

Session Proposal for EBHA 2011  
(Athens, Aug. 25/26<sup>th</sup>. 2011)

Session Organizers

**Takafumi KUROSAWA** (Kyoto University, Japan)

[kurosawa@econ.kyoto-u.ac.jp](mailto:kurosawa@econ.kyoto-u.ac.jp)

**Bram BOUWENS** (Utrecht University, Netherlands)

[b.bouwens@uu.nl](mailto:b.bouwens@uu.nl)

Session Title

***Competitive Advantage of Regions: Comparative Studies on Industries***

Abstract

In recovering from the current financial and economic crisis clusters of industry are often seen as a resilient and sustainable platform for future growth. Industry clusters have generated an extraordinary amount of interest in contemporary debates on regional economic development theory and praxis across a wide range of academic disciplines and policy circles. These debates gained momentum in view of the greater influence that global competition has on regional and national economies (e.g. Porter 2000). From the review of industry cluster and agglomeration studies, it is clear that there exists an abundance of theoretical concepts, most of which mainly attempt to disentangle the fundamental reasons behind geographical concentration of economic activities. Even though concepts such as natural advantage have been used to explain the fundamental reasons for industrial agglomeration in earlier theories, recent literature has been characterized by a socially, politically and culturally oriented analysis of localization economies.

The session *Competitive Advantage of Regions* will focus on the international division of labour in East Asia and Europe, the alterations that took place during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the role of industry clusters. The session shall utilize industry as its unit of analysis, by which it shall review how the unique 'regional' conditions are interrelated to the formation of industries and its dynamics. Both theoretical oriented papers and case studies will contribute to a discussion on the role of firms and industries in regional economic development processes. This session can be seen as a starting point of a planned long-term joint international research project of East-Asian and European business historians.

## Components of the session

25th (Thu) Aug. 2011  
(14:00-16:00 and 16:30-18:30)  
(120min × 2session, no. 20 and 20A)

### **【Part I】 14:00-16:00**

**Chair: Julia Yongue** (Hōsei University)

**Discussant: Harm G. Schröter** (University of Bergen)

### **Presentations**

**Takafumi Kurosawa** (Kyoto University)

Industry-specific Time and Space: Research Methodology, Concepts, and Implications in Japanese Studies on Industrial History

**Keetie Sluyterman and Bram Bouwens** (Utrecht University)

Longevity in regional specialisation: the Dutch dredging industry

**Takeo Kikkawa** (Hitotsubashi University)

Beyond *Product Lifecycle* or *Flying Geese*: International Competitiveness of East Asian Region and the Japanese Position Within

Coffee Break

### **【Part2】 16:30-18:30**

**Chair: Bram Bouwens** (Utrecht University)

**Discussant: Tomoko Hashino** (Kobe University)

### **Presentations**

**Stig Tenold** (Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration) and **Martin Jes Iversen**  
(Copenhagen Business School)

The International Competitiveness of Nordic Shipping, 1960-2010

**Yuki Nakajima** (Toyo University)

The role of SMEs in the development of Japanese consumer electronics industry after WWII"

**Pierre-Yves Donzé** (JSPS/Osaka University)

"Kill the Japs!": The Comeback of the Swiss Watch Industry on the World Market (1983-2010)