How Differences in the Unionization Strategy of Non-Regular Workers Affect the Nature of Union Activity

Consulting Case Studies of Supermarket Chains in Japan and South Korea

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How Differences in the Unionization Strategy of Non-Regular Workers Affect the Nature of Union Activity; Consulting Case Studies of Supermarket Chains in Japan and South Korea

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Accompanying the shift observed in the industrial profile of developed countries from the manufacturing to the service industries comes a rise in the proportion of non-regular workers and a decline in the proportion of those who are unionized. This paper focuses on supermarkets, where the percentage of non-regular workers is particularly high, comparing labour laws, systems and policies relating to non-regular employment between Japan and South Korea. In both countries, there has been progress made in the unionization of non-regular workers in large supermarket chains since the turn of the century. In Japan, the unions for originally regular supermarket employees began to admit non-regular employees as their union members in the mid-2000s, while in South Korea, non-regular supermarket workers set up their own union separately from the regular workers union in the early 2010s. This paper examines how differences in the unionization strategy of non-regular workers affect the nature of the union activity, based on interviews carried out in both countries.

▶ Keywords: non-regular workers, union activities, unionization strategy, supermarket workers

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Ⅰ. Introduction

1. The Aims of This Paper and Previous Research

Accompanying the shift in industrial focus within developed countries from manufacturing to service industries, the proportion of non-regular employees has increased, and that of unionized employees has fallen. This paper will look specifically at supermarkets, which have a particularly high proportion of non-regular employees, considering the state of industrial relations there. As it happens, the unionization of non-regular employees in major supermarket chains in Japan and South Korea took place around the same time; in Japan, the unions for regular supermarket employees began admitting non-regular employees in the mid-2000s, while in South Korea, non-regular supermarket employees set up a union in the early 2010s. This paper will examine how differences in the unionization strategy of non-regular workers affect the nature of the union activity, based on interviews carried out in both countries.[1)]

Past research has highlighted several points of commonality between the nature of industrial relations and employment practices as they occur in Japan and South Korea. For example, both nations favour company-specific trade unions or ‘in-house unions’, with industry-wide unions having little role to play. In both nations, unions have consisted until relatively recently mostly of male, regular employees of large firms, and functioned accordingly. Unionization rates are 10% in South Korea and 17% in Japan.[2)]

Among the kinds of workers covered by the unions, employment practices such as employment of new graduates, provision of long-term, stable employment, increases in pay to accompany experience, skill improvement and so on, and labour management achieved through internal promotion have become standard(Woo, 2010). On the other hand, non-regular workers who find themselves outside the trade union framework are mostly recruited mid-career, have to deal with a very transitory labour market, are deemed unsuitable for internal promotion, and have extremely small scope for wage increases. Hence, in both Japan and South Korea, the labour market is divided into two factions

1) Interviews with South Korean union members were conducted in February 2017, and interviews with Japanese union members in April 2018.

2) From ILOSTAT(http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/) (Correct at time of writing, December 2018).

(Hwang, 2006). Moreover, more often than not non-regular workers are left out of social welfare systems.

Needless to say, inferior working conditions for non-regular workers are not unique to Japan and South Korea, but are found also in many other developed nations. In developed nations, the numbers of non-regular employees are on the increase, and the widening gap between the earnings of regular and non-regular workers has become a problem for society at large. With this in mind, some unions have begun accepting non-regular workers as members.

Another feature that Japan and South Korea have in common is the gender gap witnessed in comparison to other developed nations(Jang, 2006). The difference in wages between men and women is comparatively large in both nations, while the percentage of women in managerial and leadership roles is slim. Until very recently, the female employment percentages formed an M-curve when broken down by age, in both nations. The rapidly decreasing birth rate witnessed in both countries is not unrelated to such working trends.

In both Japan and South Korea, the majority of the non-regular employees of large supermarket chains upon which this paper focuses are women. In other words, the subject of this paper is those who have found themselves outside the unionization framework and given inferior conditions, as it were, twice over－both as non-regular employees, and as female workers.

There are, of course, points of disparity between Japan and South Korea also. One such difference consists in the character of industrial relations. When industrial conflict arises in Japan, the tendency is to attempt to solve this through discussions, rather than immediately resorting to disputes. In South Korea, however, conflicts are more frequently resolved through disputes. This is reflected in the statistics, where the number of labour disputes and the number of days not worked is far higher in South Korea than they are in Japan.[3] Accordingly, industrial relations in South Korea have been described as ‘confrontational or hostile’ and in Japan as ‘harmonious’(Oh, 2006).[4]

3) The number of disputes in 2016 was 120 in South Korea (according to ILOSTAT) and 31 in Japan (from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare’s ‘Report into Labour Dispute Statistics’)

4) Park(2006), focusing on workers in South Korea who are not unionized (such as non-regular employees), contests that many employees do not have the capacity for conflict, and thus suggests that the workforce has a two-tier structure composed of those workers who can offer opposition and those who cannot.

Further, in response to a worsening of the problem of non-regular employment in South Korea, from 2000 onwards there has been a movement among the labour unions to move toward a system of industry-wide unions, in an attempt to overcome the problems of the 'in-house unions' that have been favoured until recently(Woo, 2010).[5] However, as yet we cannot declare definitively that the system has shifted entirely, and indeed, some have indicated that the transition is not proceeding very smoothly.[6]

2. The Significance of This Research

Until recently, trade unions have been focused around regular workers. Although most trade unions in the West are industry-wide, it is more common in Japan and South Korea to have in-house unions. This structural difference has entailed differences in the functioning of the unions. Also, the nature of union activity has a close connection with employment practices, and the two generally stand in a relationship of mutual influence (Dore, 1973).

These days, with the numbers of non-regular workers on the rise, their unionization has begun in many developed nations. The nature of this unionization, however, varies widely between country to country.

Turning to look at the retail industry, where the proportion of non-regular workers is relatively high, we find that in Japan, although various different kinds of unionization strategies have been attempted, the most common pattern is for the pre-existing union for regular workers to begin to admit non-regular workers as well(cf. Rengo-souken, 2009; JILPT, 2016). The case study that will be examined in this paper is an example of this approach.

In South Korea, industrial relations in the retail industry have assumed a multitude of different forms(cf. Eun et al., 2008). Unionization rates there remain at a low level across

5) In Japan, the importance of strengthening the role of industry-wide trade unions is often discussed, but there is no movement towards implementing this at present.

6) At the present time, those industry-wide unions are very much a cluster of 'in-house' unions. They do not carry out negotiations in industrial level and have not signed industrial agreements. In other words, there is a sense in which they have taken on the title of industrial unions while maintaining the structural formation of 'in-house' unions. For that reason, it appears that the 'in-house' union functions are coming into play more than the industrial ones. How this situation develops into the future will be a matter for further research(Taken from interview data).

the industry, but the unionization of non-regular workers has been proceeding at a good pace. The foundation of this development is the unions that are members either of the FKTU(Korean Federation of Tourist & Service Industry Worker's Unions), or the KCTU (Korean Federation of Service Workers' Union). Looking at this process, it seems it would be a mistake to conclude that the unionization has taken place that pre-existing unions for regular workers have been proactively incorporating non-regular workers into their unions. Moreover the rivalry between the FKTU and the KCTU has served as a factor to complicate the situation, with both competing for members within the same companies, and arguing over the rights to represent workers in negotiations. Given this situation, although cases where non-regular workers are unionized as part of the regular workers' union are not non-existent in South Korea, when we look at the whole picture, we see a broad spectrum of examples where non-regular workers are either unionized by a different union, or else form their own independent union(Kwon, 2014; Kim, J. 2015; Kim, J. 2019). The case study looked at in this paper will present a typical example of the latter of these unionization strategies.

This paper will consult two representative case studies from Japan and South Korea to shed light on how differences in the way that non-regular workers are unionized affects union activities across workplaces. Japan and South Korea may have several dissimilarities when it comes to employment practices and industrial relations[7], but in general, it has been thought there is much overlap in this area, and the potential for comparison is therefore high. It can also be predicted that non-regular supermarket employees, which in both countries are predominantly middle-aged women, will have very similar work contents. Starting out from the basis of this commonality, this paper will investigate how differences in unionization strategy give rise to differences in the everyday running of the unions, the demands made, and the state of negotiations and discussions. Research around the unionization of non-regular workers and their union activity is gradually beginning to appear, but there are few examples of research drawing international comparisons. This paper will thus seek to compare the union activity of non-regular workers in two different

7) Both Japan and South Korea have more than one trade union centres. In Japan, RENGO (the Japanese Trade Union Confederation) is by far the most prominent, whereas in South Korea, the FKTU (Federation of Korea Trade Union) and the KCTU (Korean Confederation of Trade Unions) compete for prominence. Generally, when several national centres compete, it is easy for them to become combative, with each attempting to prove the meaningfulness of their unions.

nations, from the perspective of unionization strategy.

Ⅱ. Non-Regular Employment

1. Features of Non-regular Employment

The proportion of non-regular employment skyrocketed in Japan during the economic downturn of the 1990s, and in South Korea, after the 1997 Asian financial crisis. The proper definition of the term ‘non-regular employment’ differs internationally, and there may even be multiple definitions used within a single country, which makes it difficult to make direct comparisons. According to OECD statistics, the percentages of temporary workers as a proportion of total employment stand at 7.2% for Japan and 21.9% for South Korea, with ‘temporary worker’ here signifying those in fixed-term employment. According to the same statistics, the figures for part-time employment as a proportion of total employment are 22.8% for Japan and 10.9% for South Korea. However, even with this data, we can’t be sure that the definitions of these terms within both countries are the same.

Based on the premise that it is difficult to attain an accurate grasp of the proportion of non-regular workers and to compare them, this paper will cite statistics issued by the governments of both nations. The Japanese employment system is based around job titles, and those defined at their workplace as non-regular employees constitute 38.1% of all employees.[8] In South Korea, with both temporary workers and daily workers are counted as non-regular workers, and the according ratio is 32.6% (Table 1).[9]

Again, acknowledging the definitions assigned to the term in each country, I’d like to isolate several characteristics of non-regular employees in each of the nations. First, in Japan, the largest category among non-regular workers is that of the part-timers, who make up fifty percent. This is something that Japan has in common with many European countries. In contrast to that, in South Korea, full-time non-regular workers form the

8) Statistics quoted henceforth relating to Japan are taken from the ‘2017 Labour Force Survey’ published by Statistics Bureau.

9) Statistics quoted henceforth relating to South Korea are taken from the 2017 ‘Economically Active Population Survey’ published by Statistics Korea.

Table 1. Non-regular workers as a proportion of all workers

Government statistics	Japan	South Korea
Non-regular workers as a percentage of all workers (both sexes)	38.1%	32.9%
Women	53.7%	41.2%
Men	20.0%	26.3%

Sources of data: 2017 Labour Force Survey published by Statistics Bureau; 2017 Economically Active Population Survey published by Statistics Korea (cited from 2018 Korean Labour Institute Labor Statistics, pp40-42; https://elaw.klri.re.kr/kor_service/lawView.do?hseq=32289&lang=ENG)

majority, meaning that the number of hours worked by non-regular workers is close to that of regular workers.

Also in Japan, the proportion of non-regular workers is particularly high among women, with 53.7% of all female workers being non-regular workers, in contrast to just 20.0% of male workers. In South Korea, according to the government statistics, the percentage of male non-regular workers is higher than in Japan, with the percentage of non-regular female workers at 40.7%, and men at 26.3%.

2. Labour Laws, Systems and Policies Relating to Non-regular Employment

Some of the noticeable characteristics of non-regular employment shared by both nations are low pay, job insecurity, and insufficient provision of social insurance. Also, because the labour markets for non-regular and regular employment are divided, there are rarely shifts made from non-regular to regular positions. In order to amend this situation, both governments have introduced laws in order to protect non-regular employees. This paper will provide a simple explanation of the main aspects of jurisdiction in both countries that have a direct bearing on this research.

The first thing to mention is the legislation enforcing improved treatment for non-regular workers, or equality of treatment with regular employees. In Japan, the Part-time Workers Act was passed in 1993, and amended in 2007. The amended law prohibited the imposition of unreasonable differences between regular employees and part timers. However, there are doubts about how effective this actually was. For example, in Japan, even if the law ensures equal treatment of part-timers and full-timers, differences

in job contents and scope, their degree of responsibility and the education and training they've received means that a pay gap between the two is understood to be 'reasonable'. As a result, the law has created no major change to the gap in pay between the two.

In South Korea, the Act on Protection of Fixed-term and Short-time Workers and the Employment Agency Worker Protection Act were enacted in 2007. These laws prohibit discrimination against non-regular employees, requiring employers to obtain an employee's consent in order to make them work overtime 12 hours a week, and also stipulating that employees can refuse surplus work. In addition, it rules that the employers need to clearly state working conditions for non-regular employees such as the rate of pay, the length of the contract, working hours, days off, holiday allowances, and so on.

Aside from these laws, what has affected the pay of non-regular workers working at supermarkets is the minimum wage system. This is particularly the case in recent years, when the minimum wage has been increasing in both Japan and South Korea. In these past five years, the minimum wage has gone up by 7-8% every year in South Korea and while Japan's has not undergone such a dramatic increase, it is still rising each year.

Another area of jurisdiction that deserves mentioning is that relating to employment security. In South Korea, these non-regular employee protection laws of 2007 limited the usage of fixed-term employment contracts to two years. In other words, those who have been on fixed-term contracts for two years or more are then deemed to have an unlimited contract. It also means that those who had been employed through a temp agency for more than two years had to be employed directly by the company in question.

In Japan, the Labor Contracts Act was amended in 2013 to stipulate a worker who had been on a fixed-term contract for five years could have their contract replaced by an unlimited employment contract if they applied for it to be changed.

3. Typical Characteristics of Non-regular Work in the Service Idustry

In both nations, the large majority of those working in supermarkets are non-regular employees, with regular employees few and far between. In what follows, this paper will consider the situation for non-regular supermarket employees in Japan and South Korea, as gleaned from interviews.

To consider the example of Japan first, we find that in any given store, regular employees occupy from 10-15%, and non-regular employees 85-90％. The overwhelming

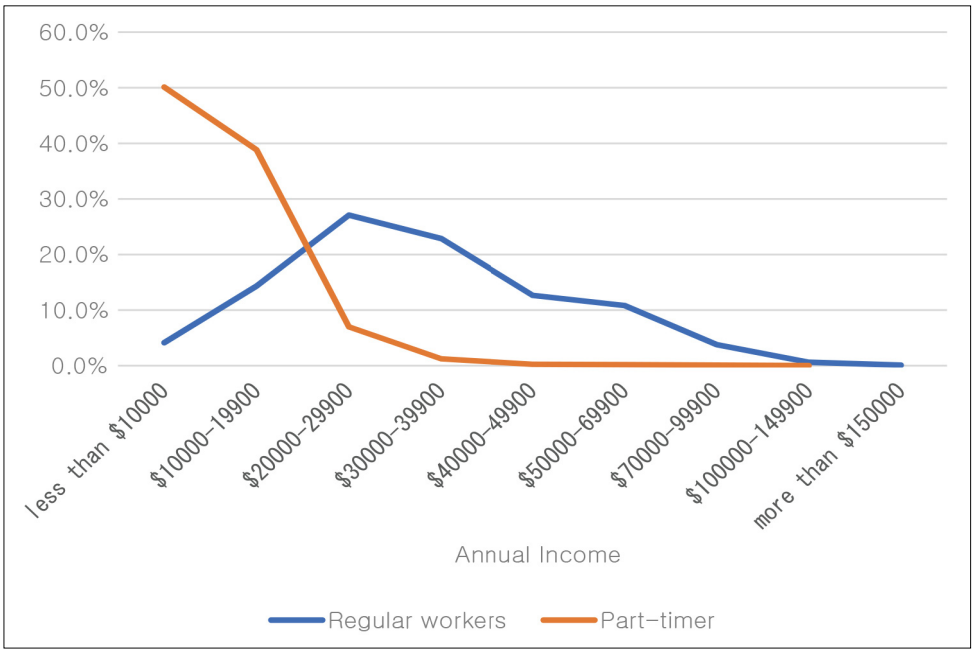
majority of non-regular employees are part-time workers. In Korea, the percentage of regular employees per store lies at around 5%, with non-regular employees employed directly by the store at 20%, and those from affiliated firms at 75%.[10] These affiliated firms are mostly the companies responsible for delivering goods, which are given sales incentives and a fixed rate of the sales in return for providing staff. As well as direct employees, a large number of those working for these affiliated firms are subcontracted and temp agency staff. In this research, this paper will concentrate on part-timers in Japan, and direct, non-regular employees in South Korea.

The majority of part-time workers at Japanese supermarkets are women in their late forties or above. Many of these women choose part-time over full-time employment because of childcare or care commitments. The main source of financial support in these women's households is the husband, and their income is seen to be a supplement to this. In Japan, the male breadwinner model is given preferential treatment in social insurance and tax systems, and according to those policies, the women themselves do not wish to become financially independent. For example, the Japanese national pension system functions so that employees with low or no income will receive a pension, even without making insurance payments. However, this system applies only to those employees whose spouse is a member of the pension scheme, and is not applicable to the unmarried, or to those whose spouse is self-employed. Premised upon the model of the typical Japanese family, this system was brought in to guarantee pensions for wives provided for financially by their employed husbands－by the so-called 'full-time housewives'. The national tax system too, grants exemptions to spouses with low incomes. These kinds of social systems have become an incentive for married women to ensure their income remains low. As a result, when we consider the wage distribution of part-time female workers as illustrated in Figure 1, around half of them have wages low enough to benefit from these systems. Compared to regular workers, part timers are concentrated in the low-income bracket, and there is little variation. In Japan, 64% of non-regular female workers are part-timers.[11]

10) There are cases of South Korean supermarkets where the ratio of subcontracted workers isn't as high as in this particular case study. This paper, however, will develop its findings based on the data obtained from the interviews.

11) Source of data: "2018 Labour Force Survey" published by Statistics Bureau.

Figure 1. Comparison of Annual Income distribution for Part-Time and Regular Employees (Female Only)



Note: This graph is calculated on the supposition that $1=¥100. Currently in February 2019, $1 is equivalent to ¥110, but in order to simplify, I have supposed that $1=¥100 for this graph.
Sourceof data: "2018 Labour Force Survey" published by Statistics Bureau.

In South Korea, too, many of the workers are middle-aged women, but their working hours are not short like the Japanese part-timers, with many non-regular employees working full time. According to the trade unions, around 40% of them are the main breadwinners in their households, seek financial independence, and work long hours to keep their households running. In South Korea, which is an expensive place to live, a high percentage of male non-regular employees makes it difficult to keep households running on the income of the men alone, and in many households both the husband and the wife work. As a result, there is a strong tendency for women to work full time in order to cover the costs of living.

In both countries, the main tasks of the non-regular employees working at supermarkets are stocking shelves, checking expiry dates, pricing, operating the cash registers, sorting the back office and so on. Looking at their average wages and the development of their careers, they do less well than regular workers and in addition, they receive unequal treatment when it comes to social insurance.

Ⅲ. The Unionization of Non-Regular Workers

1. Organization of the Unions

In both countries, most trade unions are 'in-house unions', and industrial relations mediated on a company-wide basis. Also, trade unions have historically included only regular employees. Both countries have been slow to respond to the rapid growth in non-regular employees, and have faced criticism because of it.

In Japan, the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (RENGO), the main national trade union centre, created a centre for non-regular employees in 2007. RENGO worked to strengthen the bargaining powers of non-regular employees and those not part of any union, and in addition to carrying out surveys and campaigns around the issue of non-regular employment, it also appealed to affiliated organizations to begin unionizing non-regular employees. In South Korea, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) has carried out three campaigns since 2000 to encourage unionization of non-regular employees. However, the efforts of these kinds of national centres are not always reckoned to be effective. At around 3% in both countries, the proportion of unionized non-regular employees is still low.

This paper looks into two cases where non-regular workers were unionized at an early stage, examining their functioning. As shown in Table 2, both are companies with large numbers of employees, which provide a good representation of the retail industry in their respective nations.

Table 2. Summary of the Case Studies

Japanese case study	South Korean case study
Japan's largest supermarket chain	One of Korea's three largest supermarket chain
Founded: 1926	Founded: 1997
Number of stores: 400	Number of stores: 593
Number of employees: 85200	Number of employees: around 20000 (direct employees only)

Note: These figures are from the time of the interviews in 2017.
Source: Interviews conducted by the author.

In the beginning, non-regular supermarket employees were not members of the trade unions, in either nation. In Japan, the unionization of non-regular employees by company trade unions predated the attempts of the national centre. According to the author's research, Japan's largest supermarket chain began unionizing non-regular employees in 2004. The background to this is that the percentage of non-regular employees in the workplace was rising, and the unions were feeling anxious about a lack of solidarity in the workplace. In Japanese supermarkets, the proportion of non-regular employees shot up during the 1990s. In this particular company, the proportion of non-regular workers, which had been 50% in 1990, had reached 80% by 2010. This increase of non-regular workers within the stores entailed a shift in job content, with non-regular workers increasingly entrusted with jobs with more responsibility. This fostered a sense of camaraderie among the regular workers with the non-regular workers, which in turn helped lead to their unionization.

Another motivating factor is how, if a Japanese employer wants employees to work hours more than those stipulated or work on their holidays, the employer and a representative of the employees both need to sign an agreement. Where there is a trade union, and where over half of the workers in the workplace are members, then the union can serve as a representative in this. For the unions, this meant that they needed to unionize a majority(that included non-regular employees) if they were to serve as representatives of their employees.

The union in question began by first unionizing those employees who had been at the company for a long time and those with relatively long working hours, and subsequently moved on to those with shorter histories or working hours. It carried out six campaigns, so that by 2016, all of the employees were members, other than those with contracts of less than three months. They then implemented a union shop provision, a common occurrence in Japan, and were thus able to achieve unionization of all (100%) of their employees.

In Korea, as mentioned before, the 2007 non-regular employee protection laws stipulated that those working for over two years must be given an unlimited contract. The case study studied in this research suggests that an important trigger for forming a union was that being awarded an unlimited contract in this way took away anxiety about one's contract being terminated. Before that point, non-regular employees in supermarkets were made to work without being paid for their extra hours, or in an environment where

Table 3. Details of the Union Participation

	Japanese case study	South Korean case study
Unionization begins	2004	2013
Current unionization percentage	100% (after implementing a union shop agreement)	Around 10%
Members	Around 64,000	Around 3000
No. of branches	507	52
Impetus for creation	• To create a feeling of unity in the workplace • To create a trade agreement laid down by the Labor Standards Act	Implementation of these non-regular employee protection laws (the elimination of the risk of being made unemployed through making contracts non-fixed term)
Union details	'In-house' union. Non-regular employees and regular employees join the same union.	Union created by non-regular employees for non-regular employees (although regular employees are also allowed to join.) Planning to develop into an industry-wide union.

Source: interviews conducted by the author.

harassment was frequently. The unions declared their plan to first of all protect the workers' basic rights.

Roughly four years after formation of the union, ten percent of workers were members. Currently, this union has the largest percentage of non-regular employees in any supermarket. Other supermarkets are now creating similar unions, and there are plans for the future to create a small industry-wide union for non-regular employees. In South Korea, the KCTU has been encouraging the transition from company to industrial unions, so as to overcome the limitations of 'in-house' unions. This example fits well into that pattern.

2. Activities of the Unions

(1) Japan

In Japan's case, the trade union first of all set about attaining the same welfare provisions for full-time company employees and part-time workers. Subsequently, they sought raises in pay and bonuses. However, the pay raise they were able to secure was very small, and the increases in minimum wages on a national level and pay rises due

to staff shortages had a greater impact.

As well as improving conditions in this way, the company also continued to increase the percentage of non-regular workers. In other words, the funds to improve conditions for non-regular workers came from a decrease in regular workers. Non-regular workers, as their conditions improved, began to receive training, take on more difficult positions and carry our tasks that had before been carried out by regular employees[12]. The company also introduced a wage ranking system, meaning that those taking on more complex roles would be rewarded with pay rises. Since the introduction of this system, there have indeed been employees who have risen up from the position of part-timer to team leader or store manager. Since the unionization of the company, the systems governing both wages and pay rises have been amended, meaning that it is now possible for part-time workers to ascend the ranks also.

However, it remains true that the majority of part-timers are aiming simply to supplement to their household finances, as part of the male-breadwinner model, and not that many have the desire to work longer hours than now, earn a bigger salary, or be promoted. Both employees and employers are finding it problematic that many women don't take the exams that would qualify them for pay raises.

One of the major achievements of the union has been ensuring employment security. A trade agreement concerning employment security was signed in 2009, which agreed that in the case that a branch was closed, everything possible would be done to ensure continued employment for staff, such as transferring them to nearby branches and so on. In 2008, in the wake of the worldwide financial crisis, Japan underwent an economic downturn and the company in question announced the closure of many of its branches. According to this agreement, not just regular workers but also non-regular worker working at the shops that were shut were consulted and then repositioned to shops either within the company, or those within the larger group company. Where there was nowhere for them to go, the union used its influence to help place its workers at competing companies. The in-house union went about finding new jobs for its workers by cooperating with

12) Honda (2007) studied the actual working conditions of part-timers in Japanese retail businesses, indicating that while they may be commonly perceived as marginal entities, part-timers in fact constitute a central presence in the workplace, and the backbone of the workforce. The numbers of part-timers rise year on year, and they are assuming more and more central tasks at their places of work. Honda described this change as part-timers' 'becoming the backbone' of the workforce.

industry-wide or regional trade unions, calling on them to find positions for workers. In Japan, it is not rare for industry-wide unions to play a central role in finding new jobs in the case of a mass redundancy, but in the past, this has been limited to jobs for regular workers. We can see, therefore, that the unionization of non-regular workers has resulted in an expansion of the scope of these activities.

(2) South Korea

In South Korea's case, when the trade union for non-regular workers was first founded, it worked on securing workers' basic rights through taking legal proceedings against incursions of these—forced overwork, failure to pay for overwork and so on. Without the trade union, even the basic rights of these workers were not being observed, and enforcing them was a major reason for the creation of the union.

These days, the union is concentrating on improving conditions and pay. This is because, while these non-regular employee protection laws have ensured unlimited contracts for those employed for two years or more continuously, the workers' pay and working conditions remain unchanged. From 2014, the year after its formation, the union has carried out a strike every year, and has secured a collective agreement. Through these means, the union has sought to equalize differences between non-regular and regular employees in terms of salary negotiations (the switch from hourly to monthly pay) and standards for bonuses, and has succeeded in this. Also, it has introduced a system to provide an allowance for those who have worked at the company for a long time. This system has also been adopted by trade unions at other companies. The union wants to implement a pay raise system, so that people's pay will increase the longer they've been working, and this is its current focus.

By Korean law, workers are transferred to unlimited contracts after working continuously for two years, but the union requested this transfer after fifteen months, and this was then put into practice. Also, the company has introduced a system enabling non-regular employees to switch over to be regular employees, but in reality, the number of people who can do this are extremely limited, leading to severe conflict among the workers. As a result, the union is currently opposing this system.

Further, the union has made an appeal for recognition and appropriate monetary reward of the emotional labour done by those dealing with customer complaints and so on, and

Table 4. The Main Demands of the Trade Unions

Japanese case study	South Korean case study
• Transition from hourly to daily/monthly pay when the number of working hours exceeds a certain amount • Pay raises, bonus increases • Introducing job ranking system for part-timers • Welfare provisions (employee discounts to be made equal for all employees, introduction of family allowances, benefit schemes etc.) • Labour agreement concerning job security	• Transition from hourly to monthly pay • Equalization of bonus pay standards with regular employees • Labour agreement concerning job security • Allowances for emotional labour

Source: interviews conducted by the author.

the company has as a result introduced allowances for emotional labour. Employment security has been assured as part of the agreement with the company, but at this company there has as yet been no shop shut, so it is still unclear how this will function in practice. The non-regular workers at this particular company do not move between shops, as a matter of principle, so it is unclear how their employment will be secured in the case of a shop closing.

Ⅳ. Forming Trade Unions, and Industrial Action in Japan and South Korea

Comparing our Japanese and South Korean case studies, we find that the functioning of the Japanese trade union has not changed much since the unionization of non-regular employees. Specifically, the union continues to facilitate harmonious relationships between employers and employees and prioritizes long-term job security over short-term pay raises in its action profile. In South Korea's case, with annual strikes, relationships between employers and trade unions are hostile. Rather than long-term job security, it seems that the union has prioritized more short-term gains such as pay raises and equalization of bonuses. I'd like here to enquire into the factors that lie behind these differences between Japan and South Korea.

The first factor to take into account is the differences between the non-regular employees in both countries. The South Korean union is responding to the voices of the female union members who are requiring financial independence and thus demand a wage that people can live off, where as in Japan, given the large number of female union

members who work simply to supplement their husband's income, job security is valued over the rate of pay. The difference in action is in a sense determined by the situation that women find themselves in from the perspective of social insurance after the spread of non-regular workers internationally. Whereas South Korea has many non-regular male employees, meaning that it is common for both men and women to work in order to support the family, Japan is still retaining the vestiges of the male-breadwinner model.

The second factor to consider is that, while in Japan both regular and non-regular employees belong to the same union, in Korea the non-regular employees have formed a separate union.

In Japan, the regular employee union began admitting non-regular employees, advocating for the benefits of both. For a time, in order to reduce the difference in treatment between the two, they restricted the improvement of conditions for regular employees, working instead on those of the non-regular employees. It should be said, though, that in a workplace where non-regular employees constitute close to 90% of the workforce, even a tiny raise in pay means a huge cost to the company. The trade union examined in this research contains around 64,000 non-regular workers. Increasing their hourly pay by a single cent will cost the company approximately a million dollars per year. In this kind of company, demanding increases of pay or bonuses for non-regular workers is no easy business, and it may well be for this reason that they focused their energies on allowances and job security.

Through the collaboration of management and workers, by giving non-regular employees training, increasing their skills and allowing them promotions, they created a path for them to have pay rises and to be promoted. The part-time workers also had their jobs rotated so that they could develop more diverse skills and undertake tasks with more responsibility, thus meaning they would gain pay rises. As a result, it became possible for non-regular workers to carry out the more difficult kinds of work undertaken by regular workers if they wanted, thereby attaining a better rate of pay. In reality, however, there are not many non-regular employees wanting promotions, and most of their jobs remain unchanged. Accordingly, we cannot conclude that the pay of non-regular employees has increased.

In South Korea, on the other hand, the union consists only of non-regular workers, meaning that it has been able to make demands without being conscious of the effect or costs they will have on the working conditions of regular workers. According to the trade

union interviewed, there is little to no rotation of non-regular workers at Korean supermarkets, and this kind of rotation is not in fact sought by the workers themselves. The union also is not seeking jobs that will increase the burden of its workers.

The differences in job content and pay between non-regular workers in the two case studies do not ensue purely from the fact that in one country the non-regular workers have joined a union with the regular workers, and in the other they have their own separate union. In fact, it is likely that this difference itself reflects the differences in employment practices in the two countries. The scope of the duties of regular workers in Japan is more ambiguous than in other countries, and it is common for them to undertake a wider spectrum of tasks. We can see that this is in the process of extending also to non-regular workers.

The third factor is that the unions have inherited the pre-existing features of unions in their respective countries. Generally speaking, in Japan, company trade unions have maintained harmonious industrial relations, and focused on long-term job security over short-term pay. This is how trade unions are for regular workers, and because in Japan non-regular workers are incorporated into the union for regular workers, we can clearly see why they would directly inherit their way of doing things. This also applies to matters relating to employment practices. In Japan, there is a tendency for the wage ranking system, transfer and change of position used for regular employees to be extended to non-regular employees.

In comparison to those in Japan, South Korean unions have been termed confrontational in their attitude, and this character trait has been inherited also by non-regular workers' union action. In addition, into the 2000s, the pre-existing union structure has been strongly criticized for focusing on the needs of regular workers. Thus, the subsequent forming of unions that accepted only non-regular workers as members may have encouraged the development of hostile industrial relations.

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국문요약

비정규직의 조직화 전략 차이는 노동조합 활동의 특성에 어떻게 영향을 미치는가: 일본과 한국의 수퍼마켓 체인 사례연구

와카나 슈토

선진국에서 일반화된 제조업에서 서비스업으로의 산업구조 전환에 따라 비정규직 비율이 증가하는 한편 노동조합 조직화율이 감소하고 있다. 이 논문은 일본과 한국 양국의 비정규직 관련 노동법, 시스템 및 정책을 비교한 위에 비정규직 비율이 특히 높은 슈퍼마켓 분야에 초점을 맞춘다. 두 나라에서는 20세기 초반 이후 대형 슈퍼마켓 체인에서 일하는 비정규직 노동자의 조직화가 진행되었다. 일본에서는 2000년대 중반부터 슈퍼마켓의 정규직 사원 중심의 노동조합이 비정규직을 조직해 그들을 같은 조합의 멤버로 인정하기 시작한 데 반해, 한국에서는 2010년대 초반 무렵 슈퍼마켓의 비정규직 노동자들이 기존의 정규직 조합과는 별도로 자신들의 노동조합을 설립하게 된다. 이 논문은 양국에서 수행된 인터뷰를 토대로 비정규직 조직화 전략의 차이가 노동조합 활동의 성격에 미치는 영향을 검토한다.

주제어 : 비정규직, 조합활동, 조직화 전략, 수퍼마켓 노동자