

# EastAsiaNet Workshop 2019

25 April

**Keynote: *Restrained natalism - from family planning to family making in China and East Asia***

**Ayo Wahlberg, Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen**

After decades of efforts aimed at preventing birth, many countries in East Asia are now facing the exact opposite problem – they need babies. And while Japan has been struggling with low fertility rates for many decades, the relaxation of China’s ‘one-child policy’ in 2015 (allowing all couples the possibility of having a second child) stands out as a historical turning point not only for the country but also for the region. Indeed, despite this relaxation, 2 million fewer babies were born in 2017 compared to 2016. And in South Korea, the national fertility rate fell to a globally unprecedented low of 0.98 per woman despite numerous governmental efforts to boost birth rates. In this talk, I will explore how a restrained natalism has stabilized in the aftermath of ‘compressed modernization’ in China (and other East Asian countries) as young people struggle to live and lead good lives.

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## **Session 1: “The Good Life” in East Asia**

**Wolfram Manzenreiter, University of Vienna**

### ***Social dimensions of subjective well-being in rural Japan***

For fifty years, research on rural Japan has been casted by the doomsday discourse on the devastating regional effects of outmigration, infrastructure decay and population aging (kaso chiiki). The negative assessment has been aggravated by newer key notions of ‘marginal settlements’ (genkai shūraku) and the ‘extinction of communities’ (chiiki shōmetsu), which forecast the decay of entire communities due to their increasing lack of self-governance. Cities, by contrast, seem to be more attractive due to the higher concentration of institutions and resources that enable them to excel over the countryside in terms of labor and employment opportunities, social welfare, health care, education and entertainment (Florida, Mellander and Rentfrow 2013; Gilbert, Colley and Roberts 2016). But there is no evidence that the general trend toward urbanization is paralleled by an overall increase in happiness: The scattered research on socio-spatial patterns of happiness fails to demonstrate that cities are beating villages in terms of quality of life and happiness of its inhabitants. “There are many benefits of big-city living; high levels of happiness are not among them” (Berry and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 872).

My research on rural life in Japan challenges the master-narrative of rural decline by exploring subjective notions of happiness and the good life in the countryside. The project is situated in the tradition of the Vienna School of Japanese Studies, first of all due to the multi-disciplinary and team-based approach that combines qualitative and quantitative research methods, and also because the

research site in southwestern Japan is the same that researchers from Vienna chose in 1968 for the first-ever field research project in Japan by an European research team. Drawing back on insights from the previous and the current project, I adopt a long-term perspective to explore rural happiness in the light of changing scales and scopes of social life.

**Fabienne Jagou**, Senior researcher, Lyon Institute of East Asian Studies (IAO), Associate professor EFEO

***Taiwanese entrepreneurs in search for the Good Life and the Good death through Tibetan Buddhist teachings***

At the present time, Taiwan is one of the most successful Asian countries in term of economic development. Taiwan is also (to not say mainly) a society with high religious diversity and many variants of humanitarianism. A new phenomenon has appeared in recent years and has begun to transform the Taiwanese religious landscape: Tibetan Buddhism is now flourishing. Tibetan and Chinese masters teach Tibetan Buddhism, monks and nuns take Tibetan Buddhist vows, and lay people adhere to Tibetan Buddhism and enjoy being actors involved with a new form of humanitarian Buddhism. The economic and religious worlds match and are becoming interdependent in their development. Some wealthy Taiwanese entrepreneurs become donors to Buddhist masters and Buddhist masters look for powerful donors. I would like to analyse how Tibetan Buddhism could be a factor for a good life either for the Taiwanese or the Tibetan master following these few questions: Is a wealthy life synonymous with a good life? Why are Taiwanese entrepreneurs interested in Tibetan Buddhism? How could Tibetan Buddhism help them to get a better life? Why are rich Taiwanese interested in the teachings related to the passage of death and the Buddhist afterlife? What are the strategies implemented by the Tibetan masters to make the entrepreneurs feel indebted and how do they reward them for their support? Finally, how do Taiwanese entrepreneurs help the flourishing of Tibetan Buddhism and the Tibetan masters to get a good life?

**Sarah Swider**

***Marxism and Christianity in China: converging resistance of worker solidarity and religious faith***

It is often assumed that Marxist view religion is a tool that induces complacency among the working class, as is encapsulated in the oft-quoted Marxian phrase, "Religion is the opiate of the people." However, scholars have documented the complicated relationship between Marxism and religion, specifically Christianity, and debate whether it subdues or arouses protest and revolution. This paper delves into that debate using China as a case study. Looking at the particularities of how Christianity and Marxism develops in China, it presents examples of how resistance in the form of worker solidarity and religious faith may be converging, and analyzes the implications for protest and revolution.

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## Session 2: Emerging scholars

**Zi Wang**, postdoctoral research fellow, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of Duisburg-Essen.

### ***Leading a happy life as East Asian migrants in Germany: Exploring the nexus between language and happiness***

For migrants, does using one's heritage language in the host society contribute to well-being? This paper presents a novel conceptual framework in inter-disciplinary happiness studies by highlighting the nexus between language, happiness, and migration. Since the publication of the United Nations-commissioned World Happiness Report 2018, the happiness of migrants in host societies have come under increasing scientific and policy spotlight. However, few existing reports/studies have utilised differentiated sets of criteria when gauging happiness levels of migrants, so that possible correlations between intangible elements such as heritage language use and migrants' happiness level in a host society have been left unexplored. This paper examines if and how language – with main focus on heritage language maintenance but not neglecting host country language acquisition – could be incorporated into happiness and migration research. It charts a new conceptual course by proposing a set of research questions and methods suitable for analysing correlations between language and happiness, such as to what extent is language an element of identity utility, effects of host country support for and public perception of different heritage languages, and differences in language maintenance and happiness levels across migrant communities. In the process, this paper presents the ways in which the aforementioned conceptual framework and research approach could be applied to empirical cases of Chinese and Japanese migrants in Germany, as well as new directions in happiness, language, and migration research.

**Jieun Lee**, Postdoctoral research associate, Department of Anthropology at the University of Copenhagen

### ***New Faces and Phases of Dementia in Korea: Early Diagnosis, Prognostication and the Making of (Relatively) Well Years***

Early diagnosis of dementia has been an important tenet of the nation-wide dementia management program in Korea, which has been the main focus area of the Dementia Counseling Centers (DCCs) in each municipality. The emphasis on early diagnosis may be seen as a part of larger trend toward "medicalization" of old age or "pathologization" of the aging process itself, rendering each individual responsible for his/her later years, while dismissing the "social" contexts of living with dementia and needs for improving care. In my ethnographic fieldwork in a DCC in Seoul in 2017, however, I observed that this whole process entails not only medicalization of cognitive complaints in old age, but also a re-socialization of elderly with cognitive decline by emphasizing the need for participation in social activities and care from others. Korea's early diagnosis campaign is premised on the potential to "prolong" or "extend" time for the patient to live with a relatively better quality of life given pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions. As practitioners see both pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions as activities that require other people's support, assistance, and

encouragement, cognitive impairment in old age is simultaneously medicalized and socialized. Furthermore, medicalized dementia management initiatives become a site where the elder's social life comes to matter, combining medical and social concerns. Drawing attention to new faces and phases of dementia that emerge around "medicalized" dementia management initiatives in Korea, I argue that public health efforts like early diagnosis campaigns are not simply medicalizing social concerns, but rather they can be seen as one among many practical ways through which dementia and the person with it is made recognized as someone whose quality of life is at stake, allowing for social and political concerns to be addressed in novel ways.

**Sebastian Polak-Rottmann**, University of Vienna

***Participating is Fun: Local Political Participation and Subjective Well-being in Rural Japan***

Japan is commonly portrayed as a country with a low degree of political participation in comparison to other industrialized nations. Taking part in politics is usually negatively associated with distrust and corruption on a national level. Yet local politics seem to draw a different picture. Among other reasons, immediate outcomes and personal ties to local politicians make it more promising to invest time and money into participatory actions. Large-scale observations that show a positive connection between participation and subjective well-being still await confirmation on the local level. Little research has been done on well-being in rural areas and even less on the impact of political participation. In this project I investigate the impact of political participation on subjective well-being in the Aso-region in Kumamoto prefecture. Facing increasing aging and population decline, local inhabitants are trying to find ways to improve their situation – not only for their own well-being, but also for the revitalization of their region. By combining Ponocny et al.'s framework of "narrated well-being" with a broad understanding of political participation, I try to qualitatively grasp the complex connection between these two phenomena that so far has been analyzed mostly quantitatively. Locally situated social ties and area-specific traditions seem to play a crucial role for the locals' well-being and are possibly a prerequisite for acting politically. Cooperation with rather than opposition to the mayor and the local administration is considered to be a successful option to influence decision-making.

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### Session 3: "The Good Life" in East Asia

**Peter Matanle**, Senior Lecturer and Director of Research and Innovation, School of East Asian Studies, University of Sheffield. [p.matanle@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:p.matanle@sheffield.ac.uk)

#### ***Searching for a Depopulation Dividend in the 21st Century. Perspectives from Japan, Spain and New Zealand***

The world is experiencing unprecedented demographic transformation. In the second half of the 20th century human populations expanded more rapidly than at any time in our history – from approximately 2.6 billion people in 1950 to 6.1 billion by 2000. Current estimates project that by the close of the 21st century there may be around 11 billion people alive on Earth. Amid such growth billions of people were also lifted out of poverty and are living longer and healthier lives. This expansion has had catastrophic environmental consequences, and Earth systems are now in immediate peril. The socio-economic achievements of the late 20th century are being undone by the consequences of their own success.

Nevertheless, in the 21st century there is another story taking place. In 2018 nearly half of the world's countries show lower than replacement human fertility, and 33 countries are experiencing decreasing populations. This turnaround is mainly associated with a combination of higher levels of development and increasing urbanisation. In Asia, Japan is in the vanguard and is the only shrinking country in Asia, but others are following, including China and South Korea. Beyond Asia, much of Eastern Europe is shrinking, and the European Union is anticipated to start shrinking before mid-century.

This research pulls together the experience of three countries – Japan, Spain and New Zealand – as exemplars of different patterns of living in developed countries and asks whether depopulation can be harnessed to both preserve and enhance the quality of human life and ensure environmental sustainability for future generations. The research finds that we have a long way to go before we can say a 'depopulation dividend' has been achieved. However, a start has been made.

**Jørgen Delman\*** China Studies, University of Copenhagen, [jorgen.delman@hum.ku.dk](mailto:jorgen.delman@hum.ku.dk)

#### ***The Politics of eco-civilization governance in Hangzhou, China: New pathways to green urban development and welfare?***

This study applies a governance perspective to examine how China's national ecological civilization framework is implemented at the city level. With Hangzhou, one of China's leading green cities, as a case, the study focuses on how the city's party-state authorities respond to various pressures from the central leadership and from society to improve environmental governance. Hangzhou's government applies a new public management approach with public sector performance contracts, performance reviews, and associated results management procedures that are integrated with a battery of social participation instruments. The city government aims to mitigate contradictory goals relating to the need for continued economic growth and for simultaneous environmental improvements based on plans for

ecological civilization development and protection of 'red' ecological bottom lines. It is argued that Hangzhou's authorities are testing a novel approach that could contribute to narrowing the 'implementation gap' in China's local green politics by enhancing the local party-state's ability to handle new instruments of governance in environmental politics focusing on better environmental welfare. Available, but rather fragmented data suggest that environmental improvements are occurring, but the link between the new governance framework and these improvements is difficult to establish.

Keywords: China; Hangzhou; ecological civilization; green governance; green development; new public management; performance reviews; social participation

\*The presentation will be based on this article: Delman, Jørgen (2018). Ecological civilization Politics and Governance in Hangzhou: New pathways to green urban development? Japan Focus: The Asia and Pacific Journal, Volume 16, Issue 17, Number, August 22, pp. 1-21.  
<https://apjff.org/2018/17/Delman.html>

**Daniele Brombal**, Researcher, Dept of Asian and North African Studies, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

### ***Area Studies and the Study of Urban Sustainability. Current Practice and Untapped Potential***

This presentation provides food for thought on the potential of area studies to inform urban sustainability research. Contents are based on first hand experience in the Chinese cities of Beijing and Wuxi.

The first part discusses the importance of participatory practices in enhancing analytical consistency, societal relevance, and the empowering capacity of sustainability research.

The second part explains how the inquiry into people's perceptions and aspirations is employed to develop and feed scientific models for the appraisal of urban sustainability.

In the conclusive part, I share my reflections on pathways open to our community of scholars to foster ethically grounded, societally empowering, and ecologically aware research *for* [urban] sustainability.

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## **Session 4: Revisiting the Internationalization of Japan**

**Werner Pascha**, University of Duisburg

### ***Japan's „Silk Subway“: Reacting to China's infrastructure initiative***

While China's New Silkroad scheme, the Belt and Road Initiative, is well known, Japan's long-standing and recently enhanced efforts are much less. Instead of a "road", it could rather be termed a "subway".

The Partnership for Quality Infrastructure (PQI) of 2015, extended in 2016, aims to provide 200 bn USD in infrastructure support to projects in the region and beyond. Moreover, a US, Japan and Australia infrastructure agreement of 2018 hopes to mobilize as much as 1 trill. USD as part of a „Free and Open Indo-Pacific“ plan. While the Indo-Pacific strategy is usually associated with the US Trump administration, it has a predecessor in Japan’s 2006 concept of an “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity”, including explicit statements on the role of the Indo-Pacific in 2007, during Shinzo Abe’s first term as prime minister. The presentation discusses these as well as other Japanese efforts and highlights five key elements of the country’s approach: The emphasis on Japan’s presumed competitive advantages of „quality“ and “prudency”; the involvement of well-established mechanisms like the Asian Development Bank; the noteworthy role of minilateral cooperation schemes with major partner countries; the avoidance of direct conflict with China; and the rather low-key PR profile.

**Karol Zakowski**, University of Lodz

### ***Interests vs. Animosities: Difficult Rapprochement with China under the Second Abe Administration***

Prime Minister Abe has promoted Japan’s participation in internationalization processes not only to redress the ailments of domestic economy, but also to strengthen alliance with the US and counterbalance China’s rising power. Nevertheless, withdrawal from TPP and trade wars initiated by the Trump administration created new conditions for development of Sino-Japanese relations. Paradoxically, while on the one hand the Sino-American trade war facilitated counterweighing China, on the other hand it created an opportunity for Japan to ameliorate relations with the PRC. In the face of economic problems, Beijing became more willing to deepen economic cooperation with Tokyo regardless of bilateral political disputes. In October 2018, Abe paid the first visit to China by a Japanese prime minister in almost seven years, excluding attendance at various multilateral forums, which symbolized the progress in Sino-Japanese rapprochement.

The aim of the paper is to analyze Japan’s national interests and international strategies employed by the second Abe administration in relations with the PRC. It is argued that while Prime Minister Abe has generally perceived China as a threat to Japan and has remained assertive towards that country, he has displayed some flexibility in such areas as history issues, security policy or territorial dispute. In order to overcome mutual animosities, on the one hand Abe has adhered to a strategy of separating politics from economy, but on the other hand he has actively sought rapprochement with Beijing through bureaucratic-level contacts, semi-official diplomacy and top-level meetings. The paper will analyze these complex developments in light of the evolving international environment.

**Dominik Mierzejewski**, University of Lodz

### ***Sino-Japanese relations in the context of the sub-national cooperation***

The paper aims to discuss the importance of sub-national relations in the broader context of China-Japan relations. In post-2012 reality, on the one hand, the tensions at the central level have been perceived as the core in Sino-Japanese relations, on the other, both sides have tried to secure its

relations via local governments' channels. In the first part, the paper presents a theoretical understanding of paradiplomacy, sub-national actors' position in the international relations. By referring to the theoretical assumptions to Curtis, Hochadel, Duchacek, Kuznetsov and Chinese scholars e.g. Chen Zhimin and Su Changhe the growing role of local governments is discussed. The second part debates the rationale of the relations between Sichuan Province in China with their Japanese counterparts namely Yamanashi Prefecture and Hiroshima Prefecture. In this context, the two visits made by the Governor of Sichuan Province in 2018 to Japan are introduced. During his visit (August-October 2018) Yin Li attended meeting with Japanese local authorities and business people, namely the China (Sichuan)-Japan Economic Cooperation Advisory Committee Symposium and the China (Sichuan) Japan Economic and Trade Promotion Conference in Tokyo, the Sichuan-Hiroshima Corporate Exchange Matchmaking Meeting in Hiroshima, and the China (Sichuan)-Osaka Economic and Trade Promotion Conference in Osaka. The peculiar meaning of this visit is discussed in the light of PM Abe's visit to China in November 2018.

By discussing the above mentioned issues the paper tends to answer the following questions: what are the roles of sub-national cooperation in Sino-Japanese relations, to what extent the central government use the local government in order to facilitate the relations at the central level, and finally how both local governments try to position itself as the mediators during the time of crisis at the central level?

**Toshiya Ozaki**, Visiting Scholar, Copenhagen Business School, and Professor of International Business, College of Business, Rikkyo University

### ***Comparative Institutional Advantage or Disadvantage? Rise, Fall, and Change of the Keiretsu Supply-chain Network under Global Competition***

One of distinct Japanese industrial characteristics is the “Keiretsu” supply chain. A dominant observation was that it would allow a manufacturer to achieve a lean production. Supplies would arrive “just-in-time,” contributing to lowering the manufacturing cost and reducing the time-to-market. The practice was thus observed as a source of international competitiveness and became the envy of manufacturers elsewhere.

More recently, however, it was increasingly viewed as a liability. Japanese manufacturers were unable to shed them quickly because of long-term commitment in Keiretsu while their international rivals embarked on outsourcing. When Renault rescued Nissan in the early 2000s, one of the first efforts was to dismantle the Keiretsu supply chain.

Three developments have emerged ever since. First, quite a few Japanese firms are still struggling to cope with it. They are reducing the domestic manufacturing capacity and rationalizing the remaining Keiretsu supply chain. They are demanding Keiretsu partners to lower prices, encouraging them to go off-shore, and moving to shorter-term contracts with them.

Second, quite a few suppliers who used to be an integral part of Keiretsu start rebelling. Some choose to go out of business. Others embark on selling their products to non-Keiretsu customers. Yet others

approach to the government that they are treated abusively and the practices are in violation of the competitive regulations.

Finally, a select few firms, especially in the auto industries, are making Keiretsu stronger and more international. Not only it contributes to lean production, but also it allows the development of better-quality products through specialization, coordination and knowledge co-creation among suppliers and assemblers. What are its similarities with, and differences from, the old Keiretsu? In what ways, are firms internationalizing it, especially given the fact that the old Keiretsu was deeply embedded in the Japanese business system and was considered difficult for non-Japanese firms to emulate? Will the new Keiretsu contribute to their sustained competitive advantage? Why are these new Keiretsu observed only in a select few firms? Employing organizational economics and the business-system approach, I examine changes of the Keiretsu supply chain to highlight a new level of internationalization of Japanese manufacturing firms and their business practices.

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## Session 5: Emerging scholars

Yusuf Avci, PhD Candidate, SEAS, University of Sheffield [yavci1@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:yavci1@sheffield.ac.uk)

### ***Negotiation, Appropriation and Contestation: Life in Japanese Detention Centres***

Detention has become a common practice for states to control their borders in the last decades. Being emerged in the West and spread around the globe, the practice of detention primarily targets “unlawful” entrees or residents, in practice, however in the context of constant securitization of immigration the differences between lawful or unlawful are often blurred, not to mention problematic structure of these concepts (Wilsher, 2012, xi-xii; Kotsioni, 2016, 2). In terms of justification of the detention of asylum seekers, the possibility of absconding and facilitation of deportation procedure are the ones that cited the most. Since 1990’s, however, as it is seen in the US, UK and Australia, administrative reasons have become more common to rationalize the detention of asylum seekers (O’nions, 2008, 4). In Japan, there are seventeen detention facilities including two detention centres, namely Omura in Nagasaki and Higashi-Nihon Detention Center in Ibaraki. These detention facilities came under public eye with tragic deaths (Funakoshi, 2017) and suicides (Wilson, 2018) for the last couple of years, alongside their bad reputation as a result of various problematic issues such as failing to provide appropriate health services, locking up detainees for long hours and prolonged detention of people. However, asylum seekers demonstrate limited, yet powerful subjectivities and constantly shift between negotiation, appropriation and contestation in order to find the cracks of detention regime. Based on observations during regular weekly visits to a Japanese detention centre for six months; over eighty rounds of regular interviews with a group of detainees and relevant parties such as volunteers, lawyers and researchers; and the experiences of living with asylum seekers on provisional release for over four months this paper aims to shed some light on the life in Japanese detention centres.

Aya Hino, PhD Candidate, Department of Asian and North African Studies, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice

### ***Internationalisation of what? The development of international / global Japanese studies and its implications***

This paper addresses the multitude of questions and implications pertaining to international / global Japanese studies programs inaugurated as part and parcel of internationalisation of Japanese higher education. In thinking about what ‘international’ means, the paper first offers a schematic classification of these programs: ones that focus on institutional internationalisation by means of recruiting non-Japanese scholars and students, enhancing the collaborative research and educational networks with foreign institutions, and making English the lingua franca; and, ones which concern revolves around methodological reorganisation in order to move beyond the pitfall of methodological nationalism and to transform the notion of culture from a static object of knowledge production to something that is constantly (re)shaped through transcultural entanglements. Upon analysing two categories of international / global Japanese studies, thus understanding what ‘international’ means and how scholars have resolved the notion of ‘international’ into core principles of their research and pedagogical designs,

this paper argues that the current surge of the development of international / global Japanese studies programs raises a set of fundamental and rather philosophical questions pertaining to scholarly knowledge production. More specifically, institutional internationalisation brings to the fore the issue, and perhaps even a scholarly anxiety, of assumed native authority of Japanese scholars, which ultimately relates to the question of how Japan should be studied, understood and presented. Methodological reorganisation that negates the national framework and emphasises transculturality, while problematizes essentialist views on Japan, destabilises the hitherto ostensibly static foundation of what it means to be Japanese. In arguing thus, the paper concludes that international / global Japanese studies not only proposes various possibilities and directions of internationalisation of higher education, but also manifests much more fundamental questions about scholarly knowledge production today and its intertwined relationship with the construction of the subject position and the domains of object.

**Michaël Fernandez**, Associated junior research fellow, Lyon's Institute of East Asian Studies (IAO)

***The Japanese Hydrogen Society program, a revolution?***

In the frame of my PhD thesis in economic sociology, I am studying how, in France and Japan, hydrogen integration in energy transition process is valued by its partisans through future energy scenarios. In other words, how integration of hydrogen in prospective visions can give it value? To answer this question, I try to highlight argumentation strategies and actors' discursive coalitions around hydrogen. Comparing these coalition construction process in two countries where hydrogen policies have a different maturity degree should be interesting to show the importance of social values and institutions in the valuation process. Indeed, whereas France's program is recent, Japan is currently one of the leader countries in fields of hydrogen and fuel cell technology.

My presentation at EAN workshop will focus on Japanese government's hydrogen program. Called "suiso shakai" (hydrogen society), the strategy aims at establishing a society where hydrogen would play a major role as an energy vector, for finally securing energy supply and limiting greenhouse gas emission. METI published a road-map which describes the program's three phases and fixes clear targets. Based on Japan's leadership namely in the early commercialization of technological applications such as "Ene-Farm" in the residential sector, and more recently Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles (FCEVs) in the mobility sector with in 2015 sales on the market of the first "Mirai", the Hydrogen Society program appears like very pioneering although following a similar pathway previous Japanese energy strategies have already taken. But, the Japanese program also includes some problematic elements while the official roadmap seems to hide some weaknesses. Indeed, to some extent the over-optimistic roadmap could bring into dangers the program's viability, particularly in the case of a strategy which achievement relies on a set of successive successful phases, as will be explain in my presentation.

**Clare Richardson-Barlow**, Leeds

***Cross-border Electricity Trade in East Asia: Energy Market Integration & Clean Energy Development within Regional Governance Structures***

This research examines the potential for expansion of cross-border electricity trade as a means to address clean energy concerns in East Asia and the role of regional governance structures in progressing energy market integration (EMI) efforts. For the sake of this paper focus is given to the role of trade as a supporting mechanism for regional and international electricity market expansion and the efficient disposal and purchase of power capacity as a result of increased clean energy utilization. This research includes an analysis of the background and development patterns of countries in East Asia, the resulting role for electricity trade given current global and regional climate and environmental challenges, and an examination of the function ASEAN has played in regional and sub-regional energy market integration. This research includes an analysis of elite interviews conducted in the East Asian region. The significance of addressing these issues, and incorporating an evaluation of regional governance and economic policies as they relate to electricity markets, lies in the pressing need for coordinated, global responses to climate change. Global economic growth has resulted in significant environmental and climate damage. This is due in part to a heavy reliance on fossil fuel energy sources and industrial and export driven development. East Asia is not alone in its obligation to address global climate challenges. However, as a major contributor to global emissions and emerging leader in world economic growth, technology innovation, and international trade, East Asia is in a unique position to (1) contribute significantly to the global response to climate change and (2) counter the economic and environmental contradictions that have arisen in the regional quest for “The Good Life.”

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## **Session 6: Revisiting the Internationalization of Japan**

**Ana Goy Yamamoto**, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

### ***How cool is Japan? A brief assesment of soft power on tourism policies and regional development.***

Japan is seeing a record number of foreign tourism influx and this trend is having many and varied effects that range from infrastructure development to her own perception of Japaneseness.

In this paper we will analyse how the Cool Japan policy has been used in the promotion of foreign tourism in Japan. The creative industry has helped in boasting locations, products and events that attract visitors. The promotion of this industry linked to specific tourism strategies is not new in soft power enhancement policies, and Japan has used many of her charms to lure an international customer towards a better knowledge

of herself. By comparing this policy with similar ones in other countries we could highlight the features and successes of it. Tokyo as the host city of the coming Olympic games has been the main destination of this tourism surge and will keep grabbing all the focus. However, how has this policy impacted the regional economy of other areas? In fact, there are many questions that could arise, and we will try to partially answer them based on opinion surveys and cases. Has the effect of Cool Japan policies and tourism development led to a change of mind towards foreigners? Has the image of Japan improved in

other countries? Do the strategies applied promote a standardisation and regional specialisation of the creative industry as a local branding strategy?

Keywords: Tourism, Soft power, Cool Japan, Economic revitalization, Creative content Industry

**Marcin Socha**, Assistant Professor, Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz, [marcin.socha@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:marcin.socha@uni.lodz.pl)

### **Debate on internationalization and the revision of Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law in Japan**

The low rate of population growth has become one of the most serious challenges for the administration of Abe Shinzō. Reconstruction works in the areas hit by the tsunami and nuclear disaster, as well as infrastructural projects in preparation for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics uncovered a severe labour shortage in Japan's economy. At the same time, the majority of the ruling Liberal-Democratic Party remains highly sceptical and restrictive towards accepting more foreign workers. Prime minister Abe himself promised that his government will not introduce regulations which would allow more foreign workers to permanently move to Japan. Unexpectedly in November 2018, the government revised the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law which altered the characteristics of the residence status program. New regulations allow companies from strategic sectors to hire foreign workers for the period of 5 years and longer. The aim of the presentation is to answer the question of whether the new visa regulations are a genuine endeavour which aims to open Japan towards foreign workers or are they simply a desperate attempt to cope with the looming labour shortage. The focus of the presentation is the analysis of the decision-making process which led to the introduction of the bill with a particular focus on the position of crucial veto players within the LDP, opposition parties, business federations and trade unions. Subjects which require further analysis is the possible long-term effect of the bill as well as the debate before its introduction, which uncovered interesting facts and weaknesses of current working regulations in Japan.