

Dear colleagues,

The Institute of Orient and Asian Studies at the University of Bonn (IOA) and the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies at the University of Tübingen (AOI) are pleased to announce the international workshop on “**Digital Transformation in East Asia. Impacts on Economy and Society II: From Discourse to Praxis**” (March 18 and 19, online). This workshop, which is the second part of the presentation of our research project “The Digital Transformation in East Asia”, explores digital transformation as a discourse formation which is successively developing into a self-enforcing praxis in a society. We aim to elucidate the legitimisation process in digitalisation discourses, the political-economisation, and the performative actions of digitalisation in the economy and society of East Asia. For more information, please see the short description below and our project homepage:

<https://www.ioa.uni-bonn.de/japkor/de/forschung/digitale-transformation/digitale-transformation>

[Prof. Dr. Sabine Pfeiffer](#), Professor of sociology at the interdisciplinary Nuremberg Campus of Technology (NCT) of the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, will deliver a keynote lecture.

The workshop programme can be downloaded from the link below:

<https://uni-bonn.sciebo.de/s/LE7Yx2jRa2bpYdf>

Attendance of the workshop is free of charge.

For registration, please follow the hyperlink:

[REGISTRATION](#)

We look forward to seeing you at the international workshop.

Best regards,

Takahiro Nishiyama (University of Bonn)

Short description of the workshop

The hypothesis of ‘technical determinism’ was conceptualised in the 1920s by American sociologists, most notably William Fielding Ogburn. He argues that the driving force of social change is material culture and therefore technical progress (Ogburn 1922: 276; Ogburn 1947: 81). Although this century-old concept has legitimised the technological rationalisation in the production process, it has been criticised since the mid-1980s (Lutz 1987). According to Manuel Castells (2017: 5), the dilemma of technological determinism is a pseudo-problem since technology *per se* is actually embedded in the dynamics of society. Thus, society itself is equipped with its technological tools, and is capable of discursively determining and reflexively dealing with technology.

In this respect the beginning of the socio-technical change is not technological progress itself, but rather a discursive formation accompanied by power constellations that condition knowledge orders of a society. A discursive concept like ‘digitalisation’ is present in a concentrated form and, through its articulation, shapes the perceptual horizon and legitimises the *modus operandi*. Repetitive performances of these modes of actions by members of a society recursively constitute meaning structures and release the *opus operatum*, i.e. a set of empirically analysable practices (Bourdieu 1987: 281; Bourdieu 1998: 119).

Digitalisation is precisely this leap from the discursively formed *modus operandi* to *opus operatum* in which performativity is set in motion from the discursively generated mode of action and allows itself to be consolidated through repetitive actions in a society (Bourdieu 1987; Butler 1995; Boltanski and Chiapello 2003). The legitimised performance of the digitalisation (re-)articulates itself in a 'self-enforcing' manner into a society and reproduces the social praxis of digital transformation. This spiral of socio-technical change is precisely the issue that this workshop seeks to address thus significantly contributing to research on the discursive process of legitimisation, the political-economisation and the standardisation through the praxis of digitalisation in East Asia.

This international workshop is organised by the Institute of Orient and Asian Studies, University of Bonn and the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies at the University of Tübingen within the framework of the research project "Digital Transformation and the Changing World of Work in East Asia", funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Ministry of Culture and Science of the Federal State of the North Rhine-Westphalia (MKW) as a part of the Excellence Strategy of the Federal Government and the States, and associated with the DFG priority programme, ['Digitalisation of the Working Worlds. Conceptualising and Capturing a Systemic Transformation'](#) (Prof. Dr. Sabine Pfeiffer et al.).

Boltanski, Luc and Ève Chiapello (2006): *Der neue Geist des Kapitalismus*. Konstanz: UVK-Verl.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1987): *Die feinen Unterschiede*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1998): *Praktische Vernunft*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Butler, Judith P. (1995): *Körper von Gewicht*. Berlin: Berlin-Verl.

Castells, Manuel (2017): *Der Aufstieg der Netzwerkgesellschaft: Das Informationszeitalter. Wirtschaft · Gesellschaft · Kultur*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Lutz, Burkart (1987): Das Ende des Technikdeterminismus und die Folgen — soziologische Technikforschung vor neuen Aufgaben und neuen Problemen. In: Lutz, Burkart (ed.), *Technik und sozialer Wandel: Verhandlungen des 23. Deutschen Soziologentages in Hamburg 1986*. Frankfurt/Main u.a.: Campus-Verl, 34–52.

Ogburn, William Fielding (1922): *Social change. With respect to culture and original nature*. New York: B.W. Huebsch, Inc.

Ogburn, William Fielding (1947): How Technology Changes Society. In: *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 249, 1, S. 81–88.