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Breaking Iron Triangles: Beliefs and Interests in Japanese Renewable Energy Policy**Rie Watanabe***Aoyama Gakuin University, Japan*

This article analyses Japan's renewable energy policy changes, with a focus on the interaction of multiple catalysts on changing positions, beliefs and interests of dominant-group members, and inducing non-incremental renewable policy changes (an innovative but less effective Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) in 2003 as well as a partial FIT for photovoltaics in 2009 and ultimately a more effective full-scale FIT to promote renewables in 2011). The examined multiple catalysts include the governing coalition change from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) in 2009 and four other catalysts (the oil crisis, climate change, electricity market liberalisation, and nuclear accidents) that relate to the values underlying Japan's energy policymaking: energy security, environment, economic efficiency, and safety (3E+S). The article concludes that the latter four catalysts were critical in creating and expanding cleavages among dominant-group members over a long period sufficient to realise the introduction of RPS and a partial FIT, but not sufficient to introduce the full-scale FIT. The 3/11 disaster after the governing coalition change was indispensable to achieving a full-scale FIT as it affected dominant-group members' interests in removing Kan Naoto from office, after Kan made the FIT law passage one of the conditions for his voluntary resignation. Based on the empirical study, this article also addresses one of the underexplored theoretical questions, the effects of and relationship between multiple catalysts in non-incremental policy change.

Biography

Rie Watanabe is a political scientist with expertise in policy process theory, comparative political studies, German and Japanese, as well as international climate policy. She received her bachelor and master degrees of law from the University of Tokyo, Japan, and completed her PhD at the Free University of Berlin, Germany. After having worked at several international environmental research institutes, and having been a member of several governmental committees in Japan, she is currently working as Professor at Aoyama Gakuin University.

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