

## Abstracts

### Labor Market Reform and the Weakened Power of Japanese Labor Unions: Differences from the Italian Case

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This article analyzes how labor market deregulation weakened the power of labor unions in Japan in comparison with Italy, which also implemented labor market deregulation almost at the same period from the late 1990s to the early 2010s. To analyze why the power of labor unions — such as the power of unions to resist employers' demands — weakened, the article examines the components of unions' "power resources", i.e. union density, the degree of unions' policymaking participation and the preferences and interests of unions. Against the background of severe economic situations and intensified international competition, both Japanese and Italian governments implemented labor market deregulation in favor of employers almost at the same time in the late 1990s, early 2000s and early 2010s. However, the degrees and contents of labor market deregulation differed in the two countries. Labor market deregulation weakened labor unions by reducing the degree of unions' policymaking participation, exacerbating the conflicts of interest among them and increasing the number of non-regular workers difficult to organize. However, these impacts of labor market deregulation differed in the extent and form between Japan and Italy, contributing to the differences in the degree and form of the weakening of unions in these two countries.

### Do Unions No Longer Fight? Tradition and Change in UA Zensen's Unified Industry-wide Bargaining

**Chiaki Nagumo** (Tokai Gakuen University)

With the decrease in strikes and the disappearance of large-scale strikes, it is now said that labor unions are no longer fighting. The reasons why labor unions no longer strike include the easing of information asymmetry between labor and management, changes in the public's and union members' awareness of strikes, and changes in the competitive environment surrounding companies. Although strikes have decreased under rational judgments by labor unions, the unions are still able to gather information and have management grant their demands through labor-management consultations, collective bargaining, and informal labor-management communication. In other words, today, if labor unions are not making easy compromises in labor-management negotiations prior to a strike, they should be considered to be fighting. This study examined UA Zensen's unified industry-wide bargaining and how it supports collective bargaining by its affiliated unions. The results show that UA Zensen did not allow its affiliated unions to make easy compromises, established a system that allowed them to strike, and strongly opposed any breach of trust by management, and increased the persuasive power of negotiation outcomes to union members. Even today, it can be said that UA Zensen's unified industry-wide bargaining fully supports the struggles of its affiliated unions.

### How Have Workplace Regulations of Enterprise Unions Changed?

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When we think about the sustainability of labor unions, we ask how well workplace regulation matches the needs of union members. Labor-management consultations are a common means of workplace regulation, and the items of workplace regulation dealt with in these consultations can be divided into items related to management, personnel affairs, and working hours and styles. The main objectives of workplace regulation for each item have been changing. Regarding management, employment security was the basic policy, and productivism, in which the labor unions are also responsible for production, was also important. However, in recent years, the main objectives have been shifting to the improvement of union members' understanding and acceptance of management. Regarding personnel affairs, the main objectives have been shifting from the regulation of labor force expenditures and careers to securing understanding and acceptance of management. Regarding working hours, the main objective had been to control labor

expenditures, but there is a new movement toward autonomous working styles. Generally, there have been no major changes in the items of workplace regulation, but the objectives have changed. The main objectives of current workplace regulation have shifted from the regulation of labor force expenditures to employment security, and obtaining union members' understanding and acceptance. Future tasks for unions are to support individual labor-management consultations and transactions, and to involve all workers in the company into the organization.