The 9th Young Scholars Workshop on Transnational Japan

# Japan's Multiple Publics: A Transnational and Comparative Perspective

Date: November 20 ~ 22, 2026
Place: Hosei University (Tokyo)

**Organizing Committee**

- Hosei University Research Center for International Japanese Studies (HIJAS)
- European Center for Japanese Studies in Alsace (CEEJA)
- Consortium for Global Japanese Studies (CGJS)

**Outline**

This year's workshop invites papers that examine the characteristics and development of publics in Japan. Publics are spheres outside the state and the private sphere. Within publics, people and information connect to engage in various forms of interaction. Political communication is one form of practice that takes place in publics, as demonstrated by the social theorist Jürgen Habermas. However, political discussion is not the only one. Recent discussions of the publics encompass a range of cultural interactions, including literature, art, music, drama, festivals, rituals, food, games, etc. Furthermore, communication within publics is not limited to rational debate but may also involve nonverbal or physical interactions that entail emotion. Publics are formed across multiple spheres, including face-to-face, mediated, and virtual spaces that may go beyond national boundaries. These publics can be observed throughout history and in contemporary Japanese civil society. A unique cultural public emerged during the medieval and Edo periods. Various political and cultural publics that flourished in the Meiji and Taisho eras contributed to the development of Japanese modernity. In post-war Japan, publics, in both mediated and face-to-face forms, developed within and beyond the nation to enhance democracy and transform society. Mass and counter-cultural publics flourished during the period of economic development and have also diffused beyond Japan. In recent years, we have observed new forms of publics, such as virtual and online spheres that can easily cut across national boundaries. Based on this understanding, we welcome papers that explore various publics across different times and forms (face-to-face/mass media/online). We particularly welcome those that focus on its transnational dimension - how Japanese publics are formed through transnational interaction and how publics developed in Japan were diffused to generate hybrid publics overseas. We would also encourage papers that employ a comparative lens to capture the unique characteristics of Japanese publics.

**Reports of our past workshops on Japanese transnationalism**

- 2025: 'Revisiting' Transnational Relations between Japan and the West
- 2024: Transnational Japanese Spaces
- 2023: Transnational Change in Contemporary Japan
- 2022: Japanese Transnationalism and Empire
- 2021: Japanese Studies and Transnationalism

Abstract: The 9th Young Scholars Workshop on Transnational Japan
"Japan's Multiple Publics: A Transnational and Comparative Perspective"

第 9 回「トランスナショナルな日本」新世代ワークショップ
# 日本の多様なパブリックス――トランスナショナルと比較の視点から

開催日：2026 年 11 月 20 日（金）～22 日（日）
開催場所：法政大学（東京・市ヶ谷）

**主催**

- 法政大学・国際日本学研究所 (HIJAS)
- アルザス欧州日本学研究所 (CEEJA)
- 「国際日本研究」コンソーシアム (CGJS)

**概要**

今年度のワークショップでは、日本における「パブリックス（Publics）」を考察する報告を募集する。「パブリックス」とは、国家や私的領域の外側に位置する領域であり、ここでは、人びとや情報がつながり、さまざまな相互作用が生まれる。社会理論家のユルゲン・ハーバーマスが「公共圏」と呼んだ政治的コミュニケーションは、パブリックス内における実践の一形態である。ただし、パブリックスで展開される相互行為は、政治的な議論に留まらない。近年では、文芸、芸術、音楽、演劇、祭り、祭祀、食、ゲームなど、幅広い文化の相互行為をも包含する概念として捉えられるようになってきている。さらに、パブリックス内でのコミュニケーションは、理知的な討論に限らず、感情をともなう非言語的あるいは身体的な実践をも含むものである。そしてそれらは、対面的な場、メディア空間、仮想空間など、時に国境を越えながら、多様な空間で成立する。このような意味でのパブリックスは、これまで無数に日本の市民社会に現れてきた。中世および江戸時代においては、ユニークな文化的パブリックスが出現した。明治・大正時代には、政治・文化を問わず様々なパブリックスが隆盛を極め、日本の近代化を推し進めた。戦後日本においては、メディアや社会運動などのパブリックスが、時に国境を超えながら、民主主義の深化や社会の変革を推進した。また、高度経済成長期においても、大衆文化やカウンターカルチャーに根ざしたパブリックスが多数出現し、またそれらは他国へと伝播していった。近年では、国境を容易に越える仮想・オンライン空間といった新たな形態のパブリックスへの注目も高まっている。こうした理解に基づき、本ワークショップでは時代や形式（対面・メディア・オンライン）を問わず、日本のパブリックスの豊かで多様な形態を探求する報告を募集する。特に、そのトランスナショナルな側面、すなわち、越境的な相互作用を通じて日本のパブリックスがどのように形成されたのか、また、日本のパブリックスが海外におけるハイブリッドなパブリックスの形成にどのような影響を与えたのかに焦点を当てた論文を求める。あわせて、他国との比較の視点を用いて日本のパブリックスの特徴を捉えた報告も歓迎する。

**過去のワークショップ情報**

- 2025:「日本と西洋のトランスナショナルな関係［再訪］」
- 2024:「トランスナショナルな日本の空間」
- 2023:「現代日本のトランスナショナルな変容」
- 2022:「日本のトランスナショナリズムと帝国」
- 2021:「日本研究とトランスナショナリズム」

<Keynote Speaker>

**Patterned Publics:**
**On Anime's Transnational Performances and Cultural Production**
パターン化されたパブリックス
――アニメのトランスナショナルなパフォーマンスと文化生産

**Stevie Suan**
Hosei University

What "form" or "shape" do "publics" take across borders, and what vocabulary can be developed to discuss them? How are they sustained as they exceed or intertwine with the national? To address these questions, this talk will consider anime's cultural production to explore how its patterning produces certain transnational publics. This may appear odd as anime is often glossed as "Japanese animation." But not "all animation from Japan" seems to qualify as "anime proper" in the local, Japanese subculture as well as the global fandom. Rather, a specific style which goes beyond individual works and production studios tends to distinguish anime as distinctive, and is seen as a sign of both Japanese culture and globalization: a local-global tension of "Japanese subculture gone global." But attending to anime's style enables the consideration of further modes of spatial organization. "Anime's style" might be better considered as a media-form, the interplay between material, medium, and convention, the patterning of which constitutes the very recognizability of anime as a particular type of media. From this perspective, a second type of form of transnationality (and its subsequent cultural public) emerges: what is supposedly "Japanese animation" is actually animated through a translocal network of production across Asia, centralized via Tokyo as the de facto privileged node. Importantly, it is the performance of the media-form that both enables and hides the transnationality of the final images. This performance affords a third type of transnationality, whereby the "origin" of Japan is not required as a qualifying factor if the stylistics (media-form) are enacted sufficiently. In this sense, a more decentralized, heterarchical notion of cultural production (and public) comes into view, one not necessarily isolated to one place of "authentication." Ultimately, all three of these modes of transnationality operate in tandem in the performance of anime's media-form, allowing one to sketch out a complex regional dynamic of cultural production.

<Presenter Day 1, No. 1>

**Public Openness to Ethnic Cuisine in Japan**

日本における「エスニック料理」へのパブリックの受容性

**Vien Thi-Thuc Dinh**

Kyoto University

"Ethnic food" was coined as a concept for "other" non-dominant food typically brought and prepared by immigrants, taken out of its original place. As part of culinary tourism, these traditional cuisines are reproduced and customized to feed the imagination of the mainstream demographics and to assert cultural tolerance towards marginalized groups. As such, the acceptance (or rejection) of migrant food by the public varies according to societal and individual factors. While public openness to ethnic food is shaped by the degree of familiarity between ethnic and dominant culinary cultures, individual acceptance is shaped by factors such as international trips, mass media, the presence of foreign food businesses, and migrant groups. I argue that the public consumption of ethnic food is a space of cultural encounter between mainstream and foreign residents, manifesting a public stereotype of "ethnic" flavors through a reified imagination of exotic yet approachable places and cultures, without necessarily entailing migrant acceptance. This study examines how these dynamics play out in the case of Vietnamese cuisine in Japan, a freshly emerging ethnic food compared to more established ones such as Indian or Thai, asking which factors shape public openness to it, and what its reception can reveal about the boundary between culinary curiosity and migrant acceptance. It draws on two data sources: (i) questionnaire surveys on youth perceptions (N=303) conducted in Kyoto, Osaka and Hyogo in 2021-2022 and (ii) two artifact-focused group discussions centered on fresh spring rolls. The survey results show that public openness to ethnic cuisine is influenced by gender and exposure to foreign cultures, rather than direct interaction with migrant communities. The "similar yet distinct" nature of ethnic dishes as exemplified by the pairing of Vietnamese fresh spring rolls and Japanese hand-rolled sushi, however, provides promising ground for transnational connection, cultural hybridity, and social inclusivity.

<Presenter Day 1, No. 2>

**From Diasporic to Transnational Publics:**
**Indonesian Migrants in Japan and Australia Compared**
ディアスポラ的公共圏からトランスナショナルな公共圏へ――
インドネシア移民の日豪比較

**Annisa Dina Amalia**
University of Melbourne

How are Japan's publics formed through interactions across different migrant groups across changing social and political landscapes? As Japan has increasingly become a destination for immigrants, moving beyond its longstanding image of a homogeneous nation closed to migrants (Oishi and Igarashi, 2022), examining how publics are formed through migrant– host society interactions has become increasingly important. With the growing number of Indonesian workers and students migrating to Japan over the past decades, this paper explores how Indonesian migrants in Japan engage politically with their homeland around democracy and human rights issues through political discussions and cultural interactions, including art, drama, and festivals. Moreover, this paper adopts a comparative lens to examine differences in Indonesian migrants' experiences in Japan and Australia. This comparison matters because migrants' political practices unfold concurrently alongside broader political mobilizations in both countries, particularly pro-Palestine movements and growing anti-migration sentiments. Drawing on ongoing ethnographic research in Tokyo, Hiroshima, Sydney, and Melbourne, alongside observations of social media platforms and more than 25 interviews, this paper finds that Indonesian migrants' political practices are shaped not only by factors within diasporic spheres, such as memories of the past, moments of political rupture, relations among diasporic groups, and expectations of return to the homeland, but also by encounters with different political cultures, sociopolitical contexts, and transnational networks in their host societies. These encounters create connections between Indonesian migrants and other migrant and host-society groups, while also reshaping how democracy and human rights are understood and practiced. Building on Ien Ang's (2003) theorization of 'hybridity', this paper moves beyond the question of how Indonesian migrants maintain their identities and practice homeland politics within the diasporic sphere, to how transnational publics are formed through interactions among people from different racial and national backgrounds who develop solidarities around shared and overlapping political concerns.

<Presenter Day 1, No. 3>

# "Can Gyarus be Black?":
# Gyaru as Transnational Afroasian Feminist Counterpublic

「ギャルスはブラックになれるのか？」――
トランスナショナルなアフロ・アジア ン・フェミニストのカウンターパブリックとしてのギャル

**Abena Somiah**
McGill University

Since its emergence in the early 1990s and subsequent rise in popularity during the early 2000s, Gyaru, a Japanese subculture and street style, has elicited varied responses from Japanese media and international audiences due to its distinctive aesthetic. Although characterized by diverse stylistic iterations, gyaru is often associated with distinctive eye makeup, specific gestures, unique vocabulary, and, most notably, skin-tanning. As a countercultural public, Japanese women and girls participating in gyaru constructed new identities that diverged from traditional ideals of Japanese femininity, supported by a media mix of films, magazines, and dance trends. While its popularity declined in Japan after the 2000s, gyaru developed a growing international following, particularly among consumers of Japanese pop culture and fashion in North America and Europe. In recent years, gyaru culture has reemerged on social media platforms both within and outside Japan, embraced as a subversive form of self-expression by Japanese and non-Japanese women. Notably, Black women in North America engaged in gyaru culture have highlighted the subculture's inspiration drawn from Black feminine aesthetics, thereby deepening their connection to it beyond stylistic elements. In this context, Black women actively engage with ongoing controversies surrounding the subculture and continuously redefine it as a space for feminist self-expression. This paper argues that contemporary gyaru culture functions as a transnational feminist counterpublic, connecting Black and Asian communities through diverse forms of expression. Although gyaru originated as a countercultural movement among young women in Japan, its international diffusion has resulted in the formation of a hybrid public abroad. By analyzing Black women's online engagement in this subculture since the 2010s and emphasizing the significance of Black femininity in articulating gyaru in Japan, this paper positions gyaru as a feminist counterpublic strengthened by virtual spheres that transcend national boundaries.

<Presenter Day 1, No. 4>

**From Digital Imagination to Purposeful Solidarity:**
**Older Adults and the Making of Transnational Digital Publics in Japan**
デジタル・イマジネーションから目的志向型連帯へ――
日本における高齢者とトラ ンスナショナルなデジタル・パブリックスの形成

**Yichen Zhou**
National University of Singapore

Digital technologies have transformed how publics are formed, accessed, and experienced, creating mediated spaces that extend across geographical, generational, and institutional boundaries. Yet limited attention has been paid to how older adults participate in these emerging digital publics, particularly in Japan, one of the world's most rapidly aging societies. With Japan as a case, this study examines how older adults imagine, enter, and participate in digital publics, and how such participation reshapes social relationships, cultural engagement, and experiences of purposeful aging. Drawing on 18 months of fieldwork in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area, this study employs a three-stage adoption framework to examine older adults' experiences with digital technologies. Data were collected from digital workshops (including LINE, Zoom, Teams, and ChatGPT) through observations, focus groups, and in-depth interviews. The findings show that, in the pre-adoption stage, older adults developed nuanced digital imaginations concerning self-identity, social relationships, belonging, and potential participation in online communities. During the adoption process, technological unfamiliarity and digital literacy shaped the accessibility and forms of participation in digital publics. In the post-adoption stage, digital platforms became spaces for maintaining family relationships, engaging in intergenerational and cultural interaction, and facilitating transnational family communication and knowledge exchange. These practices extended beyond everyday communication, contributing to social participation, lifelong learning, post-retirement activities, a nd the pursuit of ikigai. The study conceptualizes this process as purposeful solidarity: mediated social connections through which older adults not only maintain existing relationships but also actively pursue meaningful participation and purposeful lives. It highlights how digital publics can generate new forms of social and cultural participation among older adults in Japan while extending across national and generational boundaries.

<Presenter Day 2, No. 1>

**The Architecture of World Expositions and the Making of Publics in Japan: Osaka 1970 and 2025**

万国博覧会の建築と日本におけるパブリックスの形成――
1970 年大阪万博と 202 5 年大阪・関西万博

**David Vaculik**
Brno University of Technology

World expositions do more than represent nations to international audiences. As temporary cities and media events, they assemble participants into publics and organize the conditions under which cultural difference, technological futures, and collective identity are encountered. This paper compares Expo 1970 and Expo 2025 in Osaka to examine how architecture and media contributed to the transnational making of publics in postwar and contemporary Japan. Rather than treating international participation as a backdrop, it asks how interactions among Japanese organizers, architects, corporations, visitors, foreign exhibitors, and media shaped changing conceptions of public life and future society. At Expo 1970, the Symbol Zone, Festival Plaza, and their event and information systems combined direct encounter with the circulation and management of mass audiences. While Metabolist architects presented adaptable urban structures as models for an emerging information society, contemporary critics interpreted the Expo as an apparatus of state-corporate control. Expo 2025 instead described itself as a "People's Living Lab." Its Grand Ring, Theme Weeks, and digital platforms framed public participation through "unity in diversity," dialogue, and co-creation. Through comparative spatial and discourse analysis of master plans, architectural writings, official publications, and contemporary reception, the paper argues that the two Expos do not represent a simple transition from a passive mass audience to participatory publics. Both transformed transnational encounters into spatially organized forms of publicness while combining promises of openness and cultural exchange with systems of circulation, mediation, and control. The comparison reveals how World Expo architecture operated not merely as national representation, but as an infrastructure through which publics in Japan were imagined, assembled, and contested.

<Presenter Day 2, No. 2>

**"Here is Heaven": Poetry, Presence, and the Public in Kamagasaki**

「ここは天国」——釜ヶ崎における詩・居合わせ・公共性

**Oskar Dylewski**
Jagiellonian University

This paper examines an aesthetic public in Kamagasaki (Airin-chiku), Osaka's historic day-labor district, and uses it to interrogate the concept of the public itself. Drawing on sixteen months of ethnographic fieldwork (2024–2026), it analyses the poetry workshops, collective singing, and sustained non-verbal co-presence maintained by a local arts NPO among men who have outlived the labor market that produced the district. I argue that these practices constitute a public in the strict sense – a sphere neither state nor domestic, sustained by circulation among strangers – but one lacking the project-form that theories of the public sphere have treated as constitutive: a shared aim, a grievance addressed to power, an anticipated future of uptake. Analytically, the paper reads this soci ality through Tsurumi Shunsuke's genkai geijutsu, positioning that conce pt alongside Habermas's public sphere and Negt and Kluge's proletarian counter-public as a distinctively Japanese theorization of non-bourgeois publicness, contemporaneous with them and irreducible to either. Where the first is organized by argument and the second by shared experience, the Kamagasaki public is organized by co-presence and by voice that makes no claim. The paper then turns to the institutional contradiction that sustains it: as a subsidized NPO operating within grant cycles, art festivals, and transnational residency networks, the workshop must periodically render itself as a project – with objectives, participants, and measurable outcomes – for audiences that do not include its own participants. This double address, I suggest, is the public's condition rather than its corruption. The case indicates that futurity is an unmarked premise within the category of publics, and that ethnographic attention to a public organized around its suspension clarifies what the concept has been carrying.

<Presenter Day 2, No. 3>

**From Japanese Popular Culture to Hybrid Intimate Publics:**
**Cosplay Commission among Female Fans in China**
日本のポピュラー文化からハイブリッドな親密公共圏へ――
中国の女性ファンにおけるコスプレ委託

**Ekido Shu**
Hosei University

Japanese popular culture has played an important role in the development of female-oriented fan cultures in contemporary China. This paper examines cosplay commissioning (cos weituo), an emerging practice in which predominantly female clients hire cosplayers to embody fictional characters, often from otome games, and engage in date-like interactions. Its connection to Japanese popular culture lies not only in cosplay but also in broader cultures of commercialized intimacy combining role performance, affective labor, and paid companionship, as seen in dansō escort services, host clubs, and maid cafés. Rather than treating cosplay commissioning simply as commercialized role-play or individualized consumption, this paper approaches it as a transnational cultural public. Its practices are embedded in a network linking media texts, social media platforms, cosplay communities, and young women's imaginaries of intimacy. Within this public, participants negotiate norms concerning character authenticity, gender performance, the tension between commercialized affective labor and "authentic" intimate experience, and appropriate boundaries between commissioners and cosplayers. The rise of cosplay commissioning also reflects the expansion of digital public spaces in contemporary China, where younger generations encounter and negotiate discourses on gender, feminism, romance, and intimacy. Although it may appear to be a niche female-dominated subculture, it offers a lens through which to examine changing forms of female subjectivity and intimate expectations. This paper argues that cosplay commissioning illustrates how cultural forms associated with Japanese popular culture are localized through trans national circulation, intersecting with Chinese platform cultures and commercial practices to produce a hybrid cultural public spanning online and offline spaces, mediated fantasy and embodied interaction. It shows that transnational publics are constituted not only through discourse and media circulation, but also through affective, embodied, and intimate practices.

<Presenter Day 2, No. 4>

**Modern Dance Publics in Taiwan: Tsai Rui-yue and Japan**
台湾モダンダンス・パブリックスの形成と日本――蔡瑞月を中心に

**Yukako Takahashi**
Waseda University

This report focuses on Tsai Rui-yue (蔡瑞月), who studied at the Ishii Baku Dance School during the war and later became known as a pioneer of modern dance in Taiwan. The Ishii Baku school accepted dancers from colonial territories, including Choi Seung-hee (崔承喜) and Lee Cai-e (李彩 娥), and thus had a transnational character. Tsai participated in wartime morale-boosting tours across Japan and Southeast Asia under war constraints, gaining the skills necessary to establish herself as an independent dancer. After returning to Taiwan, Tsai engaged with local artistic circles, gave numerous performances, and interacted with artists and critics. She developed modern dance works by combining physical techniques acquired in Japan with Taiwanese folk culture and postwar social conditions. A dance public in which Tsai played a central role developed through private rather than state-led initiatives, encompassing the creation, teaching, criticism, promotion, and appreciation of dance. Previous studies have noted ideological and technical continuities between this public and the dance public surrounding Ishii Baku and Ishii Midori in Japan. Tsai was also connected to Taiwanese communities in Japan, including the Tokyo Taiwan Christian Youth Association and the Taiwanese Compatriots Association, which influenced her return to Taiwan and her early performances there. Focusing on the period from her study in Japan to her imprisonment under martial law, this report examines how the dance public surrounding Ishii Baku, other artistic publics in Japan, and Taiwanese communities in Japan contributed to the formation of a dance public centered on Tsai in postwar Taiwan. It argues that techniques, ideas, creative methods, and teaching methods acquired in Japan, when combined with networks, resources, local culture, and social conditions in Taiwan, contributed to both new modern dance works and a public receptive to modern dance.

<Presenter Day 3, No. 1>

**Buried Lives of Hibakusha under Nagasaki's Reconstruction as 'International Cultural City': Photographer Shomei Tomatsu's Reflection on the Distance to the Atomic Bomb Experiences**

「国際文化都市」としての長崎の復興の影で不可視化された被爆者の生活――
写真家 東松照明が埋めようとした原爆体験との距離

**Yoshinari Teppei**
Osaka University

Records of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki began to emerge gradually after the end of the occupation of Japan, during which the GHQ/SCAP had enforced a press code. However, the ongoing sufferings of the survivors tended to be overlooked, because early news reports focused on conveying the devastations in the aftermath of the atomic bombings. Amid a nationwide surge in the ban-the-bomb movement, triggered by the 1954 Daigo Fukuryu Maru incident, the reality of life after th e atomic bombings became gradually known. Against this social backdrop, the number of publications documenting the atomic bombings, not only collections of testimonies but also photographic works, was released. These photographs played a vital role in visually conveying the horrors of the atomic bombing to the people. However, while most of them were taken in Hiroshima, there are only a limited number of photographs of Nagasaki. Furthermore, while the photographs of Hiroshima depicted the process by which the city was rebuilt as a "Peace Memorial City," a few photographs depicted Hibakusha living in Nagasaki under its reconstruction. In particular, it is worth noting that Nagasaki City tended to put effort into rebuilding itself as an "International Cultural City," centered on the old city district that had escaped the atomic bombing, with a long history of close ties with other countries dating back to the opening of the port since the 16th century. Therefore, this report focuses on the footsteps of photographer Shomei Tomatsu, who spent his entire career photographing the post-war society after being shocked by the American occupation and gazing at atomic bomb survivors in Nagasaki beginning in the early 1960s. It examines how he sought to depict the lives of post-bombing Nagasaki while building relationships with the survivors, who were being forgotten amid the city's re-internationalization.

<Presenter Day 3, No. 2>

**Producing Contested War Memories: A Sociological Study of NHK Documentaries**

対立する戦争記憶の制作――NHK ドキュメンタリーの社会学的研究

**Nao Kato**

University of the Sacred Heart

Using tools of analysis from the fields of sociology and media studies, I explore postwar televisual journalism in Japan, with a focus on the production of documentaries on the Asia Pacific War. My thesis looks at the dyn amics of media organizations such as NHK and the "possibilities of obtai ning and maintaining autonomy" in the journalistic workplace (Castellvi 2024: 7). My argument is: (a) that while the construction of historical m emory in NHK and the media is highly ideological and contested, it is ne vertheless invested with considerable agency; (b) that a high-point of cri tical inquiry into the war was reached in the 1990s (roughly coinciding w ith the golden age of the Japanese media) before incurring a backlash th at has since limited (though not shut down) journalistic scrutiny. My findi ngs challenge perceptions of NHK as a monolithic mouthpiece of govern ment policy, while also stressing its ultimately hegemonic role in popular memory. They add to our knowledge of the inner-workings of Japan's m ost important broadcaster and how public memory in Japan is constructe d and reconstructed.

<Presenter Day 3, No. 3>

**The Public Spheres of Japan's Economic Security Policy**
日本の経済安全保障政策における多様なパブリックス

**Steven Schwarz**
University of Tokyo
University of Heidelberg

This paper examines how Japan's economic security policy has been shaped through interactions among multiple public spheres between 2021 a nd 2025. Based on Habermas' concept of the public sphere and Fraser's critique of a singular, homogeneous public sphere, it conceptualizes economic security as a contested communicative process involving political institutions and parties, economic actors and business associations, financial market actors, media, and the broader public. The United States is considered a transnational discursive arena through which economic security frames and policy ideas circulate. The paper asks: How do different publics construct and contest frames of Japan's economic security policy, and how do these frames circulate and compete across political, economic, financial, media, societal, and U.S. –Japanese arenas? Methodologically, this paper employs a mixed-methods design, combining qualitative frame analysis, quantitative content analysis, and discourse network analysis. Japanese and US policy documents, parliamentary debates, business publications, financial commentary, and media coverage from 2021 to 2025 are coded for actors, frames, problem definitions, policy preferences, and positions. Network analysis identifies patterns of discursive alignment and cross-sphere frame diffusion, while qualitative analysis examines selected episodes of significant change. The paper argues that Japan's economic security policy is not solely a pr oduct of state decision-making but emerges from a plural and uneven public-sphere configuration in which political, economic, financial, media, societal, and transnational actors interact to shape the meaning and legitimacy of economic security.

<Presenter Day 3, No. 4>

**Defining a Public: The Meaning of "Otaku" in Colombia 2000-2010**

パブリックの形成――2000～2010年のコロンビアにおける「オタク」の意味

**Nathaly Gonzalez**

Kyoto University

The word "otaku" is part of the package when talking about anime and manga fans. However, as scholars have pointed out, the label "otaku," even within Japan, does not have a stable meaning; it is a contested category that depends on the time and perspective used to conceptualize it (Kamm, 2015). In other words, instead of assuming a fixed definition applied across contexts, this paper asks how the public was conceptualized through uneven understandings of who deserved the title of "otaku". I follow the word "otaku" in the 2000s in Colombia, a country where anime and manga circulated, aided by their passage through Spanish-language media centers such as Mexico, Peru, and Spain, rarely through direct connections with Japan itself. For the analysis, I treat the term "otaku" as a label produced through positioned discourses, rather than a factual reality. Thus, I reflect on the narratives about who can be called an otaku present in fanzines; event materials from the 2000s; and discussion threads on the RCO (Red Colombiana de Otaku), a major online forum through which anime and manga fans interacted during this period, and one of the few that can still be consulted today. Across the materials, I find that otaku had contested meanings that shifted among identity markers, consumption markers, and fields of competition in which the accumulation of knowledge conferred status. These characterizations did not work in isolation, but were articulated through both opposition and association, producing "legitimate" ways of exercising fandom. Read together, they show part of the process of a public in the making. Through discussions about what the word meant, consumers were adapting the borrowed term and integrating it into their local context.