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**Call for abstracts**  
**Deadline 30. November 2011**

**International Thinkshop**

***Theories about and strategies against hegemonic social sciences***

**May 12/13, 2012**

**Seijo University Tokyo**

**Rationale and call for papers**

The Thinkshop is an event of the project “The Social Sciences and Humanities in the Era of Globalisation” funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

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## ***I. Thinkshop objectives***

1. Globalisation, the post-war II model of a politically supervised internationalisation of capitalism and the functionalization of sciences as a resource for global economic competition has changed the world of social sciences.

As a result, it is increasingly evident that significant and powerful research communities have emerged in countries like China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Korea, and Mexico parallel to the growth of their political and economic power capabilities, substantially changing the world's science architecture and the scientific power structures.

Less visible than the changing scientific world power architecture, but more significant in effect on the global social science knowledge productions are changes related to scientific concepts and paradigms that guide SSH research.

Increasingly more social sciences beyond the Western science world realize that the theories they produce are theories interpreting the world through the lenses of the Western society model, not allowing to understand the world beyond this society system – not to mention if they allow to understand the Western societies themselves.

2. While the global activities of international capital, namely the financial capital, and their effects on the sovereignty of nations state policies increasingly confuses social scientists about their theoretical assumptions and inspire them to discuss their theories about international capital, the role nation states play in global economics and how this effects the Western democratic models of governance, theorizing about the global activities of the social sciences and humanities seemingly remains in the categories of “post-colonial” discourses.

Overall, theories reflecting on the international activities of social sciences mainly interpret the global social science arena through a perspective of nation states, considering the international encounters of knowledge as an encounter of nationally constructed subjects. To give just two examples: Most significantly bibliometric studies trace the encounters of theorists as nationally constructed subjects and the academic dependence theory interprets the global knowledge encounters as an – unequal - competition among national science communities.

3. The Thinkshop in Tokyo attempts to reflect on the existing theories about the world social science system as about existing and alternative strategies against hegemonic social sciences. It will raise the question if the existing bodies of theories reflecting on international social science knowledge productions (still) allow to understanding the world social science system in the era of globalisation. It aims at disclosing what the essential assumptions, concepts of science, categories, approaches and methods are on which these theories are constructed. By doing this, the reflections will lay the theoretical grounds for a new theory about the world's knowledge arena in the era of globalisation beyond the social thinking rooted in a concept of social science that goes back to their inception during the emergence of nation states, applied to the world as if it was the nature of science.

## **II. Thinkshop topics**

The body of theories reflecting on the world's knowledge arena distinguishes three major discourse strands:

- The first strand consists of critiques of the epistemological foundations of the Western-born sciences incorporated in alternative approaches to science; most prominent examples are the Islam social science approach and all those knowledge concepts that have been excluded from the mainstream concept of a Western model of social sciences via (dis)qualifying them as indigenous knowledge. This is also and, presumably, in particular the case for alternative approaches articulated in Africa.
- The second strand critiques the world social sciences system mainly from the perspective of unequal scientific power relations. Most prominent examples for this discourse are the academic dependence theory and the North/South debates, mainly coming from UNESCO inspired ways of theorizing about the world social sciences. However, it also applies to this strand of critiques of the Western social science system that many other versions of critique have become or made invisible due their discrete exclusion from the Western mainstream debates.
- It is certainly the major dilemma for this invitation to reflect on the existing bodies of theories about the world social science system, that this is though only the body of theories that is dominated by discourses in English and mainly constructed from an ethnocentric perspective that generally dominates theorizing in and also about social sciences, mostly the Euro-centric interpretations and definitions of what social sciences are. Therefore this invitation, in the first place, is an invitation to provide a platform for the less visible reflections on the world social science system and to help completing this body of theories about this topic with those theories which have become a victim of a global scientific ignorance.

The main, though, as said, not at all complete literature, only covering English publications, might represent some of the above discourses, at least those discourses in English.

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CALHOUN, Craig (2007), Nations Matter: Culture, History, and the Cosmopolitan Dream, Routledge,

CONNELL, R. (2007) , Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in the Social Science, Polity Press

CHAKRABARTY, D. (2000). Provincializing Europe: postcolonial thought and historical difference. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2009), Emerging Trends in socio-economic Sciences and Humanities in Europe, *The Metris Report*, 2009 [http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/metris-report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/metris-report_en.pdf)

KUHN, M. & REMOE, S. O. (Eds.) (2005). Building the European Research Area: Socio-economic research in practice. New York: Peter Lang.

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NISBETT, RICHARD (2005). The geography of thought. London: Brealey

SAID, E. W. (2001 [1978]). Orientalism. Western conceptions of the Orient. New Delhi: Penguin.

WALLERSTEIN, I.(2001): Unthinking Social Science. The limits of Nineteenth-Century Paradigm. Secon Edition with a Preface. Philidelphia. Temple University Press

WALLERSTEIN, I./JUMA, C./FOX KELLER/KOCKA, J./LECOURT, D./MUDIMBE, V. Y./MUSHAHOJI, K./PRIGOGINE, I./TAYLOR, P./TROUILLOT, M.-R. (1996): Open the Social Sciences. Report of the Gulbenkian Commission on Restructuring of the Social Sciences. Stanford: Stanford University Press

WALLERSTEIN, I.(2006): European Universalism: The Rhethoric of Power. New York: the new Press

UNESCO, INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE COUNCIL, (2010): World Social Science Report 2010, Knowledge Divides, Paris 2010

### **III. Call for paper issues**

1. Possibly the most important issue to be discussed on this Thinkshop is to invite scholars to put present papers discussing theories about the social sciences in the global knowledge arena that are normally excluded from the above discourses and probably widely unknown to academics, whose knowledge is restricted to discourses that are published in English.<sup>1</sup>
2. The papers should critically disclose and discuss all the implicit assumptions and definitions of what social sciences are and on which they construct and theorize about the global encounters of knowledge, assumption, definitions and values underlying the above whole body of theories or individual theories.
3. The papers are invited to critically discuss the main essential concepts on which these theories are constructed and if and how these theories allow understanding what is happening in the global knowledge arena.
4. The papers should trace the theoretical consistency of these theories, the phenomena they chose from the entire appearance of the global knowledge arena as those that are not or rarely addressed in such thoughts.
5. The papers should reflect on the approaches and methods these theories use, as on the implicit or explicit hypothetical assumptions they wish to prove. They should discuss the inclusive or exclusive effects the choice or piroritisation of certain approaches and methods imply and disclose issues that might thus vanish from our theoretical radar.

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1 Being aware about the limited budget of our Thinkshop, we will only be able to invite a very limited number of colleagues to participate, for financial reasons mainly those coming from East Asia. We would though wish to encourage colleagues who could help us to overcome the Western dominated discourses and the global ignorance about non English thoughts about the Thinkshop issues and to submit abstracts about theories that are normally not discussed in such debates. Colleagues whose attendance we might not be able to fund, can in any case join our discourses on our World SSH Net Web-Forum, we have established for these discourses before and after the Thinkshop.

6. Therefore, this call for papers in particular invites papers that draw our attention to theories that discuss other issues than the mainstream discourses, put their issues to the forefront of debates about the world's knowledge arena, helping to detect the blind spots of the mainstream debates, their approaches and their methods.

7. The papers should also reflect on the explicit or implicit demands these theories are responding to and serving. They should discuss to whom and for whose explanatory needs these theories are constructed and what the assumptions and definitions of science are these demands introduce into the way social sciences are requested to take into account when theorizing about themselves in a global context.

8. Papers are also invited to help finding out which social science disciplines dominate our reflections about the world knowledge arena, which are not or only more randomly participating in these discourses and raise the question why this is or might be the case and how this affects our ways of theorizing about the world knowledge arena.

*Overall, the papers are invited*

- 1. to shift theories into the global discussions, that are normally excluded from the discourses about the world social science system;*
- 2. and, whatever the theories are the papers discuss, they should critically reflect on their theoretical and categorical assumptions, allowing to understand also their own epistemological background on which such critique is constructed and articulated.*

**Thinkshop and paper language is English. An abstract (maximum 1 page) and CV should be sent before 30th November 2011 to the following email addresses:**  
**Seijo University:** [syazawa@seijo.ac.jp](mailto:syazawa@seijo.ac.jp) **World SSH Net** [mkuhn@worldsshnet.org](mailto:mkuhn@worldsshnet.org),  
[okamoto@worldsshnet.org](mailto:okamoto@worldsshnet.org)

The organizing committee will review the abstracts and invite participants to the Thinkshop. Travel and/or accommodation costs for invited speakers may be covered by the organizers.

### **Web-Forum**

The Thinkshop will be accompanied by an online Web-Forum you can access via: (<http://worldsshnet.org/forum/>) To register please contact: [okamoto@worldsshnet.org](mailto:okamoto@worldsshnet.org)

**Publication:** The outcomes of these Thinkshops will be published in a book with the working title " The social sciences and humanities in the era of globalisation".