

## VSJF-Jahrestagung 2022

Programm der Fachgruppe „Politik“ am Samstag, 19.11.2022

Raum RAA-E-27

<https://fu-berlin.webex.com/fu-berlin-en/j.php?MTID=m076dede5f70d44f98191fa29b700bf84>

Organizers: Steffen Heinrich (Freie Universität Berlin) and  
Momoyo Hüstebeck (Universität Duisburg-Essen)

**16:00-18:00**

**Axel Klein** (Universität Duisburg-Essen): *Populism and Japan*

Research on populism is a tricky endeavor because it is based on a phenomenon that is like a "shiftyeel" (Weyland 2017) or a "chameleon" (Taggart 2000). Studies on Japan are proof of this as they identify very diverse political actors and parties as populists even though hardly any of them is ever mentioned in international comparative efforts. This presentation will offer an attempt to explain the conceptual confusion and its effect on populism studies on Japan. It will also introduce potentially populist actors and the reasons why they are referred to as populists.

As this presentation is based on an ongoing research project comparing "Populism in East Asian Democracies" (PinEAD), it will also ask the audience for thoughts and ideas on the methodological and conceptual path it is planning to pursue its efforts on.

**Sian Qin** (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München): *Reaching out to Japan's "affinity diaspora": Operationalizing a multistage relay-style diplomacy*

Reaching a record high of 312,214, the number of international students in Japan almost five-folded from 2000 to 2019. The inbound students mainly from Asia have been expected to "continue to live and work in Japan after graduation" and the rate of international graduates employed domestically increased from 25.3% (2008) to 36.9% (2019). However, from a reverse perspective, the absolute number of international students who were not retained in Japan as migrant workers to high-skilled professionals also increased remarkably. Little is known about the subsequent journeys of these young people who left Japan. This presentation will introduce cases based on qualitative analysis showing that international graduates, who are seeking to leave Japan or are already overseas, can be considered the affinity diaspora of Japan and be reached by Japan-sponsored agencies, including private companies and alumni associations. The presenter will propose a preliminary hypothesis that the affinity diaspora strategy can be seen as operationalization of multi-stage relay-styled diplomacy. It also hopes to discuss possible approaches for the future development of this

doctoral project to answer the questions: why does Japan foster its affinity diaspora to leave the country, and how can they be reached through affinity diaspora strategy afterward?

**Steffen Heinrich** (Freie Universität Berlin): *Privatisation without growth: A unique challenge for Japanese welfare state reform?*

Japanese welfare state reform debates have in general not differed much with regard to content from those in other mature democracies. Policy-wise there has been a gradual but noticeable push toward privatisation of old-age care by encouraging citizens to save more by investing. While many advanced democracies have seen a sharp rise in asset values in recent years, making such policies attractive at least to some, Japan has had a very different experience. The most common investment strategies have almost all suffered from falling returns on investment for decades. This seemingly undermines welfare privatisation's main advantage, which is its alleged capacity to offer comparable or even better social security at lower cost than public schemes. This presentation discusses how this constellation may alter the redistributive logic underlying the politics of welfare state reform in Japan.