

Japan Association for Social Policy Studies (JASPS) 152nd Conference

The University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan

23-24 May 2026

DAY 1 (23 May 2026)

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

<p>9:30-11:30 Special Theme Session 1 (International Exchange Committee) Reconsidering “Work” in the Welfare State: Connecting Markets, Institutions, and Citizenship</p>

Coordinator / Chair: YAMAZAKI, KEN (Meiji University)

<Theme of the Session>

Since the 2000s, social policy research has increasingly moved away from viewing work as the primary basis of livelihood security, reflecting the maturation of welfare states and the expansion of benefits and services. Scholarly attention has shifted toward redistribution, social protection, and the design of welfare services. In recent years, however, the rise of low-paid and precarious employment, in-work poverty, and the marginalization of migrant and informal workers has made it difficult to explain contemporary realities without placing work back at the center of analysis. This session reconceptualizes the welfare state as an institutional nexus linking labor markets, income security, and social citizenship, and examines—through comparative perspectives from Europe, the United States, and Japan—how the connection between work and welfare has transformed and where it has begun to malfunction from an institutionalist standpoint.

MARX, IVE (University of Antwerp)

To What Extent Can Minimum Income Protection Remain Central to the Welfare State? — In-Work Poverty and the Institutional Dilemma

Examines the institutional dilemmas embedded in the relationship between labor, income protection, and the welfare state from a comparative institutional perspective. Analyzes the limitations of work-centered social policy—so-called Make Work Pay approaches—by situating them within the expansion of in-work poverty and the functional constraints of minimum income protection schemes. Highlights the tensions that emerge between employment activation and poverty alleviation as

competing policy objectives across different institutional settings, and demonstrates from a macro-comparative and empirical standpoint that excluding labor from the core analytical framework of social policy is no longer viable.

VALENZUELA, ABEL Jr. (UCLA)

Institutional Boundaries and Rule Formation (U.S. Governance)

Depicts labor practices emerging at the margins of institutional protection and the rule-making processes that develop there, from the perspectives of industrial relations and urban studies. Focuses on how workers situated outside the welfare state’s conventional frameworks of “standard employment” and formal citizenship engage in quasi-institutional forms of organization to shape regulation and establish standards. In doing so, it renders visible how the boundaries of social citizenship are constructed, negotiated, and destabilized.

ABE, AYA (Tokyo Metropolitan University)

Reach and Implementation of Minimum Income Protection in Japan: Evidence from Empirical Poverty Research

Examines the current operation of minimum income protection in Japan through empirical analyses based on survey and administrative data. Focusing on programs such as public assistance, the study evaluates the extent to which support reaches low-income populations by analyzing take-up patterns, household-type differences, and poverty risks. It also explores how recent changes in income distribution—particularly low-wage employment and single-parent households—relate to patterns of program use. Grounded in empirical evidence rather than theoretical framing, the analysis clarifies which groups are effectively covered by existing income support schemes and where gaps remain, thereby illustrating how transformations in the labor market intersect with the practical operation of minimum income protection in contemporary Japan.

9:30-11:30 Paper Session [A] Peer Support
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Chair: GUO, FANG (Doshisha University)

MA, ZIYU (Hitotsubashi University / Postgraduate Student)

The Institutionalization of Peer-Based Support Systems in Alcoholism Recovery Facilities in Japan: The Case of Minowa MAC

This study examines the factors that have enabled the institutionalization of the peer-based support system overtime in MAC, a Japan-specific alcoholism recovery facility, focusing on the intermediate facility “Minowa MAC.” Introduced from the United States in the late 1970s, MAC emerged as Japan’s first rehabilitation facility for alcohol dependence. Focused on client-led operations and an

AA-derived Twelve-Step program, it has functioned as an intermediary connecting psychiatric hospitals and mutual-help groups. However, it remains unclear how MAC has sustained its peer-support system while navigating major organizational challenges: including financial difficulties in the 1990s, followed by adoption of the disability welfare policies published in the early 2000s.

Based on the analysis of relevant primary sources, the findings suggest that MAC's long-term stabilization has been strengthened not only by institutionalization, but also by internal reconfiguration. This reconfiguration mechanism enables staff to pass Twelve-Step practices to clients, and clients themselves to become new staff, thereby enabling the cyclical transmission of experiential knowledge.

ISHIDO, SHUNKI (Osaka City University / Postgraduate Student)

The Transformation and Tensions of Community Work in the UK, 1980s and 1990s: From Social Movement Practice to Institutional Reorganisation

This report aims to examine how community work in the UK during the 1980s and 1990s was discussed and how its practice was reshaped within the context of the institutional reorganisation of social work and the development of neoliberal policies. In the 1960s and 1970s, community work in the UK was closely connected to residents' movements and broader social movements that emerged in response to urban poverty and inequality, and it was developed as part of a social transformative practice that supported residents' organisation and collective action.

From the 1980s onwards, particularly during the period of the Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher, the environment surrounding community work underwent significant changes due to the implementation of community care reforms, the advancement of professionalisation, and changes in funding and institutional arrangements. Drawing on contemporary debates on community work, this paper focuses on the tensions surrounding the roles of community workers that emerged in this context, as well as on the structural factors and the multi-layered nature of these changes. Through this analysis, the report seeks to explore the challenges and roles of community work during this period.

YAMAJI, KYOKO (Hiroshima Bunkyo University)

TANAKA, SATOKO (Prefectural University of Hiroshima)

Medical social work in assisting atomic bomb survivors (Hibakusha): Focus on the pioneer period

The current medical social work began in 1947, when the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander for the Allied powers (GHQ) took the initiative to place social work sections in public health centers. However, the U.S did not disclose the damage caused by the atomic bombings, and legal measures for Hibakusha support were not taken for a long time. The actual living conditions of Hibakusha were not actively disclosed. As a result, Hibakusha assistance was only partially practiced in the A-bombed cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The practice of Hibakusha assistance has been largely unknown.

This report focuses on the pioneer period of medical social work in Hiroshima after the war, up until

the 1970s, when medical social workers began to provide organized Hibakusha assistance. I would like to clarify what kind of practices were implemented to address the medical and welfare issues Hibakusha at a time when sufficient systems and resources were not yet in place. In this report, I will be viewed as a process of developing social activities to clarify the reality of the wide-ranging damage caused by the atomic bombings, while providing patient support at the micro level, together with Hibakusha.

9:30-11:30 Paper Session [B] History of Work

Chair: HAYASHI, AMI (Kanda University of International Studies)

TAIRA, MASASH (Kyushu Sangyo University)

Welfare Relief for the Economically Distressed and the Role of Day Labor Unions in Coal-Mining Areas: The Case of Ōmuta City, Fukuoka Prefecture in the Era of the Energy Revolution

The shift in Japan's primary energy source, commonly referred to as the "Energy Revolution", began in the 1950s. It created large numbers of unemployed coal workers and led to a rapid increase in applications for public assistance. In coal-producing municipalities, unemployment relief projects functioned alongside public assistance as a form of "public relief", transforming into a complementary relationship between the two systems. Ōmuta City in Fukuoka Prefecture, home to Japan's largest coal mine operated by the Miike Mining Works of Mitsui Mining (Mitsui Miike), experienced significant economic fluctuations tied to the rise and decline of the mine. As Mitsui Miike underwent rationalization, two forms were mobilized to support displaced workers. Yet, those facing economic hardship did not passively depend on these institutional measures. The Ōmuta branch of All Japan Day Labor Union developed diverse strategies to secure and improve the living conditions of its members, thereby influencing the very operation of public relief programs. This presentation examines the realities of relief for the economically distressed, in coal-producing regions during the Energy Revolution, focusing on two analytical perspectives: (1) the functions and transformation of the two forms of "public relief," and (2) the survival strategies pursued by the Ōmuta branch.

TANAKA, KAZUTOSHI (The Polytechnic University of Japan)

The Creation and Hybridization of the Term "Syokugyo Kunren": The Enactment of the "Vocational Training Act" in the Transformation of Concepts and Purposes

Prior to the enactment of the Vocational Training Act in 1958, public institutions used the term "Shokugyou-Hodou" and companies used the term "Ginousya-Yousei." The term "Syokugyo Kunren" became widespread in society after the enactment of the Vocational Training Act. However, it is unlikely that the term "Syokugyo Kunren" would suddenly be used in legislation. Furthermore, in the early postwar period, GHQ officials likely used the term "Vocational Training," which Japanese people

likely understood as "Syokugyo Kunren." Today, the law is called the "Human Resources Development Promotion Act," but "Syokugyo Kunren" remains its core term. Therefore, we will organize the process by which the term "Syokugyo Kunren" was created, the term "Syokugyo Kunren" as it has been used in law, and the concept as it is commonly used, and clarify the issues inherent in the term "Syokugyo Kunren."

9:30-11:30 Paper Session [C] Restructuring of Employment Relations and Gender
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Chair: HORIKAWA, YUURI (Wako University)

TSUSHIMA, YOHEI (Meiji University / Postgraduate Student)

The Contemporary Significance of Industrial Relations Theory in Analyzing Japanese Employment Relations: A Comparison with HRM Research Tending Toward “Unitarization” and “Psychologization”

This paper examines the contemporary significance of the Industrial Relations (IR) analytical framework for analyzing employment relations in Japan. Institutional economics, the theoretical foundation of IR, posits that employment rules emerge from collective bargaining and compromise between parties with conflicting interests—namely, capital and labor. Consequently, policy interventions aim to equalize the bargaining power between them. In contrast, recent HRM research tends to view employment issues as solvable through management techniques, often reducing them to the psychological states of individual employees. This paper bridges the debate on the “unitarization” and “psychologization” of Western HRM research with the evolution of personnel and labor management research in Japan, theoretically reinterpreting Japanese trends as a shift in “frames of reference.” Finally, it elucidates the challenges arising from the absence of an IR perspective and presents the analytical possibilities offered by its reintroduction.

SUN, YUE (Saitama University / Postgraduate Student)

How Do Performance Evaluation Systems Produce Gendered Labor?: An Analysis of Sales Processes in Chinese Commercial Banks

Although women make up a relatively large share of the workforce in China’s banking sector, gender inequality still exists. As market-oriented reforms have progressed, Chinese commercial banks have gradually introduced management and personnel systems that place strong emphasis on performance results. This study examines how performance evaluation systems that appear neutral on the surface actually produce gendered patterns of job placement through the everyday labor processes of frontline sales staff.

Using Bank A in China as a case study, this research proceeds in three steps. First, it analyzes how “valuable labor” is defined within performance-oriented evaluation systems that prioritize measurable

results. Second, it explores how sales staff understand performance indicators and how they carry out their daily sales activities in response to these evaluations. Third, it examines how these sales practices lead to the gendering of everyday labor. Through the preceding analysis, this study attempts to explain the structural gender inequalities hidden behind the female majority composition in the banking industry.

TSUCHIHASHI, YUNA (Saitama University / Postgraduate Student)

Suppression and Encouragement of Skill Development in Temporary Employment: Gendering Processes within the Operational Structure of the Temporary Employment Industry

Temporary employment agency work in Japan is characterized by a high proportion of female workers, many of whom are registration-based workers. They are employed by their temporary employment agencies on an assignment-by-assignment basis and paid accordingly. According to this business model, skill development is suppressed to keep employee remuneration low. In contrast, employment-based workers are permanent employees of the agencies, primarily male, and typically assigned to highly skilled tasks.

Their skill development is encouraged to command higher payment from client companies. Thus, a gendered structure has emerged within temporary employment agency work in which forms of employment, the nature of assigned tasks, and worker demographic characteristics are systematically interlinked. Previous research explained these realities in terms of individual employment choice and institutional differences between forms of temporary agency work. However, the gendering processes arising from the operational practices of the temporary employment industry have not been sufficiently examined.

This study focuses on temporary employment agencies and conceptualizes their efforts to retain workers as a “labor supply mechanism.” Based on this mechanism, the interconnected structure of operational processes is analyzed: 1) Sales activities targeting client companies, 2) the selection and assignment of workers, and 3) the evaluation of the worker’s job performance. These processes operate in conjunction to structurally shape the employment of temporary employment agency workers. The analysis reveals that in the process of evaluating a worker’s performance, skill development is either suppressed or encouraged.

This structural analysis recontextualizes the realities of worker genderization in temporary employment agency work.

11:30-12:45 Lunch Break

13:00-17:00 SPECIAL THEME SESSION

Work and Social Security in an Ultra-Aged Society

Chair: YAMADA, ATSUHIRO (Keio University)

Discussant: OSAWA, MARI (The University of Tokyo / Professor Emeritus)

<Theme of the Session>

In Japan, the declining birthrate and aging population are undermining the sustainability of our social systems, necessitating their restructuring. The population aged 65 and older has already reached 36.24 million, with the aging rate standing at 29.3 percent; furthermore, the total population is projected to decline from the current 123.8 million to 87 million by 2070. In particular, over the next 40 years, alongside the declining birthrate, the large Baby Boom and Junior Baby Boom generations will enter old age. Furthermore, the so-called “Hyougaki Generation”—who faced poor employment prospects—will also age and become pension recipients. While various employment and social security systems have been gradually reformed in light of these demographic trends, challenges remain numerous, and the outlook for the future is far from certain.

So, how should we prepare for and navigate this super-aged society? In an aging society, pensions, long-term care insurance, and health insurance are the cornerstones of the system designed to secure our lives. However, the individual burden of social insurance premiums is already extremely heavy, and there is strong public sentiment calling for measures such as tax cuts to increase workers’ “after tax earnings.” The nature of these burdens and the mechanisms of redistribution should be discussed. Furthermore, companies are only obligated to continue employing workers up to age 65, and it is not uncommon for wages to decrease for older workers. Employment among older adults reflects the gender gap in the working-age population and exacerbates these challenges. The “equal pay for equal work” policy has become crucial in addressing issues such as female poverty and in determining whether the treatment of older workers who remain employed is fair when compared to that of the working-age population. While discussions regarding the employment of older adults in the context of extending the retirement age tend to focus on older men, the issues of poverty and employment among older women cannot be dismissed. Employment generally offers positive aspects such as social participation and health promotion. Furthermore, given the limits to the “enhancement” of social security, there is a growing need to improve the employment environment to ensure individual independence and secure income during old age.

In the special theme session of spring conference 2026, we would like to discuss three interrelated issues concerning employment and social systems in the era of super-aging. Specifically, these are: (1) employment among older adults, (2) systems and governance related to long-term care, and (3) the future of social insurance contributions for workers. Through these discussions, we will explore the research and policies that will be required in the future. By bringing together the diverse expertise of members of the Japan Society for Social Policy, we aim to take a step toward envisioning the future of our nation’s institutional frameworks as Japan leads the world in the progression of super-aging.

SAKAMOTO, TAKASHI (Recruit Works Institute)

Household Finances and Working Styles of Older Adults in a Super-Aged Society

This report aims to elucidate the household financial structure of contemporary older adults facing increased longevity and a changing economic environment. It also examines the ideal state of employment in later life from the perspective of securing quality of life in old age.

Today, the advent of the "100-year life" era brought about by extended life expectancy, coupled with recent inflation and the suppression of public pension benefit levels, is significantly impacting the economic foundation of later life. Consequently, the necessity for older adults to work is increasing as a means to maintain their standard of living.

Against this backdrop, this paper investigates the structural changes in the household budgets of older adults and the actual shifts in their employment patterns, utilizing recent statistical data. Upon reaching mandatory retirement age or completing their extended employment periods, a certain proportion of contemporary older adults leave the companies they have worked for over many years to engage in alternative forms of work.

This paper specifically focuses on the reality of such "small jobs" in later life, which differ from conventional full-time employment. Furthermore, this study evaluates employment in later life not only in terms of economic necessity but also regarding how it can be balanced with older adults' well-being. Going beyond the mere perspective of labor supply, this analysis seeks to explore ways of working that contribute to a fulfilling life for each individual.

SUDA, YUKO (Toyo University)

Privatization, Financial Engineering, and Stewardship Challenges in Japan's Long-Term Care Insurance System

Public expenditures associated with the Long-Term Care Insurance (LTCI) systems in Japan continue to rise, despite the implementation of various measures by the government aimed at controlling these costs. Paradoxically, these efforts appear to have engendered new challenges, such as low wages for care workers and an increase in bankruptcies among LTCI service organizations, as a consequence of efforts to contain essential costs.

In addressing this complex issue, this study examines the evolution of private service organizations based on the perspective of organizational theory in the area of sociology. By conducting a twenty-year panel survey of LTCI's day- and in-home service organizations, this study reveals that private service organizations inherently strive for profitability and competitiveness. Specifically, these organizations employ organizational strategies conceptualized as financial engineering to effectively secure governmental funds and generate profits. Such strategies include practices like cream skimming and strategic manipulation of entry and exit from LTCI service activities. Furthermore, this financial engineering appears to generate new risks for service users.

Given the inevitability of private service organizations in a privatized LTCI system, this study posits that enhancing the function of stewardship is essential to balance the need to contain public expenditures with the interests of private service organizations and service users, ultimately facilitating the successful management of LTCI-related expenditures. This initiative signifies a departure from the

prevailing management principles rooted in the New Public Management doctrine, which prioritize competition, towards fostering collaborative efforts among stakeholders.

TAKAHASHI, MASAYUKI (Saitama University)

Revisiting Social Security Contributions and Social Insurance Schemes: A Fiscal-Sociological Perspective on Benefits and Burdens

Five social insurance programs—pensions, medical care, long-term care, employment, and industrial accident compensation—occupy a central position within the social security system in Japan. In particular, benefit expenditures and contribution burdens have increased in the three major programs of pensions, medical care, and long-term care, primarily due to population aging and low fertility. This development has coincided with growing instability in employment and income among the working-age population, thereby intensifying perceptions of intergenerational inequity with respect to benefits and burdens. Given the clear political limits to expanding financing through tax increases, the containment of social insurance contribution burdens—achieved mainly through the restraint of medical and long-term care benefits and increases in out-of-pocket payments—has effectively come to define the substance of the so-called “all-generation social security” reform agenda.

In light of these circumstances, any assessment of the current contribution burden borne mainly by the working-age population, and any consideration of future policy directions, must adopt a comprehensive perspective. Such a perspective should encompass the overall burden including taxation, the redistributive effects when benefits are taken into account, and the institutional structures that generate these outcomes. This study reviews, with reference to international comparisons, the distribution of tax and social insurance contribution burdens by income group and by generation. It then examines the division of roles between taxation and social insurance contributions, as well as key issues in prospective institutional reforms, in relation to the desirable future configuration of overall social security financing, integrating both benefits and burdens.

DAY 2(24 May 2026)

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

9:30-11:30 Special Theme Session 2 Policies against Declining Birthrates in Japan, South Korea and China

Coordinator: UZUHASHI, TAKAFUMI (Doshisha University / Professor Emeritus)

Chair: TANAKA, HIROMI (Osaka Metropolitan University)

Discussant: KAMIMURA, YASUHIRO (Nagoya University)

<Theme of the Session>

Compared with Western countries, the decline in birthrates in Japan, China, and South Korea has been remarkably rapid. What factors lie behind this trend?

Each country faces its own particular circumstances. South Korea has seen a continuous decline in fertility without any plateau. China implemented the one-child policy for many years. Japan entered an aging society earlier than China and South Korea and has already passed its demographic bonus period. These differences shape the demographic challenges each nation confronts.

Given these circumstances, do the three countries differ in their policy responses to declining birthrates? How do their respective policies understand the causes and background of low fertility? How do they perceive its impact on economic growth and social security systems? Moreover, none of the three countries appears to have succeeded in reversing the decline in fertility—what are the underlying reasons for this?

This subcommittee aims to compare the low fertility trends and policy measures of the three countries in order to uncover new findings and insights.

KIM, SUNG WON (The University of Tokyo)

South Korea's Shift in Low-Birthrate Policy: Toward a Society That Doesn't Presume Marriage?

South Korea began to experience declining fertility as a serious social problem in the early 2000s. Since then, the Korean government has actively implemented policies to address low fertility. However, despite more than two decades of such policy efforts, the decline has not been halted at all; rather, fertility rates have continued to fall and the situation has become increasingly severe.

In an attempt to break this deadlock, it is noteworthy that the Korean government has recently begun to promote 'Support for non-marital childbirth'. 'Support for non-marital childbirth' refers to policies that enable and assist individuals to have children without getting married. This represents a significant shift from 'low-fertility policies that premised on marriage' to 'low-fertility policies that does not

premise on marriage’

This paper examines the current situation in South Korea with regard to low fertility and related policy responses. Rather than merely describing the present conditions, it aims—through comparison with other advanced countries including Japan—to clarify how and why South Korea differs from these countries. With this comparative perspective in mind, the paper elucidates the process through which South Korea arrived at this policy shift and considers the theoretical and policy implications of this change in direction.

KAKU, HOU (Doshisha University)

China’s Declining Birth Rate and Countermeasures — How and Why They Differ from Japan’s

Japan has steadily implemented countermeasures against declining birth rates since the 1990s, against the backdrop of population decline. In contrast, China is facing a turning point in its population policy, as declining fertility and rapid population aging are occurring simultaneously as long-term consequences of the one-child policy. Although low fertility is a critical issue in both countries, differences can be observed in the processes through which it has emerged and in policy responses.

One key difference lies in the timing of policy implementation. Japan, through long-term efforts, has developed a wide range of systems, including childcare services, support for balancing work and childrearing, and financial assistance. By contrast, China’s countermeasures have only recently begun, and future policy developments warrant close attention.

While research on low-fertility policies has accumulated, there are relatively few studies that compare the two countries from the perspectives of institutional arrangements and policy formation processes.

The purpose of this report is to clarify why countermeasures against declining birth rates differ between Japan and China. To this end, it conducts a comparative analysis focusing on policy development, the process by which low fertility became a social issue, its underlying factors, and the characteristics of policy responses in both countries.

YANG, HUIMIN (Prefectural University of Hiroshima)

The Disconnect between Perceived Causes and Policy Responses to Japan’s Declining Birthrate: An Analysis of the Annual Health, Labour and Welfare Report, 1956–2025

As Japan’s declining birthrate has become increasingly severe, the government has implemented a wide range of measures, including the expansion of child allowances and support for balancing work with childcare and eldercare. However, limited attention has been paid to the underlying causal assumptions on which these policies have been formulated. One frequently cited explanation for the continued failure to reverse declining fertility is the divergence between causal recognition and policy responses: while delayed marriage and non-marriage are widely identified as the primary causes, policy measures have remained heavily focused on child-rearing support.

This study analyzes the Annual Health, Labour and Welfare Report from 1956 to 2025, examining

changes in the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare’s understanding of declining fertility from three perspectives: (1) recognition of causes, (2) perceptions of social impacts, and (3) policy responses. Through a textual analysis of the reports, this study clarifies the stages at which this divergence emerged and offers perspectives for rethinking Japan’s declining birthrate policies.

9:30-11:30 Special Theme Session 3

The Changing Role of Labor Unions in an Individualized Society

Coordinator: WATANABE, ASAMI (Iwate University)

Chair: SASAKI, TAKAO (Japan College of Social Work)

<Theme of the Session>

Labor unions are increasingly expected to respond to the diverse needs of their members. Whereas unions once primarily organized male regular employees, they now encompass a far more heterogeneous membership. Consequently, contemporary unions must address issues that reflect the varied circumstances of diverse workers. This panel examines these broader social changes—particularly those surrounding labor unions—and considers the challenges unions face in responding to the needs of diverse members within an individualized society. The first presentation (Takada) analyzes the transformation of the collectivist social foundations on which unions have traditionally relied, focusing on how solidarity-based collectivism can be recalibrated in the context of growing individualization.

The second presentation (Goto) examines union officers’ “union activity time,” exploring both the election of female officers and the evolving roles of union officers amid increasingly individualized member needs. The third presentation (Watanabe) investigates the development of “work style reform” initiatives undertaken by local labor–management bodies within large corporate groups, assessing their current status and the challenges they face.

TAKADA, KAZUO (Hitotsubashi University/ Professor Emeritus))

Labor Union in the Monadic Society

The trade unions became established in Britain in the mid-nineteenth century. By the early twentieth century, a political party founded by the trade unions had been formed, and by the mid-twentieth century that party had succeeded in creating a stable government. This was the achievement of the trade unions that, as the Webbs summarized in the 1920 edition of *Industrial Democracy*, had created a “state within the state.” Workers who built their careers as union members could even become cabinet ministers. Such a degree of social success was not realized in other countries, yet trade unions nevertheless strove to shape industrial relations structured around class confrontation. This orientation, however, collapsed in the 1970s and 1980s. The reasons were twofold: 1. the unions, which had been centered on manufacturing, were unable to adapt to an economy that had shifted toward the tertiary

sector; and 2. the collectivist society on which the unions had relied was transformed by the rise of individualism. This report focuses on the second of these developments, examining the relationship between individualization and collectivism (solidarity). The term “monadic society” refers to a characteristic of contemporary society as defined by the presenter, but this society does not simply seek individualism; rather, it needs to cooperate with each other to attain personal freedom. Because the realization of individual freedom requires some kind of communal relationship. The challenge of the present age is to seek the optimal balance between freedom and communal solidarity.

GOTO, KAYO (Labor Research Council)

“Union Activity Time” for Labor Union Officers

Promoting women’s participation—specifically, the election of female union officers—is a central priority for labor unions. Although the number of female officers has been increasing, union activities are often scheduled after working hours or on weekends. As a result, female officers are more likely than male officers to be single and without children. With the rise of dual-income households, the time demands of union activities have also become a critical factor for male officers in sustaining their roles.

At the same time, the composition of union membership is diversifying, with growing numbers of non-regular employees, older workers, foreign workers, and members balancing childcare or eldercare. As members’ working lives become more varied, their needs are increasingly individualized, and the responsibilities expected of union officers are likely to expand.

This presentation reexamines data from the “Next-Generation Union Leader Survey,” conducted by the Labor Research Council, focusing on changes and current patterns in officers’ time spent on union activities and their perceptions of that time. Based on this analysis, the study considers measures that would enable union officers to remain active while effectively balancing work, family life, and union responsibilities.

WATANABE, ASAMI (Iwate University)

Realities and Challenges of Local Labor–Management Work Style Reform

How are local labor–management actors within large corporate groups advancing work style reform? This presentation draws on interviews with labor and management representatives in Iwate Prefecture to clarify the current situation. Particular attention is given to flexibility in working hours and work locations. What challenges do labor and management face in securing such flexibility, and how do these challenges differ between headquarters and local branches, as well as between central union bodies and local union chapters?

Existing surveys and research on work style reform have largely focused on the headquarters functions of major corporate groups. In metropolitan areas such as the Tokyo region, the conditions surrounding workforce recruitment differ significantly from those in regional areas. In Iwate Prefecture, declining population and the rapid progression of low birthrates and population aging have led to a shrinking labor force, making it increasingly difficult for local companies to secure workers.

Against this backdrop, the presentation examines the realities and challenges of work style reform as pursued by local labor–management actors, with a focus on securing, retaining, and sustaining human resources.

9:30-11:30 Paper Session 【D】 Reconsidering Inequality and the Welfare State
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Chair: MATSUBARA, HITOMI (Shizuoka University)

NAITO, TOMOE (Seikei University)

NAKAGOME, RIO (Seikei University / Postgraduate Student)

Education Expenditures and Fertility

This study investigates the impact of household education expenditures on fertility in Japan. Despite the recent expansion of tuition-free education policies aimed at equalizing educational opportunities and addressing declining fertility, both the number of births and the fertility rate continue to decrease. Using data from the Japanese Panel Survey of Consumers (JPSC) for 2017, 2018, 2020, and 2021, this study employs fixed-effects and difference-in-differences (DID) models to estimate the relationship between education expenditures and the number of children, as well as to evaluate the effects of two policies: the tuition-free early childhood education and childcare program and the High School Tuition Support Fund.

The results indicate that higher education expenditures per child are associated with fewer children, with tuition costs having a particularly strong negative effect on fertility. Policy evaluation shows that tuition-free early childhood education and childcare has a statistically significant positive effect on the number of children. In addition, fathers' income is positively associated with fertility, while mothers' income has a negative association, suggesting that maternal employment and childbirth remain substitutes in Japanese households. These findings imply that reducing tuition burdens, strengthening financial support in early childhood, and improving institutional support for balancing maternal employment and childrearing are key to effective fertility policy.

YOSHIZAWA, YOHEI (King's College London / Postgraduate Student)

Disadvantage Clustering: Estimation of Japan's Relational Inequality Using Machine-learning

This paper proposes an innovative measure of relational inequality, which quantifies the extent to which the most disadvantaged social group overlaps across domains of welfare (e.g., income, educational achievement, health, mental well-being). To this end, I identify the most disadvantaged group in each domain by taking advantage of the machine-learning (ML) methods of inequality of opportunity (IOp) estimation developed recently (e.g., Brunori et al., 2023; 2024).

Wolff (2015) advocates for the de-clustering of disadvantages from the perspective of relational equality, the idea that a just society is one in which individuals relate as equals. He argues that, while

the most disadvantaged group will inevitably exist insofar as we compare groups based on a single metric (e.g., income), it is unjust when that group is constant across domains. In such cases, multidimensional disadvantages are clustered to one group. This suggests there is a fixated social hierarchy (i.e., an inegalitarian relationship).

Inspired by Roemer's (1998) work on formalizing the distributive ideal of equality of opportunity, the empirical IOP literature estimates the extent of inequality that is explained by the effects of individuals' uncontrollable circumstances (e.g., race, sex, disability, and parental education and occupation). While the literature has resorted to a regression-based approach (e.g., Ferreira & Gignoux, 2011), it has recently adopted ML algorithms to take a data-driven approach to model-specification (e.g., Brunori & Ferreira, 2024). The by-product of this is the identification of the most disadvantaged group based on the decision-tree generated by the ML process. I take advantage of this hitherto overlooked merit of ML-IOP to operationalize one of the distributive demands of relational inequality proposed by Wolff.

In particular, I use the conditional inference tree algorithm applied to IOP by Brunori et al. (2023). This ML algorithm partitions the overall samples into multiple non-overlapping subgroups based on the circumstance variables in the dataset (e.g., sex, parental education) in reference to the resultant subgroups' expected outcome (e.g., income). Thereby, a social group with the lowest expected outcome is identified. This group can be interpreted as the most disadvantaged group regarding the opportunity for the chosen outcome. I conduct this for multiple kinds of outcomes and quantify the extent to which the constituents of the most disadvantaged group overlap. This is done by simply taking the percentage of individuals that appear in the most disadvantaged group across domains of welfare.

I apply this estimation method to Tokyo University Social Science Research Institute Panel Surveys (young and middle-aged adults) regarding income, educational attainment, health, and mental well-being. I find that approximately 2.5% of the population (i.e., females, born to low-income families, with mothers with no educational qualification) are always present in the most disadvantaged group.

The contribution of this paper is largely twofold. First, this will be among the first studies that aim at measuring relational inequality (Segal, 2025). And second, it will be a novel method for measuring multidimensional deprivation, which, crucially, identifies the group of people that social policies should target, unlike existing ones (e.g., Alkire & Foster, 2011).

SATOGAMI, MIHOKO (Soka University)

UTSUMI, TOMOKO (Soka University)

The “Scale” and “Effectiveness” of State Involvement in Welfare and Labor: A Six-Country Comparison Using Women’s Work and Care as Analytical Focal Points

This study aims to analyze “labor” and the welfare state arrangements that shape it across countries by applying an analytical framework that conceptualizes state involvement along three dimensions: (1) the scale of public resource allocation (state size), (2) the effectiveness of policy implementation and

enforcement (state strength), and (3) the penetration of interventions into social norms and culture (state depth). A distinctive feature of the study is that it places women's work and care at the center of institutional comparison. By doing so, it incorporates dimensions that conventional welfare state theory has struggled to capture—namely, the degree to which institutions function in practice and the extent to which they influence gender norms—thereby proposing a gender-centered comparative framework that welfare state theory has not fully brought into its analytical scope. As a first empirical step, the present paper treats the scale dimension—already extensively operationalized in welfare state research—as a baseline condition, while focusing on the comparatively underexamined dimension of institutional effectiveness (strength), including monitoring, compliance, sanctions, and policy continuity. It conducts a six-country comparison of the United States, Germany, Sweden, Japan, Malaysia, and Singapore, and provides an empirical foundation for integrating the three dimensions in subsequent analyses.

9:30-11:30 Paper Session [E] Systems and Management
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Chair: NAKAZAWA, SHUICHI (University of Shizuoka)

TAKAHASHI, YOSHIAKI (Toyo University)

MIYAMORI, KAISHU (Meikai University/ Postgraduate Student)

The 1.03 Million Threshold: Did the Public Understand It Correctly?

The so-called “1.03 million threshold” became a subject of political debate in late 2024. However, it remains unclear whether the public adequately understood the implications of raising this threshold prior to expressing support.

A random-sample survey was conducted in Urayasu, Chiba, in October 2025 (n = 133; response rate = 22.2%). Survey items included awareness of the political debate, support for or opposition to the increase, understanding of its effects, support for or opposition after being presented with estimated effects, voting intentions for the House of Councillors election, and demographic attributes such as gender, age, and income.

The results showed that 70.0% of respondents were aware of the political debate, and 93.1% supported the increase. However, 50.8% incorrectly believed that individuals with lower annual incomes would experience a larger increase in take-home pay as a result of the policy. Furthermore, when informed that a flat-rate increase would generate a greater tax reduction effect for higher-income individuals, 27.3% of respondents shifted to opposing the increase, particularly among lower-income groups.

These findings suggest that in political debates, politicians and the media should move beyond simplified catchphrases and more clearly communicate the concrete distributional effects of proposed policies to enable informed public discussion.

AKAGI, KAZUKO (Kobe University)

**Comparing the Establishment of Prescription–Dispensing Separation in Japan and Korea:
A Focus on Political and Cultural Differences**

This report reexamines the historical processes through which prescription–dispensing separation was established in Japan and Korea. It aims to clarify why complete separation was implemented in Korea, whereas voluntary separation achieved up to 80% in Japan, and to elucidate the policy role played by prescription–dispensing separation.

In Japan, prescription–dispensing separation was once promoted based on the logic that it was necessary in order not to fall behind Western Europe. However, Eggleston argues that prescription–dispensing separation policies in East Asia emerged primarily as a means of controlling physician-induced demand, such as overprescribing, and that the expansion of health insurance coverage and increased public financing of medical care contributed to the promotion of these policies (Eggleston, 2012).

While supporting Eggleston’s analysis, this study emphasizes the importance of comparing two East Asian countries that followed similar institutional trajectories but differed in their historical timing and cultural contexts. By closely examining Japanese policy documents, institutional historical materials, and discourse-related articles, together with existing literature on the history of prescription–dispensing separation in Korea, this report analyzes differences in the establishment of prescription–dispensing separation from political and cultural perspectives, with particular attention to the process of social health insurance development.

SU, CHUYUN (Kyoto Tachibana University / Postgraduate Student)

**Progress of medical IT and improvement of hospital management in China - Interview survey
of Xinjiang Cardio-Cerebrovascular Disease Hospital -**

This study examines the Xinjiang Cardiovascular and Cerebrovascular Disease Hospital to explore how the implementation of medical information technology influences hospital management, clinical workflows, and patient behavior. The results demonstrate that adopting medical IT has markedly improved the hospital’s operational efficiency. Integrating electronic medical records and digital payment systems has shortened patient waiting times, streamlined administrative tasks, and enhanced overall patient satisfaction. Moreover, the growing use of online consultation platforms has supported the triage of patients with minor conditions, eased institutional healthcare burdens, and broadened access to medical services, including for international patients.

Despite these benefits, several challenges persist. Limited consultation time and the lack of non-verbal communication in virtual settings have increased physicians’ workload and psychological strain. Meanwhile, the patient-centered physician evaluation system, though promoting transparency, has also intensified performance pressure among medical staff. At the regional level, Xinjiang faces structural barriers to sustained IT implementation, such as inadequate hardware infrastructure, a shortage of

specialized personnel, and insufficient policy support. These disparities continue to hinder the effective and equitable utilization of medical information technology.

9:30-11:30 Paper Session 【F】 Transformation of Work
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Chair: SUZUKI, NORIKO (Japan Women's University)

SATO, NAOKO (Saitama University / Postgraduate Student)

Four Types of Factors Driving the Expansion of Non-Regular Employment in Local Governments

Previous research on the expansion of non-regular employment in local governments has largely focused reductions in regular employees, and empirical analyses concentrated on policy areas and occupations where non-regular employees are already prevalent, such as welfare services.

This paper examines the drivers of non-regularization through an analysis of ten workplaces in designated City A, including sites with both high and low proportions of non-regular employees. Drawing on interview data on task allocation between regular and non-regular employees and the decision-making processes underlying these arrangements, the study classifies the factors promoting non-regularization along two axes: changes in the number of regular employees and changes in the proportion of non-regular employees. Four types are identified: (1) responses to increased workloads, (2) compensation for reductions in regular staff, (3) accommodation of tasks designated for non-regular employees, and (4) responses to administrative reform.

The findings demonstrate that the expansion of non-regular employment cannot be understood solely as a response to fiscal constraints or reductions in regular staff. Rather, it proceeds through organizational judgments about which tasks are assigned to regular employees and which are delegated to non-regular employees.

These judgments are shaped less by the objective difficulty or importance of tasks than by shared values and contextual understandings within individual workplaces and across the organization as a whole.

KONNO, HARUKI (Komazawa University)

MATSUNAGA, SHINTARO (Hitotsubashi University)

A Study on “De-flexibilization” and Characteristics of Direct Control in Platform Work: Based on an Empirical Investigation of Amazon Platform Workers

Research on platform work has largely focused on its distinctive characteristic of piece-rate wage management via applications. Platform work is often referred to as “gig work,” as it typically involves contractual arrangements that do not establish continuous employment relationships but instead promise the completion of specific tasks. Historically, such piece-rate work has been understood as a

characteristic of indirect labor management in which employers do not exercise direct supervision. This understanding of platform workers also appears consistent with the fact that most of them work as independent contractors.

However, in recent years, an increasing number of platform workers have effectively worked full-time for the platforms. Previous studies on China's platform work have shown the progression of "de-flexibilization" within platform work. Based on this discussion, this study conducts interview-based research with platform workers at Amazon. The findings reveal that although Amazon initially adopted a typical piece-rate system, it later shifted to a daily wage system, thereby accelerating de-flexibilization. By analyzing the transformations in the form of labor brought about by this shift, this study demonstrates that the app-mediated indirect management of platform work has been reconfigured in a way that strengthens the aspect of direct control, even in the absence of direct human intervention. Furthermore, through comparison with prior research, this study clarifies the specific characteristics of direct control observed in Amazon's platform work.

HONDA, KOHEI (Rikkyo University)

PARK, JOONHEE (Doshisha University)

SETO, KENTARO (Kansai University)

Industrial Relations at Denden-kosha under Administrative and Financial Reform: How Privatization Policy Was Decided at the Rincho II

The purpose of this study is to examine in detail the debates over the privatization of the Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Public Corporation (Denden-kosha) within the second Provisional Commission on Administrative Reform (the Rincho II), based on primary sources such as minutes, internal documents, and union materials, and to clarify how the framework of administrative reform and privatization was formed, placed on the agenda, legitimized, and ultimately decided within specific political and institutional contexts. In the empirical analysis, considering that much of the existing literature has tended to treat privatization as a given policy outcome, the article focuses on the fact that in the First Report privatization remained merely "one of the items for consideration," while short-term fiscal responses—namely personnel reductions and operational rationalization—were emphasized. Nevertheless, under conditions of fiscal crisis and an unstable governing base, and through informal coordination processes, the Fourth Subcommittee of the Rincho II advanced a proposal for corporatization and reorganization. This proposal was justified by arguments concerning the enhancement of managerial autonomy, withdrawal from the constraints of the introduction of competitive principles. This study traces the chronological progression of the conflict between government, labor, and management over the Rincho II, alongside the process by which the Zendentsu found common ground in the holding company model, thereby revealing the privatization decision.

11:30–12:45 Lunch break and Education Session The Forefront of Social Policy Research Methods
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Chair: SENO, MUTSUMI (Hannan University)

1: HORIE, KAZUMASA (The University of Tokyo)
SETO, KENTARO (Kansai University)
MAEDA, KAZUHO (University of the Sacred Heart)

2: SUGANUMA, TAKASHI (Rikkyo University)
TANAKA, SOICHIRO (Komazawa University)

12:45-14:45 Special Theme and Paper Sessions

12:45-14:45 Special Theme Session 4 Quality of Welfare Services and Service Evaluation Systems

Coordinator: UZUHASHI, TAKAFUMI (Doshisha University / Professor Emeritus)

Chair: HIRONO, SHUNSUKE (Doshisha University)

Discussant: IKUTA, KAZUAKI (Nonprofit Corporation "Ichigo-Ichie")

<Theme of the Session>

Since the 1990s, the implementation of neoliberal reforms in the field of social welfare has increased the share of welfare service provision carried out by private for profit companies and nonprofit organizations. In parallel with this shift, a form of public regulation known as a “quasi market” has emerged. Strengthening supervision and evaluation mechanisms for welfare services has been one such measure.

Following the thematic session at the 150th Annual Conference in 2025, this session further examines issues related to the quality of welfare services and their evaluation systems.

The first presentation focuses on the gap between the current service evaluation system and actual practices in the field. The second presentation explores what the third-party evaluation system for welfare services means for both service providers and users. The third presentation takes a slightly different perspective by examining evaluation indicators for learning and daily-life support services for children.

Through these three presentations, the session aims to explore what kind of service evaluation system can genuinely contribute to improving the quality of welfare services.

KIM, WONKYUNG (Meijigakuin University)

KAKU, HOU (Doshisha University)

JEONG, HEESEONG (Kanto Gakuin University)

Current Status and Challenges of Service Quality and Evaluation in the Field of Elderly Welfare

Improving service quality is an urgent priority in the field of elderly welfare; however, the current "service evaluation" system does not necessarily align with the "quality service" pursued by practitioners on the ground.

Through semi-structured interviews with ten directors and managers of elderly care facilities, this report clarifies the conceptualization of "quality service" from a frontline perspective and identifies efforts being made toward improvement.

Furthermore, this study aims to understand the discrepancy between existing evaluation systems and frontline practices, while examining the ideal form of future evaluation frameworks.

IGAMI, KOH (Kobe International University)

The Essential Role of Welfare Service Evaluation Systems: Perspectives of Users and Providers

This report examines what third-party evaluation of welfare services means to users and businesses who are the demanders and suppliers of the services, based on information about businesses and evaluation institutions posted on the Internet.

Third-party evaluations are only meaningful if they are widely disclosed to the market. However, to what extent can users actually access and use the information from third-party evaluations? Also, what meaning do businesses find in receiving third-party evaluations? Using these as research questions, I aim to examine to what extent meaningful information is being shared with users and businesses in the welfare service market.

In doing so, I will also deepen our examination of the nature of service evaluation, using university accreditation evaluation systems as a comparison.

BABA, MISAKI (Prefectural University of Hiroshima)

TANAKA, SATOKO (Prefectural University of Hiroshima)

Evaluation Indicators derived from Practices in Child Learning and Life Support Programs

The Child Learning and Daily Life Support Program not only aims to improve academic performance but also serves as a gateway for improving living environments and providing support to entire households, thereby contributing to the development of community-based support systems.

However, evaluation indicators that can appropriately capture the practices of daily life support and the outcomes of child poverty measures—particularly output indicators that visualize the process—have not been sufficiently developed.

This study conducted semi-structured interviews with municipalities and implementing organizations that actively engage in daily life support, and organized the identified practices using a program evaluation framework to construct feasible output indicators.

The findings revealed common practices such as respecting children’s intentions, supplementing family functions, and coordinating with related agencies, suggesting that qualitative indicators are essential for evaluating these specialized and individualized practices.

Furthermore, from the perspective of policy evaluation, the study indicated that the commissioning municipalities’ involvement in needs assessment, monitoring of program processes, and qualitative evaluation is crucial for ensuring the quality of support.

12:45-14:45 Special Theme Session 5 Theory, Policy, and Practice of Intersectionality
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Coordinator: KANAI, KAORU (Saitama University)

Chair: SUZUKI, KYOKO (Chuo University)

Discussant: YONEZAWA, AKIRA (The University of Tokyo)

<Theme of the Session>

Intersectionality conceptualizes how structurally embedded power relations—such as gender, race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, and nationality—intersect to shape social relations and lived experience beyond single-axis categories. While intersectional scholarship has expanded within gender and feminist studies in Japan, its incorporation into Japanese social policy research remains limited. Policy frameworks grounded in standardized categories risk obscuring compounded forms of disadvantage and oppression and, in turn, reproducing structural exclusion of minorities.

This panel situates intersectionality within social policy research and assesses its analytical utility across theory, policy, and practice. The first presentation examines Buraku women’s engagements with public policy, elucidating how institutional power has historically legitimized exclusion. The second evaluates programs supporting “women facing difficulties”, foregrounding heterogeneity among women’s circumstances and the implications for program design and assessment. The third reconsiders intersectionality as a framework for theorizing majoritarian power and its institutionalized effects, extending the concept beyond its conventional positioning within minority-focused scholarship.

By integrating these perspectives, the panel identifies lacunae in the design, implementation, and evaluation of social policy and clarifies both the promise and the limits of intersectional approaches for advancing social policy studies. The session builds on discussions from the Gender Study Group’s reading session (September 2023) of Collins and Bilge’s Intersectionality, and aims to contribute interdisciplinary perspectives to the advancement of social policy studies.

KUMAMOTO, RISA (Kindai University)

Understanding Fukugo Sabetsu (Compound Discrimination) in Relation to Interlocking Systems: From the View of Buraku Women’s Policy Experiences and Negotiations for Policy Change

This report uses the policy experiences of Buraku women as a starting point for an intersectional understanding of discrimination as not additive based on attributes but as emergent from the interplay of institutional powers. That is, at the same time that representations of the Burakumin, order pertaining to intimate spheres, and norms defining the Japanese “ie” (i.e., household and family) all come into play in the implementation of housing, labor, social security, and other systems, these systems have shaped life choices. From Japan’s postwar period to its period of high economic growth, the distribution of resources to a normative center of families and workers has politically produced through policy people outside of this center. Policy experience refers to experiences of using and accessing systems, or not using and accessing them, as well as experiences of improving and proposing systems through administrative negotiations. Furthermore, it frames the institutionalization of Dowa childcare and maternal and child health supports as garnered from a movement that made gaps in systems visible and, therefrom, organized demands for policy remedies as a concrete means to procure their rights to life. Overall, this report demonstrates how the Buraku women’s movement assembled its logic for resisting the government’s denial of discrimination and its use of "general policies" and "administrative neutrality" as shields, and how it harnessed this logic to push for systemic change.

TAKAHASHI, MAMI (Ochanomizu University, Graduate student /The National Institute of Population and Social Security Research)

Challenges in Advancing Person-Centered Support in the Women’s Support Program: Examining “Women”-Focused Policy from an Intersectional Perspective

This research aims to examine the changes and challenges within the Women’s Support Program, established under the Women’s Support Act enacted in 2024, from an intersectional perspective. The predecessor of this program, the Women’s Protection Program based on the Anti-Prostitution Act, operated within an authoritarian framework aimed at rehabilitating and protecting “women at risk of prostitution.” As the program expanded its target population, its practices increasingly diverged from the actual circumstances of service users. The Women’s Support Program is positioned as an effort to move beyond these longstanding challenges by shifting toward a person-centered support system that targets all “women facing difficulties.” Drawing on interviews with practitioners engaged in women’s support, this research examines how the new policy framework has transformed support practices on the ground and the extent to which comprehensive support for the targeted “women” has become feasible. In doing so, it adopts an intersectional perspective that avoids treating women as a homogeneous group and instead attends to their diverse circumstances and backgrounds.

SHIN, KI-YOUNG (Ochanomizu University)

A Critical Expansion of Intersectionality: Backlighting the Power Structures of the Majority

This research aims to examine the changes and challenges within the Women’s Support Program, established under the Women’s Support Act enacted in 2024, from an intersectional perspective. The predecessor of this program, the Women’s Protection Program based on the Anti-Prostitution Act,

operated within an authoritarian framework aimed at rehabilitating and protecting “women at risk of prostitution.” As the program expanded its target population, its practices increasingly diverged from the actual circumstances of service users. The Women’s Support Program is positioned as an effort to move beyond these longstanding challenges by shifting toward a person-centered support system that targets all “women facing difficulties.” Drawing on interviews with practitioners engaged in women’s support, this research examines how the new policy framework has transformed support practices on the ground and the extent to which comprehensive support for the targeted “women” has become feasible. In doing so, it adopts an intersectional perspective that avoids treating women as a homogeneous group and instead attends to their diverse circumstances and backgrounds.

12:45-14:45 Paper Session 【G】 Institutionalization of Support
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Chair: TAMIYA, YUKO (Kobe Gakuin University)

MATSUMURA, SATOSHI (Nagoya City University)

The Dilemma of Institutionalization in Childcare Support: Transformation of Administrative Collaboration and Stakeholder Agency

This research aims to examine the changes and challenges within the Women’s Support Program, established under the Women’s Support Act enacted in 2024, from an intersectional perspective. The predecessor of this program, the Women’s Protection Program based on the Anti-Prostitution Act, operated within an authoritarian framework aimed at rehabilitating and protecting “women at risk of prostitution.” As the program expanded its target population, its practices increasingly diverged from the actual circumstances of service users. The Women’s Support Program is positioned as an effort to move beyond these longstanding challenges by shifting toward a person-centered support system that targets all “women facing difficulties.” Drawing on interviews with practitioners engaged in women’s support, this research examines how the new policy framework has transformed support practices on the ground and the extent to which comprehensive support for the targeted “women” has become feasible. In doing so, it adopts an intersectional perspective that avoids treating women as a homogeneous group and instead attends to their diverse circumstances and backgrounds.

WATANABE, YOTA (The University of Tokyo)

HAYAKAWA, KO (The University of Tokyo)

YAMAKADO, NAOFUMI (The University of Tokyo)

ONO, HANAE (The University of Tokyo)

YAMAUCHI, YUTAKA (The University of Tokyo)

KONDO, TAKEO (The University of Tokyo)

The Mechanism of Well-being Community Development by “Coordinators”: Towards

Integrating “Coordinator” Theory

This presentation aims to elucidate the mechanisms of coordinating the well-being communities, and to integrate the previously fragmented “coordinator” theories across disciplines, and connecting it with policy discussions.

Since the 1990s, Japanese society has faced worsening challenges including prolonged economic stagnation, labour market instability, declining birth rates and ageing populations, disasters, and social isolation. There has been a growing demand for “coordinators” who tackle issues across sectors and regions. While many coordinators have become institutionalised, particularly in education, welfare, and regional development, discussions often remain confined to each field. Consequently, research and practice examining coordinators as cross-cutting entities tackling challenges beyond sectoral and regional boundaries remain limited.

Since 2024, the presenters have conducted interviews and participant observation with outstanding youth support workers, NPO representatives, and social welfare council staff in Japan to examine the mechanisms of their cross sectoral and regional approach. This presentation examines ten cases of “coordinators” as a kind of mirror to illuminate the challenges within existing policies and systems of coordinators.

TOIDA, HARUMI (Hitotsubashi University / Postgraduate Student)

Policy of Parent–Child Separation in Postwar Japanese Child Guidance Centers: Production of Deviance through Formation of “Normality”

This paper aims to clarify, from a historical research perspective, why and how the focus of what was regarded as deviant from the standard of “normality” in postwar Japanese Child Guidance Centers shifted from children’s problems to parents’ problems. The study proceeds from the assumption that the more the policy ideal of a “normal” parent–child relationship becomes institutionalized, the more visible families that deviate from a homogenized image of parenthood become. Based on an examination of consultation pathways as well as intervention and placement systems within Child Guidance Centers, the analysis reveals that child abuse, as a social problem, was deeply implicated in this shift from children’s issues to parents’ issues. At first glance, the diffusion of “normality” throughout society may appear to represent an expansion of what is considered “normal.” However, reconsidered from a policy perspective, the penetration of “normality” also functions to produce deviance, suggesting that the category of the “normal” may in fact narrow even as the scope of policy problems expands.

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

Welfare Policy, Politics, and Local Governance

Chair: NAKAMURA, AKIE (JTUC Research Institute for Advancement of Living Standards)

MAEDA, YOSHIHIRO (Chikushi Jogakuen University)

Where Is the Japan's Rights Protection Policy Heading for?: An Analysis of the Policy of Promoting the Use of the Adult Guardianship System

This report will clarify the direction and characteristics of the Policy of Promoting Adult Guardianship System in Japan's adult guardianship system, and examine the characteristics of the discussions behind it.

The research method involves the following three steps:

1. Extracting characteristics from policy documents (especially materials related to the Act on Promotion of the Use of the Adult Guardianship System).
2. Examining the context in which the term community welfare was used in minutes of advisory council meetings and other meetings.
3. Conducting interviews with three practitioners who had experience providing consultations at core institutions established under the Policy of Promoting Adult Guardianship System to ascertain actual practice.

The Analysis of policy documents showed an emphasis on consultation, coordination, and the community. The advisory council's discussions revealed that the term community welfare was used in a variety of ways, leading to discussions of policy intentions that the council wanted to emphasize—such as emphasizing consultation support and collaborative networks, and promoting the activities of citizen guardians—as part of the Policy of Community Inclusive Society.

KATO, RISA (Ryutsukeizai University)

SHIN, SUNGSU (Nagoya University)

Decarbonization and Regional Welfare: Just Transition Policies and Energy Poverty in South Korea

The concept of just transition refers to a broad set of strategies and policies aimed at ensuring that no one is left behind in the transition toward a sustainable economic and social system. In its origins and in much of the international policy debate, just transition has primarily focused on industrial restructuring driven by strengthened environmental regulations and its impacts on labor markets, with particular emphasis on unemployment measures and support for labor mobility.

At the same time, the advancement of decarbonization policies may also affect living conditions through changes in energy prices and household energy costs, suggesting the need to examine their relationship with energy poverty and regional welfare.

This paper aims to clarify how policies related to just transition are linked not only to labor market measures but also to welfare policies and energy poverty countermeasures at the regional level. As an empirical reference, it examines the case of South Korea, where just transition has been relatively early incorporated into policy documents. In South Korea, just transition is explicitly mentioned in the Framework Act on Carbon Neutrality and Green Growth, and various initiatives have been developed—particularly in regions with a high concentration of coal-fired power plants—that combine

energy transition policies with regional measures.

By providing an overview of policy cases such as mechanisms for redistributing the benefits of renewable energy projects to local residents, as well as measures addressing energy poverty, this paper offers a basic examination of the relationship between decarbonization and regional welfare. Through the analysis of South Korean policy experiences, the paper identifies key issues at the intersection of just transition policies and social policy, and highlights directions for future comparative research and theoretical discussion.

TAKAHASHI, SATOSHI (Iwate Prefectural University)

The Welfare State as a Political Concept: From the Perspective of the Foundation of Social Reason

An important element in systematically understanding the welfare state is the prominent role played by theoretical framework of coordination that assume a complementary relationship with capitalist economic society. These frameworks include discussions on welfare capitalism - such a varieties of capitalism theory - as well as coordinated management. Debates focusing on coordination and compromise, rather than on dominance or universal norms as primary explanatory factors, may be suited describing results, but are unlikely to lead to a positive conceptual framework construction.

Emphasizing the framing as a political concept, rather than as policy, means that assumptions are made regarding institutional complementarities arising from multiple institutions. This report defines social control by the welfare state as creating conditions that facilitate the establishment of Social cooperation as a normative expectation. and refers to the necessary foundation of collective reason as "social reason". This report then explains the theoretical framework of the welfare state as a mechanism for attaining social reason, in an attempt to reveal relevant conceptual and design contexts.

The report is also intended to bridge between normative and institutional theory and then propose a new framework for the welfare state in the context of contemporary issues.

15:00-17:00 Special Theme and Paper Sessions

<p>15:00-17:00 Special Theme Session 6 Nurses' Working Conditions and Health Care Reimbursement Systems: A Japan–Germany Comparison</p>
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Coordinator: TANAKA, YOKO (University of Tsukuba / Professor Emeritus)

Chair: HAYAKAWA, SACHIKO (Meiji University)

Discussant: MATSUDA, RYOZO (Ritsumeikan University)

<Theme of the Session>

Japan is facing an increasingly severe shortage of nurses in its hospital sector. Despite being indispensable essential workers responsible for safeguarding public health and life, Japanese nurses are employed under harsh working conditions, including extended night shifts lasting 16 to 18 hours, while receiving relatively low levels of remuneration. The difficulties of remaining in employment are further intensified for nurses with childcare responsibilities. As a result, a substantial number of trained nurses leave the profession and become what are commonly referred to as “inactive” nurses.

Why, then, do nurses’ wages and working conditions in Japan remain persistently poor? And why have fundamental reforms failed to materialize even as the health-care system approaches crisis? This session argues that part of the explanation lies in the institutional framework of Japan’s social health insurance system—specifically, the medical fee schedule, which publicly regulates the financial basis of health-care provision and indirectly constrains nurses’ employment conditions.

Drawing on a comparative analysis of Japan and Germany, this panel examines how nurses’ wages, working hours, and night-shift arrangements are determined in each country. It further analyzes the role played by health-care reimbursement systems in shaping nurses’ working conditions and evaluates the extent to which these institutional arrangements contribute to cross-national differences in nurses’ treatment.

TANAKA, YOKO (University of Tsukuba / Professor Emeritus)

Hospital Nurses’ Working Arrangements and Their Determinants: A Comparative Study of Japan and Germany

This paper examines the working conditions of hospital nurses in Japan and Germany, focusing on working hours—including overtime and night shifts—as well as wages and allowances, and conducts a comparative analysis based on workplace-level evidence from both countries. Drawing on interviews with nurses in Japanese and German hospitals, the paper shows that in Japan long working hours and frequent night shifts impose a substantial burden on nurses, while night-shift allowances are often indispensable for securing an adequate income. In contrast, German hospitals employ a larger number of nurses, which limits the frequency of night shifts, and wages for nurses and other care workers have continued to rise over time.

The paper further investigates the factors underlying these differences in nurses’ employment conditions between Japan and Germany, focusing on two key dimensions. The first is nurses’ labor union activity, with particular attention to its influence on wage-setting systems and pay increases for nurses and care workers in Germany. The second is the health-care reimbursement system, which structurally shapes employment conditions in the hospital sector. Special emphasis is placed on recent reforms of the German reimbursement system and their significance for improving nurses’ working conditions

SENO, MUTSUMI (Hannan University)

The Relationship between Japan’s Public Health Insurance and Nurses’ Working Conditions:

Focusing on Medical Fee

Most medical care in Japan is delivered under the health insurance system, and this framework is a major factor in defining medical labor. Within it, the medical fee schedule sets official prices for services, and these prices greatly influence healthcare workers' wage levels. In October 2022, a new payment category—the Nursing Staff Treatment Improvement Fee—was introduced, designed to raise nurses' incomes by about 3 % at eligible institutions. The 2024 revision further introduced the Base Pay Raise Evaluation Fee. However, these are recent adjustments, and the fee schedule has never fully guaranteed adequate wages for nurses. From a hospital management standpoint, nurses' labor has been intensified to increase revenue from the fee schedule, yet that income has not been distributed to their pay. This report examines medical service fees and nurses' working conditions from an institutional and historical perspective, focusing on how well the fee schedule has reflected healthcare workers' wages.

15:00-17:00 **Special Theme Session 7**
Directions for Social Welfare Reform in Japan: Lessons from the United Kingdom, the United States, and South Korea

Coordinator / Chair: TODA, NORIKI (Tokyo Online University)

<Theme of the Session>

Japan's public assistance system faces several critical challenges. Compared to other developed nations, Japan has an extremely low coverage rate, inappropriate administrative practices such as refusal to accept applications, persistent stigma toward those on public assistance, and a fragile staffing structure. In response, systemic reforms have been repeatedly discussed. This study examines the different frameworks for cash benefits and social welfare service provision in the United Kingdom, the United States, and South Korea as potential models to address these issues. The UK has long maintained a separation between interpersonal social services and public assistance, establishing a universal service provision system since the 1970s and pursuing simplified application procedures and improved coverage rates. The introduction of Universal Credit in 2012 further integrated various cash benefits such as jobseekers' allowances and income support. In the United States, the state of Wisconsin has privatized and streamlined welfare offices to enhance efficiency. Meanwhile, South Korea implemented its "customized welfare reform" following the 2014 "Songpa Three Sisters Incident," shifting from a comprehensive to a purpose-specific benefit model and establishing an integrated system for interpersonal social welfare services.

TODA, NORIKI (Tokyo Online University)

The Background to the Development of the Fourth "Optimization" Policy in Japan's Public Assistance Administration

Since fiscal year 2013, Japan has implemented the fourth phase of its public assistance “optimization” policy, marking a shift from administrative adjustments to legal and regulatory reforms. This phase has expanded the scope of policy targets to include not only public assistance recipients but also marginalized groups such as pensioners, persons with disabilities, and the working poor. Influenced by public perceptions of welfare dependency, the policy introduced time-limited employment support measures and amended the Public Assistance Act to mandate documentation requirements and strengthen penalties for fraudulent claims. Therefore, the number of recipients has declined since its peak in fiscal year 2014. However, efforts to reduce stigma and professionalize caseworkers have made little progress. This study argues that advancing these reforms requires a critical examination of the relationship between cash benefits and social welfare services.

HIRAOKA, KOICHI (Tokyo Online University)

Minimum Income Guarantee and Universalism in Britain: A Historical Analysis

In the formative years of the welfare state in postwar Britain, the idea of a minimum income guarantee based on universal benefits (without a means test) was influential in social security policymaking. This idea proved hard to materialize in the 1960s; instead, the government turned to expanding means-tested benefits and improving the management of these benefits (simplification of claim procedures, encouragement of benefit claims etc.) to strengthen the minimum income guarantee function of social security. The system of public assistance in Britain virtually dissolved when its benefits for the working-age population were integrated with the contributory benefits for job-seekers in the National Insurance system in the 1990s. On the other hand, in successive reforms of old-age pension and related benefits, a continuing awareness of minimum income guarantee based on universal benefits is evident. The establishment of tax credit systems and Universal Credit may also be analyzed from this perspective. This study analyzes these policy developments while touching on the significance of the concepts of universality and selectivity in the international discussion on social policy.

KINOSHITA, TAKENORI (Rikkyo University)

The Current State of U.S. Welfare Reform Thirty Years On: National Trends and the Case of Wisconsin

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the creation of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) under the 1996 Welfare Reform Act in the United States. This report reexamines the significance of the 1996 reforms.

First, this study seeks to clarify TANF’s position within contemporary poverty reduction efforts. The number of TANF cash assistance recipients has declined, thereby diminishing its role. Meanwhile, tax credits and food assistance have expanded, fundamentally reshaping the overall structure of public assistance. Furthermore, TANF administered by state governments has showed widening disparities due to increased discretionary authority.

Second, we wish to examine the changes in State of Wisconsin's W-2 program, which has served as

one model for welfare reform. W-2 has also experienced a decline in participants, leading to the restructuring of welfare offices. Today, welfare offices across the state are operated by ten companies and NPO. The reduction of TANF has further accelerated the pursuit of private-sector efficiency.

Public assistance has been further curtailed under the Trump administration's 2025 reforms. This paper concludes by considering the current challenges facing American poverty reduction efforts.

KIM, SHINHE (Waseda University)

Structural Transformation after Korea's "Customized Benefits Reform": The "Fragmentation" of Income Security and the "Integration" of Personal Services

This report examines the contradictory relationship between the "fragmentation" of income security and the "integration" of personal services within South Korea's National Basic Livelihood Security System (NBLSS) following the 2015 "Customized Benefits Reform." The study evaluates this reform from four distinct perspectives: coverage rates, administrative procedures, stigma, and staffing systems.

The "Customized Benefits Reform" dismantled the traditional "Integrated Benefit" system and transitioned toward "Individualized Benefits," in which specific eligibility criteria are established for each type of benefit. The South Korean government characterized this fragmentation of income security as a "universalistic" reform aimed at expanding recipient eligibility and eliminating welfare blind spots, asserting that it has achieved higher coverage rates and reduced social stigma.

Conversely, in the realm of personal services, the government has strategically deployed "Social Welfare Officers"—professionals holding social worker certifications—to community centers to implement a unified service window and the standardized execution of "Integrated Case Management." Based on the above, this report aims to clarify the achievements and challenges resulting from the simultaneous "fragmentation" of income security and the "integration" of personal services within this reform framework

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

Guaranteeing the Foundation of Livelihood

Chair: YAMANE, SUMIKA (Jissen Women's University)

MURAKAMI, SAYURI (Relight Co., Ltd.)

KASAI, NAO (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research)

An Exploratory Study of Homelessness Prevention through Early Identification and Intervention in Japan: Evidence from Pioneering Local Governments

Drawing on interview data from selected local governments, this study explores practical approaches to the early identification and intervention of people at risk of homelessness and proposes an organising framework to inform future quantitative research. In recent years, strengthened housing-related support under the Housing Safety Net System and the Support System for Self-Reliance of People in Need has encouraged local governments to develop collaborative relationships with relevant

stakeholders, creating opportunities to engage earlier with individuals at risk of homelessness. However, the extent to which such preventive approaches have developed varies considerably across local governments, and little is known about the nationwide landscape of practices through which people at risk of homelessness are identified and engaged at an earlier stage. Moreover, within the current institutional context, it remains unclear which actors and pathways can effectively contribute to early identification and intervention. With a view to future research aimed at capturing broader national patterns, this paper examines cases from selected local governments to illustrate the range of homelessness prevention approaches possible in the Japanese context and proposes an organising framework to guide the design of subsequent quantitative studies.

SHIRAISHI, ANZU (Ochanomizu University / Postgraduate Student)

An Interview-Based Study on the Receipt of Unemployment Benefits among Women with Experience of Unemployment

From 2028, the eligibility threshold for employment insurance coverage will be raised to workers who work 10 hours or more per week. As the coverage of social insurance for short-time workers expands, it is estimated that approximately 30 percent of those enrolled in employment insurance are unable to receive basic unemployment benefits when they become unemployed.

This study conducts interview research with women who have experienced unemployment in order to clarify the reasons why some individuals are unable to receive basic unemployment benefits despite having been enrolled in employment insurance in their previous jobs. The interview findings identify two main factors preventing benefit receipt despite insurance coverage: issues related to social security literacy and issues related to social security accessibility.

Social security literacy, in particular, was found to be a key factor preventing the receipt of basic benefits at the time of unemployment following a first job. This was associated with a lack of opportunities to acquire relevant knowledge and the absence of explanations provided by employers. Regarding accessibility, the problem was mainly institutional in nature. Repeated legal revisions have increasingly tightened eligibility requirements in order to promote employment, suggesting a decline in the level of labor market de-commodification.

SATO, KAZUHIRO (Takasaki City University of Economics)

The Position of Housing in the 1950 Recommendation

The 1950 Recommendation is an extremely important document for postwar Japanese social security, particularly in establishing a social insurance-centered approach and the fourfold classification of social security. However, while it has been noted that there was debate during the drafting process over whether to include education and housing, it remains unclear why and how housing was ultimately excluded from the scope of social security. In contrast, in recent years, the importance of linking housing and welfare has long been emphasized, and housing policy has come to be positioned as a key issue within social security, as reflected in the report of the Council for the Construction of

an All-Generation Social Security System. This raises a fundamental question: why was housing not originally regarded as an object of social security? This report addresses this question by analyzing the minutes of the Social Security System Council, examining why and in what manner housing came to be defined as outside the realm of social security.

15:00-17:00 Paper Session 【J】

Labor

Chair: KAMURO, AYAMI (Saitama University)

FUJII, MAYU (Hokkaido University of Education)

Measuring Employment Quality: A Latent Class Robustness Analysis

Since the mid-1970s, the global increase in non-standard employment has raised concerns about job instability, leading to heightened interest in employment quality (EQ). To better capture the multidimensional nature of EQ, recent research has divided it into seven domains (employment stability, material rewards, workers' rights and social protection, working time arrangements, employability opportunities, collective organization, and interpersonal power relations), and applied cluster analysis to sets of indicators representing these domains in order to identify EQ typologies. Using a large-scale panel survey, the Japanese Panel Study of Employment Dynamics conducted by the Recruit Works Institute, this study attempts to classify EQ in Japan. In addition, it examines how limitations in data availability—specifically, cases in which only some of the indicators representing the seven domains can be obtained, as is common in official statistics—affect the classification of EQ.

SUZUKI, KYOKO (Chuo University)

Quantitative Analysis and the Politics of Categories: Rethinking Non-Regular Employment

A large body of quantitative research has accumulated on non-regular employment. These studies have demonstrated that working conditions in non-regular employment are substantially inferior to those in regular employment, and that women constitute a large share of non-regular workers. However, do such studies describe and explain the phenomenon in a “neutral” and “objective” manner?

Categories in societies do not exist as natural entities; rather they are socially constructed through various social interactions. Because quantitative research inevitably relies on analytical categories, this insight should be of particular importance. Nevertheless, this issue has been overlooked in quantitative labor market research.

This paper takes the issue of non-regular employment to review the problems that quantitative empirical research often falls into, and to explore alternative analytical approaches.