

DIJ / Sophia Sustainability Forum



Thursday, 20 November 2025, 18.30 – 20.00 (JST)

Who Is Scared of the Climate Crisis – And Who Just Doesn't Care?

Climate Emotions and Their Significance for Environmental Attitudes and Behaviour in Japan

Carola Hommerich, Sophia University, Tokyo

Sighard Neckel, University of Hamburg

Despite the increasingly tangible effects of climate change in Japan the population continues to show comparatively low levels of climate concern. While the Japanese government has set ambitious carbon reduction targets, international observers have criticised the absence of concrete measures to achieve them. Domestic public responses, however, remain limited, and interest in the topic among the population appears to be waning. To explore the dynamics behind this trend, this DIJ/Sophia Sustainability Forum draws on original data from a nationwide survey conducted in September 2025. The speakers examine how climate change awareness, disinterest, and pro-environmental attitudes, behaviours, and perceived barriers are distributed across different population groups. Their analysis focuses on how climate emotions—such as fear, grief, guilt, and shame—relate to environmental attitudes and readiness to act. Hommerich and Neckel also consider the potential significance of climate nostalgia: the anticipation of losing culturally meaningful elements of everyday life, such as the distinct changing seasons, due to climate change. This event discusses how these emotional dimensions might help explain current patterns of engagement and detachment regarding the climate crisis in Japan.

Carola HOMMERICH is Professor at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Human Sciences, Sophia University, 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 University Press, 2024, edited with Masato Kimura).

Sighard NECKEL is Professor emeritus of Sociology at the University of Hamburg und Senior Permanent Fellow at the Humanities Centre for Advanced Studies “Futures of Sustainability”. His research covers social inequality, economic sociology, social theory and sociology of emotions, and more recently also social conflicts over sustainability. His latest book *Katastrophenzeit. Die Gesellschaft im Klimawandel und die Fallstricke der Transformation* will be published in January 2026.

The event will be held in English, admission is free. Both speakers will hold a presentation, which will be followed by a Q&A session and a small reception. To participate onsite, please register via email to forum@dijtokyo.org. To participate online, please register via our website. *Please be aware that audio-visual recordings may be made, stored, and published during and after the event.*

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