

JASPS Bulletin

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How Can the Gender Pay Gap Be Narrowed?

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1. Japan's Persistent Gender Pay Gap

In 2025, Japan ranked 118th out of 146 countries in the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index, a strikingly low position. In the sub-indicator of "wage equality for similar work," Japan's ranking has steadily declined, from 75th in 2023 to 83rd in 2024, and further down to 93rd in 2025. Why has Japan made so little progress in closing the gender pay gap and fallen further behind other countries? This paper approaches this question in two ways. First, it offers a historical review of debates within the Japan Association for Social Policy Studies (JASPS, Shakai Seisaku Gakkai) concerning the factors contributing to the gender pay gap. It then examines how these factors have evolved over time. Second, within this context, it argues, through a comparative analysis with Germany, that institutional structures governing the distribution of time between paid work and care work in Japan create the gender pay gap through two distinct pathways of full-time employment and non-regular employment.

2. How the Gender Pay Gap Has Been Explained: From the Postwar Era to 2000

2.1 Low Wages of Female Textile Workers: Postwar to High-Growth Era

During the prewar and postwar periods, the JASPS focused on the low wages of female factory workers, particularly those in the textile industry, which drove the Japanese economy at the time. Kazuo Okochi and others argued that the industry was characterized by a fusion of "capitalist exploitation and feudal subjugation" whereby advances were paid to parents to bind daughters into service — an example of "feudal labor relations" (Okochi 1950; Shakai Seisaku Gakkai 1955).

With the advent of heavy and chemical industries as the driver of high economic growth, this debate faded rapidly. The number of female textile workers declined sharply, and the situation changed as textile unions began to demand better working conditions. At this time, Shojiro Ujihara identified a different problem: the rise of homeworkers and part-time workers as forms of "peripheral labor" during this period of

rapid economic growth. These forms of labor were distinct from the prewar model of female labor. Ujihara stated that “this is in fact long-term employment, though its defining feature is that it takes the form of short-term employment.” He further argued, “Today’s female employment is independent labor, but gender discrimination exists. This is the capitalist problem of female labor” (Oba and Ujihara 1969:373-374; Omori 2014:235). This feature persisted in later decades.

2.2 “Simple Work, Short Tenure, Low Wages” in Women’s Labor: the 1970s and 1980s

Subsequently, Emiko Takenaka analyzed the structure of female wages in the 1970s and identified three occupational groups (Takenaka 1983). First were the lowest-paid unskilled workers, including dressmakers, sewing machine operators, and radio assemblers. In this group, competition with home-based piecework led to the development of an ultra-low-wage segment. Second were low-paid female clerks and sales staff. This group included supermarket and department store employees, typists, and clerical workers, who were usually women in their twenties. They were confined to auxiliary tasks and earned less than half the wages of men. Many women quit upon marriage and later returned as low-paid part-timers, creating a deep M-shaped labor participation curve. The third group was low-paid professional women who were largely found in feminized occupations such as nursing, kindergarten teaching, and nursery school teaching. Their wages were traditionally low, with the exception of teachers.

In 1989, Takenaka explained that the formation of the gender pay gap was rooted in three labor management policies of companies (Takenaka 1989). First, as technological innovation in the labor process reduced the need for skilled workers and

increased simple tasks, women replaced men as the main providers of simple and unskilled labor. Thus, a labor policy that bound women to unskilled jobs was implemented. Second, women — who were not expected to remain in lifetime employment — were confined to auxiliary tasks and simple labor outside the internal labor market, with policies promoting high turnover. Third, married women were intentionally excluded from large firms and employed instead in small enterprises as low-wage, unstable labor.

In this way, female workers became “highly mobile, unskilled, and concentrated in the lower-tier labor market” (Takenaka 1989:164, 215). Around the same period, Makoto Kumazawa similarly described a “trinity” of female labor comprising simple work, short tenure, and low wages. Takenaka further argued that discussing gender pay gaps within the same work “does not accurately reflect the reality of Japan,” emphasizing that “the fact that men and women cannot be employed in the same work is the main cause of wage gaps” (Takenaka 1989:163).

2.3 Pay Discrimination Embedded in Personnel and Wage Systems: the 1990s and 2000s

While Takenaka emphasized the overall low-wage structure of female labor, Masumi Mori focused on gender-based pay discrimination within firms (Mori 2005).

Mori sought to clarify the wage gap between male and female full-time employees by analyzing corporate personnel and wage systems in the 1990s to the 2000s. Her study was prompted by a wave of gender wage discrimination lawsuits in the 1990s that were filed by long-serving female regular employees who could no longer tolerate the wage gap. At the time, the Ministry of Labour explained that the gender pay gap was not due to gender discrimination, but rather to disparities

in age, tenure, and rank. In other words, the wage system was considered “gender neutral” (Ministry of Labour 1991). Mori challenged this view, arguing that “the very fact that the composition of workers differs between men and women in terms of job rank and tenure implies inequality and discrimination.” As examples, Mori cited numerous cases from different companies (Mori 2005: 79-84).

First, course-based employment management was introduced by many companies after the 1985 Act on Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment. Men and women were placed in separate career tracks with distinct wage tables. Men’s wages rose steadily, while women’s stagnated after age 30; some firms explicitly set the ratio with labor unions at “male 100 to female 59” at age 30. Furthermore, gender-biased personnel evaluations were incorporated within performance-based wage systems introduced by many companies, whereby men typically started at grade A or A+, while women began at grade B and often dropped to C, limiting their opportunities for promotion. Mori concluded that such biased evaluations entrenched women in lower grades, directly linking promotion discrimination to wage discrimination.

3. Gap Between Active Policy and Substantive Stagnation: the 2000s and 2010s

3.1 Gap Between Judicial/National Policies and Workplace Reality

The overt gender-based wage and promotion disparities within companies, as pointed out by Mori, were nevertheless subject to certain changes prompted by subsequent judicial decisions and administrative pressure. In lawsuits over gender pay gaps during the 1990s, a considerable number of large corporations lost their cases, with courts recognizing the discriminatory nature of their practices and

consequently requiring them to revise their personnel management policies (Mori, 100-101). Furthermore, in the 2000s, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare took action to address the gender pay gap. Through administrative guidance, it urged companies to engage in the “proactive utilization of female workers’ capabilities.” In the 2010s, improvements in childcare leave systems, the advancement of corporate work-life balance policies, and the establishment of numerical targets for increasing the number of women in managerial positions were enacted. By developing an environment that enables women to continue working after childbirth and to remain in long-term employment with equal opportunities for promotion and pay raises as men, the government promoted to narrow the gender pay gap.

However, despite these measures, gender equality in Japan showed little improvement. While explicit wage discrimination became less visible and gender inequality has theoretically been eliminated, women who bear the burden of childcare and other care responsibilities face significant additional stress, leading to de facto gender gaps at the workplace. Unable to meet the “male standard” of work commitment, they are forced to accept gender inequality.

Kumiko Hagiwara’s research vividly depicts the struggles of women continuing work after childbirth (Hagiwara 2006). They struggled with the dual demands of childcare while working hours equivalent to men’s. At the workplace, they experienced a sense of leaving tasks unfinished or having to postpone them, while in their lives with their children, cracks and tensions became increasingly visible. They felt exhausted, lamenting that “everything is half-done” and merely “rushed through in a flurry.” They also believed that, because of their responsibilities toward their children, they

could not compete on equal terms for performance outcomes with those able to work in a more unrestricted environment. Observing their male colleagues working energetically, they felt that they had “lost their chance,” while at the same time, they were overwhelmed by the increasing workload, overtime, transfers, and long competition for promotion, thinking, “I don’t want to go that far,” “I can’t do it,” and “If I’m going to quit, now is the time.”

3.2 Two Problems, One Underlying Cause

Why has the situation not improved despite women’s empowerment policies? There are two structural problems, both linked to a single underlying factor.

First, reconciling full-time work with care responsibilities remains a significant burden for women under corporate systems and practices. In particular, the long working hours and overtime, as well as frequent transfers involving relocation, which are taken for granted as requirements for full-time positions in Japanese companies, pose a significant hurdle for women (Tanaka 2018a; Tanaka 2025). When women are unable to meet these requirements because of childcare responsibilities, gender disparities in wages and career advancement inevitably arise. The childcare leave system also remains inadequate. Because shorter working hours are restricted to the years before children enter elementary school, some women leave the workforce thereafter. Following childbirth, many women are removed from career tracks and receive lower performance evaluations and salaries. Consequently, women’s promotion and pay raises remain limited. Unless they are exceptionally fortunate in their family and workplace environment, women continue to encounter significant barriers to advancement (Tanaka 2024a). Because systems and practices

surrounding time distribution have not effectively supported women’s long-term promotion and pay raises, the gender pay gap between full-time male and female employees continues to persist.

Second, over half of female workers remain employed in non-regular jobs with persistent low wages. In Japan, non-regular employment such as part-time work offers hourly wages only slightly above the minimum wage, regardless of work experience. Salary increases are minimal, and most positions remain temporary. In recent years, more responsible and important tasks have increasingly been assigned to part-time employees, yet their working conditions have remained unchanged. The fact that more than half of the female workforce is employed in such precarious forms of employment over long periods of time at low wages has significantly affected the gender pay gap in Japan (Tanaka, 2018b; Tanaka, 2019; Kamuro, 2022; Tanaka, 2023).

Previously, Ujihara, Takenaka, Kumazawa, and others noted that the characteristics of female labor after the period of high economic growth were simple work, short tenure, and low wages. Today, in addition to these characteristics, part-time workers continue to be characterized by “low wages” despite “more responsible work”

Here the question arises as to why these women continue to work in non-regular positions under such clearly unfavorable conditions. The answer, as shown consistently in any research, is clear: time autonomy.

The most frequently cited response from non-regular workers is the ability to work at times that are personally convenient, while many also note that such positions facilitate the balance of work with household responsibilities, childcare, or elder care. To accommodate their own preferences and time constraints, women often deliberately choose

low-wage and precarious employment. The prioritization of temporal autonomy is thus remarkably high. This reflects the inflexibility of Japanese full-time employment, which imposes long working hours and overtime on employees as a matter of course, thereby sacrificing time autonomy. This means that, in order to gain some flexibility over their working hours, individuals have no option other than to accept unstable, low-paid non-regular employment.. In Japan, a long-standing structural condition has left those wishing to work shorter, flexible hours with no alternative but to accept precarious, low-paid non-regular employment..

In essence, the primary factor underlying both women's limited prospects for wage advancement in full-time employment and their choice to accept low-paid part-time positions is the lack of flexibility in working hours.

4. Enhancing Time Autonomy: The German Case

Time as a Structural Constraint on Both Full-Time and Non-Regular Employment

As described above, the underlying essence of the gender pay gap arising through the two routes of full-time and non-regular employment lies in “time.”

The first fundamental problem lies in the long and excessive working hours routinely expected of full-time employees in Japan. This reflects what Claudia Goldin (2023) terms “greedy work,” a system that compels individuals to sacrifice personal and family time in pursuit of career advancement. The pervasive expectation of such working patterns in Japan imposes significant temporal and psychological burdens on women seeking to reconcile paid work with childcare responsibilities. Conversely, in Japan, women who seek to retain time for their children, family, or personal life are

effectively compelled to accept low-paid and precarious non-regular employment.

Thus, the structural pressures that disadvantage women in both full-time and non-regular positions can ultimately be attributed to the lack of time autonomy — the absence of the freedom to organize work in accordance with one's own preferences and circumstances.

From the reverse perspective, expanding individuals' autonomy over working time would help to mitigate the structural factors that disadvantage women in terms of wages and career advancement, thereby contributing to the reduction of the gender wage gap. As Goldin (2023) aptly notes, “control over time” constitutes the essential key to closing the gender pay gap.

4.1 Germany's Policy on Adjusting Men's Working Hours

Germany has pursued this approach as a matter of national policy. Germany's 2017 Gender Equality Report proposed a “Joint Work-Care Model” (Bundesregierung 2017; Tanaka 2019) that explicitly abandons the male breadwinner-female homemaker model, which remained in postwar West Germany. It envisions men and women jointly engaging in both paid work and care work by reducing working hours to a certain degree for both genders to allow more time for care. Women are no longer compelled to shoulder the dual burden of work and care solely within their private sphere. Instead, the value of care time is recognized within the public domain, and mechanisms for adjusting work and care hours are being developed, including for men.

What does it mean in practice to adjust working hours for the sake of care? Four key measures illustrate Germany's approach.

4.2 Restructuring Time Allocation in Germany

First, full-time working hours are

individualized. In Germany, it has become possible to adjust full-time working hours flexibly to suit individual needs. Within the framework of an upper limit on working hours, this system reduces the burden of full-time work. A case in point is that of a male employee who, distressed that his young son was already asleep when he returned home from work, requested to work a half-day longer on certain days in exchange for leaving at 4 p.m. three days a week so that he could spend time with his son (Tanaka 2024b).

The second key feature is the expansion of part-time work under the system of short-hour regular employment. In Germany, reducing one's working hours does not lead, as it always does in Japan, to a transition into permanently low-paid and insecure non-regular part-time work. Rather, employees receive wages on par with full-time workers and can flexibly shift between full-time and part-time arrangements, within the framework similar to Japan's so-called short-hour regular employment, which is rare.

In Japan, the wage structures and pay scales for regular and non-regular, part-time employees are entirely different. In contrast, in Germany, all employees are paid according to the same wage table, regardless of the number of hours they work. For instance, an employee who works four days a week instead of five receives 80 percent of the full-time salary, calculated on a pro rata basis. Thus, even those who choose to work shorter hours for personal reasons are not disadvantaged or discriminated against; they remain employed as regular workers. (Tanaka 2019; Tanaka 2024a).

The third key feature is the significant extension of paternity leave and the institutionalization of reduced working hours for childcare. Germany has implemented a legal framework that enables many men to take extended parental leave — often lasting

four months or longer — and to work shorter hours after returning to their jobs while continuing to participate in childcare. Consequently, a new work-life pattern has emerged in which men take long periods of leave for childcare and subsequently engage in part-time work while raising their children. This shift has fostered a growing recognition that “balancing fatherhood and work” constitutes a core issue in corporate operations, prompting many firms to restructure their internal workflows and management systems. (Tanaka 2024b).

Fourth, these measures are increasingly being practiced by managers themselves. A growing number of managerial staff now work as short-hour regular employees and participate in job-sharing schemes — often referred to as dualo-leadership or tandem models. Through these arrangements, it has become possible for both men and women to balance caregiving responsibilities with managerial career development. Such systems enable employees to realize two aspirations that were once seen as incompatible: to continue engaging in rewarding work that contributes to long-term career advancement, while also reducing working hours temporarily to prioritize family life. (Tanaka 2020).

5. Transforming Work Systems in Japanese Companies

The German experience of expanding time autonomy and restructuring the distribution of working hours offers valuable lessons for Japan.

By making full-time work more flexible and less exhausting, Japanese employees — especially those balancing work and caregiving — would no longer need to sacrifice opportunities for promotion or higher pay. Japan needs a system that allows people to take on responsible and fulfilling roles even with shorter working hours,

without having to overwork or neglect their families. For Japan's labor market — particularly for the over half of female workers employed in non-regular positions — the German model of part-time regular employment is of critical significance.

If the principle of “choosing working hours according to one's personal circumstances” could be institutionalized within the framework of part-time regular employment, it would provide a means to address the long-standing problem of low wages among Japan's non-regular workforce.

Should the many competent and diligent women who have historically labored under precarious and low-paid conditions be able to transition to part-time regular positions offering wages, career advancement, and promotion opportunities equivalent to those of full-time employees, the overall gender wage gap in Japan could be substantially reduced. Policies aimed at expanding temporal autonomy have the potential to allow full-time women to pursue career advancement and wage progression without excessive burden, while simultaneously providing women in low-paid, non-regular employment with structured pathways toward fair remuneration and professional development. By mitigating the dual challenges imposed on women by Japan's historically long working hours, such policies could make a decisive contribution to reducing the country's gender wage gap. Germany offers a salient example, having already implemented measures that significantly enhance workers' freedom to determine their own working hours — a liberty that has long been constrained in Japan. From a social policy perspective, it is now imperative for Japan to advance toward this next stage of the work system transformation, ensuring that work arrangements accommodate both gender equity and the reconciliation of employment

with caregiving responsibilities.

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Japan Association for Social Policy Studies (JASPS) 150th Conference

Tokyo Metropolitan University, Tokyo, Japan
17-18 May 2025

DAY 1 (17 May 2025)

9:30-11:30 Special Theme and Paper Sessions

9:30-11:30 Special Theme Session 1

Income Security for the Elderly in Aging Societies in Asia

<Theme of the Session>

Income Security for the Elderly in Aging Societies in Asia

As global aging continues to progress, Asia is expected to become the leading region in this phenomenon. Following Japan, which is currently the world's most aged country, South Korea and China are experiencing aging at an even faster pace than Japan. When comparing the number of years it takes for the aging rate to double, South Korea takes 18 years, China 22 years, and Japan 24 years, indicating a shorter period for the former two countries. Furthermore, South Korea is expected to surpass Japan's aging rate in the early 2040s, while China is projected to enter a super-aged society by 2034. In this context, ensuring the income security of the elderly has become an important and urgent policy issue.

So far, discussions regarding the elderly in Japan, China, and South Korea have mainly focused on long-term care services. However, income security for old age has received relatively little direct attention. When it comes to income security for the elderly, one key aspect is the pension system. Of course, the structure and maturity of pension systems differ among the three countries, making simple comparisons difficult. Nonetheless, understanding the current status of cash benefits, which are the most fundamental form of financial support for the elderly, is essential.

Another important aspect is employment income. With the rapid decline in birth rates and the transition to declining population societies in Japan, China, and South Korea, these countries are implementing policies to utilize elderly individuals as part of the labor force. Japan amended its laws in 2020 to promote a "lifelong active society," South Korea introduced the "Senior Employment Promotion Measures" in 2021, and China has implemented an extension of the retirement age starting in January 2025. In this context, balancing employment income with pension benefits has become a crucial issue.

Based on these recognitions, this subcommittee will focus on income security for the elderly in Japan, China, and South Korea, clarify the initiatives taken by each country, and derive

important insights that transcend national boundaries in addressing the common challenge of aging societies.

ZHAO De Yu (Fudan University)

Policy Objectives and Challenges of China's Rural Social Pension Insurance

The legitimacy of the objectives of rural pension insurance policy raises two key issues. First, whether the pension standards or targets set for farmers are reasonable, given the current premium levels, which are characterized by generally low contributions from farmers. Second, whether the current policy goal of an average annual increase of approximately 20%, or raising the farmers' basic pension standard by 20 yuan per year, is reasonable. These two issues are highly related but exhibit some differences.

The core elements of rural pension insurance policy design can be summarized into four key aspects: voluntary participation and selection of contribution levels, contribution standards, government subsidy standards, and pension benefit standards. Theoretically, the rural pension insurance fund, or the "New Rural Pension Insurance Fund," is composed of three parts: individual contributions, collective subsidies, and government subsidies. However, in reality, many rural collective economic organizations have become nominal entities and lack the ability to subsidize farmers' pension contributions. As a result, the primary sources of funding for rural pension insurance mainly rely on individual contributions and government subsidies.

Consequently, a clear "low-level equilibrium trap" has emerged, characterized by the lowest chosen contribution level, the lowest contribution standards, the lowest government subsidy standards, and the lowest pension benefit standards. This phenomenon is supported and confirmed by data released by the National Bureau of Statistics. According to the data, the average annual contribution level of approximately 150 million farmers nationwide is less than 300 yuan, meaning that the monthly contribution amount is below 30 yuan. On the other hand, the actual average monthly pension received by farmers under the "Urban and Rural Resident Pension Insurance" scheme is only 162 yuan.

In designing an effective rural pension insurance policy or optimizing the urban-rural resident pension insurance system, the policy focus should not be limited to the relationship between "rural revitalization and social security." Instead, broader considerations, such as financial securities policies and government fiscal subsidy policies, should be incorporated to sustainably enhance farmers' pension benefits.

Naturally, special attention should be paid to the mutually complementary relationship between rural revitalization and social security. Rural revitalization can contribute to strengthening social security, and vice versa. For instance, increased revenue from village-level collective economic organizations and improved incomes of farmers can create conditions for them to enroll in higher levels of pension insurance. Utilizing collective economic revenues to subsidize farmers' contributions and encouraging them to allocate a portion of their increased income to higher-tier pension contributions can further enhance their financial security.

On the other hand, improvements in farmers' participation levels in social pension insurance and increased pension benefits can stimulate consumption and investment activities among farmers. This, in turn, fosters the development of rural industries and contributes to rural revitalization through a synergistic effect.

KIM Myoung-Jung (NLI Research Institute, Asia University)

Comparative Analysis of Elderly Policies in Japan and Korea

— The Economic and Social Impact of Labor Policies, Social Security Systems, and Self-help Promotion —

Although Japan and Korea have implemented various measures to secure income in old age, significant differences remain in their pension systems' maturity and policies to support elderly employment within companies. In Japan, the extension of the retirement age and the continuous employment system have been gradually introduced over time. This step-by-step approach allowed workers and companies to develop a system that benefits both parties. Many companies have adopted a uniform retirement age system and implemented various flexible retirement age extensions tailored to their actual conditions. These include staged retirement systems, where the retirement age is gradually extended to 60, 63, and 65, and selective retirement systems, allowing workers to choose when to retire.

In contrast, despite Korea's legal mandate setting the mandatory retirement age at 60, many workers retire between the ages of 49 and 50. This discrepancy highlights the need to create a work environment where elderly individuals can remain employed longer with greater job security, thereby promoting self-help initiatives.

Additionally, while Japan and Korea share many similarities in their pension, medical insurance, and long-term care insurance systems, they also have notable differences. Although previous studies have introduced topics such as the declining birthrate, aging population, elderly-related policies, and issues of poverty and inequality in both countries, no studies have analyzed the similarities and differences between Japan and Korea in a structured manner.

Therefore, this paper aims to conduct a comparative analysis of elderly-related policies in Japan and Korea — explicitly focusing on labor policies, social security systems, and self-help initiatives — within an aging society with a declining birthrate. By identifying the similarities and differences between the two countries, this study seeks to analyze their economic and social impacts and provide practical policy recommendations that may benefit both countries.

Discussant: SHEN Jie (Japan Women's University, Professor Emeritus)

9:30-11:30 Paper Session [A]

Gender

Chair: HORIKAWA Yuuri (Niigata University of International and Information Studies)

SATO Chiyako

(Saitama University Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Graduate student)

Japan's Mass Media Gender Gap Via Relationship-building Between Reporters and Interviewees

This study examines how the relationship between reporters and interviewees relates to gender in Japan's mass media, especially in newspapers and news agencies. The ways in which the mass media's gender gap is created are examined. Thirty reporters working for nine companies including five national newspapers were interviewed. These interviews were analyzed, focusing on reporters from the political and social affairs departments, who are responsible for

covering people in positions of power. The results indicate that one relationship-building strategy is widely used: interviewing the subjects, building relationships with the subjects for a long period of time, and obtaining information in an ongoing fashion. This strategy not only leads to long working hours, but has a structure that excludes female reporters, who are typically responsible for care work such as childcare. In other words, the predominant relationship-building strategy leads to a work style that punishes those doing care work. Second, amid a large number of male interviewees, the process of building relationships for interviews created a gender-asymmetric evaluation of reporters, which in turn affected their promotion within the company. These disparities can also affect news content.

JIA Yingying (Chiba university graduate school, Graduate student (special research student))

The Sexual Violence in Japan: A Study of the “Karayuki-san”

This paper analyzes the structure of sexual violence and its historical background in Japanese society through the history of the “Karayuki-san,” Japanese women who traveled abroad and engaged in sex work from the late Edo period through the Meiji era and into the mid-Taisho period, ending around the end of World War I. The “Karayuki-san,” burdened by poverty and patriarchal expectations imposed by their families and local communities, were economically exploited and forced into sex work, embodying the gender inequality of modern Japan. This study examines the evolving discourses and perspectives surrounding the “Karayuki-san” over time, as well as the social structures and the state’s role that enabled their exploitation. Furthermore, it situates the issue of sexual violence surrounding the “Karayuki-san” within its historical context, aiming to provide insights into the sexual norms of modern Japan, the nation’s colonialism, and contemporary gender issues.

TAKAHASHI Mami

(Ochanomizu University, Graduate School of Humanities and Sciences, Graduate student)

Challenges of Target Inclusiveness in Women’s Welfare: A consideration of “Women’s Support Program” from the Perspective of Intersectionality

This study aims to theoretically explore how the targets and policy issues in women’s welfare support can be organized to meet the needs of all women, particularly those living at the intersection of various social categories, without creating divisions or hierarchies among women. The question of how to define women as a target group was initially addressed by researchers and practitioners in the field of “women’s welfare.” This issue was also central to the discussions held by the “Study Group on Support for Women with Difficult Problems,” which began in 2018. Subsequently, the Law on Support for Women with Difficulties came into effect in April 2024, marking a significant shift from the previous women’s protection program under the Prostitution Prevention Law, which targeted “women in need of protection and rehabilitation.” The new law is grounded in principles aimed at respecting human rights and promoting the welfare of “women with difficult problems.” Focusing on this pivotal moment, this study draws on previous research in women’s welfare, surveys of actual conditions, and government data to clarify the issues that existed before the new law was enacted. It then evaluates whether these issues were addressed within the women’s support programs and whether the new law may have introduced new challenges.

9:30-11:30 Paper Session [B]**Rural Work and Living****Chair: NAKAZAWA Syuuichi (University of Shizuoka)****OH Hanwoong (Oita University, Graduate Student)*****Diverse Lifestyles and Challenges of retired athlete in Regional Areas, with a Focus on the Case of Sports Town Development***

In this study, while the problem of career development in local areas is seen as a result of regional disparities, what are the conditions under which individual economic autonomy is formed? In order to solve this question, the process of economic autonomy is solved by focusing on the case where retired athletes make a living in sports town development. Finally, the aim is to try to mention the significance and challenges of their/her “sports town development.” The background of retired athletes’ focus on “sports town development” is that while the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has shown that professional athletes will continue to play a role in promoting sports in each region after retirement, job acquisition and life security are on their own. Under these circumstances, what significance and challenges does the case of a former professional athlete whose occupation is to create a sports town through self-help and mutual aid bring? Such attempts are considered to be fundamental data for presenting social policy points about how to work without employment.

SUGITA Hana (Osaka City University, Graduate student)***Family Business Succession and Reality as a Reason for Returning to Rural Areas from Metropolitan Areas: A Life History Study of Young People from Iwate Prefecture***

This study analyzes life history interviews with young people aged 20 to 30 returned to their hometowns and succeeded their family businesses in rural areas where the population is declining.

In rural areas, succeeding family businesses is considered to be an important earning opportunity. Previous research revealed that young people have concerns about earning the income that is sufficient to run family businesses and support their family after returning to their hometowns from the metropolitan areas. Today, some young people who return to rural areas are hesitant to continue their family businesses, which may make it difficult for them to achieve stable lives. In addition, conflicts and struggles associated with the succession of the family business and how the family business develops after being passed on to the young people have not been fully explored.

This case study examines the motivations, difficulties, and challenges faced by young people in urban and rural areas of Iwate Prefecture (Northern part of Japan) during the process of sustaining their family businesses. This study aims to explore the realities of sustaining family businesses, and how family business succession affects the decision of young people to move back to their hometowns from metropolitan areas. The implications for social policy studies will also be discussed.

11:30-12:45 Lunch Break

13:00-17:00 SPECIAL THEME SESSION**Re-examining the Gender Wage Gap****<Theme of the Session>**

There is a much debate over the gender wage gap. This is due to the growing recognition that the gender wage gap is a issue that should be considered in terms of achieving fairness in society. At the same time, the idea, that the correction of gender wage gap contributes to increase efficiency and productivity in economy, is pushing companies' efforts to reduce the gender wage gap.

There are three factors that directly contribute to the wage gap between men and women in the labor market. 1) a wage gap between standard workers and non-standard workers, 2) a wage gap among standard workers that is caused by evaluation bias, the gap of opportunity for promotion and human resource management in the companies, 3) occupational segregation by gender. Furthermore, the employment and labor systems and the taxation and social security system which are based on the male breadwinners family model, make it difficult to eliminate the gender wage gap.

The shortage of labor due to a declining population in an aging society with a falling birthrate has deepened since COVID19 pandemic. The vacancy rate in the companies is rising, and starting salaries for new graduates are rising accordingly. The ratio of mid-career hires to total corporate hiring plans is also rising, and it seems that companies are "rethinking their employment practices centered on hiring new graduates." In addition, rapid advances in technology, including AI, are expected to significantly change the nature of labor and organizations in the future. In this era of social change, is the labor system in Japan able to cope with such social changes? The polarization between standard workers who are strongly bound to their companies, and non-standard workers, whose employment is unstable and low-paid, is far from fair treatment of workers. In some respects, the state of employment is amplifying the restlessness of the workers.

For many years, it has been pointed out the gender wage gap is a big issue in the Japanese labor market. Nonetheless, the situation has hardly changed. This shows the seriousness of the issue. The year 2025 marks the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration at the Fourth World Conference on Women. This special theme session will examine whether the situation of employment labor can provide fair and appropriate working conditions for diverse workers, from the perspective of correcting the wage gap between men and women.

TANAKA Yoko (Professor Emeritus, University of Tsukuba, Guest researcher Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut, Freie Universität Berlin, Ohara Institute for Social Research, Hosei University)

How can the gender wage gap be reduced?

Japan ranked 125th out of 146 countries in the 2023 Global Gender Gap Index, marking its lowest position since the index was first published in 2006. The gender pay gap has also failed to improve, falling from 75th to 83rd place (2023-24). Why has there been so little improvement in the gender inequality in Japan?

To explore this issue, this report takes two approaches. The first is a historical review of

the discussions within the Japan Association for Social Policy Studies (JASPS) regarding the factors contributing to the persistence of the gender wage gap. We examine how the factors identified in past debates continue to shape the present situation — or whether they have lost their relevance.

For example, there is Emiko Takenaka's theory of low wages for women and gender-discriminatory wages in the 1970s-80s, based on labor market theory. She focused on changes in labor processes and the hierarchical nature of the labor market, highlighting how female workers tended to "accumulate in the fluid and unskilled lower segment of the labor market." How should this assertion be evaluated today?

Similarly, Masumi Mori's empirical research on gender wage discrimination in the 1990s and 2000s examined the wage gap between male and female regular employees. Challenging the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's view that "wage systems are gender-neutral," she emphasized the presence of "gender-biased personnel evaluations embedded in gender-based employment management." Has this situation changed over time?

Following these discussions, issues such as job segregation by gender, the expansion of female non-regular employment, and the persistent perception of the "male breadwinner family" have all been debated. In this context, particular attention will be given to discussions focusing on "gender equality in time distribution." This perspective views women's disadvantages in employment and wages as stemming from gender disparities in the distribution of time, particularly in caregiving responsibilities such as childcare. Based on this, the study will explore policies that use "time" as a key concept, either legally or within corporate policies, to overcome these disparities.

The second approach involves a comparative analysis of Japan and Germany, examining the development of systems that integrate caregiving time into working hours. This comparison will discuss the presence or potential of such institutional frameworks to contribute to narrowing the gender wage gap.

KODAMA Naomi (Meiji Gakuin University)

Wage Premium for Overtime Work: A Comparative Analysis of Gender and Changes over Time

The wage gap between men and women has narrowed in recent years, but it still remains. In this paper, we use data from 1998 to 2022 in Japan to examine how highly workers who work long overtime hours are evaluated, and to what extent this has changed over time.

This revealed that the longer an employee's overtime hours, the higher their hourly wage. Possible reasons for this are: (1) the cost of handing over work is high for jobs with long overtime hours, so long working hours are highly valued; (2) unobserved variables (e.g. motivation for work) are positively correlated with overtime hours; (3) managers and customers assign work to people who can do it, so work tends to be concentrated on those with high hourly wages, leading to long overtime hours.

When controlling for workplace (occupation*establishment) fixed effects, hourly wages are 5.9% higher in 1998 and 7.5% higher in 2022 when overtime hours per month are 16 hours ($\div 1SD$) longer, and 5.3% higher in 1998 and 5.6% higher in 2022 when workplace fixed effects are not controlled for. This means that, while the wage premium for overtime hours has not changed much for society as a whole, the wage premium for overtime hours within the same workplace has increased. It can be argued that the average overtime hours have decreased due to the work

style reform, and the wage premium paid to workers who work long hours as compensation has increased.

Furthermore, the female premium for the return on overtime is positive. In the analysis using the whole sample, the gender difference in the return on overtime hours has been decreasing over time. However, when combined with the result that the estimated coefficient for the regular/non-regular worker sub-sample has not changed over time, the decline in the female premium for the return on overtime hours can be explained by the growing proportion of non-regular workers.

Both within the workplace and in society as a whole, the gender pay gap has narrowed. In addition, the results with and without workplace fixed effects suggest that workplaces are segregated by gender, with men more likely to be in workplaces with higher pay and women more likely to be in workplaces with lower pay.

ONO Akiko (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training (JILPT))

How have wage systems for non-regular workers changed over the last decade?

— From interview survey in the retail sector —

This report examines the impact of changes in the wage system for non-regular workers over the last decade, based on interviews in the retail sector and consider how this has affected the wage gap.

Looking at the situation of the wage gap between regular/non-regular workers over the last decade, the gap between the two has narrowed. In recent years, due to the expansion of labour demand caused by labour shortages and rising prices, ‘raising wages’ has become a pressing policy issue, and minimum wages have been raised significantly, leading to basic wage increases for low-paid workers. The significant progress made over the last decade in policies for non-regular workers is likely to have contributed to the narrowing of the wage gap.

There are two main pieces of legislation introduced in the last decade that relate to employment security for non-regular workers: the revised Labour Contract Act (enacted in 2013, fully enforced in 2018), which allows fixed-term contracts to be converted to permanent contracts; and the ‘employment security measures’ of the revised Worker Dispatch Act (enacted in 2015, fully enforced in 2018). In 2020, the law on equal pay for equal work came into effect. These are all legal measures aimed at protecting non-regular workers, removing the fear of dismissal and protecting workers from unreasonable working conditions.

In this report, based on interviews with trade unions in the retail sector, we look at how the pay system for non-regular workers and employment policies have changed in response to the legislation, and whether the pay gap between regular and non-regular workers is narrowing. The interviews covered the following issues. These are: (1) initiatives to improve the treatment of regular and non-regular workers; (2) continuity between the wage systems of regular and non-regular workers; (3) conversion of non-regular workers from fixed-term contracts to permanent contracts, and promotion to regular workers; and (4) career development for non-regular workers.

Although the various problems faced by regular and non-regular workers have eased to some extent, inequality has not been resolved. Nor has the deep-rooted problem of the gender pay gap been resolved. If women are locked into non-regular work and the separation between regular and non-regular work continues to progress, it will not be possible to reduce the pay gap. What is the way to avoid this fixation and negotiate for better treatment? Let’s consider

what can be done now in a labour market with labour shortages.

DAY 2 (18 May 2025)

9:30-11:30 Special Theme and Paper Sessions

9:30-11:30 Special Theme Session 2

Quality Assessment of Welfare Services and Program Evaluation

<Theme of the Session>

Quality Assessment of Welfare Services and Program Evaluation

Since the implementation of neoliberal reforms in the welfare sector in the 1990s, the proportion of welfare services provided by private for-profit enterprises and NGOs has increased. Alongside this, a form of public regulation known as the “quasi-market” has been developed. Quasi-market regulation encompasses a wide range of measures, one of which is the strengthening of supervision and evaluation of welfare services.

Currently, in many advanced countries, the proportion of in-kind benefits in social expenditure has increased, with most of these being service benefits. In the case of cash benefits, “money is just money,” and the quality is not an issue. However, in the case of services, the quality — whether high or low — is critically important. High-quality services will likely lead to increased satisfaction among recipients, while low-quality services can, in extreme cases, lead to the violation of basic human rights, inappropriate treatment (mal-treatment), or abuse.

The first report of this session attempts an international comparison of welfare service evaluation systems and examines the indicators for “service quality.” The second report identifies several issues with Japan’s third-party evaluations, which have a low participation rate, and seeks ways to improve them. The third report shifts focus from evaluating the services themselves to evaluating the programs of private businesses that provide welfare services.

UZUHASHI Takafumi

(Emeritus Professor of Doshisha University, Visiting Professor of Osaka Metropolitan University)

Quality of Welfare Services and the Evaluation System

This report, first, presents an international comparison of service evaluation systems in several countries and outlines the general characteristics of Japan’s service evaluation system. International comparisons of service “quality” are more difficult than quantitative comparisons. What will be examined here is not the international comparison of quality itself, but rather an international comparison of the systems, organizations, roles, and functions involved in evaluating and supervising quality, based on a small number of prior studies and exploratory analysis.

Second, the report surveys the discussions surrounding the quality of services, which serves as the basis for service evaluation, confirms the importance of outcome indicators as a measure, and examines the Donabedian model of Structure-Process-Outcome. Finally the report outlines the current challenges and future directions for research on service quality and service evaluation.

TANAKA Satoko (Prefectural University of Hiroshima)

Why Third-Party Evaluation Programs for the Quality of Welfare Services Can't Be Effective?

The standards to be followed for the provision of welfare services are established through administrative audits. Third-party evaluation programs require a higher level of service quality than these administrative audit standards. And experts evaluate the service delivery process and content.

The purpose of third-party evaluation are: 1) to provide information that helps users make appropriate service choices, 2) for that purpose, to help welfare service providers identify specific issues in their operations and improve the quality of welfare services. However, despite the increasing number of social welfare facilities and service providers, the rate of participation in third-party evaluations remains low.

Furthermore, it has been pointed out that the publication of evaluation results does not contribute to helping users in making choices.

Therefore, this paper will consider why the initial goals of third-party evaluation programs were not achieved and what improvements are made to contribute to the enhancement of welfare service quality, based on hearings from the National Social Welfare Council and several prefectural and social welfare councils.

ODAGAWA Hanako (Center for Creation of Universal Support Society)

Programs for Youth at Risk in the Transition to Independent Living: Analysing with Perspective of Program Evaluation

Youth at risk who cannot expect support from parents tend to be in poverty and isolation in the transition to adulthood. However the support programs for them are not yet developed as a public program and its quasi-market is not yet formed either. Initiatives from the voluntary sector are merging using social funds.

The presenter is assisting NPOs' programs through providing funds with adapting program evaluation and logic-model. The NPOs come up with project plans based on needs evaluation and theory evaluation. They do evaluations during and the end of the implementation period as well. The presenter assists all these processes.

This study focuses on the programs which consist of safe accommodation and a key consistent relationship alongside bespoke supports. Research methodology is participant observation and review of project reports. Through the inductive research approach, the fundamental support activities and methods will be identified. The various needs of the youth require the practitioners to connect with other agencies. So that it is necessary to consider youth support programs as a system in local society when we discuss forming public programs.

Discussant: TANAKA Hiromi (Osaka Metropolitan University)

9:30-11:30 Special Theme Session 3**Three topics of the self-determination in social policy**

<Theme of the Session>

Three topics of the self-determination in social policy

This session will discuss three issues of self-determination in social policy. The principle of self-determination has only been adopted in social policy recently, around the end of the 20th century. This also marked a new stage of social policy, i.e., “monadic social policy”, based on “the merit-free principle” in social policy. We have pursued this theme for its significance. Three reports will be presented this time. The first report (Suzuki) is a study on the process of making and changing self-determination. The subject of the survey was forced into a situation in which he made a self-determination that was disadvantageous to him. The NPO people who took on him were successful in respecting the subject’s self-determination and steadily change the disadvantageous self-determination. The second report (Fujishima) is an analysis of a system that incorporates self-determination, which is rare in Japan. It analyzes how the self-determination was incorporated into the long-term care insurance, one of the few examples in Japanese social policies that incorporates the self-determination. The third report (Shiga) is a theoretical and historical study that shows that the perspective of self-determination was missing in traditional British social policy theory.

SUZUKI Miki (Rissho University)***Conceptualization of a micro-level practice model for supporting self-determination***

In discussions of self-determination, the need for professionals to support people with difficulties in self-determination due to disability or advanced age so that they do not fall into paternalism and how to support them has been discussed. On the other hand, those who suffer from abuse and isolation, which have become social problems in recent years, are not necessarily not self-determining. Rather, they are often forced into unwilling self-determination, which often results in self-doubt. If many people do not know how to make appropriate self-decisions at the most difficult times in their lives, we can understand that it is difficult to achieve appropriate self-decisions alone and that the role of an advisor is significant. How then can such support around self-determination be made possible? To address this question, we will focus on a NPO that is taking the lead in solving local issues by various actors in a certain region. Focusing on the micro-scale support process practiced by this organization, we will explore the possibility of support for self-determination by focusing on the internal changes of the subjects, and propose a micro-level model of practice.

FUJISHIMA Norihito (Fukuyama Heisei University)***Consideration on freedom in long-term care insurance***

Long-term care insurance is the first to introduce the element of individual freedom into welfare services, allowing those in need of care to choose the content of services. Individual freedom in long-term care insurance does not simply mean being able to choose the content of services, but also means that experts support people so that they can become independent and make a self-termination, even if they are not able to do so. This is an attempt to respect each

person's human rights to the maximum extent possible, and long-term care insurance is of merit-free egalitarianism. Why was the principle of self-determination added to long-term care insurance? What kind of social norms have been generated and how. Based on this survey, we will consider ways to overcome the current situation of long-term care insurance, in which self-determination is being actually restricted. Conclusion will be done by linking the generation process of social norms to research on the generation process of public spheres.

SHIGA Nobuo (Oita University)

Poverty and self-determination

Self-determination can only be logically consistent with poverty theory (social exclusion theory), which emphasizes freedom. In the field of support for the poor, measures against social exclusion and support for self-determination are mutually inseparable. To add an explanation of the relationship between freedom and self-determination, one of the former's phenomenal forms is the latter. There are, of course, some arguments that differ from this report. For example, poverty theories that emphasize "income" (relative poverty theory) are critical of poverty theories that emphasize "freedom" (social exclusion theory). Such claims are critical of the social exclusion theory, which implies "integration without power", and the criticism has validity. However, it should be noted that the significance of the introduction of the concept of "freedom" into poverty theory is overlooked by an over-emphasis on the "income" perspective. As discussed above, this report reassesses poverty theory (social exclusion theory), which emphasizes freedom and self-determination.

9:30-11:30 Paper Session [C]

Childcare and Conflict

Chair: SUZUKI Kyoko (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training (JILPT))

MATSUMURA Satoshi (Nagoya City University)

A study on the Conflicts and Policy Implications of Fathers' Identity through Childcare

Although male child rearing is being promoted as policy, it is assumed that male child rearing will create conflicts over fathers' identities in Japanese society, where the male breadwinner model and caregiving roles have been biased toward women. In this study, I analyzed the reconstruction of fathers' identities through interviews. The analysis revealed that through child-rearing, fathers were conflicted by the loss of social roles represented by the familiar breadwinner model and the image of a strong and robust man in a male-competitive society that has little to do with care. In addition, he was also unsure about retreating from the community network of the workplace and other compliant groups. New sources of identity and support are needed to resolve or alleviate fathers' conflicts and hesitations, but such policies are currently few and left to individual fathers. In order to promote socialization of child rearing and equal burden of care, I'd like to give my idea of the need for policies that do not simply leave it up to individual fathers.

NAITO Tomoe (Seikei University)

Work-Life Conflict Among Women Who Have Children Later in Life

In Japan, the trend of late marriage has led to an increase in the average age of childbirth. In 1975, women married for the first time at an average age of 24.7 and had their first child at 25.7. By 2019, the average age for first marriage rose to 29.6, and for childbirth to 30.7. Additionally, the average time between marriage and childbirth increased from 1.55 years in 1975 to 2.45 years in 2019. The 16th Japanese National Fertility Survey found that 34.0% of women preferred the life course of marrying, having children, and continuing to work. This suggests that many women will carefully balance work and family, and that late motherhood is likely to continue. This study will examine how women who have children later in life balance work and family. Using panel data from the 21st Century Birth Cohort Study, the research will explore the impact of age on factors like working hours, leisure time, inability to take time off, and work-family conflict.

SHINOHARA Akiho (National Federation of Life Insurance Worker's Unions)

***Examination of factors that mitigate conflicts due to the presence or absence of children
— Based on a survey of life insurance companies —***

This paper first examines whether or not having children causes conflicts in the workplace, and secondly, if conflicts are relieved, what are the factors behind them. For the first research question, the author analyzed the results of a questionnaire survey of 572 office workers at a life insurance company with a comprehensive work-life balance support system. For the second research question, the author conducted case studies of two different types of workplaces at a life insurance company, one with a dominant workforce of Sōgōshoku (a regular position with the prospect of managerial promotion) and the other with a dominant workforce of Ippanshoku (a clerical position). The questionnaire survey revealed that no significant conflicts occurred, but there was a “gap in awareness” between those with and without children, which could cause conflicts. The case studies confirmed that in addition to a good workplace culture and human relationships, the characteristics of the work and the composition of the workforce affect the relief of conflicts. On the other hand, they found that the personnel evaluation about the support given by those without children to those with children, which was raised as an issue, did not have much effect on relieving conflicts, and that in fact it was more important to consider how additional work would be handled at the workplace level.

9:30-11:30 Paper Session [D]

Living in Poverty

Chair: MATSUBARA Hitomi (Shizuoka University)

NAGAMATSU Namie (Kwansei Gakuin University)

The use and knowledge of the support system for the needy

This paper analyses the use of support systems for people in need. Consultation and income support services provided by local governments are not well known to citizens, and due to the ‘application principle’ of social security benefits, there are various ‘barriers’ to using the system.

Who uses consultation and income support services? In this study, we analysed questionnaire survey data from citizens of City X, a local government that is proactive in regional employment policy, and clarified the factors related to the use of consultation and income support services. The factors related to the use of consultation and support services were gender, educational background, material deprivation, and support networks outside and within the family. The factors related to perceptions of these services were employment status (non-standard employment, unemployed), and support networks outside and within the family. The two particularly important findings were (1) that people with support networks are more likely to use and be aware of these services, and (2) that non-standard workers and the unemployed are more likely to be unaware of these services.

KASAI Nao (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research)

A review of homelessness prevention typologies: discussion and future research directions in Japan

Over the past two decades, homelessness policies in developed Western countries have increasingly shifted towards preventive measures. Homelessness prevention is supported in the existing literature because of its presumed cost-effectiveness, reduction in shelter use, and improved welfare for affected individuals. However, the preventive measures discussed in the literature range from general poverty alleviation and housing policies to support measures for high-risk groups and individuals facing eviction, and in some cases even the provision of accommodation and follow-up services. This study focuses on attempts to categorise such measures and examines appropriate classification axes and criteria for preventive measures by reviewing homelessness prevention typologies in Western literature. Furthermore, based on the typology thus compiled, it examines discussions on homelessness prevention in academic research and policy-making in Japan, and highlights implications and areas for future research.

11:30-12:45 Lunch break and Education Session

Things to learn before using qualitative research methods

Chair: SENO Mutsumi (Hannan University)

Presenters: HISAMOTO Norio (Kyoto Tachibana University)

OSAWA Mari (The University of Tokyo)

12:45-14:45 Special Theme Session 4

The Current State and the Third-Party Evaluation of Welfare Services in Korea

<Theme of the Session>

The Current State and the Third-Party Evaluation of Welfare Services in Korea

In Korea, the long-term care insurance system was implemented in July 2008. Initially, there were concerns about insufficient service supply, but this gap was addressed through the entry

of private for-profit businesses and individual operators. While there are differences from Japan, such as the insurer being the National Health Insurance Corporation, the first report of this session attempts a comprehensive comparison of the long-term care insurance systems in both countries, following program evaluation theory.

The long-term care insurance system, like other welfare services, introduces a “quasi-market” into the provision of services, and the system of service supervision and evaluation is also one of the quasi-market regulations. This regulation extends not only to long-term care insurance but also to other welfare services for the elderly, disabled, and children.

The second report will clarify the actual state and issues of the evaluation system based on the work of researchers involved in welfare service evaluations. The third report will analyze the impact of such evaluation systems on the quality of welfare services.

CHOI Eun Ju (Fukuyama Heisei University)

A study of the policy evaluation of long-term care program in Japan and Korea

Japan introduced the long-term care program in 2000, and Korea introduced it in 2008.

The Korean long-term care program differs from that of Japan. The insurer is the National Health Insurance Corporation, there is no care manager system, and numerous service providers are self-employed.

Another notable difference is that Article 1 of the act on Long-Term Care Program of Korea clearly states that the purpose of the system is to “reduce care burden on families.”

This report focuses on “policy evaluation (= program evaluation),” which has been attracting attention due to the marketization of the service supply system accompanying the introduction of the long-term care program. In addition, I consider the long-term care program of both Japan and Korea as a program.

In this report, an analytical framework is program theory evaluation. I focus on the results and challenges since the introduction of the long-term care program in both Japan and Korea. To draw a conclusion, I attempt to evaluate and analyze the input, activity, output, and outcome of long-term care program of both countries.

LEE Sun-Young (Gangneung-Wonju National University Department of Social Welfare)

Evaluation system for welfare services in Korea: Focusing on facilities

The social welfare facility evaluation system in Korea has been implemented once every three years since 1999 under Article 43 of the Social Welfare Services Act and Article 27 of the Enforcement Rules of the same Act. Despite the fact that all social welfare facilities under the Social Welfare Services Act have been subject to evaluation for more than 20 years, there are still many criticisms about the appropriateness and effectiveness of the evaluation.

Therefore, in this study, we would like to examine the problems of Korea’s social welfare facility evaluation system from three aspects: evaluation index, evaluation process, and evaluation utilization, and propose future improvement measures.

In terms of evaluation indicators, we would like to examine the appropriateness of the indicators by quoting the structure-process-result model presented by Donabedian, and discuss evaluation subjects and evaluation methods, as well as incentives and consulting systems for improvement.

LIM Jeongmi (Gyeongsang National University)

Impact of the Korean Long-Term Care Evaluation System for the Elderly on the Quality of Long-Term Care Services

National Health Insurance Corporation as the insurer implement a long-term care facility evaluation system every three years. Its purpose is not only to induce improvement in the quality of services at long-term care facilities, but also to guarantee the beneficiaries' right to know, expand their right to choose, and improve the quality of life of the users in a positive way.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of the long-term care evaluation system for the elderly on the quality of services in Korean long-term care facilities for the elderly. In the field, questions have been raised as to whether the long-term care evaluation system properly reflects the actual quality of services, but verification of this has been lacking. Therefore, we examine the relationship between the structure, process and results of each of the services and the evaluation results.

The data was collected from a proportionally stratified sample of long-term care facilities for the elderly nationwide, covering 1,000 staff members. Regression analysis was used as the analysis method. The results of this study suggest policy directions for the future long-term care evaluation system for the elderly in Korea.

Discussant: KIM Sung-won (The University of Tokyo)

12:45-14:45 Special Theme Session 5

Changes in the Approach to, the System for, and the Operation of Measures Related to Children and Child-rearing and Their Significance Today

<Theme of the Session>

Changes in the Approach to, the System for, and the Operation of Measures Related to Children and Child-rearing and Their Significance Today

Regarding measures related to children and child rearing, this subcommittee will examine how policies should be drafted and how the system should be operated by analyzing the items discussed in the policy formulation process up to the present time, the structure of the system that has been concretized based on these items, and the actual operation of this system.

While there are a wide range of measures related to children and child rearing, based on the purpose of this subcommittee, as described above, it will discuss the issues related to measures for childcare that are considered to have been positioned as primary, especially those implemented since the 1990s, which is when the declining birthrate and aging population became specific topics of policy discussion. The various reports will (1) detail how measures for the declining birthrate have been discussed as the background to the changes in measures related to children and childcare, (2) examine the changes in the standards for establishing daycare centers and other facilities and their significance, and (3) conduct a quantitative analysis of subsidies and contributions related to children and childcare. These studies and analyses will enable clarification of our current position with respect to measures related to children and

child-rearing. They will also facilitate the collection of suggestions on issues related to the formulation of policies for operating child-rearing-related systems and their methods of operation in the future.

HATAMOTO Yusuke (Doshisha University)

The Development of Policies to Address the Declining Birthrate: Focusing on the Relationship with Child Welfare in Recent Years

The purpose of this report is to summarize the sequence of measures to address the declining birthrate that began with the Angel Plan after the 1.57 shock. It then aims to examine the relationship between recent measures to address the declining birthrate and child welfare by presenting the reading and interpretation results of the policy documents. Specifically, the above will be confirmed by tracing the discussions of the Council for Children's Future Strategies, the Council of Experts on the Promotion of Policies for Children, and the Council for Children and Families, and the Subcommittee on Children and Child Rearing Support. This subcommittee begins with the problem awareness that the characteristics of recent system formation are such that the objectives are not clearly defined at the beginning, and the way of operating the system is gradually transformed as it is implemented, operated, and reexamined before its final form is created. This report discusses the measures to address the declining birthrate. Its purpose is to explain the premises for the specific discussions on establishment criteria and operating expenses presented in the second and third reports.

KURODA Ashiya (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research)

Changes in Facilities and Operation Standards for Daycare Centers and Their Significance

From the perspective of ensuring the quantity and quality of childcare, daycare centers' facilities and the appropriate allocation of personnel in these facilities are important issues. The standards for these issues, which were established in the "Standards Concerning the Facilities and Operation of Child Welfare Facilities (Ministry of Health and Welfare Ordinance No. 63, December 29, 1948)", have undergone several revisions since their enactment in 1948, and these revisions reflect the childcare needs and ideas regarding childcare at the time of each revision. Additionally, these standards were made into local ordinances in 2011 following the partial enforcement of the so-called First Decentralization Act, and although the minimum standards of many items are still indicated as "standards that should be met," the trend toward decentralization has also had a significant impact on the approach to implementing these standards. Therefore, this report will clarify the changes in the philosophy of childcare and the significance of standards in childcare policy, as seen from these standards, by confirming the content of these standards and analyzing the social situation and policy issues at the time of their revision.

IZUMIDA Nobuyuki (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research)

Changes in Subsidy Contributions and the Behaviors of Local Governments with Respect to Children and Childcare

A certain amount of time has passed since the measures related to children and child rearing were placed on the chopping block as a policy issue in the form of measures to address the declining birthrate. During this time, changes have been made to system and budget measures, such as the implementation of the new Childcare and Child Rearing System in 2015

and the transition to general funding for public daycare centers' operating expenses in fiscal 2004. These changes are believed to have directly impacted the policies adopted by the local governments that directly deal with the children and parents affected by these policies. Therefore, to consider the future approach toward children and the childcare system, it is very important to empirically confirm how budgetary measures and system changes have affected the behaviors of local governments. In this report, data on the financial results of local governments in the Tokyo metropolitan area and other data will be collected and then organized by focusing on the measures for pre-elementary school children and children in kindergartens, nursery schools, childcare centers, and other facilities. Statistical analysis will be used to clarify the relationship between the actual child- and childcare-related measures of local governments, the status of subsidies and contributions, and the financial situations of local governments. The detailed results of the analysis will be reported on the day the report is released.

Discussant: TAKEZAWA Junko (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research)

12:45-14:45 Paper Session [E]

Care

Chair: SUZUKI Noriko (Japan Women's University)

QUAN Ming

(Yokohama National University Graduate School of International Social Sciences, Graduate student)

Reexamining the Refamilisation of Caring in China: A Double Responsibilities of Care Perspective

Previous research on family care responsibilities in China has highlighted trends such as housewifization and refamilisation/regendering. However, discussions on the specific details seem to be more advanced in theory than in empirical evidence. This report provides new empirical insights and approaches to the debate on defamilisation and refamilisation in welfare regime studies through the lens of double care. By incorporating the perspective of double care, this paper constructs a multifaceted empirical model of care that considers gender, region, age group, and employment patterns. By capturing the changing aspects of family care, it identifies various patterns of refamilisation. Specifically, three patterns emerged: "refamilisation of grandchild care only," "refamilisation of parent care only," and "refamilisation of double care involving both grandchild and parent care." Furthermore, in situations where grandchild care and parent care overlap (double care), the paths of refamilisation show diverse directions depending on gender and age. This translation maintains the academic tone and key concepts of the original Japanese abstract, accurately conveying the research focus on double care and refamilisation patterns in China's changing family care landscape.

KAMEYAMA Yuki (Hokkaido University, Graduate School of Education, Doctoral Student)

Theoretical Grounds for Opening the Option Not to Care

When addressing the issues faced by carers, including children, it is necessary to consider not only the continuation of caregiving but also the option of refraining from caregiving. The concept of "right not to care" can be proposed as a supportive framework for this perspective,

but it is not yet sufficiently grounded in normative theory. Therefore, this study refers to Kittay's vulnerability model and the relational model proposed by Miyamoto and Oshitani to explore the theoretical grounds for opening the option not to care.

The results indicate that, particularly regarding the relational model, it is significant to explain why children should not bear excessive caregiving responsibilities from the intrinsic perspective of realizing a "good care relationship." However, the relational model required a certain level of step-by-step reasoning in fulfilling the needs of care relationship participants, which serves as one basis for determining whether a care relationship can be considered a "good care relationship." In this respect, Nussbaum's capability approach provides a more direct framework for discussion and proves useful in opening the option not to care.

YAMANAKA Shikatsugu (Nonprofit Organization Kinki area activity network)

Nursing care worker shortage problem and solutions

— Introducing the Care New Deal policy —

Japan is suffering from a serious labor shortage, and the nursing care industry is facing an even more serious labor shortage. The age group of nursing care workers is also high, and as the super-aging society progresses, the use of nursing care will continue to increase. However, the number of people currently working will also be aging and retiring, and by around 2040, the number of people working in day care facilities will increase. It has been pointed that facilities that currently operate only four days a week.

Efforts are being made to hire foreign human resources to combat the labor shortage, but rising wages in developing countries do not allow for an increase in visits to Japan, and nursing care is an industry in which it is difficult to make up for the labor shortage through the use of AI. be. In that case, the only way to improve their treatment is to improve their treatment. However, it is not possible to improve the treatment of care workers without raising user costs and long-term care insurance premiums, but this is not a good idea as it is expected to lead to public opposition and economic devastation. Therefore, we propose the introduction of the Care New Deal policy, which aims to improve the treatment of care workers using government bonds and currency issuance as financial sources.

12:45-14:45 Paper Session [F]

Handicapped Person

Chair: TAMIYA Yuko (Kobe Gakuin University)

TERADA Gaku (Graduated from the School of International and Public Policy, Hitotsubashi University)

Definition and issues of "persons with disabilities" under the Act on Employment Promotion of Persons with Disabilities

Under the Act on Promotion of Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Regardless of the specific disability, all persons with disabilities who are unable to work are entitled to employment support services. However, under the mandatory employment system (a system under which employers with a certain number of regular employees have the duty to employ persons with disabilities at a statutory employment rate), the persons with disabilities that employers must

employ are limited to the physically disabled, intellectually disabled, and mentally disabled, and are also limited to those with a disability certificate.

Therefore, while the Act on Promotion of Employment of Persons with Disabilities is designed to restrict the mandatory employment system, which is a strong regulation on the labor market, it also provides a wide range of employment support services to persons with disabilities who are not covered by that system.

However, is the idea of this law being realized? This study conducted a survey of four public employment security offices. Additionally, it was found that the requirement to be unable to work, which is a requirement for receiving support, is not working in practice.

YAMADA Atsuhiko (Faculty of Economics, Keio University),

MOMOSE Yu (Faculty of Economics, Ryutsu Keizai University)

Pension Levels Required for Pensioners with Mental Disabilities not to Receive Concurrent Public Assistance and the Impact of Pension Increases on Their Employment Rates: Estimates Based on the Standard of Living (SoL) Method and the Actual Cost Method

The proportion of disability pensioners in Japan is lower than in Western countries. Nevertheless, since the 1990s, there has been an increase in the number of disability pensioners due to mental or intellectual disability has been observed, which has occurred independently of demographic changes.

On the other hand, among those receiving disability pension, those with mental disabilities and the third level of Employees' Disability Pension, which is considered to have the lowest level of disability, are the most likely to fall into poverty, and indeed their proportion of receiving public assistance is high. One reason for this is that in 1985, only the benefit level for Level 3 of the Employees' Disability Pension was drastically reduced due to the large number of people in employment.

This paper uses individual data from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's Survey of Disability Pension Recipients at three points in time (2009, 2014 and 2019), focusing on disability pension recipients based on mental disability, to (1) estimate the range of increases in disability pension levels required to avoid concurrent receipt of public assistance based on two methods: the standard of living method and the actual cost method. (2) The study also examines the possibility of how much an increase in the pension level would affect the employment rate.

15:00-17:00 Special Theme Session 6

History of Economically Disadvantaged Individuals and Characteristics of Support for Them in Sanya, Tokyo

<Theme of the Session>

History of Economically Disadvantaged Individuals and Characteristics of Support for Them in Sanya, Tokyo

The Sanya area in Tokyo, once a "city of day laborers," is today also known as a "city of welfare." Those who reside in the Sanya area include not only aging day laborers but also people who experience various difficulties in their daily lives. Unique systems and policies have

been put in place to help the people in Sanya cope with these difficulties. In addition, voluntary activities are carried out by support groups with various backgrounds, such as labor movements, support groups against poverty, and religious groups. As such, the Sanya region, where support for people with various difficulties in their lives is being practiced, is considered to be an area of great significance in envisioning the future of social policy.

Therefore, in the first report, we elucidate the background of their pathways into the Sanya area based on interviews with economically disadvantaged individuals in the area. In the second report, we clarify the background of support groups' entry into the Sanya area in the midst of its formation and transformation. In the third report, we focus on the case of employment support to show some aspects of support in Sanya.

OKAMOTO Takeshi (Hitotsubashi University, Graduate Student),

HARADA Genki (Takasaki City University of Economics),

HANDA Ryoji (Hitotsubashi University, Graduate Student),

SON Uisub (Hitotsubashi University, Graduate Student)

Challenges in Policy Support for the Loss of Life and Employment Foundations: Insights from Interviews in Sanya Area

This report presents key characteristics identified from an analysis of interviews conducted with economically disadvantaged individuals living in the Sanya area of Tokyo. The study aims to shed light on the pathways leading to residence in Sanya and the background factors necessitating support in this region. The research, which began in August 2021 and is still ongoing, draws on the findings of semi-structured interviews conducted thus far. The analysis highlighted three notable points: 1) When individuals lose ties with their parents by the time they complete high school, their life trajectories tend to become significantly unstable; 2) Difficulty in performing physical labor often leads to challenges in continuing employment around the age of 50, leaving limited options for alternative work; 3) For individuals in this age group, housing instability is directly linked to job loss, especially when returning to their family home is not an option. These findings suggest potential limitations and challenges in current policy support, particularly in addressing the needs of 1) individuals who lack emotional and familial support, 2) those for whom office work is not a realistic alternative, and 3) those unable to secure housing without stable employment.

SON Uisub (Hitotsubashi University, Graduate Student)

How the Sanya district Became a "Welfare Town"

The transformation of the Sanya district from a "town of day laborers" to a "welfare town" has been explained in previous studies mainly in terms of the decline of the yoseba function and the aging of the day laborers. However, there has been little academic research on the questions of "who" and "why" the needy, including those living on the streets, have come to be supported during this transformation, and how solidarity among such supporters has been achieved.

In this report, we examine the institutionalization of support for the needy in the Sanya district and the context in which the comprehensive livelihood support system, including consultation support, housing support, healthcare, and long-term care for the needy without relatives, has been formed. The results reveal that the Sanya district has become a "welfare

town” through the transformation of individual contexts, with a system of cooperation established by activist groups, religious organizations, and health and medical professionals.

HANDA Ryoji (Hitotsubashi University, Graduate Student)

A Case Study of Employment Support in the Sanya Area

This report examines the support provided by nonprofit organizations (NPOs) in the Sanya area, focusing on the content of their employment support services and interviews with users of these services. While welfare state reforms are being implemented with “welfare to work” as a keyword, employment support services and programs are becoming increasingly important in areas such as poverty, youth, and labor policy. Discussions of workfare suggest that the implementation of employment support is intended to reduce reliance on welfare. However, there are multifaceted aspects to these programs, including employment supported by welfare benefits, employment with care, and diverse forms of support aimed at facilitating employment. In employment support programs, the number of people employed is typically evaluated as an outcome. However, the reasons that such programs succeed in leading individuals to employment are not always obvious. This report seeks to clarify who utilizes employment support services and what types of support these services provide.

Discussant: GOTO Hiroshi (Rikkyo University)

15:00-17:00 Paper Session [G]

Long-term Care Insurance and Pensions

Chair: SUZUKI Miki (Rissho University)

ISHIDA Makoto (Osaka Metropolitan University, Graduate student)

Regional Disparities in Long-term Care Insurance Premiums and Care Costs in Japan: An Exploratory Study Using the Jaccard Coefficient and Hierarchical Clustering for Insurer Classification

This study analyzes equity in the long-term care insurance system from the dual perspectives of insurance premium burden and care costs. Previous research focused on differences among insurers (municipalities) and detected outliers using coefficient of variation and quantile analysis for per capita care costs among those aged 65 and older (2012-2022) and standard premium rates (from the 5th period [FY2012-2014] to the 9th period [FY2024-2026]). The findings revealed an increasing trend in the number of insurers showing outlier values for care costs, while the number of outliers in standard premium rates shifted from an increase through the 8th period to a decrease in the 9th period.

In this presentation, we employed the Jaccard coefficient to analyze the overlap of insurers showing outlier values in both standard premium rates and care costs, and attempted classification through hierarchical clustering. The results indicated limited correlation between the two factors as of 2022, with distinct regional characteristic-based typologies emerging. These findings suggest potential new challenges in fiscal adjustment mechanisms among insurers under the current premium calculation system.

YOSHIDA Kenzo (Aoyama Gakuin University, Department of Economics)

Why Did Hybrid Pensions Not Gain Acceptance in the United States?: A Focus on the Conflicts over Cash Balance Plans

Since the late 20th century, one of the central debates in global pension policy has concerned the choice between defined benefit (DB) and defined contribution (DC) plans. This choice involves the allocation of retirement income risks — whether they are borne by plan providers or individual participants — each approach offering distinct advantages and limitations. Positioned between these two extremes, hybrid pension plans represent a compromise, aiming to share risks between providers and participants. Prominent examples of such plans can be observed in Sweden, the Netherlands, and Japan. In the United States, where corporate pensions underwent a rapid shift from DB to DC plans, hybrid plans — one prominent type being cash balance (CB) plans — gained significant traction and attention in the early 2000s. However, these plans ultimately failed to achieve widespread acceptance in the U.S. This study seeks to explore why this “third way” did not gain traction in the United States and to assess the broader implications of this outcome for the future of 21st-century pension systems.

15:00-17:00 Paper Session [H]

Child

Chair: CHIKAMA Yoshiyuki (Kagoshima Prefectural College)

MATSUBARA Akira

(Tokyo Metropolitan University, Graduate School of Humanities, Graduate Student in Ph.D. Program)

Where and how often children spend time after school?: An empirical study based on cluster analysis using integrated data from surveys of local governments

In recent years, there has been an increase in policy discussions on places for children after school (“Ibassho”), and such places, run both by public and private organizations, has been on the rise. However, there are not many empirical studies that investigated where and how often children spend time after school. Some studies show relationships between family income and the children’s frequency of cram school and lessons using quantitative analytical methods, but these studies only provide descriptive analyses.

Therefore, this paper empirically analyzes where and how often children spend time after school, using integrated data from several surveys conducted by local governments. This analysis classifies where and how often children spend time after school, and analyze if these classifications are associated with individual demographics, such as socio-economic status, and regional factors. By focusing on these differences and patterns, this study can provide useful implications for policy and practice regarding places for children.

KATO Hodaka (Fukushima University)

Analysis of truant students using health observation application data

According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology’s “Survey on Problematic Behavior of Children, School Nonattendance, and Other Student Guidance Issues,” the number of truant children in Japan has increased for 11 consecutive years, and by

2023 the number of truant children per 1,000 students reached a record high of 37.2 students. Academic studies on the causes of this increase in the number of truant student are still in their infancy.

Therefore, in this study, we attempted to analyze the background factors of truancy by extracting keywords that were thought to be related to truancy from the comments recorded on the “health observation application” that was introduced in many schools when the new coronavirus infection spread, and by analyzing the relationship between truancy and the keywords. As a result, we observed an association between sleep-related keywords and truancy as well as keywords that clearly evoked truancy, such as “I don’t want to go” and “I’m scared”. From this, it can be inferred that there is a need for educational program that take into account the life rhythm characteristics of students.

NITTA Ryodai (Tokyo Metropolitan University, Graduate School of Humanities, Graduate Students Master’s program), **AOKI Kenji**, **OGIWARA Tamaki**, **MATSUBARA Akira**, **KONDO Takayuki**, **ABE Aya** (Tokyo Metropolitan University, Graduate School of Humanities, Graduate Students Master’s program)

Respect for children’s opinions at home: Analysis from a large-scale, child answered survey

The Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates that children have the right to be respected for their opinions and the right to participate in decision-making. Accordingly, the “Basic Act on Children’s Policy” and the “General Principles for Child-Related Measures” emphasise the importance of these rights. However, little is known about children’s own perceptions of how their opinions are respected and how they are able to participate in decision-making, especially at home where everyday decisions affecting their lives are made.

Therefore, this study examines children’s assessment regarding having their opinions respected and being able to participate in decision-making at home, using micro-data from questionnaires administered to students in grades five, eight, and aged 16-17 in Tokyo. The analysis examines which children’s attributes are related to their assessment and whether they are associated with children’s ‘self-esteem’, ‘life satisfaction’ and ‘subjective health’.

15:00-17:00 Paper Session [I]

WorkCareer

Chair: NAKAMURA Akie (Research Institute For Advancement Of Living Standards)

SETO Kentaro (Rikkyo University), **NASU Rantaro** (The University of Tokyo Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies. Doctoral Student)

Changes in the structures and returns of tasks from the point of view of promotions

The aim of this presentation is to explore two points from the viewpoint of Task approach. One is that what tasks workers perform contribute to promotions. The other is whether tasks which contribute to promotions change or not according to occupations and periods. In Recent years, the number of research in the relationships between technological changes and structural changes of the industry and the structure of tasks in labor markets has increased. On the other hand, we pay little attention to changes in the value of tasks over time, especially in quantitative analysis.

In this presentation, we match two data: Japanese version of O-NET provided by the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training and three SSM surveys during 1995-2015. And we show how the value of tasks workers perform changed by examining contributions of tasks to promotions.

TANAKA Kazutoshi (Polytechnic University, Professor Emeritus)

The problem of prejudice against the “apprenticeship” due to the “Japanese view of democracy”: One of the factors behind the decline in vocational education and training

The people support for vocational education and training in Japan is not as high as in Western countries, and the reality is that it is not respected. I believe the reason for this lies in the view of “democracy” that is unique to Japan, particularly after the war. This is a belief in “education” and, on the flip side, a Japanese-style criticism of the “apprenticeship.” This report will focus on the latter issue in particular. This is linked to the strange title of the “Labor Standards Act”, “Eliminating the Harmful Effects of Apprentice” and I believe it is a factor in creating the situation we find ourselves in today.

15:00-17:00 Paper Session [J]

Policy Decisions and Impacts

Chair: KAKU Hou (Doshisha University)

NISHIMURA Yukimitsu (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research)

Basic issues for EBPM in Japan: Bias in program evaluation and performance evaluation, overemphasis on statistics and underestimation of qualitative research, and shortage of statistical investigator/interviewer

Recently, there is growing attention being paid to EBPM (Evidence Based Policy Making). This is a trend that cannot be overlooked for social policies, politician, government ministries and local governments. In current academic research, public administration studies trace the overall picture of EBPM, and economics is centered on the use of statistics. In short, while the policy-making process has been criticized so far for being based on episodes without a policy-making process, these studies are now interested in the procedures and performance evaluation of administrative programs, as well as methods of RCT (randomized controlled trials).

In this presentation, I will re-examine EBPM including the criticism that it is merely a rehash of the formalities of past policy-making and project evaluation and I will also examine the problems inherent in the survey data that forms the basis of the evidence from the perspective of the survey conduction body.

In particular, in constructing evidence based on statistics, I will focus on the weaknesses of recent statistics — one of the non-sampling errors — in securing and training statistical investigator/interviewer (including registered investigator) and I present the fundamental challenges of EBPM extracted from various statistical reform reports and Statistics Commission minutes.

MAEURA Hodaka (The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training),
NISHIMURA Itaru (Chuo University)

The Process of Determining the Minimum Wage: A Case Study of 13 Local Federations

The objective of this report is to clarify how minimum wages are determined in the regions. In recent years, there has been an unprecedented acceleration in the revision of minimum wages as a result of government initiatives aimed at wage increases. Consequently, the national weighted average regional minimum wage for fiscal year 2024 stands at 1,055 yen.

Regional minimum wages are established based on guidelines provided by the Central Minimum Wage Council; however, the rate of increase varies across regions. Previous studies on minimum wages have not adequately addressed the reasons behind these regional discrepancies or the involvement of the relevant actors.

Therefore, this paper elucidates the actual processes involved in minimum wage determination through the examination of coordination activities between and within labor and management during the revision of minimum wages. The findings from interviews conducted with 13 local federations reveal the following: (1) Local federations set their own medium- and long-term targets prior to tripartite discussions; (2) Local federations have their own comparators (other prefectures), and decisions regarding the wage amounts are made with due consideration to the circumstances of these comparators; (3) Wage amounts are pre-discussed with employers' organizations based on the estimated figures for the given year; and (4) Trade unions factor in the management conditions of local companies during consultations. Thus, there is notable coordination between and within labor and management, indicating that the subjectivity of the tripartite parties in determining minimum wages remains intact.

TAKAHASHI Yoshiaki (Meikai University)

Infectious disease awareness in post-COVID-19 pandemic: Exploring social factors

It has been about two years since the COVID-19 infection was classified as Class 5 in the Infectious Diseases Act in May 2023. However, infectious diseases continue to spread in Japan, for example, in 2024, hand, foot and mouth disease was the highest in the past 10 years in July, mycoplasma pneumonia was the highest in the past 10 years in October, and influenza was the highest ever since statistics were collected at the end of the year. The reason given is that the number of people who have become immune due to corona countermeasures has decreased, but is that the only reason? This study aims to focus on changes in people's attitudes toward infectious diseases after the corona disaster. Specifically, our survey respondents in March 2021 was followed in February 2024 to compare their attitudes toward infectious diseases (n=4,696).

As a result, opinions such as "I will not be infected," "Young people will not become seriously ill even if they are infected," and "It is not a problem even if there are many people, as long as you do not talk" were minority opinions and no statistically significant differences were observed. On the other hand, there are statistical differences in the statement that "the three Cs (closed spaces, close contact, and crowded places) should be avoided," with those who agreed (= completely agree + somewhat agree) decreasing from 71.7% to 51.2%, and those who disagreed (= completely disagree + somewhat disagree) increasing from 24.5% to 44.3%. Due to such awareness, the number of people who do not wear masks at all when going out also increased dramatically from 1.7% to 24.4%. Measures to prevent infectious diseases that take such awareness of infection into account are required.