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Towards Gendering Trade Unions in Japan and Germany  
--The Impact of Expanding Part-time Employment in the 1990s—  
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## 1. Introduction

This paper examines trends and issues of trade unions newly arising through the expansion of part-time employment in Japan and Germany in the 1990s from the perspectives of gender. Specifically, the paper multilaterally analyzes the transition of trade unions' employment policies regarding part-time labour in the 1990s, focusing on Japan Trade Union Confederation (Rengo-JTUC, henceforth Rengo) in Japan and German Trade Union Federation (henceforth, DGB) in Germany. The views of women's departments at each union are also considered important, but had been rarely taken up for study.

As a source of analysis, this study mainly draws on the periodicals of *Rengo White Paper* and *A Handbook on Women's Activities* (previously, *Data on Women's Activities*) for the case of Japan, *DGB Activity Report* and *DGB Women's Department Activity Report* for Germany.

As in many other industrialized nations, in Japan and Germany highlighted in this paper, feminization of employment as well as diversification of employment types due to the increase of irregular workers, including part-timers and dispatched workers, is in progress. Particularly, since the 1990s, trade unions had been urged to cope with such diversification of employment types.

During the decade from 1990 to 2000, part-time employment in Japan increased by 1.5 times, while the ratio of women among part-time workers rose from 69.4% in 1990 to 71.6% in 2000, and that of women part-time workers among female employees rose from 27.9% to 36.1%. Moreover, women's wage differentials between full-time work and part-time work widened from 72.0% to 68.4% (Rodo-kosesho 2002), further increasing the demand for "equal treatment of part-time workers". This expansion of wage disparities involves the following two factors. First, the conditions of part-time employment, especially wage, remain low, whereas those of full-time workers are flexibly determined within each company by linking to personal evaluation ("satei"), while guaranteeing the moderate living standards. Second, unlike the cases of other major industrialized nations, part-time employment in Japan is not classified by short working hours, but instead it is regarding as workers' "status of employment".

Turning to the labour movement, the unionization rate of part-time workers stands at a low 2.7%, in sharp contrast with that of the total workforce, which marks 20.7%. Part of the reason is

that as Japanese unions are generally company-based, technically known as union shops, they limit union membership to full-time workers. Until recently, this barrier had been hindering part-time workers from participating in unions, and thus structurally Japanese unions could not reflect the demands of part-time workers.

In contrast, part-time employment in Germany increased by 1.7 times in the decade from 1991 to 2000. While the percentage of women among all part-timers declined from 86.1% to 80.3%, the percentage of women among female employees rose from 31.7% to 45.3%. Here part-timers, who were hardly assumed under the German institutionalized industrial relations which had been developed centrally by the hands of male regular workers in the manufacturing sector, existed as those who are not entitled to the benefits of collective agreements. Similarly, trade unions had little interests in part-timers, because they are situated outside the so-called “standard employment relations”, which are the mainstay of traditional trade unions. As exemplified by the struggle for shorter working hours since the end of World War II, trade unions gave priorities to the interests of male regular workers existing upon the assumption of sexual division of labour; therefore, they were not actively involved in the interests of female married part-time workers who supported those males.

This paper traces how trade unions have responded to the expansion of part-time employment beginning the 1990s, using two case studies in Japan followed by German and based on the findings, conducts a comparative study on the issue of gendering trade unions in these two nations.

Gender perspectives are now indispensable in constructing society and formulating policy, as in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, “gender mainstream” steered by EU, and the promulgation of “Basic Law for Gender-Equal Society” in 1999, to name a few. How can trade unions in Japan and Germany cope with the discrimination against part-time workers as opposed to full-time workers by reason of employment types? To what extent have those unions accepted gender perspectives? What is crucial to new social formation seems to be the capability of trade unions which are in the position of representing workers’ interests to free themselves from the image of male-dominated organization and reconstruct their policy and organization irrespective of previous gender relations. With this background, this paper examines the development of trade unions’ gendering in view of policies for part-timers and explores the future of trade unions.

## 2 Japan’s case

Since the 1990s Japan had been unable to recover from the long-term economic depression called “the great depression of the Heisei era”. As a result, the discourse extolling Japanese management and Japanese employment practices which once garnered worldwide attention has lost its momentum. Moreover, some employment laws have been deregulated, as in Labor Standards

Law, Worker Dispatching Law, and Equal Employment Opportunity Law, which in turn is promoting job mobility and the expansion of irregular employment. In sharp contrast with the bubble economy during the early 1990s when Japan was suffering from labour shortage, Japan's unemployment rates recorded 2.1% in 1991, 3.2% in 1995, 4.7% in 2000, and 5.6% in December 2001, every year hitting the highest mark of all the postwar statistics of the nation.

## 2-1 Demand for the formulation of Part-time Work Law, minimum wage system — early 1990s

On November 22, 1989, the Japan Trade Union Confederation (Rengo) was inaugurated after the reunification of Private Rengo (the Japanese Private Sector Trade Union Confederation) and the public sector unions. In 2000, it comprised 7,173,000 members, incorporating 62.2% of all the union members in Japan (Rodo-kosesho 2001, Takahashi 2001).

From its foundation, Rengo set forth the betterment of working conditions for part-time labour as one of their basic objectives, while addressing women's active participation in trade unions and the realization of gender-equal society (Rengo Rodoshi Kanko Iinkai 2000: 35, Rengo 1990: 169). In particular, the call for "the formulation of Part-time Work Law" was strong because part-time work was known as unstable employment with unfavorable working conditions and that part-time workers were predominantly women (Rengo/W 1990: 1, Yamada (ed.) 1990: 180, 220, 221). Rengo inevitably needed to overcome the instability and poor working conditions associated with part-time labour, in order to pursue "the realization of gender-equal society". Thus, from its start, Rengo had specified its work on employment policies as one of their activities.

According to its report, Rengo's part-time employment policies originate from its basic principles on part-time employment in 1988 laid out prior to its inauguration as a coalition of private and public sectors (Rengo 1999: 128). As pointed out by Rengo, its main themes were: 1. promotion of unionization, 2. improvement of wage and working conditions, and 3. improvement of policies and systems through the formulation of Part-time Work Law (Rengo 1993: 91). Out of the three, the demand for the formulation of Part-time Work Law was deemed as Rengo's immediate objective to be achieved considering the law came into force as early as in 1993. Similarly, Rengo's women's department endeavored to formulate Part-time Work Law and upgrade the working conditions (Rengo/W 1990: 14-18).

Of Rengo's part-time employment policies, wage hike is of significance with regard to "a raise in minimum wages" (Rengo 1992: 128, 129). In other words, part-time wages are not determined by the in-company wage system as in the case of regular workers, but are said to be subject to individual regional wage rates. *Rengo White Paper* in 1996 aimed at increasing minimum wages as one of its measures for eliminating part-time workers' wage problems, citing the research findings by Japan Institute of Workers' Evolution that more than 30% of places of business, especially small enterprises and large enterprises, take minimum wages into account (Rengo 1996:

59).

Another notable action by Rengo is the proposal of “intra-firm minimum wages” (INMWs). On this point, Rengo presented to each of its components, namely, unit labor unions, unit industrial unions, and local Rengos, appropriate issues to be tackled, according to the functions. In other words, Rengo requested the first two component unions to “facilitate the conclusion of a contract on ‘intra-firm minimum wages’ for all employees including temporary and part-time workers”; unions of major companies to “work to support the wage increase of those working at affiliated companies”; and local Rengos to “launch on ‘the campaign to abolish wages below X yen’ ” (Rengo 1996: 82, Rengo/W 1995: 39). As of 2002, this demand for minimum wages is one of Rengo’s priority issues to be called the “minimum wage campaign issue”.

## 2-2 Establishment of work rules and the expansion of the organization — late 1990s

The labour market in the 1990s experienced diversification of employment practices as a result of a rapid increase in part-time employment compared to regular employment, as well as an expansion of dispatched workers and outworkers (Rengo 1997b: 69). In 1996, Rengo pointed out this trend as a new progress in “‘dual’ employment” (Rengo 1996: 16) and identified it as a cause of instability in the whole employment situation. Therefore, Rengo needed to restrain further increases.

One of the solutions was the establishment of “work rules.” Rengo proposed “rule-making that does not allow any replacement by part-time labour, *arubaito* (‘a “side” job taken by someone who is in ‘school or who has regular employment elsewhere’ (Houseman and Osawa 1995: 11), and temporary work, which lead to cheap selling of labour” (Rengo 1996: 15). By the mid-1990s at the latest Rengo agreed to present it in a larger framework by making all employment abide by “Fair Work Rules” (Rengo 1998: 18). The fact that Rengo included all employees in its scope in the establishment of work rules mirrors the grave situation of Japan’s labour market. Their proposal created an opening in the wall which had divided full-time workers and non full-time workers up to that moment, only allowing full-time workers to become part-time workers, but not the other way around. This had the effect of increasing job mobility but lacked uniformity. Another possible trigger of this movement is the fact that differences in working conditions across different employment types grew significantly, as part-time employment came to be an integral component of the internal labour market, which up to then had been marginalized. Thus, this phenomenon of making part-timers core workers also generated demand to provide part-timers the equal treatment as full-time workers.

The next point to be examined is Rengo’s emphasis on “action” in the late 1990s apart from the demand on policy systems that Rengo had been emphasized throughout, as symbolized in its slogan in October 1997: “21<sup>st</sup> Century : Power and Action” (Rengo 1997b: 4-8). The

background to this action is a sense of crisis for the mounting difficulties in maintaining the foundation of labour movement in response to changes in the labour market. During this period, the labour market was characterized by an increase in part-time workers and a decrease in full-time workers. In legal circles a number of court decisions were made concerning wage discriminations against part-timers (Sugeno 2002, Yamada 1997). In Japan, labour problems confronting female part-time workers began to surface as individual disputes. As described earlier, generally part-time workers do not qualify as company-based union members, which tends to make it difficult to put the working conditions of part-timers on Rengo's agendas for collective bargaining. Such being the case, irregular workers, typically part-timers independently organized themselves and eventually established individual-based trade unions, including Woman's Union Tokyo and so-called community unions, as representative examples. These unions elevated their *raison d'être* in line with the growing diversification of employment, attracting people's attention for its ability to achieve gains for their members.

These situations urged Rengo to re-examine its function as a national center, in particular its previous policies regarding unionization. While the number of union members in Japan constantly changes, an increase in the number of employees in the past several years, especially of part-time workers, coupled with a decline in full-time workers, has had an effect of reducing the rate of unionization. Rengo itself realized that there was every possibility that it would undermine the foundation of their organization. This is why Rengo is promoting organizing part-time workers through "Local Unions", which are individual-based trade unions under Rengo. Furthermore, weakening of Rengo's structural foundation is related to the facts that demands by unorganized workers are not reflected by company-based unions at the workplaces and that the troubleshooting function that company-based unions are expected to serve is not working effectively. This is the reason that Rengo took up this issue in particular and claimed that "improvement of troubleshooting functions will be a key to organizing workers" (Rengo 1998: 86). We can see that the problems Rengo is facing are attributed to many factors related to the structure of Japan's company-based unions.

### 2-3 Equal treatment in Rengo's policies for women

In 1991, Rengo's women's department published "Action plans to promote women's participation in trade unions (tentative)" in accordance with the principles of action at the time of Rengo's inauguration (Rengo/W 1991: 22). The plans (tentative) calls for promotion of female workers' participation in trade unions, positive action toward the improvement of women's working conditions, and reform of male-dominated trade unions (Rengo/W 1991: 23). Meanwhile, through the examination of wage problems, women union members demanded the implementation and expansion of leave for childbirth, childcare, and nursing, recognizing that women's retirement and

temporary leave from work due to pregnancy and childbirth contribute to wage disparities between male and female (Rengo/W 1991: 57-60). Moreover, Rengo's women's department made policies in view of balancing work and family life. However, partly because of a shift in the labour market in response to an increase in female workers and females not taking early retirement, Rengo as a whole came to perceive the necessity of dealing with issues concerning women workers.

In the late 1990s Rengo accelerated its movement for part-time labour, demanding the revision of Part-time Work Law (enacted in 1993) in Japan and the ratification of ILO's Part-time Work Convention (No. 175) in 1994. Japan's Part-time Work Law lists among its aims guarantee of appropriate labour conditions for part-time employment and the improvement of employment management. However, whether these will be enforced purely depends on the efforts on the part of employers. Besides the Law does not stipulate part-time workers' equal treatment with regular workers. Because of this defect, the Law is familiarly called a "sieve law" in Japanese. For example, a report on Rengo's part-time employment project by Rengo (Rengo/W 1997: 140) and the comments by the then general secretary of Rengo about the proposal on the re-examination of Part-time Work Law stressed the necessity of equal treatment for part-time workers and criticized the discriminations against so-called "pseudo-part-time workers" (Rengo/W 1998: 136). Here, pseudo-part-time workers refer to workers who are part-timers under employment contract, but have the same working hours as full-time workers. This indicates that the differences between full-time workers and part-timers cannot necessarily be measured by working time, and therefore lacks rationality. In the academia, such differences are usually ascribed to the "status of employment" as part-timers since part-timers under employment contract are subjected to disparities. In short, part-time work as a status characteristic of Japan has gained importance which must be addressed in Rengo's employment policies.

On the other hand, as previously mentioned, the discussion by Rengo's women's department on part-time work not only took up the differences of working conditions, but also looked into the supply side of part-time work. This can be observed in the department's proposal to solve the problem in the taxation system, where part-time workers are forced to make certain employment adjustments to their working hours and wages, in order to be eligible for tax deduction and allowances (Rengo/W 1993: 15, 16); to reform the wage and taxation systems based on so-called household units, which support such adjustments; to emphasize the necessity of "policy changes" which enables the compatibility between work and family life for both men and women; and to reconsider the "sexual division of labour known as 'men outside, women at home'" (Rengo/W 1995: 11-17).

Such activities by women's department resulted in the introduction of "gender equality: the construction of gender-equal society" as one of Rengo's perspectives towards the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be pursued in its union movement as a whole. This perspective expressly defined the reassessment

of existing sexual division of labour through the transition from the unit consisting of “a full-time worker (company man) and a full-time homemaker” to a social system of lifestyles and working styles which enable people to maintain both work (income) and family responsibilities (Rengo 1997a: 25). This new perspective in effect served as a possible ground for explaining factors inducing supply of part-time labour and its low wages in Japanese employment.

### 3. Germany's case

In the 1990s, Germany underwent two major changes which it had never experienced before. The first change was an integration of two different economic systems, namely unification of East and West Germany on October 3, 1990, the second the reunification of EU which took place throughout Europe. With an aim at the creation of a single European currency in January 2002, EU nations in the 1990s were gradually incorporated into the movement toward the integrated socio-economic system. Under the influence of German unification and corporate globalization, the labour conditions in Germany in the 1990s were deteriorating to such an extent that there was not a least sign of recovery from mass unemployment and long-term unemployment.

#### 3-1 Part-time employment

During the 1990s the ever-growing trend toward the feminization of employment increased the number of part-timers who fall out from the scope of “standard employment relations”, to be known as the “second-wave” boom in part-time labour, following the first-wave boom during the high growth era. Concurrently, the problem of marginal part-time employment which arose in the mid-1980s was becoming prominent.

From the beginning of the 1980s onwards, part-time employment had been discussed principally from the viewpoint of employment policy, such as augmentation of employment through the promotion of part-time labour or through a mandatory transfer from full-time to part-time labour. Yet, part-time work was understood as a form of work which “differs from the working hours laid down in collective agreements” (Killmann and Klein 1997: 81). This meant that despite a boost in part-time work, within the DGB, with the exception of DGB women's department, people showed less interest in part-time labour with short working hours. Accordingly, the DGB's policy priorities were primarily concerned with the problems of workers under “standard employment relations”, whereas the problems of “women” were shelved and even within the DGB the views of women's department were hardly reflected in its policy for part-time labour, even if the agendas proposed by women's department was adopted at the Federal Conventions.

Nevertheless, in the 1990s, even in Germany, a sign of change finally began to emerge as the success of “part-time economy” in the neighboring Netherlands was reported. At the same time, the consensus to change the treatment of part-time labour was in the making by the government as

well as between trade unions and employers' associations. In early 1994, the government hammered out a "push for part-time work" in the hope of giving jobs to the unemployed by redistributing the existing amount of work through the promotion of part-time work. On November 8, 1994, DGB Executive Committee agreed on "Anforderungen an eine sozialverträgliche Teilzeitalternative (the call for socially acceptable part-time labour)". Here, the committee stressed "the necessity of legal protection of part-time work and the regulation of the employment conditions for part-timers by collective agreements" (DGB/W 1997: 40). Subsequently, it presented measures for promoting part-time work covering the respect for the autonomy in choosing part-time work, closing of differences between full-time work and part-time work, and the guarantee of the right to return to work part-time, among others (DGB/W 1997: 40). The objectives of such changes in the DGB's overall policy were to "promote policies for part-time labour, including its protection, in order to "make work and family life compatible, to open up the possibility of creating individual working hours for both male and female workers, to expand employment opportunities for both male and female workers, and to partly contribute to the reduction of mass unemployment" (DGB/W 1997: 40). DGB women's department evaluated the impact of this policy change, as follows: [From thereon] "part-time employment moved from the field of women's issues to the center of the political debates as a measure of employment policy" (DGB/W 1997: 40).

After the mid-1990s, the DGB tried to undertake the problems of part-time employment on a full scale, from the viewpoint of resolving wage disparities between men and women, re-examining the collective bargaining policy in consideration of the "exclusion of part-time employment from bargaining", applying social security, and furthermore eliminating indirect discrimination in relation to court decisions at the European Court of Justice (DGB/W 1997: 23-25).

### 3-2 Policy on collective working time

As demonstrated in the "Five Strategies for the Expansion of Employment" in July 1994, at the outset of the 1990s, the cornerstone of the DGB's employment policies was its measure to distribute labour by reducing working hours (DGB 1997b: 24) and thus policies on collective bargaining policy concerning job creation and job guarantees in particular came to have greater importance (DGB 1997b: 14, 33).

The discussion about collective agreement related to collective working time after the latter half of the 1990s centered on the topic of flexibility of working hours. After the latter half of the 1980s, in the course of countering the "flexibility strategy" by the government and employers' associations, trade unions were already standing at a major turning point in its collective bargaining policy which enables "differentiation" of fixed working hours. Particularly, from the 1990s on, in response to the unprecedented increase in flexibility driven by companies' reforms of their personnel policies and reorganization of workplaces, the DGB began exploring the path to changing its



collective bargaining policy on working time, so as to effect the time arrangement of flexible working hours (DGB 1997b: 83) .

In the mid-1990s, the DGB shifted to adopt a new working hour policy, consisting of a set of job creation by shorter working hours and flexibility under “time sovereignty,” both of which are premised on flexibility. In its brochure in 1996 entitled “Höchste Zeit für neue Zeiten (The Highest Time for the New Era)”, the DGB introduced a new concept on its policy on working time respecting workers’ time sovereignty. Accounting for the fact that there are less workers working under the fixed “standard working hours” (DGB 1996: 14), the DGB set its direction to “Arbeitszeiten sozialverträglich gestalten (create a socially acceptable policy on working time)” (DGB 1996: 18) . Specifically, it positively interpreted a wider range of choice in matters of workers’ working hours and brought time sovereignty to the fore so that workers can choose their working time out of their volition, instead of passively accepting the increased flexibility steered by companies. Now diverse types of workers working under diverse working hour systems were fully included in the scope of DGB’s policy targets.

The direction to promote “socially acceptable part-time work” now formed one of the pillars of the DGB’s new policy on working time addressing workers’ time sovereignty. In other words, the DGB was urged to “offer choices to workers wishing to work shorter hours” (DGB 1996: 20) apart from a choice of long working hours. No longer could part-time labour be neglected, since workers’ own decision is most likely reflected in part-time labour even from the perspective of time sovereignty.

In policies addressing time sovereignty, the view of eradicating gender inequality between paid and unpaid work is essential; therefore, the true significance of the DGB’s policy lies in how the DGB approaches such a view toward gender. Accordingly, the DGB turns to “encourage men as well to work as part-timers,” whereas part-time work used to be “exclusively women’s concerns” because “women had no choice other than part-time work because of her family responsibilities” (DGB 1996: 22) . Hence, the DGB “widened the possibilities for part-time labour and eliminated discriminations unique to part-time,” introduced it to the elderly and public servants as well, and “endeavored to improve the working condition and the image of part-time labour and in so doing made it more attractive to both men and women” (DGB 1997b: 100-101) . By expanding the target of its policies ranging over sex, age, and employment types, the DGB was attempting to overcome the traditional fixed image of part-time workers associated with women.

With novel perspectives to the effect that “gender equality should be better attained in establishing time sovereignty” and that elimination of gender inequality should be enforced in distributing working time considering both paid and unpaid work, the DGB sought to “call for men’s participation in family life to resolve sexual division of labour” (DGB 1996: 39) . In sum, the issues of part-time work including marginal part-time work were “no longer women-specific issues,

nor were they treated as issues having secondary relevance” (DGB/W 1997: 31) .

### 3-3 DGB and its gender policy

Under diverse changes in social environments, namely, a shift in the industrial structure from manufacturing to service sector, changes in the composition of workers in the DGB with an increase in the number of white-collar and women workers, more flexible systems within companies, and economic globalization, starting the early 1990s, the DGB was aiming at the reform of the organization in search of new principles for future labour movement, in what is known as “the Reform Debate” (DGB 1994: 23-29). The Debate was first triggered by high unemployment rates, mass restructuring which took place in the former East Germany. After the 1990s, the drop in the number of union members pushed forward this Debate (DGB 1999: 67) .

With a rise in the percentage of women union members within the DGB, coupled with lobbying action by DGB women’s department, especially during the period from the end of the 1980s to the beginning of the 1990s, women’s issues were perceived in the consciousness of the DGB as the issues to be mainstreamed into the collective concern of the union. At the same time the DGB reached an agreement to actively promote women’s status within the organization of the DGB by increasing women’s participation in decision-making bodies within the DGB. Thus, women’s issues were now in the consciousness of people within the DGB as something which should be tackled (DGB/W 1993: 60-62) . In May 1992, through its slogan of “Women forward,” DGB women’s department presented its future direction to actively deal with gender equality in all fields collectively under the department’s own initiative (DGB/W 1993: 5-7). In parallel with the ongoing discussion on the revision of the Basic Law involving German unification, Germany was moving toward the “de facto enforcement of equal rights for women and men” (Art. 3 Para. 2 of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany in September 1994) .

The DGB’s “Reform Debate” developed into the successful revision of the Basic Programme in November 1996 (DGB 1997a) and became DGB’s principle to “create future” corresponding to a drop in standard workers. In every part of the Basic Programme, the perspective of gender was incorporated, indicating that gender equality policy now gained importance as the main issue that the organization as a whole must deal with (DGB/W 1997: 60) . In the DGB’s new future-oriented policies, because of the semantic change of “redistribution of labour,” “labour” was no longer limited to “paid work,” but also included “unpaid work” such as domestic chores, childcare, and nursing care within its scope. Accordingly, relevant discussions were based on this notion of “redistribution of labour” (DGB/W 2001: 25) .

In the 1990s policy-makers within the DGB “changed their mind” to reinterpret “women’s issues” as issues of the DGB as a whole, which propelled by two major factors. One is the unification of East and West Germany, the other the EU reunification.

Among them, the EU's gender policies had a significant impact. EU had been taking the initiative in the promotion of gender equality, for example, by drawing up "Action Programmes". In 1993, the reform of the EU's Structural Fund specified the realization of gender equality as a top priority issue (DGB 1997b: 55). Moreover, through the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, the concept of "gender mainstreaming" was introduced, and thus gender policy was reinforced even more (DGB 2002: 21). Equal treatment between men and women in the area of employment was set forth as one of the central issues of the EU's various policies. As such, in the upsurge of EU integration in Europe, Germany was attempting to transform itself as an EU member nation.

In the movement toward "Europeanization of collective bargaining policies" (DGB 1997b:35, 55) including the narrowing of women's wage gaps, DGB women's department took the lead to conduct full-scale research on the status quo from gender perspectives, while setting as one of the discussion issues to raise women's ratio in the committee for collective bargaining (DGB/W 1997:24).

From the mid-1990s on, the DGB has entered the stage to take concrete measures to explore how it should incorporate collective bargaining policy into gender mainstreaming. The focus of the measures will be likely to be placed on how two different types of employment, namely, full-time work and part-time work, should be treated within collective bargaining policy. The qualitative improvement of part-time work in Germany rests how far the individual trade unions, which have just set about tackling part-time work with vigor, can implement this very issue under the DGB's initiative.

#### 4. Analysis of the differences between Japan and Germany

The result of our analysis can be summarized as follows:

In Japan the expansion of part-time workers in the 1990s compelled Rengo to organize them as a means to maintain Rengo's foundation as a trade union, as well as to immediately implement existing policies of equal treatment so as to check the aggravation of working conditions. In addition, the expansion urged it to review the previous wage policies and social security policies. To recapitulate, the phenomenon offered an opportunity to fully translate the views of women's department into Rengo's movement and policies. This may indicate that women's issues are no longer to be undertaken by women's department alone. In this sense, these recent policies by Rengo can be termed as the prologue to gender policies.

By comparison, in Germany, the DGB's departure during the 1990s from the rigorous image of "workers" founded on the past "standard employment relations" was a great achievement, in the sense that the DGB proceeded with its policy assuming the image of diverse workers to be the target of its collective bargaining policy. For instance, the DGB situated part-time employment as one of diverse employment types and in effect set it free from "women's issues", upon which the

DGB began to vigorously take measures for part-time employment. Significantly, in the upsurge of EU integration, DGB's gender policies were indeed commenced by external forces, as it were. By the mid-1990s the framework enabling the GDB to take measures for part-time work from gender perspectives had been almost completed.

The result of our analysis shows that Japan and Germany share similarities in terms of part-time employment. In the midst of recession during the 1990s the change in the labor market which took place in the form of part-time expansion served to undermine the premises of labour movement by Rengo and the DGB and the content of policy of these national centers to target regular employment and standard workers. This had a tremendous impact on Rengo and the DGB such that those policies worked out under the initiative of each women's department came to influence the trade unions overall. By earnestly launching on constructing the frameworks from gender perspectives, the two trade unions tried to reform not only the past structure of the unions, but also employment policy, equal treatment, and the notion of "labour". This creation of frameworks from gender perspectives taking into account part-timers was initiated in the late 1990 in Japan. In this effort, German precedes Japan in that it completed its new framework already by the mid 1990s. Despite this time lag, the very process signified a transition from "women's policy" into "gender policy".

By contrast, there are differences owing to the structural differences in trade unions in Japan and German. In Japan, part-timers had been excluded from union membership, which is the very requisite of trade union movement. It is pointed out that unless the member qualifications which currently are limited to regular employment are revised, advancement of gendering is bound to be difficult. On this point, collaboration within each unit labor union seems to be an important issue. However, in case of Germany, where unions are based on individual membership, member qualifications pose no structural problems.

Lastly, what this paper can suggest for the future of the two countries' trade unions is that it is incumbent upon them to further gender policies and to conclude collective agreements which include more attractive equal treatment. This in turn requires part-timers' active participation in trade union movements in parallel with the reassessment of the principles of equal treatment based on time ratios and equal pay for equal work. This reassessment must present comprehensive gender policy which takes into account re-evaluation of "labour" including not only the sites of employment, but also the realm of unpaid work in conjunction with the field of social security encompassing workers' life. Since German trade unions adopt individual membership, in order to empower trade unions, they need to make the contents of their policy attractive enough to recruit part-timers. The DGB for instance is already prepared to embark on reassessing collective agreements to formulating more appealing ones, whereas in Japan immediate measures should be taken toward the direction to move forward to stipulate gender policy in labour contract. In either

case, the key to success hinges on the national centers of both nations.

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