



Annual conference of the German Association of Social Science Research on Japan (VSJF),
Hamburg, Chamber of Commerce, 10-12 November 2006

**Social Science Matters:
Inquiries into the current state of social sciences in Japan**

Organizers:

Wolfram Manzenreiter, University of Vienna, Dept. of East Asian Studies

Iris Wieczorek, GIGA Institute of Asian Affairs

Knowledge in general has been identified as a fundamental resource for the competitive power of postindustrial society. Questions concerning the quality of social science research, science management and the practical applicability of social science intelligence are of utmost importance for the future relevance of the disciplines both in national as well as in larger contexts. The conference on *Social Science Matters* is designed to bring together specialists on Japan from different sectors and different regions in order to address the significance of social sciences in contemporary Japan and to compare it with the situation abroad. While we are convinced that “social science matters”, probably more than ever, it is still an open question why, to whom and what kind of “social science matters” actually matter. Leading figures in social sciences from and on Japan will come together with representatives from the demand side of social science knowledge to discuss the challenges social sciences are confronted with in a globalizing world.

Acknowledging the significance of historical paths underlying any particular national scientific system, the project aims at developing future research agendas as well as solutions to problems social scientists in any society are familiar with. Looking at the Japanese experience of making social science work, we expect to obtain insight into the way demand, supply and production of social sciences are organized in a particular institutional framework. Case studies shall provide evidence for generating a more general understanding of the relations between society, politics, and economy that shape the way social sciences are perceived, practiced and reproduced. At the same time, putting trust into the epistemological value of comparison, we want participants to reflect about the situation within their academic home countries. Hence, we do not only aspire to stimulate dialogue within the fields of social sciences, but also to intensify communication between social sciences and the fields of politics, business and the media.

The final discussion shall highlight commonalities and differences between Japan, German and other national scientific systems. Participants from Japan and EU countries will examine input factors, i.e. the conditions under which social science knowledge is generated, or output factors, including knowledge transfer, the graduate job market, and private and public demand for social science information.

The conference is sponsored by the Japan Foundation, the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, the Senate of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, and the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation.



CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Friday, November 10, 2006

- 12:30 – 14:00 Registration, Hamburg Chamber of Commerce
- 14:00 – 14:15 Welcome address (Iris WIECZOREK / Wolfram MANZENREITER / HCC)
- 14:15 – 15:00 **Keynote lecture:** Roger GOODMAN (Oxford University)
The 'Big Bang' in Japanese higher education and its effects on teaching, research and administration

Session 1: Defining the Agenda: Social Sciences Research Fields

- 15:00 – 15:45 Sepp LINHART (University of Vienna)
People, problems, perspectives: the development of sociology in postwar Japan
- 15:45 – 16:15 coffee break
- 16:15 – 17:00 Werner PASCHA (University of Duisburg-Essen)
Economic thought in Japan: knowledge creation under the constraint of external influences
- 17:00 – 17:45 KATŌ Tetsurō (Hitotsubashi University, Tōkyō)
Japanese social sciences in transition: new institutional and methodological constellation after the collapse of the Cold War System
- 17:45 – 18:30 Fabian SCHÄFER (University of Leipzig)
The emergence of Cultural Studies in Japan
- 19:00 Reception, Hamburg City Hall



Saturday, November 11, 2006

Session 2: Academic Markets and Networks in Japan and Beyond

- 9:00 – 9:45 Verena BLECHINGER-TALCOTT (Free University Berlin)
Making the alliance work: academic exchange programs, social science networks, and US-Japan relations
- 9:45 – 10:30 Arnaud NANTA (L'Ecole Des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris)
Networks, schools and topics of Japanese postwar anthropology
- 10:30 – 11:00 coffee break

Session 3: Social Sciences in (best) Practice

- 11:00 – 11:45 Bruce WHITE (Doshisha University, Kyōto)
Social science at work: ethnographic notes from a sociology department
- 11:45 – 12:30 Robert TRIENDL (Translational Research, Inc., Vienna and Tokyo)
System, anti-system, and beyond: (social) scientists and politics in Japan
- 12:30 – 14:00 lunch

Session 4: Social Sciences and Public Knowledge

- 14:00 – 14:45 Robert HORRES (Eberhard-Karls-University Tübingen)
Biopolitics and political science research in Japan
- 14:45 – 15:30 David CHIAVACCI (Free University Berlin)
The submersion and reemersion of social class in Japan: The perception of social stratification between social sciences and public discourse
- 15:30 – 16:00 coffee break
- 16:00 – 18:15 VSJF section meetings
- 18:30 VSJF general meeting



Sunday, November 12, 2006

Session 5: Pursuing Excellence

- 9:00 – 9:30 NAGANO Hiroshi (JST, Tokyo)
Centers of excellence and definitions of good science in Japan
- 9:30 – 10:15 OKUNISHI Takashi (Kōbe University)
The transmutation of social science in Japan – Japanese government COE (Center of Excellence) projects and social sciences
- 10:15 – 11:00 YONEZAWA Akiyoshi (NIAD-UE, Tokyo)
Quality assessment and social sciences in Japanese universities
- 11:00 – 11:15 coffee break

Session 6: Do Social Sciences Really Matter?

- 11:15 – 12:45 Final round table: managing, funding and evaluating social sciences in Japan and Germany
- Chair: Christian KIRCHNER (Humboldt University, Berlin)
- Participants:
- Harald CONRAD, DIJ Tokyo and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Jörn DOSCH (University of Leeds and GIGA Institute of Asian Affairs)
Heinrich KREFT, Foreign Affairs Advisor, CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group
Hiromi SATŌ, Japan Foundation
Martin THOMÉ, Leibniz Association
Representatives from German and Japanese research institutions
- 12:45 – 13:00 concluding words and End of conference