

# Meeting of the Politics Section (VSJF-Fachgruppe Politik)

## Saturday, Nov. 04, 2023

### Abstracts and speakers

David **Adebahr** (Kyoto University Graduate School of Law)

#### **Der Einfluss intervenierender Variablen auf außenpolitische Entscheidungsprozesse – Eine Analyse aktueller Entwicklungen in Japans regionaler Sicherheitsstrategie**

Japans regionale Sicherheitsstrategie im pazifischen Raum hat sich 2023 weiter diversifiziert. Mit der Definition einer regelbasierten Außenpolitik für die Indopazifikregion, der Stärkung internationaler Gesetze und Normen sowie der verstärkten multilateralen Kooperation Japans mit pazifischen Staaten im Bereich Cybersicherheit versucht Premierminister Kishida neue Schwerpunkte zu setzen. Obwohl Staats- und Regierungschefs häufig als Initiatoren nationaler Strategien und außenpolitischer Programme identifiziert werden, sind die Entscheidungs- und Entstehungsprozesse weitaus komplexer. Das Forschungsprojekt widmet sich daher der Frage, inwieweit intervenierende Variablen im politischen und bürokratischen Prozess die Ausgestaltung regionaler Sicherheitsstrategien beeinflussen. Um den Einfluss dieser intervenierenden Variablen zu messen, schlägt der neoklassische Realismus vor, intervenierende Variablen auf der Ebene staatlicher Entscheidungsträger zu betrachten. Die Fallstudie identifiziert zunächst diese staatlichen Entscheidungsträger in Japans außenpolitischen Institutionen, wie Kantei, MOFA und MOD. Anschließend wird mittels einer Prozess-Tracing-Analyse von Primärquellen, Interviewdaten und offiziellen Regierungspublikationen erörtert, inwieweit diese Faktoren zu einer Stärkung von regelbasierten Faktoren bei außenpolitischen Exekutivbeamten und Entscheidungsträgern geführt haben. Hierzu werden Primärquellen und Interviewdaten ausgewertet, um Entscheidungsprozesse nachzuvollziehen und Wendepunkte in der Neuausrichtung Tokyos zu identifizieren.

Das Forschungsprojekt bietet sowohl neue Einsichten in die Ursachen und Motivationen außenpolitischen Strategiewandels als auch eine Weiterentwicklung des Konzepts der intervenierenden Variablen im neoklassischen Realismus anhand konkreter Fallstudien und erweitert damit sowohl die japanologische als auch die politikwissenschaftliche Forschungsperspektive.

Andreas **Eder-Ramsauer** (University of Vienna), **Matsutani** Mitsuru (Chūkyō University)

#### **Varieties of populism in Japan: Reiwa Shinsengumi, the Japan Restoration Party, and the ambiguities in classifying populism**

Against a reductive ascription of Japan as “populism-free,” we analyze two populist political parties by deploying a highly context-sensitive discourse-theoretical framework for the study of populism. We engage fruitfully with discursive ambiguities by analyzing the usage of heuristic cues traditionally structuring the political field in Japan, such as liberal and conservative, to inquire the positioning of populist contenders in a crowded opposition field. As we argue, both parties qualify as right-wing and left-wing populist parties, respectively. Importantly, the Japan Restoration Party must be understood as an outflanking of the main party of the Right, the Liberal Democratic Party, in terms of neoliberal market ideology, and Reiwa Shinsengumi qualifies as an eclectic left-wing populist party mixing emancipatory radical democratic politics with an openness to communitarian ideas of protecting the patria

against neoliberal traitors. Opinion survey data is further used to qualify the results of the discourse analysis.

Florentine **Koppenborg** (Technical University Munich, School of Public Policy)

### **Politics of sustainable energy transitions: The role of civil society, narratives, and issue salience in elections in Germany and Japan**

This paper explores the interplay of narratives, issue salience in elections, and civil society in discontinuing technologies amidst a global transition to sustainable energy. Nuclear power constitutes a contested technology with advocates praising it as a stable low-carbon energy technology and critics pointing to the risks associated with accidents and radioactive waste. Following the March 2011 nuclear accident in Japan, the German government embarked on a nuclear phase out by 2022. Japan's pro-nuclear Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) put an end to phase out debates, but the prospects for nuclear power in Japan are so dim they may well amount to a phase out in the 2030s. The cases of Germany's state-led regulatory phase out and Japan's unintended de-facto phase out provide intriguing test cases for the role of politics in producing different energy transition policies and outcomes.

A comparison of two cases with different outcomes highlights how de-/alignment of certain political factors impacts drivers of technology phase-out. Methodologically, the research used process tracing based on analysis of primary and secondary sources in German, Japanese, and English as well as extensive fieldwork in Japan conducting interviews and collecting policy documents. A gap in knowledge about governance measures for phasing out unsustainable technologies (Geels, 2018), necessitates more research related to the politics of transitions in different sectors and countries (Köhler et al., 2019). Coordinated market economies, such as Germany and Japan, tend towards a regulatory state-driven phase out of coal power (Rentier et al., 2019). The regulatory state-driven phase out approach holds for nuclear energy in Germany. The narrative turn towards stressing the risks, vocal civil society opposition and looming issue salience in upcoming elections aligned as political drivers in 2011. Japan's unintended de-facto phase out presents an entirely divergent approach. Despite the re-election of the LDP in 2012 solidifying a pro-nuclear narrative in the name of climate change mitigation and energy security, nuclear reactor restarts progressed slowly. Japan has seen an unprecedented wave of court cases against decisions to restart nuclear reactors with the potential to put an end to Japan's nuclear energy programme. This paper concludes that an alignment of narratives, voting salience, and civil society can bring about a swift regulatory phase out decision, whereas a dealignment may produce a civil society-driven energy transformation through the use of the judiciary.

#### **Bibliography**

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