

March 18 2008 Featured Speakers

"The politics of flexible labour markets
in Germany and Japan since the 1990s.

Coordination and policy-making in an era of globalisation"

Speaker

Steffen Heinrich, Tokyo University, Japan

He is a doctoral candidate at the Institute of Political Science at the University of Heidelberg, currently a grant student at the DIJ and also associated with the Institute of Social Science at Tokyo University until March 2008. He will be continuing my research in Germany from April and finish the dissertation by October.

Research Profile & Abstract

His dissertational research project is essentially a comparative study of labour market reforms and related policymaking processes in coordinated market economies, with Japan and Germany being the two cases under investigation.

As He is a political scientist He do not look so much at questions of performance or solely quantitative evaluations of policies but rather on the political processes behind specific policies.

The aim is to understand and evaluate the extent of and motives for the (partial) 'path departure' concerning policies and the policy-making processes since the 1990s. He argue that both Japan and Germany have been trying to reform their labour market regulations with and without using institutions of coordination and that this mixed picture of reform paths is due to diverging interests of the major actors involved: on the one hand they want to preserve some aspects of coordinated market economies, on the other hand they perceive many of these features as obstacles that slow down and obstruct reforms.

Thus it is not institutional features as is often claimed by comparative political scientists - that have been predominantly 'shaping' the reform process so far. I would include in my presentation some survey data and other data from expert interviews and some comparative international data to back up this claim.

Commentator

TBA