



**Lecture Series:**

**„Current Political Affairs and Civil Society in Japan“**

This lecture series takes an in-depth look at Japan's current political affairs, with particular emphasis on the perspective of changes and continuities of Japanese civil society. Questions that will be addressed are: What has changed since Fukushima? What are the underlying power structures in Japanese politics? Who are the leaders and what are their motivations? How will Japan position itself within the East Asian region? Join us to discuss these issues with high-ranking experts in the field!

**Zeit: Donnerstags, 16:15–18.00 Uhr**

**Ort: Hauptgebäude UZH, KOL-H317**

**23.10.2014**

**Prof. Dr. Koichi Hasegawa** (Tohoku University)

*„Changing Japan's Civil Society and Advocacy after the Fukushima Nuclear Accident“*

The Fukushima nuclear accident raised important questions concerning Japan's civil society: first, what was the role of civil society prior to the accident; second, what were civil society's reactions to the accident; third, what impact has civil society had on Japan's nuclear policies following the accident. Focusing on societal, organizational, and local community-level activities, this article explores these questions analyzing documents and news clippings pertinent to the accident, participant observations of protest activities, and a comparative analysis of Japan's nuclear policies with Germany's policy shift. The relative weakness of civil society provided the context for the accident. After the accident, however, energetic citizen protests became frequent. The structures around which protests and public demonstrations were organized changed substantially over time. Civil society has begun to influence public policy, and is fostering a deeper public discourse, while advancing policy proposals.

**30.10.2014**

**Prof. Dr. Jeffrey Broadbent** (University of Minnesota)

*„Power and Civil Society in Japan: The Continuing Exercise of Vertical Control within a Socio-Cultural Field“*

My thesis, illustrated with several kinds of evidence, is that the Japanese state ministries (bureaucracies) enjoy considerable autonomy from control by the Parliament (Diet) and the Prime Ministerial Cabinet. The national structure of power at its core consists of a shifting power game among three main actors, the Ministries, the corporatistically-organized business sector, and the political coalition in control of the Lower House. The typical specific pattern since 1955 has been the Economic Ministry (MITI, METI), the peak business association (Keidanren), and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Since the 1990s, the opposition Democratic Party (Minshuto) has gained occasional political power, but even then, while cooperating with the Environmental Ministry, has faced intransigent opposition from METI and Keidanren. Even though the number of associations in civil society has mushroomed since the NGO law allowing incorporation went into effect, the



conservative ministries, in conjunction with the LDP and Keidanren, have worked to corral and control this burgeoning herd of local associations. One of the most effective methods of control, very much continuing to the present day, is for ministries to give local associations funding, which they often cannot obtain from the public, but in return place a retired bureaucrat on their Board of Directors to shape the stances and policies of the association. This method of social control has, in its latest instance, very much reduced in size, duration and institutionalization the ground swell of protest against the resumption of nuclear power.

**6.11.2014**

**Prof. Dr. Ellis Krauss** (University of California in San Diego)

*„The Abenigma? Japan’s Foreign Policy under Prime Minister Abe“*

Japan’s Prime Minister Abe Shinzō has been called “An Asian Hitler” by the Chinese, but his right-wing domestic supporters see him as the first leader to finally give a “true” accounting about Japan’s actions in the Pacific War and to make Japan into a “normal” nation militarily. Both are wrong, yet Abe’s foreign policy is something of an enigma. Professor Ellis Krauss will discuss the major difficult issues relating to Japan’s foreign policy today, including its dangerous conflicts with its Asian neighbors. He will provide a more realistic look at the rational and irrational dimensions of Japan’s current foreign policy from the perspective of Japan’s own national interests, place it into its historical perspective, and discuss its very complicated implications for the U.S. and Japan’s Asian neighbors.

**27.11.2014**

**Prof. Dr. Robert Pekkanen** (University of Washington in Seattle)

*„Neighborhood Associations and Local Governance in Japan“*

With 300,000 local branches, neighborhood associations (NHAs) are Japan’s most numerous civil society organizations. NHAs also contribute in complex ways to local governance. This talk provides a multifaceted empirical portrait of Japan’s neighborhood associations by drawing on a unique and novel body of empirical data derived from the first national survey of neighborhood associations carried out in 2007. It examines how local associational structures affect the quality of local governance, and thus the quality of life for Japan’s citizens and residents. This study of NHAs also illuminates the way in which these ambiguous associations can help us refine civil society theory and show how they contribute to governance in terms of social capital, networks with other community organizations, social service provision, cooperation with local governments and political participation.

Alle Studierenden und Interessierten sind herzlich eingeladen!

**Prof. Dr. David Chiavacci**

**Dr. Julia Obinger**

Zürich, September 2014