



JSPS

Japan Society for the Promotion of Science

RESEARCH CONFERENCES

ESF-JSPS Frontier Science Conference
Series for Young Researchers

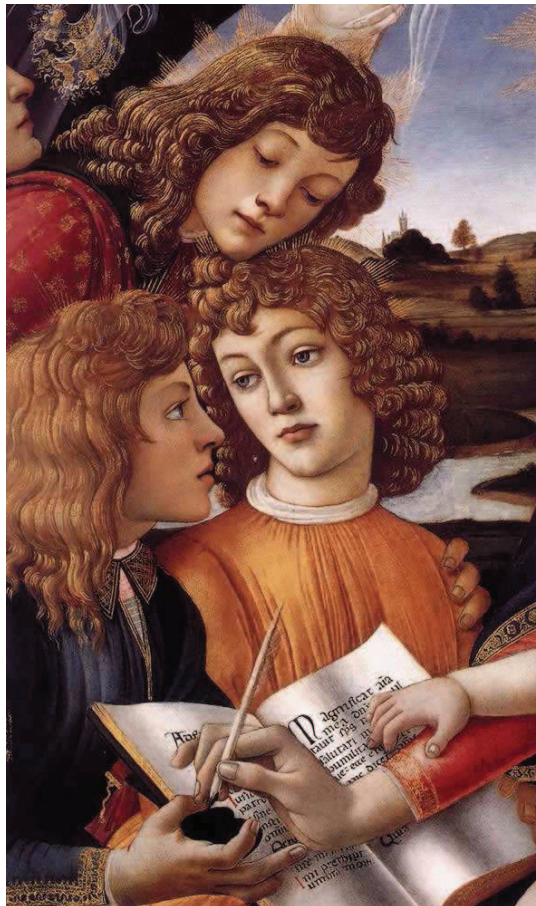
Social Cognitive Neuroscience

Hotel Villa del Mare, Acquafredda di Maratea • Italy
27 February – 4 March 2009

Chairs: **Gün R. Semin**, Utrecht University, NL – **Shun-Ichi Amari**,
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www.esf.org/conferences/09263



Botticelli - Madonna del Magnificat (detail). Galleria degli Uffizi (IT)
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Conference Highlights

Please provide a brief summary of the conference and its highlights in non-specialist terms (especially for highly technical subjects) for communication and publicity purposes. (ca. 400-500 words)

Leading scholars as well as most brilliant and enthusiastic young students from different disciplinary background, but all interested in the subject of the Social Cognitive Neuroscience performed heavily condensed brain storming. Such disciplines have equally covered wide range of literally, natural and humanity sciences, which depicts unique mixture of intellects. To a pleasant surprise, there were no discrepancies or awkwardness, which are commonly expected at the beginning of such interdisciplinary exchanges, seen throughout the conference.

There is a downside to a conference that is successful as this one. Colleagues across Europe and Japan have met and discovered interesting possibilities to advance knowledge by their complementary expertise – by developing possible new avenues, etc. They were inspired by each other. However, this is a one-off conference – and it would appear that this is it.

It would be most useful if the ESF had facilities to continue this teaser or appetizer with a longer-term program in which the contacts that were established between senior and junior scientists could be further fostered. It would appear to be a good strategy to have the option of funding future meetings at a comparable or smaller scale with a view of enhancing the stimulation and inspiration that is achieved by these bilateral conferences.

Indeed, at the end of the conference, a large voice emerged among participated students, proposing to hold a follow-up event, perhaps next time in Japan in the near future. Also, some concrete multidisciplinary joint projects seemed to be emerging among participants. Some schemes to support such joint research projects are also awaited, and should become most effective one to foster inter-continental, as well as inter-disciplinary collaborations.

I hereby authorize ESF – and the conference partners to use the information contained in the above section on 'Conference Highlights' in their communication on the scheme.

Scientific Report

Executive Summary

(2 pages max)

The conference was on broad understanding of social cognitive neuroscience, including comparative cognition work with non-human species, behavioral research aside from neuroscientific work. Thus, the lectures covered a wide spectrum of the field, and would be an eye-opening series for students who are interested to begin or widen their own research fields. It was an absolute success in initiating a dialogue between different research fields for both Japanese and European participants and took place in a congenial environment.

Scientific Content of the Conference

(1 page min.)

- Summary of the conference sessions focusing on the scientific highlights
- Assessment of the results and their potential impact on future research or applications

See comments above and section on Conference highlights.

Slight differences between Japanese and European approaches, but complementary ones, seemed to exist in this field of Social Cognitive Neurosciences. This difference might have opened a new horizon to scholars of respective cultures, and a pleasant reciprocal stimulation should have occurred accordingly, which obviously should lead to substantial contribution to the field. This experience would be most beneficial for young students to be experienced during their early carriers.

Forward Look

(1 page min.)

- Assessment of the results
- Contribution to the future direction of the field – identification of issues in the 5-10 years & timeframe
- Identification of emerging topics

The conference constituted a 'first foretaste' of what could be possible in collaboration between Japanese and European scholars and initiated a stimulating dialogue. This was the case particularly because there are complementary approaches that could give rise to unusual synergies if there could be follow ups to the conference.

Also, such complementary approaches could be sought within Europe or Japan respectively, and merged for future occasions, which could be of further benefit for both research communities. The human (social) networks formed by this conference would play a key role for such an enterprise.

- Is there a need for a foresight-type initiative?

No, a straightforward extension of the present form would be most beneficial for the field.

Atmosphere and Infrastructure

- The reaction of the participants to the location and the organization, including networking, and any other relevant comments

The terrific, although sort of isolated atmosphere of the venue should have contributed to the success of the conference. However, the location was slightly inconvenient, for Japanese participants to travel – it necessitated two days of journey each way. Hopefully, location reachable with one-day trip from home would be preferred, especially for busy lecturers – we could expect more full-attendances that they all wanted, but could not simply because of the length of the travel.