

International Workshop

Technological Innovations and Social Change: The History of Automation and the Future of Work in East Asia, 1960s-2010s

Hosted by:

Naubahar Sharif and Yu Huang,

Division of Social Science, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

We are entering into a Fourth Industrial Revolution wherein automation equipment backed by cloud data could determine the dominant logic of operations that sustain the world's economy. Both China's "Made in China 2025" plan and Vietnam's "Industry 4.0" program embrace a technicist view that considers social change a consequence, not a cause, of technological development. This workshop will perceive automation as a "socio-technical system" in the effort to understand how technology not only shapes society but is in turn molded by the prevailing structures of economic and political power (Jasanoff 2004; Marcuse 1941; Nobel 1979). Through a historical review of the dialectical relations that operate between technological innovations and social change, we will conceptualize worker-centered technologies that aspire to a socially sustainable model of development.

This project is being funded with the support of the Collaborative Research Grant Project "Making Modernity in East Asia: Technologies of Everyday Life in 19th-21st Centuries" (RGC HKU C7011-16G) of the Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, HKU.

May 11, 2018

(Venue: Room 5504, Lift 25/26, Academic Building)

9:00 Registration

9:10-9:30 Welcoming Remarks Naubahar Sharif and V. V. Krishna

9:30-9:45 Self introduction & Group photo

PANEL I INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL MODERNITY

Chair: Venni Krishna

9:45-10:45

Luke Heemsberger (Deakin University), Angela Daly (Queensland University of Technology), and Jiajie Lu (Queensland University of Technology)

Manufacturing 3D Printed Futures: Comparative Backcasting of the Political Economies of Additive Manufacturing in Hong Kong, Shenzhen, and Singapore.

Coffee Break: 10:45-11:00

11:00-12:00

Naubahar Sharif and Yu Huang (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology)

Replacing Humans with Robots”: Technological Change, Value Chain Upgrading, and Workers’ Reaction in Dongguan, China”

12:00-1:00

Boy Lüthje (Sun Yat-sen University)

Platform Capitalism “Made in China”? Intelligent Manufacturing and the Restructuring of Work”

Lunch Break 1:00-2:30

PANEL II SMART ECONOMY AND SOCIAL TECHNOLOGY

Chair: Naubahar Sharif

2:30-3:30

Gayathri Haridas and Thijs Willems (Singapore University of Technology and Design)

The Future of Manufacturing Work in Smart Singapore: Imaginations, Realities, and (Dis)continuous Inequalities”

3:30-4:30

Saori Shibata (Leiden University)

Autonomy or Fictitious Freedom: Strategies of Hegemony in Japan’s Gig Economy

Coffee Break 4:30-4:45

4:45-6:15 Planning for the special issue