

MEARC seminar panel:

Risk, Self Responsibility and the Governance of the Japanese Population

Professor Glenn D. Hook (Sheffield) & Dr Hiroko Takeda (Sheffield)

This Modern East Asia Research Centre Seminar will be held in Lipsius, 148.

Registration is advised (but not essential):
info@mearc.eu

Further details are on our website:
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In association with The Isaac Alfred Ailion Foundation

Tuesday, 24th October 2006 – 15.00-17.00 (Lipsius, 148)



Paper abstracts:

External Risk, Self Responsibility and Governance: the case of Japanese hostages in Iraq – Glenn Hook

The purpose of this paper is to investigate one of the oldest questions in political science, namely, the relationship between the state and the citizens. More specifically, the paper addresses the question of what the discourse of 'self-responsibility,' which has emerged in early-twenty first century Japan, tells us about the nature of the Japanese state and its citizens' exposure to external 'risk.' In the wake of the George W. Bush administration's declaration of the 'war on terror,' the pressure on Japan to become a 'normal' state has meant greater cooperation with the US militarily, as illustrated by the overseas deployment of the SDF in Iraq. At the same time, though, this has created new and

more complex risks for Japanese citizens, as seen in the abduction of three young Japanese in Iraq. The paper will examine the response of the Japanese state to their capture as a way to elucidate how the state responds to external risk.

Internal risk, Self responsibility and Governance: the case of youth employment – Hiroko Takeda

The management of internal risks is a vital task for the modern state, and the Japanese state has been actively engaged in this task through biopolitical governance, intervening into the everyday-life activities of Japanese citizens, since the inception of modernization. The mode, intensity and area of management the state has deployed has varied over time. Responding to historically contingent risks, the state (re)organizes its mechanism of governing internal risks, and the meaning of risks is recalibrated accordingly at specific historical junctures. The progress of globalization, which echoes the neo-liberal political agenda, has enhanced this process, as it tends to off-load the management of internal risks from the state to individuals. The purpose of the paper is to examine the relationship between the Japanese state and the citizens by focusing upon the discourse of "self-responsibility" regarding the issue of youth

employment, in particular, the 'freeter' issue (young Japanese who are in an irregular mode of employment). The topic has been much discussed by elite policy makers, bureaucrats and academics, but the relationship between and amongst risk, self responsibility and governance remains unexplored. The paper aims to change this situation by elucidating how the Japanese state is seeking to change and redefine the boundaries of the private/public realms, and hence the configuration of state governance in response to the requirements of capitalism posed by the advance of globalization.

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