

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ Tokyo)

DIJ Method Talk (Social Science Study Group)

May 18, 2022, Wed, 6.30pm (JST)/11.30am (CEST)

Critical Discourse Analysis and the Politics of Reproduction in Contemporary Japan

Isabel Fassbender, Doshisha Women's College, Kyoto



With ongoing attempts since the early 1990s to elevate the low birth rate in Japan, politics of reproduction are a highly contested realm in Japanese society. While policy makers' attempts to influence reproductive behavior on an individual level – often without sufficiently addressing social frameworks on a macro level – have been scrutinized in diverse analyses, the role of the biomedical business and mass media has been mostly overlooked. Isabel addresses this lacuna in her recent publication *Active Pursuit of Pregnancy: Neoliberalism, Postfeminism and the Politics of Reproduction in Contemporary Japan* (Brill, 2021) by using Critical Discourse Analysis on the “active pursuit of pregnancy” (*ninkatsu*), a narrative that – on first sight – encourages individual reproductive life planning or promotes assisted reproductive technologies, and has been broadly circulating in various contexts since 2011. Trying to disentangle the interplay of power/knowledge and the roles of the involved actors in contemporary politics of reproduction through the “window” of *ninkatsu*, her analysis relies on a theoretical framework combining neoliberal subjectification strategies, postfeminism, and biomedicalization. In her talk, Isabel will not only focus on Critical Discourse Analysis as a research method in theory but also try to show a possible practical implementation by presenting concrete examples from her work.

Isabel Fassbender received her Ph.D. from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (2020) and is currently an Assistant Professor at the Department of International Studies at Doshisha Women's College in Kyoto. Her research field is Japanese studies, focusing on gender, family sociology, and governmentality.

About

The [DIJ Method 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.

Online Presentation

Registration is required via email to

kottmann@dijtokyo.org until May 17, 2022.

Log in data will be provided after registration.