

## Preface

We had to have more than our share of good luck to be able to organize and complete a multiyear international and interdisciplinary research project and at the end publish this book and its companion, *The Origins of Nonliberal Capitalism: Germany and Japan in Comparison* (Streeck and Yamamura 2001).

First, we-the coorganizers of the project, who also coedited both volumes-were lucky to have met in Hawaii in summer 1995 at a conference on land-use regimes in different types of market economies, where we presented papers on the essential institutional characteristics and the changing economic performance of postwar Germany and of postwar Japan. The many similarities and no less intriguing differences between the two countries, as well as their differences from Anglo-American "standard" capitalism, became the subject of our long conversations during coffee breaks and over meals. Soon we found ourselves contemplating the possibility of jointly undertaking a comparative interdisciplinary study of Germany and Japan, two countries that had succeeded in transforming their war-torn economies and becoming leaders in global competition on the strength of their distinctive institutions, but that in the 1990s were both facing serious crises of performance and confidence.

Of course, as evident as the desirability of a broad comparative study of economic institutions in the two countries was, undertaking it was a daunting prospect given the analytical challenges it would face and the very substantial logistical difficulties and financial needs we had to expect. Still, by the final evening of the conference, we were sufficiently inspired by the dramatic sunset and a good bottle of wine that we resolved to explore the

feasibility of a joint project, which we did by countless emails and in meetings in San Francisco and Seattle. In April 1996, we scheduled a planning workshop, which was to convene in June of the same year in Köln.

There were several reasons why the early phase of the project progressed so unexpectedly smoothly. First, we quickly learned to work together, demonstrating that neither of us deserves the reputation, propagated apparently by our colleagues and even our spouses, of never being likely to receive even an honorable mention in a contest for congeniality.

Second, we had little difficulty identifying a number of eminent scholars in Europe, the United States, and Japan who had published an or were in the midst of studying the issues and institutions in Germany and Japan in which we were most interested. Better still, almost all of them indicated their willingness to participate in the project in various capacities. In particular, among the participants in the planning workshop were Ronald Dore, Peter Katzenstein, Herbert Kitschelt, Stephen Krasner, Gerhard Lehbruch, and T. J. Pempel—all leading scholars who continued to contribute to the project either by writing papers or by providing critical counsel and support.

Third, we were most fortunate in being able to obtain the necessary financial support. The Tamaki Foundation of Seattle provided a generous three-year grant, and the Max-Planck-Institut für Gesellschaftsforschung, Köln, offered both financial and administrative assistance. Although we like to think this was strictly because of the merits of the project, we cannot deny that two propitious facts played a role: the president of the foundation, Meriko Tamaki, is the daughter of a German-Japanese marriage and takes a strong personal interest in promoting studies of her parents' nations, and Wolfgang Streeck had moved in 1995 from the University of Wisconsin to become codirector of the Max-Planck-Institut.

Fourth, our good luck continued as the project progressed. In April 1997, we held the first conference in Seattle at the University of Washington, which agreed to defray the local costs. Participants included those who had attended the planning workshop. They were joined by a number of others who presented papers-in-progress or proposals for comparative studies (Robert Boyer, Gregory Jackson, Ikuo Kume, Philip Manow, Kathleen Thelen, Sigurt Vitols, and Steven Vogel) or acted as discussants (Theo Eicher, John Haley, Fumio Kodama, Mikio Matsui, Yukio Noguchi, and Tsutomu Tanaka).

Two other successful conferences followed, one in January 1998 at the Japanisch-Deutsches Zentrum Berlin (JDZB), which provided a generous subsidy, and the other in June 1999 at the Max-Planck-Institut in Köln. Either as paper givers or as resource persons and discussants, the following scholars attended, some of them at both conferences: Masahiko Aoki, Harald Baum, Angelika Ernst, Heidi Gottfried, Erica Gould, Susan Hanley, Anke Hassel, Kenji Hirashima, Ulrich Jürgens, the Tate Frieder Naschold,

Jacqueline O'Reilley, Thierry Ribault, Mike Shalev, Karen Shire, Akira Takenaka, and Hajo Weber. In Berlin, we also held a public session with business representatives, union leaders, and journalists on the future of the German and the Japanese models. In particular, we had the good fortune of being joined by Dr. Klaus Murmann (former president of the German Employers' Confederation, BDA), Kazuo Nukazawa (Keidanren), Noriko Hama (Mitsubishi Research Institute, London), Dr. Rainer Hank (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung), Prof. Hans-Jürgen Krupp (Landeszentralbank Hamburg), Tsutomu Tanaka (Chuo University, Tokyo) and Prof. Norbert Walter (Deutsche Bank Research) as speakers, as well as by others from business, academia, and government who attended the Session and took part in the discussion.

Finally, we were blessed with the capable and dedicated assistance of Martha Walsh in Seattle and Greg Jackson in Köln. Working with two project directors as demanding as we are is not easy to begin with. But the burdens Martha and Greg had to carry became even heavier when the project turned out to encompass not only the present, main volume of papers as initially envisioned, but also the Origins volume, as it came to be called in our internal jargon. As a result Martha Walsh's duties -turning Germanic or Japanese and Jargon-laden English into readable English, reminding authors to respect logical consistency and accuracy of facts, and use accepted translations and terms, not to mention all manner of administrative tasks-also doubled. The same applied to the workload we imposed on Greg, who acted as the majordomo of the project as a whole. We still wonder how he managed to get all this done while at the same time contributing a major chapter to each of the two volumes and completing his Columbia University doctoral dissertation.

As codirectors, the only way for us to conclude this preface is to thank the goddess of probability for our luck and, of course, to express our deepest appreciation to all those who helped us, including the many others whom we do not have the space to mention by name. We can only hope this volume and its companion justify all the support we have received in so many forms from so many individuals and organizations. Personally, we are amazed at having survived in good health the task of editing the two volumes, the miserable gold and wet snow of Berlin, and the Japanese restaurant there for which there is no appropriate adjective. And we may be permitted to add that we are pleased to report that after nearly five years of meeting so often and exchanging innumerable emails, we have developed what can be best called an acquired fondness for one another.

WOLFGANG STRFFCK  
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*Köln and Seattle, July 2001*