

A Report from the International Conference:

## The Relevance of Area Studies for the Sciences and Public Policy

A two-day conference held at The University of Tokyo, Japan

November 14–15, 2016

November 14, 2016 (Mon.)

Location: Sanjo Kaikan, The University of Tokyo

### 09:30–10:30 *Setting the Scene* (Closed)

#### Welcome Addresses

Osamu Takamizawa (Director, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia [IASA], The University of Tokyo)

Welcome addresses were delivered by Osamu Takamizawa from The University of Tokyo and Franz Waldenberger from DIJ.

Franz Waldenberger (Director, German Institute for Japanese Studies [DIJ])

#### Introduction to the Rationale of the Conference

Iris Wieczorek (Senior Research Fellow, German Institute for Global and Area Studies [GIGA]; Representative, Leibniz Japan)

Iris Wieczorek introduced this conference as experimental, multidisciplinary, and an opportunity to create a cross-border network for all the social sciences, natural sciences, and engineering from Europe and Asia. She suggested that this conference should try to figure out how can area studies contribute to innovation and research in these disciplines, and vice versa.

#### Keynote Speeches: Area Studies: What is it, What it can do

Hiroyoshi Kano (Professor Emeritus, The University of Tokyo)

Hiroyoshi Kano explained how area studies on Asia were established in Japan after the Russian-Japanese War, and how it has developed since the beginning of the 20th century. However, by learning from the bitter experience both before and during the war, scholars of Asian studies in Japan tended to emphasize basic research and not being involved in policymaking. This was different from the case in the US. Further developments still remain to be seen.

Patrick Köllner (Director, GIGA Institute of Asian Studies [IAS])

Patrick Köllner discussed the recent trends of area studies in Europe and the US. With globalization, we could see a more fluid flow of goods, capital, ideas, people, and institutions across countries and continents. The mutual relation of the local and the global can only be understood through approaches that take seriously the importance of area studies. Globalization does not diminish but rather increases the potential value of area studies. With these transitions, Köllner introduced a new funding method in Europe that helps to promote new initiatives and tends to illuminate trans-regional interconnections.

Itty Abraham (Associate Professor, National University of Singapore)	Itty Abraham shared his opinion on the title “Innovation in the Anthropocene: Insights Form Area Studies.” He emphasized the need to understand worlds beyond humans, and researchers should take into account the human and non-human interactions, such as humans and nature and humans and non-living things, by sharing the case study of the snow leopard and the sea wall. In conclusion, he pictured the new “three worlds” as follows: human, nature, and non-living for further studies.
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**10:30–12:00 Area Studies in Practice**

**Session 1: Innovation**  
Chair: Margot Schüller (Senior Research Fellow, GIGA)

Margot Schüller (Senior Research Fellow, GIGA)	Margot Schüller introduced certain basic features of the National Innovation Systems and Triple Helix, and highlighted the missing link, which is the innovation culture. When comparing innovation systems and designing policies, she suggested that one needs to take innovation culture explicitly into account. Analyzing the differences in the innovation cultures in Europe and Asia can help one understand why similar organizations involved in innovation work vary in the two regions. Asian countries are quite successful in absorbing and adopting already existing technologies, but less was regarded to the development of new ones.
Patarapong Instarakumnerd (Professor, GRIPS National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies)	By comparing technology and innovation policies, such as tax incentives, grants, loans, and equity financing, for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Taiwan, Patarapong Instarakumnerd drew certain lessons, such as different levels of technological and innovative capabilities of firms need different policies instruments. Countries that are more successful have a higher level of flexibility and policy coordination and learning. Besides, long-term commitment is a serious requirement, as capability building takes a long time. Thus, policymakers must understand what constitute innovations and innovation systems, and how they evolve overtime.
Hideyuki Horii (Professor, The University of Tokyo)	Hideyuki Horii shared the experience of conducting regional innovation at The University of Tokyo. He cited as an example the i.school, which started in 2009 and aims to produce new products, services, business models, and social systems through group works with students from different background. Similar activities also include UTokyo Innovation Summer Program (TISP), which tries to create story-embedded products or services with local high school students. According to Professor Horii, there is a need for creativity training and entrepreneurship because the Japanese culture does not offer strong incentive for creative and innovative thinking. He believed that collaboration among researchers in area studies and designers of innovation workshop is promising in the future.

**13:30–15:00 Session 2: Ecology and Energy Transition**

Chair: Jin Sato (Professor, The University of Tokyo)

Daniel Kremers (Senior Researcher, DIJ)	Daniel Kremers made his speech with the title “Different Speeds of Energy Transition in Rural Japan: Comparing Municipal Policies from the Perspective of Social and Cultural Capital Theory.” By comparing the situation of energy transition of Town A and District B in Japan, he concluded that in Japan, although local environmental conditions are similar, unequal distribution of various types of capitals, such as economic, cultural, and social capital exist, which affect the speed of energy transition. What should be done for the energy transition are the distribution of capital from Tokyo to local regions and be sensitive to different local reference frames, that is, socio-spatial inhomogeneity.
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Weert Canzler (Speaker, Leibniz Research Alliance “Energy Transition”)	Weert Canzler mentioned Germany’s carbon crisis and how it reacted to this crisis. He said that there are three-fold radical changes within the energy system: switch from coal and nuclear to recycle energy in electricity sector, electrification of heating and transport sector, and increasing energy efficiency. He advocated an energy system based on renewable sources, which have a decentralized structure and combines the so far separated fields of electricity, heating and transport in smart grids. Because this character of REs and different political, historical and cultural conditions (e.g., regulations, path dependencies, traditions etc.) and varying players in the energy field (e.g., big or local energy suppliers, new players, civil society, etc.), the relevance of area studies for the transformation of the energy system is rising sharply.
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Hiroyuki Yamamoto (Associate Professor, Kyoto University)	Hiroyuki Yamamoto presented the earthquake and tsunami in Sumatra in December 2004 as an example to show his focus on the importance of capturing the diversity of needs of the victims in disaster management. He said that natural sciences and public policies might miss serious problems by not considering the regional differences. Although fundamental needs for survival may vary depending on times and regions, such as the charging of mobile phones (Philippines) and disaster victims evacuating with their pets (Japan). An effective local consideration should be emphasized to reduce social damage and contribute to people to live better lives.
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**15:15–16:45 Session 3: Public and Foreign Policy**

Chair: Patrick KÖLLNER (Director, GIGA Institute of Asian Studies)

Henner Fürtig (Director, GIGA Institute of Middle East Studies)	Henner Fürtig made a speech with the title “Overcoming the Gap Between the Worlds of Thought and Action: The Impact of Think Tanks on German Foreign Policy.” He said that a few years ago, the concept of foreign policy was developed to react to the accelerated globalization. Foreign offices have to be transformed as platform and regenerate insights relevant from an academic and a real-world perspective similar to what GIGA is practicing right now.
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<p>Yaqing Qin (China Foreign Affairs University, President)</p>	<p>Yaqing Qin talked about the area studies as possible middle way between international relations and public policy. The scholars in area studies understand the situation from their long history with the local community and are able to produce several views and proposals that the public policy usually needs; policy analysts do not have these. The background knowledge of the area studies is rather important for not only theories but also public policy practices.</p>
<p>Kenichi Masamoto (Director, Policy Planning Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan)</p>	<p>Kenichi Masamoto explained the function of foreign policy think tanks in Japan and the current challenges they are facing. Relating to the area studies, he believed that as the benefits of the think tanks, area studies form and energize an important intellectual base for foreign policy and provide influence to the government. He emphasized the value of the role area studies play in public policy and their potentiality for further contributions.</p>
<p><b>17:00–18:30 Session 4: Health and Food Security</b> Chair: H. D. Karunaratne (Professor, University of Colombo)</p>	
<p>Chiho Watannabe (Director, ASNET, The University of Tokyo)</p>	<p>With the title “What is Regional Specificity for Health Sciences?” Chiho Watannabe shared with the participants the environmental research in rural areas in Asian countries (2006–2008). In this study, he brought the conference attendees’ attention to conceptual definitions, such as “universal health” and “global health,” and then pointed out that health is not “universal” but regional. In each case, different elements and cultures should be considered to understand the health condition of each place. This is the same for the following policy measure to confront these health problems.</p>
<p>Reiner Brunsch (Scientific Director, Leibniz Institute for Agriculture Engineering and Bileconomy)</p>	<p>Cancelled</p>
<p>K. Karunathilake (Professor, University of Kelaniya)</p>	<p>K. Karunathilake made a speech about “Social Safeguard Issues in Development Planning: Health and Food Security Requirements in Road Infrastructure Developments” in Sri Lanka. He argued that infrastructure development is an essential part of the development process that the people are scarifying it voluntarily or involuntarily. Although the existing legislatives and policies are addressing many aspects of social safeguard, certain aspects, such as health (physical, mental and community) and food security, must be further strengthened. Thus, it needs sufficient improvement in legislation and policy documents in developing countries in South Asia. Furthermore, donor agencies can play a major role to convince the member countries to upgrade their legislations and policies related to social safeguards. Finally, he emphasized that it is also necessary to highlight “Area Development” similar to “Area Studies.”</p>

November 15, 2016 (Tue.)

Location: Sanjo Kaikan, The University of Tokyo

**9:00–12:15 Area Studies in Practice**

**9:00–10:30 Session 5: Ideological, Political, and Social Forces in the Era of Globalization**

Chair: Eiji Nagasawa (Professor, The University of Tokyo)

Emi Goto (Associate Professor, The University of Tokyo,)

Emi Goto shared her research with the title “A Goal of Area Studies in the Era of Globalization: Understanding the World, Understanding the Self.” Her personal research deals with the increase in veiling among Muslim women in Egypt since the 1970s. It revealed that Egypt had experienced dissemination of certain religious discourse connecting women’s pious subjectivity and the wearing of veils. Thus, the question asked by GOTO is who are the “Ideological, Political, and Social Forces” in the Era of Globalization? According to her research findings, the common factors among Muslim populations are not always related to authenticity of religious sources or genuine Divine Will. This notion could also be applied to the prosperity of *halal* food industries, which started in Southeast Asian countries during the 1970s.

Claudia Derichs (Professor, Philipps Universität Marburg)

Claudia Derichs argued that in the conventional area studies, scholars usually concentrate on geographical regions, countries, or overarching themes, such as East Asia, Chinese studies, and Islamic studies. Although nowadays, a cross-cutting connectivity renders container categories less significant. Thus, area studies can contribute to raise awareness of the relevance of knowledge systems in knowledge production by recognizing that knowledge is not confined to certain cultures or territorial geographical areas; in one country, it may be highly contested what is “true” or universal knowledge. The “we” identity is rather important for the area studies.

A. B. Shamsul (Founding Director, Institute of Ethnic Studies, the National University of Malaysia)

A.B. Shamsul made a presentation on “Southeast Asia as a Form of Knowledge: Relevance of Southeast Asian Studies for Sciences and Public Policy.” He said that area studies are embedded deeply in decolonized countries. European and Asian colonialisms established the basis for area studies through “colonial knowledge” for at least 300 years. On one hand, colonialism is embedded in everyday bureaucracy. They are embedded in the colonial state’s “architecture of governance” later inherited by the postcolonial state in its day-to-day governance. On the other hand, area studies are an academic and a policy endeavor used by think tanks, and in universities and marketing and advertising companies. For the following development, he suggested four layers of research frame: fundamental scientific research, fundamental social/humanities research, applied science-based research complemented by social/humanities research (environmental issues), and applied social/human science-based research complemented by science-based research (urbanization challenge, from diversity to super-diversity).

<b>10:45–12:15 Session 6: Engineering, Robotics, and Information Communication Technology (ICT)</b>	
Chair: Susanne BRUCKSCH (Senior Researcher, DIJ)	
Pablo García Del Valle (Scientist, EPFL) and Marc Laperrouza (Scientific Collaborator, EPFL)	Pablo García Del Valle shared the successful implementation experience of China Hardware Innovation Camp (CHIC). CHIC is a program for EPFL Master students that takes them from idea to production of electronic devices. In small and multi-disciplinary teams, students engage in sourcing, assembly, prototyping, and manufacturing a connected hardware device. As the final step, the team flies to Hong Kong/Shenzhen to manufacture the first units of the device. It is really innovative and interdisciplinary, and students learn by doing it and reflecting on it. They also tackle the existing limits, such as little social science in the project and scalability of the model since it is resource consuming.
Masaru Yarime (Project Associate Professor, The University of Tokyo)	Masaru Yarime made a presentation on “Diversity in Implementing Smart Cities: Implications of Area Studies for Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy.” Inside the design of new technology, Yarime mentioned that the local condition and context provide a large variety and diversity in conceptualizing the new technology and smart cities. This also brings the connection to area studies. He said that to involve the knowledge of area studies, one could then change the uncertainty and ambiguity to opportunity and possibility.
Stéphane Grumbach (Director, Complex System Institute, IXXI)	Stéphane Grumbach talked about “Digital Platforms, Europe Asia, Diverging Spaces?” focusing on data analysis. He said that now there is a global connect because of ICT or digitalization. During his speech, he focused on the cross-border platforms, and he believed that there is really something happening in the world with the development of these platforms. They ensure services without limitation in these countries and are closely related to the knowledge production. Their power could even be compared with the power of states, which needs researchers’ attention and the future usage of these platforms.

<b>Open to Public</b>	
<b>13:30–13:40 Welcome Addresses</b>	
Masashi Haneda (Vice President, The University of Tokyo)	Welcome addresses were delivered by Masashi Haneda and Patrick Köller on area studies in the era of globalization.
Patrick Köller (Director, GIGA Institute of Asian Studies)	
<b>13:40–14:40 Keynotes: Area Studies, Innovation, and Public Policy in Europe and Asia</b>	
Yuko Harayama (Executive Member, Cabinet Office Japan, Council for Science, Technology and Innovation)	With the question, “Does Location Matter for Designing Science and Innovation Policy?” Yuko Harayama stressed that space matters; policy challenges include creating spaces for science and innovation and leveraging it to gain the attractiveness of the locality. Harayama later mentioned that

	<p>people are living today in an ever more connected world. She believed that to make actions, one should pay attention to the following three elements: coordinating national and local policies, watching local initiatives, and sharing good practices with the aims, so that one could inspire “locals” and “policymakers” at all levels. Finally, policy coherence and consistency must be ensured.</p>
<p>Yuichiro Anzai (President, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS); Member, Foundation Council of Japanisch-Deutsches Zentrum Berlin, )</p>	<p>Yuichiro Anzai emphasized the importance of area studies toward the further advancement of this field. He mentioned certain procedures that might help: establishing core research institutions, building international networks, promoting international research collaboration, and fostering young researchers. He cited the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) as an example. JSPS was established with an imperial endowment in 1932. Since then, it has initiated and carried out a vast array of programs that are essential to promoting scientific research. In April 2013, JSPS embarked on a five -year period of its third mid-term objectives, under which its program rests upon four main pillars: (1) creating diverse world level knowledge, (2) building robust international cooperative networks, (3) fostering the next generation while enhancing the education and research functions of universities, and (4) building evidence-based science promotion systems and strengthening linkage with society.</p>
<p>Keiko Sakai (Project Leader, Relational Studies on Global Crisis, Chig Diba University)</p>	<p>According to Keiko Sakai, predicaments of the area studies may rest in the negative legacies of orientalism and policy-oriented study. A new perspective for area studies must be pursued. The observations of scholars of area studies are results of social relationships within certain timeframes and conditions, and not everlasting primordial entities. Area studies exist to focus on the relationship among the various actors, rather than to simply analyze the substance of the actors. Hence, one must link the strong points of International Relations and Area Studies, add the viewpoint of area studies in analyzing global relationships with a focus on non-state actors, and utilize the framework of International Relations in focusing on relatedness.</p>
<p>Franz Waldenberger (Director, DIJ)</p>	<p>Franz Waldenberger made a provocative statement saying that people are living in an age of growing ignorance. The world is now interconnected and fast changing while people’s brain is not growing. The result is ignorance increases with the increase in specialization. Under such conditions, how can such society and the political representative shape processes, influences, and outcomes for a sustainable future? Area studies could play a role here. Social sciences should be integrated to get a clear understanding of the situation and that is why we talk about trans-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, cross-disciplinary approaches. Area studies could take the lead in this direction.</p>

## 15:00–17:00 Roundtable: Why Area Studies Matter

Chair: Iris Wieczorek (Senior Researcher, GIGA; Representative, Leibniz Japan)

Yuko Harayama (Executive Member, CSTI)

Margot Schüller (Senior Research Fellow, GIGA): *Chair of Innovation Session*

Jin Sato (Professor, The University of Tokyo): *Chair of Ecology & Transition Session*

Patrick Köllner (Director, GIGA Institute of Asian Studies): *Chair of Foreign Policy Session*

H. D. Karunaratne (Professor, University of Colombo): *Chair of Health and Food Security Session*

Susanne Brucksch (Senior Researcher, DIJ): *Chair of Engineering, Robotics, and the IoT Session*

Eiji Nagasawa (Professor, The University of Tokyo): *Chair of Ideological, Social, and Political Forces in the Era of Globalization Session*

Almost all professors stressed that area studies matter in the current society. For example, policymakers and natural science specialists have to take different national and global condition into account. In this sense, area studies could help to understand which will and will not work. At the same time, Professor Sato mentioned that not only the significance of area studies be praised but also the unique questions that area studies asked must be figured out. Thereby, area studies could have a clear future outline.

Harayama commented that area studies researchers should ask the following questions: “Who are you as a researcher?” and “Can you do something to improve the status quo and the reality?” With such considerations, she suggested that researchers later engage with further research. Moreover, learning by doing is also a key point in area studies. A follow-up question asked to Harayama is as follows: how do we imagine the role at the national level, considering that it is difficult to know at which level the policy is designed effectively. She answered that now in Japan, local governments or institutions having their own visions, but there is still no fixed relationship. There is no one solution for all, and different tools must be combined.

A question on handling failure in collaboration and research in area studies was also raised. Instead of difficulty, Professor Sato said that different from the US where institutions are selective of disciplinary training, Japanese researchers have rather loose requirement for disciplinary requirement and better environment for area studies. He said that Japanese researchers must make good use of it. He also suggested the revision of reward system in the institution to promote innovative research.

As regards success and failure, Professor Köllner said that on the supporter side, researchers have various programs, foundations, and governments trying to foster interdisciplinary cooperation for many of the issues that they are facing, but it is still quite difficult when it comes to individual career. However, a number of cases still worked out, indicating that researchers have a promising vision in this area.

Other questions, such as the independence of scholars, forms of training of area study scholars, and funding sources, were raised. In Wieczorek’s conclusion speech, she said that although researchers still face struggles in area studies, they must keep conducting collaboration and finding dynamic.

The report was written by Bao Lige (Student, Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies).