

Tohoku Forum for Creativity 2017 Junior Research Program

Risk Communication and Safe Food in Post-Fukushima Japan

1. Speaker

Paul O'Shea (Associate Senior Lecturer, Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University, Sweden)



2. Date and Venue

February 7, 2018, 14:40-16:10

School of Law, Graduate School of Law, Kawauchi Campus, Tohoku University

(Seminar Room1, 2nd Floor)

3. Abstract

As radiation from the Fukushima nuclear disaster hit food production nationwide, the Japanese government rushed to lower the safety standards for radiation, while the public feared contamination of the entire domestic food supply. This paper examines the government's attempts to re-establish a concept of 'safe food' in post-Fukushima Japan and considers its implications for Japan's food governance system. Specifically, it analyses the risk communication policies enacted by the government, focusing on the changing standards for radiation maximums in food, and on the 'Radiation Risk Communicator' program. We demonstrate that the state's attempts to reconstruct 'safe food' has in fact intensified public confusion and uncertainty, and eroded institutional trust in the food governance system. These implications for the food governance system in Japan attest to the inherently ungovernable nature of the 'new' manufactured risks in today's 'risk society'.

4. Introduction of our Speaker

Dr. Paul O'Shea is Associate Senior Lecturer at the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies at Lund University, Sweden. He obtained his PhD from the University of Sheffield. His research covers a broad range of topics, including Japan and its relations with China and the

United States, regional territorial disputes, military bases, US influence on Japanese policy-making, food consumption, environmental politics, rural policy, and immigration. In addition to his publications in international journals such as *Asian Survey* and *The Pacific Review*, Dr. O'Shea has co-authored the monograph *Regional Risk and Security in Japan: Whither the everyday*, and co-edited *Risk State: Japan's Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*. Dr. O'Shea is co-organizer of the Tohoku Forum for Creativity Junior Research Program on the 'Political and Social Dynamics of Crisis and Innovation in Japan, Asia and the World'.

5. Contact

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6. Overall Program Details

<http://www.tfc.tohoku.ac.jp/junior-research-program/program/8002.html>