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Discussion Paper No.496

Science for Society, Yes, but How?: A Case of Science Council of Japan (SCJ) 's Coming Institutional Reform in 2026

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9th October 2025

TOHOKU ECONOMICS RESEARCH GROUP

Discussion Paper

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MANAGEMENT TOHOKU UNIVERSITY

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Science for Society, Yes, but How?: A Case of Science Council of Japan (SCJ) 's Coming Institutional Reform in 2026

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This is a Country Paper prepared for and to be presented at the 26th Association of Asian Social Science Research Councils Biennial Conference held at New Delhi, India, the 4th and 5th December 2025.

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This paper intends to make clear the current state of the three concepts of science, that is to say, "science for science," "science for society," and "science for policy," to examine the relation among them and to present the social backgrounds of each concept. Given that the Science Council of Japan (SCJ), Japan's national academy, faces its most significant institutional reform since its establishment in 1949 (hereinafter the 2026 institutional reform), we will use SCJ as a case. This reform offers a compelling case study for considering the role that "science" should play in a state once considered developed but now said to be in decline.

We will tackle the aforementioned tasks by outlining the historical and social background and specific details of SCJ's 2026 institutional reform and by pointing out its problems.[1]

1. Science for Science and Science for Society

Let us begin by defining the concept of "science for society." "The Declaration on science and the use of scientific knowledge," usually known as the Budapest Declaration (1999), issued at the World Conference of Science co-organized by UNESCO and International Council of Scientific Union (predecessor of International Science Council), presented this concept as one of four concepts concerning science, alongside "science for knowledge," "science for peace," and "science for development." Among these, "science for knowledge" can be rephrased as "science for science," while "science for peace" and "science for development" can be considered encompassed within "science for society."[2] In other words, the declaration asserted that science is an endeavor with significant social influence and a social foundation. This is evident when we consider the immense impact that science has on society and recognize that scientific research—particularly large-scale research practices known as "big science"—is funded by society. Therefore, scientists should not remain confined within an ivory tower, nor (whether intentionally or not) secluded themselves within it.

However, it is important to note that neither pure "science for science" nor pure "science for society" exists.

Regarding the former, no science has ever existed without exerting influence on society, nor has any scientific endeavor ever been conducted without a social fiscal and institutional foundation. In Japan today, most universities publish "university academic journals" authored by their faculty members and published by the university itself. Given that a significant portion of these is written in Japanese, a situation exists where it is often joked that "the average readership for an article published in a university academic journal is two people, one of whom is the author." Yet, even these articles published in university academic journals with such a

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[1] In order to know SCJ 2026 institutional reform in general, see Akio Komorida, *'Nihon Gakujutsu Kaigi Mondai' toha Nanika?* [What is 'SCJ Problem'?] [(in Japanese, Tokyo: Kadensha, 2024).

[2] https://worldscienceforum.org/contents/declaration-of-the-1999-unesco-world-conference-on-science-110056

small readership cannot be said to lack social influence. For example, the proof of the ABC conjecture, one of the unsolved conjectures in mathematics (the contents of which are completely unknown to us, a socio-economic historian), was published in 2012 by Shin'ichi Mochizuki in a journal published by the Research Institute for Mathematical Sciences at Kyoto University, where he is affiliated. This proof has been controversial in the mathematical community, and the debate continues today, but what is important is that a major article, said to be a different solution to Fermat's Last Theorem (from Andrew Wiles' solution), was published in a Japanese university academic journal.

On the other hand, we must not forget that today not only big science but any science is conducted based on a social financial and institutional foundation. That is to say, the era when wealthy aristocrats, in medieval Europe for example, engaged in science based on their own interests and leisure time, or acted as patrons of outstanding scientists—building observatories or supporting expeditions, and so on—is over. Today, the vast majority of scientists conduct their research affiliated with universities or research institutions, many of which receive public funding. This is abundantly clear when we look at today's USA. Research areas like DEI studies, renewable energy research, and climate change studies, which received significant public funding under the Biden administration, have even become targets of persecution under the Trump administration II, labeled as the "modern heliocentric theory." Moreover, most scientists consciously or unconsciously select research topics in response to societal trends, that is to say, the preferences of the non-scientist public. The political, economic, and social liberalization promoted after World War II led to political science celebrating democracy, economics advocating deregulation, and humanities and social sciences advocating multiculturalism. However, the global situation in recent years has seen the rise within academia of trends advocating the efficiency of authoritarianism, the protection of national economies, or the usefulness of exclusionary communitarianism.

Regarding the latter, pure "science for society" is fundamentally impossible. Under a dictatorship forcing the ultimatum "research or death," one might be compelled to engage in research they neither care about nor even detest. However, scientists typically choose research topics based fundamentally on their own interests and preferences, while keeping an eye on societal trends and utilizing public funds. "Science for society" carried out by scientists inevitably incorporates "science for science" through the emotions of those scientists.

2. SCJ and Science for Policy

SCJ is a governmental institution established in 1949 based on the SCJ Act enacted in 1948 (hereinafter the 1948 Act).[3] It is positioned as Japan's national academy, which refers to an organization representing the scientific community, possessing functions such as conferring

[3] As for the history of SCJ, see for example Takashi Onishi, *Nihon Gakujutu Kaigi* [The Science Council of Japan] (in Japanese, Tokyo: Nihon Hyoronsha, 2022), chap.2, 3, 4.

honors, promoting academic research, providing scientific advice and recommendations, and fostering international collaboration. However, the specific functions retained by national academies vary between countries, reflecting the historical context of each national academy's establishment. In Japan today, the Academy of Japan handles the conferral of honors. Academic promotion based on public research and development funding is managed by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) and the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST). SCJ assumes the remaining functions of scientific advice and recommendations, as well as international collaboration.

The 1948 Act included a preamble stating that "SCJ is hereby established with the conviction that science forms the foundation of a cultural state. Under the collective will of scientists, its mission is to contribute to Japan's peaceful reconstruction and the welfare of human society, and to advance academic progress in collaboration with the global scientific community." [4] As is clearly evident from this preamble, SCJ was established as an organization to realize science's contribution to Japan's new beginning as a peaceful and welfare-oriented state. This was founded upon a strong sense of reflection regarding the collaboration of scientists in pre-war Japan—whether intentional or not—in the preparation for and execution of war.

SCJ was founded on the ideology of "postwar democracy" in Japan, emphasizing peace and welfare, and this stance was fundamentally adhered to. As the Cold War began, however, the Japanese government, pressured by the U.S. government to adopt what Japan termed a "reverse course" policy—represented by the establishment of the Self-Defense Forces—gradually abandoned the stance of peace and welfare, particularly the former. This led to situations where SCJ and the government clashed, or where the government ignored SCJ's scientific recommendations and advice. For example, in 1963, when a U.S. nuclear submarine docked in Japan, SCJ issued a statement declaring that "the docking of nuclear submarines in Japan is undesirable," putting it at odds with the government. Furthermore, in 2001, the Council for Science and Technology Policy (CSTP) was established in the Cabinet Office as the central body responsible for formulating and implementing the government's science and technology policy. Chaired by the Prime Minister and with many cabinet ministers participating as members, it was reorganized in 2014 into the Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (CSTI). Consequently, SCJ, whose main role was to provide scientific recommendations and advice, gradually lost its presence. Had this trend continued, it would not have been surprising if arguments for abolishing SCJ had emerged someday.

What radically altered this situation was the full-scale onset of globalization at the end of the 20th century. Specifically, the collapse of the Cold War and the rapid development of ICT technologies, including the Internet, made people worldwide acutely aware of the importance of science and technology. For Japan, having become a developed country by the 1970s through its post-World War II economic development, yet having entered a prolonged

[4] The 1948 Act is found on https://laws.e-gov.go.jp/law/323AC0000000121/ (in Japanese).

recessionary process from the 1990s and even begun experiencing a downgrading from developed country to declining one, the promotion of domestic science and technology became a top priority.[5]

The World Conference on Science which issued the Budapest Declaration reflected this situation by emphasizing the importance of "science for society." It advocated that scientists worldwide should recognize that science now possesses unprecedented social significance and that science cannot function without a social fiscal and institutional foundation, urging them to listen to society's needs.

Some national governments, on the other hand, concluded that scientists and governments must align their steps to adapt to globalization and resist national downgrading. Japan exemplified this approach. To achieve harmonization between the scientific community and government—or science and policy—it conceived the strategy of reorganizing the existing SCJ into a useful organization. The question then arises: useful to whom? The answer, needless to say, was the government.

The phrase symbolizing this trend is "science for policy." Looking at Japan, the concept of "science for policy" itself was actually already present in the 1948 Act. However, this term only began to be loudly proclaimed, at least in Japan, after the start of the 21st century. Specifically, the government formulated a "Basic Plan for Science and Technology" every four or five years since 1996, followed by the "Basic Plan for Science, Technology and Innovation" from 2011 onward.[6] The fourth plan, beginning in 2011, stated that "the state shall promote science for <science, technology and innovation policy>."[7] Following this plan, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the Cabinet Office (especially CSTI) launched various initiatives to promote "science for policy." Consequently, SCJ was also expected to contribute to its advancement.

At first glance, "science for society" and "science for policy" appear to be consistent with each other. Society is the beneficiary anticipated to gain from government policies. Therefore, the new technologies and outputs realized by "science for policy" ultimately benefit society. Thus, it can be argued that "science for policy" is included in "science for society." Furthermore, both are positioned as opposites to "science for science" and are sometimes used to criticize scientists' anti-social stance.

It should be noted, however, that there exists a conflicting aspect between "science for society" and "science for policy." While the "society" addressed by "science for society" is composed of everyone, meaning people around the world, the beneficiaries of the "policy" to

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[5] See Yoko Kato, "Gendai Nihon to Gunji Kenkyu [Comtempotary Japan and Military Research]" (in Japanese), in Id. et al., eds., *Gakumon to Seiji* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2022).

[6] All the documents concerning "Basic Plan for Science and Technology" are found on https://www8.cao.go.jp/cstp/kihonkeikaku/index.html (in Japanese).

[7] All the documents concerning the fourth plan are found on https://www8.cao.go.jp/cstp/kihonkeikaku/index4.html (in Japanese).

which "science for policy" should contribute are the government and, by extension, the nation. Nation constitutes a community bounded by national borders, distinctly different from the borderless people of the world. Simply put, while "science for society" has no nationality, "science for policy" bears the imprint of nationality. Taking Japan as an example, "science for society" conducted by Japanese scientists is meaningful even when it only benefits people in Africa or Latin America. Conversely, "science for policy" conducted by Japanese scientists is considered meaningless unless it benefits the Japanese government and, by extension, the Japanese people. Furthermore, since governments determine policy, the framework of "science for policy" creates a dependency of scientists on the government. Based on these two points, it is fair to say that "science for policy" has an extremely close affinity with nationalism. While it is often said that science knows no borders, it must be noted that science for policy does have borders.

Globalization is inherently compatible with borderless "science for society." Indeed, the USA, EU, and China are engaged in fierce technological development competition over ICT and its extension, AI technology, as well as biotechnology. However, examining the scientists driving this development reveals that their nationalities, employers, and work locations are invariably diverse. The new technologies and outputs that they generate consequently can benefit anyone worldwide.

In countries like Japan that have chosen to promote domestic science and technology as a means to prevent downgrading, on the contrary, "science for policy" takes precedence over "science for society." The political decision-making body which science serves is the national government, and its purpose is to benefit the nation. There is thus no need for it to benefit people outside the citizenry, and in some cases, it should not. In recent years, for example, as skepticism toward globalization has spread, the concept of economic security began widespread.

Returning to Japan, promoting domestic science and technology to prevent further downgrading is central to economic policy. To achieve the harmonization of the scientific community and science on the one hand and government and policy on the other, "science for society" is insufficient, and "science for science" is out of the question. To mobilize the scientific community for the promotion of "science for policy," one strategy that gained attention was to reorganize SCJ and make it more useful.

3. The Debate Over SCJ Institutional Reform

The controversy surrounding the reform of SCJ began in 2020. We here trace the events leading up to the amendment of the SCJ Act in the June 2025 Diet session. Based on this 2025 SCJ Act (hereinafter the 2025 Act), SCJ is scheduled to transition from its current status as a governmental institution to a special corporation starting in October 2026.

In October 2020, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) established a "Project Team (PT) on the role of academia in policy decision-making." The PT compiled and submitted

"Recommendations on reforming SCJ" to the Prime Minister in December.[8] The LDP-PT Recommendations are extremely important as they formed the basis for the subsequent government's institutional reform proposal.[9] Three key points are worth noting:

First, the Recommendations clearly presented the stance outlined earlier: mobilizing the scientific community to promote "science for policy," harmonizing the scientific community and science on one hand and government and policy on the other, and making SCJ more useful. Specifically, the Recommendations assessed that SCJ was not contributing to "science for policy" nor sharing "the same sense of urgency and timeframe" with the government and policy makers. It argued that SCJ should strengthen its think tank function to deliver "high-quality policy recommendations."

Second, the Recommendations asserted that, while SCJ's independence and political neutrality must be guaranteed, this is impossible if it remains as a governmental institution. Therefore, the Recommendations argued that SCJ should adopt an independent organizational structure with legal personality, similar to the national academies in many developed countries.

Third, while SCJ had adopted co-optation as its membership selection system—the *de facto* standard among national academies in developed countries—the Recommendations assessed that pure co-optation lacks transparency. They argued that measures such as introducing a recommendation system involving external entities like economic organizations should be implemented.

As is evident from these three points, the Recommendations faithfully followed the science and technology policy that once-developed countries could adopt in the era of globalization: relying on the utilization of "science for policy" for the promotion of domestic science and technology in order to prevent downgrading through.

Based on the LDP-PT Recommendations, the government conducted deliberations within the CSTI. After subsequent political turmoil, in June 2023, it established the "expert consultation Panel on the future of SCJ" under the Cabinet Office to discuss the matter.[10] The Panel comprised 12 members, including scientists, representatives of economic organizations, or a journalist. It was tasked with "examining the functions required of SCJ and the appropriate organizational structure to fulfill them." The chair was Teruo Kishi, a scientist and former SCJ vice president, with the secretariat placed within the Cabinet Office's Comprehensive Policy Promotion division. Additionally, the division director Takeshi Sasagawa and others on the government side, along with SCJ officers including the actual president Mamoru Mitsuishi on the other, participated as observers.

The Panel held its first meeting in August, then convened at a rapid pace of ten meetings

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[8] https://storage2.jimin.jp/pdf/news/policy/200957_1.pdf (in Japanese)

[9] As for the LDP-PT Recommendations, see Seigo Hirowatari, *Shakai Toki to Chiteki Kansatsu* [Social Engagement and Intellectual Observation] (in Japanese, Tokyo: Nihon Hyoronsha, 2022), section 1, chap.4.

[10] All the documents concerning the panel, including records of proceedings are found on https://www.cao.go.jp/scjarikata/kondankai.html (in Japanese)

over four months. While initial discussions focused on SCJ's functions and roles, the focus narrowed to its organizational structure starting from the fifth meeting held in November. In response to many members expressing the view that transitioning from a governmental institution to a special corporation was desirable, the 10th meeting in December compiled an Interim Report centered on establishing SCJ as a special corporation.[11] Next day the Cabinet Office Specially Appointed Minister, Yoshifumi Matsumura, following the Interim Report, issued a decision entitled "Toward incorporating SCJ," which states that "SCJ shall be an organization with legal personality independent from the state... Hearing the views of SCJ, the Cabinet Office will proceed with discussions toward concrete legislation." [12]

The Interim Report faithfully followed the three points outlined in the LDP-PT Recommendations, adding one further point: unlike many national academies in developed countries, which operate based on substantial endowments and large donations, the financial foundation of SCJ as a corporation would, for the time being, have to rely largely on public funds. Therefore, the government would have an obligation to participate in SCJ's governance, not only regarding finances but also operations, in order to monitor the use of public funds. Consequently, it would be necessary to design a specific organizational structure to realize this government involvement.

Here, we must recognize a paradox: the institutional reform of establishing a special corporation —presented as a means to achieve independence from the government—actually results in strengthening government involvement and intervention in SCJ operations. The fourth point could be seen as presenting the rationale and measures for the first point of the Recommendations: transforming SCJ into a think tank capable of delivering "high-quality policy recommendations."

After compiling the Interim Report, the Panel established two working groups (WGs) in April 2024 to concretize the Ministerial Decision: one on organization and systems, and another on member selection. These WGs, with SCJ and the government participating as observers, held 10 meetings for the former and 8 for the latter by the end of December 2024, reporting their discussions to the Panel. In December, the 15th Panel compiled a Final Report that essentially followed the Interim Report and dissolved.[13]

As for SCJ's response, it adopted a statement in April 2021 entitled "Toward better functioning of SCJ" at its general assembly.[14] This statement presented five requirements that a national academy should possess, asserting that these requirements must be met regardless of whether SCJ undergoes institutional reform or not, that is to say, whether it remains a governmental institution or is converted into a special corporation. The five requirements are: first, status as an institution representing the state academically; second, the conferral of public

[11] https://www.cao.go.jp/scjarikata/kondankai/chukanhokoku.pdf (in Japanese)

[12] https://www.cao.go.jp/scjarikata/pdf/20231222houshin.pdf (in Japanese)

[13] https://www.cao.go.jp/scjarikata/kondankai/hokoku.pdf (in Japanese)

[14] https://www.scj.go.jp/ja/member/iinkai/sokai/pdf25/sokai182-s-houkoku.pdf (in Japanese)

qualifications for this purpose; third, a stable financial foundation supported by national fiscal expenditure; fourth, independence from the government in its activities; and fifth, autonomy and independence in member selection. Based on this, SCJ participated in discussions within the Panel and WGs, taking the position that the purpose was to ensure these five requirements were maintained, and that whether the organization remained a governmental institution or became a special corporation was not the main issue.

In the spring of 2025, the government proceeded with drafting a new SCJ Bill based on the Final Report, enacting the bill in March and securing a Cabinet decision. The bill was immediately submitted to the Diet, passed by the House of Representatives in May and that of Councilors in June, and enacted. SCJ's institutional reform centered on becoming a special corporation was thus completed. SCJ would start anew as a special corporation from October 2026.

4. Content of the 2025 Act and Evaluation of the 2026 Institutional Reform

The 2025 Act stipulated that it would come into effect in October 2026, so the 2026 institutional reform was implemented based on that Act. What does this law contain? Let us examine this point in light of the five requirements for a national academy presented by SCJ in its statement "Toward better functioning of SCJ" (mentioned earlier).[15]

First, status as an institution representing the state academically. The 2025 Act states that "SCJ shall, as the representative body of Japan's scientists both domestically and internationally, deliberate on important matters concerning academia…" (Article 1) It thus satisfies the first requirement.

Second, the granting of public status for this purpose. The Act stipulates that "in implementing this Act, the State shall, in view of the characteristics of SCJ's organization and operations as the representative body for Japanese scientists both domestically and internationally, which includes providing responses to government inquiries, constantly take into consideration the autonomy and independence of its operations" (Article 2), thereby also meeting the second requirement.

Third, a stable financial foundation through national fiscal expenditure. While the Act stipulates that "the government may, within the limits of the budget, provide subsidies to SCJ in the amount deemed necessary to cover the costs of its operations" (Article 48), comparing this to the 1948 Act's provision that "expenses related to SCJ shall be borne by the national treasury" (Article 1) clearly shows a significant deterioration in the stability of its financial foundation. Specifically, the 2025 Act stipulates that "the amount deemed necessary" may be subsidized, but it does not specify who deems it necessary. In such cases, the decision-maker would likely be the government. Furthermore, the 2025 Act states "may subsidize" rather than "shall subsidize," again granting the government, presumed to be the decision-maker,

[15] The 2025 Act is found on https://laws.e-gov.go.jp/law/507AC0000000070 (in Japanese)

considerable discretionary power.

Fourth, independence from the government in operational matters. The 2025 Act mandates the appointment of auditors by the Prime Minister to oversee finances and operations (Articles 19, 20), requires the formulation of a six-year term activity plan, and stipulates evaluation of its achievement by the SCJ evaluation committee also appointed by the Prime Minister (Article 51). It also establishes an operation advisory committee (Article 26), whose members are appointed by the SCJ president from outside the membership to advise him/her on SCJ operations. These bodies—auditors, SCJ evaluation committee, and operation advisory committee—constitute a system to check and evaluate SCJ activities and governance. Notably, the first two bodies, appointed by the Prime Minister, are likely to significantly diminish SCJ's autonomy and independence from the government. It is doubtful whether any other national academies in developed countries have such blatant government intervention in their operations.

Fifth, autonomy and independence in member selection. The 2025 Act established a selection advisory committee appointed by the SCJ general assembly from non-members for providing opinions on member selection policies (Article 26). While the extent of influence this committee will wield over member selection remains unclear at this stage, it is almost certain that autonomy and independence in member selection will decline compared to the current co-optation system.

In summary, while the 2025 Act satisfies the first and second requirements, it is unclear at this stage whether it meets the third and fifth requirements. As for the fourth requirement, it fails to meet it entirely. SCJ has thus significantly lost its operational independence from the government due to the 2026 institutional reform.

Next, let us evaluate the 2026 institutional reform. We will assess them against the four points outlined in the December 2023 Cabinet Office Specially Appointed Minister's decision (mentioned earlier).

First, the 2025 Act clearly takes a stance of mobilizing the scientific community, or harmonizing the scientific community and science on the one hand and government and policy on the other. The 2025 Act established auditors and a SCJ evaluation committee both appointed by the Prime Minister. These can be seen as components of systems designed to advance the harmonization between the scientific community and the government. Furthermore, the same law established an operation and a selection advisory committees. It stipulates that members of both committees shall be selected from outside SCJ membership, with a certain portion expected to be recruited from industry, such as economic organizations. These can be seen as systems to advance the harmonization between the scientific community and industry.

Second, the 2025 Act claims that it adopts an independent organizational form with legal personality rather than being a governmental institution in order to guarantee SCJ's independence and political neutrality. While this seems a natural claim when we consider the national academies of developed countries, the issue is not whether it is a governmental institution or a special corporation, but rather the specific institutional design. The introduction

of systems enabling external oversight of SCJ governance—such as auditors, the SCJ evaluation committee, or operation and selection advisory committees—along with the establishment of a six-year term plan and the implementation of PDCA cycle through achievement evaluations by the government-appointed SCJ Evaluation Committee, would undoubtedly undermine SCJ's independence and political neutrality, particularly the former.

Third, the 2025 Act assesses co-optation system as the member selection mechanism negatively. It does not specify the concrete system for member selection. While it will likely introduce measures such as recommendations of candidate members from external entities like economic organizations, the final selection is expected to fall back on the co-optation system. However, the recommendation of candidate members from external sources is already a practice adopted by SCJ, and the outcome of the concrete system design remains to be seen.

Fourth, the financial foundation of SCJ as a corporation must, for the time being, rely largely on public funds. The 2025 Act introduces auditors who could oversee not only SCJ's finances but also its governance and operations under the pretext of checking the use of public funds. While the expert consultation Panel and its two WGs acknowledged the necessity of establishing auditors for SCJ, they argued that limiting the auditors' scope to financial matters alone would preserve independence from the government. However, this argument was not incorporated into the 2025 Act. This clearly reflects a governmental stance prioritizing the harmonization between the scientific community and government over maintaining the independence of the former.

Overall, the 2025 Act can be assessed as faithfully following the stance underlying the downgrading-prevention policy adopted by Japan—a once developed country—since the full onset of globalization. This policy mobilizes the scientific community to promote domestic science and technology based on the concept of "science for policy."

5. Science for Science, Science for Society, and Science for Policy

"Science for society" was initially used in contrast to "science for science." It can be said to have been deliberately introduced to remind the scientific community that science is significantly influenced by society and also influences society heavily, thereby emphasizing the importance of considering science's social responsibility. In this sense, the significance of introducing the concept of "science for society" is substantial.

However, this concept contains a major problem: the question of what exactly constitutes the "society" referred to. Of course, it goes without saying that the "society" implied by the concept of "science for society" refers to those outside the scientific community, namely non-specialists in science. However, society defined in this way encompasses far too many entities. It includes not only individual non-scientists, but also diverse intermediary groups such as industry, the political sphere, government as an administrative body, non-profit organizations, and so on. Moreover, since power functions within the practice of science itself, when we speak of "science for society," the core of the 'society' that "science" serves is usually occupied

by the holders of social power—namely, the social elites such as industry, politics, and government.

This "science for the social elites" is often presented under the banner of "science for policy." While the ultimate beneficiaries of "policy" may be the socially disadvantaged, it is the socially powerful who are responsible for formulating "policy." Moreover, we have repeatedly witnessed instances where policies for the socially powerful are implemented under the slogan "for the socially disadvantaged." Therefore, while "science for policy" may be necessary, not all science should become "science for policy."

Furthermore, a certain degree of tension is always necessary between science and policy, and between the scientific community and government as the policy-maker. It is precisely the independence and political neutrality of science that guarantees the possibility of this tension. This is symbolized by the national academies' operational independence from the government and their autonomy and independence in selecting members. Considering this point, the 2025 Act can be assessed as having weakened the mechanisms of scientific independence and political neutrality—embedded to prevent the transformation where "science for policy" might degenerate into "science for the social elites"—by overemphasizing the harmonization between science and scientific community on the one hand and policy and government on the other.

Another point to note is that, as mentioned earlier, while the addressee of "science for society" is everyone—that is, people worldwide—the beneficiaries of the "policies" to which "science for policy" should contribute are the government and, by extension, the nation. In other words, while "science for society" is guided by universalism, "science for policy" is consistent with nationalism. In contemporary era, where the post-World War II age of political and economic liberalism brought globalization, and where reactions against it now call for economic security, supply chain restructuring, or the reshoring of core industries, the relationship between science and nationalism has emerged as a theme requiring careful consideration.

Finally, it should be noted that the ideal form of science varies depending on each country's stage of economic development. In developing countries, where raising the living standards of the entire population through economic growth is a top policy goal, "science for policy" will likely be emphasized. In developed countries, reflecting the attainment of a certain standard of living, the focus of the scientific community and government expands beyond national borders, creating the capacity to pursue "science for science" or "science for society." Conversely, in countries like Japan, facing downgrading from developed ones, this capacity diminishes. Consequently, government and industry will once again demand "science for policy." The events surrounding SCJ's 2026 institutional reform, which we discussed in this paper, seem to be its prime example.

Lastly, will SCJ's 2026 institutional reform be fruitful for science, society and policy? Our answer is, in French, "On verra."