

# INTERVIEW WITH MASAYO FUJIMOTO

October 2020



- Industry: Manufacturing Japanese U
- Foundation: Around 1850 (Continuer
- President: Kotaro Nishibori (The 5<sup>th</sup>)  
(Also, President of TCI - Tradition is Conti
- Customers: Traditional cultural cente  
Flower Arrangement, Incense Ceren  
foreign architect, designers, distrib
- Many awards related to the design
- Applying the core Japanese umbrella  
equipment, producing Japanese cult  
and consulting the traditional equipm  
buyers.
- Opened design atelier at Marais distr

*Masayo Fujimoto is Professor of Social Sciences at Doshisha University. Her main research themes are sociology of work, sociology of profession, social mobility and institutional changes. She is associate researcher at FFJ for the theme 3 "Thinking innovation through the interactions between science, culture and society". She won the prize JACUE Selection 2020 by the Japan Association for College and University Education (JACUE) for the book: European Education and Employment Systems and Career Development for Young People: A Guide to Transnational Human Mobility and Internationalization.*

**First of all, we would like to congratulate you on the prize you received in June 2020 for your book *Educational, employment and youth career development in Europe: a guide to transnational mobility and internationalization*, written in collaboration with Yamauchi Mari and Noda Ayaka on the relationship between higher education and employment in Europe.**

**Can you briefly present this book to us, which is currently only available in Japanese?**

This book focuses on the future career prospects of highly qualified young professionals in Europe, by looking at: how education systems encourage specialization; what sort of employment market these highly specialized young professionals move into; what their mobility, norms, and behavior look like within this market; and what relationship exists between education, international competition and social structure within the context of globalization. We examine these issues in Europe from the perspectives of pedagogy, sociology, economics, and political science, while also comparing them with Japan. The book's methodology is based on documents analysis and survey data analysis (interviews, questionnaires). Part I, "Education System and Labor

Market Overview for the Whole of Europe," summarizes each European country's education system and the mechanism of employment in their labor markets. It also looks at the institutional changes in the standardization of education systems in Europe. Part II, "Educational Systems in European Countries and Working Styles for Highly Skilled Professionals," provides an overview of the labor systems in Europe and the United States, and details the educational systems in Germany and France. It also examines the institutional factors that influence the tendency of highly skilled professionals to change or keep their jobs. The working styles and careers of highly skilled professionals in France and Switzerland are also described.

**One of your conferences scheduled for March "Disparity between humanities and sciences graduates in the Japanese labor market" had to be canceled for obvious reasons. What were the main points you wanted to introduce to the audience?**

At the conference, I was planning to explain occupational structure, industrial structure, and social stratification in France and for students in particular. Then, I was going to talk about the difference in what causes educational inflation in France and in Japan. Both countries have in common that social

**"This book focuses on the future career prospects of highly qualified young professionals in Europe."**

stratification influences exams, but they differ in which areas educational inflation occurs. In France, it happens in the humanities, and in Japan, in the sciences. I analyzed these differences in terms of institutional and structural elements.

### **How have universities, companies and students rethought this transition period from education to employment within the framework of confinement?**

Campus life with friends and an environment where students could easily ask questions directly to professors was very important. On the other hand, during lockdown, students were able to watch classes with on-demand content repeatedly, and the learning benefits of this unintended trial run were clear. The trend in new graduate hiring is similar to previous years due to labor shortage. In my research on the work place during the COVID-19 disaster, large companies used telework, but SMEs either continued work as usual or has employees stay at home while guaranteeing a salary. The manufacturing sector was relatively stable, but some companies in the food and lodging industry had no income for four months. In addition, the managers of SMEs were willing to compromise their credit rating by paying salaries to their employees and paying their suppliers, even if they were heavily in debt themselves. More and more companies in Japan are encouraging telework, and that documents and procedures go through IT systems. My concern is, while organizations are becoming more efficient, they may neglect to secure the status of non-regular employees and to care for the workplace community.

### **What are your current or future research projects?**

I am currently working on clarifying why in Europe and the U.S. doctoral graduates are employed in jobs other than researchers, while a similar labor market has not developed in Japan. At present, the sophistication of science and technology has led to a demand for high-level information management jobs, such as managing research sites, producing research, and coordinating research conferences. In the case of France, where there is a system of scholarships for doctoral graduate students, the missions given to them shape their readiness to work in various fields. Graduate students learn values from both academia and industry, and they also play a bridging role. In the case of Japan, graduate students are not able to transcend the differences in values between industry and academia. Europe does have similar problems

to Japan, however, for example, the fact that many PDs have to repeat fixed-term employment contracts. Establishing a system for the careers of those who have completed higher education will be a major issue for the future of the world.

## **Further information**

### **► Masayo Fujimoto's profile**

### **► Awarded Book**

For her book written in 2019 in collaboration with Mari Yamauchi and Ayaka Noda, Masayo Fujimoto was awarded the prize JACUE Selection 2020 by the Japan Association for College and University Education (JACUE). This book includes the results of the research that she was able to obtain thanks to her stay at FFJ in 2015-2016 as a visiting researcher.

Fujimoto, Masayo, Mari Yamauchi et Ayaka Noda (eds.), *Ōshū no kyōiku koyō seido to wakamono no kyaria keisei: Kokkyō o koeta jinzai ryūdō-ka to kokusai-ka e no shishin* 『欧州の教育・雇用制度と若者のキャリア形成：国境を越えた人材流動化と国際化への指針』 (European Education and Employment Systems and Career Development for Young People: A Guide to Transnational Human Mobility and Internationalization), Hakuto Shobo, 2019.

### **► Latest article**

Masayo Fujimoto, "An occupational sociological approach to a society with increasing numbers of highly educated and white-collar workers", *Science Council of Japan*, June 2020.

Seven research papers about corona disasters can be found on her website: [Fujimoto, Masayo Lab.](#)

<sup>1</sup> Japan Seminar, CANCELED – Masayo FUJIMOTO Conference – Disparity between humanities and sciences graduates in Japanese labor market (12/03/2020), 10/03/2020, <https://japanseminar.hypotheses.org/2758> (accessed on 14/09/2020).