Chapter 52
Globalization and Transformation of Care in Japan

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ABSTRACT

This chapter deals with the situation of family and care work in Japan, and, in particular, the Conjunction between Family, Care Work, and Immigration in Japan. The chapter is aimed to elucidate the complex interplay between family and care work from both paid and unpaid work. Furthermore, Japan currently does not have an immigration policy that would include social integration policies. Since the care needs cannot be met solely by the families or the domestic labor market, globalization of care will become a salient trend for a foreseeable future. Moreover, the chapter proceeds to analyze the globalization thesis within the Japanese context. According to the author, one should be able to see the convergence of welfare states in many countries, but as in the case of Japan, the process of globalization is not linear but contingent. Instead, what one has seen is a dialectical process of how the domestic factors are differently shaping the well-being of the people within their own institutional histories and strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Japan is known to be one of the most advanced economies in the world but the structural change since the 1990s has brought poverty, inequality and social exclusion to the everyday lives of the people. The term 'social inclusion' originated from the European Council first appeared in the policy agenda in Japan in 2000 (Ôsawa, 2007, p. 21). The term 'unequal society' (*kakusa shakai*) was chosen as a 'vogue word' in 2006. A book titled 'anti poverty' (*han hinkon*) was published by Iwanami Shoten in 2008.

The structural change from industrial to post industrial society was further accelerated by the demographic change of population ageing and the state is restricted in responding to these changes when there is an ever growing need for social protection. The residual nature of Japanese welfare state has long being dependent on companies and families as the two main sources of welfare service provider. Insofar as the two institutions were stable and resourceful, individuals were provided with either formal or informal safety net. However, the two institutions started to deteriorate as the company encountered fierce competition

in the global capital market demanding deregulation and flexibility, and the family became more individualized and diverse.

The growing polarization, inequality and unemployment that are taking place in Japan closely echoes with similar trends in USA and Western Europe where the welfare states have come under serious pressure (Castells, 2000; Swank, 2002). Scholars have argued that the international capital mobility has significantly deregulated the working conditions, reduced taxation, removed protection mechanisms and weakened the welfare state to undertake redistribution (Beck, 2000). The globalization thesis undertakes causal analysis to perceive the globalization as a cause of the retrenchment of the welfare state. However, the others argue that globalization should not be treated as a monolithic phenomenon and has to be disentangled with the other political, demographic and social trends (Yeates, 2007, p. 642; Swank, ibid). They emphasize the particular importance of national institutions which are detrimental in mediating how globalization would affect the national politics and the larger social change.

Instead of adapting a causal analysis between globalization and welfare state, McGrew (1992, p. 74) has emphasized that the process of globalization is "dialectical in nature and unevenly experienced across time and space". Similarly, Giddens (1990) acknowledges that the dialectical process does not bring change in a uniform direction but produces contradictory tendencies. One of the contradictory tendencies that I would like to apply in this paper is the binary opposition of "universalization" verses "particularization" (Harvey, 1989). This refers to the universal tendencies that globalization produces and the specific strategies that the state adapts according to its own institutions, capacities and social norms. Instead of the causal analysis between globalization and social policy, to understand globalization as a contingent and dialectical process allows us to see how different factors are shaping the social welfare provision today.

In this chapter, I would like to elaborate the changes that took place in Japan in the past two decades revolving around the field of long term care and examine the globalization thesis. It maps the four terrains; employment, family, long term care insurance and entry of migrants and examine the factors that shape the changes. First, I will outline the theoretical foundations of the scholarly works on globalization and social policy. Secondly, I will elaborate the changing structure in employment and family and how it affects the status of long-term care. Thirdly, I will outline the introduction of Long Term Care Insurance responding to the population ageing. Finally, the entry of migrant nurses and caregivers under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) will be discussed together with the challenges. I argue that the impact of globalization is not linear but dialectical representing universal trends as well as specific particularities due to the ways in which national institutions respond to the challenges.

2. GLOBALIZATION AND SOCIAL POLICY

Discussions on globalization and the intensification of interconnectedness and interdependencies has now become one of the central concerns of the social science analysis. Globalization has been analyzed from a plethora of approaches including economic, political and socio-cultural dimensions and a wide divergence of positions including criticism of 'anti-globalization movements' to the optimism of 'neo-liberal' ideologies. Even though far from reaching a consensus, globalization studies challenges the social science notion to perceive nation state as a container of the society as it is increasingly becoming difficult to ignore the transnational mobilities of capital, goods, information, images, ideas and people.

However, in the contemporary discussion, social policy is largely confined within the nation state framework without taking into account the

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