

Japanese migrants' transnational political engagement: the case of Reiwa Shinsengumi's overseas supporters (Andreas Eder-Ramsauer, Univ. Wien)

Although the literature on Japanese migrants has expanded considerably over the past few decades, there has been limited research examining the engagement of Japanese nationals abroad in homeland politics. This paper examines the phenomenon of long-distance political participation, with a particular focus on the case of supporters of Reiwa Shinsengumi. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Reiwa Shinsengumi supporters residing overseas and organized in the "Reiwa kaigai kate-ren". Based on interview data, we illustrate diasporic subjects' political participation with reference to the use of digital technologies and social media and highlight how this challenges conventional understanding of migrants' transnational political participation. Furthermore, we shed light on the connections between their migration trajectory and their endorsement of Reiwa Shinsengumi. It suggests that the advocacy of Reiwa Shinsengumi provides them with an emotional fulfilment—a sense of belonging that they longed for.

A local turn in Japanese immigration policy? (Momoyo Hüstebeck, Univ. Duisburg-Essen)

"Local turn" is a term used by researchers who analyse transnational migration to Europe, especially in 2015-16, when a record number of refugees arrived. Migrant studies focused on Europe's local level because municipalities had to deal with the wave of refugees on-site. The so-called "refugee crisis" boosted the autonomous activities of municipalities in developing their integration policies. The "local turn" is a conceptual term for the increased political autonomy granted to local governments in migration/integration policy. The national government is no longer the sole authority in migration policymaking. And local governments no longer consider their role as merely reacting to ordinances from above.

Referring to the European state of the art, I would like to ask in my presentation whether we can also observe a local turn of migrant strategies in Japan against the backdrop of increasing migration and the comprehensive reform of the Immigration Law in 2018.

With a few exceptions, no migration literature on Japan compares the integration policies of Japanese municipalities in an analytically structured way. More recent case studies on municipal integration policies are written by local stakeholders, e. g. administration or NGO staff. Therefore, in order to answer the research question, I will refer to the independent variables of European structured analysis on local migrant policymaking to hypothesize whether or not there is a local turn in Japan as well.

Participatory city planning in times of demographic change: Creating sustainable cities from the bottom up (Antonia Vesting, LMU München)

In the wake of a rapidly ageing and shrinking society and the increasing effects of climate change among others, Japan is facing multiple challenges. Not only Japan's rural regions, but also larger cities, such as Kyoto, are directly experiencing the effects of demographic change. Although a city with many universities and students, there is an outflow of young working force. Also, many families can no longer afford city life and are thus moving to the surrounding areas, which leads to a dwindling tax-paying population. Added to this is the imbalance in public finances, over tourism and increasing extreme heat in summer.

The question arises as to how these complex and diverse problems can be overcome in an ageing society and how social resilience and sustainability in this process can be strengthened. To this end, it is essential to include the voice of citizens from all walks of life in the urban planning process. Drawing on the concepts of civil society and grassroots movements, social innovation and the theory of participatory planning, I intend to find answers to that question.

A particular focus lies on projects that deal with intergenerational *machizukuri* (micro town planning with bottom-up character), urban and social sustainability and resilience. Also, the activities of young people, especially students, will be analyzed in more detail. In doing so, I draw on initial results from field research in Kyoto from April to September 2024.

From focusing event to policy change: An examination of the Fukushima nuclear accident and its impacts on Japan's nuclear politics (Tjorven Lippmann, HHU Düsseldorf)

My work focuses on the reconstruction and explanation of the crisis-driven policy process in Japan's nuclear politics in response to the Fukushima nuclear accident March 11th, 2011. Using two political theories - the multiple streams framework by John Kingdon (1984) and the focusing events theory by Thomas Birkland (1997) – this paper examines whether the Fukushima nuclear accident can be identified as a so-called focusing event and thus as a trigger for policy change in Japan. The examination shows that Fukushima fulfills important characteristics of a focusing event and was of central importance in initiating changes for Japan's nuclear policy domain. Based on the multiple streams framework, the study further exhibits that Fukushima cannot be seen as sole trigger for policy change in Japan's nuclear politics, but activated other factors within the policy making process, which together brought about policy changes. In the aftermath of Fukushima, I observe that growing national anti-nuclear sentiment influenced the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) government's interests and beliefs to reconsider the status quo in nuclear politics. This ultimately led to the shutdown of all nuclear reactors and the creation of the Nuclear Regulatory Agency ensuring nuclear safety. However, the dominance of a strong pro-nuclear coalition between the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the industry and administration as well as turnover of government to the LDP in 2012 restricted more ambitious policy changes in Japan's nuclear politics.