

Challenges to Achieve a Sustainable Society Insights from Social Science Sub-title

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The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted at a summit held at the UN headquarters in 2015. The SDGs comprise 17 international goals aimed at realizing a sustainable, diverse, and inclusive society where no one is left behind. These goals compel governments to address a wide range of issues, including poverty, education, gender equality, and energy.

Japan is striving to achieve the SDGs by addressing its declining birthrate and aging population through work style reforms and the acceptance of immigrants, increasing the number of female managers to achieve gender equality, promoting digital transformation (DX) through AI technology, and pursuing green transformation (GX).

Despite these efforts, achieving the SDGs presents complex challenges. For example, the declining birthrate remains a serious issue in Japan. According to the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare's Vital Statistics, the number of children born in Japan in 2022 was 777,747, continuing a downward trend since 2016, when births first fell below 1 million. Since 2007, the number of deaths has consistently exceeded the number of births, leading to an unstoppable population decline. Moreover, Japan has set a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 46% by 2030 compared to 2013 levels, but achieving this goal requires significant behavioral changes from the public.

In response to these challenges, we propose establishing an interdisciplinary project team comprising researchers from diverse social science disciplines, such as political science, economics, sociology, psychology, and information engineering. Our objective is to employ a multifaceted approach to tackle policy issues related to the SDGs. Research will be conducted on measures to cope with a declining birthrate and an aging society, as well as measures to address environmental issues. Through these studies, we aim to present evidence-based implications on policy issues for the realization of a sustainable society from an academic perspective in the social sciences.

A key component of our methodology involves conducting experiments to examine under what

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conditions broad public support and cooperation for government policies can be garnered. We aim to identify which combinations of policies or messaging enhance public support and willingness to cooperate. Additionally, adopting a future design approach, we plan to explore potential consensus points regarding the direction of a gender-equal society, intergenerational cooperation, and GX by engaging participants in scenarios where they represent "hypothetical future generations." Specifically, in our experiments, respondents are induced to take the perspectives of future generations as part of the future design interventions, and we will examine how this affects public support and willingness to cooperate.

This research aims not only to identify effective strategies for public engagement but also to understand the types of discussions that facilitate deep conviction among participants, thereby improving collective decision-making processes. In my presentation, I will explore these research possibilities in greater detail.