

# Kentaro ASAI

PhD candidate  
Paris School of Economics  
48 Boulevard Jourdan, Paris, France

Email: [kentaro.asai@psemail.eu](mailto:kentaro.asai@psemail.eu)  
Personal website: [Link](#)  
Mobile: +33 7 67 79 12 27

## CURRENT STUDIES

---

October 2019- **Paris School of Economics, Paris, France**  
Ph.D., Economics. (Expected completion: June 2024)  
Advisors: Thomas Breda & Akiko Suwa-Eisenmann

## References

### Thomas Breda

Paris School of Economics  
+33 1 80 52 19 07  
[thomas.breda@ens.fr](mailto:thomas.breda@ens.fr)

### Luc Behaghel

Paris School of Economics  
+33 1 80 52 16 87  
[luc.behaghel@psemail.eu](mailto:luc.behaghel@psemail.eu)

### Ryo Kambayashi

Musashi University, Tokyo, Japan  
+81 3 5984 4650  
[ryo.kambayashi@cc.musashi.ac.jp](mailto:ryo.kambayashi@cc.musashi.ac.jp)

### Akiko Suwa-Eisenmann

Paris School of Economics  
+33 1 80 52 16 89  
[akiko.suwa@psemail.eu](mailto:akiko.suwa@psemail.eu)

## RESEARCH FIELDS

---

**Primary:** Labor Economics; **Secondary:** Applied Microeconomics, Economic History

## EDUCATION

---

2016-18 Master in Analysis & Policy in Economics, **Paris School of Economics, France**  
2015-16 Visiting student (whole academic year), **Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, USA**  
2012-16 Bachelor in Economics, **Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo, Japan**

## RESEARCH

---

*(Abstracts are on the last page)*

### Job Market Paper

“Firm-Level Effects of Reductions in Working Hours” [[pdf](#)] (with Alessandro Tondini & Marta Lopes)

### Working papers

“Consequence of Hometown Regiment: What Happened in Hometown When the Soldiers Never Returned?” [[pdf](#)] (with Ryo Kambayashi)

### Work-in-progress

- “Reputation in International Trade: Evidence from Fukushima Nuclear Disaster” (with Christian Abele)
- “Do Cognitive Skills Explain the Rise of Income Inequality in OECD Countries?” (with Thomas Breda and Marco Paccagnella)
- “Working Hours Reductions and Female Employment”

## Publications and policy reports

- "Education, skills and skill mismatch: a review and some new evidence based on the PIAAC survey", *IPP Report No.26* (with Thomas Breda, Audrey Rain, Lucile Romanello and Marc Sangnier) [[link](#)]
- "OECD Skills Outlook 2021 - Learning for Life" [[link](#)]
- "Understanding how economic conditions and natural disasters shape environmental attitudes", *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 280* (with Francesca Borgonovi and Sarah Wildi) [[link](#)]

## Media

- The paper "Consequence of Hometown Regiment - What Happened in Hometown When the Soldiers Never Returned?" was featured in "Covid-19 et perte de capital humain : l'exemple du Japon", *Le Monde Opinion, April 15, 2021* [[link](#)]

## TEACHING & PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

---

Teaching 2021-22	Introduction to Econometrics Université Paris 1, Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris, France
Teaching 2019-20	Advanced Econometrics (a lecture) Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan
Consultant Oct'20-Jan'21	Centre for Skills OECD, Paris, France
Researcher Nov'18-Aug'19	Social Impact and Partnership Division Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting, Tokyo, Japan
Intern Jul'17-Aug'17	Institut des Politiques Publiques Paris, France

## SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

---

2023-2024	Economic History Association Annual Meeting; EALE Conference (European Association of Labour Economists)
2022-2023	NBER Japan Project (National Bureau of Economic Research); AASLE Conference (Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics); 17th Belgian Day for Labour Economists (Federal Planning Bureau, Belgium); Labour and Public Economics Seminar (PSE)
2021-2022	Augustin Cournot Doctoral Days (University of Strasbourg); LEED Workshop (University of Porto); XV Labour Economics Conference (The Spanish Labour Market Association); Doctorissimes (Paris, France); Chaire Travail (PSE); Applied Economics Seminar (PSE)

**“Firm-Level Effects of Reductions in Working Hours”** *with Alessandro Tondini and Marta C. Lopes*

This paper examines how legislative reductions in working hours impact firms’ employment, output, and productivity. We exploit a Portuguese reform that reduced standard hours from 44 to 40 hours in 1996. Our findings indicate that the reform had adverse effects on the employment and output of affected firms. These effects can be attributed to a mechanical increase in hourly labor cost induced by the restriction imposed on firms to reduce monthly salaries along with hours. Treated firms adjusted their employment by reducing hiring. Furthermore, treated firms significantly improved hourly labor productivity, and there is some evidence suggesting an intensified use of capital. Firms that reduced working hours through collective agreements prior to the reform were able to increase productivity without adverse effects on employment and output. Together, these results show that working hour reductions can decrease employment for affected firms while simultaneously inducing a more efficient use of labor.

**“Consequence of Hometown Regiment - What Happened in Hometown When the Soldiers Never Returned?”** *with Ryo Kambayashi*

Sometimes, war results in a large gender imbalance in certain cohorts and areas that changes the path of economic development. However, there is ambiguity around this notion because the market economy has a strong restoring force. This study contributes to the existing literature by presenting the Japanese experience during the Second World War. Japan lost approximately 2 million soldiers during 1938-1945. Furthermore, the loss of young males concentrated in certain cohorts of certain geographical areas owing to hometown regiment system. By exploiting the variation of changes in gender balance cohort-by-prefecture, we examined the effect of the loss of young males on the post-war industrial structure. We observed that the reduction in the gender ratio may have led to slower industrialization, although to a limited extent quantitatively.

**“Reputation in International Trade: Evidence from Fukushima Nuclear Disaster”** *with Christian Abele*

A country’s reputation may be an important determinant of its ability to export but the effect is difficult to isolate from underlying product attributes. We consider the trade impact of the Fukushima nuclear disaster and ask whether damage to the Japanese reputation for food safety played a role in its impact. The disaster led to a large and prolonged reduction in Japanese food export value to the EU by up to 40% immediately following the disaster compared to products from other East Asian countries, with many products ceasing to be exported for up to four years. Since radiation exposure, capacity destruction and trade restrictions varied by product and prefecture, we use agricultural production data to identify products unlikely to be affected by these negative supply shocks. Such products still exhibit a sizeable reduction in exports, suggesting that a change in the perceived riskiness of Japanese products in the eyes of foreign consumers could have shaped the trade reaction.

**“Do Cognitive Skills Explain the Rise of Income Inequality in OECD Countries?”** *with Thomas Breda and Marco Paccagnella*

Using microdata from the two OECD skill surveys, this paper investigates the role of cognitive skills in explaining the growth of wage inequalities. The findings indicate that basic cognitive skills have contributed to increased wage inequality. The primary contribution comes from changes in the returns to cognitive skills rather than from variations in the distribution of these skills. Additional evidence suggests that the previously attributed role of education in driving wage inequality partly stems from the impact of cognitive skills. These findings align with the perspective that recent technological advancements have increased the demand for cognitive skills.