

# SEMINAIRE DE LA FONDATION FRANCE-JAPON DE L'EHESS

## The Rising Inequalities in Japan A Political Economy Approach

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(University of British Columbia)

**Discussant: Ryo Kambayashi (Hitotsubashi University and OECD)**

Dans le cadre du séminaire Economie politique du changement institutionnel (EPCI)  
organisé par PSE et MSE (Université Paris1)

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Maison des Sciences Economiques, Salle 17  
106-112 boulevard de l'Hôpital 75013 Paris

### □ SUMMARY

The seminar analyzes the causes of the surprising rise in inequalities in Japan, a rise that is eroding the social and political foundations of the Japanese system of political economy.

The Gini coefficient has gone from the lowest level in the world in 1980 (Swedish level) to a level that is now superior to the OECD average (about the UK level). This major change cannot be explained by conventional models (globalization, technical progress, wealth effect at the top). True, demographic factors play a role. Yet, this presentation argues that the key causal factor lies in the growing dualization of the labor market, namely the increasing gap between permanent and permanent workers. The seminar presents a political economic analysis of structural reforms in Japan since 1982 (especially since 1997) that have facilitated these changes on the ground.

This argument builds upon the work of researchers such as Paul Krugman, Ron Dore, and others on the normative and competitive forces of neoliberalism. These forces have also been at work in Japan and have led to partial liberal revolution.

### □ ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Yves Tiberghien (Ph.D. Stanford University) is Associate Professor of Political Science and a Faculty Associate of the Center for Japanese Research at UBC. He specializes in Japanese, Chinese and European politics and political economy. In 2007, he published *Entrepreneurial States: Reforming Corporate Governance in Japan, Korea, and France* (Cornell University Press). He has also published several articles and book chapters on the Japan's bubble economy, crisis period, and reform process; as well, he has written articles and chapters on Japan's climate change policy and genetically-modified food regulation.

### CONTACT

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