Individual development model and community embedment model: an examination based on a fieldwork of job placement at a disadvantaged non-vocational high school in Japan

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Preface

This research note is the touched up version of the manuscript for my presentation at a Tuesday Seminar of the Department of Sociology, the Faculty of Social Science, the University of Copenhagen, on March 12th, 2019, during my sabbatical year.

0. Purpose

This research note is about job placement at the “disadvantaged non-vocational high schools” in Japan.

The Japanese high school structure is very hierarchical. At the bottom of this hierarchy are the “disadvantaged non-vocational high schools,” where many students get a permanent job just after the graduation, but many of them quit a job soon mainly because of mismatching.

How can these schools improve their job placement? This note will mention some findings from my ongoing ethnographic research and show a bigger picture of my research and its future challenge.

The plan of this note is the following: in Section 1, it will explain a bigger picture of my research. In Section 2, it will describe the Japanese high school system. In Section 3, it will mention the high school I am focusing on. In Section 4, it will explain my ongoing research and future challenge.

1. A bigger picture of my research

I have been trying to contextualize and document what I am observing in the recent history of the labour, civic and social movements in Japan. What I am observing is the collaboration for job placement between a public high school and a voluntary association. They are located in Osaka City in Osaka Prefecture.

Osaka Prefecture is located in the western part of Japan. Osaka city makes up the second biggest metropolis in Japan.
The population density is about 12,000 km², more than double of Copenhagen Kommune. Osaka City consists of 24 wards. Osaka Prefectural Nishinari High School is in Nishinari Ward. The voluntary association, A dash Work Creation, is in Naniwa Ward. It is said that there is the “North-South problem” of Osaka City in socio-economic terms. That is, the southern wards are underprivileged areas and Nishinari Ward and Naniwa Ward are ones of them.

Looking at the percentage of welfare recipient (March/2018), which is under the Livelihood Protection Law, the national average is 1.6% and the percentage of the whole Osaka City is 5.2%. The percentage of Nishinari Ward is 23.8%, the highest in Osaka City. That of Naniwa Ward is 7.5%, the second highest.

These underprivileged areas have a historical background of Buraku. Buraku, in Japanese, literally means “village”, but has a negative connotation due to the history of outcast from the feudal age.

Therefore, since its establishment of 1946, BLL (Buraku Liberation League) had negotiated with the government for the legislation of anti-discrimination and the more distribution for improving their status. However, because the special time-limited law intending social inclusion enacted in 1965 was abolished at last in 2003, they had to explore new ways of revitalization of these areas (Nishinari Ward Chapter of BLL 1998, Osaka Human Rights Center for Human Resource and Employment Development ed. 2005, Tsutsui 2016b).

So, many voluntary associations and social movement organizations have been tackling various problems. For example, Nishinari Ward Chapter and Naniwa Ward Chapter of BLL, NICE (Nishinari Inner City Enterprise), Voluntary Teachers’ Project of Secure Transition from High School to Work, and Osaka Shoe-maker Companies’ Association.

The reason shoe-maker companies are related is that the traditional industry of this area is leather industry: from slaughter, tanner to manufacturer of shoes and accessories, run by very tiny businesses. Such occupations as slaughter and tanner are related to the history of outcast and discrimination.

The start of my research commitment is as following: in 2008 I began my research project on employment support policy and practice of Toyonaka City in Osaka. In 2010, I joined the oral history research project on JTU, the Japan Teachers Union. In 2011, I joined the project research on the employment support policy and practice of Osaka Prefecture. In 2014 I started my oral history research of the revitalization of this underprivileged area. So, the President of A dash had already known my research and in 2015 asked me the research initiative into the local high school on the collaboration.

The main findings of each research are the following: (a) The research on Toyonaka City in Osaka: this city supported job seekers and companies by developing “intimate knowledge” of the local labour market. (b) The oral history of JTU: this union was so active in community organizing that the government was afraid of and hated their power. (c) The research on Osaka Prefecture: it was encouraging voluntary associations which had supported
people with difficulties in finding and continuing jobs as early as in 1990s. (d) The oral history of the revitalization of this underprivileged area: the key persons are community activists and they committed to labour, student, civic and social movements in their twenties and thirties. All of these findings are the basis of my ongoing research.

Here, let’s summarize a bigger picture of my research: I am trying to document the impact of the above organizations on this underprivileged area. The key persons of these organizations, many of them are now in their fifties and sixties, committed to labour, civic and social movements in their twenties and thirties. Therefore, the key persons are the key parts to contextualize what I am observing in the recent history of the labour, civic and social movements in Japan⁹.

2. The Japanese high school system

2-1. basic structure, students and graduates¹⁰

The Japanese school system is almost similar to that of the U.S.A., for it was reorganized following it after WWII.

The elementary school and junior high school are compulsory. The high school is not. But 99% of the junior high school graduates go to high school. 88% of the population of 18 year-old are high school graduates (in 2018). So, the high school is almost compulsory de facto.

The pathways after graduation from high school (in 2018) is as following. “University and 2 year-college” is 55% and the largest. Then, “vocational school” is 22%. Many of vocational schools are private. “Get a permanent job just after graduation” is 17%. “Temporary work” is just 1%. “Not in education, employment and training” is 5%.

66% of the high schools is public and 34% is private (in 2018). Therefore, the ratio is 2 to 1.

The following is the information on the public and private high schools: (a) Private high schools don’t have to pay the corporate tax, income tax, enterprise tax, and residence tax. (b) Both public and private high schools can receive the governmental financial support through each prefecture where they are located. (c) The well-off are more likely to go to private high schools (and public or private universities). (d) Private high schools hire their own teachers. The Office of Education of each prefecture and municipality controls the tenures of teachers at public schools.

Basically, there are 3 types of high school: general, vocational and comprehensive. (a) General: students learn mainly academic subjects. Many students hope to enroll in higher education. (b) Vocational: students learn mainly vocational subjects. Some students hope to get a permanent job just after graduation, and others to enroll in higher education. (c) Comprehensive: subjects are the mixture of academic and vocational courses. Students can choose them more flexibly. This type of high school was introduced in 1994 by the Ministry of Education and Science. Some students hope to get a permanent job just after graduation, and others to enroll in higher education.

The percentage of the three types (in 2018) is the following. “General” is 62%
and the largest, then “vocational” 34% and “comprehensive” 6%. The percentage of students in each option is following this composition: 73%, 22% and 5%.

The future pathways of high school new graduates by types, represented by real number: “General” is 772,647 and the largest, then “vocational” 228,127 and “comprehensive” 55,604.

Then, represented by percentage: More than 80% of the students in “general” high school enroll in higher education. 45% of the students in “vocational” get a permanent job. As for the students in “comprehensive,” 27% get a permanent job and 67% enroll in higher education.

The residual category of the future pathway, “others,” is “not in education, employment and training.” The change in its percentage for these three decades is roughly from 4% to 10% influenced mainly by the business cycle.

1-2. graduation from high school and enrollment in higher education

The following is the information about graduation and enrollment in higher education. (a) High school students don’t have the opportunity to wait a year after the graduation from high school. And if you fail the entrance exam, you have to take it again the following year. (b) There is no special examination such as “Abitur” or “studenterekamen”, for graduating from high school. (c) Students who want to enroll in higher education have to take the entrance examination and/or interview. That is, one exam and/or interview for each university. For example, if you want to go to University A or University B, you will have to take the two exams. (d) Or, students can enroll in higher education by receiving a high school recommendation.

Then, the information about financing. (a) Since 2014 the public high schools have been basically free for students and their families. (b) But they have to pay for school uniforms and other things such as textbooks. (c) They have to pay the tuition of higher education: c.a. 27,000DKK/year\textsuperscript{11} for public university, and c.a. at least 50,000DKK/year for private university. (d) There is some exemption from tuition for both public and private universities. (e) There are almost no student stipends, almost loan only.

1-3. school year and the law on job placement of high school graduates

Let’s move on to the school year. School begins in April in Japan. First term, summer vacation, second term, winter vacation, third term, spring vacation. University and two-year college are taking the semester system: spring and fall semesters, but still begin in April.

For, the fiscal year of the governments, municipalities and many companies also begins in April. And there is the conventional employment practice. It is called “blanket recruitment of new graduates,” which means mass-at-one-time recruitment. Through this, the new graduates from high school, vocational school, 2 year-college and university can make an incessant transition from school to work through March to April.

The law on job placement of high school graduates is as following. (a) It is stipulated in the Employment Security Law. (b) Principally, the job offerings should
be permanent ones. (c) The National Employment Office in each local area is in charge of the placement, while each high school can also be in charge of it. (d) So, the high schools, many of whose students get a permanent job just after graduation, focus on job placement for them.

The flow of the placement of high school new graduates is as following: recruiting companies are allowed to post their job offerings only on July 1st and after and allowed to take an entrance examination for job and job interview only on September 16th and after. An entrance examination is usually about reading and writing very basic Japanese and very basic math. Therefore, the 3rd year teachers and the teachers in charge of career guidance are very busy with job placement and the related works.

1-4. high school hierarchy and the “disadvantaged non-vocational high schools”

As this note mentioned at the beginning, the structure of high school in Japan is very hierarchical. This hierarchy is differentiated between non-vocational (general and comprehensive) and vocational, and within each category high schools are ranked informally through their educational “outcome” ---- how many graduates enroll in prestigious universities or how many graduates are hired by large corporate firms such as TOYOTA.

My focus is on the bottom of non-vocational high schools in this hierarchy. I name them the “disadvantaged non-vocational high schools.”

Many students of this kind of school have to/want to get a permanent job after graduation. But the “disadvantaged non-vocational high schools” have a weak relation with companies, while vocational high schools have a strong relation with them. Moreover, mainly because of mismatching, many of graduates from the “disadvantaged non-vocational high schools” quit a job soon. How can these high schools improve their job placement? Nishinari High School, which I am focusing on, is one of such high schools.

2. The high school I am focusing on

2-1. Osaka Prefectural Nishinari High School

The basic information on the school district and Nishinari High School is the following: (a) There has been no school district for Osaka prefectural high schools since 2014. That is, anyone living in Osaka Prefecture can study at any prefectural high school (if they can pass the entrance examination). (b) Many students of Nishinari High School live in Nishinari Ward and its neighboring wards. (c) Nishinari High School was established in 1974. (d) It was reorganized from a general high school to a comprehensive one in 2015, by which this high school began 30 minute-teaching of very basic math, very basic Japanese and very basic English (class is usually 50 minutes).

The table below is the future pathways of Nishinari High School graduates in 2017. Its dropout rate is 30%, while the dropout rate of the overall comprehensive schools in Japan is 3.6%.

74.5% (60.7% + 13.8%) of the graduates,
3 out of 4, got a job. The percentage of temporary job is 13.8%, which is much higher than that of the overall comprehensive schools in Japan. As for higher education, university and 2-year college is only 7.5%. Vocational school is 16.6%. The schools are for hair dressers, care workers, cook, and so on. This composition of the pathways has not changed basically for a long time.

Again, many of the students have to and/or want to work just after graduation because of their family background: socio-economically disadvantaged: welfare recipient, single parent, low income, and so on. Therefore, Nishinari High School has been focusing on job placement so far. But again, many graduates quit a job soon. So Nishinari High School needs to improve their job placement.

Future pathways of Nishinari HS graduates (2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pathways</th>
<th>Overall comprehensive schools in Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 year-college</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational school</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout 30%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2-2. problems surrounding teachers and the governmental policy

However, there are many problems surrounding teachers. First of all, too much work of teachers. This is not limited to the teachers who are busy with placement, but a more general problem. Look at the data of TALIS survey conducted in 2013, “the average hours spent working and teaching per week,” the OECD average is a little bit less than 40 hours, Denmark is about 40 hours and Japan is 54 hours.13

Taking a look at another survey, conducted in 2016, by Rengo Soken, the research institute of Japanese Trade Union Confederation.14 It shows the percentage of the teachers working and teaching for 60 hours and more per week. Elementary school teachers: 73%, junior high school teachers: 87% and high school teachers: 61%.

This long hours working is due to more complicated situation after the “bubble economy” (1987-1991). (a) Growth in child poverty. The relative rate of child in poverty is 13.9% (in 2015). (b) Higher education orientation. This is the governmental policy for Japan not to be behind in the global competition. (c) Increase in the New Public Management initiatives in schools to be more competitive. These elements are pressing more pressure on teachers.

For these reasons, the government (the Central Council for Education) issued the report (no.185), “school as team” on 21st/December/2015. This report emphasizes that in order to reduce the amount of teachers’ work, school should share teachers’ work with clerks and outside (semi) professionals such as school counselors, school social workers and job placement persons. This report also emphasizes the importance of the “collaboration” among teachers, clerks and outside (semi) professionals.

Many scholars of social policy and education point out the insufficient and temporal revenue causing the unstable
status of outside (semi) professionals. However, I think that what matters is not money only. Let’s move to my ongoing research.

3. My ongoing research

3-1. object, data and methods

Again, what I am observing is the collaboration between Nishinari High School and A dash Work Creation for the improvement of their job placement (and related programs). The research methods are: (a) Interview with the people of this association, Principal, Deputy-Principal and the teachers, (b) Class room observation, (c) Gathering documents and statistics.

A dash Work Creation, commonly known as A dash, was established in 1991 as a regional vocational training center funded by Osaka Prefecture (that is, it was basically an official organization). But it was about to be closed in 2008 due to the revenue shortage. Then, some social movement organizations restarted A dash in 2008 as a voluntary association, by investing c.a. 750,000DKK.

Its main function is still vocational training, but since its restart A dash has spread its functions very widely such as job placement and consulting for small and medium company.

The collaboration between Nishinari High School and A dash was started by the project of Osaka Prefecture in 2014, which was to dispatch a job placement person to the high schools which requested (the diagram below). A dash was one of the undertakers of this project and Nishinari High School wanted to work with A dash.

Osaka Prefecture Project of 2014 dispatching job placement person

3-2. my provisional idea: “individual development model” and “community embedment model”

The diagram below shows my provisional idea on the practices of this project. I name them “individual development model” and “community embedment model.” Now I am trying to develop these two models.

“Individual development model” is the conventional or traditional way of seeing education and school. By “individual development model,” teachers and outside professionals are to infuse something useful into each individual student.

“Community embedment model” is an
alternative way, the way of *A dash*, of seeing education and school. By “community embedment model,” teachers and outside professionals are to embed the school itself in its local community and labour market.

These two models are complemental, but the latter has been ignored and the former emphasized after the steep decline in the Japanese economy in 1990s.

### 3-3. the time line of the collaboration and some difficulties

I have been observing this collaboration since 2015, that is, for almost four years now (as of March/2019). The time line of the collaboration is the following.

In 2015-16, *A dash* tried to find what the problems were. One job placement person was dispatched from *A dash*, but she was just expected to do “quick fix” for job interview practice. That is, when the teachers didn’t know how to deal with their students, they said, “Go and see Ms. Kikuchi.” She was just sitting in a small office, an isolated spot. Therefore, there was no real collaboration.

However, she found what the problems were. (a) The students are not well-prepared before coming to her. (b) The internship program is much less-organized. (c) The teachers have no “intimate knowledge” (Marshall 1921) on the local firms hiring their graduates.

It is only in 2017 that she could begin the collaboration for the job placement with 2nd year teachers with sharing the problems above. And it is only in 2018 that she could begin the collaboration for the reform of the internship program by encouraging the teachers to get more contact with the local firms.

There are some of the difficulties in this collaboration. (a) The percentage of the newly hired teachers of this school is 60%. (b) The average tenure of teachers of this school is 3.7 years. The “disadvantaged non-vocational high schools” are more likely to have much higher percentage of newly hired teachers.

As this note mentioned earlier, the Office of Education of each prefecture controls the tenures of the public school teachers. So this high rate and short tenure is due to the personnel policy of Osaka Prefecture.

This research is ongoing and not yet finished, but let me summarize the results so far (the diagram below): (a) There was no real collaboration in 2015 and 2016. (b) The collaboration for “individual development model” began only in 2017. (c) The collaboration for “community embedment model” began only in 2018. (d) The know-how of both models is difficult to accumulate due to the many inexperienced teachers and the early transfer of teachers.

The results so far

3-4. my future challenge

The question I want to focus on is, “How
will “community embedment model” be implemented?"

I believe that the key to this implementation is the negotiation for institutionalization of this model, between the Osaka Prefecture and A dash, its related social movement organizations, local small and medium businesses and Nishinari High School.

The collaboration between A dash and Nishinari High School is based on the scheme set by Osaka Prefecture, so the relation is a contractual one. But the implementation of “community embedment model,” not a conventional but an alternative one, needs the political process for the institutionalization of it. This is what A dash is trying to do now.

I have been trying to contextualize and document what I am observing, including this political process for the institutionalization of “community embedment model,” in the recent history of the labour, civic and social movements in Japan.

The diagram below shows the outline of my understanding of the recent five decades of the above history. After the oil crisis in 1970s, on the one hand Japan saw the decline of the left-wing labour, students and civic movements, which had community organizing orientation. On the other hand Japan saw the rise of the right-wing labour movement and the people’s private life orientation.

Since the burst of the “bubble economy” in 1990s, Japan has been struggling in the “Lost Decades” for revitalizing its society and local communities. What is interesting is that the key persons of A dash and its related social movement organizations were born in 1950s and in early 1960s, experienced the left-wing labour, students and civic movements in their twenties and thirties, and now they have been committing to the new social movement such as work and life support for people with difficulties.

Therefore, one of the expected statements is that the spirit of social movement has been lived like underground water in the key persons and it has been revived and embodied into practice by them. Of course, this is open to question and my research will need to follow for at least 3 years.
This note is one of the outcomes of “Sociological research on the employment support policy and practice programmed in the revitalization of local industry and community” (project leader: Miki TSUTSUI), Grunts-in-Aid for Scientific Research (c), No.17K04711, funded by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science from FY2017 to FY2019.

Here I would like to thank Mr. Kazuo TAKAMI (President of A dash Work Creation), Ms. Iyo KIKUCHI (job placement person of A dash Work Creation) and Mr. Katsuharu YAMADA (Principal of Osaka Prefectural Nishinari High School) for their cooperation for this research and reading my draft.

Also I would like to thank the people of the department: Nicole Doerr for encouraging me to make this presentation, Bente Halkier for removing my anxieties, Kristian Bernt Karlson for brisk scheduling, Myra Lewinter for her patient and detailed feedback, and Nicola Thomas and Yunran Zhang Serena for helping my rehearsal.

In economic terms, see Takami (2018).


One of the outcomes is Tsutsui, Sakurai and Honda eds. (2014).
One of the outcomes is Tsutsui (2014).
One of the outcomes is Tsutsui (2013).
Some of the outcomes are Tsutsui (2016a) and Tsutsui (2016b).

This paper will refer to this point again in the last section.

The statistical data in this subsection are from “Basic Survey on School (Gakko Kihon Chosa)” by the Ministry of Education and Science, and Nishinari High School, http://www.osaka-c.ed.jp/nishinari/

and on interview with Mr. Katsuharu Yamada, the Principal of Nishinari High School.

14 https://www.rengo-soken.or.jp/work/bcf009507f369 83a485217ed230437c742fb5082.pdf

This is its shortened title. I could not find the official English title on the English website of the Ministry of Education and Science, which does not upload all the reports by the Central Council (access on 17th/February/2019) http://www.mext.go.jp/en/publication/report/index.htm

If its Japanese official title were translated (team to shite no gakko no arikata to kongo no kaizen hosaku nituite), it would be “the way school as team should be and the future reform plan.”

The data shown in this section are from interviews with Mr. Kazuo TAKAMI, President of A dash Work Creation, Ms. Iyo KIKUCHI, job placement person of A dash Work Creation, and Mr. Katsuharu YAMADA, Principal of Nishinari High School.

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“Individual development model” and “community embedment model”:
an examination based on a fieldwork of job placement at a “disadvantaged non-vocational high school” in Japan

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The Japanese high school structure is very hierarchical. At the bottom of this hierarchy are the “disadvantaged non-vocational high schools,” where many students get a permanent job just after graduation, but mainly because of mismatching, many of them quit a job soon. How can these schools improve their job placement?

Teachers in Japan are facing various problems: more students are in poverty and with developmental disability than before on the one hand, the outcome-oriented pressure is reinforced under the New Public Management on the other hand.

For this reason, in 2015 the government introduced a new policy “School as Team,” which states that schools should share teachers’ work with outside professionals such as school counselors and job placement persons. The collaboration between a public high school and a voluntary association in Osaka City which I have been observing for four year is one of such projects.

I found two different ways currently being practiced and I name them “individual development model” and “community embedment model.” The former is the conventional way of seeing education and school, while the latter is an alternative one.

This note will not only explain these two models but also show a bigger picture of my research: a trial to contextualize and document what I am observing in the recent history of the labour, civic and social movements in Japan.