Contemporary Japanese Politics and Anxiety Over Governance

Ken'ichi Ikeda

Chapter 5

The COVID-19 pandemic in the context of anxiety over governance

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

5 The COVID-19 pandemic in the context of anxiety over governance

Since the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant damage around the world. This chapter provides an overview of the Japanese government's response to the outbreak and the public response through an empirical analysis of two surveys. There are two main points. First, we demonstrate that a phenomenon consistent with the hypothesized anxiety over governance discussed in Chapter 4 also emerges in the wake of the pandemic in Japan and that the Japanese fear of COVID-19, accompanied by excessive risk perception, led to harsh criticism of the government. This association did not occur because of the COVID-19 disaster, but because the long-standing phenomenon of excessive risk perception surfaced, as we saw in Chapter 4. Second, in the fall of 2021, when the COVID-19 crisis had not yet been fully resolved, we conducted an Internet survey of the House of Representatives election, creating a direct measure of anxiety over governance and testing the hypotheses proposed at the end of Chapter 4 to show a generalized structure of Japanese anxiety over governance in addition to the analysis of the COVID-19 experience.

As mentioned in the Introduction chapter, anxiety over governance was evident from the beginning of the pandemic in Japan. The pattern of fear of COVID-19 and harsh criticism of the government caused Japan to stand out from other countries. In particular, the surge in fear from March to April and May 2020 showed the peculiarly excessive anxiety of the Japanese people, which went far beyond the objective magnitude of the risk, given the small number of deaths and infections in Japan compared with other countries.[1]

This pattern continued to be reinforced in 2021 in the contentious issues surrounding the hosting of the Tokyo Olympic Games and the prioritization of vaccine uptake. However, the direct role of fear of COVID-19 infections and their economic impact receded into the background in the House of Representatives elections held at the end of October 2021 amidst the rapid convergence of the fifth wave of the coronavirus. Nevertheless, the long-term cumulative effect of the structure of anxiety over governance was clear, and the high perception of future risk for Japan, rather than a direct fear of infection and economic hardship, strongly defined the government's assessment of its pandemic measures.

COVID-19, initial experience in Japan

Tracing the trajectory of the pandemic in Japan, we can clearly see strong ongoing concern about governance. Even in the early stages of the pandemic, the Japanese consistently expressed skepticism toward the government and politics, and a lack of trust in the ability of the government and politicians to deal with the crisis.

It is clear from responses to items of the YouGov COVID-19 survey mentioned in the Introduction chapter that there was a lack of support for the public health measures implemented by the Japanese government compared with many other countries. Japanese citizens were suspicious of the effectiveness of measures to encourage telecommuting and gave low marks to the government's quarantine system for screening close contacts as well as returnees from countries where the disease had spread, all of which are seen as objectively effective measures to control points of contact with infected people and reduce the overall likelihood of infection. All these measures received the lowest levels of support among comparable countries.

To place events in chronological order, Prime Minister Abe attempted several measures on his own initiative during the initial phase of the crisis, and although his request in February 2020 for "simultaneous closure of elementary, junior high, and high schools" did not differ from the expert panel's decision (Takenaka, 2020), it was perceived as a symbolic, impact-oriented, and politically motivated choice that went beyond the scope of its recommendations.[2] The "toilet paper panic" that occurred around this time brought to the surface the civil anxiety, as mentioned at the beginning of the Introduction. Abe's claims that the country had sufficient stock were not believed, and the buying frenzy continued for another month or so. In March, there was a citywide shortage of masks. At Abe's direction, ironically undersized masks, dubbed "Abenomasks" (a play on "Abenomics"), were distributed to every household in the country from the next month. However, it took two months just to distribute the masks, and in the meantime, masks with better protection became available in the city. The Abenomasks were ridiculed as being weakly effective and aimed only at political effect.[3] All of these were criticisms of the delay, inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the government's response to the crisis, which failed to respond to the Japanese people's sense of emergency.

The expert panel established in mid-February had no legal authority, but as fears of a "lockdown" of the capital spread at the end of March and the pandemic fear reached its peak, the PM changed course to lean heavily on the expert panel's judgment, as if to "subcontract" the implementation of his policies. When the state of emergency was declared, the PM was further criticized for giving the impression that the experts, rather than the PM, were leading the "call for self-restraint," which was often perceived as an evasion of accountability.

Although PM Abe can boast an unusually long term in government since the end of 2012, there were great concerns about his overall governance of the COVID-19 countermeasures, and the government failed to back him up. These

criticisms were reflected in the cabinet's disapproval rating, which rose from 38% in April to 49% in June (NHK monthly political attitude survey data).

Limited individual coping

The data from the YouGov COVID-19 survey also show features of Japanese behavior during the first wave of the pandemic.

While the people were fearful and criticized government measures, they took too few precautions to cope personally. While the majority of Japanese wore masks, as is commonly reported, in terms of suppression of risk through behavior such as working remotely and avoiding going out, Japan was among the lowest-ranked YouGov participating countries such as the US and Australia, as well as countries in Western/Northern Europe and Southeast Asia. Similarly, personal consideration of public health matters was also low, and actions such as avoiding congestion and not touching things in the city, avoiding contact with travelers, and encouraging personal hygiene were all weak. Although PM Abe boasted that he had "demonstrated the power of the Japanese model" by voluntarily refraining from the mandatory lockdown when the first wave subsided,[4] this is far from the reality.

In spite of this seemingly indefensible situation of simply blaming politics and not dealing with the dangerous situation personally, during the first wave, there was an active attempt on social media to provide psychological support to those who stayed at home, which received a large number of replies, retweets, shares, follows, and other responses. A spontaneous social movement emerged. Underlying this movement, a sense of mutual support was apparent. Many Japanese people saw the "#School closure challenge plan," "#Let's stay at home," and "#Let's dance at home." Many people could empathize with this. However, considering that similar mutual support did not occur during several subsequent waves of pandemic impact, it is possible that this social movement was a phenomenon of "euphoria" often observed in the early stages after major disasters. In fact, a comparison of Japanese data from the Values in a Crisis (VIC) survey in May 2020 and May 2021 for the same person shows that both "the majority of Japanese people behave appropriately" and "I feel solidarity when I meet other people" had declined at the later time. There was a general distrust of infection control measures taken by others and a decline in solidarity, which is a prerequisite for mutual support.

A comparative study of COVID-19 and anxiety over governance: Analysis of VIC survey data

While Japanese people are reluctant to take personal measures in response to the COVID-19 situation, they consider the government's responsibility for addressing the risk to be serious. To clarify the meaning of this sense of responsibility of government, let us examine the structure of Japanese anxiety over governance in an international context, using VIC data to measure people's reactions to the pandemic.

Below, I use comparative data from 13 countries. The Japanese data were obtained from an Internet survey on May 15–16, 2020, during the phase-out of the state of emergency declared by the first coronavirus wave.[5] The following countries are included in the analysis (in order of survey code): Austria, Brazil, Greece, Maldives, Germany, Korea, Georgia, Japan, Poland, Colombia, Kazakhstan, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The survey was conducted in these countries from the end of April to the end of June 2020, and it is likely that they were in more or less similar circumstances.[6]

First, let us examine the relationship between fear of infection and the evaluation of the government's handling of the crisis. The same pattern that we saw in the YouGov data in the Introduction is consistently observed here. As shown in Figure 5.1, Japanese people are very afraid of both the COVID-19 infection itself (Figure 5.1, left) and the economic damage caused by the disaster (Figure 5.1, right), and they clearly do not appreciate the government's management of it at all. Japan is shown at the bottom right of the figures near to Brazil. At the end of May, the number of deaths in Japan was just under 900, while the number in Brazil was about 29,000, a 32-fold difference. Moreover, at the beginning of July, the number of deaths in Japan was just under 1,000, while that in Brazil was just over 60,000, 62 times as high. Although we hesitate to declare that the number of deaths is too large or too small based on the absolute death toll, we would have to say that the sense of fear and the low evaluation of the government's management of the situation is almost equal to that of citizens in countries where the death toll is tens of times larger, which is an exact reflection of the level of anxiety over governance in Japan.[7]

With this in mind, we use a country-fixed effects model analysis again. This method enables to show robust group differences in the effect of the given independent variable within a target group of countries.[8] The dependent variable, the specific question on the evaluation of the government, was "How well do you think the [Japanese] government is responding to the COVID-19 crisis" (the name of the respective home country was used), and the response options were on a five-point scale from "not responding well at all" to "responding very well."

The independent variables in the following categories were used.

1) Basic attributes, personal impact of the COVID-19 disaster, and personal psychological characteristics
   - Demographic factors: Gender, age, educational level, and income
   - Morbidity and economic impact of coronavirus disaster: Presence or absence of COVID-19-related symptoms (multiple items), experience of unemployment, closure of business, and job loss due to the pandemic
   - Personal characteristics: Psychological tension/anxiety/worry scale (tension, anxiety, depression, loneliness, etc. in the past two weeks)
2) Fear of COVID-19 disaster (risk perception): The following items were entered as fear of infection and economic fear. "How afraid are you that you or someone you love will become infected with or suffer badly from the new coronavirus?" and "How afraid are you that you or someone you love will suffer from the economic recession that will follow the coronavirus crisis?"
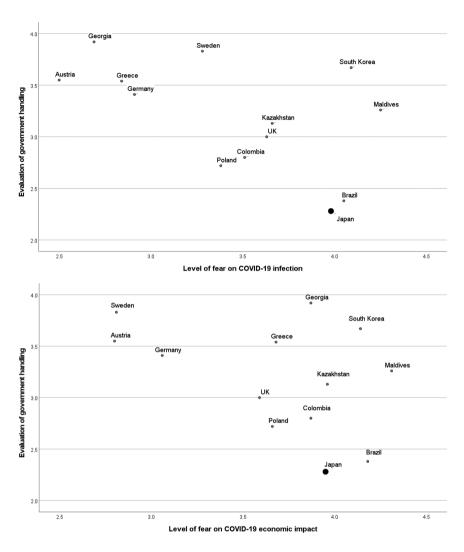
Figure 5.1 Scatter diagram of fear of COVID-19 infection and government response rating. (Source: Created by the author using data from VIC survey 2020.)

(both are five-point scales). The subjective risk perception indicated by these two questions corresponds to risk perception, which has the same meaning as the Anxiety over Governance Index in Chapter 4.

3) As basic attitudinal factors toward risk, we adopted two items corresponding to "Security" in Schwartz's value model (Schwartz, 1992). Specifically, they concern whether respondents identify as "people who value living in a safe environment and avoid all danger" (a six-point scale) and "people who believe that it is important for the government to ensure safety against all threats and

want the country to be strong in protecting its citizens" (a six-point scale). These are measures of a person's risk-averseness and the perception of the government's responsibility for dealing with risk (they are inverted from the original values: The lower the value, the stronger the perception they measure)

4) Attitudinal factors toward national institutions responsible for dealing with risk situations
   - Trust in national institutions (a composite of the four-point scale for government, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, and national institutions in general)

5) Differences in values related to the perception of social goals
   - Materialism: The "Inglehart index" included in the internationally shared merge file was used. A value of 1 indicates a high level of post-materialism, while a value of 4 indicates a high level of materialism.

In the analysis, country dummies (with Japan as the reference category) are introduced for the interaction term with two variables concerning fear of COVID-19. Because the correlation between the two fear variables is as high as 0.54, we conservatively estimated their impacts separately.

The final results are graphically shown in Figure 5.2. They are based on the country-fixed effects model analyses placed in the Chapter Appendix Table 5.4.

First, consistent with the hypothesis of Japanese anxiety over governance in the VIC data, both fear of infection and fear of economic impact lower evaluations of the government among the Japanese. In Figure 5.2, we see that the Japanese effect is basically the most negative, especially with higher fear leading to even lower evaluations of the government. Not only is the overall evaluation of the Japanese citizens low, but fear has reduced it further. A similar slope is shown for Brazilians and UK citizens, but given the much smaller scale of the pandemic in Japan, the effect of fear owing to excessive perceived risk is distinctive for the Japanese.[9]

Second, concerning the effect of the two risk perception variables, we found no effect for the perceived responsibility of the government to deal with risk or general risk aversion. Although they are not shown in the table, examinations of the effect of risk-averse orientation by country show that the more risk averse Brazil was than Japan, the lower the government rating was, and this risk aversion effect was also found to be insignificantly different from Japan in the other four countries (Georgia, Poland, Kazakhstan, and Sweden). This was true regardless of whether fear of infection or the economic damage from COVID-19 was the independent variable. In this respect, anxiety over governance is not an effect of a well-known Japanese psychological peculiarity of risk aversion (Hofstede et al., 2010) but a new finding that adds a distinctive feature of Japanese social risk perception. Then, the question that must be asked is where the specificity of this fear of pandemic comes from. In the second half of this chapter, we discuss the features of diffuse anxiety further.

Finally, let us also examine the effects of other independent variables.

Impacts such as COVID-19 symptoms consistently lead to lower ratings of the government's handling of the situation. The same is true for psychological tension and anxiety.
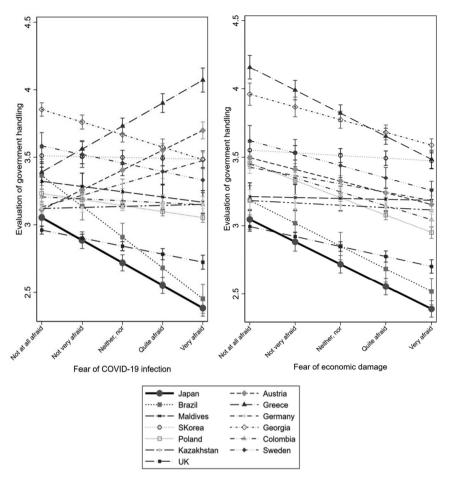
Figure 5.2 Evaluation of government's handling of the COVID-19 disaster and fear of
coronavirus infection and economic damage: Post-hoc simulation. (Source:
Created by the author using data from VIC survey 2020.)

By contrast, the higher the level of materialism, the higher the government
is rated. In other words, the higher the level of post-materialism, the lower the
government rating. This was common to all countries without exception when we
examined country-specific effects (though the association was somewhat weaker
in Japan and even more so in Korea). There were widespread calls for meas-
ures against the COVID-19 pandemic, including restrictions imposed by the gov-
ernment on citizen activities and thorough enforcement, consistently revealing
across the countries that such restrictions and enforcement are incompatible with
post-materialism.

The strong effect of trust in national institutions is also worth noting. Consistent
with the finding in Chapter 4 (Table 4.3), trust in political institutions mediates

the democratic governance factors in Japan and is negatively correlated with the Anxiety over Governance Index.

Regarding demographic factors, women and younger people rated the government's coronavirus countermeasures higher.

Throughout, the data shows excellent consistency, in which the effect of Japanese governance anxiety is also clear.

The Suga administration's countermeasures for the COVID-19 disaster: Issues of hosting the Tokyo Olympic Games and expansion of vaccination

Initially, Prime Minister Abe spearheaded the COVID-19 response, but he declared his intention to step down as Prime Minister in August 2020, citing illness. In the following month, a Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) intraparty presidential election was held. The winner was Yoshihide Suga, who had served as Chief Cabinet Secretary in the Abe administration.

Despite his initial ambition, the new Prime Minister's measures to combat the pandemic only served to support the anxiety over governance hypothesis further. The Suga Cabinet boasted a high approval rating at its inception, but this rapidly declined (the rightmost part of Figure 5.3; a chart based on NHK's monthly political attitude survey[10]).

People witnessed management by the Suga Cabinet that only issued top-down instructions without sufficient accountability while hurrying the economic recovery from the catastrophe, ignoring the logistics in the field of infection control. It can be seen from the figure that the decline in approval is directly related to the evaluation of the government's handling of COVID-19 measures. If we focus on fluctuations in the evaluation of the countermeasures and the fear of infection (measured since February 2020, Figure 5.3), the fear remained high and rose and fell in small increments with each wave of the COVID-19 expansion period. Clearly, the evaluations of the Abe/Suga government's handling of the pandemic and its overall approval ratings are linked; furthermore, they are linked in a way that suggests that the relative expectations of the cabinets were an exact function of the evaluation of the government's handling of the pandemic. Then, with the exception of one initial point, the Suga Cabinet's approval ratings, evaluations, and expectations were dashed.

Especially after the fourth wave of COVID-19 in the spring of 2021, the Japanese were doubly swept up in the confusion over the hosting of the Tokyo Olympic Games and the administrative confusion over the introduction of vaccinations. Both left the Japanese with a strong sense of loss of control and lack of conviction, and they promoted division rather than consensus among citizens with different opinions and interests. Let us examine the details.

At the end of Chapter 1, we mentioned the postponement of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games by one year and forcing the Games to be held in 2021 without the consent of the public. PM Suga in 2021 did not further explain his decision to hold the Games and simply asserted he would "protect the safety and security of
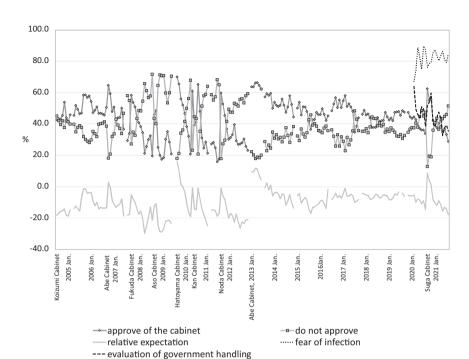
Figure 5.3 Approval of cabinet, relative expectations, and COVID-19-related fear/
evaluation. (Source: Created by the author using data from NHK monthly
political attitude survey.)

the people." In addition to not being accountable to citizens, the PM did not even
hesitate to confront experts on infectious diseases. This gave the strong impres-
sion that hosting the Olympic Games was being controlled from outside Japan
by stakeholders such as International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Bach
and Olympic Games sponsors. Moreover, the fact that both PM Abe and Suga
announced their "international commitment to hold the Olympic Games in the
summer of 2021" at the summit was another factor that strengthened Japanese
citizens' sense of loss of autonomy. The Japanese felt that they were not in control
of their government and its policies.

Moreover, many Japanese were not convinced that holding the Olympic Games
could be compatible with controlling the pandemic; nor did they agree on what
should be prioritized. Despite the PM's statement on the safety and security of the
people in hosting the Olympic Games, no convincing countermeasures were artic-
ulated. The decision on whether to hold the Games with the attendance of spec-
tators was repeatedly backtracked and finally the Games were forced to be held
without spectators. In this situation, the Prime Minister evaded responsibility at a
Diet committee, falsely saying, "I am not the organizer" (June 7, 2021). While the
specific management of the Olympic Games was left to the front line, in April and

May of 2021, when the final qualifying rounds for the Olympic Games were concentrated, even the Japanese athletes were subject to criticism (only because they are preparing for/trying to participate in the Games). At that time, JOC President Yasuhiro Yamashita, who was partly responsible for the participation of the athletes, made no statement to defend them. Some individual athletes could not hide their conflicting emotions in front of media reporters. Many Japanese were not convinced by these developments; furthermore, the conflicts and divisions among the people over whether to host the Games surfaced to a large extent.

Even in the midst of all this, PM Suga nostalgically recalled and commented on his own experience of watching the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964 and emotionally expressed his admiration for the Games (July 6, 2021, at the party leader's debate in the Diet), but in practical terms, he only declared that top-down infection control was possible. He did not attempt to build a consensus that took into account the opposition and did not fulfill his duty of accountability to win broad support, which only added to the conflict.

On the other hand, regarding the vaccination schedule, PM Suga made a statement at the end of April 2021 that the vaccine would be finished by November. However, the logistical outlook was not perfect, and instead of sufficient quantities of vaccine being imported at the beginning of summer, even the prospect of procuring the reserved quantities changed frequently, causing confusion on the front lines. Reservations by every citizen caused stiff competition, and when they were made, they were often postponed. In addition, many citizens under the age of 65 were initially denied the right to make reservations. Again, there was a lack of autonomy over the importation and distribution of vaccines, a lack of conviction over who was to be vaccinated first, and a divide over prioritization of vaccination by generation and occupation, with 52% of respondents disagreeing with the government's vaccination policy and 47% supporting it. In addition, 66% of the respondents thought that the Japanese government was responsible for the delay in vaccination rather than other developed countries. Three times as many did not approve of the government's overall measures as those who did (67% vs 23%) (Asahi Shimbun Poll, May 17, 2021).

Reflecting the sense of lack of autonomy in this context, an advertisement was released by Takarajima, a magazine publisher (May 11, 2021; Figure 5.4). In a full two-page advertisement in three major Japanese newspapers, the company appealed, "No vaccines, no drugs. We will be killed by politics. Are we supposed to fight with bamboo spears? Otherwise, we'll be killed by politics." At the center is a virus with a red circle resembling the flag of the rising sun, and at the upper right is the word "In a State of Emergency." In the background image, a picture of a girl being forced to fight for no reason may be seen (supposedly taken in 1941 during World War II).[11]

The expression of this disparity (deprivation) between anxiety over the spread of infection without medical help and the reality that one's control is so limited (to masks, handwashing, and self-restraint) that one is forced to continue to believe that it is the only way provoked a great sensation. This advertisement was criticized by some intellectuals and medical doctors. They claimed that mass
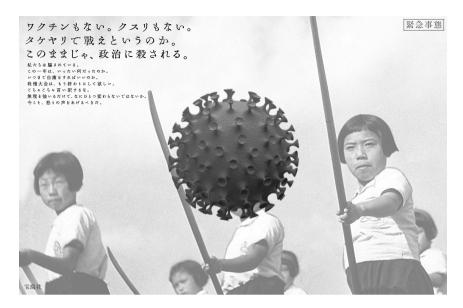
Figure 5.4 A full two-page advertisement by Takarajima (May 11, 2021). (Source: Takarajima.)

importation of vaccines was a certainty at this time, that Japan was not alone in lacking a special remedy, and that masks and handwashing were not helpless like bamboo spears but were effective means of defense. However, the sentiment and sense of deprivation of the Japanese citizens during this period were clearly expressed in the advertisements. The reality of May 2021 is that many Japanese have not even been vaccinated, and even if they are wearing masks, they are still facing the harsh reality of repeated pandemic waves. In addition, at that time, the government's attention was largely focused on the hosting of the Tokyo Olympic Games, and it was unavoidable to say that the measures against COVID-19 were only a function of the Games events.

The fifth wave of COVID-19, which came with the Olympic Games, easily shattered the PM's hopes that progress in vaccinations would have a positive effect on government approval ratings. Nevertheless, as of late August 2021, the PM's statements remained unchanged, and his approval rating dropped further. In both of these respects, prospective expectations for the PM continued to plummet. In addition, the ever-worsening state of affairs under the Suga administration only served as "evidence" to justify anxiety over governance. Thus, a widespread feeling of "relative deprivation" arose in Japan.

Furthermore, the Olympic Games eased the sense of self-restraint, and although the fear of coronavirus was strong, Japanese people's personal coping behavior decreased, the movement of people outside did not decrease any further, and even the rate of mask wearing declined, and the situation continued to be dependent

on vaccination rate. In the midst of this trend, the fifth wave of the COVID-19 epidemic spread with increasing speed. This divided citizens further. On the one hand, the elderly were given priority in receiving vaccinations, while on the other hand, the majority of the working population were forced to exercise self-restraint in their daily lives owing to vaccination delays. Moreover, frontline medical workers risking their lives and on the verge of medical collapse were exhausted, while the Olympic Games went ahead without their consent and the number of people walking around the streets without masks increased owing to the relaxation of inhibitions caused by the event. This contradictory situation unfolded before the eyes of Japanese citizens. In spite that effective countermeasures have dwindled, and the supply of medical care has become very tight, the PM and the Governor of Tokyo, the most heavily infected area, exchanged accusations and were observed by the mass media to be only considering the COVID-19 response as a political battle (Asahi Shimbun, August 21, 2021[12]). Such situations reinforce the impression that leaders and rulers are not in control of where society is going; in other words, they fortify anxiety over governance.

Thus, the current state of affairs on the threshold of the fall of 2021 was one of a strong sense of dysfunction: Ignoring the logical application of scientific knowledge to the pandemic, shortage of careful handling of the logistics of the countermeasures, deficient sense of accountability, inability to change the course of events by the ruling and opposition parties, i.e., overall dysfunction of the governance system, resulting in awareness of the multiple organ failure of politics and society, so to speak. This led to a widespread sense among citizens of deprivation of what the country could have been. This is the reason why it was dubbed the "Corona defeat" (Mikuriya and Serikawa, 2021).

The 2021 General Elections and the direct measurement of anxiety over governance

In early September 2021, PM Suga was psychologically pressured not to run for the LDP presidency when his term expired that fall. Although the election was not a change of government from the ruling to the opposition party, but merely a change of leadership (called the "pseudo-change of government" in the words of Japanese pundits) within the ruling party, Suga took responsibility. A new Prime Minister, Fumio Kishida, was sworn in on October 4 as a result of the intraparty election.

Fortunately for the ruling LDP, after Suga announced his resignation, the fifth wave of the pandemic rapidly subsided, and the Suga administration, as though it were a souvenir of a past crisis, lifted the declaration of a state of emergency at the end of September, which greatly reduced the calls for self-restraint.[13]

As the COVID-19 situation was being resolved, the election for the LDP presidency in September was a confrontation between reformers and the establishment. Although Kishida had appealed for reform in that election, he was elected with strong support from the established factions. The election of the LDP president was based on the votes of LDP party members and Diet members, but there

was a big difference between the preferences of ordinary party members and those of Diet members, and Kishida was clearly chosen to reflect the preferences of the latter. A breakdown of the votes shows that Kishida lost the votes of the former, which were closer to public opinion in general. This was the result of an intra-party election in which the party members wanted reform, but the Diet members prioritized the established line and the preservation of existing power relations.[14]

After being elected as PM, Kishida's October 8 policy speech to the Diet did not directly address reform, but the House of Representatives was immediately dissolved just before the term of the House expired and a general election was held.

In the following section, we analyze the data from the election survey at the end of October 2021 conducted under the new Kishida administration to demonstrate the structure of anxiety over governance.

Empirical demonstration of anxiety over governance in the 2021 House of Representatives election

Although we conceptualized anxiety over governance as a diffuse future negative expectation in Chapter 4, the perception of national and social risk was used as an indicator of anxiety over governance, which is merely an index. Although it showed the predicted structure, the index did not directly measure negative prospective perceptions of politics and society itself, reflected in questions such as "What will happen to Japan in the future if this style of politics continues?"

The general election in the fall of 2021 provided an opportunity to directly measure anxiety over governance and examine the structure of perceptions of Japanese politics as seen above. On this occasion, the author conducted an Internet survey and attempted to validate the arguments made so far in this book.[15] This survey was conducted during a one-week period starting from the day after the House of Representatives election on October 31, and the number of respondents was 946. The survey population comprises registered members of the Nationwide Consumer Panel of Intage Inc. These participants agreed to join the panel named *i-SSP* (log data from their PCs, mobile ICT devices, and TVs are collected for analysis). The current respondents were randomly sampled from the *i-SSP* with a quartering method: The proportions of respondents' genders, ages grouped into ten-year intervals (from 20 to 69 years old), and metropolitan residential areas (Tokyo, Kansai, or Chukyo areas) were planned to reflect the population in these areas.[16] In this survey, we developed a direct measure of anxiety over governance together with the Anxiety over Governance Index. We were able to analyze voting behavior in the House of Representatives election, evaluations of the government's response to the COVID-19 disaster, and the structure of anxiety over governance.

Direct measure of anxiety over governance

The Anxiety over Governance Index in Chapter 4 was obtained from international comparative data and was meaningful as a comparative index to measure the excessive risk perception of the Japanese. On the other hand, it did not directly measure diffuse negative future expectations, or the internal reality of what we

named "anxiety over governance." In this study, we developed the direct measure and will examine its relevance to the Anxiety over Governance Index and consider whether the direct measure is a key to understanding Japanese politics in the 21st century, consistent with previous descriptions in this book, and whether it is an important explanatory factor for citizens' political behavior and the evaluation of government's handling of the pandemic in the fall of 2021.

The following five new statements were developed to create the scale. "I am worried that Japanese politics is going in the wrong direction," "I am worried that even the ruling party cannot implement proper policies in Japanese politics," "I am worried that the opposition parties are too weak to check the actions of the ruling party," "In Japan, politicians spend most of their time engaged in political battles and power struggles," and "I am worried about the future of Japan if things continue as they are." These are general risk perceptions that include uncertainty about future governance, concern about the ability to implement policies, perceived fragility of checks and balances, and resentment about the continuation of excessive conflicts, as well as systemic perceptions of dysfunctional governance in the political arena. The questionnaire items were measured on a four-point Likert scale, and the results of factor analysis on the five items showed a robust unidimensional scale.[17]

The results for the frequencies of responses to each question are shown in Figure 5.5. We see the percentage of positive responses to the five items reached 70%–80%, indicating a great deal of agreement on all the items measuring anxiety about the future of Japanese political governance. Although we have no data for other countries because this is a newly developed scale, we can form the opinion that anxiety about the future governance, which is diffuse among the Japanese, clearly existed even after the Kishida administration took office.
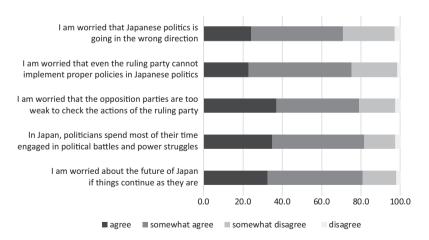

Figure 5.5 Measurement of anxiety over governance: The 2021 House of Representatives election. (Source: Created by the author using data from the 2021 Internet survey on the House of Representative Election.)

In the following section, we confirm that countermeasures against the COVID-19 pandemic were a major focus of the election, and on this basis, we will (1) examine the relationship between the evaluation of COVID-19 pandemic countermeasures and anxiety over governance and then (2) dissect the socio-psychological structure of diffuse anxiety over governance.

Voting behavior and the evaluation of the government's COVID-19 control measures

To show that the evaluation of the government's measures against COVID-19 infection was an important determinant of the vote in the 2021 House of Representatives election, ordered logit regressions were conducted by setting two votes cast[18] for the ruling LDP and the largest opposition Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) in the election as dependent variables. The independent variables were the parties' perceived ability to govern and the evaluation of the government's measures as well as the ideology, and demographic factors are added as control factors.

Table 5.1 clearly shows that the evaluation of COVID-19 control measures had a positive effect on the ruling party and a negative effect on the opposition vote. This would confirm that various measures against the pandemic were important election issues even during this period when the fifth coronavirus wave was in its convergence phase.

In light of these results, let us examine the implications of a direct measure of anxiety over governance.

Table 5.1 Effect of evaluations of the government's COVID-19 measures on the 2021 House of Representatives vote

| | LDP vote | | CDP vote | |
| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
	Coefficient	t	Coefficient	t
Ability to govern (LDP)	1.97	9.39 ***		
Ability to govern (CDP)			1.67	7.02 ***
Ideology	0.24	4.76 ***	−0.15	−3.09 **
Evaluation of government's handling of COVID-19 disaster	0.47	5.07 ***	−0.39	−4.73 ***
Gender	−0.08	−0.44	−0.32	−1.55
Age	−0.02	−2.71 **	0.04	4.34 ***
Income	0.02	0.55	0.03	0.99
Education	−0.07	−1.41	0.15	2.40 *
Cutpoint 1	3.56		2.00	
Cutpoint 2	4.40		2.88	
N	912		912	

$0.05 < p =< 0.1$ +, $0.01 < p =< 0.05$ *, $0.001 < p =< 0.01$ **, $p < 0.001$ ***.
Source: Created by the author using data from the 2021 Internet survey on the House of Representative Election.

Effect of the direct measure of anxiety over governance on evaluations of government's handling of COVID-19

First, let us examine whether the direct measure of anxiety over governance, in addition to the independent variables of personal suffering and fear of the coronavirus that were also used in the VIC study, is indeed associated with a negative evaluation of government responses to the crisis. This means that H3 in Chapter 4 will be retested, this time in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

The ordinary least-squares (OLS) results of Model 1 on the left-hand side of Table 5.2 show that fear of coronavirus still has a negative effect on evaluations of government in terms of its impact on jobs but that the effect of fear of infection has already disappeared in this last phase of the fifth wave when infections were rapidly declining. The number of daily cases in Japan at the time of the House of Representatives election was just over 200, which would reflect a significant decrease from around the 25,000 cases in mid-August. Moreover, respondents' negative work experiences to some extent lowered their evaluations of government measures, but again, experiences of infection (of oneself or close others) were not significant. In this respect, the situation was considerably different from that of the first COVID-19 wave discussed in the first half of this chapter.

However, the right-hand side of the table (Model 2) shows the results after adding the direct measure of anxiety over governance as an independent variable to the equation. It is clear that this anxiety is strongly related to evaluations of the

Table 5.2 Effect of anxiety over governance on evaluation of government's handling of COVID-19 crisis

	Evaluation of government's handling of COVID-19 disaster			
	Model 1		*Model 2*	
	Coefficient	*t*	*Coefficient*	*t*
Fear of infection	0.00	0.10	0.02	0.49
Fear related to work due to COVID-19	−0.11	−2.16 *	0.02	0.50
Experience of infection	−0.05	−0.74	0.00	0.00
Work-related negative experience	−0.25	−1.66 +	−0.12	−0.93
Anxiety over governance			−0.56	−15.63 ***
Gender	0.01	0.14	−0.01	−0.15
Age	0.00	0.44	0.00	0.67
Income	0.03	2.05 *	0.02	1.66 +
Education	−0.02	−1.00	−0.01	−0.36
Constant	3.09	9.94 ***	2.52	9.72 ***
R-squared	0.0243		0.2634	
N	936		936	

$0.05 < p =< 0.1$ +, $0.01 < p =< 0.05$ *, $0.001 < p =< 0.01$ **, $p < 0.001$ ***.
Source: Created by the author using data from the 2021 Internet survey on the House of Representative Election.

government's handling. The difference associated with such evaluations was 1.12 points between the upper and lower standard deviations from the mean (between −1 SD and +1 SD) of anxiety over governance.[19] The higher the anxiety became, the lower the evaluation of the government. This value far exceeds the effects of personal infection, work impact, and fear. The addition of the variable increased the variance explained from 2.4% to 26.3%. In this regard, it is clear that negative and diffuse future expectations of the government responsible for managing risk, i.e., anxiety over future governance, have a stronger impact on evaluations of the current government response than the perception of unusual risks such as fear of disease or job insecurity caused by the COVID-19 crisis. Rather than the current fear or previous coronavirus experiences, uncertainty about the future of national governance, such as whether the government will make a wrong decision or what may happen to Japan, has a fundamental impact on evaluations of governance, in this case, evaluations of the government's coping with COVID-19. H3 is supported.

Then, what factors explain this direct measure of anxiety over governance? Let us proceed with our analysis with the diffuse nature of this anxiety in mind.

Analysis of the determinants of the direct measure of anxiety over governance: An examination of its diffuseness

First, to examine conceptual consistency, we checked the association between the Anxiety over Governance Index and the direct scale. We found a positive and statistically significant correlation of 0.27 between the two, confirming that the index is consistent with the direct scale, although the value is moderate. This supports H1 in Chapter 4.

Next, to confirm that the direct measure has a diffuse negative aspect, let us see how the multiple factors we have been examining since Chapter 1 predict the value of the direct measure. This leads to a demonstration of H2.

In relation to the decline in social capital shown in Chapter 1, let us now enter the institutional trust and social and political participation factors. We predict that the less social capital one has, the higher one's anxiety will be. On the trust in institutions, by a factor analysis two dimensions were identified. The first had high loadings on trust in the Prime Minister, cabinet, political parties, and the Diet and can be called trust in political institutions, while the second had high loadings on trust in prefectural governors, local governments (municipalities), hospital personnel, and medical/scientific experts and can be called trust in frontliners (trust in "government agencies" had weak loadings on both dimensions). We will use both of these dimensions in the analysis.

In relation to the range of party choice discussed in Chapter 2, we introduce two variables for perceived rejection of the major political parties. In particular, it was shown in Chapter 2 that the sense of meaningfulness of party choice drops significantly when the LDP is identified as the party of rejection (i.e., the party the respondents would never vote for), implying that the significance of participation in governance will be questioned, and this will increase anxiety over governance.

In Chapter 3, we introduce the variables of post-materialistic and Asian values. Those with post-materialistic values will be more willing to participate in governance and eager to transform society through participation, but when this does not work, anxiety over governance will increase. On the other hand, the Asian vertical-emphasis values related to paternalism will work in the opposite direction because they indicate dependence on rulers' governance. In other words, the more one supports vertical-emphasis values, the lower one's anxiety will be.[20]

In Chapter 4, we introduce the perceived degree of democratic governance. The perception that a country is democratically governed is an important protection against governance malfunction, as confirmed in Chapter 4 on the Anxiety over Governance Index; (in a democratic country) the greater the perceived degree of democratic governance is, the lower the anxiety.

In the first half of this chapter, we introduce risk-related attitude factors as controls: Risk aversion and recognition of the government's responsibility to deal with risk. We examine whether people with high-risk aversion also have higher anxiety over governance, and whether people with a tendency to avoid involvement in risk management by themselves, believing that the government, not the individual (themselves), should deal with risk, have higher anxiety over governance.[21] Even after controlling for these risk-related attitudinal factors, we sought to see whether the complex factors extracted from Chapters 1–4, related to perceptions of the current political structure of Japanese society, still shape Japanese anxiety over governance. Note that demographic factors were also included as control factors.

Finally, we added the Anxiety over Governance Index as a separate model for the analysis and examined whether this index also has additional explanatory power.

First, let us consider the results of Model 1 shown in Table 5.3. Clearly, the direct measure of anxiety over governance shows an additive effect of various complex and diffuse factors. In other words, H2 is supported. The lower the confidence in the national-level political institutions, the less likely the ruling party is to be within the range of party choices (the more likely people are to reject the LDP), the less paternalistic and dependent values are expressed in relation to governance (the more people avoid Asian values), the less people believe that the country is democratically governed, the more they judge the government to be responsible for responding to risks,[22] the higher their anxiety over governance.

In more detail on the differential effect of the two dimensions of institutional trust: The trust in frontliners, i.e. trust in municipalities and experts, who are marginal to central politics, shows that the higher the trust is, the higher the scores on the direct measure of anxiety over governance. Also, its level of trust was clearly higher than trust in central politics and received higher ratings for its response to the handling of COVID-19. We speculate that the values in Table 5.3 are reversed, as many local governors and experts were under a daily positive spotlight owing to a dramatic increase in media coverage of their battle against the pandemic, which contrasted with the "Corona defeat" of the national politicians and administration, leading to the opposite effect to that of trust in central political institutions.

Table 5.3 OLS models of the determinants of anxiety over governance

	Anxiety over governance			
	Model 1		Model 2	
	Coefficient	t	Coefficient	t
Anxiety over Governance Index			0.20	6.33 ***
Trust in political institutions	−0.42	−8.61 ***	−0.42	−9.18 ***
Trust in frontliners	0.15	3.31 ***	0.16	3.62 ***
Social participation	0.01	0.27	0.01	0.57
Political participation	0.08	2.60 *	0.07	2.49 *
Party of rejection (LDP)	0.24	3.41 **	0.25	3.65 ***
Party of rejection (CDP)	−0.03	−0.43	0.00	−0.03
Materialism – post-materialism	0.01	0.41	0.01	0.31
Asian values (vertical emphasis)	−0.09	−2.13 *	−0.08	−1.92 +
Asian values (harmony orientation)	0.05	1.24	0.04	0.89
Perceived degree of democratic governance	−0.13	−7.96 ***	−0.12	−7.43 ***
Risk-averse orientation	0.05	1.69 +	0.04	1.38
Perceived government responsibility to deal with risk	0.10	3.19 **	0.08	2.55 *
Gender	−0.08	−1.33	−0.13	−2.26 *
Age	0.00	−1.46	0.00	−1.86 +
Income	0.00	−0.51	0.00	−0.21
Education	0.02	1.13	0.02	1.38
Constant	0.28	0.99	0.41	1.48
R-squared	0.3636		0.3981	
N	827		827	

$0.05 < p =< 0.1$ +, $0.01 < p =< 0.05$ *, $0.001 < p =< 0.01$ **, $p < 0.001$ ***.
Source: Created by the author using data from the 2021 Internet survey on the House of Representative Election.

Then, the higher the trust in frontliners is, the more negative the prospects for governance at the national level, i.e., higher anxiety.

These results are significant even after controlling for demographic factors. In addition, the association between perceptions of democratic governance and the anxiety over governance is consistent with the findings in Chapter 4.

When we examine the control factors, none of the demographic attributes were significant. This is another indication of the diffuse nature of anxiety over governance. It was not that people in a particular social group were more anxious but that negative perceptions of political and social factors were additive, driving up anxiety over governance.

There was no effect of social participation. The fact that this type of social capital is disconnected from the uncertainty of the political future suggests that the link between social capital and politics is fragmented. If there were a negative effect, social participation may reduce anxiety over governance (by participation), but this was not the case. On the other hand, involvement in politics (the more

experience in political participation) reinforced negative and diffuse views of politics (possibly owing to negative political experiences). This point illustrates the potential effect of citizens falling into anomie. It is a dilemma that involvement in politics does not reduce negative future expectations but instead promotes anxiety over governance.

On the right-hand side of the table, Model 2 shows that the results remain basically the same even with the addition of the Anxiety over Governance Index variable, and the index itself has a statistically significant effect. Because the index was based on national risk perceptions of war and terrorism as well as social risk perceptions related to unemployment and education (not related to COVID-19 risk perception), what does it mean that this index has an additive effect in addition to the other factors? As this index measures the overestimation of risk in the international and domestic environment, it means that socio-environmental uneasiness positively links to the perception of diffuse national uncertainty, independent of social capital, political choice, values, and perceptions of democratic governance.

These results provide excellent support for hypothesis H2, but it will be necessary to verify the hypothesis with more representative survey data in the future. If possible, the results should be compared and examined in the framework of international comparisons. If the concept of anxiety over governance in relation to prospective future expectations is an appropriate conceptualization, in tandem with diffuse political distrust related to retrospective performance evaluations, then it should be possible to compare Japan with other countries in this theoretical framework and reveal the nature of anxiety over governance in each country. Even if Japan is unique, the new concept can serve as a new measure by which to judge the future of politics in other countries to a greater or lesser extent, i.e., we predict the following: The clearer the country's political options (the more alternatives that are available), the greater the trust in its political institutions, the more confidence in the country's democratic governance, and the more effective the linkages between social capital and politics, the lower one might expect anxiety over governance to be. It would also allow for examination of the more multifaceted paternalistic aspects of Asian values. If the weakening of emphasis on verticality (paternalism) makes governance feel more insecure, what can democracy do to counter this impression?

Conclusion

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 has had a great impact on Japan as well as on other countries around the world. The Japanese government has focused on measures to control the infection since the beginning of 2020. While the apparent results in controlling the number of infections and deaths were not outstandingly bad by world standards, public evaluations of the government could be described as outstandingly bad. The anxiety over governance that this book targets surfaced, and the link between exaggerated perceptions of risk and bad evaluations of the government emerged. This was a different phenomenon from that in other

countries. This chapter examines the hypotheses formulated at the end of Chapter 4 with regard to (1) Japanese anxiety over COVID-19 through the comparative VIC international survey in the period of the first wave of the pandemic and (2) an Internet survey after the House of Representatives election in the last phase of the fifth wave, respectively. Both results were consistent with the hypotheses. In other words, (1) negative perceptions of the country's future were associated with high perceived risks, which were directly related to poor evaluations of the government's handling of the COVID-19 disaster. (2) It was also demonstrated that this diffuse negative perception was an additive effect of the multiple negative changes to Japanese governance described in Chapters 1–3. In the concluding section of Chapter 6, we will discuss whether there is a way out of this diffuse negative perception.

Notes

1 The low number of deaths and infections could be a result of the government's competence, or a manifestation of other cultural or medical mechanisms, etc. The latter was often discussed, and the former appeared in appeals from the Abe Cabinet and other government officials. However, these arguments did not appease the fears of the Japanese people.

2 The effect of the school closure has subsequently been empirically debunked. See Fukumoto et al. (2021).

3 Only 4% of the national population used the Abenomasks after the distribution ended, while 89% of Japanese wear masks (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, August 13, 2020; https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXMZO62611360T10C20A8000000/). PM Abe was ridiculed for being the only government official in the TV footage who wore such a mask.

4 Statements at a press conference on May 25, 2020, when PM Abe judged that the first wave had subsided.

5 Data were provided by Professor Naoko Taniguchi (Keio University), visiting researcher Dr Plamen Akaliyski (Keio University), Professor Joonha Park (Nagoya University of Commerce and Business), Dentsu Research Institute, and VIC teams from other countries. The authors would like to thank all of them. The data is now available at https://data.aussda.at/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.11587/LIHK1.

6 More precisely, the survey periods were as follows: Austria, end of June; Brazil, mid-June; Greece, mid-June; Maldives, end of May; Germany, late April–early May; Korea, end of May; Georgia, early June; Poland, early June; Colombia, mid-May; Kazakhstan, early May; Sweden, early May; the United Kingdom, late April–mid-May. As three other surveys do not correspond to the first wave, they are not used in this chapter; China collected data in mid-July, Italy obtained half of its data in August of the same year and half in January 2021, and South Korea conducted its second survey in June 2020.

7 The Chinese data that were not included in the analysis also show a different pattern from that of Japan. Fear is high, but the evaluation of the government is close to the highest (77% give it the highest rating).

8 The data used for each country in this analysis do not have multiple survey times, so the effects of macro-level variables (e.g., the effect of the number of infected persons in each country at the time of the survey) cannot be examined. Note that although the VIC data as a whole have been collected multiple times, only the data from April to June 2020 will be purposefully used in this analysis.

9 The number of COVID-19 deaths was 42 times larger in the UK than that in Japan at the end of May 2020 and 40 times larger in early July (37,527 and 40,576, respectively). The same is true for Brazil, as mentioned in the previous section.

10 Permission obtained. The author would like to acknowledge use of this data. Relevant data start from July 2004. The "relative expectation" in Figure 5.3 is the difference between the percentage of people who support the Cabinet for the reason of "high expectations of its policies" and the percentage of people who disapprove of the Cabinet owing to "low expectations of its policies." If the value is higher than zero, this means that the former is higher than the latter. In other words, this value shows a gap in expectations, named "relative expectation" in the Figure.

11 Permission obtained to use this advertisement. The author would like to acknowledge it. Takarajima says on their intention: "There are limits to the efforts that citizens can make, such as wearing masks, washing hands, and avoiding the 'three densities' [a well-known catchphrase in 2020]. Many Japanese may feel the current situation overlaps with the unscientific tactics of the late Pacific War, when even young girls were forced to train with bamboo spears. To fight the new coronavirus variants, we need the power of science (vaccines and treatments). Isn't it time to raise our voices in anger?" (https://www.advertimes.com/20210511/article349664/).

12 https://digital.asahi.com/articles/ASP8M3QVPP7XUTFK01V.html?iref=comtop_7_02.

13 There are a variety of possible reasons for the reduction in COVID-19 cases at that time, but they have not been fully identified. These include the expansion of the number of vaccinated people and vaccination groups (age groups and occupations), the decrease in the cross-generational spread of the disease, the reduction in the incidence of serious illness, the end of the leisure season and a decrease in the number of people moving across regions, the change from closed air-conditioned spaces to open spaces in autumn, etc.

14 Taro Kono, who was defeated by Kishida in the intraparty election, commented in a special TV program "Testimony Document" on NHK: "The voices of those who don't want a change [in the LDP] are louder than those who do. In the end, things don't change, and we slide down the slope, while we are used to the situation like a boiling frog, and don't feel threatened. I think it's a very big problem" (January 16, 2022). This is very informative concerning the sense of inability to change the whole direction of politics even by an insider.

15 The survey was made possible by the JSPS fund (21H00753) to Professor Yuki Yasuda of Kansai University. The author is one of the members of this project and would like to acknowledge Professor Yasuda for her special arrangement of this opportunity of research.

16 Actually the 2021 survey was the third wave of the first survey in 2017; the response rate for the 2021 survey was 66% (from 1437 samples in 2017) and 86% (from 1095 samples in 2018). Rather than using results from the three-wave dataset in this chapter, we will focus solely on the 2021 survey (weights are used in the analysis).

17 The results of the analysis based on the maximum likelihood method explained 51% of the variance in the data, and the respective factor loadings for each question were 0.800, 0.789, 0.570, 0.563, and 0.815. The factor scores here are used as the direct measure of anxiety over governance.

18 In a House of Representatives elections, voters are able to cast two votes: One for the single-member district, and the other for proportional representation.

19 The range of evaluation was 4.0 because of the five-point scale.

20 In this survey, two Asian values, i.e., vertical emphasis and harmony orientation (see Chapter 3), were put into a questionnaire on the public and private life value domains. A factor analysis showed three dimensions: Vertical emphasis common to both domains, public harmony orientation, and private harmony orientation. In this analysis, the first two were included to examine anxiety over governance from a public perspective.

21 People with a strong perception of the government's responsibility to respond to risk may be considered to have a "big government orientation," and the current analysis could be relevant in this regard. The big government orientation of the Japanese is clear in other data; In response to the choice on government responsibility between "People should take more responsibility" and "The government should take more responsibility" (ten-point scales), the Japanese rank ninth out of 77 countries in terms of emphasizing government responsibility (WVS7, E037).

22 Note that risk averseness is independent of anxiety over governance, meaning that both are conceptually different, although risk aversion was slightly positively related to evaluations of government's handling of the pandemic, as shown in Table 5.1 in this chapter.

References

Asahi Shimbun Poll. (2021). https://digital.asahi.com/articles/ASP5J7H1RP5JUZPS003.html?iref=pc_extlink

Fukumoto, K., McClean, C.T., & Nakagawa, K. (2021). Shut down schools, knock down the virus? No causal effect of school closures on the spread of COVID-19. *medRxiv*. https://doi.org/10.1101/2021.04.21.21255832

Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Mikuriya, T., & Serikawa, Y. (2021). *Japanese Politics: A Study of the Corona Defeat*. Tokyo: Nikkei Inc (in Japanese).

Schwartz, S.H. (1992). Universals in the content and structure of values: Theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 Countries. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, *25*, 1–65.

Takarajima. (2021). https://tkj.jp/company/ad/2021/index4.html

Takenaka, H. (2020). *Politics in Coronavirus Crisis*. Tokyo: Chuokoron-Shinsha (in Japanese).

Appendix

Table 5.4 Determinants of evaluation of government's handling of COVID-19 disaster: Country-fixed effects model

Evaluation of government's handling	Model 1			Model 2		
	Coefficient	t		Coefficient	t	
Fear of COVID-19 infection	−0.17	−37.63	***			
Fear of economic damage				−0.16	−37.28	***
Country	(reference category = Japan)					
Austria	−0.26	−7.95	***	0.37	8.49	***
Brazil	0.37	9.43	***	0.14	3.80	**
Greece	0.00	−0.03		1.12	14.74	***
Maldives	0.14	2.91	*	0.01	0.19	
Germany	−0.17	−5.96	***	0.28	6.19	***
South Korea	0.30	7.78	***	0.36	8.24	***
Georgia	0.73	14.95	***	0.84	11.41	***
Poland	0.06	2.01	+	0.37	10.06	***
Colombia	0.00	−0.02		0.34	11.64	***
Kazakhstan	−0.11	−3.30	**	−0.01	−0.13	
Sweden	0.43	6.17	***	0.50	6.12	***
UK	−0.20	−6.43	***	−0.14	−3.56	**
Interaction country × fear of COVID19 infection (Model 1)						
Interaction country × fear of economic damage (Model 2)						
Austria	0.31	52.00	***	0.08	24.12	***
Brazil	−0.06	−15.39	***	0.00	−1.40	
Greece	0.34	28.28	***	0.00	−0.34	
Maldives	0.13	31.01	***	0.16	42.75	***
Germany	0.25	35.75	***	0.10	25.76	***
South Korea	0.16	52.80	***	0.14	42.18	***
Georgia	0.07	18.07	***	0.07	10.52	***
Poland	0.12	28.15	***	0.04	7.72	***
Colombia	0.15	32.39	***	0.06	10.68	***
Kazakhstan	0.18	40.93	***	0.15	14.03	***
Sweden	0.10	43.75	***	0.07	10.24	***
UK	0.11	20.15	***	0.09	23.73	***
Coronavirus-related symptoms	−0.02	−4.20	**	−0.02	−3.45	**
Loss due to coronavirus	−0.04	−1.74		−0.02	−1.15	
Psychological tension/anxiety/worry scale	−0.02	−4.32	**	−0.01	−3.27	**
Risk-averse orientation	0.01	1.71		0.01	0.98	
Perceived government responsibility to deal with risk	0.00	−0.46		−0.01	−0.55	
Trust in national institutions	0.27	10.37	***	0.27	10.44	***
Post-materialism – materialism	0.14	5.34	***	0.14	5.44	***
Gender	0.08	2.63	*	0.08	2.38	*
Age	0.00	−2.57	*	0.00	−2.56	*
Education	−0.03	−0.88		−0.03	−0.85	
Income	0.02	1.66		0.02	1.35	
Constant	8.85	3.06	*	8.67	3.05	*
R-squared	0.4053			0.4014		
N	23,246			23,244		
N of country clusters	13			13		

$0.05 < p =< 0.1 +, 0.01 < p =< 0.05 *, 0.001 < p =< 0.01 **, p < 0.001 ***$.
Source: Created by the author using data from VIC survey 2020.