

学位論文の要旨 (論文の内容の要旨)
Summary of the Dissertation (Summary of Dissertation Contents)

論 文 題 目

Dissertation title

Digital Flea Markets in Post-Industrial Japan: Anthropological Study of Insecure User-Workers and Their Survival

広島大学大学院国際協力研究科

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This work constitutes an anthropological exploration into the engagement and survival tactics employed by economically and socially insecure user-workers of Japanese Digital Flea Markets (DFMs), drawing a comparison with their Italian counterparts. Utilizing a multisited and multimodal fieldwork approach, the study aims to observe the composition of these communities, examine the nature of engagement these individuals have with the platforms, and highlight recent evolutions in productive practices within post-industrial economies. The underling thesis is that through the precarization of the labor market the engagement with DFMs is a form of cognitive labor which creates a new category of precariat the user-worker. DFMs, as other virtual platforms, became a new hub not only for economic exchanges but for the creation of human interactions overtaking the role of traditional labor in shaping individuals' identities. Throughout the research, various typifications of user-workers and profiles have been developed to facilitate a nuanced discussion on the emergence of new professional identities propelled by DFMs.

Comprising six chapters, the structure of the work is as follows:

Chapter 1 lays the foundation by presenting the core argument: DFMs serve as arenas for the precariat to redefine their identities and forge new pathways of economic and social engagement. The objectives and research questions are outlined, grounded in an extensive literature review encompassing the genealogy of precarity, the anthropology of digital media, and the intersections of these fields within the broader social sciences. The chapter also discusses the methodologies adopted during data collection, particularly in light of the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, and acknowledges the study's limitations, including the inability to cover all stakeholders and incorporate broader international observations.

Chapter 2 situates the historical backdrop of precarity and digital media within the comparative contexts of Italy and Japan. It examines the unraveling of neoliberal policies that have significantly contributed to the rise of the precarious class in both countries. The chapter critically examines how the advent of digital capitalism has expedited the precarization of employment and interrogates how digital capitalism has absorbed and perpetuated neoliberal ideals under the guise of progressivism.

In Chapter 3, the study transitions to the empirical realm, exploring the experiences of DFM users who do not identify with specific sub-communities but feel an allegiance to the platform itself. This chapter profiles strategies employed by two distinct sets of "casual users" who utilize DFMs to navigate and potentially

overcome precarity. These include a collective engaged in repairing and reselling products and a group of young mothers trading children's items, some doing so semi-professionally. Their narratives are then juxtaposed with equivalent Italian informants to draw comparative insights.

Chapter 4 delves into the experiences of users over the age of 60, analyzing how DFMs have become instrumental in their quest to reclaim agency and foster a positive self-identity. This age group, while not considering themselves professionals, views the potential for such a professional outcome positively. The chapter uncovers how these individuals creatively utilize digital spaces to carve out personal niches for interaction and trade. It examines themes of proactivity, the centrality of certain activities in life, and the role of fate in facilitating positive interactions on DFMs. The analysis also engages with the Japanese concept of pre-death activities, the dissolution of traditional family bonds, and the exploitative practices prevalent in DFMs. A comparative analysis with Italian informants highlights the differences in motivation behind DFM engagement, with Italian users placing a stronger emphasis on economic stability as a stepping stone toward solidifying their user-worker identity.

Chapter 5 delves deeper into the recursive relationship between the platforms and professional users. Focusing on Japanese informants who own digital and offline "shops," the chapter examines how Mercari's "shop" certification impacts their self-identification. The Italian informants' narratives present a dual trajectory, with some finding avenues for professional growth and others falling into legal grey areas, exacerbating the precarious conditions they sought to escape. The aim here is to unravel the factors driving the development of a professional identity through digital trade and to what extent DFMs contribute to this identity formation.

Chapter 6, the concluding chapter, synthesizes the insights garnered from each segment of the dissertation. It succinctly recaps where the thesis has been substantiated or challenged and provides updates on the informants' current situations. The chapter also offers concluding narratives that are pivotal to the speculative discussions that have emerged throughout the fieldwork.

The work is significant in its meticulous dissection of how user-workers in DFMs renegotiate their professional and personal identities amidst the uncertainties of precarity. It scrutinizes how they leverage digital platforms to forge new livelihoods, often transforming their precarious conditions into opportunities for reinvention and resilience. It also contemplates the transformative potential of DFMs as spaces that can either enable the precariat to redefine the contours of their economic and social existence or entangle them further within the web of exploitation. This inquiry is paramount in understanding the shifting paradigms of labor and production within the contemporary digital economy, emphasizing the need to contextualize these labor practices within an evolving global landscape marked by biocognitive capitalism.

Through this exploration, the thesis contributes a nuanced anthropological perspective to the discourse on labor dynamics and social change, spotlighting the precariat's innovative responses to the challenges posed by a digitalized world. It underscores the agency of precarious individuals as they navigate, adapt, and sometimes transform the digital environments that both enable and constrain their economic and social aspirations.

備考 論文の要旨はA 4判用紙を使用し、4,000字以内とする。ただし、英文の場合は1,500語以内とする。

Remark: The summary of the dissertation should be written on A4-size pages and should not exceed 4,000 Japanese characters. When written in English, it should not exceed 1,500 words.