

# German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ Tokyo)

## DIJ Method Talk (Social Science Study Group)

June 23, 2022, Thursday, 6.30pm (JST)/11.30am (CEST)

### *Actors, networks, and where to find them in rural Japan*

Timo Thelen, Kanazawa University



Aging inhabitants, economic decline of the primary sector, outmigration of the young generations – the postgrowth state of Japan’s peripheries challenges local communities to sustain rural living in the globalized age. To stop or even reverse this structural decline, various actors such as regional governments and research institutions forge strategies of revitalization, following national aims as well as global frameworks. For the investigation of these new and complex formations of power and knowledge in rural Japan, actor-and-network theory (ANT) can provide a window to shed light on how different allies find their goals unified in a common project and how links between centers and peripheries are established. It can, moreover, help to understand the impacts that such projects may – or may not – have on the local communities, which are supposed to benefit from them.

Timo Thelen will introduce some basic ideas of ANT and STS (science and technology studies) as coined by Bruno Latour (*Pandora’s Hope*, 1999) and give advice on their practical employment as tools for analysis and interpretation of ethnographic fieldwork data based on his own experience. By drawing on examples from his recent publication “Revitalization and Internal Colonialism in Rural Japan” (Routledge, 2022), he will discuss the potential of such a research approach for the study of rural Japan.

**Timo Thelen** is Lecturer at Kanazawa University, where he teaches Cultural Anthropology and German as a Foreign Language. He received his PhD from Dusseldorf University in 2018. His research focuses on rural Japan, media tourism, LGBTQ, and horror. Recent publications include “Between 1990s’ Nostalgia and ‘LGBT-friendly’ Tokyo Olympics: Representations of LGBTQ People in NHK’s Morning Drama Series” (Japanese Studies, 2021) and “Real Mermaid vs. Nuclear Power Plant: Ecofeminist Vengeance and Ama Divers in Japanese Horror” (Gothic Nature, 2021).

#### **About**

The [DIJ Methods Talks](#) are part of the Social Science Study Group, a forum for scholars conducting research on contemporary Japan. Meetings are open to speakers from all disciplines of the social sciences focusing on methods and methodological questions. The event is open to all.

#### **Hybrid Event**

**On-site participation:** **Registration** is required via email to [kottmann@diجتokyo.org](mailto:kottmann@diجتokyo.org) until June 22, 2022. Due to safety reasons the number of participants is limited to 16; masks are obligatory.

**Online participation:** Please register via the webpage.

**Log in data** will be provided after registration.

