

Kil-Ho LEE (with Thomas Brisson, Laurent Jeanpierre)

“Western References in Asian Social Sciences (Japan and South Korea)”

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The Social and Human Sciences in Global Power Relations

Editors: **Heilbron**, Johan, **Sora**, Gustavo, **Boncourt**, Thibaud
(Eds.)

Provides a comprehensive analysis of the globalization of social and human sciences
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About this book

About the authors

This volume employs new empirical data to examine the internationalization of the social sciences and humanities (SSH). While the globalization dynamics that have transformed the shape of the world over the last decades has been the subject of a growing number of scientific studies, very few such studies have set out to analyze the globalization of social and human sciences themselves. Arguing against the complacent assumption that Science is 'international by nature', this work demonstrates that the growing circulation of scholars and scientific ideas is a complex, contradictory and contested process. Arranged thematically, the chapters in this volume present a coherent exploration of patterns of transnationalization, South-North and East-West exchanges, and transnational regionalization. Further, they offer fresh insight into specific topics including the influence of the Anglo-American research infrastructure and the development of social and human sciences in postcolonial contexts. Featuring contributions from leading international scholars in the field, this work will advance the research agenda and will have interdisciplinary appeal for scholars from across the social sciences.



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Western References in Asian Social Sciences (Japan and South Korea)

Thomas Brisson, Laurent Jeanpierre, and Kil-Ho Lee

According to the Thomson Reuters Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), Asia is currently third in rank for production of social scientific publications measured by continent. In 2007 it accounted for one sixth of social science output in North American journals and around one fourth of their European counterparts (Gingras and Mosbah-Natanson 2010). Its share in the major Western scientific citation databases is rapidly growing – around ten per cent of the total output. Asian social sciences are

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also strongly internationalizing. SSCI data on citations in the 200 most-cited journals in Asian social science published between 1993 and 2005 show a rapid decline in citations of papers from the author's own region (referred to as "self-citation"). North American journals accounted for 54.1 per cent of the citations and European journals for 41.8 per cent (Gingras and Mosbah-Natanson 2010). Furthermore, in the past two decades the rate of transnational publications with at least one Asian author has been rising. These figures indicate the global importance of Asian social science at a time when Asia is gaining prominence in the world-system (Lee 2000) and call for a better understanding of the patterns of scientific transnationalization and of the position of non-Western countries in global social science.

To grasp more accurately the relationships between Western and Asian social sciences, this paper analyses the place of Western references in Japanese and South Korean social sciences, with a special emphasis on sociology. We start our inquiry with a case study based on a collection of data from the Japan Sociological Society, the Ministry of Education, the National Diet Library and other academic libraries, as well as from several discussions and interviews with Japanese sociologists. South Korean social sciences, then, provide another case study, with data coming from the SSCI, the Korea Citation Index (KCI-Thomson Reuters), the Ministry of Education and the Korea Higher Education Research Institute (KHEI), cross-checked with results from a fieldwork survey and several interviews (n = 33) with Korean publishers, journalists, translators and professors, scholars and students in sociology and political science.

It was not always possible to get commensurate data for Japan and South Korea, as each country has its own statistical system and has followed a specific path with regard to the importation of Western social sciences. We nevertheless believe that contrasting the two cases is fruitful as our findings tend, first, to relativize the idea of a unilateral dependency of East Asian sociology towards North American or European authors. Indeed, the dependency of the social sciences of the Global South with regard to the West has various dimensions that need to be differentiated analytically (Keim 2010). The Western research traditions may, first, define the legitimate research questions of the Global South. The Western research traditions may also define the theoretical frames, methods,