

**International Symposium: Crisis of Democracy? Chances, Risks, and Challenges -
A comparison between Japan (Asia) and Germany (Europe)**

Organization: apl. Prof. Dr. Carmen Schmidt (carmschm@uos.de)

Thursday 15 March 2018 - Saturday 17 March 2018

Venue: Schlossaula, University of Osnabrueck

Conference Report

by

Andrej Galic (Social Sciences) and Lea Sachs (Psychology), University of Osnabrueck

"Is democracy in crisis?" By formulating this question, Watanuki, Huntington, and Crozier started their legendary report on the governability of democracies to the Trilateral Commission meetings in Kyoto, Japan, in May 1975. In this report, they provided a predominately optimistic prognosis of democracies' viability in the West and Japan. Some forty years later, however, this question is being posed with increasing urgency. Besides severe economic and fiscal crises in Japan and Germany, we witness a visible loss of trust in political, economic, religious and other institutions.

This interdisciplinary symposium, which was smoothly organized by Prof. Carmen SCHMIDT at the University of Osnabrueck between March 15 and 17, 2018, was intended to shed light on the future of our democracies, economies, and politics, socialization in family and school as well as related value changes to name just a few topics. It should also show implicit and explicit objectives of the actors on the various levels, namely the macro, micro and individual level within this process of change. Since the future of democracy is closely related to the process of political globalization, the conference also focussed on new forms of supranational political organization and regional integration.

The primary diagnosis was that the crisis of democracy is a crisis that occurs during the transition from modernity to the second or digital modernity. Thus it can be considered as a crisis of adoption of social change. The outcome of the conference will be published in 2019.

The conference started with Prof. YAZAWA discussing 'crisis of democracy' from a Japanese point of view, emphasizing the challenges of globalization and new tendencies of nationalism. Prof. SHIN Kwang-Yeong presented a historical insight into the

development of civil society in South Korea. Prof. Gian-Vittorio CAPRARA showed a normative perspective on democracy as a moral enterprise.

The next day started with a psychological perspective on democracy. Prof. KOBAYASHI gave a lecture on the preconditions for the formation of global citizenship identities which require a further merging of the countries. Prof. TAKAHASHI talked about “foot voting” and how it provides cooperation. Prof. MANN concluded the first panel by comparing the developments of public health in Germany and Japan.

Panel 2 (autonomy, legitimacy, and democracy) started with Prof. YAMAI giving an insight into regional policies in Germany since the 1990s. Dr. HÜSTEBECK talked about innovating Japanese representative democracy through participatory democracy, and Prof. NAMBA compared the renewal and reconstruction of the closed military base sites in Germany and Japan.

Panel 3 (“Democracy, political representation, and the political system”) started with Prof. MORI. He focused on traditional values and structures in Japan and their consequences. Prof. SATÔ continued with a speech about political legitimacy in Japan.

Legal aspects of democracy were the topic of Panel 4. Prof. MENKHAUS gave an overview of the legal Framework of Democracy in Japan. Prof. KIMURA analyzed the recently established system of lay judges. Finally, Prof. ABE presented a study on constitutional reform and the divided society.

"Democracy and wellbeing" (Panel 5) included a contribution by Prof. UCHIDA on the function of social capital and autonomy. Prof. NISHIJIMA presented a paper about the change in the communicative behavior of young people in Japan and Germany. Finally, Prof. SCHMIDT discussed modernization, values, and democracy in East Asia.

Panel 6 was concerned with "democracy and public policies." Prof. HIRASHIMA explained public finance in Japan. Prof. YAMAMOTO analyzed Japan's new ODA strategy and Prof. TROMMSDORFF, who represented Prof. KORNADT, compared the educational system in Japan and Germany.

The last topic of the day was concerned with "Democracy, economy and political thought." Prof. MORIKAWA commented on the contemporary crisis of democracy in Japan by considering the social systems theory. Prof. PILZ and Dr. ALEXANDER discussed the transition from school to work in times of economic and social instability in Japan.

Saturday started with Panel 8 on “democracy, minorities, and integration." Dr. PAPE advocated for more international interdependency of international political institutions. Prof. TROMMSDORFF referred to a successful adaptation to socio-cultural change,

and Prof. DERICHS focused on the impact of the liberation movement in the 1960s on a global scale.

Panel 9 on “minorities and integration” started with Dr. SCHMITZ talking about individual differences in acculturation strategies. Dr. FROEHLICH discussed the integration of immigrants and refugees into German society. Dr. MINAMI concluded the panel with a genealogy of arguments on the independence of Okinawa and its feasibility.

In the final panel on "democracy and ecology," Prof. VÁZQUEZ-GARCÍA talked about the challenges of the Spanish Animalist Party fighting against animal abuse. Prof. TOKUYASU gave a speech on difficulties in democratic decision making concerning risky ecological problems. Lastly, Dr. MUSCH, analyzed the climate change policy in the Netherlands.

Given the far-reaching consequences of digitization for the development of contemporary societies, the GJSSS decided to turn attention to the socio-cultural implications of digitization. An international symposium on this topic is planned as part of the organization's 30th-anniversary celebrations in summer 2019 in Hamburg.