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FONDATION FRANCE-JAPON DE L'EHESS

Newsletter

Established in 2009 within the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS), the Fondation France-Japon has developed public and private partnerships to promote scholarly exchange in social sciences and humanities between Europe and Asia for more than ten years.

NEWS

Launch of the New Research Project, "Care-Led Innovation: the Case of Elderly Care in France and in Japan"

Rising life expectancy and ageing populations are a major challenge for our societies. A key issue is care for elderly people who are experiencing a loss of autonomy. While the contribution of technology in this field (especially robotics, artificial intelligence, and information and communication technology) is recognised as a solution, this contribution is also defined by certain limitations, now partly revealed by the COVID-19 crisis. Our hypothesis is that this is a structural problem related to the partial disconnect between social needs and technological solutions, itself tied to the dominant paradigm of innovation. Our project's objective is to develop an alternative concept called care-driven innovation. Thanks to a multidisciplinary French-Japanese collaboration, we will thus analyse the policies and practices that put well-being at the centre of innovation.

This complex issue is the subject of a new project launched by FFJ, in collaboration with several French and Japanese research centres, as well as associations involved in the care sector.

Creation of the International Team, "Capitalism, Technology, Society, and Health"

FFJ has just been selected for the "Triennial International Team" funding scheme, following a call for applications launched by the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS). Within the framework of a partnership with CCJ (China, Korea, Japan centre), CERMES3 (Centre for research on medicine, science, health, mental health, and society), CAK (Alexandre-Koyré centre), the University of Tokyo and Seoul National University, some twenty researchers from Europe and Asia will collaborate for a period of three years on a joint scientific issue. The Eurasian team "Capitalism, Technology, Society, and Health" which includes FFJ, will meet at least once a year on the EHESS premises.

The overall objective of the project is to revisit the relationship between technology and society, focussing specifically on the issue of health. This approach is in line with previous FFJ research programmes, the findings of which were compiled in the 2019 publication *Innovation beyond Technology – Science for Society and Interdisciplinary Approaches*, edited by Sébastien Lechevalier (FFJ-EHESS), with contributions from Jean-Paul Gaudillière (CERMES 3), as well as 13 other Japanese and French colleagues who sought to criticise and rethink the concept of innovation, as well as the relationship between technology and society in the fields of environment and health. This new team wishes to delve even further by focussing on health issues, but with a novel approach that goes beyond the traditionally segmented disciplinary approaches to this topic such as economics (of health), sociology (of health), anthropology (of health), or history (of medicine and health).

The EHESS programme will allow FFJ to establish a temporary international laboratory for the successful completion of this project, which is scheduled to start next spring.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

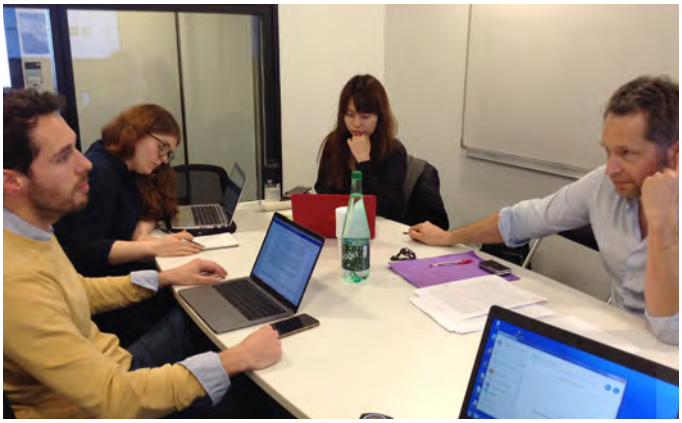
The Transformation of Work in Japan

When it is not culture or history that attract attention, it is often work and business that put Japan in the limelight. In the past, it was the economic success of its large corporations that sparked a series of studies on the "Japanese model". Today, focus has shifted more towards how work is changing and the challenges that accompany this transformation.

This issue is especially important because the challenges Japan has been facing for the past two decades are a preview of what France will now have to face: the issue of older workers in the context of an aging population, the inequalities caused by diversifying forms of employment, as Uber-type digital platforms develop, or the difficulties of how to manage employees' working hours at a time when teleworking is becoming widespread due to the global pandemic.

Well-being in the workplace

Despite the differences between these two countries, comparative analyses of France and Japan are both enriching and necessary. One issue where each country could learn from the other, namely well-being at work and how it has evolved, was the focus of a research project carried out by the Fondation France-Japon in 2018 and 2019. The project's premise was as follows: in both societies, the transformation of the working world since the 1990s has been accompanied by a decline in well-being within companies, which has also had an impact on productivity. The project's objective was to understand the origins of this phenomenon and to look at what solutions were proposed in Japan.



The research team of the project © FFJ, 2018

The first result of this project was the publication of a research report in November 2018. A team led by Sébastien Lechevalier and composed of young researchers in economics and sociology at EHESS carried out an analysis of research conducted in Japan on this issue. The first part of the report examines the major changes in the Japanese labour market since the 1990s (lower average wages, increase of non-regular employment, job insecurity for young people, women and older workers) and how these changes affect well-being at work. The second part details the response of both government and businesses, through the regulation of working hours, various initiatives for improving work-life balance, and the promotion of women, culminating in the *Working Style Reform Law* (*hatarakikata kaikaku*) in 2018. Subsequent to this report, FFJ co-organized a workshop with JILPT on March 15, 2019 in Tokyo.

Teleworking © OregonDOT, 2020

The impact of new technologies on productivity and employment

Artificial intelligence (AI), which generates both an expectation of increased productivity and concern about massive job destruction, is bringing the focus back on analysing the relationship between technological innovation and employment. Indeed, some predict that its impact on employment could surpass anything that has been analysed so far. However, if we define AI as "the set of theories and techniques used to build machines capable of simulating intelligence", there is a clear continuity with robotics. Lessons can therefore be drawn from previous cases where the introduction of new technologies led to forms of automation that can provide nuance to the catastrophic projection of massive job destruction. There is, nevertheless, a new dimension: the very nature of work could be revolutionized by, for example, the emergence of new professions that are essential to the construction of AI, but could lead to greater job insecurity. For example, all activities aimed at making machines learn (facial identification, for example) and which require the mobilization of workers for piecemeal tasks.

In this context, it is interesting to look at the case of Japan because the introduction of new technologies is presented there as a solution to labour shortages; yet, at the same time, this will destroy jobs massively in sectors that are currently seeing overemployment. In addition, the organizational change linked to new technologies has not been commensurate with the efforts made in research and development. The impact of innovation on productivity is limited, and productivity gains result more from work organization than from automation.

At the crossroads of labour economics, industrial economics and innovation economics, these questions will be examined in a research project that is part of a collaboration with Keio University and its Panel Data Research Center, chaired by Prof. Isamu Yamamoto. The first key event of this project was a study day organized in Paris on November 20, 2019. During this event, French and Japanese researchers from various institutions met to brainstorm how technological innovation can contribute to improving well-being at work.

This piece was written in collaboration with César Castellvi (CCJ-CRJ, EHESS).

TESTIMONIAL

French-German Dialogue on Japan

The FFJ team and the JDZB are joining forces in a Franco-German dialogue on Japan, based on artificial intelligence. Werner Pascha (University of Duisburg-Essen, JDZB) looks back at the first part of this dialogue, which deals with autonomous vehicles and is available online.

Autonomous driving (AD) has become an extremely important topic for the future of Japan, as well as France and Germany. While there are many public events and discussions on the future of power generation for vehicles (electricity, hydrogen, etc.), the issue of autonomous driving seems to still be somewhat overlooked. Yet, the consequences of AD are just as far-reaching as power generation. It will not only affect car construction and design, but it will also have an impact on how public space is organized. Moreover, AD is impossible without a sea change in data transmission, which also raises serious questions about data security. Last, but not least, there is a highly sensitive ethical dimension: who should AD artificial intelligence "save" in case of an impending accident?

The questions – and answers – on AD are not necessarily the same in different countries. They depend on the capacities and business environment of the various countries, but they also depend on the socio-psychological profile of various regions, to what extent people will accept artificial intelligence solutions in existentially relevant contexts, such as AD. There is a lot to learn from these different perspectives.

For topics such as these, the Japanisch-Deutschen Zentrums Berlin (JDZB) and the Fondation France-Japon de l'EHESS (FFJ) inaugurated the "French-German Dialogue on Japan," which brings together trilateral perspectives, research findings, and hands-on experience from panelists from academia, public administration and business. Our first, virtual event on AD was held on October 8, 2020, with JDZB Berlin as the main co-organizer.

It will not be possible to summarize the many contributions and the scope of the arguments presented at the event in this brief account.Yet I will try. The keynote speaker, Professor Fujimoto Takahiro from the University of Tokyo, a world-leading authority on automobile manufacturing systems, pointed out that there are three important levels of analysis: "ground" issues of motor vehicle construction, "low-sky" issues of vehicle-to-vehicle communication and infrastructure, and "high-sky" issues of vehicle-to-internet connections, including digital platforms and infotainment.

The first session, on "Regulating Autonomous Driving", focused on the views of automobile manufacturers and other players on regulation and policy related to AD. Among the highlights, Mr. Ota Hiroki of the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association (European Office) explained JAMA's Mobility Vision, which sets 2030 as a critical milestone for proposing solutions related to priority issues, such as AD, electrification, and connectivity.

The second session, on "Autonomous Driving and Society", compared how autonomous driving is received and accepted in the three societies in question. What attitudes and preferences can be found in the Japanese, French and German public? What opportunities and risks do citizens perceive with regards to autonomous driving? I will mention two important positions (amongst many): Professor Brice Laurent of CSI Mines ParisTech presented the challenge of modelling the social impact of AD and how it relates to the possibility of experiments, while Professor Armin Grunwald of the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology and Head of Technology Assessment of the German Federal Parliament pointed out structural issues in the political debate in Germany related to AD, including the role of the German Ethics Council (Deutscher Ethikrat).

Participants agreed that despite this being "only" a virtual conference due to COVID-19, the discussions among the panelists and with the wider public participating in the online meeting room were very stimulating. The organizers agreed to hold another such dialogue event in 2021 on a different topic, hopefully in situ in Paris.

Werner Pascha
Mercator School of Management and Institute of East Asian Studies, University of Duisburg-Essen (Germany), JDZB

CERCLE DE LA FFJ

The Cercle de la FFJ brings together visiting researchers, prize winners and the FFJ's closest collaborators. In this section, you will find interviews to introduce the members of this Cercle.

Masayo Fujimoto

Professor at Doshisha University

Masayo Fujimoto is the scientific supervisor of the FFJ's theme 3 "Thinking Innovation through the Interactions between Science, Culture and Society". She is Professor of social sciences at the Doshisha University (Kyoto), and specialist of sociology of work, professions, and social mobility and institutional change.

Read the interview

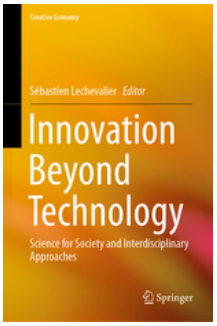
Ryo Kambayashi

Professor at Hitotsubashi University

Ryo Kambayashi is Professor at the Institute of Economic Research, Hitotsubashi University. His research field is labour economics, law and economics, Japanese economic history and institutional economics. He is associate researcher of the FFJ's theme 5 "Inequality & Social Policies".

Read the interview

Round Table on the Book *Innovation Beyond Technology*



A round table devoted to the book *Innovation Beyond Technology - Science for Society and Interdisciplinary Approaches*, organised by FFJ in collaboration with the Institut francilien recherche innovation société (Institute for Research and Innovation in Society-IFRIS) and the Institut interdisciplinaire de l'innovation (Interdisciplinary Institute on Innovation-i3, UMR 9217), took place on 19 October 2020 at EHESS. This round table was the first 'hybrid' event organised by FFJ, bringing some 50 participants together both physically and virtually in the EHESS lecture hall.

Speakers and book contributors: **Sébastien Lechevalier** (economist and professor at EHESS), **Sandra Laugier** (philosopher and professor at University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne) and **Brice Laurent** (sociologist at CSI Mines Paristech).

Panellists: **Franck Aggeri** (professor of management at CSI Mines ParisTech), **Matthieu Montalban** (University of Bordeaux) and **Anne Rasmussen** (historian and professor at EHESS).

Round table report

Sandra Laugier started by reminding us that innovation has long been presented as always positive, but that current technological scandals are forcing us to reflect on the notion of scientific and social progress. "All research must be based on human well-being, which is often difficult to define. Citizens' competence to intervene on topics that concern them seems obvious, but the outlook of this book seems to suggest that it is perhaps not so obvious after all," she concluded.

In turn, Brice Laurent pointed out that the book takes the issue of inequality created by innovation very seriously, thus highlighting one of the main criticisms of innovation. The book describes styles of criticism and theories of innovation that are connected to three ways of thinking on innovation. The first sees innovation as a religion, the myths of which need to be dismantled. The second sees innovation as a generator of excess, often with harmful and violent consequences such as the Fukushima nuclear disaster, but it also creates novelty by questioning what is currently in place. The third sees innovation as an instrument of public policy and corporate strategy, leading to a vision of society in which social progress arises naturally from technological progress. Finally, each style of innovation corresponds implicitly to a type of society.

Brice Laurent's article on experimental forms of innovation, especially in urban planning, illustrates this point. "In San Francisco, there is a strong emphasis on technology, the use of big data and the democratic mode of functioning. Using data makes it possible to know how people 'think' and to combine this thinking with systems in real time. This form of innovation goes hand in hand with a vision of local democracy focused on immediate implementation. Protest movements, meanwhile, have mapped evictions caused by price hikes due to technological development. Criticising innovation can simply mean highlighting the controversies between different social projects and thus differentiating the ways of thinking about innovations", he explained during the round table discussion.

For Anne Rasmussen, this book provides an international narrative around global issues of markets, scientific policy, research models, as well as more local case studies, in Japan in particular. She was especially interested in Sayaka Oki's article which "analysed how the idea of progress was replaced by the idea of innovation, to which she assigns a socio-political scope of social inclusion. She highlights the shift from cumulative progress to innovation based on discontinuity and diversity."

Franck Aggeria remarked that the book notes growing disagreement about innovation and offers a criticism of the technological lens and its associated imagery. According to him, however, the book does not include enough non-technological experiments, even though many examples are mentioned in the introduction.

Matthieu Montalban questioned the term 'innovation' and wondered whether it should not be replaced by 'social change' instead. Brice Laurent concluded that discussions around the term 'innovation' depend on how the term is perceived and its corresponding society.

The purpose of this book, as Sébastien Lechevalier pointed out during this panel, is to analyse the conditions under which a society moves from being techno-centric to human-centric, to discuss the non-technological aspects of innovation, and to go from seeing innovation as a tool for competitiveness to seeing innovation as a source of well-being. Thus, the book has a tendency to emphasise the role of social sciences and humanities in innovation, which is never exclusively technological, but also social.

Our research on social innovation will continue in 2021 with the creation of a three-year international research team and a research programme on care-led innovation, both mentioned on the first page of this newsletter.

The round table report was written by Catherine Gayda, i3's scientific mediator.

Watch the round table (in French)

Editorial board: Céline Caliaro, Jodie Cazau, Sébastien Lechevalier
Translation: Aurélia Martin

Fondation France-Japon de l'EHESS
54, boulevard Raspail 75006 Paris - ffj@ehess.fr