

Abstracts

Are More Women Working as Regular Employees? From Work-Life Balance Support to Active Participation Support

Hiroki Sato (Professor Emeritus The University of Tokyo)

This paper first examines the meaning of “regular employees.” Next, we examine the changes in the number of men and women “regular staff and employees”, based on the wording used in the *Basic Survey on Employment Status*, as a proxy to “regular employees.” Furthermore, we analyze human resource management of regular employees. In particular, we focus on women regular employees in career-track positions who are part of the core human resources. Through this analysis, we test whether or not women are making inroads into career-track positions. According to the *Basic Survey on Employment Status*, the number of regular employees declined during 1992-2012 for both men and women; however, the number of women regular employees increased during 2012-2022, resulting in the proportion of women regular employees increasing. Nevertheless, regular employees remain dominated by men. Human resource management in companies has changed through the respective introduction and revision of the equal employment law and childcare and family care leave system, putting more women in career-track positions. However, men still hold the majority of career-track positions. In addition, women in career-track positions receive fewer personal development opportunities compared to men in career-track positions in terms of work tasks and mentorship. As a result, despite the rise in the number of women in career-track positions, the rate of growth in the number of women in management positions is slow. Moreover, although women regular employees, including those in career-track positions, who continue to work using childcare leave or shorter work hours have increased, their continued use of such work-life balance support systems to maintain their employment negatively impacts their opportunities for personal development.

The Roles of Labor Unions in the Protection of Migrant Workers' Rights in Japan

Satomi Era (Hosei University)

This paper discusses the current situation and roles of labor unions in supporting and organizing migrant workers in Japan. Since the 1990s, accompanying an increase in migrant workers, community organizations such as NPOs and general labor unions have started to play leading roles in supporting migrant workers' rights, while company-based labor unions, which form the mainstream of the labor movement in Japan, have been late to respond to labor issues concerning this situation. At the same time, we are facing a turning point in migrant policy following the enactment of the revised Immigration Act in 2019, which led to the acceptance of workers from the front door. Conventional labor unions remain inactive in organizing the unorganized, and the government has long been reluctant to enforce measures for an inclusive society. Under these circumstances, several trade unions have progressively engaged in consultation services for migrant workers, worked together with other organizations, and formed networks among such grassroots movements. Recently they have even begun to have political influence on the government. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of previous research on the process and roles of such labor unions in terms of the political, socioeconomic, and organizational significance of organizing migrant workers.

Does Diversification of Working Style of Regular Workers Cause Gender Segregation of Occupation or Wage Gap?

Akira Kawaguchi (Doshisha University)

This study analyzes whether diversification of the work style of regular workers causes gender segregation or gender gap in wages. Under the Japanese-style employment system, regular workers have to follow employers' order of job transfer, relocation, and overtime work. Conversely, non-regular workers have fixed jobs, workplaces, and work hours at the expense of stable employment and wages. However, a small proportion (approximately 10%) of regular workers have fixed jobs, workplaces, and/or work hours

with more stable employment and higher wages than non-regular workers. These workers are called determinate regular workers (*gentei seishain*). The study reveals that the proportion of determinate regular workers in regular workers is significantly larger among women than men, earnings of determinate regular workers are approximately 20% lower than those of ordinary regular workers after controlled variables of human capital, and determinate workers have common attribute as non-regular workers such as married, less educated, non-manager, and having less willingness to get a promotion. However, the gender segregation or gender-biased distribution of determinate regular workers in occupations is unclear. Thus, diversification of working style of regular workers (increase in determinate regular workers) may widen the gender wage gap.

Limitations of the Employment Rate System as a Method of Promoting the Employment of Persons with Disabilities

Hirofumi Konishi (Meiji University)

This paper focuses on the employment rate system for people with disabilities, and examines the advantages and disadvantages this system has in promoting the employment of people with disabilities, the relationship between this system and so-called anti-discrimination provisions, and how this system and anti-discrimination provisions can co-exist. In this regard, the author has already introduced Germany's employment rate system in this publication. Through comparison with German law, which uses both of the above systems, the author will confirm the scope of these systems and how the roles of the two systems should be divided. This paper ultimately makes recommendations including the abolition of the employment quota system.

Diversified Employment Management Categories and Legal Regulations regarding Differences in Treatment between Employees

Mio Abe (Tohoku Gakuin University)

In recent years, the Supreme Court has issued a number of decisions finding that disparities in treatment between regular and non-regular employees are unreasonable. Through the improvement of the treatment of non-regular employees in court cases, there have been calls for a partial review of some of the wage systems and personnel policies that became institutionalized in the Japanese employment system centered on regular employees. Although such corporate management decisions are to be respected, if the purpose of granting allowances and leave is also appropriate for non-regular employees, it is deemed to be unreasonable to grant them only to regular employees. Article 8 of the Part-Time and Fixed-Term Employment Act is no longer applicable to workers who convert from fixed-term contracts to permanent contracts. However, since they are still treated in a non-regular manner and labor-management self-regulation cannot be anticipated, we can conclude that they should be given legal redress through public policy and other means. For diverse employment management categories to spread in a desirable manner, companies must be able to rationally explain differences in wages and treatment not only among non-regular workers, but also among workers, including those who have been converted to permanent status.

History of Diverse Working Styles in the Netherlands

Takamitsu Kubo (Meiji University)

Work sharing through shortening working hours and part-time work in the Netherlands was expected to be a solution to high unemployment rates in the late 1970s. Full-time male workers in the main industry, manufacturing, wanting to improve unemployment were reluctant to utilize part-time work, and hoped to create more employment opportunities by shortening collective working hours. Part-time female workers in the service industry, who wanted to achieve work-life balance, wanted equal treatment and flexible working hours. However, due to the oil shock, the number of full-time male workers in the manufacturing industry has decreased, while the number of part-time female workers has increased, mainly in the service industry, which has disrupted the balance within labor unions. Success in organizing part-time workers has increased the presence of women within labor unions. As a result, rectifying working conditions related

to part-time work has become a major theme within the unions. Employers have also agreed to the use of part-time labor because it allows for flexible labor adjustments. While maintaining equal treatment, the Netherlands promotes work styles that deviate from the standard of full-time work and promotes diverse work styles. Furthermore, the Netherlands also provides an example of how efforts to shift from “uniform and collective reduction of working hours” to “flexible and individual adjustment of working hours” will no longer be about “collective” “management,” but from now on “individual” “support” for workers will be more important.