Diversification of Japan’s Labor Market: Risks and Opportunities in a Multidisciplinary and Comparative Perspective

This is a joint research and teaching project between the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies at Waseda University and the Department of Japanese Studies at Hamburg University. In 2016 and 2017, the project receives mobility funding by Waseda University and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

Research Objective:

The diversification of labor markets is a global phenomenon. Diversification in this context generally refers to two aspects: (a) to the types of employment, and (b) to the composition of the working population. The research project aims at bridging the gap between these two themes. We place our focus on the intersection of the structural (a) and the societal (b) diversification of Japan’s labor market. Our main research question is how the diversification of types of employment and the diversification in the composition of the working population impact each other. Certain groups that are directly influenced by these shifting dynamics are in the center of our general research project and compose the core of the three project pillars. In our research we give special attention to women, youth and immigrants in Japan’s labor market, thus covering the independent variables of gender, age and ethnicity. Each project pillar as well as the general project, in addition, covers class as an underlying variable. We adopt an interdisciplinary perspective, combining cultural anthropology, sociology and political science, and conduct a multi-level analysis of the various emerging phenomena.

Project Leaders:

Professor Glenda S. Roberts (Waseda) https://www.waseda.jp/gsaps/about/faculty/roberts-glenda-s/
Professor Gabriele Vogt (Hamburg) http://www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/japan/personen/vogt.html

Project Participants:

Noriko Fujita, M.A. (Waseda)
Helena Hof, M.A. (Waseda)
Vincent B. Lesch, M.A. (Hamburg)
Professor Gracia Liu-Farrer (Waseda), 06/2016-08/2016 in residence at the University of Hamburg https://www.waseda.jp/gsaps/about/faculty/liu-farrer-gracia/
Anna-Lea Schröder (Hamburg)
Stefanie Schwarte (Hamburg)

Activities:

International Workshop: How Japan Works: Risks and Opportunities of a Diversifying Labor Market

This international workshop took place at the University of Hamburg in summer 2016 (2016/07/18-21). We addressed issues such as “the history of work, non-work, and life”, “work in the life course”, “good work, good life” – including a field-trip to the Hamburg-based Museum der Arbeit –, and “portable work and life”. The full workshop program is available: https://www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/japan/personen/vogt/medien/daad-workshop-program-vogt.pdf.