
Intermediary and Design: Valuation process of the local products in Japan

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Résumé

In this report, based on interview with middleman and designer, we analyze the valuation process as network forming by concepts of Convention theory and Actor-Network theory (ANT). In recent years traditional techniques and local crafts have been reevaluated. Many local industries and traditional crafts production areas have experienced a marked decline in price competition with overseas, changes in the domestic market, and reorganization of distribution structure. In such production areas, there are movements such as development and sales of proprietary brand products making full use of the tradition of production areas, and development of overseas markets. This can be regarded as a transformation to the cultural industry or the creative industry of traditional industries. On the nature of a new economy that is replacing standardized industrial production that had supported economic growth in the past, the theory of Cognitive Capitalism shows a broad outlook. Here, Economics of Convention and ANT should be referred to as a more specific analysis methodology. Economics of Convention as a school in the institutional economics especially focuses on the pluralism of normative values and the role of objects in coordination among actors. ANT, which is one of the STS and has an aspect close to Convention theory, tracks the network as a hybrid of human beings and things and its generation process. M. Callon, representative researcher of ANT, and his colleagues actively develop research targeting the economic market. Both are partially joining in Valuation Studies that have been rising recently and show an interesting development. The following points are suggestive for this report: the intermediary among various things and actors is an important moment in value creation, and the mode of valuation can be identified and distinguished analytically. Especially analysis of *économie de l'enrichissement* by Boltanski et Esquerre (2017) is effective in analyzing the transformation of traditional industry into cultural industry or creative industry. The epidemic of the term "design" in business discourse means that the design of a product does not consist only of designing the shape of the product as a thing. Rather, the problem is the design of a valuation network (elements of market agencement) formed by intermediaries of various aspects including production, distribution and final consumption.

Mots-Clés: conventions, market agencement, valuation, intermediary, design

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