

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ Tokyo)

Joint Social Science Study Group and Business & Economics Study Group



April 18, 2024, 18.30h (JST) / 11.30h (CEST)

Who Drives the Green Shift? Environmental Attitudes in Japan from 1993 to 2020

Carola Hommerich & Joanna Kitsnik (both Sophia University)

Given the growing challenge of meeting the 1.5 degrees Celsius target outlined in the Paris Agreement, climate scientists are urging rapid and substantial action to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis. The role of institutional and governmental policies in combating climate change is crucial, yet their success hinges on public compliance and support. The willingness of people to adhere to these policies or to modify their individual habits directly impacts the possibilities and effectiveness of climate protection measures. Therefore, comprehending how individuals perceive climate change, and identifying the circumstances under which these perceptions influence behaviour, is a vital component for mobilizing a collective shift towards environmentally sustainable societies.

Using survey data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) Environment module for Japan spanning the years 1993, 2000, 2010, and 2020, we discuss how the perception and reaction to environmental issues and climate change has evolved and identify the primary trends. Our analysis centres on pro-environmental attitudes, willingness to make sacrifices to protect the environment, environmental self-efficacy, and beliefs in external solutions to the climate crisis. We explore how these aspects vary among diverse social groups and identify the role of sociodemographic characteristics in the translation of pro-environmental attitudes into action. With our analysis, we aim to shed light on the intricate relationship between individual attitudes, societal trends, and policy effectiveness in the context of climate change, ultimately providing insights that could guide future strategies for fostering a more environmentally sustainable society in Japan.

Carola Hommerich is Professor at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Human Sciences, Sophia University, Tokyo. In the past, she has served as Associate Professor of Sociology at the Graduate School of Letters of Hokkaido University, and as Senior Research Fellow at the DIJ Tokyo. Her research focuses on the interrelation of subjective well-being and social status, as well as on the interlinkage of environmental attitudes and behaviour. Recent publications include *Sustainable Societies in a Fragile World. Perspectives from Germany and Japan* (Sophia UP, 2024, ed. with M. Kimura) and '[Perceived Social Exclusion Partially Accounts for Social Status Effects on SWB: A Comparative Study of Japan, Germany, and the US](#)' (*Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 2024, with C. Sagioglou).

Joanna Kitsnik is a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) funded postdoctoral researcher at Sophia University, Tokyo. She holds a PhD in Sociology (2022) from the Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University. Her other ongoing research topics are related to the comparative aspects of attitudes towards wealth and income inequality, environmental attitudes, and sustainability. Recent publications include 'A Revolution in Consciousness? Changes in Environmental Attitudes and Behaviours in Germany and Japan' (in: *Sustainable Societies in a Fragile World*, see above) and 'Why We Don't Mind the Gap: The Robust Role of Individual Beliefs in Enduring Unequal Income Distribution—Evidence from 34 Countries' (*Comparative Sociology* 22(4): 589-630, 2023).

About:

The DIJ Study Group is a forum for scholars conducting research on contemporary Japan. Meetings are open to speakers from all disciplines.

Hybrid Event:

For **on-site participation** please register via email at heckel@dijtokyo.org until April 17, 2024.

For **online participation** please register via our [website](#).