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“Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens” and Japan’s Status-based Employment System

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Introduction

This paper examines whether “The Japan’s Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens” (hereafter, the “Plan”) that is currently promoted by the Abe administration has the quality and momentum to overcome Japan’s status-based employment system. The Plan is designed to effect changes in Japan’s employment system, which is strongly founded on a status-based structure. Thus, the success of the Plan is contingent on whether Japan can manage to improve this status-based system.

Here, “status-based employment system” refers to the following factors in Japan. Compared to other OECD member countries or the EU member states, the gap in working conditions and treatment between regular and non-regular employees is wider in Japan. These two types of employees are attributed different status levels that refer to their positions within their organizations, not their social status. First, the relationship between regular and non-regular employees in organizational hierarchy is vertical. Non-regular employees are positioned at a lower status than that of regular employees, almost without exception. Second, appointment to regular or non-regular positions is made through discrimination, especially in the case of female workers, at the time of initial employment, and would not be chosen based on an employee’s motivation or skills. Third, in most cases, as mobility between regular and non-regular employment is difficult, opportunities to transition from a non-regular status to a regular status are severely limited.

The analysis in this paper relies on two methods. Regarding policies, we will identify primary “indicators” that are set at the core of the plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle of each of the Plan’s policy measures and examine the extent of achievement. Next, regarding the employment system, a historical method is adopted to track the formation of the employment system and highlight contemporary challenges the system faces.

Outline and characteristics of the Plan

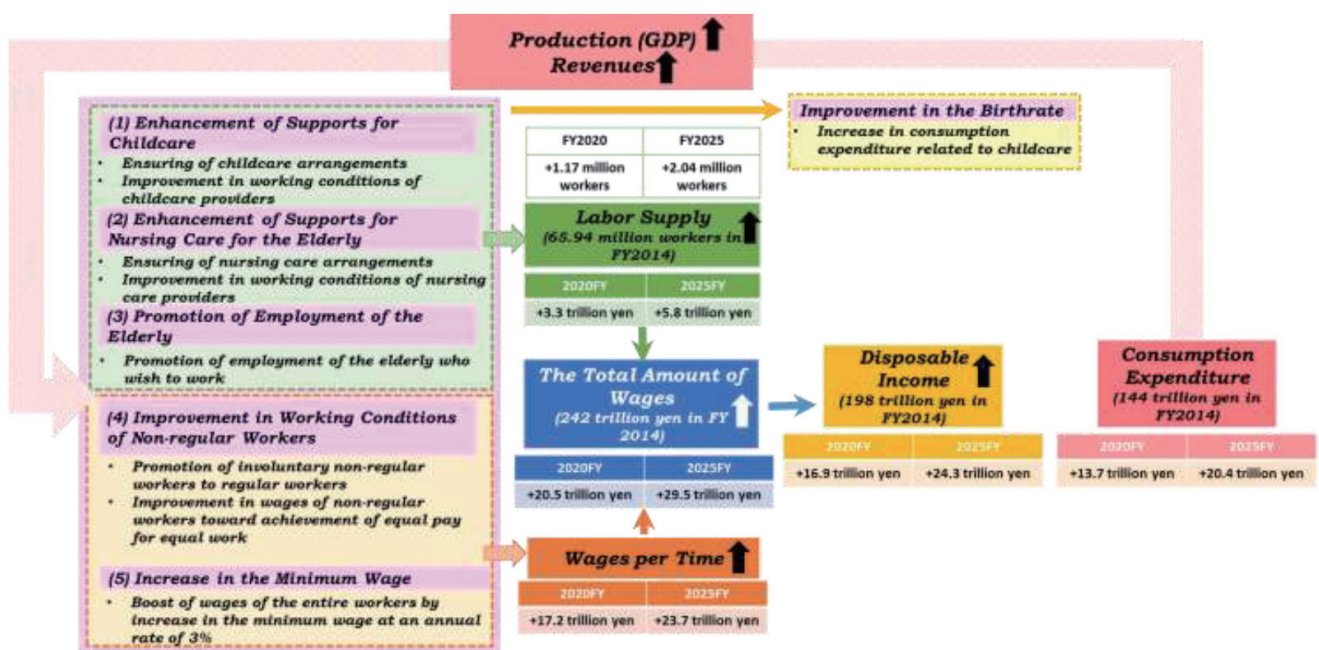
The Plan is organized in a three-tiered structure. The largest tier is the Plan itself, which is an economic policy in a broad sense that encompasses social policies. The next tier is the “Action Plan for the Realization of Work Style Reform” (hereafter, the “Action Plan”), which is regarded as the greatest challenge in achieving the Plan. The last tier is the reduction in working hours and the “Equal Pay for Equal Work Guideline” (hereafter, the “Guideline”), which are located at the core of the Plan. This paper will not analyze the reduction in working hours and instead focuses on the latter component, the Guideline.

What are the characteristics of the Plan? First, in terms of both its procedural and substantive aspects, the Plan makes policy interventions into the so-called autonomy of labor/management relations. Second, regarding interventions in the issues faced

by non-regular workers, the Plan hardly touches on regulations concerning the form of employment but directs much of its attention to aspects concerning the treatment of workers. Third, the Plan places emphasis on the quantity rather than the quality of labor. The following are some of the details of the last characteristic.

The aim of the Plan is to foster a “virtuous cycle of growth and distribution.” Regarding growth, the Plan calls for “the largest nominal GDP in postwar history of 600 trillion yen” as a goal. As for distribution, the Plan aims “the desirable birth rate of 1.8” and “no one forced to leave their jobs for nursing care.” The following policies concerning distribution were cited to generate growth: 1. Enhancement of Supports for Childcare; 2. Enhancement of Supports for Nursing Care for the Elderly; 3. Promotion of Employment of the Elderly; 4. Improvement in Working

Figure 1. A Mechanism of a Virtuous Cycle of Growth and Distribution toward a Society in Which All Citizens are Dynamically Engaged — Estimation Concentrated on a Cycle of Wages, Incomes and Consumption —



Source: “The Japan’s Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens,” Cabinet Decision on June 2, 2016. <https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/ichiokusoukatsuyaku/pdf/plan1.pdf>

Conditions of Non-regular Workers; and 5. Increase in the Minimum Wage (Figure 1). The Plan then estimates the impacts of these policy measures to quantitatively project the positive cycle of growth and distribution.

It is important to consider the paths that form this “virtuous cycle.” The path “Growth \rightarrow Distribution” is not particularly new, and the path “Distribution \rightarrow Growth” is the target of our interest. The Plan assumes that the following three paths will be established. The first path is “Labor supply (+) \rightarrow Potential growth rate (+)”; the second path is “Wage (+) \rightarrow Consumption/Investment (+) \rightarrow Growth (+)”; and the third path is “Diversity (+) \rightarrow Innovation/Productivity (+) \rightarrow Growth (+).” The first and second paths in the mechanism are fairly obvious, as these are fundamentally concerned with quantity. The third path is, however, difficult to understand. Although its later step “Innovation/Productivity (+) \rightarrow Growth (+)” is understandable, the ways in which its premise, “Diversity (+) \rightarrow Innovation/Productivity (+),” will materialize are unclear.

This third path is deeply related to the quality of labor. Simply fostering diversity is not likely to generate an increase in innovation and productivity. In order for diversity to induce such an increase, the quality of labor must be improved through diverse participation of workers. However, the Plan hardly addresses this. The Plan’s most significant issue is its lack of concern with connecting distribution to growth through the path of “Quality of Labor (+) \rightarrow Innovation/Productivity (+).”

Outcome and limitations of the Plan

As the Plan is currently being implemented, it is too early to perform a full-scale evaluation of it. However, it is still

possible to examine the policy internally. The Plan sets indicators for each policy measure item and implements a PDCA cycle along these indicators. Thus, we can extrapolate the intent of the policy from the types of indicators in focus in the Plan. We can also extrapolate policy outcomes and limitations from the achievement levels of these indicators. This study examines 1) whether the Plan is capable of achieving “Distribution \rightarrow Productivity \rightarrow Growth” across the board; 2) whether the Plan is capable of “reducing non-regular employment”; and 3) whether the Guideline is capable of realizing the “Prohibition of Unreasonable Treatment.”

Regarding the first point, a typical example is the policy that aims to “increase the productivity in the service industry,” which is pertinent to both goals of the “desirable birth rate of 1.8” and the “largest nominal GDP of 600 trillion yen.” In order to increase the service sector productivity this policy measure, on one hand, tries to promote the stabilization of employment and increase the wages of young people working in services. On the other hand, it encourages business owners/managers to “leverage the ‘Japan Service Award’ to disseminate best practices of Japan-style hospitality.” The problem is that the Plan hardly explicates the relationship between the two — that is, the ways in which more stable employment of young people will increase innovation/productivity. The process of achieving “Distribution \rightarrow Productivity \rightarrow Growth” is thus not clearly described in the policy.

Regarding the second point, the policy measures do not seem to have achieved visible results. Concerning the form of employment in particular, non-regular workers still constitute almost 40 percent of all workers. In addition, the proportion of “involuntary” non-regular workers,

which the Plan proclaims to reduce, has not sufficiently fallen among fixed term contract employees and temporary agency workers. These facts indicate that despite the policy's intention to "reduce non-regular employment," the Plan has not succeeded in producing positive policy effects due to insufficient policy efforts. Alternatively, this may be an indication that both the policy intentions and efforts did exist, but positive effects have not materialized due to the resistance of existing practices.

Regarding the third point, the clause of the Guideline saying that "the basic salary, bonus and other treatment including allowances" are now evaluated separately when determining whether a given working condition is unreasonable can be considered a mark of progress because evaluating every conditions totally was an excuse to justify not giving bonus/allowances to non-regular workers. In addition, the clause of the Guideline saying that the determination of whether conditions are reasonable or unreasonable is now performed by "taking into account the circumstances that are appropriate in light of the nature of the said treatment and the purpose for which the said treatment is implemented" can also be considered a point of progress compared to previous practices. However, the traditional requirement kept intact in the Guideline asking to consider "the content of the duties of the workers and the extent of responsibility accompanying the said duties (hereinafter referred to as the 'content of duties'), the extent of changes both in the content of duties and in the work locations, and other circumstances" when evaluating the gap in the treatment between regular and non-regular workers is clearly problematic, as it endorses conventional "Japan-Style" practices.

Towards "Single Status"

In Europe, the flexible implementation of the prohibition of discrimination is premised on "wage grades" that are mainly determined by job type. Regardless of regular and non-regular employment forms, the wages workers receive are identical if their wage grades are the same. In contrast, in Japan, regular and non-regular workers are separated by the combination of "job + career" (from the European perspective) or the combination of "status + qualification" (from the perspective of Japanese history). "Status + qualification" is not simply related to one's wage grade but their "personnel grade"; regular and non-regular workers receive different treatment and different wages as a result of differences in their personnel grade. To truly reduce the gap in the treatment of regular and non-regular workers, therefore, "equal status/qualification" should be considered rather than "equal pay."

This can also be examined in light of the historical context. After modernization, business managers in Japan did not consider it necessary to treat workers with same skills or same jobs equally. Instead, the business norm was "multi-track management" in which workers were assigned different statuses even if they had the same skills. These statuses included the "leader class," whose employment was as stable as that of government employees, "regular employees," whose employment was guaranteed to a certain degree, and "temporary employees," whose employment was not guaranteed. Amidst post-war democratization, however, this management system was accused as "status-based discrimination," and adherence to the system became significantly weaker. Instead, the "ability-based grade system" became popular. This system guaranteed

employment for even ordinary blue-collar workers and established qualification-based grades, which had only been available to white-collar workers before the war, creating a career path in which “all employees” (though only regular employees) could climb up the grades to a certain level. It is well-known that the consolidation of the statuses of white-collar and blue-collar workers, or the “Single Status,” boosted the skills and commitment of employees and supported the competitiveness of Japanese companies.

However, the consolidation of statuses and qualifications increased the sense of burden for management, reflecting the large degree to which treatment had been linked to status and qualification. Additional statuses and qualifications were then created to mitigate this burden. Included in such statuses and qualifications were “temporary workers” through the 1950s, “part-time workers” after the 1960s, “regular service employees” in contrast to comprehensive service employees after the 1980s, and “fixed-term contract employees” and “temporary agency workers” after the 1990s. Because the statuses/qualifications differed from those of regular employees, employees of these types would not only receive lower wages but were also treated differently than regular employees in terms of their unemployment benefit or retirement money/old-age pension as well as their career paths, including assignments and promotions.

When viewed against the historical background, it is evident that “Equal Pay

for Equal Work” will not solve Japan’s non-regular employment issue. Instead, a “reduction in the status/qualification gap” is currently necessary. The current condition in which an ever-large number of non-regular employees are used as not merely supplementary but near “main” workers not only lacks social equity but also suppresses the increase in productivity and the generation of added value. This condition must be improved immediately. However, it is neither realistic nor desirable to naively presuppose “unrestricted” (in working hours and work location) regular workers as we did before and consolidate statuses and qualifications using this presupposition. We must attempt to eliminate the status/qualification gap in new ways. Conceptually, the “standard” form of employment we must adopt is regular employment in which working hours and work location are “restricted.”

It is important to note that we have recently started to see cases of companies that succeed in creating the “Single Status” by eliminating the status gap between regular and non-regular employees. This shows that we should first attempt to consolidate employee grades, then — under the premise that workers can choose their own work style and career path — consider adjusting the extent of job security, the extent of working hours and work location, and the extent of compensation on seniority between different segments of workers as needed.

Japan Association for Social Policy Studies (JASPS) 138th Conference

18-19 May, 2019, at Kochi Prefectural University, Kochi City, Japan

DAY1 (18 May 2019)

12:15-14:15 Special Theme and Paper Sessions

SPECIAL THEMES

12:15-14:15 Room A109

Special Theme Session 1: **Effectiveness and Problems of Japan's Employment Policies for the Disabled: Analysing the situation of employment using data from two surveys**

Chair/Coordinator: Tomoyo TAKAGI (Keiai University, Faculty of Economics)

<Theme of the Session>

In Japan in recent years, the Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities has been implemented, and more employers are paying a levy to the government according to the regulations when they employ fewer than the prescribed number of disabled people. Also, the calculation basis for the legal employment rate now includes the mentally disabled. All these are the result of the change in the law promoting employment of the disabled. Unlike other countries where governments have shifted their employment policies to centre on the anti-discrimination law, Japan has maintained and developed its employment policy based on the legal employment rate. In view of the fact that employment has been increasing, the positive effect of this policy is obvious and therefore not to be unduly criticised. However, there are still a number of problems to overcome in order to respond to new social demands and to establish a sound employment situation.

Our discussion at this section meeting is partly based on the research project supported by JSPS (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (A), FY2017-2021). We will use the sets of data from "Survey on the Employment Situation of Persons with Disabilities" and "Survey on Persons with Difficulties of Living" conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in order to clarify quantitatively the actual facts about employment and work for the disabled, and to discuss what viewpoints may be required for the making of future employment policies.

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

Firm-level Analysis of the "Survey on the Employment Situation of Persons with Disabilities"

In Japan, the employment of persons with disabilities is promoted by policies such as the employment rate system and the levy and grant system. Under these policies,

private companies are obligated to employ a certain percentage of persons with disabilities. Companies that fail to meet the legally required employment quota pay a levy of 50,000 yen per month for each person below the quota.

These policies have increased the number of employees with disabilities. Meanwhile, less attention has been paid to the details of employment in each workplace: How many people with disabilities and with what kind of disabilities are employed? What are their working hours? What is their remuneration?

This study was performed to examine the employment situation of persons with disabilities by analyzing workplace-level data from the “Survey on Employment of Persons with Disabilities,” conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Atsuhiko YAMADA (Faculty of Economics, Keio University) and Hiroko ARAKI (Faculty of Economics, Kindai University)

Wage Determinants of Employees with Disabilities; Firm Size, Number of Employees with Disabilities, and Disability Levels

The number of employees with intellectual or mental disabilities has increased due to aging of employees with physical disabilities and policy changes relating to the statutory employment rate. From the viewpoint of securing their incomes, it is important to clarify not only the expansion of employment opportunities but also how employment conditions, in particular, wages are determined.

Based on micro dataset of “Survey on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities” conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in 2008 and 2013, we estimate the wage function of employees with disabilities separately for physical, intellectual and mental disorders, to quantify the wage determinants. In particular, we examine the effects of firm size, the degree of disability, and the number of employees with disabilities at the establishment on wage rates.

We found that the wage distribution of employees with intellectual or mental disabilities has changed between 2008 and 2013, meanwhile that of employees with physical disabilities has not changed. We also found that large wage disparities exist among different firm size, even after controlling the degree of disabilities, diseases, and occupations.

Hiroko ARAKI (Faculty of Economics, Kindai University)

A look at the Status and Determinants of Employment and Disability Certificate Obtainment among Persons with Mental Disabilities

40 years have passed since Japanese legislation established the mandate for companies to employ persons with disabilities. During this period, the labor market has experienced important structural changes affecting the participation of the disabled population. Population ageing has led to a decrease of the supply of productive-age persons with physical impairments, who compose the largest share of workers with disabilities. In an effort to satisfy quotas required by the legislation, companies face the need to employ more workers with mental and intellectual disabilities. This puts into the spotlight issues such as the low rate of adoption of the Disability Certificate among persons with mental

disabilities, and the challenge to deal with a relatively wider array of necessities of workers with mental impairments.

This paper employs data from the ‘Survey on persons with disabilities’ (years 2011 and 2016) by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and looks at the status of the adoption of the Disability Certificate, focusing on the population with mental disabilities. I present the characteristics of persons who don’t hold a Disability Certificate and reveal the characteristics of persons with disabilities who wish to work and are actually doing so. I hope that our conclusions can be useful for the formulation of policies towards a greater inclusion of persons with mental disabilities in the labor market.

Tomoyo TAKAGI (Keiai University, Faculty of Economics)

Companies’ Intentions and Disabled Persons’ Attitudes Concerning Employment: Studies based on quantitative data analyses of companies and individuals

Disabled employment on the whole has been on the increase thanks to repeated amendments of the Act for Promotion of Employment of Persons with Disabilities. Such positive results have mainly come from the pressure on companies to obey the law, as well as from their accumulation of know-how through experience. In order to employ disabled workers, companies must solve many problems and consider various conditions for reasonable accommodation. At the same time, employment is a matter of contract between employer and employee. Employment will not function as expected unless the workers’ mind, psychology and behaviour are all focused on their jobs.

I will use the data from “Survey on the Employment Situation of Persons with Disabilities (2013)” and “Survey on Persons with Difficulties of Living (2011 and 2016)” to clarify quantitatively the factors that may promote employment and those that may prevent it, and also to show the change in the disabled persons’ attitudes towards their jobs both before and after the enforcement of the amended law. These analyses will demonstrate that administrative support in the promotion of employment is truly vital, and that future policies will have to be directed not only to companies but also to disabled persons concerned in order to effect a positive change in their way of thinking about work.

12:15-14:15 Room A110

Special Theme Session 2: **Supporting for needy people making use of community and places to belonging to: ask the role of NPO and social enterprises towards social participation and employment**

Chair/Coordinator: Hiroyuki FUKUHARA (Osaka City University)

Discussant: Toshiro KAMEYAMA (Chukyo University, School of Contemporary Sociology)

<Theme of the Session>

Since April 2015, the municipalities throughout the country have been implementing systems to Support for Poor and Needy Persons, and today it is a big problem how to support social participation and employment. Under these circumstances, supporting methods for these people are devised in various places., and new support methods are developed.

Nonetheless, it is difficult to realize high-quality support for persons restoring social recognition and self-esteem, and gaining active participation in society and employment.

In this subcommittee, we will focus on NPOs and social enterprises in France and Japan that address these issues. Based on these concrete efforts, we will consider what kind of support is effective for those with difficulty. In particular, in addition to individual support, I would like to deepen the discussion about the effectiveness of support utilizing the community and the place to belong to.

For this reason, we aim to deepen the discussion by examining not only case studies but also past research results on how such support should be provided.

By the way, in the 2nd report, we invite non-member Kenji Ayase (support staff of NPO 'network for making life Kitashiba') and ask him to report. Mr. Ayase is not only a support staff but also the secretary general of 'the study group on support of young people with Minoh city'. Therefore, I think that he is a very suitable person as a presenter on the subject of this session.

Atsuya HASEGAWA (Osaka City University, Graduate School of Economics)

Living and employment support of 'Régie de quartier' in Lyon, France: its activities and their significance

'Régie de quartier' (RQ) is a non-profit organization that has been in operation since 1980 in France. In 320 domestic priority areas (high unemployment rate and poverty rate and French urban policy Area), this organization employs persons who are difficult to work for a short period of time, supports living and working for them, and works on improving the employment, housing and living environment of the area. The organization consists of about 140 cooperating organizations in France and implements employment support of about 8,000 people every year using the term-based employment system.

In this presentation, based on the survey conducted at the commune in Lyon and its surroundings, the presenter will clarify the characteristics of RQ activities in Lyon Metropolitan area while comparing with other social enterprises. Finally, the presenter discusses the significance of the activities of this organization.

Kenji YANASE (NPO 'network for making life Kitashiba')

Support for young people making use of social resources in Kitashiba area Minoh City

The Kitashiba area is located in the Kayano area of Minoh City, Osaka Prefecture. In this area, Some residents' organizations have been developing town planning (Machizukuri) since the 1970s with the aim of "a town that everyone can live in peace of mind". This area has transformed the idea that "community welfare is the administration's responsibility" largely, and has been building a style that residents creates the activities necessary for the community. Under the mechanism of "Community Management Organization" that summarizes various entities such as NPO 'network for making life Kitashiba', LLC and Buraku Liberation Movement Organizations, This mechanism is implementing supports projects such as Support for Poor and Needy Persons, settlement house (designated manager of city), home for resting aged people (designated administrator of city), child support (after school support, local currency "Mabu" etc.).

In recent years, while taking advantage of town planning practice and know-how, this mechanism has challenged making the place to belong to, opportunities for work, information exchange with society by cooperating with young people who are hard to live in society. In this presentation, the presenter analyzes and reports on the current situation of youth support projects making full use of social resources in these areas.

Mizuki MORI (Osaka City University, Graduate School of Economics)

Circulating recognition and social participation of supported person through a supported experience at a social place to belong to (Ibasho): presentation based on participation observation study and research survey

There are a lot of persons that relations with society break off from various backgrounds in these days. In the social place to belong to (Ibasho), supporters recognize person's existence by supporting the person with some problems, and raise their self-esteem by playing the role of suggesting their social participation.

This presentation confirms, as two axes, both results of the participation observation which I did in the labor integrated social enterprise and the preceding study which argued the circulation of recognition and social participation.

We paid attention to the support at the social Ibasho becoming the place where the aforementioned role is played and each dignity is being resumed. A changing sign could be observed, *that is*, the supported persons are changed to the supporter and vice versa. This social structure could be called a kind of 'circulation of the role'. This suggests an important perspective for the discussion of the social inclusion.

12:15-14:15 Room A211

Special Theme Session 3: **Work and Employment in the Monadic Society**

Chair: Yuko IJIMA (Tokyo University of Social Welfare)

Coordinator: Kazuo TAKADA (Hitotsubashi University, professor emeritus)

<Theme of the Session>

Monadic society is the concept created by Takada to express a society based on freedom of the individuals. It is not just individualism. Monadic society has its own communal and cooperative sides. Takada found the idea during the research in history of the social policies. Social policy has been changed historically from liberal social policy based on meritocracy in the 19th century to collective one based on merit-based egalitarianism in the 20th century, then to the monadic based on merit-free egalitarianism in the 21st century. Each stages of changes in the social policy corresponds to specific phase in civil society, i.e., bourgeois society, mass society, and monadic societies. The session presents three different facets of work and employment in the monadic society. The first paper (Takada) discusses European unemployment policies, maintaining the labor market in the monadic society needs support from the redistributinal plans. The second (Hayakawa) analyzes work style of the contractors in the professional jobs, finding that they establish their individual life styles with good working conditions. The third (Watanabe) reveals that successful shortened work schedules

require commitments of the labor union. The monadic element (enlargement of leisure) should be supported by the entity of the 20th century (*i.e.* trade union).

Kazuo TAKADA (Hitotsubashi University, professor emeritus)

Individualization of the Labor Market in the Monadic Society

Present labor market policies are based on flexible labor market which creates jobs and absorbs unemployment. Recently, however, increasing atypical employment has made much unemployment. The labor market has constant surplus labor. High level of participation rate of labor for both sexes and low rate of economic growth are the main reason for it. It is a structural problem. Under the situation employment adjustments in the 20th century don't work well. Advanced economies apart from Japan, which has relatively low rate of participation for women, have introduced various redistribution measures to decrease unemployment. In particular France, Germany and Britain have unemployment assistances without means tests. The USA also introduced tax credit. Till recently, social policy was based them on meritocracy. Those payments introduced are free from meritocracy. I call them merit-free egalitarianism. Solidarity spirit supports the fluid labor market.

Sachiko HAYAKAWA (Hiroshima International University)

Temporary Professional Workers in the United States

Now more than half of temporary workers have specialist jobs in the United States. Temporary staff service industry started fully after the WW II. Most of the jobs were unskilled such as clerical and manufacturing jobs. Professional temporary workers which have high-level skills like medical treatment and IT, are continuously increasing after 1990's. It is totally different from the Japanese image of temporary workers, because most Japanese contractors are unstable work force completely under the control of the staffing companies. American counterparts having high skills successfully establish their own life styles with good pay and working conditions. Focusing on an American manpower supply company, specializing in the medical industry as a case study, I'll make clear the reasons why such professionals grew up. The average hourly wage of the Japanese temporary workers is very low, only at 1,363 yen at present, and the gap between regular and temporary employees is significant. Now the difference is much criticized in relation to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. Contractual work should be severely re-examined.

Asami WATANABE (Iwate University)

Influences of labor union on the personnel and labor management in the progress towards "better work environments"

There is a tendency that companies attempt to create "better work environments" such as those with good work-life balance and diversity management by putting efforts into making the human resource management more flexible. It would be desirable, however, for their workers to participate in these efforts in order to achieve "the better environment" where they can work more efficiently, rather than the environments where companies simply have the workers produce outcomes. What sort of participations would it be

required from the side of the workers to create such work environments? In this study, we report the analysis on companies that actively attempt to improve “the work environment”. Therein, based on a questionnaire targeting white-collar workers, we clarify factors that result in long working hours. In particular, we aim to clarify influences workers can exert on the human resource management that potentially cause the long working hours. At present, efforts towards the better work environment are yet made primarily for female full-time workers but our report suggests that the work environments, where long term efforts are made and effectively put in action, meet needs of the workers with a variety of backgrounds.

PAPER SESSIONS

12:15-14:15 Room A106

Paper Session 1: **The Poverty Problem**

Chair: Tohru HATANAKA (Teikyo Heisei University)

Rie IWANAGA (Japan Women’s University), Kuriko WATANABE (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research)

Setting the poverty standard by the Engel method

In this research, we derive the poverty standard that guarantees minimum living, by using the Engel Method, and also we compare it with the Social Assistance Level. As poverty has become a social problem in Japan in 2000s, a new poverty concept and standard are sought which fit the current living standard.

Minimum Income Standard (MIS) is a new scheme to build the minimum needs for living and not only experts but also citizens are involved in the decision making process of what is necessity for decent life. However, MIS is an arguable scheme, whereas, as the Council of MHLW mentioned, the current calculation method for minimum living standard has critical limitations. Therefore, it is necessary to set a new minimum living standard by using a different method, like the Engel Method.

Based on the result of this research, we provide implications for Social Assistance and also reveal the situation of multidimensional poverty in Japan.

Yusuke AZUMA (Graduate school of arts and sciences, The University of Tokyo), Katsuhito KAJIWARA (Graduate School of Humanities, Tokyo Metropolitan University), Hironao TAKIZAWA (Graduate School of Humanities, Tokyo Metropolitan University), Keiko KAWAHARA (Faculty of Sociology Department of Social Welfare, Toyo University), Jae Ho PARK (Graduate School of Humanities, Tokyo Metropolitan University), Aya ABE (Graduate School of Humanities, Tokyo Metropolitan University)

Positioning Japan in the Context of Paugam’s *Les formes élémentaires de la pauvreté*

This research is an attempt to position Japan within the context of Serge Paugam’s *Les formes élémentaires de la pauvreté* (2013). In this book, Paugam looks at the “poverty” in various western nations and categorizes them into 3 elementary forms. What is unique

in his endeavor is that he not only looks at the institutional setting to alleviate poverty, as is usually done in typical welfare regime comparisons, but looks at how “poverty” is understood and how the “poor” are treated within the society as well as how the “poor” themselves experience the poverty. In this research, we attempt to place Japan in one of the 3 elementary forms using various statistical data indicative of Paugam’s arguments.

Hisashi FUKAWA (Hosei University, Faculty of Social Policy)

Creating new participation opportunities for long-term unemployed in Germany

Unemployment is no longer an issue in Germany where the unemployment rate has plummeted by half from 11.7% in 2005 to 5.2% in 2018. Nevertheless, long-term unemployment remains a critical political issue. In this regard, two measures will be implemented from January 2019 that were introduced with the revision of the law on basic income support for job-seekers (SGB II) enacted in December last year. One measure (Article 16e) is directed at promoting the normal-employment of persons who have been unemployed for two years or more. The second measure (Article 16i) is directed at long-term recipients of SGB II who have been collecting benefits for six years or more. This measure requires enrollment in social security insurance and provides for employment that is paid on the basis of collective agreement.

This report looks at the background of these two new measures by exploring how they came to be implemented after the cut-backs of labor market measures since 2010, examines their significance as “inclusive” measures to promote peoples’ participation in society, and concludes with proposals on Japan’s policy for employable people in need.

12:15-14:15 Room A107

Paper Session 2: **History and labor movements**

Chair: Charles WEATHERS (Osaka City University)

Hikaru TANAKA (Kobe University, Faculty of Economics)

Did Farmers’ Multi-income structure effect to Japanese Minimum Wage concept?

It is said that drastic structural change induced domestic immigration from rural to urban in post-war Japan. In this social structure, farmers took their second job in other industries, as they still maintained their home business. Besides, in 1959, Minimum Wage Act legislated which seemed ensuring people’s minimum living standard. However, the minimum wage doesn’t assume the level in the present. What made Japanese minimum wage lower than minimum living standard cost?

Jun KINOSHITA (unaffiliated)

Japanese Social Policy Reconsidered — Evolution of the Prefectural Section, 1897-1912

How can we write a history of social policy in Japan? In 1919, members of the Japanese Social Policy Association (社会政策学会) were divided over the participation in the Kyochokai (協調会), causing its demise in 1924. In these turbulent years, the Japanese government rapidly developed its organ for social policy in the Home Ministry (内務省):

from the Prefectural Section (府県課1886), to the Relief Section (救護課1917), to the Social Section (社会課1919), to the Social Bureau (社会局1920), and to an external organ, the Bureau of Social Affairs (外局社会局1922). It can be said that the Prefectural Section was a rudimentary organ of Japanese social policy.

I will present the social policy activities of the Home Ministry, focusing on the Prefectural Section. From 1897 to 1912, Prefectural Section Chief (府県課長) was Tomoichi Inoue (井上友一1871-1919). Inside Home Ministry, this is a personnel arrangement sui generis. To clarify an origin of Japanese social policy, I will try to answer two questions: (1) Why one person occupied the position for so many years?, and (2) Why the choice has fallen on Mr. Inoue?

Itaru NISHIMURA and Hodaka MAEURA (Japan Institute of Labour Policy and Training)

Some Observations on the Role of Locals in Revitalizing Unions

The purpose of this report is to explain the role of Locals in revitalizing unions. In an era of declining union density, improving the union organization rate is one of the most important problems facing unions attempting to revitalize the labor movement. While many researchers have examined the organizing process and the role of enterprise unions and industrial unions, the study of local unions in JTUC-RENGO has not advanced very much. In addition, according to Suzuki and Hayakawa (2006), affiliated local unions do not necessarily promote unionization.

Therefore, in this report, we seek to clarify the activities of Locals through a case study of a Local in Prefecture A (Local A). Our case study finds that Local A (1) shares the knowledge of one particular regional industrial union with other industrial unions in the same region, (2) conducts unionization activities with regional industry unions, and (3) disseminates its knowledge to other Locals.

This case study also points out that, in working to revitalize the union movement, Locals also play important roles in gathering the knowledge and experience of specific unions and disseminating that information to other unions.

14:20-16:20 Special Theme and Paper Sessions

SPECIAL THEMES

14:20-16:20 Room A109

Special Theme Session 4: **Pregnancy, Childbirth and Child Rearing, and Female Employment Continuation**

Chair: Kumiko HAGIWARA (Shimonoseki City University, Faculty of Economics)

Coordinator: Yuki Yoshi WATANABE (Doho University, Faculty of Social Welfare)

<Theme of the Session>

The Cabinet Office's "The White Paper on Gender Equality 2018" observes the following problems faced by women desiring continuous employment. (1) The gender gap index in Japan

is remarkably lower than the human development index and the gender inequality index, and there are serious gender disparities in the economy and in politics. (2) The female employment rate by age group in Japan conforms to the “M-shaped curve”, but the middle section of the M-shaped curve has risen significantly to a shallow dip, and the overall figures have also shifted upwards, unlike Western countries. (3) More than half of working women are still employed as non-regular employees. (4) The most common reasons why women seek non-regular jobs are “for childbirth and childcare”.

Therefore, we will examine the life events of pregnancy, childbirth and child rearing, and the difficulty of continuous female employment from a comparative international perspective using questionnaire surveys regarding women who become pregnant, and the conditions of female temporary workers experiencing childbirth and childrearing.

Yoko TANAKA (University of Tsukuba, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences)

Is a Historical Transition from the Housewife Model Underway? A Comparative Study of Childbirth-related Continuity and Interruption in Women’s Employment in Japan and Germany

The housewife model became prevalent in Japan and Germany during and after the high economic growth era following the Second World War. During that period, full-time male employees guaranteed the global competitiveness of manufacturing, and female housewives supported family members at home. In recent years, however, policymakers in both countries have urged women to bear children and to work at the same time. Particularly in Germany, the dual earner-care giver model has been proposed as a new family model in a government report.

So, is the housewife model now approaching the end of its historical role? Has the problem of job quits because of childbearing been overcome, and has a new dual work-childbearing model been realized?

This paper aims to confirm and clarify the basic historical facts on the changing family model for both countries. Based on government statistics and a comparative analysis of policy transitions, we will examine how the conditions of women’s work and childbearing have changed in Japan and Germany.

Yukari ITO (Osaka School of International Public Policy)

Advanced maternal age and the continuation of employment of women at birth

Although the need for women in Japan to continue employment has long been recognized, many women continue to leave jobs before and after giving birth for the first time. Despite the high number of quits resulting from first childbirths, the conditions of women who continue to work during the perinatal period have not been adequately explored in previous studies.

In this paper, we focus on the continued employment of women pregnant with their first child. We use the results of a questionnaire survey of mothers in the second trimester; the survey was conducted at a mother’s class in Osaka from November 2014 to February 2015.

According to the Declining Birthrate White Paper 2018, the average age of mothers in Japan having a first child in 2016 was 30.7, 4.0 years higher than in 1985. With more people

starting to have children later in life, an increasing number of couples have to rely on fertility treatments to conceive. While giving attention to the factors contributing to later childbirth, we examine the effect of advanced maternal age on women's employment during the perinatal period.

Yuka MIZUNO (Faculty of Economics, Nagoya University of Economics)

Childbirth and Childrearing by Female Temporary Workers

Most female temporary workers in the age range of 30 to 59, married or otherwise, are engaged in clerical work. This age range overlaps with life events such as childbirth and childrearing. According to the 2017 Labor Force Survey, some 66.7% of the married temporary workers surveyed gave as reasons for working as temps: "I want a convenient work schedule," "I want to earn money to pay for the household or for tuition etc.," or "It is easy to balance temporary work with household chores, childrearing, and caregiving at home."

The amendment of the Child Care and Family Care Leave Act in 2005 has made it possible even for temporary workers, who are fixed-term contract workers, to be granted parental leave if they meet the specified conditions. Nevertheless, less than one-fourth of all the temporary workers responded that their employer supports childbirth/childrearing through such measures as granting pre-childbirth/ postchildbirth leave or having a childrearing leave program.

Focusing on the relationship between work and family life, this report elucidates the reality and the difficulties of female temporary workers in the childbirth/childrearing period. The report also examines the relationship between temporary labor and the awareness of work-life balance or the gender division of labor as well as the effects of fixed-term employment and indirect employment on continuous employment and re-entry into the work force.

14:20-16:20 Room A110

Special Theme Session 5: **Challenges for Redistribution and Link with Employment by Public Pension**

Chair/Coordinator: Atsuhiko YAMADA (Keio University, Faculty of Economics)

<Theme of the Session>

Macroeconomic indexation will lower the public pension benefit level and weaken the income security function of public pension in the long run. On the other hand, despite various reforms on private pension in recent years, it is still unclear whether it can play an alternative income resource to fill the shrinking public pension benefit. As a result, working income is still an important income resource for older people, and how to combine employment and pension is a challenge for the public pension system in Japan to date.

In this session, we investigate a long-term trend in public pension as a redistribution system; a relationship between the income security function of disability pension and employment; and an effect of earnings test for working pensioners. We utilize micro datasets

for our analysis. By doing so, we clarify the challenge of the public pension system for income redistribution and the combination of pension and working income. Furthermore, we give an overview of the possible future pension reform.

Masato SHIKATA (School of Policy Studies, Kwansai Gakuin University), Kuriko WATANABE (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research)

The effects of public pension benefits on income distribution among the elderly in Japan

We examine the effects of public pension on poverty and income inequality among the elderly in Japan by comparing multiple data sets. First, we investigate pension payments by gender, age group, and household type comparing “National Life Basic Survey” by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, “National Survey of National Consumption Survey” by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, “Survey on the Actual Status of Old Age Pensioners” by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. Based on the above, we review the effects of public pensions on income

disparity and poverty rate using decomposition analysis by income sources.

Yu MOMOSE (Ryutsu Keizai University, Faculty of Economics), Yui OHTSU (Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Saitama University)

Living Conditions and Employment Status of Disability Pension Recipients

Based on microdata set of “Survey on the Living Conditions of Disability Pension Recipients” conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, we shall investigate actual living conditions of disability pension recipients by disability type and gender. More specifically, we investigate the relationship among employment status, benefit amount, living arrangement, household income, out-of-pocket expenses for care services, simultaneous receipt of public assistance, and other individual attributes of disability pension recipients. In particular, we aim to clarify the characteristics of pensioners with mental disabilities in which the number increases rapidly, as well as those of female pensioners with disabilities, who are indicated to be at high risk of poverty.

Secondly, concerning factors affecting employment rate, working hours, and wages of disability pension recipients, our analysis focuses on differences in individual attributes such as gender, age, degree and type of disability, amount of disability pension, living arrangement, and receipt of public assistance. Especially, taking gender, age, degree and type of disability into consideration, we shall quantify influence of pension amount on employment status by multivariate regression analysis.

Through the above, we shall review the disability pension and employment policies, and give some implications for the future.

Atsuhiko YAMADA (Keio University, Faculty of Economics)

Labor Supply of Older People

While the labor force population declines sharply by the year 2040, the change in labor supply pattern of older people largely affects these reductions. Social policies including public pension system, alter the employment behavior of elderly people. Using the micro data set of “Employment and Life Survey in the 60s” conducted by the Japan Institute

for Labor Policy and Training in 2014, we investigate how the social policy influences the employment behavior of the older people. More specifically, we investigate whether the disincentive created by earnings test of Employees' pension disappears after the upward revision of pensionable age for the fixed portion of specially provided Employees' pension. We also analyze a condition that people eligible for Employees pension choose early/ later withdrawal of pension benefits. Based on these analyses, we clarify challenges for an appropriate connection between employment and pension.

14:20-16:20 Room A211

Special Theme Session 6: **The Theory of “Independent Life” in the Public Assistance**

Chair: Atushi FUKASAWA (Ritsumeikan University, professor emeritus)

Coordinator: Mayumi OHSHIO (Ryukoku University)

<Theme of the Session>

The Livelihood Protection Act (the Public Assistance Law in Japan) has two aims. One is to secure the national minimum of life, and the other is to promote independent life. In this session, we will discuss what the independent life means and how the caseworkers in the public assistance system should support the independence of clients (recipients). First, we will analyze the theories of independence on the Life Protection Act from historical and social perspectives. Next, we will examine the three theories of the independence proposed by the Council of Social Security. Finally, we will discuss the independence of Single-Parent Families in order to identify necessary supports for Single-Parent Families to become independent.

Noriki TODA (Kobe Shinwa Women's University)

Historical Analysis of The theory of independent Life in the Public Assistance

This research conducts a historical and social analysis of the theory of independent life in Public Assistance. The theory of independent life in Public Assistance reflects how poverty and social welfare policies have been viewed over the years. Therefore, it enables us to clarify the problems of modern society. The theory of “support” for independent life has historically promoted “optimization” policy for suppressing applications, including improvement of the implementation system, special projects, and measures to deal with the new borderlines. The theory of “autonomy” in the practice of public assistance services on the other hand, has contributed to enriching living, as a resistance to the ‘optimization’ policy. The examples of the “Edogawa learning group for junior high school 3rd graders” which provided opportunities ninth form students for studying, aiming at entering a high school, represent this well.

I argue that the theory of independent life in administration and in practice has hence developed supports with conflicting goals and directions. Analyzing and considering these steps, I would like to clarify the problems of independent life theory from users' viewpoints.

Keita SAKURAI (Nagoya City University)

A Critical Study on “The three types of self-reliance” in Public Assistance System

“The three types of self-reliance” consists of the financial and social self-reliance and self-reliance in daily life. “Self-support program for public assistance” has been implemented in welfare offices since 2005. It was the proposal of the council of public assistance that became the trigger. The proposal contained the three types of self-reliance and the three types of self-support. It is said that “The three types of self-reliance” changed the traditional idea that “self-reliance = leaving welfare”. So it brought about a significant influence on the public assistance system, policy, and casework.

On the other hand, casework in the public assistance system has been discussed for a long time from the end of World War II. However, how to locate the self-support program in casework has been unclear. This report reviews the three types of self-reliance, especially relying on disability studies, and discuss the casework in public assistance system introduction of self-support system.

Satoko TANAKA (Prefectural University of Hiroshima)

Support for the independence of Single-Parent and Low income Families

The purpose of this research is to examine the support policy for the independence of Single-Parent Families. I use the result of the questionnaire targeting the members of the Single-Parent and Children’s Welfare Associations in Kyoto and Hiroshima prefecture. More than 80% of single mothers are working. However, their incomes are low.

Moreover, it is pointed out that their take-up rate of public assistance is lower than in other households. If Single-Parent Families want to get enough income, they must shorten the time for child-rearing and leisure for themselves. As a result, they cannot bring up children well enough and fail into a severe physical and mental situation. However, even if they do not receive any public assistance, it does not mean they are independent economically.

What is independence of Single-Parent Families? What is the necessary assistance for them? I study the conditions of working and bringing up children of the Single-parent Families receiving livelihood protection system.

This study was supported by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (15K03935)

PAPER SESSION

14:20-16:20 Room A106

Paper Session 3: **Labor issue**

Chair: Teppei SHIBATA (Iwata Prefectural University)

Junko EMOTO (Prefectural University of Hiroshima)

Problems and solutions in the employment support system for people with disabilities

This century the employment support system for people with disabilities has been expanding, accompanied by a sharp increase in employment support offices for people

with disabilities. However, the operation of such offices was not necessarily clear. In fact, the existence of offices not providing appropriate training or employment has been pointed out. In response to this situation, the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare tightened its supervision of continuous employment support offices for people with disabilities. As a result, some continuous employment support offices have gone out of business, leaving many people unemployed.

However, continuous employment support offices for people with disabilities (offices with employment) have an important role when people with disabilities obtain employment or receive training in protected environments. The closure of continuous employment support offices is a loss not only for people with disabilities, but also for local communities.

This report first examines factors leading to the bankruptcy of continuous employment support facilities for people with disabilities (facilities with employment), including the association between these factors and policies regarding people with disabilities, and then suggests strategies for ensuring secure and safe employment support for them.

Kaoru KANAI (Saitama University), SHIN Ki-young (Ochanomizu University Institute for Gender Studies)

Professional Career Versus Women's Ordinary Job?: Two Models of Gendered Labor in Life Insurance Companies in Japan

The life insurance industry has traditionally been a significant employer of middle-aged women in Japan. Unlike the American and European life insurance companies where male agents are the staple of sales personnel, women comprise a vast majority of the sales labor force in Japanese life insurance companies. These two models based on gendered employment have been thought to explain differences in sales strategies between western-origin life insurance companies and the traditional Japanese life insurance companies. Foreign life insurers are known to hire high profile male sales staff and train them to be professional career persons whose earnings would rise well beyond the average salary of Japanese male employees. On the other hand, Japanese traditional life insurance companies employ middle-aged women as sales staff on the assumption that women are naturally cut out for selling life insurance policies and caring for the customers.

However, our research based on interviews and participatory observation in both types of companies in Japan found that the differences between these two models are largely exaggerated or misleading at best. The content of the training program, success rates, and methods of policy sales of high performers are more similar than what has been assumed. We argue that the core part of both models of sales strategies is whether he or she can provide a wide range of caring services for the customers.

Koshi Endo (Meiji University)

Definition of Equal Pay Principle and Method of Job Evaluation specific to the Principle: Why can we call them "American-made"? and why have they grown popular in some European countries today?

I demonstrated two below points in my previous article.

First. What Art.3 of ILO Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100) of 1951 means. In all the drafts of Art.3, pay differentials between men and women had been regarded to meet the equal remuneration principle when they were stipulated in the collective agreement. However, after the last discussion on June 1951, all of these were completely deleted from the final draft. Then, in the final draft of Art.3, job (content) was the only basis of equal remuneration principle. The final draft was adopted at the ILO 34th general session on 29 June 1951.

Second. I suppose that the above complete deletion was led officially by the US government-delegates and actually Frieda S. Miller, advisor to the US-government delegates and officially appointed a reporter of committee discussion to the 34th general session. Frieda S. Miller was the director of Women's Bureau, US Department of Labor, too.

The equal remuneration principle, which Americans called "comparable worth," and a method of job evaluation specific to the principle, both of which we may be able to call "American-made," had gone out of fashion in the US today. On the other hand, both have grown popular in some European countries today. Why has this difference between the US and European countries come about? I believe JASPS session is the best arena for me to present my hypothesis regarding the reason why. I welcome any comments on my hypothesis from JASPS members.

DAY2 (19 May 2019)**CONFERENCE PLENARY SESSION****9:30-16:00 (Room A101)****“The Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens”
and the Status-Based Employment System in Japan**

Focusing on the key indicators of the Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens through its core PDCA, this paper examines whether the Plan can achieve reform of the employment system’s current status-based practices, which is the prerequisite for active engagement. With regard to the type of employment, it is suspected that the Plan’s real intent is to reduce the number of responsibility-unlimited regular workers and increase those of responsibility-limited regular workers, and/or to reduce the number of non-regular workers and increase those of responsibility-limited regular workers. For future prospects, it is important whether “equal pay for equal work” can be established. Although Japan-style equal pay for equal work may bring improvement in the treatment of non-regular workers, it is unclear whether the “government guideline” and its application to the revised laws will lead to genuine reform since it allows the continuation of current practices. It is difficult to make predictions about the likely success of the PLAN because it has the following problems: (A) the policy goal is not clear, (B) the entity that is to implement reform policy in the field is not yet ready, and (C) the policy instruments are not systematic.

CHAIR: **Michio NITTA (Tokyo University, professor emeritus)**SPEAKERS: **Jong-Won WOO (Saitama University)****Eriko SUZUKI (Kokushikan University)****Yusuke NAKAMURA (Koto Sogo Law Office)****Kazuhiko ASAMI (Senshu University)****9:30-12:00 Morning session****Jong-Won WOO (Saitama University)****“The Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens” and the Status-Based Employment System in Japan**

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whether the “government guideline” and its application to the reformed laws will lead to genuine reform since it allows the continuation of current practices. It is difficult to make predictions about the likely success of the PLAN because it has the following problems: (A) the policy goal is not clear, (B) the entity that is to implement reform policy in the field is not yet ready, and (C) the policy instruments are not systematic.

Eriko SUZUKI (Kokushikan University)

Advancing the “Utilization of Foreign Human Resources” behind the “Society to Promote Active Participation of 100 Million Japanese Citizens”: What Makes It Impossible for Foreigners to “Participate Actively” in Japanese Society?

Since the start of the second Abe Cabinet, which has emphasized economic growth strategies, the term “utilization of foreign human resources” has often been used, and it is prominent in the plan for the “society to promote the active participation of 100 million Japanese citizens.” However, there is no mention of “active participation of foreign nationals” in the plan.

This report examines the restrictions that make it impossible for foreigners to “participate actively” in Japanese society from the standpoint of “inequality.” One of the most important restrictions is the institutional (de jure) inequality of residential status. There are “inconvenient” foreign workers who, depending on their status, face limits on jobs, work hours, and length of stay in Japan.

Those who have attained the new residence status as “designated skilled labor”, as established by the 2018 revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (ICRRA), are also prohibited from working beyond the maximum limit of their designated residency period, and from moving freely to work (regional migration). That is to say, the enforcement of the 2018 revised ICRRA will bring an increase in foreign workers subject to institutional inequality.

Moreover, unresolved discrimination, which is substantive (de facto) inequality, of employment discrimination prevents foreign workers from achieving their workplace potential.

Prior to the actual implementation of the 2018 revised ICRRA, comprehensive countermeasures were approved in Cabinet meetings, but it is clear that the measures will not eliminate substantive inequality. As is made clear in the term “foreign human resources,” the “utilization” of foreign workers as “products” labeled a labor force will continue.

Yusuke NAKAMURA (Koto Sogo Law Office)

On the Working Environment Surrounding Taxi Drivers and “The Japan’s Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens”

The Abe Government has introduced a set of labor reform bills, dubbed “Work Style Reform”, as one of the pillars of “Japan’s Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens”. While there are several important problems concerning the plan, this report will focus on its effect on taxi workers and the problems they face by examining two aspects, namely “labor conditions” and “deregulation.”

The new limits placed on overtime work by the government's labor reforms do not apply to vehicle driver occupations, including taxi drivers. Furthermore, with regards to working conditions, multiple lawsuits have been filed over wage regulations, and other issues in the industry as such problems continue to mount. Even though taxi companies are subject to a multitude of regulations, the government's deregulation initiatives since the 1990s have led to a decline in the income of taxi drivers due to severe competition. Today, the rapid spread of "ride-sharing" services, which resembles the wave of deregulation in the last couple of decades, poses a new threat to the industry.

This report will assess how the working conditions may change in the face of "Japan's Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens" and will explore possible solutions to combat such changes.

12:00-13:30 Lunch Time

13:30-16:00 Afternoon session

Kazuhiko ASAMI (Senshu University)

The changing contours and present state of Japan's trade unions

The Abe government's policies for labour market deregulation and human resource mobilisation feature no concern for the role of trade unions as representatives of the workers. Academics as well have paid little attention to the long-standing decline of Japan's trade unions.

Therefore, this paper explores and summarises the changing contours and current state of Japan's trade union organisations and activities of differently-situated workers, namely, core workers in large private firms, workers in small and medium-sized enterprises, civil servants national and local government, professional and licensed positions workers, and non-regular workers.

The second half of the paper explains the structural and long-term problems and significant challenges of reform facing the unions in each sector. It also suggests appropriate measures to regulate employment relations from the perspectives of the workplace, industry, and local community.

Finally, the author advocates that an 'organic solidarity' among the workers of diverse strata should be established.

Chairperson comments

Panel discussion