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The Present and Future of the Social Security System from the Perspective of Self-Employed Workers

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1 Introduction

The common theme of this year's conference, "Pandemics and the Future of Social Policy," provides an opportunity for engaging with the experience of pandemics academically and thereby developing a vision of the future of social policy. The present project begins with the question of whether the state has functioned fairly and efficiently in modern society, given the rise of the welfare state institutions that have emerged since the time of the Spanish flu epidemic a century ago. This question reflects the current public health situation, in which the spread of novel coronavirus infections is being experienced unequally depending on people's circumstances, as the nature of work and family changes.

One of the unequal experiences at issue derives from the weakness of the social security system for self-employed and freelance workers — a pre-existing weakness that has been exposed by the coronavirus disaster. For example, at the end of February

2020, the Japanese government called for all schools in the country to close temporarily, establishing a subsidy for elementary school holidays for workers with school-age children. The fact that people who work without being employed were excluded from the subsidy, and that the amount of the subsidy later set aside for freelancers was only half that reserved for those who work without being employed, led to a widespread perception of inequality in the way people who are not employed actually work. In turn, social security for the self-employed and freelancers became the focus of attention. It is not just the disparity in the amount of benefits that presents a problem; a more fundamental question concerns how the social security system can include people who work without being employed.

A special report titled "Actual Situations and Problems of Working Styles Not Bound by Traditional Employment Relationships" in the academic journal *Social Policy* suggests ways to address this question. The direction

indicated in the report is to apply labor laws and social insurance to protect freelance and self-employed workers when their circumstances are similar to those of hired workers, with respect to the actual conditions of the work style (Goga 2019). For example, according to one study on sole proprietors, laws should be developed to protect those who work in a manner that situates them somewhere between workers and employers (Shibata 2019). Discussions about the applicability of labor laws to those who choose such intermediate work styles are already gathering momentum in other countries (e.g., OECD 2019; JILPT 2021a). Roughly summarized, these discussions explore how to expand the scope of legal protection when necessary, and also how much protection is needed.

The present author shares the intentions informing — and the directions indicated by — some of the existing studies in this area. At the same time, I have a strong feeling that the more we focus on the self-employed way of working, the more we lose sight of the larger picture presented by the group of people who are practicing this way of working. Of course, in the past year, we have had many more opportunities to meet self-employed workers and freelancers than previously. This is because newspapers and the mass media have been reporting daily on restaurant owners who are having difficulty making ends meet because they have closed their businesses due to public health concerns about COVID-19, and also on sole proprietors who use online platforms such as Uber Eats to accept orders for delivery services. Do such people fit into the category of self-employed workers? Moreover, what kind of self-employed people should be covered by the social security system?

As long as the social security system targets individuals in the society, it will not

be able to avoid these problems. In other words, in order to construct a better, more sustainable system for the future, it is essential to understand the distribution of self-employed workers taken as a whole. To do so, we need to know how many self-employed people there are in Japan, how their lives have been affected by the coronavirus disaster, and how many of these people have been helped by the emergency measures.

In order to make policy decisions about how many resources to allocate and whom they should be allocated to, quantitative research dealing with the distribution of the whole is required. However, judging from previous research in sociology and social policy studies, surveys and research on self-employment are not sufficient. Therefore, this paper approaches the problem of how to build a future social security system by describing the reality of self-employment in the present age. More specifically, it uses data from a social survey conducted to clarify the relationship between self-employed persons, freelancers, and the social security system.

In section 2 below, we present our perspective on contemporary self-employment and some of the key issues it raises, in light of recent debates about social protections for the self-employed. Section 3 then explains the data and variables examined in the present study, with section 4 using these data to analyze (1) the actual conditions of self-employment (occupation and income), (2) the living conditions of the self-employed amid the spread of the novel coronavirus, and (3) the role played by the subsidy program for sustaining businesses in Japan. In section 5, we discuss the policies that support self-employment based on the results of our analysis, and also outline directions for future research.

2 Perspectives on Self-employment and Freelancing

Against the backdrop of the rapid development of information and communication technology, there is a growing tendency for work to be performed by workers who are self-employed, including through individual contracting and outsourcing, both in Japan and overseas. This trend includes the platform economy, gig work, and cloud labor, where individuals work under short-term contracts. Japan's social security system and labor law policies have, in principle, been based on the premise of people working under medium- to long-term employment contracts. The question of how to protect self-employed people, who are not subject to such contracts, has now become a pressing concern — not only in Japan but also worldwide (e.g., OECD 2019; Hamaguchi 2020b).

In the European Union, social security coverage for the self-employed has become a major issue, and on November 8, 2019, the “Recommendation on Access to Social Protection for Workers and the Self-Employed” was passed, calling on member states to ensure adequate social security coverage for all workers, including those who are self-employed¹. It provides guidelines for extending to the self-employed schemes originally designed for employed workers, such as workers' compensation insurance and unemployment insurance. The trend of providing protection for workers through such platforms has begun to take hold in Korea as well as countries such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

The debate over how to provide social

protection for the self-employed has existed since before modern industrial society, emerging as an issue related to the extension of the employment contract, but the coronavirus crisis has brought this debate to the fore (Hamaguchi 2020a, 2020b). In this paper, we focus specifically on how to deal with non-employment work and how to support the self-employed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To this end, we confirm the direction indicated by the report by the Study Group on Employment Similar Work Styles². According to this report, the following perspectives should be considered when determining the protections to be provided in labor policy: (1) a method of extending worker status to provide protection; (2) a method of defining self-employed persons who need protection as being intermediately situated between employed workers and self-employed persons, and of applying relevant labor-related laws and regulations to this subset of workers; and (3) a method by which, instead of broadening worker status, necessary measures are taken separately for self-employed persons who need a certain level of protection, taking into consideration the nature of the protection required. The policy outlined in the report uses method (3), and starts by determining the necessary measures for those who need protection.

The question that immediately arises is how to draw a line between those who need protection and those who do not, given the diversity of self-employed individuals. In the present state of knowledge, this question cannot be answered immediately or definitively. Therefore, this paper examines,

¹ The official title is “COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 8 November 2019 on Access to Social Protection for Workers and the Self-employed.” The full text of the recommendation can be found at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html>.

² In this section, we refer to the following websites (https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/newpage_05479.html).

on the basis of the data collected, who the self-employed workers who have faced challenges from the coronavirus crisis really are, and which workers' living conditions have deteriorated particularly severely.

Second, we examine to what extent the emergency support measures designed for the self-employed have played a role in the coronavirus disaster. Many support measures for self-employed workers and freelancers were introduced in 2020. The subsidy program for sustaining businesses, in which benefits, rather than being paid to workers who have contributed to social insurance, are paid from general funds to sole proprietors who have not paid such insurance premiums, was created hurriedly in the midst of the pandemic. The program thus lacks consistency from the standpoint of overall policy, providing benefits in a manner that results in a reversal phenomenon: the amount of benefits paid to the self-employed is in some cases larger than the amount of public benefits (unemployment benefits) paid to workers (Mizumachi 2020). The role played by this system can only be partially verified at this stage of the unfolding of the pandemic. In this paper, we examine who qualified for the subsidy program for sustaining businesses and what impact the system had on their lives.

3 Methods

(1) Data

The data used for the analysis are taken from the National Survey on the Working Styles and Lifestyles of the Self-Employed and Freelancers. This survey was conducted

by the author and colleagues from February 18 to February 22, 2021, targeting males and females aged 25 to 69 living in Japan as of February 18, 2021. The survey sample was facilitated by online panels sponsored by Rakuten Insight, Inc. The questionnaires were distributed according to the demographic composition indicated by the census (18,515). Responses were received from 5,800 self-employed and freelance workers, 1,100 full-time workers, and 1,100 part-time workers.

The self-employed persons included in this paper are those who selected “self-employed/freelancer” or “employer” and “firm size of less than 30 employees” for the category of employment status³. In the case of self-employed individuals, we use the term “freelancer” to refer to those who run their own business alone, and “self-employed” to refer to those who have between 1 and 29 employees⁴. In part of the analysis, we also use the category of non-regular employment, which is a combination of part-time employment, contract employment, and temporary employment, for purposes of comparison.

Table 1 shows the basic composition ratios of the personal attributes of freelancers and the self-employed, by gender. In terms of age structure, the proportion of workers in their 50s or older is high for both men and women. Freelancers make up 65.6% of men and 72.4% of women. In terms of occupation, the highest percentages were in the professional/technical category (26.5% and 34.9% for men and women, respectively). As for personal annual income (2020), the proportion of those earning less than 3 million

³ Although this operational definition is commonly used in the study of social stratification, in which the author specializes (e.g., Ishida 2004; Naka 2018), it should be noted that it is only one conceptual definition among other possibilities.

⁴ Among self-employed workers and freelancers, 65.5% had no employees. Among those with employees, 12.1% had 1 employee, 18.4% had 2 to 9 employees, and 1.6% had 10 to 29 employees.

Table 1 Basic Composition of the Self-employed Based on the Survey Data

| | Male | Female | | Male | Female |
|------------------------|-------|--------|---------------------------|------|--------|
| Age | | | Employment status | | |
| 25-29 | 0.4 | 2.7 | Freelance | 65.6 | 72.4 |
| 30-39 | 5.7 | 16.7 | Self-employed | 34.4 | 27.6 |
| 40-49 | 23.1 | 30.6 | Occupation | | |
| 50-59 | 40.7 | 33.2 | Professionals/Technicians | 26.5 | 34.9 |
| 60-69 | 30.2 | 16.8 | Clerical/Sales | 19.2 | 16.5 |
| Education | | | Service | 15.5 | 23.9 |
| Junior/High school | 33.0 | 25.7 | Craft | 18.6 | 3.7 |
| College/Vocational | 21.8 | 37.9 | Other | 20.2 | 21.0 |
| University | 45.2 | 36.5 | Annual income (2020) | | |
| Area of residence | | | -300M yen | 32.1 | 62.7 |
| Hokkaido/Tohoku | 9.9 | 8.9 | 300-500M yen | 32.7 | 24.5 |
| Kanto | 35.1 | 37.9 | 500-700M yen | 15.3 | 6.3 |
| Chubu | 39.9 | 36.9 | 700-M yen | 19.9 | 6.4 |
| Chugoku/Shikoku/Kyushu | 15.1 | 16.3 | Use of a platform | 19.8 | 26.8 |
| Spouse | | | Online sales | 9.3 | 13.4 |
| Without | 22.6 | 24.9 | | | |
| With | 77.4 | 75.1 | | | |
| Sample size | 4,443 | 867 | | | |

yen is relatively high. Among self-employed women, 62.7% earned less than 3 million yen. Online platforms are used by 19.8% and 26.8% of men and women, respectively.

(2) Variables

The key variables in this paper are changes in living conditions due to the spread of the novel coronavirus and use of the subsidy program for sustaining businesses and prospects for business continuity. Table 2 summarizes the definitions of the variables used in our analysis.

In this paper, we examine the reality of various types of self-employed work based on the combination of gender and freelance/self-employed status, yielding four types of workers. Because existing studies have shown that the occupation and income levels of self-employed persons differ for men versus women (e.g., Naka 2018), we split the

sample for purposes of analysis. As for the presence or absence of employees, the business operation differs fundamentally depending on whether the business is run solely by an individual or he or she has one or more employees. We believe that the difference between these two categories is particularly important in the event of risks to business or life in general, such as the risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The freelancer bears the risk only for his or her own life, whereas the self-employed person bears the risk not just as an individual but also as a manager.

In addition, we took into account the fact that the number of self-employed people who work without employees (freelancers) has been on the rise in recent years. Likewise, for freelancers, whether or not they use online platforms is essential for capturing the real-world conditions of contemporary

Table 2 Details of the Main Variables

| Variables | Detail |
|--|---|
| Gender | 1 : Male, 0 : Female |
| Freelance/Self-employed | Number of employees→0 : freelance, 1-29 : Self-employed |
| Marital status | 1 : With spouse, 0 : Without spouse |
| National pension | 1 : Pay, 0 : No pay |
| National health insurance | 1 : Pay, 0 : No pay |
| Changes in living conditions | Current living conditions compared to before the spread of the new coronavirus (2019)→1 : a lot worse, 0 : Almost the same, better, Much better |
| Use of the subsidy program for sustaining businesses | 1 : already used, 0 : No plans to use |
| Business continuity outlook | Current business for the foreseeable future (about 3 years)→1 : keep going, 0 : thinking about quitting, going to stop soon |
| Use of a platform | Conducting business and work using online platforms→1 : Use, 0 : No use |

self-employment. In turn, careful consideration of such conditions is important in determining whether (and how) self-employed persons should be covered by social security.

4 Results

(1) The Reality of Self-employed Workers in the Modern Age

Based on our dataset, can we determine what kinds of people are self-employed? In this section, we provide an overview of the respondents in terms of (a) occupational category and personal annual income, and (b) job description.

(a) Occupational Classification and Personal Annual Income

Looking at the occupations of the male self-employed workers (Figure 1), the highest percentage of freelancers was in professional/technical occupations (29.9%), followed by production site/transportation occupations (18.6%), sales occupations (17.1%), and service occupations (12.3%). Compared to freelancers, self-employed workers included a slightly lower percentage of professionals (20.0%), whereas there were slightly higher percentages of self-employed workers in

sales (23.2%) and service occupations (21.6%).

Meanwhile, when it comes to the female respondents' occupations, there is a high ratio (39.8%) of self-employed women in professional occupations without employees. Self-employed women in professional/technical, sales, and service occupations accounted for about 75% of the self-employed female workers in occupations with employees. For both men and women, a certain number of respondents fell into the "other" category, but because this category encompasses a wide variety of activities, including agriculture and activities conducted via the Internet, we do not attempt to interpret it positively in this paper.

We can confirm that the level of personal income differs greatly for men versus women (Figure 1). The median personal income of male self-employed workers is similar to that of non-regularly employed workers, though it is slightly higher for the employed. In contrast, the median personal income of female self-employed workers is about 2 million yen, which is higher than that of non-regularly employed workers, but notably lower than that of male self-employed workers.

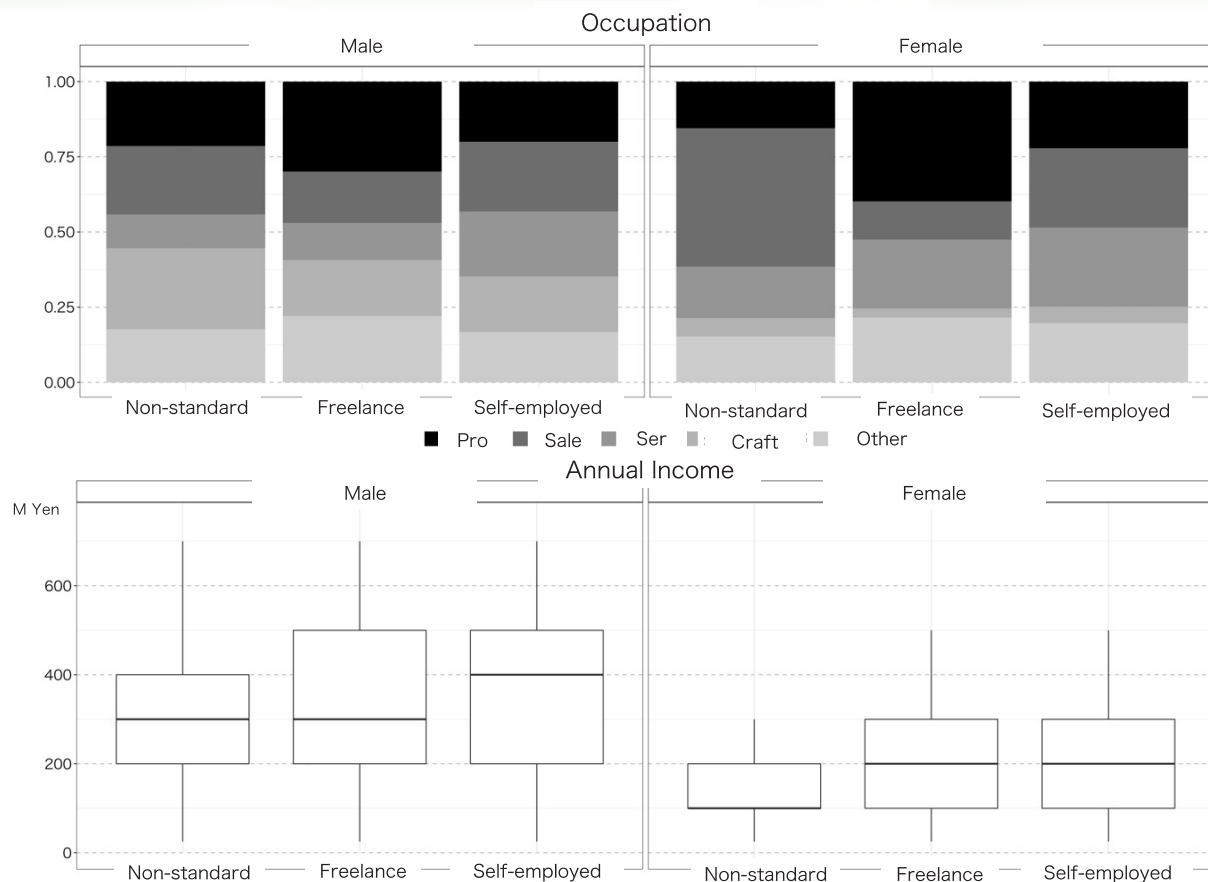


Figure 1 Occupation and Personal Income by Employment Status

(b) Occupations of Self-employed Workers

What kind of work do self-employed people do exactly? In this section, we present the 20 most frequently occurring words in free descriptions of work (see the full version of this paper in Japanese for more details), and describe the characteristics of each category based on the results for gender and employment status. It should be noted that the purpose of this paper is to give an exploratory view of the overall picture of various occupations, not to make an exact comparison among them.

For both men and women, sales and catering occupations are ranked high for both categories of workers. Nevertheless, it is not easy to find a common denominator in the work content of self-employed men and women, with the occupations of self-employed males and females differing greatly. One manifestation of this heterogeneity can

be found in the professional occupations held by men versus women. Male self-employed professionals tend to work in the areas of architecture, design, and management consulting (and other information processing-related jobs), while female self-employed professionals tend to be lecturers (in music and education), translators, designers, and writers.

(2) The Living Conditions of the Self-employed amid the Spread of the Novel Coronavirus

Freelancers and self-employed workers have faced serious challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, given that both their personal income and their household income has deteriorated (e.g., Mizumachi 2020; Nagamatsu 2021; Takahashi 2021). In this section, we review how the impact of the pandemic differs among the self-employed. In this way, the section provides clues for

examining the scope of the safety net for self-employment.

How have the lives of the self-employed changed compared to before the spread of the novel coronavirus? Figure 2 shows the distribution of responses comparing living conditions at the time of the survey to those in 2019, before the spread of the disease. Responses were classified as “worsened” when “much worse” and “worsened” were combined, “remained almost the same” was classified as “maintained,” and “improved” and “much improved” were combined as “improved.” The ratio of workers indicating worsened conditions is higher among the self-employed than among employed workers, for both men and women. Specifically, the ratio of male self-employed workers indicating worsened conditions was 17.8 percentage points higher compared to male non-regular employees, and the ratio was 13.8 points higher for female self-employed workers. These data suggest that the overall impact of the spread of infectious diseases on people’s lives is greater in the self-employed group than in the employed group.

That said, however, roughly half of the self-employed indicated that they have not experienced any deterioration in their living conditions (choosing “maintained” or “improved”). For men without and with one or more employees, 55.5% and 51.9%, respectively, answered “maintained.” For women, in addition to the 48.5% and 54.3% who indicated “maintained,” 7.6% of those without employees and 6.7% of those with employees responded “improved.” These percentages are slightly higher than those for employed workers.

Which workers’ lives deteriorated as a result of the pandemic? In this section, a binomial logit model was used to estimate the dependent variable, which was set to 1 when living conditions worsened and 0 when living conditions were maintained or improved. From the coefficients of the estimation results, the odds of freelancers and self-employed workers based on part-time employment were calculated as shown in Figure 3.

The results show that the odds are greater than 1.0 for both men and women.

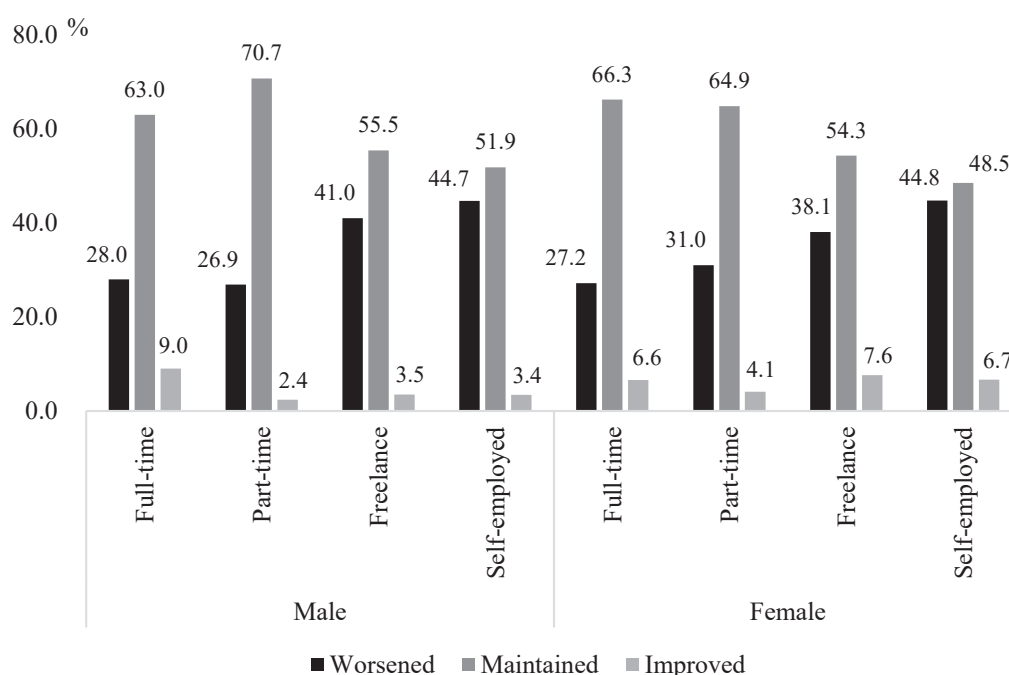


Figure 2 Workers' Living Conditions Compared to Those in the Pre-pandemic Period

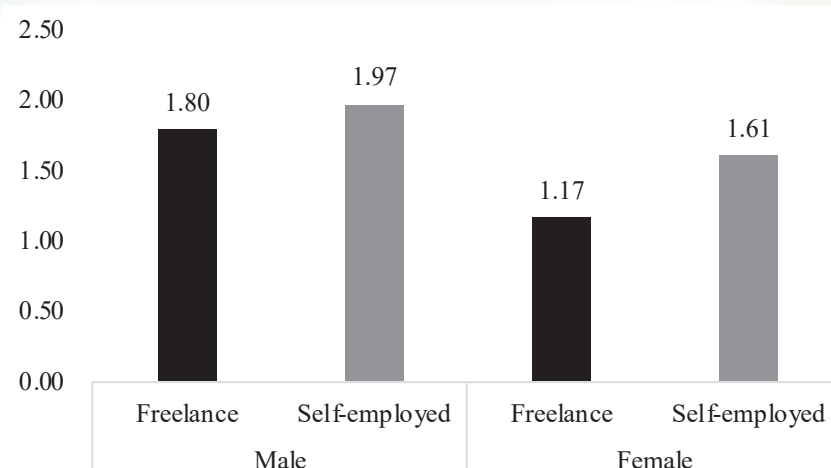


Figure 3 Odds of Worsening Living Conditions Due to the Novel Coronavirus (Base: Non-regular Employment)

Note: A binomial logit was used to estimate the dependent variable, which was binary: 1 when the living situation “worsened” and 0 when it “maintained” or “improved.” The control variables are age, age squared, education, region of residence, marital status, occupation, years of employment, working hours, and personal income.

In other words, the self-employed are more likely to experience a deterioration in their living conditions than workers who have part-time employment. However, the difference in the degree of deterioration is 1.97 times greater for employed men than for self-employed men (this difference is not statistically significant). This result implies that among the self-employed, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is different for different subgroups.

Therefore, after limiting the sample to the self-employed, we examine what factors have contributed to the worsening of living conditions using the same framework as the one previously described. The coefficients of the main factors affecting the deterioration of living conditions are extracted from the analysis results (Figure 4). In this figure, the black dots indicate the point estimates, and the lines extending to the left and right of the dots indicate 95% confidence intervals. If a line crosses zero, it means that the result is not statistically significant.

Although the value of the freelance dummy for both men and women is smaller than zero, the association is not statistically

significant. For male self-employed workers, the coefficient is to the right of zero, indicating that their living conditions are more likely to deteriorate when they use a platform service. On the other hand, for female self-employed workers, the value of the dummy with a spouse is smaller than zero. The coefficient of the dummy with a spouse is to the right of zero, indicating that the living conditions of self-employed women are less likely to deteriorate when they have a spouse than when they do not.

(3) The Role Played by the Subsidy Program for Sustaining Businesses

Self-employed workers in Japan are facing the COVID-19 pandemic without the partial protection afforded by labor laws and social insurance. As an emergency measure to cope with this situation, the Japanese government has taken steps to provide a sustainability benefit of 1 million yen to sole proprietors whose sales have declined. As suggested by the previous section, this subsidy is even more important for the self-employed, given that their living conditions are worse than those of the non-

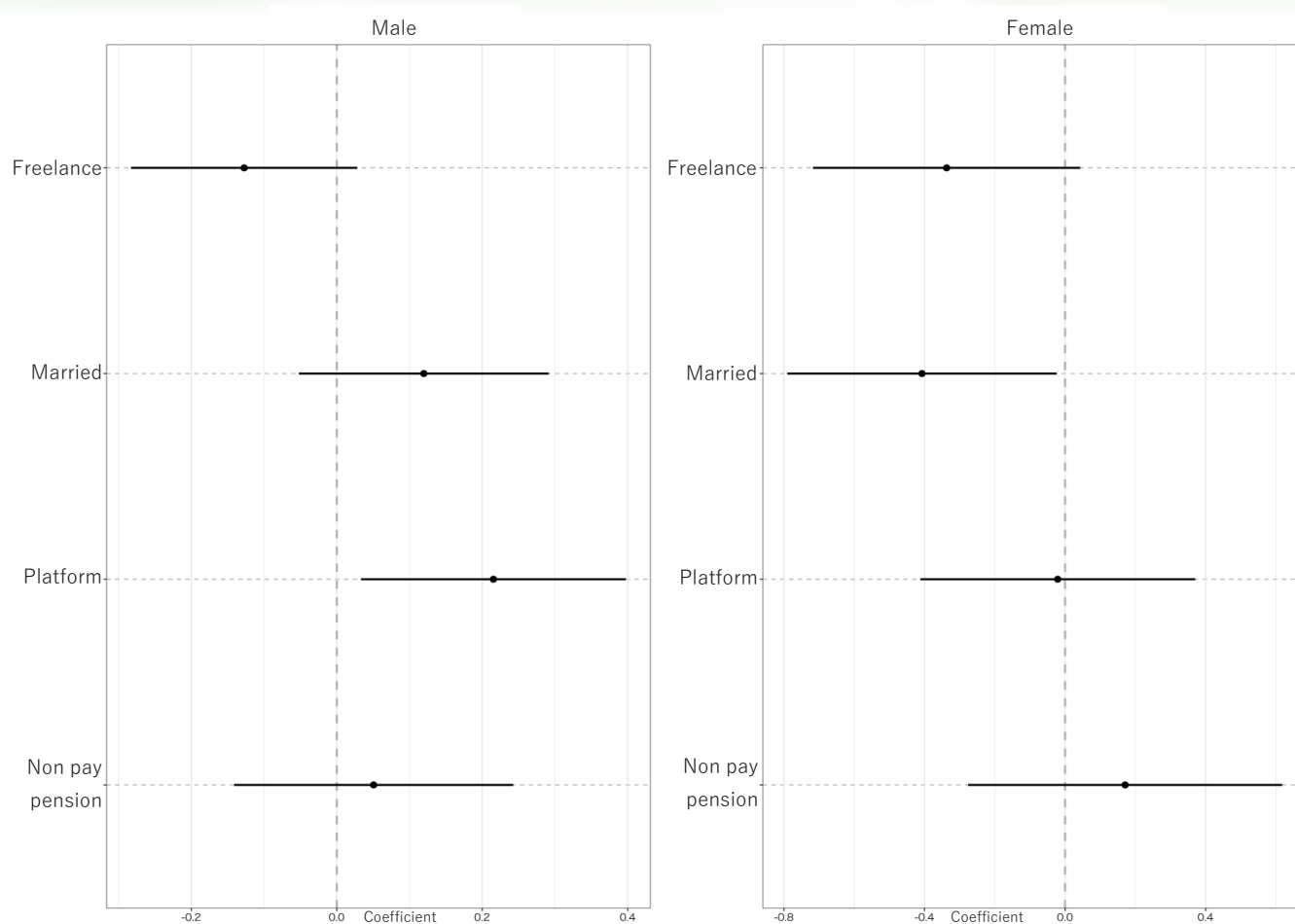


Figure 4 Main Factors Contributing to the Deterioration of Living Conditions Due to the Novel Coronavirus among Self-employed Persons

Note: A binomial logit was used to estimate the dependent variable, which was binary: 1 when the living situation “worsened” and 0 when it “maintained” or “improved.” The control variables are age, age squared, education, region of residence, marital status, occupation, years of employment, working hours, and personal income.

regularly employed.

In this subsection, we examine the role played by the subsidy program for sustaining businesses by considering the following two points: (a) what kind of people used the subsidy, and (b) whether the use of the subsidy affected their intention to continue their business.

(a) Users of the Subsidy Program for Sustaining Businesses

Figure 5 shows the percentage of people who have used this subsidy. The percentage of those who have already used the subsidy is 36.6% for male freelancers and 44.2% for

self-employed males, while the percentages for women are 41.7% and 52.8%, respectively. At the same time, about half of both men and women said they did not plan to use the subsidy. Whether or not this subsidy has reached the people who need it most, the results do indicate that it is easy to use these support measures for the self-employed.

Further, what is the relationship between the use of subsidy program for sustaining businesses and the deterioration of living conditions confirmed in the previous section? Here, we plotted a cross table (Figure 6). In this figure, we can see that among both men and women whose living conditions

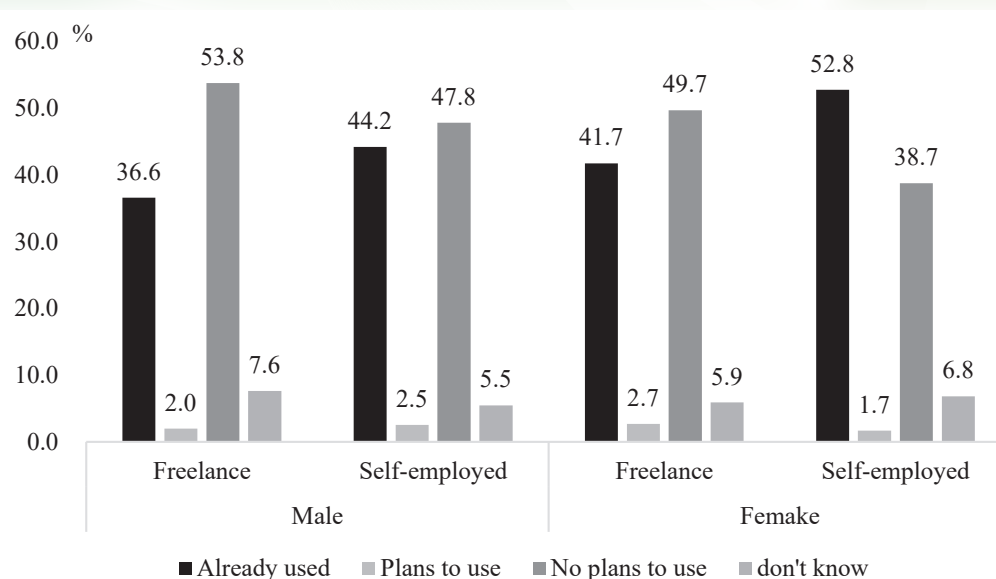


Figure 5 Users of the Subsidy Program for Sustaining Businesses, by Gender and Employment Status

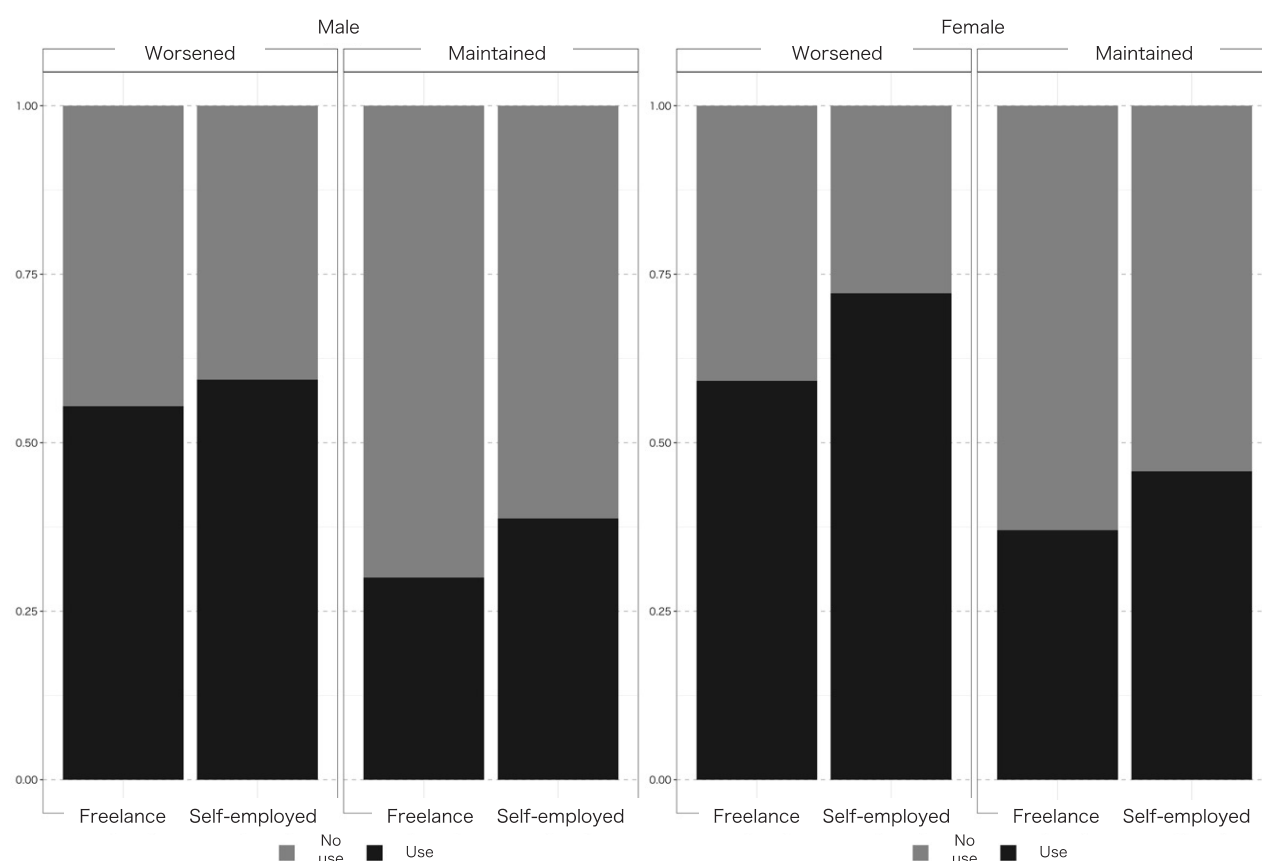


Figure 6 Use of the Subsidy Program for Sustaining Businesses, by Change in Living Conditions

worsened, 50 to 60% used the subsidy. The percentage of employed women who used the subsidy is the highest, at 72.2%. However, it is important to note that about 40% of the respondents did not use the subsidy, even if their living conditions had

worsened. The reason why they did not use the subsidy (or why they could not) will be discussed in Section 5; here we limit ourselves to noting the distribution.

What kind of self-employed individuals were more likely to use the subsidy program

for sustaining their businesses? We estimated the results using a binomial logit model with the dependent variable set to 1 if the self-employed worker used the subsidy and 0 if he or she did not use the subsidy (the control variables are the same as in the previous section). Among the coefficients of the estimation results, only the explanatory variables of particular interest are shown in Figure 7.

Specifically, this figure indicates that the value of the dummy variable for worsening living conditions is relatively large and has a positive effect. In other words, those whose living conditions have deteriorated are more likely to use the subsidy than those whose living conditions have been maintained. Specifically, for males whose living conditions have worsened, it is 2.63 times more likely that they will use the subsidy ($\exp(0.966)$), and for females, it is 2.38 times ($\exp(0.865)$). Based on the results of this analysis, it can be confirmed that at least those whose living conditions have deteriorated because

of the pandemic are using the subsidy, which is generally in line with the purpose of the subsidy. However, since the relationship between the amount of personal income and the use of the subsidy is not statistically significant (the confidence interval crosses zero), the attributes of the subsidy users need to be examined more carefully.

The other notable result is that the dummy variable for non-payment of social insurance premiums is positive for women, although it is not statistically significant. In other words, people who have been outside the safety net since before the pandemic are more likely to access the subsidy, even when controlling for other factors.

(b) Use of the Subsidy Program for Sustaining Businesses and Business Outlook

Finally, we consider whether the use of the subsidy program for sustaining businesses had a positive impact on the prospect of continuing the affected businesses. Using the same method described previously, we

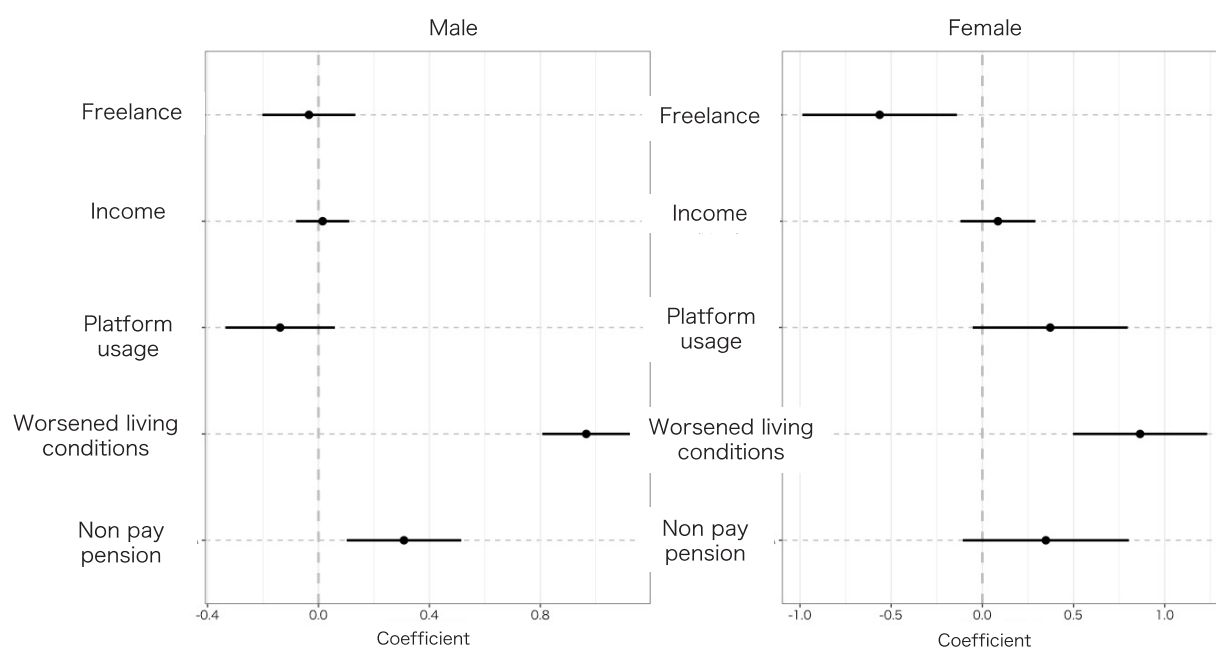


Figure 7 A Breakdown of Users of the Subsidy Program for Sustaining Businesses

Note: A binomial logit model was conducted with the dependent variable set to 1 for the use of the subsidy program for sustaining businesses, and 0 for the non-use of the program. The control variables are the same as those used in the previous analyses.

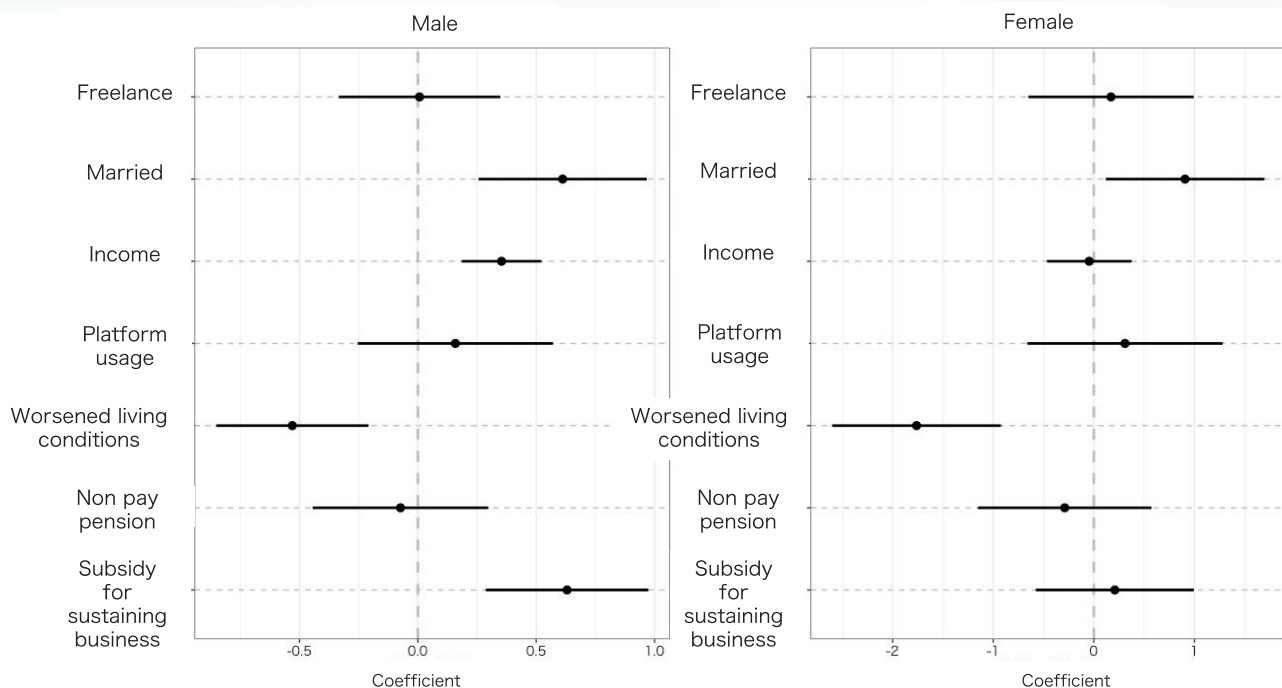


Figure 8 Impact of the Use of the Subsidy Program for Sustaining Businesses on Business Continuity Prospects

Note: A binomial logit model was conducted in which the dependent variable was set to 1 when “continue” was selected as the prospect for business continuity, and 0 when “close” was selected. The control variables are the same as those used in the previous analyses.

estimated the results using a binomial logit model with the dependent variable set to 1 when the respondent answered that he or she intended to continue a current business, and 0 when the respondent answered that he or she intended to quit the business. The main coefficients are plotted in Figure 8.

Looking at the effect of the use of the subsidy on the intention to continue business, the coefficient is positive for both men and women, though it is statistically significant only for men. For men, those who used the subsidy were about 1.88 times ($\exp(0.630)$) more likely to choose to continue or expand their business than those who did not use the subsidy. This result indicates that the subsidy program for sustaining businesses does have an impact for men. However, the results are negative for men whose living conditions have worsened, meaning that their business prospects have not improved.

Meanwhile, for both men and women,

having a spouse has a positive impact on business prospects. Compared to workers without a spouse, the living conditions of men with spouses are 1.84 times better ($\exp(0.612)$) and women 2.48 times better ($\exp(0.907)$). As pointed out in the previous section, the living conditions of women with a spouse are less likely to deteriorate despite the challenges of the pandemic. In light of this finding, the impact of the novel coronavirus on workers’ lives and businesses may be mitigated to some extent by their family structure. At the same time, the finding suggests the need for a subsidy that is independent of marital status.

5 Conclusion and discussion

In this paper, we have described the actual situation of self-employed people today in relation to the spread of infections from the novel coronavirus. In this section, the main points of the analysis are briefly

summarized and the implications are pointed out. In addition, we discuss the issues that need to be addressed in order to reconfigure the social security system for the future.

The paper's five main findings are the following. First, the occupational composition of self-employed workers without employees (freelancers) is such that the ratio of workers in professional and technical occupations is high for both men and women. The personal annual income of male self-employed workers is at the same level as that of the non-regular employees, while the income of female self-employed workers is around 2 million yen. Second, 20% to 30% of the respondents in this study used online platforms, with the percentage being particularly high among women who did not have employees. Third, we found that the spread of the novel coronavirus has worsened the living conditions of the self-employed more than those of the non-employed. In addition, when we restricted our analysis to the self-employed, we found that the living conditions of male self-employed workers who used online platforms were more likely to deteriorate than those who did not, whereas the living conditions of female self-employed workers who had a spouse were less likely to deteriorate than those who did not.

Fourth, about half of the people whose living conditions had worsened compared with the pre-pandemic period used the subsidy program for sustaining businesses, with those who had not paid their social insurance premiums having more access to the subsidy. Fifth, although access to the subsidy positively affected the prospects for business continuity, at least among men, those experiencing a deterioration in their living conditions were more likely to consider closing their businesses despite the provision of the subsidy.

What are the implications of these results? Here we focus on issues that are important to examining the future of social policy, in keeping with the common theme. First, during challenging times, self-employed workers, for whom safety nets for unemployment and leaves of absence are not in place, are likely to experience a deterioration in their living conditions that is comparable to that experienced by non-regular workers. After the 2008 global financial crisis, "Haken-giri" (i.e., the layoff of temporary workers) and "Yatoi-dome" (i.e., unfair termination) became social problems, and efforts were made to expand the safety net for non-regular employees and improve their living conditions. However, the situation is more serious for self-employed workers, who are not covered, at all, by the safety net. The development of safety nets for freelancers had been viewed as an important policy issue even before the pandemic, but the coronavirus crisis has unfolded without stakeholders reaching any concrete conclusions or measures in this connection.

With a few exceptions, self-employed persons are not eligible for unemployment insurance because they are not employees, and there is no safety net for self-employed persons who are effectively unemployed. It is understandable that the structure of the insurance system would differ fundamentally for employed labor versus self-employed workers; but there is much room to consider whether, in today's era, this classification should really remain unchanged. Given people's right to a healthy and culturally appropriate minimum standard of living, a continuous system that covers the whole range of work options, from employment work to self-employment, is necessary.

At the very least, if we are to promote diverse ways of working, we need a system that supports each of these work styles

more fairly. In the current situation, even if we limit ourselves to the question of unemployment insurance, it is difficult for people to freely choose the type of work they want to do because there is an incentive for them to work in the context of hired labor. In this respect, too, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed a contradiction that has existed for some time.

One of the emergency measures developed in response to the crisis, the subsidy program for sustaining businesses is symbolic of this contradiction. As Mizumachi points out, benefits that are not paid to workers who have contributed social insurance premiums to prepare for the risk of a decline in income are paid to individual entrepreneurs who have not paid insurance premiums, based on general financial resources that are also supported by workers and pensioners; and in some cases the amount received by the self-employed is larger than the amount of public benefits received by workers (unemployment insurance) (Mizumachi 2020). From the present data, it is not possible to determine how much of an effect this policy has had on the continuation of business. However, the fact that people whose living conditions deteriorated received benefits may have indirectly played a role in supporting their livelihood.

Still, approximately 40% of the population does not make use of the subsidy program for sustaining businesses despite the worsening of their living conditions. One of the reasons for this pattern is that the self-employed do not file tax returns, making it difficult for them to track declines in business due to the spread of the coronavirus (Kakita 2020). In other words, there are people who are unable to complete the application procedures because they do not have the necessary documents. They cannot

use the formal system because their work style is informal, in the sense that they cannot determine their sales levels through tax returns. This situation had been going on even before the pandemic, which only made it more visible.

In light of these considerations, it can be stated that there are various subcategories of self-employed persons as well as a broader division of employment status into employed labor and self-employed workers. One of the major issues for social policy (and the science of social policy) in the future will be how to construct a social security system that does not depend on workers' type of employment, in order to better support the lives of working people. In turn, a key question is how to set the scope of the safety net and identify the target population. Based on the results of the analysis presented in this paper, it is necessary to consider a system that is not affected by the presence or absence of employees or by family structure (marital status). Indeed, it may be desirable to introduce a system in which self-employed persons themselves decide whether or not to join the system. This is because the impact of the novel coronavirus on the self-employed has not been uniform, making it difficult to determine in advance who needs higher levels of protection.

However, the data used in this paper represent only one case study, a beginning to the research that is required in this area. The development of a social security system for the self-employed will not be a straightforward process because of the wide range of issues involved. Indeed, this problem can be effectively tackled only through the cooperation of researchers in multiple domains, including law (labor law), social policy studies, and labor-related economics and sociology.

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Japan Association for Social Policy Studies (JASPS) 142nd Conference

22-23, May, 2021, at Hitotsubashi University (online), Tokyo, Japan

Conference Theme: The Pandemic and the Future of Social Policy

DAY 1 (22 May 2021)

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

9:30-11:30 Special Theme Session 1

Poverty as a Social Norm: Toward a New Theory of Poverty

Coordinator: TAKADA Kazuo (Hitotsubashi University, Professor Emeritus)

Chair: SASAKI Takao (Tokyo University of Social Welfare)

<Theme of the Session>

Poverty has been discussed in relation to social norms. The notion of the absolute poverty connotes the premise that subsistence instead of decent life is the basic policy target. And, stigma is a byproduct of meritocracy. We focus here how the social norms in the poverty have been changed and how a social norm is functioning in the specific program. We also discuss on the debate between Sen and Townsend on the concept of poverty, because we can have an upper concept to integrate the opposite ideas of them. The first presentation (Nobuo Shiga) deals with the historical change of the notion of poverty. The second, Tuyoshi Hita discuss on the advocacy service in Japan, finding the basic concept of freedom and human rights. The third, Kazuo Takada propose the upper concept for the integration, self-determination. The concept will show a direction to develop future policy on poverty.

SHIGA Nobuo (Prefectural University of Hiroshima)

Expanding the Concept of Poverty

This research investigates what triggered the expansion of the concept of poverty.

The concept of poverty has evolved as “absolute poverty → relative poverty → social exclusion” (expansion of the concept of poverty). This expansion of the concept of poverty can be understood as the development of social norms regarding “unacceptable state of life”. So, what opportunities can we take for the development of social norms regarding this “unacceptable state of life”? This paper examines two hypotheses for this opportunity: (1) economic growth and (2) the fostering of anti-discrimination social norms.

This report will emphasize the validity and importance of (2). On the other hand, with regards to (1), although it is too often uncritically accepted as an opportunity to expand the concept of relative poverty from absolute poverty, it is not sufficiently valid to understand it as one of the important opportunities, because the economic situation in

advanced capitalist countries since the 1980s, when the concept of social exclusion became common, has not necessarily been in step with economic growth.

HITA Tsuyoshi (Kyusyu University of Health and Welfare)

What “Rights” are Protected by Social Welfare? An Examination Focused on the Social Welfare Practiced by Social Workers

A commonly cited goal in social work is the protection of rights. However, those rights are not always universally defined as a standardized, clear concept specifying whose rights and which rights are protected within the system. For instance, guardians under the adult guardianship system are responsible for protecting adults (the elderly or those otherwise unable to care for themselves) from abuse or neglect. However, the nature and extent of this protection often remain unclear. In Japan, simply applying the system’s guidelines or following formal procedures might have trivialized the meaning of the “protection of rights.” This study sought to clarify the vague concept of the “protection of rights” from the standpoint of social work, the core support method in social welfare, focusing on the “actions/activities,” “mechanisms,” “processes,” and “conditions” that protect rights. The study discussed how social workers practice the “protection of rights” and demonstrated that the rights to be protected have, at their foundation, human rights and freedoms.

TAKADA Kazuo (Hitotsubashi University, Professor Emeritus)

An integration of concept of poverty: Beyond the opposition between Sen and Townsend

The debate on the theory of poverty was done between Sen and Townsend. Its aftermath extends to the recent authors. Ruth Lister, reviewing the debate, wrote that she agreed with Townsend, but still she confessed her understanding of Sen’s argument. The core of the controversy should rest on the question where the vanishing point for poverty is. Both Sen and Townsend missed it. And my idea tells that the controversy can be solved by seeing it from the concept of self-determination. I think it is the state where we can make a self-determination. From this point we can have a new perspective on the policy on poverty, free from the old but still living concept of the poor laws.

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

Employment Issues ①

Chair: MURATA Takafumi (Kyoto Prefectural University)

TAKAHASHI Yusuke (Ehime University)

Workers’ Transition to Regular Employment and the Factors Influencing It

This study examined the factors that generally influence workers’ transition to regular employment (employment with full benefits) from non-regular ones (fixed-term contract employment). In particular, the study focused on the pathways adopted by the workers to change to regular employment and also examined their employment status in their first jobs, along with their individual and economic attributes. The study resulted in some interesting findings. First, workers are more likely to make a transition from a non-regular

employment to a regular one if they were regular employees in their first jobs. Second, married women are less likely to make a changeover, implying further that unmarried women are eager to become regular employees. Third, the use of Hello Work (the government's employment support services) facilitates women's transition to regular employment. Fourth, workers in the medical, social security, and social insurance industries are relatively likely to make a transition to small and medium-sized companies. Finally, those who leave their jobs after getting a new job are more likely to make a transition to regular employment than those who quit before finding one. Similar results were obtained when the sample was limited to only those who were regular employees in their first jobs.

HIRAO Tomotaka (Setsunan University)

The Determinants of Educational Mismatch: Evidence from Japanese Youth Labor Market

In this paper, we analyze the determinants of educational mismatch among Japanese youth labor force, focusing on the mediating effect of early turnover after graduation. Our study used the data set of original survey that targets the youth of regional labor market in Japan. The survey was conducted in January 2017. The empirical results show that early turnover after graduation provide young people with educational mismatch, especially overeducation. In addition, after controlling for potential bias, overeducated workers earn less than their correctly placed colleagues. Early turnover after graduation has a mediating effect on decreasing the wage in the Japanese youth labor market. Our findings suggest that the prevention from early turnover after graduation plays an important role in career development of Japanese youth.

11:30-13:00 Lunch Time

CONFERENCE PLENARY SESSION

13:00-17:00

The Pandemic and the Future of Social Policy

COVID-19 poses a variety of challenges to our society. We should confront these challenges and make them opportunities for a better future.

The current pandemic is comparable to the Spanish influenza of a century ago, at the end of the First World War. At that time, the ILO and LNHO (the predecessor of the World Health Organization, or WHO) were just commencing their activities, and welfare states were in their infancy. Compared to that period, can we say that today's welfare states have functioned equitably and efficiently during the pandemic? With the changing nature of work and family, the pandemic is experienced unequally. Experiences are different, for example, among those in full-time employment, those in part-time employment, and those who are self-employed, among those who can telework and those who cannot, and among those who have care responsibilities and those who do not. We need to take such differences into account and envision inclusive social policies. In addition, in a situation where vaccines may be used as a tool

of soft power in international politics due to the confrontation between the United States and China, both developed and developing countries must cooperate in establishing a system of global governance in order to overcome the crisis together. In this sense, domestic social policy in each country is not separable from global social policy.

Hopefully this special theme session will provide an opportunity to examine academically the experience of the pandemic and turn it into a vision for the future of social policy.

Chair: SUGANUMA Takashi (Rikkyo University)

Discussant: TANAKA Takuji (Hitotsubashi University)

Speakers:

ENOKI Kazue (Hosei University)

Infectious Diseases and Social Policy: Emergencies and Policy Formation in Modern Japan

The formation of social policy in Japan was pioneered by the Factory Law of 1911, and was developed mainly through the regulation of factory workers' working conditions and the introduction of the health insurance scheme. The Society for Social Policy Studies, established in 1897, held its first conference in 1907 on the theme of the Factory Law and stimulated public opinion for social policy. However, the Society ceased its activities in 1924.

Until now, the relationship between the historical development of social policy in Japan and infectious diseases has hardly been discussed. The Spanish influenza that struck Japan 100 years ago has also been forgotten. However, interest in countermeasures against infectious diseases such as tuberculosis increased at that time, culminating in the enactment of the Health Insurance Law of 1922 and the revised Factory Law of 1923. Minoru Oka, who was instrumental in the enactment of the Factory Law, pointed out that inattention in health issues was characteristic of Japan in the public debate over the Factory Law, but this situation changed dramatically.

This paper focuses on the formation of social policy in modern Japan, paying special attention to the impact of infectious diseases. The focus is on policies enacted during emergencies that are aimed at sustaining people's daily lives. Based on these findings, I would like to make suggestions for the future of social policy.

NAKA Shuhei (Meiji Gakuin University)

The Present and Future of the Social Security System from the Perspective of Self-Employment

The purpose of this paper is to summarize, from the perspective of self-employment, the challenges facing the social security system and the steps needed for its reconstruction. A number of emergency measures have been taken in response to the spread of COVID-19, but in the process, the inadequacy of protection for the self-employed and freelancers compared to employed workers has come to light. With the rapid development of information and communication technology, there is a growing tendency, both in Japan and abroad, for a wide variety of work to be performed as self-employment, often in the forms of individual contracting or outsourced work. This includes the platform economy, where

individuals work under short-term contracts, gig work, and cloud labor. In principle, Japan's social security system and labor law policies have been based on the premise of people working under long-term employment contracts. Today, it has become necessary to find ways to protect people who work on a self-employed basis, as they are poorly covered by the existing schemes. This paper examines the relationship between social security and the emerging self-employment practices through an analysis of original social survey data. Based on these results, I will make proposals for the building of a social security system that is not based on types of employment.

OCHIAI Emiko (Kyoto University)

Gender Issues and the Care Crisis Revealed by COVID-19: What Can Social Sciences Do to be Inclusive of Life?

A survey on telework conducted by the presenter shows that telework has become a compulsory experiment in care visualization and work-life balance. Even in cases where both husband and wife do telework, the husbands' work takes precedence and wives have become overburdened with housework. On the other hand, some increase in time spent on housework and childcare is found to have the effect of making family life happier. The ambivalent nature of care work, which is both work and life, is clearly demonstrated. It will be interesting to see what happens to the new working style brought about by COVID-19.

The Corona crisis has been identified worldwide as a gender issue that will hit women harder than men. Because COVID-19 is a disease of intimacy, it has a greater impact on women, who do most of the care work both inside and outside the home. Many women are forced to leave the workplace due to increased domestic care work. On the other side of the coin, social care work, which exposes workers to the risk of infection, is becoming more demanding, yet there has been no progress in improving those persons' labor conditions.

In these ways, COVID-19 has made visible the importance of care work in supporting life and livelihoods. It is now clear that the sustainability of society, including life and care, is an issue that demands to be addressed, as feminist economists and feminist welfare state scholars have been arguing since the 1970s and even before. The significance of feminist social sciences has been revealed, including redefinitions of work and economy, economic models that include care work, gender statistics, and the gender evaluation of policies.

TAKUMA Kayo (Tokyo Metropolitan University)

The State and Challenges of Global Health Governance

International cooperation against infectious diseases has historically developed relatively smoothly because such cooperation is mutually beneficial by nature. Why, therefore, has confrontation rather than cooperation become more apparent in the case of COVID-19? This is due to a combination of several factors, such as the growing socio-political impact of infectious diseases in the age of globalization, the decline of the liberal international order based on multilateral cooperation, and the institutional problems of global health governance.

In an international society based on realism, there are two essential elements that make international cooperation work. The first is the intention of nations to stand in solidarity against a common enemy, the virus. When the outbreak of COVID-19 began, the President of the United States was Donald Trump, who put America first, and the United States and China were in the worst relationship in history over technological hegemony and trade. Partly because the new virus originated in China, the two countries came into conflict over the pandemic as well.

The second element necessary for international cooperation to work is effort and ingenuity on the part of the international organizations seeking to achieve their goals. In the case of COVID-19, the WHO was slow to respond and made enemies of the United States because of its conciliatory attitude to China. As a result, the WHO's subsequent recommendations and appeals to countries did not work effectively. Moreover, the WHO's poor performance was deeply related to the institutional problems in health governance that existed even before the current pandemic.

In this paper, I would like to decipher the state and challenges of health governance from such a perspective.

15:30-17:00 Discussion and Chairperson final comments

17:00-17:10 Break

17:10-17:40 General Meeting

DAY 2 (23 May 2021)

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

9:30-11:30 Special Theme Session 2

Aspects of Social Policy in the Tokai Region: Population Outflow, the Support System for Poor and Needy Persons, and Cottage Industry Labor

Coordinator: WATANABE Yuki Yoshi (Doho University)

Chair: ASANO Kazuya (Tsu City College)

<Theme of the Session>

Aspects of Social Policy in the Tokai Region: Population Outflow, the Support System for Poor and Needy Persons, and Cottage Industry Labor

In the Tokai region, modern industry developed from an early stage, and the city of Nagoya, population two million, was the core of the Chukyo area's influence. However, with the exception of research regarding Toyota, there has been little debate about research on social policy in the Tokai region. Therefore, the Tokai Subcommittee, on the 20th anniversary of its establishment, decided to present a panel on such endeavors at the national convention in the hope of revitalizing social policy research in this area.

The first report deals with the relationship between the progress of aging due to population outflow and mutual aid. The second report deals with the relationship between cottage industry workers who supported the prosperity of the textile industry and their family members. And the third report presentation deals with the independence support system for the needy. All three reports capture important characteristics of the Tokai region and its livelihood problems.

FUKAI Hideki (Mie University)

The Impact of Regional Aging on Mutual Aid of Residents

A legal revision in 2017 deepened and promoted the Community-based Integrated Care System, and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare has called for development of the “Inclusive Society.” The Inclusive Society is based on making resident-led community development a core component of long-term care insurance. Many debates have already been conducted on the pros and cons of emphasizing mutual aid among residents in long-term care insurance, especially from the viewpoint of the public responsibility that national and local governments should bear in social security. In addition to considering these debates, this report raises the concern that the Inclusive Society does not fully consider the impact of the aging of the regional population, owing to the declining birthrate and the outflow of the young population, on mutual aid in the region. Based on quantitative and qualitative surveys in a city in Mie Prefecture, we will consider the relationship between regional aging and mutual aid.

MAEDA Naoko (Nagoya City University)

Sewing Industry and Families in the Seino Region: Reconsideration of the “Postwar Family Model”

Since the Tokugawa Period, the Seino region (in southwest section of Gifu Prefecture) has been a rural industrial area. It once produced numerous textile products made from cotton fabrics, though the core material changed over time from cotton fabrics to wool fabrics. From the Taisho period, the spinning industry flourished. During the high growth era, the production of clothes became the core industry as various textile industries rose and declined. These industries utilized not only in the traditional cottage industry system but also modern factories. These industries were heavily dependent on female labor.

How have women’s work styles changed in line with changes in local industries? How were these changes related to the division of household labor and child-rearing? To answer these questions, this report analyzes life histories of women who worked in the sewing industry during the high growth era, and then became cottage industry workers as the “postwar family model” became mainstream. The relationship between their work and their families is examined.

SUGINO Midori (Gifu College of Nursing)

The Subjects of the Support System for Poor and Needy Persons in the Tokai Region

Five years have passed since the Support System for Poor and Needy Persons started in 2015. This system provides a “second safety net,” functioning as a preliminary step towards getting public assistance.

The law was amended in 2018 to support people facing financial distress because of

difficult employment, mental, or physical situations, or difficult relationships with their local communities. Before the amendment, the law stated only that its subjects were those currently facing financial distress who might not be able to maintain a minimum standard of living. Municipalities are responsible for implementing policies to support the lifestyle independence of distressed persons.

The standard for measuring economic hardship is not clearly established. Therefore, each operating center operates by adjusting to the conditions and limits of the municipality in which it is based. As a result, regional characteristics and differences have become apparent.

This report presents the achievements of one city in the Tokai region in implementing the new policy region, comparing the outcomes to public assistance recipients in the same city. Next, the outcomes are compared to the survey results for independence support system consultants in other regions. Finally, this research is used to consider to what extent economic hardship is targeted.

9:30-11:30 General Session [B]

The Poverty Problem

Chair: MATSUE Akiko (International University of Health and Welfare)

OHTSU Yui (Saitama University), WATANABE Kuriko (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research)

The Correlation between Deprivation and Health: Evidence from a National Survey in Japan

In this study, we aimed to examine the correlation between deprivation and health in Japan. Deprivation, which is defined as an “enforced lack of necessities,” is the key non-monetary indicator of poverty to complement monetary indicators such as income. Utilizing microdata from the “National Survey on Social Security and People’s Life” conducted by the Japanese National Institute of Population and Social Security Research in 2017, we regressed three indicators of health (self-rated health, activity limitation, and K6) on deprivation with income poverty and socio-demographic factors controlled.

The main finding was that being deprived significantly increased the probability of poor self-rated health, limitations in usual activities, and depression. Conversely, the negative effect of income poverty was not observed after adjusting for deprivation. These results suggest that deprivation has a stronger negative impact on health than income does. Measuring poverty by only income may underestimate the effect of poverty on health.

MOMOSE Yurie (University of Tokyo, graduate student)

Unhealthy but Not Disabled in Japan: An Analysis of the Difficulties that People in Gray Areas Undergo

In recent years, there has been a growing need to promote ties between social security policies and labor policies. This need has shed light on the problems caught in the gap between various policies. Previous studies have been focusing on national policies, including welfare services and labor support policies for people with disabilities based on the

Comprehensive Support Law for Persons with Disabilities, and the pension systems and employment policies for the elderly. However, there are people who are unhealthy or have disabilities but do not fall into any of those disability/elderly categories, and it is highly likely that those people have slipped through the nets of both welfare and labor policies. In order to gain access to disability benefits, they must be certified by the local government. Those who are not being certified are possibly in the gray areas. Thus, they might be excluded from any social protection programs and undergo hardship.

The purpose of this study is (1) to identify those who are in the gray areas, (2) to clarify what kind of benefits they receive or miss, and (3) to examine the differences between the benefits that people in gray areas would receive and those that disability certificate holders would obtain by analyzing a set of official statistical data.

KONDO Takayuki (Tokyo Metropolitan University), KAJIWARA Katsuhito (Tokyo Metropolitan University), KURIHARA Kazuki (Hitotsubashi University), TANG Chengchen (Tokyo Metropolitan University), HAYASHI Masako (Tokyo Metropolitan University), LIU Mingyang (Tokyo Metropolitan University), ABE Aya (Tokyo Metropolitan University)

Attitudes Toward Support for University Students from Low-income Families: Positioning Japan Among Other Countries

According to OECD, the tuition for tertiary education in Japan is one of the highest among the OECD countries. Previous studies have pointed out that the Japanese government's low spending on higher education was thought to be associated with notion that the cost for education of children should be borne by parents. At the same time, the recent introduction of tuition waiver and reduction as well as scholarship for student from low-income families indicate that Japanese people are willing to support students if they are poor. However, there are few empirical studies on whether Japanese citizens actually want the state to bear the cost of higher education compared with other countries.

Therefore, in this paper, we use data from the "Role of Government" survey conducted by the ISSP (International Social Survey Programme) in 2016 to compare the general public's preferences for "assistance to university students in low-income families" in OECD countries, and clarify the position of Japan among these countries.

9:30-11:30 General Session 【C】

Employment Issues ②

Chair: WEATHERS Charles (Osaka City University)

SATO Naoko (Kawasaki City)

Gender Gaps in the Career Paths of Local Government Executives

This paper analyzed career paths of general clerical executives who had served for designated city A at director-general level or relevant level from the perspective of specific job contents and gender comparison. Though the examination of all female director-general level executives in the last 50 years regardless of job types, it was confirmed that there was no female director-general level executive whose job type was "general clerical" in

designated city A. Then by conducting the interview survey for the 11 executives through semi-structured interviews, it was analyzed that the female executives were assigned to job descriptions that made them difficult to acquire enough “judgement ability for administrative decision making” in the first half of their careers, while male executives were assigned to appropriate positions in their career paths. It was confirmed that there was a clear gap between male and female executives at the initial stage of their careers.

In addition, it was also recognized that when the female executives suddenly got transferred to the posts that required them to make decisions of local government 20 to 25 years after they started their working careers at the city government, they managed to use human network mainly to make up for their lack of experiences.

TAKEDA Jiro (Doshisha University, graduate student)

The employment of professionals: why the number of “highly professional workers” in Japan does not increase.

In 2019, the pay system for “highly professional workers,” which was aimed to be one of the primary means to promote “work style reform,” was introduced. The system’s concept dates back to 2005 when the Japan Business Federation (Keidanren) proposed a “white-collar exemption.” Since then, much discussion has developed among politics, bureaucracy, business, and labour. Finally, the system was put into force. However, currently, the examples which have applied to it seem to be relatively rare.

This report aims to offer some suggestions that may lead to understanding the cause of that rarity by mainly focusing on research and development people. A critical reason is that most professionals in Japan tend not to match with the ideal professionals, which Eliot Freidson (2001) described in *Professionalism: The Third Logic*. Moreover, the mismatch has grown as popular mainstream theories of business strategy have permeated through Japanese companies. This paper attempts to demonstrate it by reviewing the relevant literature.

MATSUNAGA Shintaro (Nagano University), NAGATA Daisuke (Meisei University)

Life transitions and ‘Corporate-oriented society’ on freelance work: Focusing on the women’s workstyles in the animation industry

In terms of female workers in employment relations, the institutions to balance work and childbirth/childcare and continue working in Japanese society have developed in recent years. Still, they have not focused on freelance women workers who are in seemingly gender-neutral competitions. This paper will clarify how they prepare for life transition while working as freelancers in such a Japanese society. For this purpose, we analyzed the life course narratives from the interviews with freelance female animators. As a result, it became clear that freelance work has difficulties coping with life transitions, making them hesitant to make the transition itself in some cases. They cope with difficulties after the transition by taking advantage of their high discretion. Some of the life transitions were due to the instability of freelancers in general, and some were due to women’s specific life events such as marriage and childbirth.

9:30-11:30 EDUCATION SESSION**Chair:** OBI Harumi (CHUO University)**Theme:** What Graduate Students and Young Researchers Need to Know about Submissions to Refereed Journals**Speakers:****HATAMOTO Yusuke** (Doshisha University)**ONOUKA Tomoji** (University of Tokyo)**TAMAI Kingo** (Aichi Gakuin University)**11:30-12:45 Lunch Time****12:45-14:45 Special Theme and General Sessions****12:45-14:45 Special Theme Session 3****Women's Impoverishment by COVID-19 and "Work, Family and Rights"****Chair and Coordinator:** KINOSHITA Takeo (Showa Women's University)**<Theme of the Session>**

The spread of COVID-19 is causing problems with long periods of absence from work, layoffs and hiring. In particular, the impact on female workers has been pointed out, and the number of suicides has been increasing. However, the factors and processes that contribute to why women have more difficulties with COVID-19 have not been fully elucidated.

Therefore, we interviewed women who had provided labor consultations related to COVID-19 to labor NPOs and labor unions since February 2020 about their progress since then. A follow-up study was conducted on 60 subjects. Based on this survey, we will discuss the impact of the survey from the perspective of work, family, and the exercise of rights.

The first paper will report on the changes in the positioning of women workers in the household and the manifestation of problems by COVID-19. The second paper will discuss how occupations and hierarchies have changed family relationships in the COVID-19 disaster. The third paper will discuss the difficulties in exercising rights in the workplace and the resignation of workers.

MIKAMOTO Satomi (Rikkyo University)**Transformation of Female Workers from "Household Support" to "Household Maintenance" and the Impact of COVID-19**

The spread of the COVID-19 has had a major impact on employment, especially in service industries that involve contact with people, such as restaurants and retail stores. These industries have a high percentage of female workers, and many of them are non-regular workers. Such store closures should normally be covered. However, there have been a number of cases where the absence allowance has not been paid.

This non-payment has had a significant impact on household finances. This is because

the position of women in the household is changing. (1) The number of unmarried women who are “self-reliant” is increasing. (2) An increasing number of married women workers are taking on “household maintenance” roles with their husbands, rather than “household support” roles.

Thus, the changes from before COVID-19 have amplified the impact of COVID-19 on employment and families. In this report, the above changes will be analyzed based on interviews with female workers.

IMAOKA Naoyuki (Okinawa University)

Changes in Family Relationships in COVID-19: Focusing on Occupation, Hierarchy, and Care Burden

Various changes in workplaces and schools associated with the spread of COVID-19 are affecting the work styles and care burden of female workers. In this context, changes in family relationships are emerging. For example, when household members telework, they are able to stay home longer than before, which improves family relationships. On the other hand, there are many occupations where telework is not possible, especially in the service sector where many women are employed. Also, the lower the income group, the more workers are exposed to infection risks. In some cases, this results in the deterioration of family relationships.

With regard to the burden of care, the simultaneous closure of children’s schools and telecommuting of household members have increased the burden of household work. This may increase stress among women, who bear a larger share of the household burden, and affect family relationships. In this report, the above changes will be analyzed based on interviews with female workers.

AOKI Kotaro (General Support Union)

Addressing Labor Issues of Women Workers and their Consequences in COVID-19: Patience, Lay-off, Occupational Change and Exercise of Rights

Many women workers faced labor problems such as dismissal and absence from work in COVID-19. The damage done to these women was revealed through the press. However, little is known about how they dealt with labor issues and what the results were. They have three main ways of dealing with labor issues. The first is patience. They face labor problems and are troubled, but they persevere and keep working. The second is lay-off and occupational change. This refers to cases where people resign due to labor problems. After that, there are two types of people: those who remain unemployed and those who change jobs. The third is the exercise of rights. This is a case of negotiating with the company to improve the labor problem.

In most of the second cases, income was lower than it was before COVID-19. On the other hand, in the third case, some results were achieved by conducting labor-management negotiations. They tended to be able to maintain their standard of living better than if they had given up.

In this report, we will analyze these actions and their results based on the interviews.

12:45-14:45 General Session [D]**Labor-Management Relations****Chair: MATSUBARA Hitomi (Shizuoka University)****PARK Joonhee (Saitama University, graduate student)****Solidarity between the labor movement and university students: From the case of the Korea Railroad Workers' Union strike in 2013**

The Korea Railroad Workers' Union went on strike against the privatization of railways from December 09 to December 31, 2013. One of the key characteristics of this railway strike is that university students across the country organized a movement to support the railway strike. Many universities students across the country posted hand-written posters supporting the railway strike, and in Seoul, South Korea, held demonstrations supporting the strike. In Korea, there are few cases where young people support labor union activities, so this case has an important meaning in the history of labor movement. However, it is not yet clear why young people supported the strike of railway workers. Therefore, this research reveals the reason why university students supported the strike by using 200 hand-written posters posted at universities nationwide. Also this research examines the relationship between the social and economic conditions faced by young Koreans at that time and the railway strike. At last, this research examines the mechanism how labor movement can be supported by young generations.

IWASA Takuya (Kobe University)**German Meat Industry under the Corona Crisis: On "Organized Irresponsibility"**

Travel and meals are often the focus of attention as a place for coronavirus infection to spread, but perhaps even more important is the workplace. There is a structure in which workers are forced to go to work even if they take the risk of infection for fear of income decrease and employment loss as well as long-term crowding. The German meat industry is a clear example of this problem. Since May 2020, the infection has spread rapidly in meat factories, and "organized irresponsibility" has been pointed out as a major factor. That is, many of the workers are procured from Eastern European countries through contracts, and the widespread use of these contracts obscures the responsibility for infection control. There have been criticisms of contracting for some time, but after the Corona crisis, it became the focus of public opinion, and a law banning contracting in the meat industry from 2021 was enacted. In this report, I would like to use these materials to clarify the process by which labor problems develop in a unique way during the corona crisis.

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

Social Security ①

Chair: ISHIKAWA Kimihiko (Okinawa University)

MATSUMOTO Naoko (University of Tokyo, graduate student)

Changes in Policies against Mass Unemployment under Crises: One Example of Germany as a <Social State>

This paper focuses measures which German social state (Sozialstaat) has taken under crises with the concern about mass unemployment; namely two different past policies and current ones under the corona crisis. For three decades after 1970s, which could be characterized as ‘employment crisis,’ the German labour market responded recession through labour force reduction by means of early retirement. However, this framework was not sustainable from the viewpoint of pension finance. Boosted by the activation paradigm in social policy including pension policy since 1990s, it was the instrument of short-time work allowance rather than early retirement, that German federal government adopted extensively under the world economic crisis in 2008/09. This instrument is designed to maintain employment and to lighten the burden of employers, whereby employers temporally reduce working time of their employees (up to 100%) instead of laying them off. Employees can be compensated partially the missing net wage by the Federal Employment Agency. This scheme, which enabled Germany’s ‘employment miracle,’ has been currently expanded during Covid-19. At the same time, German government has proceeded for non-workers, including the unemployed. This paper also gives thoughts to financial aspects.

FUKUICHI Shio to (Chubu Gakuin University)

The Future of the State-Civil Society Relations in the “Neo-liberal Turn”: The Case of the LSS Reforms in Sweden

This study focuses on the recent changes in disability policy in Sweden. As is well known, Sweden has been characterized by a substantial welfare provision by the public sector financed by tax revenue. In recent years, however, there have been some changes in disability policy that make us suspect that it is becoming increasingly neo-liberalization. For example, there has been a sharp decline in the number of recipients of disability pensions (Aktivitetsersättning och sjukersättning) (Fukuchi 2020) and the strengthening of supply-side measures in wage subsidies.

Since 2016, there has been a controversy in Sweden in recent years over a proposed reform of the LSS Act, the country’s basic law for welfare services for people with disabilities. In this study, we will look at the main points of the 2018 government survey report, which provided the opportunity to determine the direction of the proposed LSS reform, and the reactions of various disability organizations to it. The final aim of our work is to shed light on the state-civil society relations in the “neoliberal turn” (Hort et al., 2020) of disability policy in Sweden.

TAKAHASHI Toshihiro (Bukkyo University, graduate student)

Industrial structure and social security: Clothing manufacturing and social security in G City

Immediately after the war, many micro businesses started the garment manufacturing industry in G city, and it was a domestic production area in the 1980s. However, the garment manufacturing industry has been declining due to globalization since the 1990s and imports from overseas. On the other hand, these businesses have almost no livelihood security, and it is not uncommon for them to fall into poverty when they quit their businesses. Furthermore, life in old age cannot be lived on the national pension alone. Therefore, the important role is social security, but the national government emphasizes the self-responsibility of social security and reduces pensions and medical expenses in old age. Given that it is the constitutional principle that social security be carried out under the responsibility of the state, the reduction of social security comes violation of the right to life. Clarify the ideal from of social security that protects the lives of workers from the industrial structure and social security.

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

15:00-17:00 Special Theme Session 4

An International Comparison of Policy Initiatives Aimed at Supporting People Facing Employment Difficulties

Chair: ABE Makoto (Oita University, Professor Emeritus)

Discussant: KIM Sung-won (University of Tokyo)

<Theme of the Session>

As the employment circumstances for young people deteriorated in Japan in the 1990s, the assistance for people who face difficulties seeking employment has attracted greater academic and social attention. Job Assistance Program was introduced as Government policy under the Act on Self-reliance Support for Needy Persons in 2015. On the other hand, in many countries the job assistance programs are more formally embedded within welfare policies. These are often discussed as activations and work-fare. However, there are many differences between countries in terms of schemes and methods of the job assistance programs.

It is important to discuss some issues regarding the assistance policies for people who face difficulties seeking employment, such as its relationship with income security, system and methods of the assistance for them, through international comparison to consider how the job assistance programs should be.

The aim of our research project is to examine some features of job assistance policies in some countries and to discuss some issues regarding job assistance policies through comparison of them. In this session, we will discuss the job assistance policies of the United States and Denmark.

SASAKI Takao (Tokyo University of Social Welfare)

Work Assistance Programs for the Low-income in the United States

This report aims to analyze the relationship between public assistance programs for low-income individuals and work assistance programs in the United States.

In addition to the demographic segmentation of recipients, U.S. public assistance programs are characterized by structural diversity, as exemplified by systems including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that are focused solely on a specific benefit type and mechanisms like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) that are based on the American tax system and not part of public assistance programs. It is also necessary to attend to the relationship between the federal government and each state as well as differences in system operations depending on the state.

By illuminating the varying degrees of emphasis placed on employment in those programs, the author hope that this report will contribute to the elaboration of this session's theme, an international comparison of "work assistance policies" for people who have difficulty finding employment.

KATO Soichiro (Ibaraki University Social Cooperation Center)

Development of the activation approach to Danish public assistance recipients

In Denmark, the number of public assistance recipients had increased due to the long-term economic recession since 1973. In 1994, the center-left government (1993-2001) introduced activation policies to public assistance recipients.

Since then, the number of public assistance recipients, mainly young people, had decreased until the 2008 financial crisis. However, there was no declining trend among middle-aged and older people and non-European immigrants and refugees who need support such as health, medical care or language education.

Recently, there has been concern that the child generation of public assistance recipients will be affected by "social heritage" as negative impact on later life due to their growing environment.

15:00-17:00 General Session [F]

Social Security ②

Chair: TANAKA Yumiko (Shimonoseki City University)

YAMADA Soshiro (Nihon Fukushi University), SAKURAI Keita (Ritsumeikan University)

Parliamentary Debate and the Mass Media Regarding Public Assistance

Previous studies that have historically examined the policy formation process of public assistance have often used the testimonies of welfare bureaucrats and policy documents as analytic materials. Although bureaucracy plays a predominant role in Japan's political system, the political influence of the mass media needs to be examined. This study provides an overview of how the media has influenced the politics of public assistance in the postwar period. Using a database of Diet proceedings, we analyzed the frequency at which public assistance was discussed in the Diet and found that media coverage of public

assistance was extremely scarce until the 1990s. However, media coverage and related Diet debates abundant in the 2000s. In addition, a text analysis of Diet members' statements that relied on media reports showed that media reports were utilized in an advocacy capacity against welfare recipients until the 1990s. Since the 2000s, reports have nonetheless been used in a critical manner as well.

KARIYA Takashi (Hitotsubashi University, graduate student)

The Historical Development of Japan's Policies of Independence Support: Focusing on the Discourse about Self-Reliance from the 1940s to the 2010s

In this report, the concept of self-reliance that has been the keynote of Japanese social policy historically, and the following features are examined. Japan responded to poverty by introducing a public assistance system based on the principle of self-reliance after the end of the Second World War. At that time, self-reliance had an ambiguous nature. On the one hand, it aimed to integrate individuals into a specific place and create order, on the other hand, it meant respect for the will and freedom of activity of the individuals. During the period of creation of the social insurance system, self-reliance was tied up with the purpose of economic development. Since the 1970s, however, the movement of the disabled has led to a redefinition of work and of self-reliance. These redefined concepts meant that individuals have the freedom of choosing their activity. Since the 2000s, policies of independence support have been introduced for the new poor social stratum, such as the working poor and non-regular workers. These policies are aiming not only to integrate individuals in the labor market, but also to respect the choice and the freedom of individuals by utilizing various welfare providers and expand opportunities for social participation.

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

