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Patrick KÖLLNER, GIGA Institute of Asian Studies

Japan's Policymaking System under the DPJ: Towards Westminster-Style Government?

The DPJ's victory in the 2009 Lower House election has provided the party with the opportunity to make good on its long-standing promise of breaking the executive's alleged dependence on the national bureaucracy. In its election manifesto, the DPJ proposed a number of institutional measures to foster political leadership. The party pledged to increase the number of ruling-camp Diet members playing senior roles in ministries. It also pledged to establish a new central policy unit, the so-called national strategy bureau, charged with drawing up general policy guidelines and defining spending priorities. As for templates regarding efficient but accountable government, the DPJ's leadership has for some time looked to Great Britain and its Westminster system of government.

Will Japan's system of government experience 'Westministerization' under DPJ rule? Will the sharp division that between cabinet and the ruling party and the outsized role of the national bureaucracy, which both characterised LDP rule, be overcome? Will policymaking be conducted by the cabinet on a 'unilateral' basis? In his presentation Patrick Köllner will discuss DPJ visions for re-calibrating Japan's system of government, the ruling party's achievements in this respect so far and existing ambiguities and contradictions that have bedevilled this endeavour. He will embed the empirical analysis in a conceptual discussion of what 'Westminster/isation' entails.

*Patrick KÖLLNER, PhD is acting director of the GIGA Institute of Asian Studies (www.giga-hamburg.de/english/ias). He joined the institute in 1996, after having studied political science and modern Japan at the University of Konstanz (Germany) and the University of Essex (UK). In 1998, he obtained a Ph.D. in political science from Humboldt University of Berlin and in 2005 a *venia legendi* in political science from the University of Trier (Germany). In November 2010, Dr Köllner is a JSPS-sponsored visiting scholar at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Tokyo.*

The DIJ Social Science Study Group is a forum for young scholars and Ph.D. candidates in the field of Social Sciences organized by Maren Godzik and Barbara Holthus. All are welcome to attend, but registration (godzik@dijtokyo.org) is appreciated.

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