



# DIJ Forum

Thursday, 18 October 2018, 18.30h – 20.00h

## The Politics of Subnational Spaces in Japan and China

**Carolyn Cartier**, University of Technology, Sydney

**Franz Waldenberger**, German Institute for Japanese Studies

Social scientists are frequently concerned with the “local”. However, the social and spatial boundaries of the “local” are often elusive, and subject to change. This is particularly true in Japan, where local administrative boundaries were abruptly redrawn in a wave of municipal mergers in the mid-2000s, initiating an ongoing process of local socio-spatial readjustments. In China, the “local” is the local in center-local relations between the Party central and the provinces, prefectures, counties, and towns. Since the onset of economic reform, the party-state has been incrementally changing the territories of these levels of government into cities. Subnational territories are not constitutionally guaranteed, and the state maintains powers to establish new cities, enlarge and merge existing ones and eliminate others.

The two speakers address political and economic consequences implied by differing delineations of subnational spaces. For China, Carolyn Cartier shows how territorial strategies, administering urban expansion, rationalizing government administration, and organizing capital through economic growth are negotiated within the political system and decided through non-transparent processes. The party-state defines what a city is, and what places are designated as cities, changing also their process of formation and development. Franz Waldenberger contrasts this with the case of Japan by looking at how definitions of subnational spaces differ depending on whether one applies administrative, political, economic or historic perspectives, and how resulting borders are continuously being contested by reforms, new infrastructures and changing local narratives.

**Carolyn Cartier** is Professor of Human Geography and China Studies at the University of Technology Sydney. She is chief investigator of the Australian Research Council Discovery Project, *Governing the City in China: The Territorial Imperative* (2017-2020). She was a Fulbright Scholar in Hong Kong and a member of the faculty of the University of Southern California. She is the author of *Globalizing South China* (2001, 2011) and co-editor of *The Chinese Diaspora: Space, Place, Mobility and Identity* (2005) with Laurence J. C. Ma, and *Seductions of Place: Globalization and Touristed Landscapes* (2003) with Alan A. Lew.

**Franz Waldenberger** is Professor for Economy of Japan at the LMU Munich and the Director of the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ). He has published widely on corporate governance, Japan’s international economic relations and fiscal and monetary policy. He leads the DIJ project “The Future of Local Communities in Japan - Risks and Opportunities in the Face of Multiple Challenges”

Following the talks and comments, the floor will be opened for a Q&A session. The event will be held in English. It will be followed by a small reception. Admission is free, registration is required at [forum@dijtokyo.org](mailto:forum@dijtokyo.org) or <https://dij.tokyo/forum>