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Osaka University

**Precarious Academic Employment in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Japan:  
Exploring the Career and Life of Japanese PhD Graduates  
from the Humanities and Social Sciences**

**By**

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## **1. Introduction - Precarious PhDs?**

Similar to other industrialized nations, the share of non-regular employment in the Japanese labor market has been rising for the last decades and non-regular employees now comprise nearly 40% of all workers in Japan (The Japan Institute for Labor Policy and Training 2016a). Academia is no exception to this general trend. According to statistics by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) only 48.4% of all teaching positions at Japan's universities are filled by academics working full-time, while 51.6% are part-time positions (MEXT 2016a, 2016b). Hit hardest by this hiring trend are Japanese PhD graduates, of whom about half each year start their career in non-regular academic employment. Even though non-regular academic employment is widespread, it has not yet received much attention from researchers and it is largely unknown under what circumstances Japanese PhD holders are working and living and how they advance in their careers. The goal of this study is to examine non-regular employment in academia utilizing the case of PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences.

Researchers of the National Institute of Science and Technology Policy (NISTEP) who examined job-postings on JREC-IN, the most frequently used career database for academics in Japan, were able to observe a trend toward even more non-regular employment in academia. Their findings show that the number of fixed-term positions announced on the database surpassed the number of tenured positions in 2008. Tenured positions have been almost stable in the last 10 years while fixed-term positions were increasing steadily. In addition, a gradual increase of part-time positions could be observed (Kawashima and Yamashita 2016).

At the same time, the number of PhD graduates in Japan has been on the rise and as a consequence, PhD graduates of all fields face difficulties when they are looking for employment. With the number of new students shrinking due to ongoing demographic changes in Japan and a general trend toward more non-regular employment, those who want to work in

academia are facing an insecure future. Japanese companies, on the other hand, are reluctant to hire PhDs and still prefer young bachelor or master graduates they can train themselves instead of hiring older PhD graduates who possess very specific skills. As a result, the options for alternatives outside academia remain scarce. The *Gakkō Kihon Chōsa*, which tracks the number of graduates as well as their employment situation right after graduation, shows that only half of the PhD graduates each year are able to start their career in regular employment. The other half is sorted into various categories, which suggests that they are either working in non-regular employment or unemployed. In another survey, the NISTEP (2009), attempted to shed more light on the career paths of PhD graduates by providing a breakdown of all graduates in each year between 2002 and 2006. However, similar to the *Gakkō Kihon Chōsa*, the categories of the NISTEP are not helpful in comprehending the situation of PhD graduates. The employment status of a significant share of the participants was categorized as 'Unknown' (23%) or 'Other' (10%), and an additional 23% were recorded as working in non-regular employment in academia. These results reiterate that a large population of PhD graduates is not able to secure a regular position, but do not give an assessment of their actual livelihoods. What the survey did show was that especially PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences were pursuing academic careers after graduation and that a significant share of the PhDs of those fields work in non-regular employment after they have completed their PhD courses.

A long-term study regarding the career path of PhDs within five years after graduation administered by the same institution found that those who started their careers as postdocs had good chances to become a regular employee in academia within those five years. Nonetheless, 65.7% of the humanities PhDs and 46.1% of the social science PhDs who started their careers as non-regular employees were still part of the auxiliary academic labor force five years after graduation. Also, the share of postdocs is small for both fields (14.9% humanities, 11.2% social

sciences) (Park, Horoiwa and Chayama 2012). PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences are therefore not only more likely to work in non-regular employment in academia, but they are apparently more likely to stay in this form of employment than graduates of other fields.

The existing data on the career paths of recent Japanese PhD graduates suggests that half of them or more will be in non-regular employment or otherwise precarious situations right after their graduation, as the unresponsiveness for questions concerning employment suggests. What it does not explain is what high-status precarity exactly means for those affected. It remains unclear what kind of positions they work in, whether they are working for a single employer or have several workplaces, and how this situation is affecting their careers as academics and their life chances as a whole.

It is the purpose of this study to close this knowledge gap through a qualitative interview survey. I will focus on Japanese PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences because their career prospects are especially bleak.

The fate of Japan's PhD graduates is relevant for several reasons. Non-Regular employment is usually discussed as an issue of unskilled workers like people who only graduated high school or individuals with a comparably weak stand in the labor market like senior citizens or women (Rebick 2005, Mouer and Kawanishi 2005). The figures above however suggest that non-regular employment is also spreading in the world of academia and is affecting around half of Japan's highly skilled PhD graduates each year. Since there is a lack of qualitative studies on academics in precarious employment, it is widely unknown under what conditions they work, how they progress in their careers and how their lives are influenced by this career choice. The case of PhD graduates in the humanities and social sciences is, therefore, a good example to assess non-regular employment in the professions and will make it possible to compare precarious employment of highly skilled workers to precarious employment in the



Japanese labor market as a whole. In addition, an increasing number of academics are working under these conditions, and the way they engage in their research and education is likely to influence the overall performance of the sector of higher education in Japan. Attempts by policymakers to reform higher education should be informed by an accurate understanding of their working and living conditions. The current knowledge in this area is vague at best and does not allow for the assessment of where support or additional regulation is needed. Knowledge about non-regular employment in academia is also essential for the PhD graduates who are struggling to find jobs right after their graduation. Only by exploring their problems career counseling by universities and the government's efforts to get PhDs into the labor force can be improved. Lastly, for those planning to join a PhD course, it is important to know what it means to be a PhD holder in Japan and what the degree is worth in this country. Only with this knowledge, an informed decision can be made about whether to stay at university or to start job-hunting while they are still attractive hires in the Japanese labor market.

The goal of this study is to show how PhD graduates of the humanities and social sciences work and live when they are unable to find regular employment right after graduation. Furthermore, I will assess how they feel about this situation and how they react to working in non-regular academic employment. The expected consequences for the interviewees' careers and lives and the implications of the growing trend toward precarious employment in academia will be discussed, and the working and living conditions of non-regular employees in higher education will be compared to those of other non-regular employees.

To reach these goals, I conducted a qualitative interview survey with 16 PhD graduates and used a grounded theory approach to analyze the collected data. I followed the various analytical steps of the grounded theory method and was able to identify two important aspects in the interviewees' lives that further guided my inquiry and inspired the structure of this dissertation. Firstly, I found out that all participants who were aiming for a career in academia

had been, or still were, working as part-time university teachers (*hijōkin kōshi*). I will, therefore, explain the characteristics of this form of work and compare it to other forms of non-regular employment outside academia. I will focus on the questions: '*How is it to work as a part-time teacher in Japan?*', '*Why did the interviewees choose to work as hijōkin kōshi?*', and '*How does this form of employment influence the participants' careers and lives as a whole?*' Secondly, I found out that becoming an academic required the participants to organize their lives actively to make time for their research, which all interviewees saw as essential for career advancement. The economic and social aspects of working as *hijōkin kōshi* or in other forms of academic employment had to be coordinated with the demands of respondents' personal lives, such as housework, family, and hobbies. For that reason, I will strive for a comprehensive understanding of precarious academic work. The questions that will be answered are: '*How does non-regular academic employment influence the interviewees' private lives?*' moreover, '*What influence do aspects of the respondents' private lives have on their careers?*' My analysis of the PhD holders' strategies for managing their work and life under these complex demands reveals three dominant patterns: the Overwhelmed, the Settled and the Researchers. Each of these ways to cope with their situation has distinctive consequences for career prospects and livelihoods.

Since the sample mainly consisted of PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences, the findings of my work will apply to other PhD graduates of these fields. Graduates from natural science fields have more options after graduation, and my conclusions will only help understand the cases of those who stay in academia and are working in non-regular employment.

Including this Introduction, this dissertation is composed of eight chapters. Chapter 2 provides information on the general context of precarious employment and takes a look at the growth of non-regular employment in the Japanese labor market. It also presents what is known

about Japanese PhD graduates regarding their careers and lives and examines the case of PhD graduates from the humanities and social science fields by introducing the recent debate about the worth of those fields in Japan. After that, the methodology and the utilized sample will be introduced in detail in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 looks at the work as *hijōkin kōshi* in detail, and Chapter 5 covers additional aspects of academic work. It addresses other remunerated and unremunerated forms of employment that were typical for the PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences. Research, which the interviewees considered the most important aspect of academic life, is also examined. Chapter 6 then looks at activities of the participants' private lives and discusses how working in non-regular academic employment is influencing their engagement in the household, time with family and friends and their hobbies. On the other hand, the influence of their private lives on their career decisions is explained. Chapter 7 draws the aspects of work from Chapter 4 and 5 and the aspects of the rest of the participants' lives of Chapter 6 together. It examines in what ways the interviewees manage their work and lives, suggesting that they can be usefully categorized as either 'Overwhelmed,' 'Settled' or 'Researcher.' As a result, the consequences of the PhD graduates' ways to manage their daily lives are presented. In Chapter 8, I offer a summary of my conclusions and connect my results to the larger contexts of precarious employment and higher education in Japan.

## **2. Academics, Precarious Work and Non-Regular Employment in Japan**

### **The Concept of Precarious Employment**

In this study, I address precarious academic employment in 21<sup>st</sup> century Japan. Therefore, it is necessary to explain how precarious employment is defined and to make clear how the term will be used in this dissertation. The main characteristics of precarious work are uncertainty, instability, and insecurity (Kalleberg 2009, Kalleberg and Hewison 2013). Vosko (2006:3) defines it as paid work "involving limited social benefits and statutory entitlements, job insecurity, low wages and high risks of ill-health." Even though scholars agree that employment has been precarious in the past, the contemporary discourse is referring to changes in employment relations in the last decades. Such changes include increased employment insecurity through shorter and more flexible work arrangements, less protection provided by social security systems and a weakened bargaining position caused by the deteriorating legal protections of workers and the decreasing influence of organized labor. It is acknowledged that there is an objective side to precarious employment that can be measured using statistical data on employment relationships and their characteristics. Objective precariousness can, for example, be measured by analyzing wage developments or the share of temporary employment relationships. On the other hand, there ought to be a subjective side to precariousness which covers how the uncertainty is experienced by the individual (Duell 2004, ILO 2011, Kalleberg 2009, Kalleberg and Hewison 2013).

An international comparison or an assessment of the growth of precarious employment proves difficult. The term is not commonly used in all countries and precarious employment takes different forms in distinct national contexts due to the different social and economic structures of the political systems and the labor markets (Duell 2004, ILO 2011). Furthermore,

there is no agreement regarding what characteristics need to be considered when evaluating the level of the precariousness of work. To allow for a quantitative analysis of precarious employment in national and international contexts the characteristics of precarious employment are often equated with specific forms of non-regular employment that are associated with precariousness. The International Labor Organization (ILO 2011) is a good example of this kind of approach. For the sake of measuring the growth of precarious employment, they analyze the development of temporary and fixed-term employment as well as agency work and the degree to which working under those conditions could be seen as voluntary. Vosko, MacDonald, and Campbell (2009:6) argue that this approach reduces the potential of the concept of precarious employment to a "colourful [sic] term" for certain forms of non-regular employment. They, therefore, favor an approach that allows for the measurement of multiple dimensions of precariousness, which make the concept applicable to any kind of employment (Vosko, MacDonald and Campbell 2009). Even though precariousness is often discussed in the context of non-regular employment, it has to be noted that regular employment can also be precarious and likewise non-regular employment can be non-precarious (Duell 2004). While the distinction between regular and non-regular employment is congruent with non-precarious and precarious employment in countries like Spain (Ibid.), Kalleberg and Hewison (2013) see the increasing use of the term of precarious employment as a sign that it has become difficult to grasp the complexity of contemporary work by utilizing the categories of regular and non-regular or the divide between formal and informal work.

Nonetheless, the definition of precarious work remains vague, which is why several working definitions are used to assess its extent and to make the issue internationally comparable with the data available. For this dissertation, I will evaluate the precarity of workers in the academic labor market by using the working definition of Duell (2004) as a guideline.

The author focusses on objective uncertainties because she tries to analyze the issue in a similar manner for five European countries and works with aggregated data, collected by the respective countries and other European sources.

In her working definition Duell (Ibid.) evaluates precarious employment using four dimensions: a temporal dimension, an economic dimension, an organizational dimension and a social protection dimension. In the temporal dimension, she takes a look at the continuity of employment for both regular and non-regular employment relationships. On the premise that not all unstable jobs are precarious, she considers the length of employment with one employer and the share of non-permanent contracts in the respective country which are both indicators of instability. In the economic dimension, she takes a look at wages and income mobility, as well as the level of training the workers receive because they directly relate to their job opportunities. The organizational dimension is concerned with working conditions and includes aspects concerning the level of autonomy at work, the level of safety, the working hours and the employees' control over their work time. The social protection dimension covers the level of social security. Aside from those four dimensions, she acknowledges the national context of the countries she compares by evaluating the dynamics of precarity, so whether there are ways to leave precarious employment or not. She furthermore considers features of the respective labor market in terms of supply and demand of precarious employment. By focusing on objective uncertainties, the approach lacks the subjective perspective of the individuals affected. The objective features are useful for making the case of Japanese academics comparable. I will, however, add the workers own perception to shed more light on the connection between the formal characteristics of precarious employment and the perception of it, identifying what aspects of their employment relationships or lives add to their feeling of insecurity or, to the contrary, make it seem less severe. This will help me to evaluate what kind

of temporary employment relationships lead to precarity, which according to Duell has not been examined yet.

### ***The Global Growth of Precarious Employment***

It is the common understanding that the share of precarious employment is rising globally (ILO 2011, Kalleberg 2009). Although the definition of precarious employment remains vague due to its various forms that are influenced by the national context, existing studies circumvent these inaccuracies by focussing on workers that are most likely to be working in precarity. The ILO (2011) concluded that since there is an increase of temporary workers and employees working on fixed-term contracts, who would prefer to work in a more stable employment relationship, the share of precarious employment is growing worldwide. Duell (2004) comes to a similar conclusion and notes that precarious employment in almost all European countries has increased since the 1980s. She, however, discerns that the European Foundation found no significant increase between the years of 1995 and 2000 and stresses that relatively secure standard employment still prevails in the European labor markets.

The increase in precarious employment is explained as a consequence of globalization and technical advancements (ILO 2011, Kalleberg 2009). The opening of markets and technological progress in the areas of communication and transportation have made it possible to outsource labor to low-wage countries, and at the same time, the labor pool was increased through the new mobility of immigrants, more working women, and older workers. These developments made it easier for employers to circumvent regulations and to increase the profitability of their businesses at the expense of their employees (ILO 2011). According to the ILO (2013:18) precarious work is increasing as a result of the "abuse of economic power, economic liberalization, global capital mobility, fierce lobbying against protective labour [sic]

laws, and a whole range of state policies guided by economic thinking that believes in the efficiency of free markets." It is more widespread in countries with lower levels of social protection that force people into low-quality jobs, driving down their wages. The ILO (2011) sees businesses as responsible for these changes in the world's labor markets and accuses them of using the opportunities presented to them by globalization to undermine labor rights and to reduce the ability of governments to protect their citizens by pursuing a national economic policy. On the other hand, the ILO expresses that nation states have failed to adjust their labor laws in a timely manner, therefore making it possible for businesses to exploit loopholes to create more flexible work arrangements. As a result, not all workers benefit from labor legislation and are relatively unprotected. They furthermore criticize the weak enforcement of existing laws, which in their opinion further facilitates the growth of precarious employment (ILO 2011).

### ***The Consequences of More Precarious Employment Relationships***

According to many scholars, the effects of precarious employment are predominantly negative and effect the work and life of individuals but also have implications for society as a whole (Bohlea et al. 2004, ILO 2011, Kalleberg 2009, Kalleberg and Hewison 2013). Workers in these insecure jobs suffer from a higher workload and have less reliable working hours (Bohlea et al. 2004, ILO 2011). There are furthermore implications for the workers' health as they suffer from increased stress because of their working conditions and are exposed to more dangerous work. Since they cannot plan for their future and lack the security of certain social protections their working and living quality is deteriorating and they are at risk of long-term unemployment if they get injured or sick. Also, they are less likely to receive adequate training, which depending on where they work can furthermore increase the health risks and at the same



time decreases their career chances. It is therefore up to them to develop their skills and stay employable (ILO 2011, Kalleberg 2009). People in precarious employment are unable to make long-term decisions and to plan their lives. Subsequently, many of those workers are unable to get married, to have children, or to make big investments like buying a house. It has also been found out that it leads to less engagement in communities (ILO 2011, Kalleberg 2009). On the scale of society, precarious employment brings more economic inequality, insecurity, and instability and leaves workers unable to buy what they produce. This situation leads to growing pessimism due to the lack of upward mobility and decreases satisfaction with the standard of living because more has to be spent on necessities. It reinforces the class divide because people from higher classes have an advantage and it is argued to consolidate the gender division because it leaves women in employment relationships that do not enable them to be financially independent (ILO 2011, Kalleberg 2009). According to the ILO (2011), it will also affect workers not in precarious employment, frightening them into accepting worse working conditions themselves. These developments will lead to less social cohesion and may in extreme cases result in social unrest. Because people feel powerless and are in resignation, the ILO predicts a crisis of democracy (ILO 2011).

The ILO bemoans the growth in precarious work for the reason that it is the opposite of what they are demanding with their concept of decent work. Economists, however, tend to argue in favor of the flexible labor markets pointing out that being in temporary employment is still better than being unemployed. Chassin (2013), when pointing out the advantages of a flexible labor market in Canada, makes clear that an overwhelming majority of non-regular workers had freely chosen this type of employment in order to meet family obligations or to have time for other activities. Chassin furthermore argues that through the uniform pay scale more people can be employed, which he sees as highly beneficial for those groups affected most by unemployment: young people, immigrants, and less-qualified workers. He goes even

further and states that if regular employment were more flexible, there would be no need for so many temporary workers and the unemployed would have it easier to find work. From his point of view, flexible employment is good for the people and the economy since it also allows companies to react to circumstances of the market. Companies using flexible labor have more economic success and therefore can hire even more workers, he argues. For Canada, 60% of the unemployed who got into regular employment were first hired in non-regular jobs. He positions non-regular employment as a stepping stone towards a more stable career. Especially immigrants would profit from these flexible work arrangements because it gives potential employers the opportunity to evaluate their skills in a non-regular work relationship before hiring them in a regular job. The work experience they gain during this time would furthermore help them to get accustomed to the country. In addition, he claims that the non-regular labor market offers a great variety of jobs and the chance to receive training and gain experience. More regulation of temporary staffing agencies would lead to less flexibility, higher labor costs and, as a result, to more unemployment (Chessin 2013). In contrast to the other sources mentioned so far Chessin's position follows the neoliberal stance that flexible employment, which is called precarious employment in this dissertation, is good for the economy and therefore good for the individuals who can share the generated prosperity. However, scholars like Kalleberg (2009) show that workers no longer have a share in the profit of their employers. As far as non-regular employment as a stepping stone is concerned, it became apparent that this depends on the national context. For the European countries, Duell (2004) finds highly skilled youth in Germany who just graduated to be overrepresented in precarious employment relationships. In their case, however, it is indeed only a step on their way to a more secure place of work, while in countries like Spain, people were locked into the non-regular labor market and had it tough to leave their uncertain employment relationships. Chessin's argument regarding experience and training was also proven inaccurate by the other sources. Of course,

work might help immigrants to get accustomed to the country, but data shows that people in this kind of employment lack training opportunities and that the responsibility to improve their skills lies with them. However, the ILO concedes that it might be better to work in a temporary work relationship than to be unemployed, but at the same time makes clear that the benefits of such an arrangement subside after four years (ILO 2011:14). For the ILO (2011) precarious employment is a consequence of the increased competition in the global markets but at the same time fueling this competition. Furthermore, it sees neoliberal policies as failed since they have not brought more economic growth.

### *More Qualitative Research is Needed*

In this section, it became apparent that precarious employment is an important issue because its growth has many implications for individuals working under these conditions and even on communities and society as a whole. Kalleberg (2009) however criticizes recent approaches to the issue. In his opinion, labor research has come to focus on large-scale surveys, which are diverting attention away from qualitative studies about workers and work in non-regular employment. He also dislikes the tendency to explain work-related phenomena leaving workers out of the explanation. The studies mentioned above are focusing on the objective uncertainties of precarious employment because they are easier to measure and therefore easier to compare internationally, avoiding the subjective uncertainties experienced by the workers. For future research about precarious employment Kalleberg postulates that "we need to understand the range of new workplace arrangements that have been adopted and their implications for both organizational performance and individuals' well-being" (Kalleberg 2009:18). I intend to follow his proposal by focusing on precarious academic employment in Japan, discussing the consequences of increasing insecurity in highly skilled academic jobs on

the performance of higher education in Japan and most importantly on the academics working in these jobs.

### **Precarious Employment in Japan**

The term 'precarious employment' is not widely used in research about the Japanese labor market and issues regarding insecurity and precarious work relationships are covered by the discourse on non-regular employment (*hiseikikoyō*). When utilized it is not further explained how the concept of precarious work is defined but rather used interchangeably for discussing working conditions and insecurities of non-regular employees (Gottfried 2009, Kalleberg and Hewison 2013, Osawa et al. 2013). Only a few scholars go as far as to include other types of employment that are not categorized as non-regular when addressing bad working conditions and insecurity. Taromaru (2009) in his work on non-regular employment among young Japanese, as an example, includes accord workers suffering from bad working conditions and self-employed truck drivers carrying most of the economic risk when working as subcontractors. This example shows that there is a strong connection between the topic of *hiseikikoyō* and precarious employment but that there is an awareness that other forms of employment can also be problematic. It is, therefore, justified to follow the discourse about non-regular employment in Japan when exploring the state of precarious employment in the country due to this overlap.

#### ***Reasons for the Growth of Non-Regular Employment in Japan***

Although non-regular employment only made up 16.4% of the working population in 1985 (The Japan Institute for Labor Policy and Training 2016b), this share went up to 20.9%

in the following ten years (Okunishi 2009), sharply rising further to 37.6% in early 2016 (The Japan Institute for Labor Policy and Training 2016a). Just like in the general discourse about precarious employment, non-regular employment in Japan is argued to be growing as a consequence of neoliberal policies like deregulation (Kalleberg and Hewison 2013, Mouer and Kawanishi 2005, Osawa et al. 2013, Rebick 2005), in response to globalization in order to be more competitive by cutting costs and increasing the flexibility of the labor force (Genda 2005, Gottfried 2009, Kalleberg and Hewison 2013, Keizer 2008, Mouer and Kawanishi 2005, Osawa et al. 2013, Rebick 2005, Sakurai 2011, Taromaru 2009) and technological progress (Kalleberg and Hewison 2013, Sakurai 2011). Furthermore, a general shift toward the service industry (Mouer and Kawanishi 2005, Osawa et al. 2013, Taromaru 2009) and Japan's economic stagnation in the 1990s are provided as causes for the increased share of non-regular employees in Japan (Gottfried 2009, Mouer and Kawanishi 2005, Osawa et al. 2013, Rebick 2005). In addition, the systems of taxation and social security are seen as providing incentives for hiring more non-regular employees (Osawa et al. 2013).

Even though non-regular employment saw substantial growth from the 1990s, Gottfried (2009) and Taromaru (2009) make clear that precarious employment was nothing new in Japan at that time. Gottfried points at the use of women as an auxiliary labor force, predominantly employed part-time, when a cheap source of labor was needed during the height of fordist production in Japan. Taromaru, on the other hand, points at day laborers and the owners of small shops who were suffering from job insecurity before the 1990s and stresses that only a part of the male labor force enjoyed the benefits of lifetime employment even before Japan's Bubble Economy came to an end.

However, the share of non-regular employment increased drastically from the 1990s. The deregulation of the labor market was promoted in a move to revive the economy. As an example, the Temporary Dispatch Law that came into effect in 1986 was reformed in various

steps as of 1999. While the law strictly limited the areas in which temporary agency work was allowed, those restrictions were gradually lifted until, with a revision in 2003, temporary agency work was allowed in all industries. The number of *hakenshain*<sup>1</sup> rose, and their vulnerability became evident when many of those workers lost their jobs and eventually became homeless after the Lehman Shock in 2008, living in a tent village in Hibiya Park (Osawa et al. 2013). Increased flexibility was identified as key to compensate market fluctuations and trends in a globalized world. Japanese companies tried to achieve this flexibility by increasing the share of non-regular employees, who could be dismissed more easily than regular workers. However, instead of making the whole labor market more flexible, companies tried to achieve more flexibility without changing the guarantees of employment stability provided to regular workers (Genda 2005, Keizer 2008, Mouer and Kawanishi 2005, Osawa et al. 2013, Rebick 2005, Taromaru 2009). Due to the fact that Japanese companies were increasingly financing themselves, Rebick (2005) argues that they had to please their stockholders and therefore were eager to reduce labor costs. Osawa et al. (2013) support this argument by pointing out that 55% of Japanese companies hire non-regular workers to save wages. Another factor is the shift of the Japanese economy toward the service industry with a share of 68% (Taromaru 2009), which reduced work opportunities in both shrinking sectors of agriculture and manufacturing (Osawa et al. 2013, Taromaru 2009, Mouer and Kawanishi 2005). Taromaru (2009) makes clear that there is more demand for non-regular employees in the service industry for the purpose of reacting to business fluctuations and customer flows. Above that Osawa et al. (2013) make clear that with its taxation system and the system of social security, Japan is setting incentives to hire more non-regular employees because companies can save expenses and do not have to pay into the social security system when hiring them. On the other hand, they see a strong incentive for married women to work part-time. If they keep

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<sup>1</sup> Temporary Dispatched Workers

their income below 1.3 million Yen per year, they are defined as dependents of their husbands and do not have to pay a social security or health insurance premium, but are still eligible to receive basic benefits upon retirement. If they manage to keep their income below 1.03 million Yen per year, they can even avoid taxes.

### *The Structure of the Japanese Labor Market*

The Japanese labor market has often been described as a duality. In the past, the prevailing duality was the difference in working conditions between small and mid-sized firms on one side and big companies on the other. Many scholars see this old duality dissolving and a new duality forming with regular employees on one side and non-regular employees on the other. Regular employment offers the chance for skill-development and gives those employees access to a broad spectrum of corporate based benefits, while they enjoy a high level of employment security. Regular employees are hired by their employers directly, work full-time, and are expected to work overtime if necessary, whether the additional work is remunerated or not. Regular workers are on a rotation through the company and may have to relocate according to business needs with less regard to their personal lives. Non-regular employees, on the other hand, receive little training at best and are not protected from unemployment beyond their contract terms. They are hired for specific work assignments and do usually not have to work overtime. Non-regular employees are not transferred within the company. They can be hired through agencies or outsourcing firms and are the first who will be fired if an adjustment to the labor force is needed (Gottfried 2009, Keizer 2008, Osawa et al. 2013, Rebick 2005). Keizer (2008:421) argues that this duality is deliberately created in order to sustain regular employment in its present form to the disadvantage of those who are excluded: "The continued support for lifetime employment, and the essential division it creates, remains the defining

characteristic of the Japanese labour [sic] market and the stability and financial rewards this market offers are made possible by the limited possibilities for non-regular employees to enter."

Sato and Imai (2011) as well as Mouer and Kawanishi (2005) see the divide between regular and non-regular employment as an additional duality in the Japanese labor market and point toward the larger share of non-regular employees in small and mid-sized firms.

It also has to be mentioned that the divide between regular and non-regular employment is a highly gendered one and that women are more likely to work in non-regular employment (Gottfried 2009, Rebick 2005, Taromaru 2009). While Rebick (2005) argues that women disrupt their careers for family needs out of free will and find reentry difficult because of discriminatory practices regarding age and a concern about their skills, Osawa et al. (2013) make clear that this is merely the result of policies that are still oriented towards a male breadwinner model that systemically disadvantages women in the labor market and confines them to do the larger share of the reproductive work.

### ***What Forms does Non-Regular Employment Take in Japan?***

Even though non-regular employees in Japan are often discussed as a large group in the labor force, like in other countries, there is a wide variety of different types of employees with different characteristics.

Part-time employees constitute the largest share of non-regular employees in Japan (48.8%) (Sōmushō Tōkeikyoku 2016). Who counts as a part-time worker is designated by the employer rather than through formal characteristics such as contract length. In the past, this employment type was filled with students and housewives who were earning something extra on the side. Recently, however, the number of people who work almost the same hours as



regular employees is rising as well as the number of individuals who meet costs of their daily lives working part-time. The numbers increased because they either did not want to work as regular employees or did not find a regular position (*freeter*) (Mouer and Kawanishi 2005, Osawa et al. 2013, Taromaru 2009). The largest share of part-time workers is female with 87.8% (Sōmushō Tōkeikyoku 2016).

*Hakenshain* (temporary agency workers) have strongly increased due to the deregulation of the Temporary Dispatch Law as already noted (Mouer and Kawanishi 2005). These workers are dispatched by temporary work agencies to work for the company or municipality they are dispatched to. Their contracts have a fixed-term that can be as short as a day (Taromaru 2009). Gottfried (2009) notes that becoming a *hakenshain* has become an alternative for women in administrative and knowledge-intensive work. However, the share of men (40.5%) and women (60.3%) is more balanced in this type of employment. Temporary Agency Workers only constitute 6.1% of Japan's non-regular workforce (Sōmushō Tōkeikyoku 2016).

Contract workers constitute 13.7% of the non-regular workforce and are workers on fixed-term contracts (Sōmushō Tōkeikyoku 2006). Various terms exist for contract workers (*Keiyakushain*, *Shokutakushain*, *Hiseikishokuin*, *Rinjikoyō*<sup>2</sup>) but there is no definition by law. Most of them work on contracts between 1 to 3 years and are well paid for non-regular workers. They also have better working conditions, but their situation differs significantly depending on where they work and according to their function (Taromaru 2009). 54.8% of contract workers are male (Sōmushō Tōkeikyoku 2016).

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<sup>2</sup> Keiyakushian = contract worker

Shokutakushain = contract worker continuing to work for his former employer after retirement

Kiseikishokuin = contract worker

Rinjikoyō = contract worker in construction often day laborers

### *Who is Most Affected?*

In Japan, four groups of people are most affected by precarious employment: Women, young people, old people after their retirement age and people who only have a low level of education. When an individual belongs to more than one of these groups the likelihood of being in non-regular employment and therefore working under precarious conditions is increased.

Since institutions are still working under the assumption of a male breadwinner model, reducing women largely to their domestic responsibilities and treating them as if there were only providing additional household income, young single women and single mothers suffer the most from this kind of discrimination on the labor market (Osawa et al. 2013, Taromaru 2009). Furthermore, domestic responsibilities and a career in a regular job are difficult to combine, which is why many women do not benefit from legislation giving them equal rights on the labor market but stay confined to non-regular employment with all its uncertainties (Keizer 2008). 67.4% of all non-regular employees in Japan are women (Sōmushō Tōkeikyoku 2016). Also, young people are identified as the victims of the restructuring of the Japanese labor market (Genda 2005, Inui 2005, Mouer and Kawanishi 2005, Osawa et al. 2013, Rebick 2005, Sato and Imai 2011). According to Genda (2005), it can be assumed that younger employees face a harsh reality when they start to work, with a large percentage of them being confined to non-regular employment and jobs without a perspective for the sake of sustaining regular employment with its benefits and wages for mid-aged and older workers. Various studies also attest that people with lower skills are more likely to work in non-regular employment in Japan. This includes people who only graduated high school or junior high school and were unable to enter a university (Mouer and Kawanishi 2005, Osawa et al. 2013, Rebick 2005, Sakurai 2011, Sato and Imai 2011).

### ***Debates Surrounding Non-Regular Employment in Japan: Inequality, Voluntariness, and Upward Mobility***

Non-regular employment in Japan is often discussed on the grounds of the inequality it produces within the society. One of those inequalities is the income inequality between regular and non-regular employees and therefore between men who represent the largest share of regular employees and women who supply most of the labor in non-regular employment (Mouer and Kawanishi 2005, Osawa et al. 2013, Rebick 2005, Sakurai 2011, Taromaru 2009). Taromaru (2009) explains that because regular employees are still seen as breadwinners supporting a family, their wages are comparably high. Non-regular employees, on the other hand, are still recognized as dependents. It is therefore assumed that they have an additional source of support. In the case of young workers, it is expected that their family supports them, women are supposed to be supported by their husbands and older workers after retirement should have their pension that adds to their overall income. Sakurai (2011) observes an increase in income inequality between regular and non-regular employees between 1990 and 2007, arguing that non-regular employees on average only make 63.9% of what regular employees earn. One reason for the increasing gap is the fact that regular employees get raises over time, while non-regular employees earn almost the same no matter how many years of experience they have (Osawa et al. 2013). Also, the inequality of employment security is discussed along with the duality of non-regular and regular employment in Japan. Regular employees on the internal labor market enjoy a high level of employment security. Non-regular employees, on the other hand, are easily dismissible and therefore stronger influenced by market forces and globalization (Sakurai 2011, Taromaru 2009). Furthermore, regular employees have a chance of being promoted and enjoy good working conditions as Taramaru (2009) argues. It has to be noted, however, that this high level of employment security comes at a price and that long working hours and overtime could probably render certain regular jobs in Japan precarious as well. Japan's social security system further amplifies the inequalities created through the

duality of regular and non-regular employment (Osawa et al. 2013, Taromaru 2009). While the social security system covers most regular employees in case of unemployment, by health insurance and through pension plans, non-regular employees are only inadequately covered (Taromaru 2009). Unemployment insurance covers only 60% of the non-regular employees and even if covered many are ineligible for unemployment benefits since the Employment Insurance was not designed having non-regular employees in mind (Osawa et al. 2013). Workers are eligible to join the insurance program when the employment term is expected to be at least 31 days, and they have to work more than 20 hours per week. These restrictions leave many workers uncovered especially day laborers or seasonal workers. Even if enrolled, unemployment benefits can only be received in case the worker was employed for more than 12 months, and the employee must have continuously worked at least 11 days per month during the two-year period before being laid off. This leaves only welfare benefits for those not covered or eligible, but in order to receive those benefits, a worker has to be physically unable to work. When it comes to health insurance only 48.6% of the non-regular employees are covered, for public pension the coverage is at 46.6% (Ibid.).

Despite all the negative consequences of working as a non-regular employee it is discussed controversially whether especially young people and women chose this kind of employment voluntarily. It is the consensus that most non-regular workers are voluntarily engaging in this type of employment with a share of 50 to 70% earning extra income for their household working part-time (Tsuru et al. 2011). Other non-regular employees, especially contract and temporary agency workers, show a higher share of people working in their position involuntarily (45% in 2006) (Taromaru 2009). Even though most non-regular employees are in it by choice, scholars have also agreed that the share of involuntarily non-regular employees has been increasing since the 1990s (Osawa et al. 2013, Taromaru 2009, Tsuru et al. 2011). In their study, Tsuru et al. (2011) compare stress levels, the standard of living

and social security among unemployed, voluntarily and involuntarily employed non-regular workers, and regular employees. They come to the conclusion that only people involuntarily employed in non-regular employment suffer from higher levels of stress, have a lower standard of living since they usually have to sustain their livelihood without help and less social security. Their levels were comparable to those of the unemployed. Taromaru (2009) makes similar observations regarding involuntary non-regular workers. He finds them to be easier depressed and more unsatisfied with their daily lives. They are furthermore said to lack self-confidence owed to the fact that they think their situation is their own fault, which hurts their self-confidence. Voluntary non-regular workers did not show a significant difference in stress levels, the standard of living and social security compared to regular employees (Tsuru et al. 2011). Tsuru and his colleagues, therefore, describe the freedom of choice as an important distinction among non-regular workers. From their point of view, it has to be acknowledged when creating policy and involuntary non-regular employees should be prioritized. Due to the larger share of women in part-time employment various scholars infer that most women are in non-regular employment out of free will (Rebick 2005, Taromaru 2009). Rebick (2005) goes so far to argue women would leave the labor force for child birth by choice, while Gottfried (2009) and other scholars dispute this view by pointing toward the limited choices left by the system, which relies heavily on women doing reproductive work without much support. A similar dispute can be observed for the case of younger workers, who are described as enabled to withdraw their labor power by opting for non-regular employment (Mouer and Kawanishi 2005) and may not be interested in rigid forms of employment (Rebick 2005). Genda (2005), on the other hand, contests this view and explains young people are discouraged because of the lack of opportunities they have on the labor market with many of them stuck in dead-end jobs. Osawa et al. (2013) show that between 1997 and 2007, 87% of non-regular jobs were created by the demand side of labor, companies are willing to restructure to cut costs and make their

workforce more flexible. It becomes clear that the perception of whether the employment is chosen out of free will or involuntarily plays a significant role in the perception of the urgency of the related problems and only those who did not have a choice but to work in non-regular employment are seen as deserving assistance. Genda (2005) blames the prevalence of the idea that *freeter* are voluntarily working part-time because of their values as the very reason that problems related to their employment have been ignored for an extended period.

The feature of the Japanese labor market promoting the inequality between regular and non-regular employees to a social problem is the lack of mobility from non-regular to regular employment. It is safe to say that people who start their career working part-time or on a contract tend to become locked into place, unable to leave their precarious employment relationships (Inui 2005, Keizer 2008, Osawa et al. 2013, Sato and Imai 2011, Taromaru 2009, Tsuru et al. 2011). Even though the figures vary slightly by source, scholars concur that there is a lack of mobility between regular and non-regular employment. Using data from 2007 Taromaru (2009) explains that contract employees have the best chances to switch into regular employment with 11.9% for men and 6.1% for women. For 2008 to 2009 Tsuru et al. (2011) show a slight increase for contract workers to 14%, while they identify much lower rates for *hakenshain* and day laborers (5-6%) and only 2-5% for part-time and *arubaito*<sup>3</sup>. Working for a Temporary Work Agency can therefore not be seen as a stepping stone toward a better career like in some European countries. Osawa et al. (2013) state that the overall rate of transition is 21.9% with better chances for men (20%) than women (7%). They furthermore identify education and the length of their non-regular careers as important factors. The transition rate for high-school graduates is comparably low with 10.4%. 10.3% of people only employed non-regularly for a year can switch to regular work, between one and three years this rate slightly rises to 12.3% and drastically sinks for individuals who worked in non-regular employment for

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<sup>3</sup> From the German word "Albeit" (work) is referring to side jobs

more than a decade (6%). Rebick (2005) rightfully adds age discriminatory practices as partially responsible for the hindered mobility, with many firms only hiring people below a certain age, usually between 30 and 35. Companies would only hire older workers for specific skills that are needed immediately. They restrict their hiring in this manner because of their expectations of tenure and the policy to treat people equally according to age. This makes older hires costlier. Furthermore, the firm-specific training older recruits received, or the lack of such, make it difficult for companies to fit them into their training system and integrate them into their corporate culture. It, therefore, has to be noted that not only the former employment status is crucial when it comes to labor market mobility in Japan but age and, as the differences in mobility show, gender and education are essential factors as well. The before mentioned aspect of voluntariness has also found its way into this debate. Rebick (2005) concludes that the employment mobility is increasing and that the only reason for low rates is the unwillingness of many to switch into a regular employment relationship.

### ***What are the Consequences of More Precarious Employment in Japan?***

The growth in non-regular employment and the inequalities accompanying it are deemed to have strong implications for the Japanese society as a whole. Tsuru et al. (2011) and Osawa et al. (2013) argue that those inequalities threaten the cohesion of the Japanese society. Taromaru (2009) in his analysis found a connection between non-regular employment with its low income and decreased satisfaction with the own life. This trend showed for all non-regular employees with the exemption of contract workers who were on par with regular workers' satisfaction levels. The growth of precarious employment has already lead to an increased poverty rate. Japan ranked 4<sup>th</sup> among OECD countries with a poverty rate of 16.1% for 2012 behind Mexico, Israel, and Turkey (OECD 2017). Osawa et al. (2013) confirmed a lower

marriage rate among non-regular workers, which is likely to lower Japan's birth rate even further and worsen the demographic situation with all its consequences. A yearly income of 3 million Yen, which is well above the poverty line, is identified as the dividing line. Only 8 to 10% of the men and women below that line in their 20s and 30s were married. Above this income, the rates range from 25 to 40% for the same age group. By their early 30s, only 30% of non-regular workers have gotten married compared to 56% of the regular employees (Ibid.). Mouer and Kawanishi (2005) predict that those who started their careers in non-regular employment, such as *freeter*, will likely experience financial problems when they get old due to the lack of savings and their inability to pay the installments for their pension and other insurances. They conclude that the changes in the Japanese labor market "will promote employment security for a small number of the most proficient employees while assigning a growing proportion of the less proficient workers to the peripheral labor force where decisions to employ and to maintain employment are more at the whim of the employer" (Mouer and Kawanishi 2005:258).

Rebick (2005) sees the trend toward more non-regular employment continue in Japan. However, he is confident that these developments on a macro level are beneficial for the Japanese economy, enabling it to react to future challenges like demographic change and to provide employment for the retiring baby boomers. He sees especially young people affected by these structural changes. Since it is difficult for companies to modify the employment structure due to the existing employment protections, they seem to have started the restructuring process from the bottom up with their new hires. Sato and Imai (2011:31) conclude: "The rising number of non-regular employees immediately means a rising number of workers who are excluded from opportunities for upward mobility. Exclusion of youth, women and less educated is especially clear from various empirical analyses, and is becoming a seedbed of immersing issues of inequality, insecurity and social stratification."



## **Narrowing Down the Sample - The Transition from School to Work and Japanese PhD Graduates**

As already discussed in the previous section young people are among the groups who tend to be most affected by precarious employment in Japan and in case they are unsuccessful in securing a regular position right after graduation their chances of switching from non-regular employment to a regular position later on are limited. This lack of mobility, of course, creates pressures and makes the job-hunting process, and therefore the transition from school to work, an important turning point in the life of young Japanese. In the following, I will describe this transition process briefly, addressing how many graduates manage to find a regular job after finishing high school and university on the undergraduate and graduate level. I will subsequently compare these rates to the chances of highly educated Japanese PhD graduates. They are the persons most likely to work in precarious academic employment in Japan. Finally, I will state the case of PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences, whom I identified as most vulnerable and therefore chose as my sample.

### ***Graduates and Regular Employment***

Most Japanese companies prefer hiring new graduates right out of school or university for the fact that they are still considered as "white cloth." They are seen as highly trainable and therefore can be mended to the companies needs and liking. New graduates are still open for corporate values and therefore are supposed to provide a better fit than people with existing work experience (Nagano 2014). New graduates can furthermore be hired cheaper and then turned into the specialists needed. If a graduate is unsuccessful in finding a regular position it is not impossible to gain more stable employment in the early years after graduation, but the

chances decrease rapidly, and prior employment in a non-regular job is seen with suspicion (Ibid.). New graduates are hired each year in April after they graduated in March. Rebick (2005) describes the job-hunting process as well organized, starting one year prior to employment. Especially for high school graduates he stresses the importance of attending a good school and argues that the school serves as a matchmaker between applicants and companies. This data, however, is outdated, and Brinton (2011) showed that schools no longer fulfill this function and that the students are almost on their own when looking for a job in the present day. Rebick (2005) describes similar processes of matchmaking for university graduates especially in the science and engineering fields, in which professors or the faculty influence the chances of finding a good position. The prestige of the university and faculty still plays a significant role in the hiring process, with companies setting quotas for the intake of graduates of specific universities and faculties, disadvantaging graduates of less prestigious institutions.

It is hard to find accurate numbers for those who do not manage to find a regular place of employment. The statistics of the *Gakkō Kihōn Chōsa*, which also track the career path of recent graduates, only provide an idea of the extent of this transition problem due to badly defined categories, which I will address in more detail later in this chapter. Also, it is still an option to go on to another school or graduate school to avoid disadvantages on the labor market or to take an extra year at university, allowing for another chance to find a regular job. I will nonetheless provide the share of graduates who are likely to start their careers in precarious employment. In the case of high school graduates, the majority with around 70% enrolled in a different school or university after graduation in 2016. Of those who went on to find work, 23% failed to obtain a regular position. For university graduates the chances of finding regular employment improve. For the same year, 17.3% of the graduates on the undergraduate level seeking employment could not find a regular position or were unaccounted for. For graduate

students on the masters level the chances of entering regular employment only slightly decreased with 18% of the graduates seeking work unable to secure a regular position. For PhD graduates, however, the rate for those unable to find regular employment or unaccounted for was 47.6% (MEXT 2016).

### *The Plight of Japanese PhDs*

Even though highly skilled PhD graduates seem to have a more difficult standing than high school graduates seeking work, the issue is only rarely discussed in academia.

One of the few voices in the discourse surrounding the precarity of Japanese PhD holders is Mizuki. In his works, he attempts to raise awareness of this situation and tries to explain why the numbers of PhD graduates has grown and an oversupply was created to their disadvantage. A good example is the book *Kōgakureki Wākingu Pua - 「Furiitā Seisankōjō」 toshite no Daigakuin*.<sup>4</sup> (Mizuki 2007). He identifies government policies as responsible for the increase in graduate students and PhDs in Japan. The official goal of those policies was to increase Japan's research capacity for global competition. Mizuki, however, sees the shift to more graduate education as a reaction to shrinking student numbers. By luring more people into graduate school, the MEXT is compensating for the losses in paying students on the undergraduate level and is keeping overall student numbers stable. This, he argues, means that bureaucrats at the MEXT preserve their power. However, a growing number of graduate students find it increasingly difficult to find a place of employment. As a direct result of this overcapacity, the working conditions in the academic labor market are influenced negatively

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<sup>4</sup> Academic Working Poor - Graduate Schools as *Furiita*-Factories: *furiita* or *freeter* is a term used to describe people who do not engage in full-time employment after graduation and earn their living in low skilled jobs. The term is negatively connoted and its use usually suggests that someone is in this situation out of free will. Being labeled as *freeter* comes with the accusation of being lazy and putting the own lifestyle before fulfilling social expectations (see the debate on *Parasite Singles* by Yamada (1999)). It, however, has been shown that many are in this situation because they did not have another choice (Genda 2005:64-66)

by making it possible for employers to keep pay and employment security low. Academics are increasingly employed as non-regular employees and thus cheaper than regular teaching staff. The author sees the people controlling higher education as the only beneficiaries of this situation. For their own interest, they are clinging to the status quo, preserving the system that is no longer suitable for the actual situation at hand. He argues that if the graduates that are produced are not utilized and end up working part-time or being unemployed, the tax money supporting those strategies is wasted.

Unlike Mizuki, Nishida (2013) who is working in the Career Support Office for PhD students at Ritsumeikan University, does not suspect a spirit of mischief by officials. He, however, notes that this oversupply was indeed the result of government policies like the *daigakuin jūtenka keikaku*<sup>5</sup> in 1990 and the plan to raise the number of postdocs to 10,000 in 1996. Those plans were aimed at increasing the global competitiveness of the academic sector in Japan. Nishida explains that since 1997 there are more PhD graduates than regular teaching positions and that this oversupply has been growing year by year. He argues that this problem has not been solved so far because it is a problem of low priority for universities. Institutions of higher education in Japan suffer more severe problems when it comes to funding and are fighting with plummeting student numbers due to the demographic changes of the country. Problems affecting PhD students and even graduate students as a group have a lower priority since they only comprise a small share of the overall student numbers. Furthermore, if discussed, the universities are only able to cover the supply side of the problem. As Nishida notes it is difficult for universities to reduce the supply and he demands that policies should consider both the supply and the demand side. Nishida identifies prejudices regarding PhD graduates as the main barrier to their utilization in Japanese companies. They are thought to be

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<sup>5</sup> Plan for the prioritization of graduate education: Graduate schools were founded and professors became affiliated to those graduate school, furthermore master and PhD programs were expanded.

people who overthink everything and are difficult to communicate with, but on the other hand, PhD graduates hold prejudices regarding working in the private economy as well, thinking that their careers as researchers are over when they leave the university. Nishida argues that this problem has to be solved on the supply side. When it comes to policies regarding PhDs in Japan, he criticizes that those who decide on changes and have to implement them are uninvolved in the situation themselves. They do not understand what it means to be an academic and what challenges such a career brings. If faculty members are involved in the policy-making process, they tend to be older faculty members who usually do not have a good understanding of how it is to be a PhD student or PhD graduate in contemporary Japan. Nishida fears that the plans of the MEXT to produce more capable PhDs and to foster innovation to make Japan more competitive globally are going to fail if the problem of the oversupply of PhDs, or therefore the lack of career options for them, is not addressed. The general public has already come to see graduate students and the PhD in particular as leading to uncertain careers. He predicts that this will prevent skilled individuals from entering a PhD course and result in the lack of qualified researchers needed for the ambitious plans of the government to promote science. For this reason, the problem has to be solved as soon as possible he argues.

### ***What is Known About PhD Careers?***

In both sources the PhD graduates' problem in finding a regular position in academia or the private economy have been addressed, strongly suggesting that Japanese PhD graduates are either working in precarious employment right after graduation or unemployed. They, however, do not help to understand under what circumstances and where they are working. There are two main sources on PhD careers that are frequently quoted by the media as well as in academic sources. The first source is the formerly mentioned *Gakkō Kihon Chōsa*, a survey

by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) tracking the number of schools and universities, student and graduate numbers, as well as data on teaching staff. The second dataset often utilized to investigate the career paths of PhD graduates is the *Waga Kuni no Hakasekatei Shūryōsha no Shinro Dōkō Chōsa*<sup>6</sup> by the National Institute of Science and Technology Policy (NISTEP 2009). In the following paragraphs, I will introduce both studies, point out their weaknesses and summarize the information they offer on PhD graduates in Japan.

The *Gakkō Kihon Chōsa* has been carried out annually since 1948. Data is collected directly by the education institutions and then submitted to the MEXT. As part of the survey, information regarding the situation after graduation (*Sotsugyōgo no Jōkyō Chōsa*) of Japan's students is gathered from middle school level up to graduate school. The data collection by schools and universities is possible because as already noted by Rebick (2005) the job-hunting process is well organized, allowing the graduates to move either to employment or another school or university right after graduation. Therefore, those students who managed to find a place of work or continue their studies know where they will be working or studying before they graduate. Owing to the timing of the data collection, it, however, offers less reliable results for those who are still undecided or have not been able to find a place of employment.

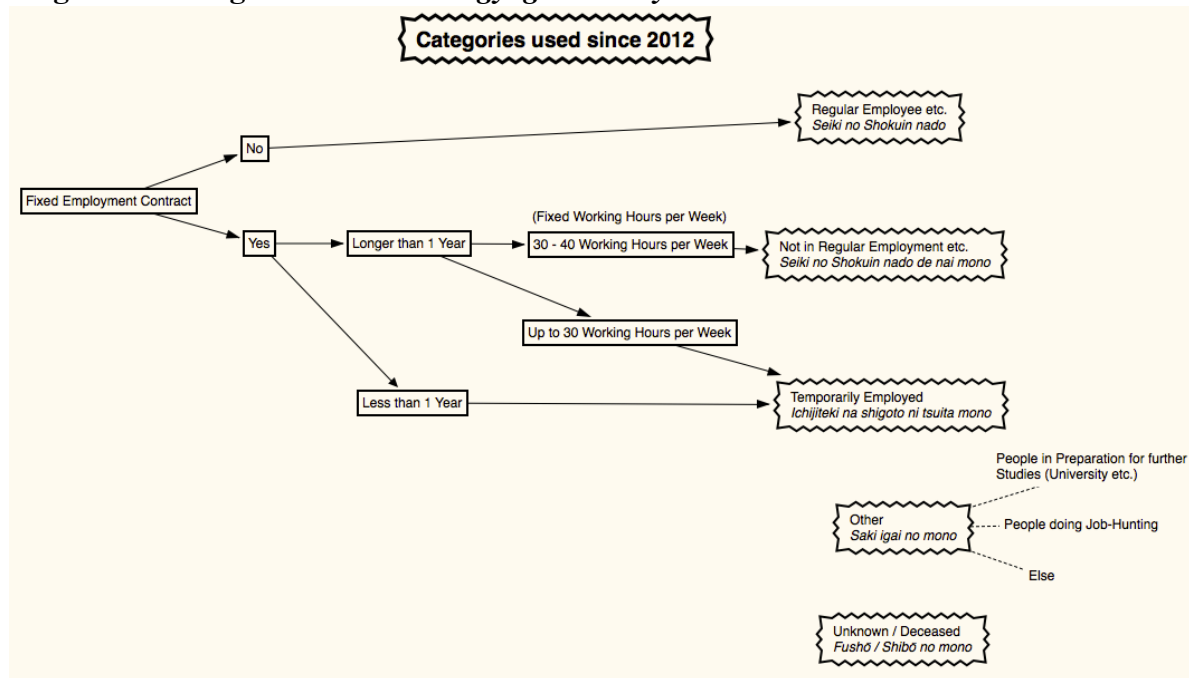
In order to track the 'Situation after graduation,' the students are sorted into various categories that are supposed to describe their employment status and therefore give an idea about their situation after they finish their studies (see Figure 1). The data from the 2016 survey shows that 8,151 of the 15,792 PhD graduates (51.6% *Seiki no Shokuin nado*) were able to find regular employment after graduation. 2,483 were listed as not in regular employment (15.7% *Seiki no Shokuin nado de nai mono*). 1,025 were listed as temporarily employed (6.5% *Ichijiteki na shigoto ni tsuita mono*), 2,926 as 'Other' (18.5% *Saki igai no mono*) and the path

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<sup>6</sup> Career Trends Survey of Recent Doctoral Graduates

of 965 graduates (6.1% *Fushō / Shibō no mono*) was either unknown, or they were deceased (MEXT 2016c).

**Figure 1 - Categories of the *Sotsugyōgo no Jōkyō Chōsa* from the *Gakkō Kihon Chōsa***



Created from: MEXT. 2016d. "Gakkou Kihon Chousa No Teibiki - Daigaku Tankidaigaku Koutousenmongakkou (Manual for the Basic School Survey - Universities Short-Term University Higher Secondary Vocational Schools)." P.44

These results suggest that slightly more than half of the graduates are in stable employment. The other half is fragmented in various categories, disguising the extent of problematic career paths for PhD holders. Researchers from the Nihonsōgōkenkyūsho (2011) came to a similar conclusion. They pointed out that the data collected does not help to understand the actual career paths of PhD graduates. However, they deemed this knowledge essential for improving their situation. The researchers of the Nihonsōgōkenkyūsho argue that without exact knowledge of the graduates' plight, plans to get them into employment and utilize their skills will most likely fail. In their work, they focused on the data collection process for the *Gakkō Kihon Chōsa*, which is carried out by universities, to identify the problems leading to the flawed results with more than a quarter of the PhD graduates categorized as 'Other' and 'Unknown.' The authors found that interest in the survey differed from university to university and those institutions that did not utilize the data for their own purposes were not motivated to

carry out the study properly. Furthermore, it was found that many people in charge of carrying out the survey at their institution were not aware of its goals, which made it difficult for them to collect the data. Some institutions already had improved their data collection processes, but many universities still needed improvement. As a result, the researchers of the Nihonsōgōkenkyūsho suggested that more guidance from the government on how to conduct the survey is necessary and stressed the necessity to explain the questionnaires. From their point of view, the categories used in the current form of the survey cause confusion and lead to wrong answers. Furthermore, with 24.6% categorized as 'Other' or 'Unknown,' there was no indication for what PhD graduates of those categories are doing after they left university. They modified the categories slightly and recalculated the results, but a large gap in the data remained.

However, the way the study is carried out and the large share of people categorized as 'Other' or 'Unknown' are not the only problems that make it difficult to assess how the PhD graduates work and live after they have graduated. The question is how good are the other categories in describing the PhD graduates' career paths. If we cross-reference the definitions for categories used in the *Gakkō Kihon Chōsa* with statistics on working conditions in the Japanese labor market what do we find?

The *Seiki no Shokuin nado* are defined as not having a fixed-term contract, which is a legitimate way of categorizing regular employees. However, people who start working in a family business because they could not find a post in their field would be counted here as well.

The category of those who are 'not regular workers' (*Seiki no Shokuin nado de nai mono*) is defined as working on contracts longer than a year. In addition, the working hours per week have to be between 30 and 40 hours. When comparing these specifications with numbers provided by the *Shūgyō Kihon Chōsa* (2013), which tracks the working hours and contract terms of non-regular workers in Japan, it is evident that most non-regular workers will not be



counted in this category. Part-Time employees are not counted because most of them are on shorter labor contracts and about half of them work less than 30 hours per week. Contract workers are hired for short periods, and although they would meet the requirements for working hours, the contract length of 63.1% of them is shorter than the specified contract duration of over a year. They, therefore, would not be counted in this category. Temporary dispatched workers also work between 30 and 40 hours per week, but most commonly work on short-term contracts with a three-month duration and will therefore not be included in this category either. Although the name of the category suggests that those not in regular employment culminate here, the narrow definition keeps the category small.

The name *Ichijiteki na shigoto ni tsuita mono* suggests that this employment solution is of a temporary nature and that the PhDs listed here will not stay in this employment relationship for long. However, the contract length and working hours do not necessarily reflect how long someone might work under these circumstances and is misleading. This category contains non-regular employees working under the most precarious conditions.

This comparison shows that dividing the respondents in this way makes it impossible to determine how they are employed. Therefore, a connection to other studies exploring the career paths and situation of part-time workers or other non-regular employees and therefore the degree of the precariousness of their situation, cannot be established. Their working hours and contract length alone does not allow for any conclusions regarding what their living conditions may be or what career path they might have chosen.

Since these categories have obviously not been aligned with any known labor statistic or to the specifications of common employment forms in academia, they are impractical for making assumptions on what being in one of those categories means for the PhD graduates' career path or under what circumstances the graduates are leading their lives. The only effect

is a fragmented view of non-regular employed academics with a large share of participants categorized as 'Other' and 'Unknown' who are presumably in an unfavorable position.

The *Waga Kuni no Hakasekatei Shūryōsha no Shinro Dōkō Chōsa* by NISTEP (2009) was a follow-up study for the third Science and Technology Framework<sup>7</sup> by the MEXT. Its aim was to provide a more detailed view of the career paths of PhD graduates to enable measures to improve the quality of their education and to shed light on the career options of PhD holders in order to ensure a stable supply of PhD graduates. Even though more precise than the *Gakkō Kihon Chōsa*, a significant share of its sample is sorted into categories that either do not allow for understanding their employment status or reassure that a large share of Japan's PhD graduates is working in non-regular employment. Of the 75,197 PhD graduates who finished their doctoral program between the years 2002 and 2006, the trajectory of 23% was 'Unknown,' while the employment status after graduation was listed as 'Other' for an additional 10%. 8% were non-regular employees working at universities, and another 15% were listed as postdocs. In sum, 56% of the respondents were either unaccounted for or in a non-regular employment relationship right after graduation.

Taking the mentioned statistics into consideration, it is undeniable that about half of the PhD graduates each year will start their career in non-regular employment. The surveys mentioned successfully categorize the graduates, but do not explain how they are employed or what being part of a certain category means for those graduates' career paths. With the existing data, it is impossible to implement effective policies for the support of PhD graduates who start their careers in precarious employment and therefore does not make this career choice more attractive, as seems to be the goal of the government. To create effective policies, it is necessary to find out how and where they are working after their graduation and what influence this has on their career prospects and their lives as a whole.

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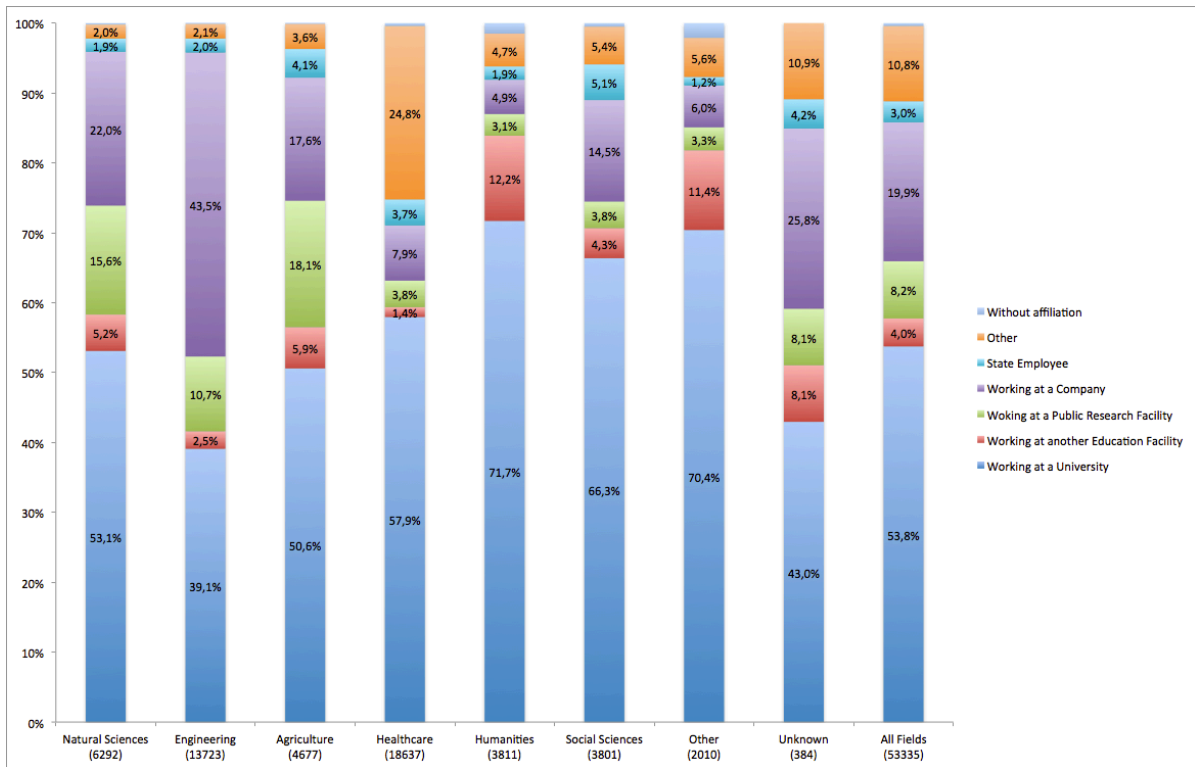
<sup>7</sup> *Kagakugijyū Kihonkeikaku*: Are frameworks that set goals for academia for a five-year period.

## **A PhD in the Humanities or Social Sciences - An Admission Card for Precarious Employment?**

Even though the data from the NISTEP study was not helpful in comprehending the employment situation of Japanese PhD graduates to a satisfying degree, the detailed information on the different trajectories of various fields of study helped to identify the most vulnerable group among PhD holders. Graduates of the humanities and social sciences appeared to be most suitable for the exploration of precarious employment in academia. They stood out because of their high commitment to an academic career, the large share of them working in non-regular employment after graduation and the prospects of these fields that are likely to deteriorate their employment opportunities in the following years further.

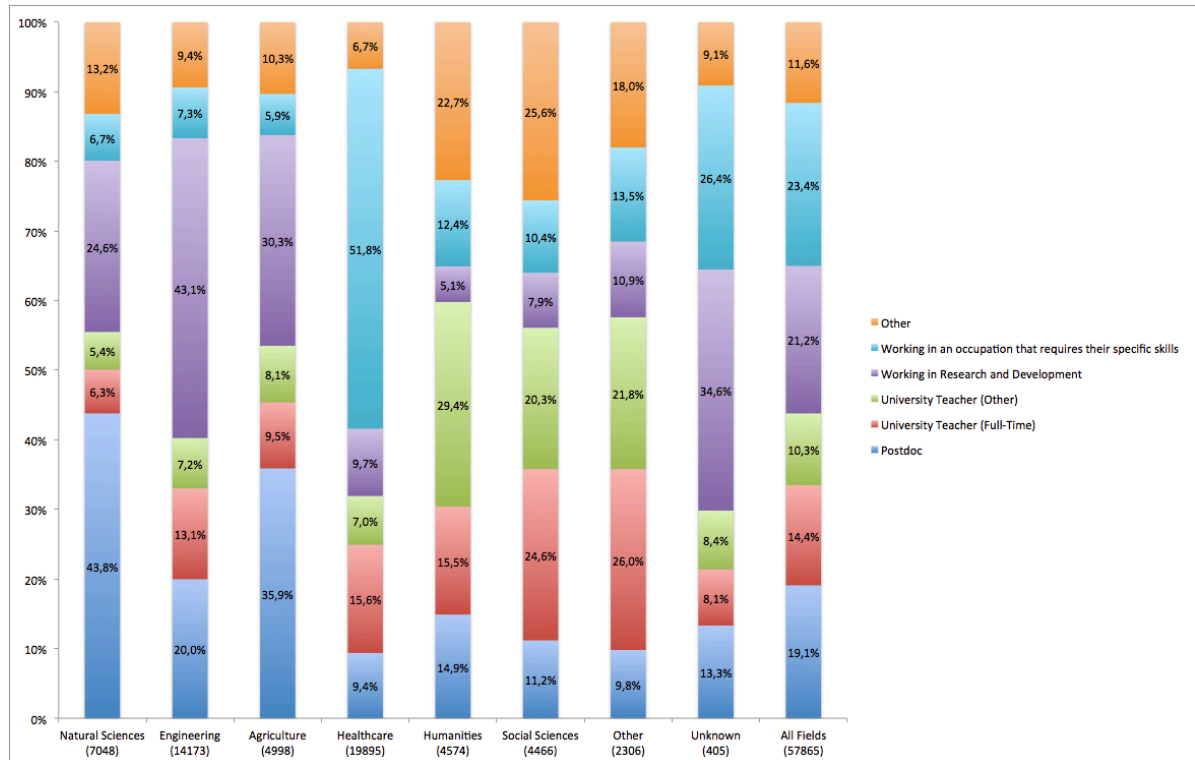
Utilizing the dataset of the *Waga Kuni no Hakasekatei Shūryōsha no Shinro Dōkō Chōsa*, Park, Horoiwa and Chayama (2012) focused particularly on the career paths of doctoral graduates from the humanities and social sciences. They showed that 71.7% of the graduates from the humanities and 66.3% of the graduates from social sciences work at universities. In the natural sciences, 53.1% continue their path at universities, while 22% find employment in the private economy. The share of university employees is smallest for PhD holders in engineering at 39.1%. Many of these graduates are able to find an employer outside of academia (43.5%) (see Figure 2). While a significant share of the graduates from engineering, the natural and agricultural sciences show a high proportion of postdocs and people working at companies, graduates from the humanities and social sciences are largely working as university teachers (see Figure 3). They are either hired as full-time teaching staff (red) or part-time teaching staff (green).

**Figure 2 - Place of Employment of PhD Graduates by Field of Study**  
 \*\*'Unknown' excluded



Created from: Park, Yoosung, Akira Horoiwa, and Hidekazu Chayama. 2012. Overview Graph 8 *Kekyūbunya betsu no hakasekatei shūryōsha nado no shushokusaki* (Place of Employment of PhD Graduates by Subject)

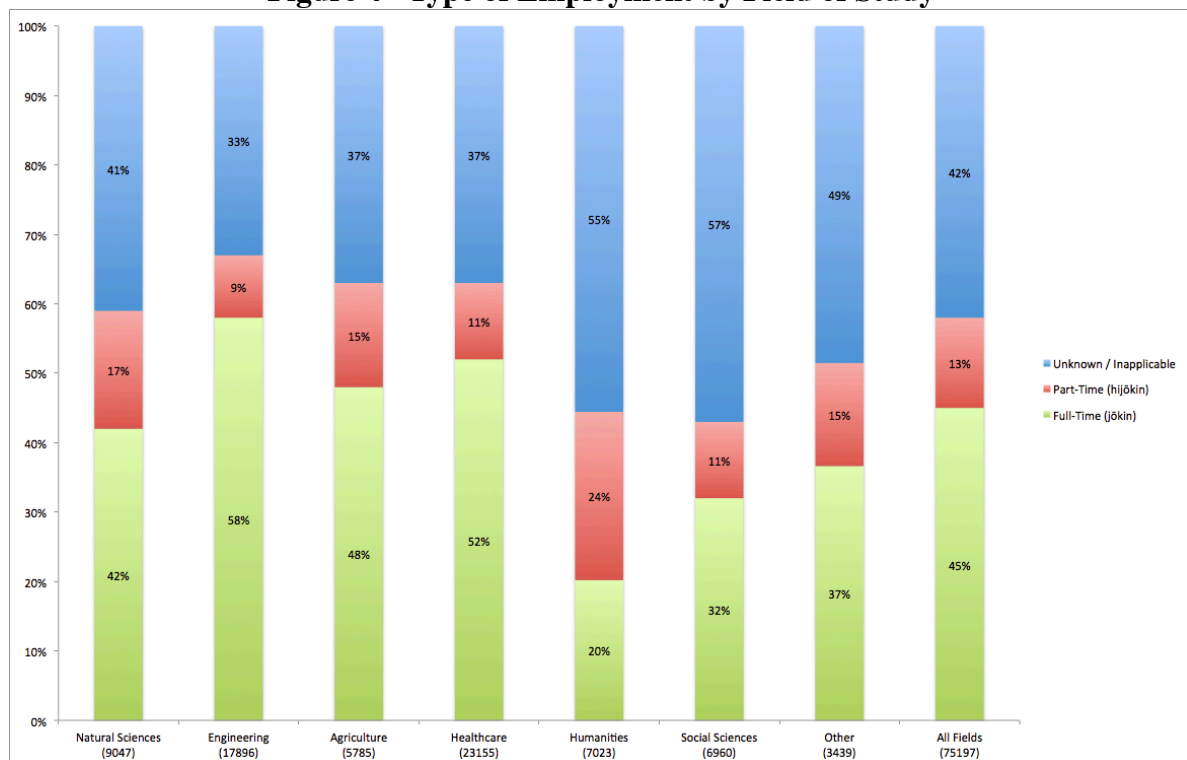
**Figure 3 - Employment Status of PhD Graduates by Field of Study**  
 \*\*'Unknown' excluded



Created from: Park, Yoosung, Akira Horoiwa, and Hidekazu Chayama. 2012. Overview Graph 7 *Kekyūbunya betsu no hakasekatei shūryōsha nado no shokugyō* (Employment Status of PhD Graduates by Subject)

Data from the original study from 2009 (NISTEP 2009) also shows clear differences between fields of study. Investigating their employment status based on whether they were hired full-time (*jōkin*) or part-time (*hijōkin*) (see Figure 4), it becomes clear that graduates from the natural sciences (42%), engineering (58%) and agriculture (48%) yield a higher chance of working full-time directly after graduation than PhD graduates from the humanities (20%) or social sciences (32%). A great number of people did not respond, which suggests that they might be in a more precarious situation and not be willing to admit it. The share of 'Unknown' is particularly large for the humanities and the social sciences. This share, however, is almost

**Figure 4 - Type of Employment by Field of Study**



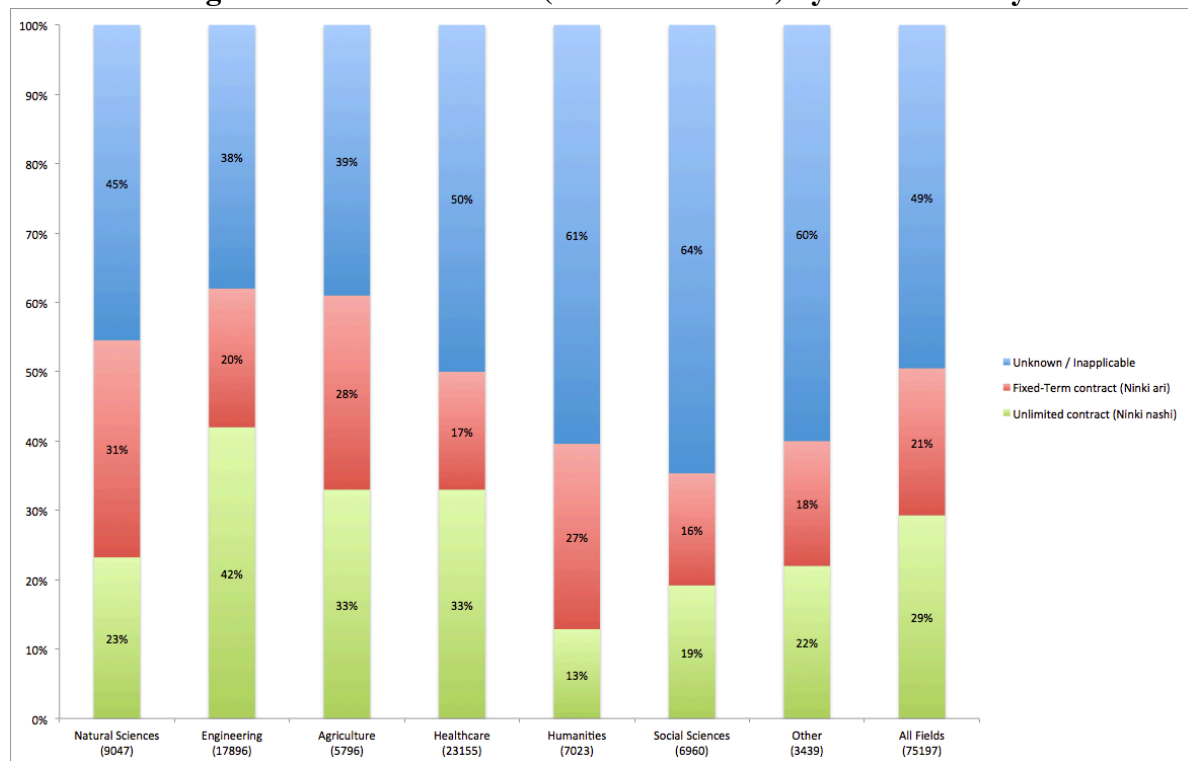
Created from: NISTEP. 2009. Graph 37 *Kenkyūbunya betsu ni miru shūryō chokugo no kinmukeitai* (Type of Employment Directly After Graduation by Field of Study)

congruent with the proportion of people who were unable to gain their degree when finishing their doctor's course<sup>8</sup> in these subjects (humanities 67%, social sciences 55%). Additional data

<sup>8</sup> The PhD in Japan is organized in a course. Unlike doctoral courses in Europe that are finished by gaining the degree after writing a dissertation, the Japanese PhD programs are a combination of course work and a thesis. It is possible to graduate the program after the necessary number of credits has been obtained. After this they have two years to gain their degree but are not required to stay enrolled. The term *hakasekateishūrōsha* therefore refers to both, people who graduated a PhD course with or without gaining a degree.

on the PhD graduates without degree shows that it is possible for them to find employment as well. However a larger share of them remained 'Unknown.' The graph exploring the status of

**Figure 5 - Contract Terms (fixed / non-fixed) by Field of Study**



Created from: NISTEP. 2009. Graph 38 *Kenkyūbunya betsu ni miru shūryō chokugo no ninki no yūmu* (Contract Terms (fixed / non-fixed) directly After Graduation by Field of Study)

either fixed-term (red) or un-fixed (green) labor contracts (Figure 5) again shows that graduates from the humanities and social sciences have a more insecure employment situation compared to those of the natural science fields. The big share of unresponsive participants may indicate an even worse situation than displayed in these statistics. As previously mentioned, it is likely that these are the PhD graduates without a degree.

In addition to the fixation on work in academia and the tendency toward starting their careers in non-regular employment, new policies further challenge the standing of graduates of the humanities and social sciences. In the summer of 2015, the MEXT gave out a statement calling for the reorganization or the abolishment of the humanities and social sciences at national universities (MEXT 2015). Universities were swift to comply, probably fearing financial consequences, and indeed many faculties and graduate schools of those fields were

reorganized, the rate for future students reduced or completely abolished (Mainichi Shinbun 20.10.2015, News Post Seven 11.09.2015). The argument by the MEXT was that in the face of the declining population, the needs for human resources and the preservation of research and education standards, resources should be shifted towards fields yielding a high value for society. They were arguing that the humanities and social sciences are not beneficial for innovation and technological progress (MEXT 2015). The Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) saw this statement as further weakening the sector of higher education as a whole (Nihon Keizai Shinbun 29.07.2015). Even the Japan Business Federation (*nippon keidanren*) voiced concern about this move, arguing they are seeking workers with basic competencies such as creative thinking and communication skills. According to their statement, specific knowledge preparing graduates for certain occupations is not what they seek in new graduates (Honda 2016). Of course, there were voices from academia defending the humanities and social sciences, arguing that they are useful on a longer term (Ibid.). The whole debate and the direct actions taken by the national universities show content with the MEXT's stance, lowering the reputation and value of those fields. Measures to change course have been taken, leaving the future of those fields hanging in the balance. It is, therefore, likely that universities are not willing to enter long-term commitments with their teaching staff as long as the future course is not clear. Therefore, the share of non-regular employees working in the humanities and social sciences is likely to increase even more, making it an interesting group to study precarious academic employment in Japan.

### **Precarious Academic Employment in 21st Century Japan**

In this study, I will analyze precarious academic employment in contemporary Japan using the example of PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences. The aim is to

explore under what circumstances these highly qualified individuals are working and living and what it means to them to be in precarious employment despite their high status. I will explore their work arrangements and evaluate how they influence their careers and life chances and what the growth of precarious employment in academia means for the system of higher education in Japan.

In Japan, the discourse surrounding non-regular employment focusses on women, young as well as older people, and lower skilled workers, although highly skilled individuals seem to be even more affected than people seeking work after graduating high school. This situation allows for the question what is a PhD worth in Japan. The case of highly skilled PhD graduates allows for a comparison of non-regular employment in a profession with non-regular employment on the Japanese labor market as a whole. With an increasing number of academics working under these circumstances, it is of interest how precarious employment influences research and education in Japan. The understanding of precarious employment in academia is essential for reforms that may improve the quality and productivity of Japan's universities, enabling the country to be globally competitive. Lastly, information on what it means to be a PhD in Japan will allow young Japanese to make an informed decision whether to enter the labor market or to join a PhD course.

In the following Chapter, I will introduce the utilized sample and the methodology, before addressing the work arrangements of PhDs in precarious academic employment in Chapter 4 and 5. I will introduce the employment form of the part-time teacher in detail in Chapter 4, which proved to be a common occupation with many participants holding multiple positions. Chapter 5 will introduce other types of employment the participants were involved in, analyzing their motivation to enter those particular employment relationships and the consequences it had for them. In addition, the interviewees' research activities will be examined. Chapter 6 is focused on the participants' non-academic activities, including housework, family,



and hobbies. It will show how being in multiple precarious employment relationships influenced the private sphere of the interviewees. Then Chapter 7 indicates that the individuals in my study had to manage their lives to an unprecedented degree, further exacerbating their chances for a transition to a more secure employment relationship. In this chapter, I identify three categories 'the Overwhelmed,' 'the Settled' and 'the Researchers' who showed distinct ways of arranging their own lives leading to different consequences for their own careers and life chances. Chapter 8 concludes my findings and connects them to the larger context of precarious employment and higher education in Japan.

### 3. Methodology and Sample

The existing data on PhD graduates in Japan suggests that about half of them, if not more, start their careers in non-regular employment each year. For PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences, the outlook is especially bleak, with a majority of graduates in non-regular employment or unaccounted for. While non-academic sources present accounts of PhD holders living in precarity (Mizuki 2007), official statistics fail to provide a detailed picture of what it means for academics to start their career in non-regular employment and what influence this situation has on their lives and future careers. Are most of them trapped in non-regular employment like *freeter* or other non-regular employees mentioned in Chapter 2, or do they have better chances to find regular employment? How precarious is their situation in comparison to other non-regular employees in Japan and how do they compare to academics in other countries? In order to fill this gap, it is necessary to include the accounts of the PhD holders who are in this situation instead of sorting them into vacuous categories. Due to the weak data on their employment status and their livelihood, I decided to conduct a qualitative interviews survey using a grounded theory approach. In grounded theory, the data analysis begins after the first data has been collected and allows for adjustments of the interview guide to cover the issues the participants deem important. The resulting theories are grounded in the collected data, will allow for a better understanding of their reality, and will help to improve the categories of the quantitative studies.

The methodology of grounded theory was introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a tool to create theories that are grounded in data using qualitative methods instead of deducing testable hypotheses from existing theories. It was a reaction to the dominance of quantitative research in their time and provided a systematic guide for qualitative research that should allow researchers to construct abstract theoretical explanations of social processes. The method is characterized by data collection and analysis taking place at the same time, and the construction

of analytical codes instead of deriving them from preconceived hypotheses. The analytical process includes constant comparison, and theory is developed throughout the study. It furthermore includes memo-writing to specify the properties of discovered categories, to define relationships between them, and to find gaps. Sampling is conducted only for the purpose of theory construction. A controversial aspect of the original guide for grounded theory is the recommendation to delay literature review until after data has been collected and first categories have been identified. The idea was that prior knowledge of the area of study could lead to contamination and impede the researcher's analysis of theoretical codes derived from the data (Giles, King and de Lacey 2013). Charmaz (2006) also warned that an in-depth review of the existing literature prior to the study could influence novice researchers so that they would force the collected data into categories derived from the literature. After examining the discourse on the timing of literature review, Giles, King and de Lacey (2013) come to the conclusion that reviewing literature in advance can have positive effects on grounded theory, enhancing the researcher's creativity and sensitivity for theory. The influence of this literature on the researcher should, however, be reflected. The best way to avoid preconception, they argue, is to make sure that the theory is grounded in arguments and evidence from the collected data. For this study, I decided to delay the literature review until after data collection for two reasons. Firstly, since I was new to the field of labor research, I saw this project as a chance to go into analysis with almost any preconception from labor theory. I was curious whether I might be able to find a theory that profits from this impartiality. Secondly, I saw no harm in delaying the literature review for the reason that my theory would have to be located within existing literature afterward. I was aware of the risk to find nothing new, but this risk was minimized because there was not much literature on PhD graduates available. For this reason, the Chapters 4 to 6 form the core of this dissertation since they represent my original findings grounded in the data I collected. The theoretical context of precarious employment has been

chosen subsequently and was introduced in Chapter 2. The contextualization of my theory with existing work will, however, continue throughout the dissertation.

Until the present day, grounded theory has evolved, and researchers started to use it in flexible ways as encouraged by its creators. In this study, I oriented my approach to Charmaz's (2006). Different to the classical approach by Glaser and Strauss, where theory is seen as emerging from data being discovered by the researcher, Charmaz based her approach on the assumption that grounded theory does not emerge from the data but is constructed through the researcher as a person and therefore influenced by his experiences. The result is an "*interpretive* portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it."(Charmaz 2006:10) In this study, I followed the guidelines for grounded theory research as laid out in Charmaz's book "Constructing Grounded Theory" (2006), which I will further discuss when describing the data collection process and the analysis of the material I gathered.

As far as the research questions were concerned, I started out with the broad topic of the work and life of Japanese PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences, because the statistics on university graduates hinted that about half of them were not in regular employment and graduates of those fields were proportionally affected. The first interview guide was developed taking Charmaz's (2006) suggestions into consideration. Therefore, the interview was divided into three parts. The first section contained open-ended questions, followed by a section of more detailed questions regarding the events mentioned in the first part of the interview, and ended in a section asking for their opinion on their situation and allowing them to raise issues that have not come up during the interview so far.

Because I had problems in the past with Japanese interviewees who hardly gave any information to open questions, I prepared particular questions regarding issues of work and their daily lives to be able to continue the interview in case the first questions might not provide a basis for further inquiry. The interview was initiated with the question: "Please explain how

you became the person you are now, starting from when you entered university to the present day." It was then followed by a question regarding their time right after graduation in terms of what they were doing and how they felt at that point in their lives. Subsequently, the second part with intermediate questions followed. After addressing their descriptions from the initial questions, I inquired about their working experience, including questions regarding what kind of work they were involved in, what their work's content was, and how they had chosen their workplaces. Also, I prepared questions regarding their lives other than those about remunerated work, asking for changes in their daily lives since graduation, how a regular day in their lives looks, whether they were satisfied with their lives and what was most important for them. I furthermore asked where the participants saw themselves in the next five years. Following this, I closed the interview with the last section focused on their opinion about doctoral courses in Japan and included two open questions. The first one allowed them to raise issues they deemed important in understanding the work and life of Japanese PhD graduates and the second gave them the opportunity to ask me questions in regard to the research or me as a person. While the interview structure and the scope of the questions were inspired by Charmaz's guide to grounded theory, the questions regarding work and the rest of their lives were not derived from existing literature because I delayed secondary literature review.

Per usual in grounded theory, I updated the interview guide over the course of the survey and gradually included questions regarding personal relations at work, how they found their jobs, their work as *hijōkin kōshi*, and the what role having an affiliation played in the participants' lives. I also inquired what differences the interviewees saw between regular and non-regular employment and asked them in more detail about where their work was taking place and how they defined work.

Other than these additional questions, the interview guides were adjusted for those participants who were interviewed multiple times. The open questions at the beginning were

replaced by questions regarding what had changed since the last interview. For people working in regular employment, additional questions were added for why they chose to look for work outside academia. For those who managed to find a full-time position in academia, the focus was on how they gained this position and what they thought was the reason for their success.

The interview survey was carried out over the course of one year between early 2015 and early 2016. In this period, I was able to conduct 20 interviews with 14 PhD graduates from the humanities or social sciences and an additional two PhD graduates from the medical and natural science fields who were included because they started their careers as regular employees at a company. However, one interview was unusable because the participant avoided answering my questions and filled the time with anecdotes unrelated to the topic. Various attempts to get the participant back on topic failed, and therefore the interview was not included for analysis. I interviewed 14 participants once in individual interviews and conducted three individual interviews with two of the youngest participants, Takashi and Ichiro, to track their development right after graduation. The first interview was done before both graduated in March of 2015. The second one followed three months after graduation and the last one nine months after graduation. The following table (Figure 6) contains all interviewees whose interviews were utilized for my analysis, indicating their age, gender, and major, as well as their employment status at the time of the interview.

Snowball sampling was used to recruit respondents: the interviewees referred me to other PhD graduates. The sample, nonetheless, was quite diverse, with an age range from 27 to 51 years old and featured people living and working in the Kantō and Kansai area in Japan. Only three participants (Tadaaki, Machiko, and Madoka) were in regular employment at the time of the interviews, and only Machiko and Madoka had started their careers as regular employees, both working outside academia. Even though I was looking for both regular and

**Figure 6 - List of Interviewees**

Alias	Age	Sex	Major	Employment Status
Takashi ✕	27	Male	Security Policy	Non-regular (Part-Time)
Madoka*	27	Female	Engineering	Regular (Company)
Kaori	30	Female	Agronomy	Non-regular (Part-Time)
Naoki	30	Male	Economic Geography	Non-regular (Part-Time)
Ichiro ✕	30	Male	Korean Literature	Non-regular (Part-Time)
Machiko*	30	Female	Public Health	Regular (Company)
Saburo	32	Male	Political Science	Non-regular (Part-Time)
Yaichiro	32	Male	Sociolinguistics	Non-regular (Full-Time)
Nachiko	32	Female	Japanese Education	Non-regular (Full-Time)
Ogai	35	Male	History	Non-regular (Part-Time)
Tadaaki	37	Male	Modern Culture and Public Policy	Regular (Academia)
Tadae	41	Female	Anthropology	Non-regular (Part-Time)
Yahiko	43	Male	History	Non-regular (Part-Time)
Okito	45	Male	Sociology	Non-regular (Part-Time)
Ukiko	51	Female	Classic Literature	Non-regular (Part-Time)
✕ 3 Interviews // * Not from the humanities or social sciences				

non-regular employees with a PhD, I only could find one regular employee working in academia during the survey period. Although some candidates were introduced to me as 'researchers' or 'university teachers,' it became apparent during the interviews that they were, in fact, non-regular employees. Either the person making the introduction was not aware of the definition or gave their affiliation in an obscure way on purpose. Six participants were female. It should be noted that half of them were what I called 'returnees.' They had started their careers outside academia and at some point in their lives returned to university to obtain a higher degree and begin a new career. The rest of the participants were male. During my search for participants, the criteria were loose, and all PhD graduates from the humanities or social sciences were considered with no regard to their occupational status or age. Yahiko and Yaichiro were the only interviewees in this sample who started academic careers even though they were not able to obtain their degrees at the time of graduation. Both, however, managed

to earn their PhD afterward. Due to the sample, the findings are limited to Japanese PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences, of whom most were involved in non-regular academic employment according to the categories used in the statistics. Similar to people who had succeeded to find a regular position in academia the other end of the spectrum, PhD graduates who became sick or dropped out of their lives, no longer working at all, are underrepresented in this sample. The participants told me about PhD graduates who could not deal with the pressure or lost their health, and as a result became dropouts and were unable to work, or even committed suicide. I was able to establish contact with some of them, but they were not willing to talk about their situation. It, therefore, has to be kept in mind that an unspecified number of persons did not manage to overcome the hardships after obtaining their degrees. Unfortunately, secondary literature does not provide more insights into their situation either.

Before I could start the data collection and look for participants, my survey had to be approved by the Ethics Committee of the Graduate School of Human Sciences of Osaka University. My intentions for the collected data had to be specified to the committee and made clear to the participants in advance. I furthermore had to prove how the personal rights and the privacy of the participants will be protected. I gained written consent from all interviewees and their names and names of institutions they mentioned were anonymized. The interviews took place at a room of my university, in cafes, or over Skype. The latter were carried out with an active video connection between me in a room at my university without others, and the participants from their homes. This may have been the reason that those interviews were the most detailed and useful. The loud environment of a coffee shop to some degree concealed the interview situation, but since people at surrounding tables could listen in to what we talked about, the interviewees may have held back on particularly personal topics. The participants I interviewed multiple times were especially helpful in understanding the situation of PhD



graduates right after graduation. Due to the fact that we met multiple times, a relation of trust was established, and they provided me with detailed accounts of their situation and even disclosed information that was embarrassing for them. All participants, to some extent, saw me as one of their own, because I was a PhD student, which particularly showed in the last section of the interviews where they could ask me questions. They usually asked me about my career path and my career aspirations and tried to give me advice. Another helpful aspect was that I took on a position as *hijōkin kōshi*<sup>9</sup> myself from April of 2015. This post was not used for fieldwork or participant observation, but it helped me to interpret what the interviewees told me. By disclosing this occupation toward the end of the interviews, another commonality was found, and rich interview data could be gathered.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Participants with a long work history offered to provide me their CVs to understand their work experience better. This data was also included for analysis.

In accordance with the grounded theory methodology described by Charmaz (2006), I started data collection and analysis almost simultaneously. After transcription, the interviews were imported into the maxQDA software for coding. I performed the initial coding process using line-by-line coding. In this step, I tried to find out what issues were important for the interviewees, what this suggested, and whose viewpoint was incorporated. In this step, I stayed thematically open and coded each line according to what action took place in those short sections. As a result, I was able to create 1400 different codes, which I then reorganized to create the first categories. For this purpose, I used the creative coding function of maxQDA. The creative coding tool provides a blank screen with all codes that have been created. On this screen, the codes can be freely rearranged and their connections defined. During this step, the first categories were established, and I started to write memos about them regarding what they

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<sup>9</sup> Part-time teacher

entailed, specifying their characteristics I had discovered so far. These categories were then used for focused coding, in which larger segments of the interviews were coded. Every time I came across new aspects, I created codes for them as well. Creative coding was used six times, and the categories became more refined. I continued writing memos until I finally identified the core aspects that were influencing the PhD graduates' lives.

At the beginning of the survey, I lacked the perspective of people who were willing to work outside academia. I was, therefore, unable to analyze the difference of both types. During the theoretical sampling step, I specifically searched for PhD graduates who were working in the private economy. However, the only PhD holders I could find were from the medical and natural science fields. Nonetheless, I included them for a different perspective. While collecting data, I continued to write memos and optimized the categories until I came up with a theory of my own. The interview process was stopped when the important categories were saturated, and new interviewees did not provide more theoretical insights. The need to manage their work and life like a self-employed, responsible for their own skill development and for making time for other activities besides work actively, in combination with social pressures were identified as the most important aspects of the interviewees' lives.

The detailed analysis of the interview data allowed me to establish my theory on the effect of non-regular employment on the situation of PhD graduates from the humanities or social sciences who are seeking career employment in academia. My findings will certainly help to improve the understanding of those graduates' situation and how they experience it. They will, furthermore, allow me to compare their case to academics of other countries working in precarity and to provide policy makers with a more detailed picture of those PhD holders' problems, enabling them to reform higher education and help those skilled academics into more stable employment.

#### 4. Working as *Hijōkin Kōshi*

Working as *hijōkin kōshi* proved to be a central aspect of the lives of PhD graduates in the humanities and social sciences. For this reason, the first chapter on academic employment will be devoted to this precarious form of work. The chapter will introduce the case of Japan's part-time teachers, explain their working conditions and compare them to those of other part-time employees in Japan. It will furthermore shed light on the so far unexplored motivation of PhD graduates to work in this precarious form of employment to determine whether they work as a part-time teacher out of free will or are to blame for their precarious situation, which is an important aspect when discussing non-regular employment in Japan.

##### ***Hijōkin Kōshi* and Non-Regular Employment in Academia**

*Hijōkin kōshi* have existed in Japan since the Meiji Era. During this period the first Imperial Universities were founded, and the number of private universities constantly grew, although those schools were not called universities at the time. The number of teaching staff that was able to teach at university level was very limited, which is why the professors of the Imperial Universities were gradually hired for specific classes by private institutions as well. The first *hijōkin kōshi* were the solution to a shortage of personnel, and they were well paid (Asano 1998:15; Daigaku Hijōkin Kōshi Mondai Kaigi 2000: 27-8). However, with the beginning of the period of high economic growth in the 1960s, higher education became widely accessible to the masses in Japan. The role of universities and the curriculum changed, and the number of private universities rose further. With the need to educate the growing number of students and the post-war baby boomer generation, the demand for university teaching staff was high. Instead of hiring more full-time staff, the managers of private universities used the opportunity to increase the employment of low-paid *hijōkin* from the growing pool of graduate

students (Daigaku Hijōkin Kōshi Mondai Kaigi 2000:26-31). Between 1975 and 1995 their numbers increased by 95% while the number of regular staff had only increased by 29% (Asano 1998:15).

The only sources that provide information on the extent of non-regular academic employment in contemporary Japan are two studies by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) that gather data on teaching staff working at universities. One of them is the *Gakkō Kihon Chōsa*,<sup>10</sup> which is carried out annually. The second one is the *Gakkō Kyōin Tōkei Chōsa*,<sup>11</sup> which is conducted every three years and is specifically focused on teaching staff in Japan. The latest edition is the study from 2013. Analyzing the results of both studies, it was difficult to derive a precise estimate for *hijōkin kōshi* because the studies use overlapping categories and therefore individuals are counted multiple times. Full-time teaching staff, whether tenured or on a fixed-term contract are subsumed under the category of *honmusha*,<sup>12</sup> while part-time teaching staff is subsumed under the category of *kenmusha*.<sup>13</sup> For the purpose of data collection, every university reports their numbers of *honmusha* and *kenmusha* to the MEXT. For the *honmusha*, who are working in full-time positions, this method of data collection is suitable, since a person can only hold one full-time position. For calculating the number of *kenmusha*, the category in which *hijōkin kōshi* are counted, this system is ineffective. First, some full-time teachers are working as part-time teachers as well, who are also reported as *kenmusha*. Also, *hijōkin kōshi* tend to work at multiple universities and are therefore also reported as *kenmusha* multiple times. For this reason, the figures of the *Gakkō Kihon Chōsa* only show the total number of reported *kenmusha*. This is the number of cases that have been reported for filled part-time teacher positions and

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<sup>10</sup> 'Basic Survey on Schools' covering student and graduate numbers, the number of schools and universities as well as data on teaching staff.

<sup>11</sup> 'Statistical Survey on Teaching Staff'

<sup>12</sup> People with a main place of employment working full-time.

<sup>13</sup> Describing someone who is working part-time, not specifying whether the person is working elsewhere full-time or not.

not the actual number of part-time teachers. By taking these stipulations into consideration, it becomes clear that the real number of *hijōkin kōshi* will likely be much lower than the case figures. In the *Gakkō Kyōin Tōkei Chōsa*, in contrast, it is claimed that the actual number of persons working as *hijōkin* is given in the results. However, the numbers for *kenmusha* in the datasets of both studies for the same year raise doubt about the accuracy of the results of the *Gakkō Kyōin Tōkei Chōsa*.

For comparison, the *Gakkō Kihon Chōsa* (MEXT 2013a) reported a total of 192,958 *kenmusha* as case numbers, while the *Gakkō Kyōin Tōkei Chōsa* (MEXT 2013b) provides the figure of 206,202 *kenmusha* as the actual number of *hijōkin kōshi*. Therefore, to be accurate, the numbers provided as the total number of cases would have to be higher than the number provided as the actual number of *hijōkin kōshi*, taking into account that *hijōkin kōshi* work at several workplaces. These discrepancies have to be kept in mind when taking a further look at the figures of the *Gakkō Kyōin Tōkei Chōsa*. The study provides a detailed breakdown of the *kenmusha* recorded, which is helpful for identifying *hijōkin kōshi* that exclusively work as non-regular employees. The total of 206,202 *kenmusha* is divided into those who have their main occupation at another university or school (55,816), those who work at research facilities (8,690), those who have their main occupation outside academia (52,406), and finally those who have no main occupation and therefore only work as *hijōkin kōshi* or have other part-time arrangements other than teaching at university (89,290) (MEXT 2013c). The latter group is certainly the most interesting because they do not have any additional income from a full-time position that would allow them to compensate for their low pay as *hijōkin kōshi*.

Although both studies showed contradicting results, I assume that the data of the *Gakkō Kyōin Tōkei Chōsa*, which was carried out with consideration of the difficulties in tracking non-regular employment in academia, reported fairly accurate results. With total numbers of 177,263 *honmusha* and 206,202 *kenmusha* (MEXT 2013b, 2013d), it becomes clear that more

than half the posts in academia are part-time positions. Nonetheless, at 89,290 workers, there are only half as many part-time workers without any other full-time position as *honmusha* employed in academia. However, it has to be noted that not all *honmusha* are regular employees either. Thus, the number of non-regular employees in academia is likely to be higher than 89,290. However, those are the ones most likely to work under precarious circumstances because part-time work is their only source of income. It can be assumed that the overall share of non-regular employment in academia is on par with non-regular employment on the Japanese labor market as a whole around 35 and 40%.

### ***Hijōkin Kōshi in the Academic Discourse***

Other than official government statistics, there are not many scholarly sources on the topic of part-time teachers in Japanese universities. The papers available cover *hijōkin kōshi* working conditions, and are of an introductory character. In the following section, the four main sources on the topic shall be briefly introduced, and the part-time teacher's working conditions explained and compared to those of other non-regular employees. I will end the section by summing up the shortcomings of the existing literature.

The first source of interest is titled "*Daigaku kyōshi ha pāto de ii no ka*"<sup>14</sup> and was published by the *Shutoken Daigaku Hijōkin Kōshi Kumiai*.<sup>15</sup> (Kato 1998) This book is an edited volume of 14 chapters, and the declared goal is to raise awareness of the part-time teachers' situation by giving them a voice through this book. The working conditions of part-time teachers are introduced with special focuses on pay and the insecurity of the occupation. The main criticism of the authors is the particularly large gap in remuneration between full-

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<sup>14</sup> Is it really ok to hire university teachers part-time?

<sup>15</sup> University Part-Time Teacher Union of the Kantō-Region

time and part-time teaching staff. Even though they acknowledge that responsibilities and tasks are different when both employment tracks are compared, they come to the conclusion that paying *hijōkin* only one-sixth of what a full-time teacher earns for the same number of classes is disproportional and unfair. To illustrate their point, they compare the yearly income of a regular staff member teaching 4 to 6 classes per week to a *hijōkin kōshi* giving the same number of courses. While the full-time teacher earns 9 million Yen per year, the *hijōkin kōshi* only makes 1.5 million Yen (Asano 1998:9). They try to connect the issues of part-time teachers to part-time workers in Japan in general and, citing a court case from 1998, make clear that such a gap in salary would be illegal. In the case mentioned, the court ruled that it is against the law if part-time workers are paid less than 80% of what full-time employees earn doing the same job. However, part-time teachers do not even earn 20% of what their full-time colleagues get (Ibid.). They identify hiring of *hijōkin kōshi* as a cost saving measure for financially troubled institutions. Most importantly they make clear that the improvement of working conditions is vital, because being a *hijōkin kōshi* is no longer a temporary experience for many of them, with many academics spending their whole career as part-time teachers (Ibid.:17). They close their argumentation by criticizing high tuition fees that stand in no relation to the sinking class quality due to the working and research conditions of *hijōkin kōshi* (Ibid.:19).

The second source that stood out was titled "*Daigaku kiki to hijōkin kōshi undō*"<sup>16</sup> by the *Daigaku Hijōkin Kōshi Mondai Kaigi*<sup>17</sup> (2000). It takes a slightly different stance on the whole problem. It is an edited volume as well, comprised of the accounts of part-time teachers, unions, parents and students regarding the *hijōkin kōshi* issue. The goal here as well is to raise awareness of the problems of part-time teachers and gain support by pointing out the consequences for the quality of university education as a whole. The authors see the quality of

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<sup>16</sup> University crisis and part-time teachers' movement

<sup>17</sup> Conference on the part-time teacher problem. A committee of the Japan Scientists' Association

research and education being diminished through what they call "*yasuagari kyōiku*."<sup>18</sup> This policy, according to the authors, has an impact on how teachers are employed and is the main reason many people are only hired on a temporary basis. They also try to establish a connection between the *hijōkin* issues and those of part-time employees in general. They argue that the *hijōkin*, just like other *hiseiki shain*,<sup>19</sup> are there to preserve the system as it is for full-time employees. As a solution to the '*hijōkin kōshi crisis*,' they demand better working conditions for *hijōkin kōshi* to improve the overall quality of research and education and point to the principle of equal pay for equal work (Ida 2000; Kinoshita 2000). Instead of blaming universities directly, they blame neoliberal policies that have led to fierce competition among education institutions. According to the authors, the problematic structures of unequal funding causing these problems were created when the first universities were founded in Japan. These inequalities in the financing are sending higher education into a downward spiral. Private or municipal institutions especially have to cut costs by hiring even more *hijōkin*. Instead of just focusing on working conditions, the authors of this book go slightly further in exploring the reasons for the increasingly insecure and temporary employment practices in academia. They blame the situation on the facts that universities are more and more run like companies and that there is increased competition for educational funding in Japan. From their point of view, the only solution to those problems would be more investment in research and education, and they cite the low percentage of GDP that Japan invests in higher education compared to other OECD countries.

In his book "*Burakku Daigaku Waseda*"<sup>20</sup>, Hayashi (2014) adds to the description of the two previous sources, especially focusing on the hiring practices of Waseda University. Private

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<sup>18</sup> Economical education

<sup>19</sup> Non-regular employees

<sup>20</sup> Black University Waseda: Black in this context refers to unlawful or bad working conditions. The term is usually used as *burakku kigyō* for companies that do not follow labor laws and offer precarious working conditions, usually long working hours or unremunerated overtime.



universities such as Waseda employ the majority of Japan's part-time teachers. As of 2012, the teaching staff of Waseda University was comprised of 1,848 regular teaching staff (*jōkin*). The number of temporary teaching staff (*hijōkinshokuin*) was 4,261 of which 3,762 were *hijōkin kōshi* (Hayashi 2014: 9-14). The author addresses the consequences of the revision of the Labor Contract Law, which came into effect on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 and introduced a five-year limit for the employment of temporary staff, after which they gain the right to be employed on a more permanent basis. The law was supposed to bring more stability into workers' lives, however, among other institutions, Waseda University was quick to specify work regulations for their employees for the first time, setting an upper limit of continuous employment for temporary staff for five years to circumvent the new regulation. When work regulations are drafted, representatives of the employees have to be included in the process. This right usually goes to a union that represents the majority of employees. In the case of Waseda University, such a union did not exist. Therefore representatives of the workforce had to be elected. In this election process, so the accusation, despite supplying the biggest share of the workforce, the *hijōkin kōshi* were systemically bypassed. The messages calling for the election were distributed to the teachers' mailboxes on February 14<sup>th</sup>, a date on which the semester had already ended, and the part-time teachers were not able to react to it, not to mention to nominate a representative for the negotiations. Therefore, the representatives were recruited from the regular teaching staff and the new work regulations limiting the term of *hijōkin kōshi* were put into effect before April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. According to the author other limitations, such as an upper limit for the number of course that could be taught by one part-time teacher, were included as well. With the help of unions, the part-time teachers were able to negotiate an amendment for some of those limits. The upper limit for employment term, however, remained unchanged. As a reaction 15 *hijōkin kōshi* sued against the new rules, arguing that this measure was only taken to circumvent the law and not to hire the *hijōkin* permanently. Through this book, it becomes clear that there is a

large difference between national universities and private universities, which heavily rely on their part-time teaching staff. Furthermore, an additional source of uncertainty has come to affect the *hijōkin kōshi*, because the five-year rule has found its way into almost all labor contracts of part-time teachers to the present day. This account furthermore demonstrates how marginalized part-time teachers are at their workplaces, even if they constitute the majority of the labor force at an institution.

### **How do the Working Conditions of Part-Time Teachers and Other Part-Time Workers in Japan Compare?**

In the following paragraphs, the working conditions of part-time teachers at Japanese universities will be introduced and compared to those of other part-time workers to whom they are often connected in the secondary literature. The figures are derived from the "*Daigaku Hijōkin Kōshi no Jittai to Koe 2007*," (Kansai ken Daigaku Hijōkin Kōshi Kumiai et al. 2007) which was carried out by a group of university part-time teachers' unions across Japan. It is the only quantitative study that offers insights into their working conditions but has some limitations. It has to be noted that the sample was mainly composed of people with a background in the humanities and social sciences. This however works to my advantage since the focus of this study is on PhD graduates from these fields. For the purpose of analysis, the authors divided the sample into various categories in order to accommodate the respondents' employment situations. I will only introduce the data of those who either exclusively work part-time at universities (Univ. PT main) to earn a living and those who have additional part-time jobs outside university that are their main source of income (Other PT main). It is however not specified of what nature these jobs outside university are. Taking a look at an overview of their teaching activities, it becomes clear that they are likely to teach outside university as well

since the number of courses taught outside university is explicitly mentioned. These part-time jobs might include teaching at language schools, *yobikō*<sup>21</sup>, and *juku*<sup>22</sup>. People of both groups only work as non-regular workers and are therefore those who suffer the most from insecure working conditions.

Even though *hijōkin kōshi* are in general compared to other part-time workers, the image of both could not be more different. As noted already in Chapter 2, women dominate part-time work in Japan, and the general image of part-time workers is that of a housewife earning additional income on the side, supported by the salary of their husband who is in regular employment (Osawa et al. 2013). Indeed, the share of part-time workers earning 'extra money' was at 49.5% in 2011 (Ministry of Health Labor and Welfare 2011) and Osawa et al. (2013) stress that incentives set through the social insurance and taxation system draw especially married female workers into part-time employment. The image of a part-time university teacher, on the other hand, is more connected to the image of a high-status occupation and not many people are aware of the precariousness in academic work relationships, as my interviewees ensured me (see Chapter 7).

Nevertheless, both *hijōkin kōshi* and part-time workers in general, are mainly hired on yearly contracts (Sōmushō Tōkeikyoku 2013; Shinda 2000). The way part-time teaching jobs are distributed and the specialized skills required, only allow them to apply for posts in their field and this makes it more difficult for them to find positions. According to Asano (1998:8), the common way to get a *hijōkin* job is through an introduction of regular staff members. This makes it difficult to find jobs without a well-established network, and also can make it difficult to turn down offers because of the bad influence it may have on future opportunities. Other part-time workers do not suffer from such restrictions because they usually work in industries

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<sup>21</sup> Preparation school: Students learn for their university entrance examinations at those schools

<sup>22</sup> Private tutoring school: A school where students of secondary education repeat and practice what they have learned at their regular school

that do not require special skills (Ministry of Health Labor and Welfare 2009). As a result, *hijōkin kōshi* employment comes with more insecurity.

Additionally, whether they are hired part-time or full-time, academics are evaluated by their academic achievements (Kinoshita 2000:176-7). This requires them to advance their own research. However, because they have to teach many classes and are unable to decline offers, Asano concludes that this extended workload pushes class preparations to the weekends, making it difficult for *hijōkin kōshi* to conduct their research (Asano 1998:10). They cannot work on their projects at their *hijōkin* workplaces either because they are only allowed to use the facilities to prepare for their classes (Ibid.:8; Kinoshita 2000:176-7).

For part-time teachers, only the time spent in class is counted as working hours, which denies them access to social insurance because they cannot meet the requirement of 20 hours of work or more per week (Asano 1998:9-10.; Kansai ken Daigaku Hijōkin Kōshi Kumiai et al. 2007). *Hijōkin kōshi* would have to teach more than 13 classes<sup>23</sup> per week in order to be eligible, but the survey on university part-time teachers shows that neither the Univ. PT main with 10.1 classes (15.1 hours) nor the Other PT main with 7.3 classes (11 hours) on average are able to cross that line. The actual time they use for their work is a combination of class preparation and the class itself. In the case of the Univ. PT main, 2.8 hours of preparation were invested per class (Kansai ken Daigaku Hijōkin Kōshi Kumiai et al. 2007). The time spent for classes and preparations adds up to a total of 43.4 hours per week. For the Other PT main with 4.7 hours of preparation time per class, the actual working hours per week add up to 45.3 hours. Included are the time they used for teaching and preparing classes at university and outside university. Part-time workers in general work 26.5 hours on average per week (Ministry of Health Labor and Welfare 2009) and therefore have access to the social security system while having a considerably lower workload. Regarding wages, *hijōkin kōshi* are paid 25,000 Yen on

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<sup>23</sup> The duration of one class is 90 minutes.

average per month for a class (Asano 1998:9), whereas part-time workers receive hourly wages. In terms of yearly income, wages of part-time workers in general peak at around 1 million Yen per year (Ministry of Health Labor and Welfare 2009). The reasons for that, as explained in Chapter 2, can be found in the social security and taxation system. With an income up to 1.3 million Yen per year, the part-time worker is recognized as a dependent of the household's breadwinner and does not have to pay into the social security systems without losing the right for receiving a pension for example. Below a yearly income of 1.03 million Yen per year, tax payments are reduced significantly (Osawa et al. 2013). It is, therefore, comprehensible that especially part-time workers, who earn an additional income for the household, keep their earnings below these limits. They furthermore do not want to lose the support payments provided by employers for spouses of full-time workers who are mainly working in the household (Toyokeizai Shinbun 2015.12.22). In comparison, *hijōkin kōshi*, both Univ. PT main and Other PT main, earn slightly more than 3 million Yen per year (Kansai ken Daigaku Hijōkin Kōshi Kumiai et al. 2007). With this income, they are well above the poverty line and earn more than other part-time workers in Japan. However, this is their main source of revenue.

In sum, *hijōkin kōshi*, like other non-regular workers, have been increasing in numbers in recent years and those only employed part-time comprise about one-third of the teaching staff in higher education. A review of the secondary literature suggests that their share will further increase in the future because of the growing need to lower costs, especially at private and municipal universities. Even though *hijōkin kōshi* are often compared to other part-time workers, many differences can be observed: Firstly, because of the nature of their jobs and how they are distributed, it is harder for part-time teachers to find a position. Secondly, *hijōkin kōshi* spend much time on work outside official working hours. It is furthermore suggested that they have problems containing this high workload, thus reducing their ability to progress their own research. However, this point is not further explored in the sources noted above even though it

was mentioned that *hijōkin kōshi* are evaluated on their academic achievements when hired. In secondary literature, the focus is on part-time teachers as educators and strongly interwoven with a call for better working conditions for academics in these jobs. It is however not addressed why they work in these precarious employment relationships in the first place and whether they are *hijōkin kōshi* by choice or working as part-time teachers involuntarily. This question will be addressed in the following sections of this chapter. Other aspects that are not addressed are the influences working as *hijōkin kōshi* has on their careers as academics and their lives as a whole. This question will be gradually answered in the following chapters because an isolated view on the employment as *hijōkin* does not provide the information needed to answer it sufficiently.

### **Differences between the Utilized Sample and Secondary Literature**

When comparing the characteristics of the interviewed PhD graduates with those of the *hijōkin kōshi* featured in the existing literature, I noticed that the samples used in the publications of the university part-time teacher unions are composed of people who have been working as *hijōkin kōshi* for a long time. For this reason, they were teaching more classes and had a higher income than people in my sample. I therefore assume that the working conditions of part-time teachers at their career start are likely to be worse than featured in union statistics. None of my interviewees were in a union.

Further differences from the secondary literature on part-time teachers at Japanese universities were the fact that my interviewees spend significantly more time for class preparations than the respondents of the quantitative survey on part-time teachers (Kansai ken Daigaku Hijōkin Kōshi Kumiai et al. 2007). Particularly for recent graduates, such as Takashi and Ichiro, this aspect was the most striking. Another aspect that was different from other

sources was how jobs are distributed. Almost all interviewees told me that positions were handed down to them from seniors leaving a post. By calling them senior or *senpai*, it is clear that there is a connection on the institutional side. Those *senpai* are either graduates of the same university, graduate school or even the same *kenkyūshitsu*<sup>24</sup>. After applying for many positions shortly before graduation and failing to obtain any of the posts he applied to, Takashi was finally able to secure his first *hijōkin* position thanks to his network. A *senpai* of his former university was looking for someone to replace him, and Takashi, in desperate need of any job, accepted it. Even though he found his one and only post thanks to his network, he was critical in regards to the way those jobs are distributed:

"I think that the mobility in regards to posts at universities and research facilities tends to be very limited. I can observe this especially in my field of politics. [...] For example, for a long time there has been the system of the *kenkyūshitsu* at Japanese universities, and among the members of this *kenkyūshitsu* posts would be distributed. My post at °° University is a classic example of that, [...] posts are distributed in a very closed environment. In my case, the *senpai* from my time at XX University would hand down posts to their *kōhai*, and so on, it was an environment in which that was very likely to happen. [...] What I have heard is that they call it a colony. A colony, for example [...] for XX University °° University is a colony. The teaching position for the class 'Introduction to Politics' of °° University has been continuously filled by people of my graduate school at XX University."<sup>25</sup>

He identified those distribution mechanisms as the very problem that made it difficult for him to find a position in the first place. The introduction of jobs by full-time university staff as mentioned in the union sources could be observed. However, the distribution by *senpai* was the most common. Other than that, the descriptions by other sources have proven to be accurate.

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<sup>24</sup> Translation: Laboratory. A *kenkyūshitsu* is an organizational unit at Japanese universities. Members of the *kenkyūshitsu* are a supervising professor and his graduate students. The same word refers to the locality, usually a larger office like space, where the graduate students can study and seminars are held.

<sup>25</sup> 少し思うのは、大学とか研究機関のポストが非常に流動性が乏しくなりがち、なりやすい傾向があると思うことが、特に僕の政治学とかの世界ではかなり見受けられます。[...]例えば日本の大学には研究室という制度が昔からあって、研究室の仲間の中でさまざまなポストを融通したり。例えば、僕が〇〇大学のポストを獲得したようなケースが典型的なんですけども、[...]非常に閉ざされた中でポストがやり取りされていますね。僕の場合だと、僕のXX大学にいたときの先輩から後輩に対してポストが渡されたりとか、そういうことが非常に起きやすい環境になっている。[...]僕が聞いたことがあるのは、植民地という言い方をするんですね。植民地、例えば、そうですね、XX大学にとって〇〇大学は植民地なんですね。〇〇大学の政治学概論という授業を教えるポストは、いわばXX大学の私のいた研究科がずっと歴代、繰り返し、いわば、ずっと独占し続けたわけです。

### Why Work as *Hijōkin Kōshi*?

There are many similarities between *hijōkin kōshi* and other non-regular workers when it comes to their reasons to choose this kind of employment. Just like an increasing number of people in the Japanese labor market (The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2016a), many participants of my sample were unable to find a full-time position after graduation and therefore started their careers as non-regular employees. Similar to 47.8% of contract workers (Tokyo Metropolitan Government 2016), they, however, showed a strong desire to use their special skills and to stay connected to their profession, which is why they preferred working as part-time teachers. When asked what kind of post he desired, Ichiro explained: "[...] Definitely the post of a professor I would say. [...] What comes closest at the moment is a part-time teacher position [...]." <sup>26</sup>

However, many of the young academics in my survey considered it normal to start their career in non-regular employment. They saw the difficulties that come with such a situation as an aptitude test that has to be passed if someone wants to find full-time employment in academia. Takashi explained: "If a normal person would enter the world of academia I think he would not feel satisfied. You cannot lead a regular life. [...] Living under insecure circumstances for four to five years, a long time, and during this time being pitied by friends, family and the people around you." <sup>27</sup> Others did not perceive it as a test but were convinced that having work experience as a part-time teacher was a qualification they needed to gain a

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<sup>26</sup> やっぱりあの教授と言いますか、うん、そうですね、だからまー、これから一番近いのは非常勤でまー[...]

<sup>27</sup> 普通の人にはアカデミアの世界に入ってきてても、満足はできないと思いますね。普通のごく一般の人たちのような生活は絶対にできないと。[...]たぶん4年とか5年とか、かなり長い間、不安定な状況に置かれて、その間に家族とか友達とか、あと周囲の人たちから、なんていうか、同情されたりとか、[...]



full-time position at some point in their career. Their perception is understandable considering that unlike in Europe or the US, graduate students usually do not have the chance to gain their first teaching experience before they graduate. Ogai told me: "I'm not working at my current job [as *hijōkin kōshi*] because I couldn't find anything else. I see it as a step towards the job I want to have in the future [a full-time job in academia]."<sup>28</sup> The interviewees of my survey expected their career start to be difficult, but were convinced that this suffering would only be temporary and bring them closer to their goal of finding a full-time position. Therefore, rather than considering other jobs, they embraced their work as *hijōkin kōshi*.

In the understanding of the PhD graduates of this study, the choice to work in low-paid non-regular employment in academia instead of taking more lucrative job opportunities elsewhere had to do with their perception that they were trapped in their academic career path. On the one hand, people like Yahiko made clear that they would not have a chance anywhere else: "At my age (30s) only with a background in the humanities and without any experience as a businessman, there is probably no chance to work at a Japanese company. So there is probably no chance for most of those who quit research to become a normal salaryman."<sup>29</sup> However, on the other hand, people like Takashi saw themselves as trapped because they felt that research is the only thing they can do. He explained:

"It's somehow difficult to explain but [...] one reason (to choose a career in academia) was my vocational aptitude. [...] I had side jobs and tried out various jobs through internships. [...] I for example even considered applying to a normal company, but I came to the conclusion that these jobs did not fit my vocational aptitude. I felt that research was the best fit for me. [...] I thought if I have this ability I should use it."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> えーと、現在行っている職業は、単に希望する職業がなくて行っているのではなくて、今後、将来的に自分の希望する職業に就くためのステップとして行っているものだと考えています。

<sup>29</sup> いや、でもやっぱり。日本の企業で。そのいわゆるビジネスマンとしての経験がなく、30代で、文学部出身、これはもう一般企業に入るという選択肢は多分ないと。えー。だからほとんどその、途中で研究を辞める人間が、普通のサラリーマンになることは多分ないと思いますね。

<sup>30</sup> [...]それを説明するのはちょっと難しいと思うんですけども、[...]1つはやはり僕の適性ですね。[...]アルバイトとか、まー、インターンみたいな形でいろんな仕事は見ていたんです。で、その中には例えば、[...]民間企業に普通に就職するというのも考えたりしていたんですけども、いろいろ経験しているうちに、やはり自分の適性があまりないんじゃないかということを感じるようになりました。で、そうした中で研究というのは、ある意味、自分の適性にかなっているんじゃないかというふうに、[...]まー、そういう能力であれば、[...]、世の中に通用するかもしれないというふうに思ったことが1つと。

Nonetheless, none of the respondents tried to change their careers. When asked whether they would accept an offer for a full-time position outside academia, only two interviewees stated that they would consider this option. The others showed a strong commitment towards academia and were not willing to settle for anything else. Saburo, when asked if he would take the full-time job replied: "I don't think I would take the job. [...] Because I want to work as a researcher, I want to do the work I like [...]." <sup>31</sup> It is, therefore, questionable whether the respondents saw themselves as trapped, or were just making excuses. It, however, shows their strong commitment towards their academic careers that also influenced their choice for part-time jobs. Put differently; they were working as part-time teachers because they had a strong fixation on working in academia.

For most women in my sample, the reasons for working as *hijōkin kōshi* differed from those given by the male interviewees. Ukiko, Tadae and Nachiko all had careers outside academia before they decided to go back to university. For them, the contrast to their experiences in the private economy made working in academia and even working as part-time teacher attractive for them. Nachiko explained:

"When you work at a company [...] you can't do anything besides work when you're in the office. [...] The point that there are many things you can't decide yourself makes it very restrictive. [...] Many people like working within those rules, [...] but I like it when I can decide freely how I do things. [...] Here (at her workplace in academia) we have the philosophy that you can do things your way as long as you get your work done. [...] It doesn't matter when you do your work. [...] It is, for example, okay when a teacher says, 'I have to leave early today to get my children from the daycare center,' [...]. In this sense, it is really free." <sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> (..) 働かないと思いますけど。[...] (...) (..) 研究者の、自分のやりたい仕事があったという[...]。

<sup>32</sup> [...]企業は、[...]仕事以外のことはオフィスでは100%できない。自分だけではいろんなことも決められないので、という部分でまったく自由がなかったです。そういう決められた内容で動くほうがいいという人もすごく多い。[...]私は自分でやったほうが好きです。[...]ここは一応、[...]成果さえ出せばOKという主義。[...]何時から何時に働こうと関係ない。[...]例えばこのほかの教員で保育園のお迎えが、ちょっと今日は早く行かないといけないからといってすぐ出るというのももちろんOKですし、[...]、その辺はホントに自由ですね。

Right after quitting her regular job, she went back to university studying Japanese Education, which she was interested in. She explained her plans at that time as follows:

"[...] I thought it would be okay to earn a living working as *hijōkin kōshi*. Teaching a couple of classes per week while raising children. I thought if I even have summer holidays and more time off, I can manage both career and family. But when I was finishing my Masters I came to like research and recently a PhD is required to work as a part-time teacher anyway. So I decided to get a PhD and thought if I go this far I might as well try to get a full-time position [...]."<sup>33</sup>

The women I could interview were more positive about their *hijōkin* jobs because they saw them as an opportunity to do work they are interested in while allowing for better work-family reconciliation. They furthermore preferred the working style of academia, which in contrast to employment in the private economy offers the freedom to be creative and to approach tasks on their terms, instead of following rigid rules and procedures.

### **Economic Prerequisites for an Academic Career**

The economic foundation that enabled many interviewees to study in a doctoral course was also enabling them to work as *hijōkin kōshi* despite the fact that this occupation does usually not provide a living wage right after graduation. For this reason, the role of the family in granting financial support and stability was vital for the people in my sample. Without the support of their families, most of the interviewees would not have been able to focus on higher education for the time it takes to finish a PhD. Most of the women in my sample were an exemption because they changed their life trajectory after they had worked for an extended period and were able to finance their graduate studies on their own. The high number of PhD

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<sup>33</sup> 非常勤講師ぐらいでやっていくのもいいかなって思っていたんです。子どもを育てながら何コマか、週何コマかこなして、夏休みもお休みがあってというほうが両方、家庭と両立できるかなと思ったんですけど、修士の修論を書き終わるにつれて、やっぱり研究も面白いと思ってきて、それプラス、けっこう非常勤でも最近ドクターPhDを持っていることとかというのも書いてあったりとか、そこまで来たら、もうちょっとフルタイムのポジションも考えたいなというのもあってドクターを受けたというのと、[...]。

students and PhD graduates is not only caused by incentive setting policies and the desire of more people to work in academia, but was enabled by parents who were affluent and willing to invest in their children's education in the first place. The need for their support does not end with graduation. Ichiro, Kaori, Ogai and Takashi were still living with their parents at the time of the interviews because they were unable to afford to live on their own. This kind of support allowed the interviewees to follow their goal of a career in academia, even though they did not have the funds to do so. In Ichiro's case, for example, his family served as a social safety net. He could not manage to find any position after his graduation and as a consequence ended up being unemployed. He moved back in with his parents who supported his daily life and did not even ask for anything in return. When asked what influences made him become the person he is now he replied:

"[...] I think the fact that I was enabled to study what I wanted to study most. [...] Put differently it's maybe that I've been blessed with circumstances of life that allowed me to do the studies I'm interested in, so the fact that my parents enabled me to do so (laughing) [...]."<sup>34</sup>

Instead of forcing him to get a side job, when he was living at home and unemployed, they even send him to a language school where he was then studying to earn an additional qualification as Japanese teacher and enabled him to continue his own studies. It remained unclear whether this was what he wanted or his parents pushing him to gain a qualification that would be more useful to him in the labor market. As a consequence, he spends most of his days at the school, using their facilities to study for the qualification and do some of his research as well. He was enabled to participate in a conference of his field where he was approached and offered a part-time teaching position that saved him from unemployment. Without his

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<sup>34</sup> 自分が一番勉強したいことをやってきたというような感じだと思います。[...]ま一別の言い方をすればその自分がなんというかそのしたい勉強できるようななんというんですか、環境と言えますか、だからま一親が助けてくれたとか(laughter)、ま一そういうなんか環境に恵まれていたということあるかもしれないですね、[...]。

supportive parents, it is unlikely that he would have found this job and had been able to follow his dream.

Another example that showed what consequences there are when there is no family to support the young scientists' endeavors was Yahiko's case. In order to finance himself, he had started to work in education jobs outside academia while he was already a student. Other than teaching as *hijōkin kōshi* at university, he began to teach at *yobikō* and *juku*. He made it clear several times that he had to earn his living. After an extended period of being a post-doc and still unsuccessful in securing a full-time position and without a future prospect in his field, he came under increased financial pressure because he was not even able to find part-time teaching positions anymore. So at one point, he made the difficult decision to stop his research efforts and to focus on his teaching career outside academia instead:

"At one point when I was 32, I quit research. It's difficult to explain my reasons, but I think I had quite some achievements as a researcher. However, you have to be able to make a living. Since I became a student, I had a job teaching English to high school students. I earned my living with this while going to graduate school as well. So I did both. If you need it to live, you do more work. But on the other hand, the time you need to spend for research is not getting shorter, [...] hm, so I was in a state where I was doing both but neither one well. So I thought to myself it's better than working in a world that doesn't bring you work at all. I should focus on what I did as a side job for a long time where I get a lot of work, and my work is appreciated. That's why at one point my heart broke [when he realized that he did not have a future in academia] and I announced that I would quit and only focus on one thing. If there are not even part-time teaching jobs, the outlook of gaining a full-time position is horrible [in his field]. That's why I thought [...] it's bad if I don't continue my work at the *yobikō*. I thought only focusing on research is really tough."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> ある段階で、32歳の時に研究を辞めたんですけど、その理由はなかなか説明難しいんですけど、まっ研究者としてある程度の業績はあったと（さっと？）思うんですが、やっぱりこう生活していかないといけない。でも僕はあの大学入ったときからこうアルバイトとして、高校生に英語教えるという。仕事をしてたのね。まー大学院行きながらこっちでまっ生計を立てていたわけです。[...]その両方やっていたわけですけども、まっ生きていかないといけないので、まー仕事の方増やしていきますね。じゃこちらを研究時間が減るわけではないのですけれども、[...]まーそのこちらがこう、どちらつかずの状態なったのも事実何ですけども、まー全然仕事をくれない世界よりもこっちのののまー、元々アルバイトでした仕事の方はもう仕事はガンガン来るわけですね。まっ評価もされるわけですね。ですからまーある時心が折れたと言いますか、ある時思い切って辞めると宣言してこちらに専念する。[...]非常勤の仕事でこれだけないんだから、正規の仕事を獲得するのはかなり大変だろうなという見通しはあったので、ですからあのまー、[...]その予備校の仕事は続けないとまずいなと。「その研究だけに集中することはなかなかしんどいなー」と思いましたね。

Even though the choice of his subject and other factors played a role in his decision, he had to make a choice at some point and opted for his education jobs outside university because they provided more financial stability. Without a family to support him, he could not manage to stay focused on his research long enough to find employment in his field. Success and failure in the world of academia are closely related to one's financial situation and whether a family is supporting the own endeavors.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, the focus was on Japanese part-time teachers, their working conditions, and their motivation to work in an employment relationship that is regarded as precarious in the academic discourse and by the PhD graduates themselves. A closer look at statistics on non-regular teaching staff in Japan revealed that *hijōkin kōshi* constitute about one-third of the academic workforce. It became apparent that they suffer from more insecurities than other part-time workers because of the limited niche where their skills are of use and the relatively closed labor market for part-time teachers, in which positions are mainly distributed through networks. Although working part-time, their working hours were comparable to full-time employees and could be calculated at over 40 hours per week. Due to the fact that only the hours in class were counted, access to the social security system was limited, leaving them even less protected than other part-time workers. The low pay they receive per course seems even more unfair considering the amount of hours these teachers are investing outside class. Above that, yearly contracts further increased the level of uncertainty experienced by part-time teachers, taking a turn to the worse with new legislation from 2013, basically expelling them from their posts at the same university after five years of continuous employment. Even though not all aspects of the dimensions of precarious employment could be covered in this chapter, it can be concluded

that *hijōkin kōshi* showed high levels of precariousness in the temporal, the economic, the organizational and the social protection dimension. When answering the question '*Why work as hijōkin kōshi?*' It could be shown that there is not one simple answer to this question. What the interviewees had in common was their will to utilize their professional skills, which is probably why they were eager to work in academia instead of choosing a more lucrative form of non-regular employment for the time being. It can be assumed that the choice of the field of work was voluntary, the choice of working as *hijōkin kōshi* was not. The interviewees showed their clear preference for regular employment in academia but were willing to endure their situation for various reasons. Some saw it as an apprenticeship, a necessary step toward a regular position. This might indeed be the case since for Japanese PhDs these temporary jobs allow them to gain their first teaching experience and they can keep an employment record without gaps. The increasing number of academics who stay in part-time employment throughout their careers, however, suggests that like in the case of part-time teachers in Australia, these temporary positions can no longer be seen as apprenticeships, but operate to commodify labor with no prospect for upward mobility (Brown et al. 2010). The feeling of being trapped in this line of work was also mentioned, again supporting the interpretation of having no alternative, which translates to being a *hijōkin kōshi* involuntarily. For women the case was different. Compared to their dim chances on the labor market, even working as a part-time teacher seemed to be an attractive choice. It is combinable with family goals, while at the same time offering the opportunity to do 'meaningful' work. Lastly, I explained the prerequisites for engaging in *hijōkin* work and made clear that without financial support from the family, working as *hijōkin kōshi* is an unattractive option, since it does not provide enough money to live on right after graduation.

Although working as *hijōkin kōshi* was an essential part of the interviewees' lives, it became apparent throughout the interviews that the work and life of PhD graduates from the

humanities and social sciences were far more complex and could not be reduced to this single type of employment. The following chapter will address other forms of employment the interviewees were also engaging in and, as probably the most important activity of an academic, research will be discussed.



## 5. Other Forms of Academic Work and the Need for an Affiliation

Although working as *hijōkin kōshi* could be identified as a central aspect of the interviewees' lives, this was not the only kind of work they were involved in. In the following sections additional occupations, which the interviewees worked in will be introduced. The apparent reasons that made additional jobs necessary were, besides economic aspects, the need to belong to a university or a research institution to be socially accepted as academics. In Japan, people define themselves largely through the organization to which they belong (Thurow 1985:27). Affiliation serves as a measuring point of status, much like seniority, when interacting with others and would usually be the first thing asked when meeting a new person. *Where do you work? What do you do?* Such questions help their counterpart understand the difference in social location and choose the appropriate language, which is necessary in order to communicate in Japanese. The affiliation provides an identity and rank and enables smooth social interactions.

The common perception among the participants of my survey was that being affiliated with an organization or company was equated with being a productive member of society, and being incorporated in an organization was seen as being acknowledged, while not having an affiliation was feared and seen as a failure. Asked, "What it would mean to have no place you belong to?" Takashi responded: "I think it's likely to be perceived very, very badly. No matter how hard this person actually works, he would likely be seen as someone who doesn't make an effort, not giving his best, when he is not affiliated with a company or a university."<sup>36</sup> When not having any job at all, the stigma of being unemployed was a heavy burden. Ichiro lost his affiliation after he graduated and was unemployed for half a year. He described the situation as follows: "It is embarrassing. You can say it's embarrassing, um and somehow, it's like a feeling

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<sup>36</sup> すごく、すごく悪い評価になりがちだと思います。その人がどんなにがんばって仕事をしていたとしても、やはりどこかの企業とか大学とかに所属してないというだけで、その人は努力してない、がんばってないというふうにみなされやすいと思います。

of being sorry towards my parents."<sup>37</sup> He later continued: "It is a gap [in the CV], having a gap is bad I think. [...] I think so from my point of view and how do you say it, [...] from the point of view of the hiring side, if my CV has a gap it's something they evaluate."<sup>38</sup>

Thus it was not surprising that the interviewees were willing to circumvent this situation by either keeping their student status longer or by finding another post that in their perception qualified as an affiliation. Usually, they would at least hold one affiliation that would be accepted by people outside academia and one that could be given when dealing with academics. In order to qualify as an affiliation, the workplace had to fulfill at least one of the following three functions.

The first function that constitutes an affiliation has to do with social interactions and the social pressures that can arise in those interactions. It has to serve as a short and comprehensible answer to the question 'What do you do?'. This is obviously the case if someone works for a single employer. However, in the case of most part-time teachers, they work at many different universities and do not feel a stronger attachment to any of them. So when explaining their situation, they would have to give all their different workplaces, which is bothersome in a conversation and at the same time shows their comparably lower status because it becomes clear that they do not have a single employer and are working part-time. The shorter and easier to understand, the better the explanation is. As Takashi explained:

"My affiliation? At the moment I write the invited researcher position at OO University on my business card. That is because I could of course use my part-time teacher position at XX University, but if it's only a part-time teacher position, hm, how shall I put it, it is difficult to explain it to people who don't know about it. An invited researcher position is very difficult to explain as well, but there is less confusion when I use an

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<sup>37</sup> 恥ずかしいですよ、やっぱり恥ずかしいといいますか、mhm (thinking) 後なんか、まーあの親に対して申し訳ないというか、うん、そういう気持ちです、はい。

<sup>38</sup> ブランクといいますか、空白の期間があるのはやっぱりダメなことだと思いますけど、うん [...] それは自分の視点もそうですし、まーなんというんですか、[...]採用する側というかあの上の人の立場から見て／僕の履歴書とか見た場合に空白の期間があるとやっぱり原点と言いますか。

affiliation that is easier to understand, that's why I usually give my invited researcher position at OO University. I decide case by case though."<sup>39</sup>

As his remarks show, it furthermore helps if the affiliation is comprehensible. This raises their status and at the same time keeps the explanation short.

Even though the reality of their situation might be fairly complicated, a well-known employer given at the start of the conversation would prevent most people from inquiring further. However, if they were not able to explain their position in society adequately, the reaction of the counterpart would create social pressures, reminding them of their unfavorable situation, their low status and that they have not made it yet. Ichiro felt uncomfortable when forced to explain his affiliation when he was unemployed:

"[...] I tell them that I'm a graduate of OO University, (incomprehensible) from September onward I can tell them that I'm a part-time teacher at XX University. But now I say that I'm a graduate of OO University. [...] That's a problem, I think it's embarrassing."<sup>40</sup>

Only able to provide the university he graduated from when asked what he does was embarrassing for him because the accepted way of career progression for new graduates is to start working right after graduation. Even though the job-hunting process for PhD graduates is different than for other undergraduates or people who graduated with a master's degree, the same social expectations toward the transition from school to work seem to be valid. In comparison to the well-organized job-hunting process for students not on the PhD level, with job fairs and information events of companies, the job-hunting process in academia builds on

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<sup>39</sup> 所属ですか。ああ、そうですね。（...）所属は、まあ、今、名刺に書いているのはOO大学の招聘研究員を入れていますね。それは、あの、やはり、なぜかという、その、えっと、XX大学の非常勤講師と名乗ることもあるんですけども、なんていうんですか、非常勤講師だけだと、ちょっと、なんていうんですか、知らない人に説明しにくいんですね。あの、招聘研究員も非常に説明しにくいので、あんまり変わらないんですけども、やはり、その、なんといいですか、（...）分かりやすい所属で名乗ったほうが、そうですね、あまり誤解がないので、OO大学の招聘研究員で基本的には紹介していますね。でも、それはケース・バイ・ケースで使い分けていますね。

<sup>40</sup> 今はなんかまーそうですね。OOの修了生とか、(incomprehensible) 9月になれば、まーXX大学の非常勤講師ですとか、そういうふうに答えますね。今はあのOOの修了生と答えると思います、はい。[...] 困るんでしょうね。うん、困るといふかね恥ずかしいと思いますけど。

applying for vacant positions found on internet job databases for academics or by introduction through the own network.

The second function is connected to their understanding of what is needed to be a researcher. Even though all of them saw themselves as academics, they were well aware of the fact that they would not be accepted as such without an affiliation at an institution that is active in research or education. When asked what she disliked most after switching to an academic career Ukiko explained:

"[...] It had a big effect whether I had a place that I was affiliated with or not. 'I'm working at a company,' 'I'm a student at university,' 'I'm a graduate student.' If you have a social position, you can graduate from it's easier. You can easily explain it to everyone right. But even if you work a lot as a part-time teacher it is difficult to explain when you are asked, 'What are you? What do you do?' You don't know what you should answer when you're asked 'What's your job?' But you are asked about your work quite often. If you answer 'I'm a graduate student.' if someone asks 'What do you do?', It's ok even if you are a bit older. If you say 'I'm a university teacher.' That is fine too. But as a person like me that has no full-time position at the moment whatsoever, it is a bit embarrassing to answer I'm a researcher."<sup>41</sup>

Ultimately, to feel as an acknowledged part of the academic community, an affiliation in academia is necessary. The PhD might be the ticket that allows them to enter the world of academia. However, in their perception, an academic is not recognized as such without an appropriate affiliation. An academic without a full-time job feels that his skills are not recognized and to become a 'real academic' an affiliation is indispensable.

The third function of an affiliation is connected to practical aspects it provides. One of the most basic elements a workplace needs to provide to count as an affiliation is space. So the

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<sup>41</sup> [...]所属している場所がちゃんとあるかないかというのはすごくやっぱり色々なところで大きく作用する。だから、「会社に勤めています。」「大学に、学生です。」「院生です。」卒業できる身分がある時は楽なんです。誰にもこう説明しやすいでしょう。だけど、そうやって非常勤とかはいっぱいやっているけど、「で、あなた何屋さん、何やっているの」と聞かれた時にとても説明難しくなってしまうよね。「あなたの職業はなんですか」と聞かれた時に私の場合なんて答えればいいのでしょうか。っていうことになりますよね。でも、割と簡単に職業って問われるんですよ。「何しているんですか」で、「大学院生です」って言えば、多少年取っていても大丈夫でしょう。で、「大学の教員です。」って言えばそれもオッケーですよ。だけど、私みたいにそのフルタイムの職を今どこでも持っていない人間は「じゃ、あなたの職業はなんですか」と聞かれた時に(laughter)「研究者です」って答えるのはちょっと恥ずかしいしね(laughter)。

person has to be allowed to use the facilities and be able to involve in research activities there, be it their own or connected to another project. An affiliation has to provide a place outside the home where the person can go to do their work. An additional requirement for academics is free access to a library. This gives them a connection to the academic community and limits research costs. Thus, it is not only the name of an institution that is needed but an environment in which actual research could be carried out. When asked what would qualify as an affiliation for him Yaichiro made clear:

"An affiliation, hm, difficult. It is one if I can do research. For example, if you have a job at a convenience store you are affiliated with the convenience store, right? But I think for me at the time it felt like I was going to a part-time job. I think I did a pretty good job, at first, but I couldn't do research and was in a situation where I didn't know when I will be fired and only did it for the money."<sup>42</sup>

Through taking a look at the functions that were described by the interviewees and their tendency to provide their affiliation on a case-by-case basis, it became clear that a *hijōkin kōshi* position alone was not enough. The interviewees felt the need to cover all the functions noted above by accumulating one or more places of employment. The problem of giving part-time teaching as an affiliation was connected to the fact that not all functions mentioned above could be covered. A *hijōkin kōshi* position, for example, would provide a short and understandable answer about what they are doing for normal people who work outside of academia but would be problematic when interacting with other academics. They know the circumstances of part-time teachers, and because they mainly involve in teaching at those part-time teacher positions, it would be difficult to preserve their identity as a researcher when only hired as an educator. Respondents noted that even the utilization of facilities at their part-time jobs was limited. They

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<sup>42</sup> 所属は、うーん。難しいけど、そうですね。研究をしていたらということですかね。例えば (...) コンビニでアルバイトをしているとコンビニに所属しているということですね。だから、たぶん僕にとっては当時、そうですねえ、アルバイトに行くような感覚だったんだと思います。そうですねえ。自分が、結果的にはすごくよかったと思うんですけど、最初は、そうですね、研究ができるわけでもないし、いつクビを切られるか分からないという状況で、もうお金を稼ぐためにこれをやらないといけないという。

are usually only allowed to use them for their teaching work and not for their own research as was made clear in chapter three. So for interactions with other academics, who know what it means to have a PhD and be a *hijōkin kōshi*, those workplaces were hard to give as affiliation, and this was only done if the person did not have anything else to give. When asked how he usually explains his affiliation to others Saburo said, "That depends on whom I'm talking to. When I'm talking to a regular person I would tell them I'm a part-time teacher at university and when talking to people in this line of work [academia], I would introduce myself as a researcher of XX University."<sup>43</sup> So working as a part-time teacher would only fulfill the role of an affiliation in certain situations, while holding a research position implied that they were still actively involved in research activities not only confined to teaching.

When talking to the interviewees, it furthermore became apparent that they saw only regular employment as something that can provide a place to belong. They were using the *hijōkin kōshi* positions they had accumulated at the time of the interview mainly to fulfill some of the functions noted above without considering them their real affiliation. Takashi noted: "[...] I basically don't have a desk at XX University (part-time teacher) or OO University (invited researcher). That's why I don't consider them as a place of employment in any real sense. In my opinion, I can at most give them as an affiliation."<sup>44</sup>

### **Non-Regular Academic Employment Aside from Part-Time Teaching**

In need for an affiliation and an income, many interviewees were also working as part-time researchers or research assistants while at the same time teaching as *hijōkin kōshi*. Those

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<sup>43</sup> (...) 相手によるんですけど、まっ普通の一般の人だったら、大学の非常勤講師ですと言って、まっ (...) 業界の人だったら、あの一応神戸大学の研究員というのがあのマインの肩書きになるですね。

<sup>44</sup> [...] どの、京都橘大学も大阪大学も基本的に私のデスクはないので、ですから、そこが私の本当の意味での職場だという気持ちはないです。あくまでも所属がそこにあるということだけのことですね、私にとっては。

who could secure a part-time researcher position were significantly better off than other PhDs even though they were usually only hired for the duration of a project.

A good example of someone holding such a position was Ogai. I met Ogai when he was still in his first year after he had returned from his study abroad in Great Britain where he had completed his PhD. After returning to Japan, he was still waiting to take his last oral exam to obtain his degree. Back to his home country and without a PhD at the time, he first found work as a part-time teacher via an introduction by a friend. After finally gaining his degree, he applied for a research assistant position at his former university in Japan and was accepted. He was officially hired for 15 hours per week. However, in our interview, it became clear that he was working more than the specified hours, but he was compensated for these hours as well. So when working as a research assistant, he would leave the house at ten in the morning and get back home at six in the afternoon. On three days of his week, he worked as a research assistant and spent the other two working days for his part-time teacher jobs of which he had two. He was hired for work on a government-funded research project, and the term of employment was bound to its duration. It was a three-year project, but when he joined it was already running, providing him only with a labor contract for the rest of the duration.

Ogai's tasks were research related but included administrative work as well as research. He was allowed to work on his own projects using the facilities in his spare time. So he would go there usually on one day of the weekend as well and work on his research. Compared to other interviewees who were only working as *hijōkin kōshi*, his life gained structure and more financial stability through this post. On the three days, he was working as a research assistant; he had fairly regular hours. One additional benefit was the extended access to the facilities that provided him with a space where he could do his own work. Those only working as *hijōkin* were usually spending each day at a different place sharing a big room with all other part-time teachers and being discouraged to use their time spent there for anything other than their

teaching activities. Furthermore, he had the advantage of not having too many *hijōkin kōshi* positions at the same time, therefore reducing the time he needed for preparations that would be done in his time away from the workplace.

Why he involved himself in this line of work is evident when thinking back to the functions an affiliation needs to provide mentioned above, in combination with our knowledge of the financial situation of PhD graduates. Regarding his overall earnings Ogai noted:

"[...] Eh, If you ask me whether the time and energy I invest in my part-time teaching jobs stands in any relation to the pay I get, I think it doesn't. The pay I receive at XX University [research assistant] is a different story, but I think that I'm not paid enough as a part-time teacher."<sup>45</sup>

Saying so, he implied that he was satisfied with the pay he received as a research assistant.

By taking on such a position PhD graduates can gain an affiliation that fulfills all the required functions noted above while at the same time being paid comparably well. Those who are able to secure such positions, therefore, have it easier, because remunerated assistant researcher positions do not interfere with their time budget outside their working hours. Other than Ogai, only Tadae and Naoki were holding similar positions.

### **Unremunerated Work in Academia**

As I previously discussed, working as a *hijōkin kōshi* does not qualify as an affiliation in all regards and the interviewees who were only able to gain a part-time teacher position or those who had not been able to find any position at all used the opportunity to secure a place they could belong to by applying for unremunerated posts as visiting or invited researchers. Many universities and research institutions offer such positions. It was common for

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<sup>45</sup> [...]えー、その非常勤の給与が、自分が使っている時間であつたり自分のエネルギーに比例するものかという、比例はしていないと思います。XX大学のお金、XX大学での給与については、それとはまた別ですけれども、非常勤講師の給与は十分ではないと思います。



interviewees of this study to have at least one additional post as visiting or invited researcher. They would often work at the same university they had graduated from. Visiting and invited researchers are not paid, but, in exchange for publishing a certain number of papers, they are granted access to the library, and in some cases, they would even have a workspace. Saburo's university had such a system in place, and he applied gratefully because he feared the loss of his affiliation and therefore his identity:

"When I graduated my PhD course, I somehow had the feeling that I had lost my identity, I was no longer a student. Because I was neither a company employee nor did I have a full-time position. I asked myself to what institution I would belong to now. I found it a bit strange not knowing where I belong."<sup>46</sup>

Asked about the stipulations he explained: "I don't get paid for it, but I have a desk, the library, and internet and it is a place where I can apply for research funding, at XX University."<sup>47</sup> He further noted that there was no fixed term for this position for graduates of his university because it was not a paid position and therefore not much of a burden for the institution.

Takashi, by the time of his second interview, had even accumulated two positions. He applied for his first when his search for employment was unsuccessful and he was afraid of losing his affiliation:

"As far as the visiting researcher position at XX University is concerned, I asked my supervisor for it. Because I had not found a single job at that time yet and because there was the possibility that I might not even find a part-time teacher position, there was the threat of losing my affiliation; that's why I did this beforehand so that I could at least secure this title."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> 博士課程を卒業した時に、なんかすごいこう、アイデンティティで喪失みたいの感じで、学生でもないし、どこかの組織のなんだろう、会社員とか常勤の人でもないの、自分は何に属しているんだろうというのちょっと不思議に思った。

<sup>47</sup> 給料は出ないんですけど、まっ机と、図書館とインターネットと後、なんだろう、まっ科研費とかを出す時窓口になって、まっXX(incomprehensible) 大学で。

<sup>48</sup> XX大学の招聘研究員のポストは、私が指導教官に、その、お願いをしたんですね。というのも、そのときはまだどこにも決まっていなかったので、もしも非常勤講師が1つも見つからなかったら完全に所属がなくなってしまうという危険があったので、だから、あらかじめ手を打ってですね、とりあえず、その招聘研究員という肩書を確保しておいたということで、それはそのもっと前からお願いをしていました。

Later his second position followed elsewhere when he was invited to join by someone he knew. In contrast to the positions that Saburo described, both of Takashi's positions had a fixed term. The first position, which he asked his professor for, was unpaid, but nevertheless limited to one year. It offered access to the library, and in exchange, he was expected to participate in study groups and publish one paper in this term. The second position has a term of three years and is also unpaid. For this post, he is required to publish one paper in an area related to but still different from his research.

The interviewees' statements on why they were taking on those positions were contradictory. Even though they gave their fears of losing their affiliation as one reason Takashi, for example, stressed that he needed them to carry out his research:

"I don't get paid for my positions at XX University and YY University, but because I can use the research facilities and books and journals, it helps me a lot. So I work at OO University to cover my daily expenses and am using XX University and YY University for research."<sup>49</sup>

However, further analyzing his responses, it became clear that he did not use the facilities on a regular basis because he would have lost time in his busy schedule and had to cover the expenses by himself to get to those universities when there are no meetings. They were fairly far away from his parents' house where he lived. Takashi explained:

"As far as work at XX University and YY University is concerned, I don't have to come in very regularly. [...] For XX University, for example, when I have to come in for a study group my travel expenses won't be covered. For YY University the transportation fee is covered but um because it takes me about 3 hours to get there and back my working time is shorter because of that."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> XX大学とYY大学は、なんていうんですか、給料は出ないんですね。ただ、研究施設とか文献とかは利用することができるという意味で、まあ、非常に助かっているところなんです。なので、まあ、生活はOO大学でやって、研究ではXX大学、YY大学も使わせてもらっているという状況です。

<sup>50</sup> OO社大学とXX大学の仕事に関しては、その、それほど定期的に来ないといけないということはないんですけど、やはり、その、[...]大阪大学については、例えば何か研究会に参加する場合でも別に交通費が出たりするわけではないです。OO社大学は交通費が出ます。交通費は出るんですけど、やはり、その、往復したりするのに、まー、そうですね、やはり3時何ぐらいはかかってしまいますから、[...]まー、働く時間がちょっと短い。

Since PhD graduates have to be economical with their time use and their funds it is, therefore, unlikely that he will go there if he does not have to. So the actual reason for investing time in papers for these positions seems to be connected to the need to keep an affiliation making their social encounters easier and allowing for a self-understanding of being an academic.

On a first glance, these posts appear to be offered out of courtesy in order to protect PhD graduates from losing their affiliation after graduation and therefore presumably diminishing their future chances on the academic labor market because of gaps in their CV. It furthermore seems to be a good deal because they can keep their access to books, journals, and datasets that are needed to keep their own research going. However, on the other hand, universities profit from the poor circumstances in the academic labor market and the high number of PhD graduates, whom they can then employ for nothing and let them publish papers for their institutions, while their graduates' actual use of their facilities seems to be very limited. For the PhD graduates themselves, taking on such a position pushes them to be active in research and to publish, which will most likely be beneficial for their career progression. In addition, it helps them to keep an affiliation and avoid gaps in the CV.

### **Research**

Another significant activity Japanese PhD graduates from the humanities were involved in was their research. Continuing their own research was seen as key by all participants to be able to secure more stable employment in the future. Ichiro noted: "I think it is most important to study in order to become a professor or to get such a position. Hm, [...] writing a lot of papers, publishing a book, giving presentations at conferences. I think it's most important to

show such accomplishments."<sup>51</sup> Kaori as well guessed that what is needed are, "Probably publications"<sup>52</sup> and Saburo added, "In order to become a full-timer, you need publications, achievements in research and education I think."<sup>53</sup> Even though the goal seemed to be clear for everyone, the amount of work they put into it differed significantly. The interviewees in this sample showed a broad spectrum of involvement in those activities that ranged from spending every free minute for it to admittedly not doing any research on a regular basis anymore. Nonetheless keeping their research activities alive, no matter to what degree, was necessary to preserve an academic identity. In this section, I will demonstrate to what extent the interviewees were doing their own research and explain the reasons for why they made compromises on their research time. Furthermore, I will assess how productive they were in their efforts.

Naoki exemplified the research-focused end of the spectrum. After taking his PhD, Naoki managed to become a regular worker at a private company that was utilizing software he had used during his studies. He had been working for them doing *arubaito*<sup>54</sup> during his time as a PhD student already and chose to work with them afterward. His declared goal was to become a university professor someday. Thus, in order to not lose touch with academia, he reduced his working hours at his full-time position in order to be able to work as *hijōkin kōshi* on two days of the week. During that time he was still involved in his research and spent every free minute he had on his efforts. He would go so far to take vacations to go abroad for fieldwork. None of his own time was used for recreation or other purposes but his studies. His research-centered lifestyle finally caused him to break with his employer. He resigned because he found it difficult to switch from his work at this firm to research after coming home:

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<sup>51</sup> 教授というかそういうポストに、就くにはやっぱりあの勉強するのが一番大事だと思います。でまー、[...] たくさん論文を書いたりとか、あの本を出したりとか、まー学会で発表するとか。まっそういう実績を積むのが一番重要だとは思いますが。

<sup>52</sup> たぶん業績。

<sup>53</sup> まず常勤になるには、実績と、研究実績と教育実績だと思う。

<sup>54</sup> A Japanese word for a side job, especially used for students who earn something extra on the side.

"Eh, the place I work at now is the research center of a city office. I'm on a limited contract there, for three years. But my work there is research. At my former workplace, I had to work with this software and switching to my own research in my head after I came home was tough. At the place I work now I do research, and now I can do research all day long, it's not that hard."<sup>55</sup>

Taking a look at how his days are structured, it became apparent that he is working every day and doing research for a couple of hours as well. He told me that he came home from his work at the city office at around six in the evening, ate dinner, and then focused on his own studies between seven and eleven or twelve. He explained a similar pattern for the one day of the week when he worked as a part-time teacher. That left him with four to five hours of research per day. On the weekends he did housework and research. Asked about what bad changes had occurred since he started working he noted: "Bad changes in my daily life, hm, I don't see anything as bad actually, but because I'm doing research after I get home, I have almost no time besides research. But I don't really think that this is bad."<sup>56</sup> His involvement shows that he is still aiming for his goal of becoming a professor some day and is willingly sacrificing his free time for that purpose. He was even willing to sacrifice his stable position at a company and traded it for working on a contract to optimize his efforts towards that goal. The connection he has with his own studies is passionate and it working in academia seems to be more than just work for him. He appears to like what he does which is why he can engage in those activities on a regular basis.

The most common patterns of research activity were limiting it to one designated day per week or doing research on the weekends. Okito was a relatively good example of the weekend pattern. He saw himself as an academic and was hoping to be able to advance to a

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<sup>55</sup> [...]今のところは、あの、市役所の中にある研究センターなんです。で、こっちのほうは任期付きなんですけど、3年間の。ただ、こっちだと、えっと、仕事の内容そのものが研究になるので、なんていうんですかね、前だと仕事をしている間はその業務についてXXXについて、家に帰ってから研究の（レンレイ？）、ちょっと頭の切り替えが大変だったんですね。今のところは研究やって、研究やってなので1日中研究できて、そんなに大変じゃないというイメージですね。

<sup>56</sup> 生活で悪い変化（...）、まー、自分の中では悪いとは何も思ってないですけど、家に帰ってから研究をやっているんで、研究以外の時間はほとんどなくなってきましたね。うん。ただ、自分の中では、それは悪いとはあんまり思ってないです。

more stable position as well. "[...] I think work for me is writing papers, I don't get money for it, but writing papers is my destiny, my role in society so to say."<sup>57</sup> As far as his career in five years was concerned he said: "I think I will get a post, gain a position as a result. I think I will have a higher standing than now."<sup>58</sup> At the time of the interview, he was solely working as *hijōkin kōshi*. Asked how he uses his time he replied:

"I work as *hijōkin kōshi*, and it's pretty tough. The preparations [...] take a lot of time and keep me busy on weekdays. I can only write papers on the weekends, but even on the weekends (laughing), I can't get much done [...] because I do some useless things as well it takes a lot of time (laughing)."<sup>59</sup>

Confirming with him what he was doing on his weekends he noted:

"On Saturdays, I sometimes participate in research meetings, [...]. And I'm spending part of the weekend for my hobby, [...]. But I don't use a full day for that only the evening. On Sundays, I regularly go out for fieldwork. (laughing) [...] Recently I spend a lot of time taking field notes."<sup>60</sup>

Most interviewees had similar arrangements for their weekends in particular. Usually, the entire workweek would be consumed by remunerated work such as part-time teaching jobs and research positions, leaving no time to spare for their research. Those efforts would then be shifted to the weekends, where they are competing for time with housework, hobbies, time with the family and preparations for the *hijōkin* classes of the following week. Compared to Naoki who could account for more than 20 hours per week spent on his own projects, it was significantly less for most interviewees in this sample. Even though they were still seeing themselves as academics and working towards the goal of a regular career at a university or

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<sup>57</sup> [...]やっぱり論文書くのが仕事とっていて、それは給料が出ないんですけども、なんかそれはなんか使命というか社会的役割としてはやっぱり論文書くのが。

<sup>58</sup> だからそれがまっポストに、やっぱりそうだと結果として何か仕事与えられていると思います。だから今よりも、やっぱり地位は高いと思います、はい。

<sup>59</sup> まっ非常勤講師をやっています、はい、でそれで非常勤講師もまっ結構大変ですね、[...]結構時間がかかります、だから、まっ平日はちょっとそのことで頭がいっぱいです。はい、だからまっ週末だけ(laughter) 論文を書きますが、[...]まっそこで本当に集中してあればもっと早いけど、まだmhm (thinking) まだちょっと無駄なこともちょっとするから、それでまたちょっと時間かかる(laughter)。

<sup>60</sup> [...]まっえーと土曜日に時々研究会が、[...]。後えーと、まっ趣味をやっているのがまー一部ありますね、あの週一回だけね。[...]えーと後ね日曜日に僕はやっぱりフィールドワークによく行きますね。(laughter) [...]結構フィールドに行くんですよ、[...]最近は多いですねフィールドノート取る時間が、はい。

research institution their own research efforts which are needed for career advancement, were suffering and reduced to only a couple of hours per week.

The last pattern that could be observed for research arrangements was the complete halt of all regular research activity. Reasons for giving up research were the need to invest time for work, other activities listed in Chapter 6, and mainly economic factors. Kaori's example represented this type. She was the most active part-time teacher in this study, teaching ten classes per week. How did her work influence her future chances?

"The fact that I do not have time to write papers anymore is the biggest problem for the future outlook. [...] At the moment I'm happy if I can manage to write papers in the summer or winter holidays, but it's difficult to make time for research. But more than the time, funding is a problem. You get less money than the full-time teachers, and it's a problem that you can't apply for research funding. It's a problem that I can't go far for my research."<sup>61</sup>

Even though she knew that it was key to produce papers, she did not have the time nor the funding to do the research she was interested in. She did not dislike her job as a part-time teacher since in her understanding not only research but education were both parts of an academic's career. Asked what she considered her work she replied: "My work? Teaching people. My work is explaining complicated things so that they are easy to understand such as things that I have learned and new scientific information and about problems in the world of research."<sup>62</sup> When talking about her career in the next five years, she imagined it as follows:

"Hm, Ideally, I don't know whether I'll still have work or not. But I think it would be nice if I can continue like this. Because I want to get married. I still haven't found a partner, but I really want to get married. It would be ideal if I would be married and had a child five years from now."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> 将来性はかなり、論文を書く時間がやっぱりなくなってしまうというのが一番のネックですね。[...] 今は論文を書くのはほとんど夏休みとか冬休みの長期休暇にできればいいかなぐらいで、調査に行く時間もやっぱり厳しい。調査に行く時間が厳しいというよりも、常勤の先生に比べると金額が、もらえる金額も少ないですし、科研が取れないという問題もあるので、やはり調査費を工面するのに困ってしまって、遠くの、遠方のほうの調査に行けないという部分が難点かなというのは。

<sup>62</sup> 私の仕事？人に伝えることかな。学んできたことであったり、新しいことをかみ砕いていかに学術的というか、研究の世界ではどういふふうな問題点があるのかというのを分かりやすく伝えるというのが仕事かなと。

<sup>63</sup> まあ、理想としては、仕事に就けているかどうかというのははっきりとは分かりません。でも、今のまま現状維持でもいいかなっていうのが1つはあります。なぜかという、私は結婚したい。ま

I came to the conclusion that a shift in goals had occurred and she had abandoned her own research as a result. She might have changed course because of time and financial constraints, but being an educator seemed to be enough for her at some point, and her new goal was starting a family. Nonetheless, in her descriptions, she depicted herself as someone still doing research when the situation allows it. It seems to be a necessary part of an academic identity to display oneself as being involved in research. So instead of admitting that they, in fact, were no longer doing any research, people tended to come up with a story that made them still look like academics.

Those who opted out of academia completely were worried about what others might think because of their decision. Yahiko had quit all his research activities because of financial reasons as he explained. He saw no future in his field since he was not even able to find posts as a part-time teacher anymore and was not successful in the search for a full-time position either. He shifted his attention towards his work in education outside university and was making a living doing so. However, towards the end of the interview he showed concern regarding what other academics might think of a dropout like him: "[...] I would honestly like to know what people think about a person that quits research, a person like me who has quit."<sup>64</sup> He seemed worried that he might be perceived as a traitor by other academics. I came to the conclusion that the last group, without regular research activities, was only trying to circumvent this stigma.

When considering the participants' goal of full-time employment in academia, it should be clear that continuous efforts for their own research and producing papers is indispensable for career advancement. However, the reality of their daily lives showed that only a few

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だ相手がいるわけではないですけれども、結婚したいと考えているので、5年後ぐらいには結婚して子どもがいればいいかなというのが一番の理想。

<sup>64</sup> [...] 研究途中で辞めた人が、僕ぐらいやって辞めた人が、どういう風に思っているのかむしろ知りたいぐらいですけどね。



participants were investing the time needed to get ahead. Commitment to research activities was still present, but in terms of time-use insignificant in producing academic output on a regular basis. It could also be observed that people started to set new priorities in their lives and were, therefore, abandoning research for good, even though they might not openly admit to this decision. Those who were still prolonging their research had casual involvement. It was at the level of a hobby, but they were still active enough to call themselves academics.

### **Leaving Academia - The Value of a PhD in Japan's Private Economy**

In contrast to most PhD graduates in this sample, who were firmly committed toward a career in academia, I had the chance to conduct interviews with two PhD graduates from other fields. They provide an alternative view on the choices presented to a PhD graduate in Japan and are therefore included here as well. In this short section, I will explore why the interviewees decided to leave academia, what difficulties they encountered when looking for a job and what value their PhD had in the private economy.

Machiko had just finished her PhD in a public health related field and started working in a consulting position when we met for the interview. For her, there was some connection to her studies because her new employer provides services in the area of public health. The other PhD in regular employment outside academia was Madoka. She had just completed her PhD in an engineering subject but was working for a foreign firm in Japan. Unlike Machiko, her field of study was completely unrelated to her new job.

During the interview, I asked both why they had decided to leave academia after graduation. Both provided me with a similar answer. Machiko argued: "I thought that I can't endure the situation of not knowing whether I will have work or not. [...] If you work at a Japanese firm, [...] although it's said that lifetime employment no longer exists, [...] it is very

difficult to fire you once you have become a regular employee."<sup>65</sup> Madoka as well characterized a career in academia as too insecure: "The image of academia is not good, [...] to try it in academia is really insecure."<sup>66</sup> For both the employment insecurity an academic career comprised was their reason to look for alternatives.

During job-hunting Machiko felt inferior to other applicants because of her comparably advanced age, she was 30 at the time and the fact that she, despite her advanced age, did not have any work experience. She was afraid not to find anything like so many other PhD graduates she knew. Even when she made it to the interview stage, the selection committee regularly asked if she would not prefer becoming a university teacher, which further intensified her fear of being judged based on prejudices that are commonly connected with PhD graduates. For example, having a tendency to overthink everything or to lack communication skills as mentioned by Nishida (2013) in Chapter 2. Madoka felt discriminated because of the sometimes rigid rules regarding new hires in Japanese firms. She especially disliked that some companies would not hire people above masters level on principal and that companies who did not have any experience with PhDs yet were reluctant to give her a chance because they were not sure how to position her in their workforce. When applying, she, therefore, focused on companies who had hired PhDs in the past and foreign firms, which were said to be more open to PhDs.

For the reason that both did not seem to be willing to take a chance in academia, it was interesting to ask why they entered a PhD course in the first place. Machiko had assumed that she might have better chances on the labor market when she gets a PhD. She came to this perception during an internship at the WHO: "During my masters, I had the chance to

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<sup>65</sup> 次に仕事があるかないか分からないという状況でお仕事をするのは、自分ではできないなと思って、[...]日本の民間企業であれば、[...]終身雇用はなくなったと言われてはいるんですけど、[...]1回正社員として雇った従業員を辞めさせるのは、無理とは言わないけど、困難なんですね。

<sup>66</sup> やっぱりアカデミックにいいイメージがなかったということがありますね。[...]ずっとアカデミックで行くことはスゴイ不安定です

participate in an internship at the World Health Organization. There were a lot of non-medical doctors working around me and I thought it is necessary to have one to prove one's expertise."<sup>67</sup>

Madoka, on the other hand, did not have a particular reason to enter. She did not feel the need to start to work, could afford it and was interested in the subject of her studies. In retrospect, Machiko explained that she regretted taking her PhD even though it had been a good experience. Madoka, when asked, said she did not regret taking her PhD and did so because she was interested in doing research, which was not possible during her masters. Both interviewees agreed that they did not need the specific skills they acquired during their doctoral course. Machiko, however, could build on her basic knowledge about public health, while Madoka stressed that her advanced writing skills, her logical thinking and her knowledge about statistics were useful even in her current job. When asked how they evaluate the chances of PhD graduates on the labor market, Machiko explained:

"I think there is a chance. [...] But as a prerequisite, they have to be able to adapt to the people around them, listen to what they have to say. If they don't have the capability to adapt, they are only eccentrics. There are a lot of strange people among PhDs [...], me included, who lock themselves into their little world. [...] They look down on others, somehow strange. It is ok to have confidence in your expertise, but it is not ok to rub it in other people's faces. People like that are of no use to society if they don't become a scientist in their field."<sup>68</sup>

Apparently, the prejudices toward PhDs mentioned by Nishida (2013) in Chapter 2 have some truth to them when even PhDs themselves admit to being eccentric. If the PhDs themselves

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<sup>67</sup> 修士課程のときにWHOという世界保健機構でインターンシップをする機会をあって、そのときにいた周りの方々はメディカルドクターが多くて、メディカルドクターじゃないノンメディカルの方は博士号だとかPHDを持っている方々がけっこうたくさんいて、自分の専門性、これができますよと言うにはやっぱりPHDが必要なんだろうなという

<sup>68</sup> チャンスはなくはないというふうに思ってます。[...] ただし、そのための必要条件として適応力というか、ちゃんと周りに合わせられるだとか、人の話が聞けるだとか、そういった適応能力を博士の人材が持ってないと、ただの偏屈な人たちの集まりなので、そういう意味で、なんというのかなあ。博士にいる人って、[...]自分自身を振り返ってみてもだけど、狭い世界にずっと閉じこもっているので変な人が多い。[...]人をちょっと見下すような人とか、なんていうか、ちょっとなんか変。自分の専門性に対する自信があっても、それはいいとは思いますが、その自信を人にひけらかしたりとかするものじゃないと思うし、そんなの社会に出たら、はっきり言って役に立たないよ。研究者にならない限り、その分野の。

think this way, it is hard to change the perception in the public eye and the private economy. Madoka was convinced that the labor market for PhDs had improved because companies seemed to have discovered value in having a diverse labor force.

On the non-academic labor market, the perception of a PhD is strongly linked to the prejudices already mentioned in Chapter 2. A PhD seems to be a handicap when looking for a job in the private economy, and those trying to find a regular job outside university are well aware of that and are intimidated by this handicap. As could be observed in Machiko's case, they would compare themselves to other new graduates and quickly come to the conclusion that they might not be able to offer what employers are seeking. This was one of the reasons for working as *hijōkin kōshi* mentioned in the last chapter. At least in the interviewees' perception, their PhD is worthless outside academia. Unable to use the degree to their advantage, the PhDs I interviewed saw themselves as inexperienced, old applicants and lacked self-confidence.

### Summary

This chapter added to the understanding of work in academia and showed that the interviewees were not only working as part-time teachers, but were involving in other forms of academic employment, and of course, research, which many saw as their main function as academics and as essential for career progression. Aside from obvious economic reasons and the fact that other forms of academic employment came closer to the kind of position they desired, I argued that the need for an affiliation was an important motivator to seek other positions that were easier to explain than the work of an *hijōkin kōshi*. A good affiliation had to be easy to explain to people in and outside academia, provided them with resources and facilities to progress their academic careers, and was needed to make them feel as real

academics. A PhD in Japan, in that sense, is a necessity when aiming for a career in academia. From the perception side, however, people only become academics when they have a corresponding affiliation to affirm their position.

The part-time researcher positions some of the interviewees were working in proved to be less precarious than part-time teaching. Usually project based, the term of employment was as long as three years, pay was better, and with a fixed amount of working hours per week, they could gain access to employment insurance more easily than part-time teachers. The fixed working hours, however, reduced their level of autonomy at work.

Visiting researcher positions, on the other hand, did not offer any pay, but they gave the PhD graduates the possibility to gain an affiliation with access to research materials and a workspace. This affiliation made it easier for the interviewees to describe where they belong to and what they do. In addition, they could avoid gaps in their CVs.

When exploring how the interviewees involved in research, it became apparent that precarious academic employment negatively influenced the capability of PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences to work on their own research projects, therefore preventing many of them from producing publications. In this chapter, I was able to identify three distinct approaches to research activities. One group was very active and involved in research, which was enabled by working in part-time researcher positions, which, with their fixed working hours, provided more structure to their daily lives and made research activities easier to accommodate. The second group only could spare a day per week or the weekends for their research due to their busy schedules as part-time teachers. The high unconfined workload that was identified in the previous chapter was hindering them from working on their own projects. The last group seemed to have given up on research because of time and financial constraints caused by precarious academic employment as well. These differences of involving in research activities proved to be the first signs of the three distinct approaches to managing an academic

career in non-regular employment, which I will introduce in the chapters to come. Research had to take place in the interviewees' free time and was, therefore, competing with time spent for the preparation of *hijōkin* classes and other non-academic activities such as housework, time spent with family or hobbies. The latter aspect will be addressed in the following chapter. In the previous chapter it was argued that even part-time teachers are evaluated based on their academic achievements, and while the informal way of job distribution reduces the importance of such achievements for *hijōkin* positions, a regular position in academia can not be reached without them. How successful a PhD graduate can make time for research activities is therefore connected to his chances for upward mobility.

Finally, after having discussed the value of a PhD in the academic world in Japan to a certain extent, it was necessary to address the degree's value in the private economy as well. The two PhD holders who started their careers as regular employees completed the picture with their accounts. Their story made clear that a PhD is not valued in the private economy and they understood their higher education as a handicap rather than an advantage. The interviewees seemed to see themselves as unattractive hires due to their lack of practical experience and their advanced age compared to other graduates.

The following chapter will deal with non-academic activities, explore how those activities were affected by the interviewees' employment situation and also address the influence of social factors on the PhDs' work and life.

## **6. Non-Academic Activities and Social Factors Influencing Daily Life**

The time spent for remunerated work and for the purpose of gaining an affiliation took priority in the interviewees' lives. The activities listed in this section can be differentiated by their lack of an obligatory character. They do not indicate working hours, and there is no power to enforce the involvement in them other than the individuals themselves. So whether or not to be involved in those activities, or how much time to spend on them, was up to the PhD graduates themselves. What the activities have in common is that they all take place in their limited free time and therefore are competing with research activities and the time needed to prepare *hijōkin* classes, as noted in the previous chapter. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the effects of precarious academic employment on the interviewees' lives, it is necessary to analyze how the listed activities were influenced by how they work and reciprocally how the involvement in those activities influenced their academic careers. Also, the role of social factors in influencing the interviewees' priorities will be addressed.

### **Housework**

For the participants of my study, whether living alone or together with their parents, housework was part of their daily lives. Here the issue of housework shall not be discussed in length and all its facets but will be limited to the aspects that seemed to be unique when academics are involved in it.

Those participants living alone were, of course, doing their housework. Yahiko and Naoki, for example, could not make time for it during the week, so they used the weekends to do their necessary chores. Naoki explained: "On my days off, eh, on Saturdays for example, I

get up a little later around 10 in the morning. Then I would do housework until the early afternoon. Tidy the room, clean and do the laundry [...]."<sup>69</sup>

An interesting observation in this sample was that housework in academic households was shared almost equally when a partner was present. Yaichiro described how he and his partner shared the housework:

"On weekdays, because we have two elementary school children at home, [...], I make their breakfast because they have to be at school by eight or seven thirty. After they go to school [...], I go to university and work, eat lunch, work some more and then make sure to be home by six. If my partner has prepared dinner already, I eat or help her to prepare it if she didn't prepare it yet. Then we eat, and I play with the kids, [...]."<sup>70</sup>

From the point of women, this had the effect of reducing the burden of work during the free time and made it possible for them to use more of it as they pleased. At the same time, the share of housework done by men increased. For the general population, there is still a strong gender difference when it comes to working in the household. Even though the number of dual-income households has increased in recent years in Japan, suggesting changes in the traditional division of labor, women still carry most of the burden and in general work about three times longer doing household chores (Ishii-Kuntz 2008).

The most interesting cases in this study regarding housework were Ukiko and Takashi. Ukiko was the oldest interviewee of my sample and was experiencing a gradual decline in the number of *hijōkin* posts she could secure. Other than those posts she held an unremunerated researcher position at a women's university that provided her with an affiliation and a place to go. As previously mentioned, at the time when she ended her career in the private economy she also ended her marriage. She was fairly positive about the changes she had made but expressed

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<sup>69</sup> 休日は、えっと、例えば土曜日だと、朝ちょっとゆっくりして10時ぐらいに起きて、それから昼過ぎぐらいまでは家事をします。部屋の片づけとか、掃除だとか、洗濯だとかやって、[...]

<sup>70</sup> 平日は、子どもが、小学生が2人いるので、[...]8時ぐらいに、7時半ぐらいに学校に行くので、僕が朝食を作ったり、作らなかつたりして、8時ぐらいに学校に行って、子どもたちは学校に行って、僕はその後ぐらい、[...]、大学に来て、仕事をして、お昼ご飯を食べて、また仕事をして、6時前ぐらいには帰るようにしていて、帰ってパートナーの人がご飯を作ってくれていたらご飯を食べて、ご飯を作ってなかったら一緒にご飯を作って、ご飯を食べて、子どもたちと遊んだりして、お風呂に入っ  
て、[...]



dissatisfaction with the fact that she had not been able to earn enough to support herself, which was apparently not only a financial issue but felt like a lack of recognition of her skills. At the time of the interview, she was living with her new partner, a full-time professor. When asked if she was satisfied with her life at the moment she explained:

"I don't actually feel much dissatisfaction with my daily life. But depending on your stance what you feel will slowly change. Hm, for example, eh, giving a very private problem, at one point, I broke with the social life that I had created, I was married, and I had a job. I wanted to do research, so I quit my job and ended my marriage. And that's why at this point I had the wish to earn money with the new thing I had begun. I wanted to make a living in this world [of academia]. That's why I think it's very unfortunate that I don't have economic power at the moment. Maybe I didn't have the energy that it takes, and my age was a problem, the timing might have been a problem as well, but as a result, I couldn't make it, eh I feel defeated. [...] Another thing, if you as a researcher are not able to work in a full-time position, you get the feeling of not being seen as a real researcher, I don't know if this is true or not, but it feels bad."<sup>71</sup>

Because of this feeling, and because she had more time at her disposal than her partner, she was caring for the household and involved in housework on a daily basis. When describing how she spends her usual days, housework had a fixed spot, and she referred to it as her work. Even though she seemed to enjoy those tasks, her taking over housework was a way she could compensate for the economic weakness she felt and somehow repay her partner who was supporting her. While such a gendered division of labor does not seem too odd to the observer knowing that there are full-time housewives who operate on a similar logic, it sticks out in academic relationships, which are usually thought to be more egalitarian. However, the function of housework as a way to repay or repent their economic weakness was not only

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<sup>71</sup> あの、毎日の生活そのものには実はあまり不満はないですね。ただ、自分の／自分がどこにスタンスをおくかによって、感じることは少しづつ違ってきていて。mhm (thinking) 例えばえーと、これはものすごく私のプライベートな問題として、一点自分が始めていた生活、結婚もして、それか仕事もして、始めていた社会生活を私が学問を勉強／研究がしたいということで、一回する全部切ってしまったでしょう。仕事も辞めたし、結婚も辞めました。で、だからその時に私としてはその新しく始めたことで自分でちゃんとやっぱりできれば稼ぎたかった。その世界で食って行くというか、その世界で食べていきたいと狙っていた。だから自分はきちんと今経済力がないということに関してはとても残念である。で、自分がやっぱりあの力持たらなかつたのかもしれないし、年齢の問題もあるし、それからタイミングの問題も色々あるけれども、結果として私はそれをできなかつたっていう、あの敗北感があります。[...] もう1つは／今後はですか。今後は研究者として何か、そういうフルタイムの職に就いていないと、研究者として一人前に見られないっていうような、あのこれは本当にそうかどうか分からないけれど、なんかこうそういう気分にはなれる。それはちょっとしんどい。

observed among female participants. Takashi was heavily involved in housework at home. After his graduation, he was only able to secure one teaching position and several affiliations that were unpaid. He was therefore not able to afford to live by himself and was still living with his parents:

"[...] I help in the household because they let me live at home even though I can't pay for it. I can't pay for it because my salary is way too low. My parents cover the expenses for food and utilities, quite a share. Because of this situation, I'm helping in the household; I repay them so to say. What I'm doing is, I plan the meals, go grocery shopping, cook, and clean up after cooking when I'm there. I do the dishes; I do everything. And I do the laundry and cleaning as well. That's why I do my research until six in the evening and from six work in the household."<sup>72</sup>

This situation had changed by the time of the third interview. At that point, the repayment period of his student loans had started, and with his low income, he was not able to make the payments. He made arrangements with his mother, and she paid the loan in his place, but he would now return what he owed by paying her small installments every month. His feeling of indebtedness to his family had grown drastically. Because of this development, he had now completely taken over all household chores, leaving him less time for other activities.

Housework is usually not something that is enjoyed but has to be done. In this sample sharing the housework was common, but at the same time, the time spent on it was increased when people felt indebted. For PhD graduates, being involved in housework was one way to make themselves useful, which they could not do by contributing financially. So contributing with their labor was seen as a suitable substitute and a token of gratitude. As could be observed in Takashi's example, such a reaction could significantly reduce the time the interviewees had

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<sup>72</sup> [...]家事を手伝っています。というのも、僕、家に住まわせてもらっているんですけども、お金が入れないんですよ。あまりにも給料が少ないので、家にお金を入れることができないので、もちろん食費とか光熱費とかも、いったら、かなりの部分、親に負担してもらっているんですね。なので、そういう事情があるので、いろんな家事の手伝いとかをして、いわばお返しをしています。で、具体的な内容としては、いったら、献立のメニューの計画、買い物、調理、それから調理が終わった後の片付けですね。食器洗いとか、というのを一通り僕が全部やっています。で、あと洗濯関係とか掃除とか、というのもやっています。だから、夕方、6時ぐらいまでは僕、研究をしているんですけども、それ以降は家事をしています。

to their own disposal and therefore other activities sharing the same budget of free time had to suffer.

## Family

Family plays a significant role in the life of Japanese PhD graduates. First and foremost, their parents provide them financial support and a place to live in their most vulnerable time right after graduation as already mentioned in Chapter 4. As already addressed in the section on housework, this helps them to stay on track, but at the same time leads some of them to help more in the household to repay this graciousness. In this section, the parents are not at the center of attention, but rather the PhD graduates with spouses or children. After considering the factors that made having a family of their own feasible, the implications of family relations for the use of free time and work shall be discussed.

In particular, the male interviewees were only married if they had found a partner while still a student or after they found a full-time position. During their insecure career as *hijōkin kōshi*, there were a variety of reasons preventing contact to the other sex as well as family planning. One aspect was that they while working under such circumstance, had very limited social contacts due to the nature of their jobs with very short interactions at their different workplaces. Ogai told me: "You can say that there is not much communication at my two *hijōkin* workplaces. There is almost no opportunity to talk to the other part-time teachers."<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, their economic situation made socializing during free time difficult. As Takashi pointed out: "I'm not going out with my friends often because it costs money [...] I'm the only one who is not a full-time employee, so I'm in no situation to go out drinking or to meet new

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<sup>73</sup> ただし、非常勤講師を行っている2つの大学の中では、他の非常勤講師との交流はあまりないと言えます。他の非常勤講師の人と会話をする機会はありませんね。

people for example."<sup>74</sup> As a result, situations in which a potential partner could be found were rare. In addition, a feeling of inferiority could be observed for the male interviewees. The sense of uncertainty about their future hindered them in such endeavors. Ogai, when asked how he imagined his future in the next five years in terms of family life explained: "It's hard to think about anything else as long as you haven't found a secure place of employment."<sup>75</sup> For the women in this sample, their social standing did not seem to be critical, which is certainly linked to the fact that it is more common for women in Japan to be part of the auxiliary workforce. So in their case, there was no need to fulfill a provider role in a potential relationship, which made it easier for them to find partners. Both Tadae and Ukiko had found new partners while they were working in academia. Precarious employment as a cause for delaying marriage or as a cause for not being able to marry at all is nothing new. As already mentioned in Chapter 2, Osawa et al. (2013) could show a connection between the yearly income and marriage rates in Japan with 3 million Yen as a line from which marriage becomes more likely. She did not go into detail why exactly such an income was necessary. Through my interviews, it has become clear that men still had the idea that they can only start a family when they can provide for them with an appropriate income. Also, social deprivation caused by how they were employed, their social status and their economic situation, made contact to potential partners difficult if not impossible.

The cases of Naoki and Yahiko were interesting examples of married couples where the women were able to find a full-time position while the men were working as irregular workers in education. Their stories help to assess the influence of being married on time-use. To my surprise even though both of them were married, both were living apart from their partners.

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<sup>74</sup> ただ、その、友達と外出をするとなると、やはりお金がちょっとかかってしまうので、それほどはやってないですね。[...]正社員じゃないのは僕ぐらいなので、あんまり、その、例えば飲み会とか懇親会とかには行けないですね、なかなか。という状況です。

<sup>75</sup> 仕事が安定した地位にならなければ、えー、それ以外のことについて考えることは難しいと思います。

Yahiko and his wife got married when they were still PhD students, his wife is an academic just like him but was already working as a government employee at the time of the interview. While he was living and working in the Kansai Area, she was working in the Kantō Area. Both spent a long time as post-docs and tried to find employment with the same universities, so they applied together, but were unsuccessful. He stopped his research activities and focused on his jobs at *yobikō* and *juku* for financial reasons and because he no longer saw a chance for himself to gain something more stable in academia. Since they were living apart, the influence on the marriage partner's life was limited:

"Because my wife is living in Kantō, I'm living alone [...]. Because I live alone, I have to eat by myself. That's why I invite friends or *kōhai* or would go out to eat, that's how it is. And since music is my hobby, I might go to a concert and go out to eat afterward."<sup>76</sup>

He had to care for his household all by himself but seemed to enjoy the freedoms of this arrangement as well, spending time with friends or for his hobbies instead of spending it with his wife.

Naoki and his wife were living separated as well. He was working in the Kantō Region while she was working as a state employee in Kyūshū. He noted that it would be difficult for someone working in a city office to relocate. This relationship seems to have existed from their time as students as well, and the search for a job send them into different areas of the country. Again, because they were living apart, being married did not have much influence on his time use other than making him the only person responsible for housework.

For both examples, it is interesting to think about why the spouses were living apart and what this behavior tells us about them and their priorities. Both women had been able to gain stable jobs as state employees and were superior in terms of status. Nonetheless, both men did not seem to be willing to give up their posts and to relocate. An obvious reason was

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<sup>76</sup> [...]まっ妻が関東に住んでいますから、一人暮らしなので、[...]。だから、一人暮らしなので自分でご飯を食べないといけないので、友達とか後輩を誘って、ご飯食べに行ったりとか、そんな感じなので、だからまー後はまー音楽が趣味なので、コンサート行ってからご飯とか。

assumedly the way their work is structured. Working on yearly contracts only leaves a small window of opportunity for change when the contracts end and failure to find a new post in the new location would mean a substantial loss of income at least for a year. Moreover, a change in location means leaving their network, which is providing them with jobs. As discussed in Chapter 4, referral is the main method of job distribution for *hijōkin kōshi* jobs. It is, therefore, a career-threatening move to change location, and this might have prevented them from relocating to where their full-time employed wives worked. Even though the couples in this sample proved to be more egalitarian regarding gender roles, the husbands' statements allow for the interpretation that living apart is also a way to avoid conflicts and enables them to sustain their current lifestyle. Naoki, when talking about what he disliked about his daily life at the time of the interview told me: "One thing is that my income is low. Another that I don't have much free time. At the moment I'm living apart from my wife, but if we would live together, she would always be mad at me."<sup>77</sup> As already mentioned in the section on research activities Naoki spent every free minute of his day for his own research and went even so far to give up a full-time position to make the daily transition between work and his research easier for him. Here he was assuming that it would cause conflicts if he spends too much time on work and research if they would live together. His research-oriented lifestyle might have come to an end, and I therefore presume that he will not relocate as long as he has not reached his goal of full-time employment to preserve the freedoms he enjoys without the need to fulfill gender roles.

Tadae and Ukiko were both living together with their partners. Ukiko was more involved in the household because she felt bad about her economic weakness and because she wanted to support her partner, as discussed in the section on housework. In Tadae's case, living

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<sup>77</sup> 1つは、やっぱり収入が少ないということ。で、もう1つは、やっぱりプライベートな時間がない。うん。なので、今は妻と別居をしているんですけど、これ、同居、一緒に住んでいたら怒られるというのは常々ありますね。

together reduced the work she had to do at home because her husband was helping with housework and childrearing. Especially while he was still a post-doc and at home regularly, he took care of most of the chores. This situation changed slightly after he got a job, but in general, both seemed to be working together as well as they could. Sadly, they told me nothing about conflicts at home or about time they lose because they spend it with their partner.

For couples, both living apart or living together, no significant impact on time use could be observed in this sample. For those living together the time spent on housework was shared and those living apart were able to use their time without the need to consider their partner but had to take care of all household chores themselves.

An influence on time use could only be observed when the couples had children. This, however, was rarely the case. Only two interviewees of this sample had children. Even though the sample size does not allow for generalizations, the attitude of the male interviewees suggests that they will not start a family until they feel they can provide for one through stable employment. They certainly won't do so while still living with their parents as the statement above from Ogai suggests.

The two interviewees with children in this sample were Tadae and Yaichiro. Tadae was one of the 'returnees' who had changed her career from being a regular employee to academia when she could not accommodate both work and family anymore. Her child was born right after she finished her undergraduate studies. After getting a divorce when changing jobs, she found a new partner who was a post-doc at the time of the interview and both cared for the child and did housework. In terms of time use, she belonged to the group of those who only had the weekend for their research. This time was further reduced because she had a child: "[...] I can only work on my papers on one day of the week. And I can only do it after my child is asleep, So that's when I do it. On Saturdays and Sundays because I have a child (laughing)

[...].<sup>78</sup> So her research activities were limited to the weekends when her child was asleep. Her free time was more or less family time and her research had the least priority of all her tasks. As noted already she was sharing housework and childrearing with her husband, but when doing her research at home on the weekends, this did not seem to be a relief.

For Yaichiro the situation was similar. In contrast to the other interviewees, he was no longer working as *hijōkin* but had managed to get a full-time position limited to five years. Working full-time reduced the amount of time he could allocate freely. His work was focused on education and administration, and he had to deal with exchange students and Japanese students that were willing to go abroad. Regarding his research activities he explained:

"[...] At the beginning I was told, 'We are hiring you for a five-year project' I'm in my second year now. 'Of course, you have to work, but please use the time to do your own research as well, so that you can find a good place of employment after those five years.'<sup>79</sup>

However, asked where and when he was doing his own research he told me:

"I'm mainly doing it at home. I was told that I could do my research here [his workplace] if I have time and there is not much to do, and I even have a couple of books here, but lately I'm busy and don't have time. I almost do no research [...] I do it at home, yes."<sup>80</sup>

However, on coming home he would be met by his small family with two children, whom he enjoyed spending time with. Asked what he does on his days off and after work, he replied:

"[...] When I come home [...] I eat dinner and play with the kids [...] on the weekends, in the morning, I sleep a little longer. Hum, how long? Until eight or nine, and if the kids want to eat bread, I prepare it [...] if the kids say they want to go somewhere I take them [...]."<sup>81</sup> Thinking

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<sup>78</sup> [...] 論文が書けるというのは1週間に1日ぐらいしかありませんね。で、後はもうあの子供が寝てからやるとか、そういう感じでやっているの、で、土曜日と日曜日は子供がいるので(laughter) [...]

<sup>79</sup> [...] 最初のときに、「5年間のプロジェクトでお願いするので、今2年目なんですけど、だから、「もちろん仕事をしていただくんですけど、その間に自分の研究もしていただいて、5年後にいいところに就職できるようにがんばってください」というふうに言われています。

<sup>80</sup> それは家が多いですね。ここも、暇なときとか、あんまりやることがないときは自分の研究をしてもいいと言われてるんですけど、本も少し置いてるんですけど、ちょっと最近忙しくてやる時間がない。研究自体あんまりしてないんですけど[...]家でやったり、そうですね。

<sup>81</sup> [...] 帰って[...]子どもたちと遊んだりして、[...]休日は、朝、どれぐらいだろう、8時か9時ぐらい、少し遅くまで寝ていると、子どもたちが朝パンを食べたいと言ってくるので、作って、[...]子どもたちがどこか遊びに行きたいと言ったら一緒に遊びに行ったり [...]



back to the three groups identified when talking about research, he was clearly in the group that had abandoned it, which was not uncommon for people who found a full-time position. It is ironic that even full-time positions seem to hinder career advancement almost like *hijōkin kōshi* posts. Their own research would still be considered something private and people were only allowed to engage in it on their own time or if there is not much to do. During their working hours they would usually be busy, and even for people working full-time in academia, their own research was pushed into the private sphere. If they were, for whatever reasons, no longer able to spend time for it at home, this would mean the end of the own research activities. In Yaichiro's case, his own research was replaced by family time and housework. Considering that he is on a limited contract and would have to be appealing for another employer afterward, this development might be fatal career wise.

As soon as children are present, they gain priority during free time and reduce research efforts significantly. This is understandable and a satisfying thing for the PhDs as parents, but it likely gets in the way of gaining regular employment in academia.

Most people in this sample did not have a family of their own nor did they feel that they could support one at this point in their career, which is why spending free time with the family was not often the case. However from the moment children were present, the overall goal of finding a full-time position in academia was replaced by spending more time with their family, and the time the respondents could allocate for their own research efforts was reduced to a symbolic act. This disposition is very likely to have adverse effects on their careers, and that is why it has to be mentioned in this chapter. Having a family with children had the potential of derailing a career in academia in cases in which no regular position had yet been secured.

## Hobbies

Hobbies are the last activity that shall be mentioned in this chapter. I will show why the participants chose to spend time on their hobbies and explain the various costs of leisure.

In the Oxford Dictionary (2017) a hobby is defined as an "activity done regularly in one's leisure time for pleasure." For those interviewees who spend time on such activities, hobbies proved to be quite purposeful in the sense that they were activities they deemed necessary to preserve their health. I am not arguing that they may not have had fun doing sports, but when asked what they do in their free time the description of their hobby would usually be followed by an explanation why they had chosen this particular activity. As it became clear in Chapter 4, part-time teachers work under insecure working conditions and becoming sick can lead to the loss of their jobs. That is why it is understandable that they actively work on preserving their health to stay employable. When asked what would be most important in her life Kaori explained that this would be her health. She regularly went swimming in her free time. She explained:

"[...] I do it to stay healthy. If you have to stand for 90 minutes in front of a class, hm, when I have classes in the third and fourth period I have to stand for three hours straight. If you don't work out your back will start to hurt, and two classes can be quite tiring. When I wasn't used to it at the beginning, there were times when I was quite exhausted after that."<sup>82</sup>

That alone seems to be reason enough to be active and do something, but when asked why her health was so important she bluntly replied: "If you become sick and are hospitalized, the likelihood of getting fired is high."<sup>83</sup> Besides preserving her health to keep her job, exercise served as a stress reliever as she explained:

"During class I am the boss, but when dealing with students there are times when I get quite mad, and for example when I'm teaching at my alma mater I get in trouble with

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<sup>82</sup> 体力維持のためにも。やっぱり教壇に90分立ちっぱなしとなると、まあ、3限、4限と連続して立つと3時間ずっと立ちっぱなしということになるので、そうすると、それなりに鍛えてないと腰が痛くなってしまったりとか、あとは、2コマだけでもけっこう、最初のころは慣れなかったもので、すぐ、終わった瞬間ダウンしちゃうということもあった。

<sup>83</sup> 病気になって入院すると、おそらくクビになる確率のほうが高いですね。

the full-time teachers above me and I am under pressure, I get quite furious at times and therefore I'm doing it [sports] to relieve stress."<sup>84</sup>

A hobby can be something that is done alone but in most cases, be it for sports activities or just for going out; it is a social activity. The social aspect was something that proved to be problematic, in particular for the younger PhD graduates with a weak economic standing who had problems keeping up with their friends, who were usually their peers either from high school or university. Takashi explained:

"[...] There are times when I go out with my friends, but because it costs money when I do it, so I'm not really doing it often. It's like, how shall I put it... My friends are all working. Because I'm the only one who is not employed full-time, it's like, I'm not really in a position to go out for drinks with them or to meet new people."<sup>85</sup>

His weaker stand both financially and in terms of status was making it difficult to interact with his friends, and as a result, he no longer went out with them regularly. The only thing he kept up as a hobby was sports. He explained:

"[...] If you do research all the time your body tends to get weaker. That's why I always work out in the evening. If possible, every day. If I don't it might disturb the rhythm of my daily life. [...] I don't think I'm very successful at it, but I work hard to preserve my mental and physical health."<sup>86</sup>

So again instead of doing something just for pleasure, his example shows the purposeful use of his free time to stay employable.

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<sup>84</sup> やはり授業をして自分がトップに立ってやっているけれども、それなりにストレスがたまることもあって、学生とのやり取りとかでけっこうカチンときたりすることもあったりとか、そのほかですと、自分の母校に行っていたりすると、上の常勤の先生からのけっこう軋轢というか、しがらみ、圧力的なことがあったりとかして、カチンとすることもたまにあるので、1つはストレス発散のためにやっているということもある。

<sup>85</sup> [...]友達と一緒に外出したりとかということもあるんですけども、ただ、その、友達と外出をするとなると、やはりお金がちょっとかかってしまうので、それほどはやってないですね。やはり、なんですかね。僕の友達みんな就職をしているんですけども、そうですね、正社員じゃないのは僕ぐらいなので、あんまり、その、例えば飲み会とか懇親会とかには行けないですね、なかなか。という状況です。

<sup>86</sup> [...]やはり研究をずっとしていると体力が落ちてきやすかったりするので、必ず夕方以降には、必ず体力トレーニングをするようにしています。それはほぼ毎日するようにしています。そうでないと、いわゆる生活のリズムが崩れやすくなりますし、そうですね。[...]だから、あんまりうまくはできていないんじゃないんですけども、自分の精神衛生というか、健康状態をうまく維持するためにいろいろ工夫をしているところです。

Hobbies turned out to be the least important activity the interviewees engaged in their free time. Aside from the apparent need to preserve their employability, they were the first activities to be abandoned after the PhDs had graduated. Engaging in social activities always came with the burden of interactions with others to whom their situation would have to be explained or with old friends with whom they can no longer keep pace. Spending time with old friends who usually all have achieved something in their full-time jobs is like being confronted with their own situation over and over again. When asked if he is dissatisfied with aspects of his life Okito said:

"Honestly, I don't really think so. Or let's say I think that one shouldn't be dissatisfied. But sometimes I'm dissatisfied. Compared with others, my standard of living is low. [...] It's like this with salarymen, eh, people with the same, a similar educational background. When comparing myself to someone like a salaryman, for example, of the same age and with the same attributes, hm, they have families. I don't. How shall I put it? Thinking about it from a sociological point of view, eh thinking about class, if I hear the story of regular people I feel dissatisfied."<sup>87</sup>

In these interactions, people realize how bad their situations are compared to their peers and how they could have developed had they only chosen another path. Therefore hobbies that include social interactions can have a daunting side effect for those who chose academia and might, for this reason, be neglected. What remains as the most functional aspect of free time is preserving one's health and therefore their employability. These activities are motivated by the fears connected to the loss of one's economic base in the form of part-time teaching jobs, and the need to be as productive as possible for their research. However, then again, I could observe that such activities were sacrificed completely for activities like research, time with the family,

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<sup>87</sup> あの、まっ正直にね、まっあまり考えないというか、あの不満を持ったらダメだとやっぱり思う／考えているんです。あの今ではね。だけど、感じて、で、時々はこうなんというかな(laughter) 思ってしまうのはやっぱり、人と比べたら生活水準は低いですね。[...]サラリーマンでもそうですし、その、そうですね同じやっぱりある程度似た学歴で、えっもうサラリーマンとか、それから年齢とか同じような属性の人と比べたら、まー家族があって持っていませんし、あのどういかな、それこそ社会学のあの階層とかそういうこと考えたら、もうすごくなんかだから、そういうあの一、一般的なそういう話を聞いたら不満に思う。 [...]

or housework and might not be present in their daily lives at all. Time for a hobby has to be actively made by the individual, and people unwilling or unable to do so gave up on them.

### **Social Factors Influencing Daily Life - Between Two Worlds**

Aside from the different activities, the interviewees of my study were involved in; their situation was influenced by what others thought about them and what they thought others might think about them. In this section, the social aspects that had an impact on the interviewees' lives will be introduced.

When aspiring to become an academic and working in the world of academia, people become part of two different value systems with two sometimes contradicting sets of expectations.

The first one is emerging from the standard expectations that apply to every member of society and are different depending on gender and age (*normal way*). In the case of Japan, these expectations include areas such as work and family. The interviewees in this study defined their self-worth by measuring themselves against those expectations. During my study, these pressures were established in the category of 'following social obligations.' These expectations ranged from the pressure to find stable employment after graduation and the need to start a family by a certain age to social expectations such as taking care of elderly parents.

The interviewees had a detailed idea about what would be expected from them as 'regular people.'<sup>88</sup> Saburo pointed the expectations of the *normal way* he was not able to meet out. He explained:

"Japan is a place where it is common to hire people right after graduation. That's why it is normal to start working after you have left university. If you don't, you have many problems. In the case of researchers, some people find employment right after

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<sup>88</sup> Ippan no hito (一般の人)

graduation, but there are a lot of people for who don't. It's like a deep crisis, and there is not much support from the social security systems either. It is very insecure because it is not guaranteed that you'll find a job after this period [...]."<sup>89</sup>

It is clear that it is perceived as a failure from the *normal way*, even though it is common for people that have chosen academia not to find employment right after graduation. Therefore, this not only causes insecurity, but also social pressures. In Takashi's case, the expectations from the *normal way* were surfacing through comments by his family:

"Especially my mother is worried about my future. She asks me when I will get married and wants me to present a plan (laughing). Since I got my PhD three or four months ago, I'm asked quite frequently when I will get married. What I always answer is that I will get married in my early 30s, between 30 and 35. But my mother is really worried that I might end up being single forever, not getting married and having a sad life when I'm old. Especially in Japan, [...] if you are over 35 and unmarried, people will think that there is something wrong with you. They will think there must be something wrong with your character. That is why I recently often hear I shouldn't miss this window of opportunity."<sup>90</sup>

It should be mentioned that Takashi did not even have a girlfriend at the time of the interview and was worried himself whether he would be able to find a partner in the near future. He was clearly willing to get married and worried whether he could. Regarding marriage, he went on:

"Many PhDs are marrying later. Generally speaking, there are many reasons for that, but I think that this is most difficult for women. I think there are many female researchers who exceed their reproductive age and are not marrying anymore. If marriage is delayed, it gets more difficult to give birth. Because of medical reasons [due to women giving birth at older ages], miscarriages are getting more likely. Because the likelihood of a miscarriage sharply rises above age 30, I think that balancing work and life after getting their PhD is the biggest difficulty for female researchers. Especially

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<sup>89</sup> 日本って、新卒採用の世界じゃないですか。なので大学に出たら就職するというのが普通で、そうじゃない人って結構。困ることが多い。で、研究者の場合は、大学出てすぐ就職っていうこともあるんですけど、そうじゃない人もかなり多い。で、危機感がかなり苦しいし。社会保障みたいなあまりないし。で、その期間を過ごしたと言って次に、あの、就職が約束されているわけでもないので非常に不安定、[...]。

<sup>90</sup> 僕の母親とかが特に、僕の将来を心配して、おまえはいつ結婚するんだと。プランを示せと (laughter)。聞くことが非常にこの3、4カ月ぐらい。だから、僕、博士号を取ってから増えました。結婚をいつするのかということについて。僕がいつも答えるのは、30代前半ぐらい、だから30~35ぐらいまでの間に、まー、しよかなあとということは何となく言うんですけども、母親としては、やはり、いつまでもずっと独身でいると、結局は結婚しないままいってしまっって、最後は非常に寂しい老後になるんじゃないかということ、非常に心配しているみたいですね。特に日本では、みんながみんなじゃないですけど、やっぱり35を超えて結婚してないというのは何か問題があるんじゃないかと。ちょっと問題があるんじゃないかとか、そういうふうに見られることがあるので、あまりにもずっと結婚してないと、なので、そこは時期を見逃さないように気をつけろということ、最近、何回も聞いている。

the choice of when to get married has a big impact on work-life balance and, in case of PhDs, the window of opportunity is very small. I think that's an important point especially when thinking about female researchers."<sup>91</sup>

The points Saburo and Takashi made allow for the assumption that there is something like a standard timeline that is socially accepted, including certain turning points in a person's life. One of them being graduation and the expectation to make the transition into becoming a *shakaijin*.<sup>92</sup> Beyond that, we learned about expectations for getting married and having children before the age of 30, for biological reasons as Takashi argued, and the need to marry not later than age 35. When not on track for this timeline, for whatever reason, family or friends may start to question the person's choices and behavior, thus creating pressure and making it necessary to defend their position or adjust their actions actively. Most problems in this regard arose because the interviewees spent an extended period in the education system as students and were already late for meeting those expectations at the time of graduation. Other than expectations regarding their life courses, interviewees described their fears of not being able to fulfill their social roles because of their weak economic standing. Takashi told me:

"Elderly care is a problem. I'm 27 at the moment, and my parents are still in good shape, but my grandfather has been hospitalized. Seeing the situation now with my grandfather, I think that it is plausible that I may have to take care of my parents at some point. And if someone who took a doctoral course has to take care of his family in his 30s, when he doesn't have an income...[he cannot care for them]. That's why if you have chosen to work as a researcher and face something like having to take care of your parents, there is really not much you can do."<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> [...]博士号を持っている人というのは、だいたい結婚が遅れるんですね、一般的に。それは、やはりいろんな理由があると思うんですけども、最近、つまり、特に女性の場合は影響が大きいと思うんですけども、出産適齢期を超えて結婚しないといけなくなってしまうとか、というようなことがけっこう研究者ではあるんじゃないかと。[...] 婚期が遅れると、やはり出産しにくい条件になってしまおうと。医学的な理由ですね。医学的な理由で流産しやすい。特に30代以降は流産のリスクが非常に高まったりするということがあるので、だから僕が思うには、研究者、博士課程を取った後の生活と仕事のバランスで一番苦しんでいるのは女性の研究者だと思いますね。[...]特に、いつ結婚するのかわという選択は人生に非常に大きな、特にワークライフバランスに決定的な影響を与える選択ですので、その選択の幅が博士号を取ることによって非常に狭められていると。ということは、特に女性研究者の問題を考えるうえで大事なポイントだなということ最近思ったんですね。

<sup>92</sup> People who start working become *shakaijin*, literally society persons. The qualification to be a productive member of society is connected to employment.

<sup>93</sup> [...]やはり介護とかの問題ですね。今、僕は27歳で、両親とかもまだ、まー、元気なんですけれども、僕の祖父は今、入院中なんです。祖父とかの状況とかを見ていると、なんていうかな、例えば30代とかで博士課程に入った人とかは、収入がない時点で、例えば両親の介護が必要になったりとか、

None of the other interviewees in my sample raised the issue of elderly care, and it only seemed to be present for Takashi, who saw the health of a family member deteriorating. His worries were not about providing the work to care for his parents if necessary, but he was concerned whether he was financially capable of fulfilling his role. At the time of the interviews, Takashi was only able to follow his aspirations to become a scholar because his family supported him. So the capability of his family to do so was directly linked to his own career possibilities. His case will be introduced in more detail in the next chapter and hints at him putting his family's needs and therefore the socially expected behavior above his own personal desire and career aspirations. When his mother's health deteriorates at the time of the third interview, he takes over all household chores and starts to think about alternative sources of income.

The second value system is the academic value system (*academic way*). In this system, success is measured differently. It is necessary to have a position that legitimizes one's membership to the academic community. In other words, to be either a student or otherwise affiliated with a university or a research institution. Additionally, it comes with the expectation of being actively involved in research activities. Other than the *normal way*, the *academic way* was joined out of free will, and the interviewees were expecting frictions caused by walking both ways. The interviewees did not desire the immediate rewards that could be expected if they follow the general expectations on the *normal way* and joined academia for mainly two reasons. Takashi, for example, joined academia because of his ideals and his desire to have a positive impact on society: "I want my research to be useful for coming generations. I think all researchers think that way, but I really want to do research that has a [positive] impact on

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というような状況も、たぶん、ありうると思うんですね。だから、そういう、なんていうか、研究職を選んだことによって、そうした介護の問題とかに直面したときに、非常に選択肢が狭まってしまうとか。



people's lives. To continue this kind of research you need money, have to find a job [...]."<sup>94</sup> He did not expect his academic career to be on par with the career of a salaryman. For him the most important thing was his research and earning money, a means to an end. Many others joined because they wanted to involve in the work they liked and earn their living in the process, like Ichiro: "What I want to do most is I want to take what I like best [research] and make it my job until I die."<sup>95</sup> People who become part of this value system are evaluated by their academic achievements and not their financial situation.

As far as the *academic way* is concerned, pressures seemed to be more subtle, because the *normal way* sets expectations for all members of society, while the *academic way* is only followed and understood by academics. In other words, if people do not know these standards, they will not judge others based on them. Nonetheless, my interviewees were moving in both worlds and therefore had to accommodate both sets of expectations. This situation regularly caused conflicts. During the interviews, it became evident that working full-time in academia was seen as a prerequisite to calling oneself a researcher. Ukiko told me: "I have the feeling that I'm not seen as a real researcher as long as I'm not hired full-time as one. I don't know if this is true or not, but it feels bad."<sup>96</sup> Nonetheless, as mentioned by Saburo before, it is not expected that a PhD graduate can find such a position right away, which is why this kind of pressure only becomes relevant when young academics spend a long time without finding full-time employment. Even though only full-time employment made them feel like real academics, the interviewees were circumventing the lack of such positions by taking on unremunerated

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<sup>94</sup> 特に、自分の研究が僕の後の世代の人に何か役立てるようなものであってほしいということ、そうですね、やはり常に考えていますね。まー、研究する人はみんなそうだと思うんですけど、やはりほかの人に何か影響を与えることができるような研究をしたいというところが非常に大きくあって、それを続けるためにはお金が必要なので、やはり就職のこととかいろいろ[...]あるんですけども

<sup>95</sup> その自分がやっぱりその一番やりたい、一番好きなことをなんというんですか、仕事にして、でまーそれで死ぬまで行ければ、行ければいいというか、それが一番の希望ですかねmhm (positive)。

<sup>96</sup> 今度は研究者として何か、そういうフルタイムの職に就いていないと、研究者として一人前に見られないっていうような、あのこれは本当にそうかどうか分からないけれど、なんかこうそういう気分にはなれる。それはちょっとしんどい。

posts as visiting or invited researchers to gain an affiliation that could be used for academic purposes (see Chapter 5). Another prerequisite to being acknowledged as an academic involves research activities. Even though many people in my sample were no longer involved in research to a considerable degree or were not doing anything for it at all, they nonetheless stated that they were doing research. The only interviewee who admitted to not doing research anymore was Yahiko. His constant failures in securing a regular position in academia in combination with the need to make a living forced him to make a decision about which course in life to take. He decided to focus on his teaching jobs outside academia since his work was valued there and completely gave up on research. However, he was still concerned what other academics might think about his decision: "I really haven't done much research since I finished my dissertation. But in retrospect, I think that it was good that I finished it. [...] The only thing I would honestly want to know is how people think about someone like me who has quit on research."<sup>97</sup> Even though he was still working in education and teaching several classes at university as well, he stopped being an academic when he stopped doing his research.

Because the *normal way* and the *academic way* both operate on different logics, it is possible to have a high standing in one and a low standing in the other. A low standing in a value system brings about pressures by those who belong to that system. For the *normal way*, these are family, friends or peers, or basically those who live the *normal way* who push those with a low standing to live up to its expectations. In academia, people from the same *kenkyūshitsū* and how they are doing in their careers are whom and what they compare themselves with. However, their hardest critics tended to be themselves. The interviewees of

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<sup>97</sup> 本当にD論／博士論文を完成してからもう、そんなにね研究続けなかったんで、まー結果的に博士論文は書いておいてよかったなと思います。[...]でもどうなんですかね。まっ正直僕の方がむしろなんか研究途中で辞めた人が、僕ぐらいやって辞めた人が、どういう風に思っているのかむしろ知りたいぐらいですけどね。

my study were suffering because regular people did not understand their achievements in the system of academia and would judge them on the basis of the *normal way*.

It was difficult for the interviewees to bear the pressures from the *normal way* and at the same time stay focused on their career in academia. Takashi explained what pressures he had to bear:

"[...] If a regular person would enter the world of academia he could not be satisfied. You can't lead a regular life. [...] You live in insecurity for 4 to 5 years, quite a long time, and will be pitied by family, friends and the people around you. I have a sister. She is working full-time, ah sorry, part-time at XX. She often tells me: 'You are like a NEET.' Because as a researcher I don't have a designated place to go, a place I have a desk and do my work, the time I spend at home tends to be quite long. When people who don't know about that see me, it looks like I'm unemployed to them. I have been told so too. I think our neighbors believe that I'm unemployed."<sup>98</sup>

For him dealing with these pressures was seen as part of becoming an academic. Not all participants were able to fend them off successfully and changed their careers.

The need to accommodate those double standards was difficult for most participants and therefore influenced their overall chance of reaching their goal of full-time employment in academia.

The only interviewee who had found a regular position in academia was relieved from such social pressures after finding regular employment. He worked 35 hours per week and had only 10 hours for his own research, but he enjoyed the flexibility of his academic position. However, his regular post came with fieldwork in Okinawa, and he was careful not to create

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<sup>98</sup> [...]普通の人アカデミアの世界に入ってきて、満足はできないと思いますね。普通のごく一般の人たちのような生活は絶対にできないと。すごく優秀であれば、また話は別かもしれないですけど、普通の人であれば、たぶん4年とか5年とか、かなり長い間、不安定な状況に置かれて、その間に家族とか友達とか、あと周囲の人たちから、なんていうか、同情されたりとか、そういうこともかなりあるわけですね。実際に、これは余談ですけど、僕、妹がいるんですけども、妹はコープの、生協の正社員、すいません。パートなんです。パートで、その妹が僕についてよく言うのは、おまえはもうニートみたいなものだ。ニートだと。つまり、研究者というのは、どこかに勤務地があって、そこで机をもらって、そこで仕事をするわけではないので、なんか家にいる時間も長くなりがちだと。そういうのを、知らない人から見ると無職に見えてしまったりとか、そういう目で言われるし。おそらくは、僕の家近所の人たちですね。近所の人たちも、僕が無職なんじゃないかなと思ってるんじゃないかな、というふうに思うんですね。

an image of playing around and having too much fun at work, which supposedly is not accepted on the *normal way* either:

"I have fun [at work]. But considering the regular workers around me from the same generation, they would not be very happy to see me uploading pictures of Okinawa on a weekday around noon, for example, that's why I have been careful about this. But in the end, because I produce research results, hm, I want them to think of me as doing work."<sup>99</sup>

## Summary

Through this chapter, the comprehensive view on precarious academic employment in Japan could be completed. After introducing the different work relationships the PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences were involved in, the previous two chapters showed that preparation time for *hijōkin* classes and research activities had to be accommodated in the participants' free time. For this reason, it was necessary to take a closer look at other aspects of the interviewees' lives in order to evaluate the influence of precarious academic employment on aspects like housework, family, and hobbies, but also to find out what influence those aspects of their non-academic lives had on their work performance and research efforts. Also, social factors that were affecting how they felt in their role of aspiring scholars in non-regular employment were explained, pointing at the role conflicts of the *normal* and the *academic way*.

Their precarious employment situation influenced the participants in various aspects of their daily lives. Some of the interviewees, for instance, spent more time for housework to compensate for their economic situation. Especially men were negative about their prospects of starting a family and delayed it until their career goals would be met and economic stability

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<sup>99</sup> 確かに楽しそうに、同世代や周りの普通に社会人をしている人だと、やっぱり平日の例えば昼間に沖縄の写真が上がるのは、けっこうやっぱり、なんかあんまり快く思われないらしいので、その点はけっこう気を使った時期もあるんですけど、実際、でも、ちゃんと研究の成果とかを出したりしているので、まあ、仕事をしているんだというふうには思われているつもりです。

achieved. Social deprivation made it furthermore difficult to find a partner. It became apparent that women in the same situation seemed to have fewer difficulties in finding a marriage partner due to the low expectations regarding their financial situation and their role in the gendered division of labor. The employment insecurity and the fears of losing one's job when getting sick furthermore influenced leisure activities. Those who had any free time left were using it for staying healthy by doing sports. Hobbies for pleasure were transformed to hobbies for work. Due to the way they were employed, the interviewees faced pressures from the *normal way*. Because of their career choice, many of them were unable to conform to the standard timeline that set expectations toward career and family life, thus causing pressures from people around them like friends and relatives, who did not understand the inner logic of work in academia. This was especially problematic when the interviewees were still relying on financial support from their family, and there was no family member with experience in academia understanding their plight. The combination of economic vulnerability and a growing difference in social status to friends who were in regular employment lead to the avoidance of social contacts and social deprivation.

More time spent on housework as a consequence meant less time for research and for those couples who had children of their own family time came to replace research time, bringing research efforts, and therefore plans for career advancement, to a halt in case the interviewees could only do research on their own time. When considering the chances for career advancement, it was remarkable that non-regular full-time positions were almost as bad for their research efforts as working as *hijōkin kōshi*. Working conditions and income were less precarious, but the lack of possibilities to develop the own skills by doing research presumably has an adverse impact on upward mobility. It was, however, reassuring to see that the only interviewee in regular academic employment was active in research, enjoyed employment security, and a high level of autonomy at work.

The following chapter will put the young academics' reaction to the complicated situation to handle various precarious positions, multiple types of employment, their own research and other aspects of their lives, into the center of attention. How they managed their work and life was influencing their chances for upward mobility, but also had implications for the consequences precarious employment had on their lives as a whole.

## **7. Managing Life: The Overwhelmed, the Settled and the Researchers**

In this section, I will describe the complex situation the PhD graduates interviewed for this study found themselves in when working in non-regular academic employment. Aside from their employment as *hijōkin kōshi*, they were involved in other forms of work, research, and housework. They furthermore spent time with their families and were engaged in leisure activities. The interviewees acted out of their own motivation while having their goals in mind, but at the same time were influenced by the demands of their various activities as well as economic needs and social pressures. In this section, I will introduce how the participants managed these requirements and evaluate what this means for their careers and their lives by utilizing the three distinct types of the Overwhelmed, the Settled and the Researchers. I will first clarify the main characteristics of each type, and then present an example, showing how the different aspects introduced in the last three chapters come together in the life of a participant.

### **The Overwhelmed**

The status of being overwhelmed was most common for young PhD graduates that just had finished their PhD courses. This type is characterized by the inability of the individual to organize the own life according to their long-term goals. As mentioned numerous times before, the PhDs in my sample were seeking a full-time career in academia. Influenced by their part-time teaching jobs, other activities of their daily lives, social pressures, and economic needs, they were only working on a short-term strategy, aiming to satisfy their most immediate demands. Often they were aware that they could not continue their lives in the current way and started to reorient themselves, either looking for new sources of income or thinking about changing their trajectory in life. Nonetheless, they would cling to their former goal. For

example, they would no longer actively plan their activities and give in to pressures from employers. Priorities were then shifting toward remunerated work and the tasks they were forced to be involved in either by a contract or by social pressures. As a result, activities that had no formal character such as the own research, as well as free-time, would disappear.

A good example of a person who could be categorized as overwhelmed was Takashi. His case is especially interesting because he first planned his life around his goal of full-time employment in academia, giving his own research the highest priority. At the time of the third interview, his situation had changed, and he had shifted from being researcher-type to being overwhelmed. After explaining how he managed his life before this transition, I will show what factors overwhelmed him and how his priorities had changed. Finally, I will discuss the consequences of that shift and explain what influence it has on the PhD graduates' lives when they are characterized as overwhelmed.

Takashi was the youngest person in my sample. In his 27 years alive, he had already been able to achieve remarkable things while still being a student. Because of his good performance, he was able to finish his Master Course in half the time. Takashi's appearance reflected his perfectionist character. He looked tidy and organized during all interviews. He wore glasses and had a symmetrical haircut. It was the kind of person you would ask for help when something has to be 100% right. However, at the time I met him for the first interview, he was in trouble. He was about to graduate from his PhD Course and still had not found a place of employment despite his great efforts. He was still without any career perspective at the time of the first interview but was finally able to secure a position shortly before graduation. His first occupation was not a full-time position, but a position as *hijōkin kōshi*. He had gained the post because a *senpai* of his former university was leaving and was looking for a replacement among his *kōhai*. As already noted in the section on affiliations, he had obligations other than his part-time teaching job as well. Afraid he would lose all his affiliations after



graduation, he asked his professor for an invited researcher position at his university and was able to secure an additional visiting researcher position at another institute through a referral. Both posts were unpaid, but he was required to participate in meetings and produce a paper for both. The position to which he gave the most priority was a research institute where he was granted a fellowship during his last year of his PhD. The money he received there was enough to buy books, but not enough to support his own living. His term was about to end half a year after the second interview took place and he was required to publish a paper there in their name as well. For this reason, the work for his fellowship had priority as he said. At the time of the second interview, he still could be categorized as 'Researcher,' so his own research had the highest priority for him. At that point, he had meticulously planned his daily life:

"When you ask me what I'm doing on days without work, I'm getting up between seven and eight, eat breakfast and check my emails. From nine, I start working on my research. I would do my own research between nine and twelve. Besides that, what do I do, in the morning, I'm only doing my own research, nothing for the XX Institute or something like that. In the afternoon, I would then prepare my *hijōkin* class, like I told you before, and prepare the papers I have to publish for the different research facilities I'm involved with. But I also help in the household. My parents let me live at home, but I cannot pay for it. I can't pay for it because my salary is way too low. My parents cover my expenses for food and utilities, quite a large share. Because of this situation, I'm helping in the household; I repay them so to say. What I'm doing is, I plan the meals, go groceries shopping, cook and clean up after cooking when I'm there. I do the dishes; I do everything. And I do the laundry and cleaning as well. That's why I do my research until six in the evening and from six work in the household. When I'm done with that, I work out. I do many different things I do toning exercises and go for long runs; I usually run more than 3 Kilometers, that's what I would usually do. Before going to bed, I study a language. I'm studying for an English Test at the moment. I passed the second level of that test but failed the highest level. Because it has an impact on my chances when job-hunting, I study for it every day and then go to sleep. [...] I go to bed at around twelve."<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> [...]仕事がない日は、だいたいどうしているかという、だいたい7時から8時ぐらいに起きて、で、まー、朝ご飯とかメールチェックとかをして、9時から研究を始めるようにしています。9時から12時の間は自分の研究をするようにしています。ほかの、なんですか、XX研究所とか、そういうのとは一切何も関係なく、自分のための研究を午前中はします。午後は、例えば、さっき言ったように授業の準備とか、あといろんな研究機関に提出する論文の準備とかのために午後は時間を割きます。ただ、えっと、家事を手伝っています。というのも、僕、家に住まわせてもらっているんですけども、お金が入れられないんですよ。あまりにも給料が少ないので、家にお金を入れることができないので、もちろん食費とか光熱費とかも、いったら、かなりの部分、親に負担してもらっているんですね。なので、そういう事情があるので、いろんな家事の手伝いとかをして、いわばお返しをしていると。

On the day of the week when he gave his class, his schedule was only slightly different. On those days, he would leave the house at ten in the morning and return at five in the evening and start doing his household chores before working out and learning English. On holidays and at the weekends he worked on a similar schedule, although he made sure to get some time socializing and not doing research for the purpose of sustaining his mental and physical health as he said.

His highest priority in this schedule was his own research, which received most of his productive time in the day, while other research activities for his affiliations and his part-time teaching job took place in the afternoon. His schedule did not allow for any significant free time. He was responsible for doing housework in the evening, and the only activity that might resemble a hobby was his workout in the evenings. However, as he explained this was more of a purposeful activity that was supposed to help him to stay productive and healthy. During that time, he mentioned pressures he was feeling because of his current employment situation in academia. His family played an especially big role for him. He knew that it would be difficult when it comes to employment in the first years after graduation and had made an informed decision about it. He only felt bad that his relatives were worrying about him. The expectations toward his career were high because he graduated from a prestigious university and received an advanced degree. The understanding of regular people, as he called them, of work in academia was limited:

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で、具体的な内容としては、いったら、献立のメニューの計画、買い物、調理、それから調理が終わった後の片付けですね。食器洗いとか、というのを一通り僕が全部やっています。で、あと洗濯関係とか掃除とか、というのもやっています。だから、夕方、6時ぐらいまでは僕、研究をしているんですけども、それ以降は家事をしています。家事が終わったら体力トレーニングに行きます。体力トレーニングでは、メニューはいろいろ違うんですけど、筋力トレーニングとか長距離走とか、だいたい3キロ以上は絶対走ることが多いんですけども、そういうこととかをやって、夜寝る前に語学の勉強をしています。今、英検準1級を取ろうとしています。英検2級は持っているんですけども、実はちょっと昔に準1級を落としてしまって取れなかったんですね。だから、まー、就職とかにも影響があるので、語学の勉強は毎日、夜寝る前に勉強して寝ると。[...]寝るのはだいたい12時ぐらいじゃないですか。

"[...] I'm worrying the people around me. For my parents, for example, and my grandparents, my work is really hard to understand. What I do. I work, but because the way I work is different from a regular full-time employee, they tend to worry about whether I'm alright. As for my parents and the people around me, I want to make these people feel reassured, but I can't. I feel a bit sorry for that [...]."101

Takashi was confident that he was able to withstand those pressures. He did not feel dissatisfied with his life even though he was being pitied by people around him, and might have been mistaken as unemployed:

"I have a sister. She is working full-time, ah sorry, part-time at XX. She often tells me: 'You are like a NEET.' Because as a researcher, I don't have a designated place to work, [...] the time I spend at home tends to be quite long. When people who don't know about this see that, it looks like I'm unemployed for them. I have been told so too. I think our neighbors believe that I'm unemployed."102

Even though he was feeling such pressures on a daily basis, he reassured me multiple times that he was fine with it, but made clear that this would be an impossible situation for normal people. He was strongly driven to gain a full-time position in academia and was organizing his day in a way that allowed him to regularly spend time on his research and his publications that he saw as key to reaching that goal. Another motivator in his life was the feeling of indebtedness toward his family who was supporting him in these economically difficult times, and as a consequence, he was repaying them by engaging in housework.

At the time of the third interview, Takashi had made the shift from being the researcher-type to being overwhelmed by his situation. The reasons for this change had to do with the requirements of his *hijōkin kōshi* position, his financial situation, and his family.

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<sup>101</sup> [...]僕の周囲の人を心配させているんですね、やはり。周囲に、例えば僕の両親とか、僕の祖母とか祖父とかには、僕の仕事は分かりにくいわけですね。何をしている。仕事はしているんですけども、普通の正社員とはちょっと働き方がかなり違うというので、ちょっと大丈夫かと心配をしやすいわけですね、両親とか関係者は。なので、そういう人たちを安心させないといけないんですけども、なかなか安心させることができないという、まー、というところはちょっと申し訳ないというか[...]。

<sup>102</sup> [...]僕、妹がいるんですけども、妹はコープの、生協の正社員、すいません。パートなんです。パートで、その妹が僕についてよく言うのは、おまえはもうニートみたいなものだ。ニートだと。つまり、研究者というのは、どこかに勤務地があって、そこで机をもらって、そこで仕事をするわけではないので、なんか家にいる時間も長くなりがちだと。そういうのを、知らない人から見ると無職に見えてしまったりとか、そういう目で言われるし。おそらくは、僕の家近所の人たちですね。近所の人たちも、僕が無職なんじゃないかなと思ってるんじゃないかな、というふうに思うんですね。

When I met Takashi for the third time, he was still doing the same part-time teaching job, but the demands for it had drastically increased the time he was investing in it. Before, he had spent six hours in total on the day he had to teach in order to get to the university that was quite far from his parents' home, prepare, hold the class, and clean-up afterward. Three hours were spent on the train, ninety minutes for preparations and clean-up and ninety minutes for the class itself. However, he had to prepare his classes every week and made sure to spend not more or less than four hours each week, since he wanted to make sure to deliver them at a certain quality. At the time of the third interview, his time spent at his workplace had not changed, but the time he spent for preparations had gotten out of hand. He explained:

"The time I spend for preparations differs, but I usually spend over ten hours. Ten or twelve. [...] Checking the attendance is most difficult. I have to check whether they attended the class or not. If it were only the preparations for class, I would need maybe eight hours. I would still need eight hours, but managing the attendance and the assignments, if I add this time I need ten to eleven hours."<sup>103</sup>

He was teaching an introductory class to political sciences and had to teach about 200 students. The university he was working at had a new electronic system to track attendance. Students have to check in at a console in the classroom using a barcode on their student ID. He told me that the system was still flawed and that people that attended would show up as absent. If this happened, he had to correct the records manually and to enter them into the system. Another factor that had increased his preparation time was that he had to work with an already existing syllabus and was not allowed to make changes:

"I told them that I want to change the syllabus. Attendance, grading, everything was decided in detail. And, I said I want to change the syllabus, but the university told me that the syllabus had been approved by the MEXT, so by the government and that I did

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<sup>103</sup> 授業の準備は、場合によるんですけども、だいたい10時間以上は準備にかかっていますね。10時間か12。[...]一番難しいのは出欠とか、出席管理ですね。出席したとか欠席したという管理の仕事も私がやらないといけないので、授業の準備をするだけだったら、たぶん8時間ぐらい。それでも8時間はかかりますけど、くらいで終わるんですけども、出席の管理とか、あと課題の管理ですね。そういう課題提出物の管理とかも含めたら、もう10時間か11時間ぐらい。

not have the right to make changes. That's why I was told to hold the class about the topics and in the way specified in the syllabus."<sup>104</sup>

As a result, his workload was forced on him because he had to stick to the syllabus which included what kind of assignments he had to give out and how to grade them. In a class of 200 people, this is quite a lot of work. He also had to prepare for topics he was not familiar with as well, which took even more time out of his schedule. The four hours of preparation time had tripled due to these circumstances and made it harder to organize his daily schedule toward his goal of gaining full-time employment in academia.

The second factor that put him into the category of the overwhelmed was related to his financial situation. For his part-time teaching job, he got 35,000 Yen per month, which was not enough for him to live on his own and motivated him to work in his family's household in exchange for food and shelter provided by his parents. At the end of September before his last interview, the repayment period of his student loans had started. So from this time onwards, he was required to make monthly payments of 15,000 Yen. With his already low income, it was impossible to shoulder for him, so his mother paid all his debts at once and he, from that point onwards, was paying her 10,000 Yen per month to pay off his dues. Under economic pressure, he started to help one of his relatives with his work to earn something on the side:

"It's not a part-time job, but I help a relative with his work. It has nothing to do with research; it's office work. Preparing documents and, well, I mainly prepare documents. I help with this office work for one or two hours and get 1000 or 900 Yen per hour."<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> シラバスを書き直したいと言ったんですけれども、なんでかという、出席、成績評価のやり方が細かくもう決まっていたんですね。で、これを私のやり方で直したいというふうに言ったんですけれども、大学から言われたのは、シラバスというのは文部科学省、つまり政府ですね。政府に承認してもらっているものだと。だから、これを直すということは私の権限ではできないと言われたんですよ。だから、私は、このシラバスどおりのやり方、授業内容をやってくださいというふうに。

<sup>105</sup> アルバイトではないんですけれども、私の親戚がやっている仕事の手伝いみたいなことをやっている。それは研究とは関係がない仕事で、ホントに事務的な仕事です。資料を整理したりとか、あと、そうですね。そうだなあ。だいたい、資料を整理したりするのがだいたいなんですけれども、そういう事務的な仕事をちょっとやって、時給1,000円とか900円とかで特別に1時間とか2時間だけ手伝わせてもらうという。

In addition to that, there had been some changes in his family that altered his priorities. He explained that the health of his mother had deteriorated and that she was no longer able to work in the household. Furthermore, his father had been transferred to Tokyo and was no longer living at home. As a result, he had taken over all the household chores by the time of the third interview. Lastly, his grandfather had passed away. He explained:

"My grandfather really supported my studies, he really understood me and was my biggest supporter. But he passed away in the autumn of last year, around November. So I lost one of my studies biggest supporters and, how shall I say, there was pushback from my family. I'm now more often told things like "Don't you have far too little money for someone who finished his graduate studies?" Thinking about it, all of my student life people around me respected me as long as I gave my best, but after my time as a student was over, it felt like they were less understanding. To make a long story short, because people around me had been supportive of my studies when I gave my best, I could do my research with self-confidence. However, when this support slowly disappears, it drastically lowers your self-confidence, whether you can go on with your studies or not. That's why I'm really worried if I can continue being a researcher."<sup>106</sup>

Facets of this lack of understanding were already present during the second interview. Nonetheless, thanks to the support of his grandfather he seemed to have been able to endure it. However, with him gone, these pressures put weight on his shoulders, and he lost the confidence in his cause.

His new situation with social and financial pressures and an increased workload from his *hijōkin* job had heavily altered his daily schedule. Instead of giving priority to his own

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<sup>106</sup> 私の祖父は私の学問をすごく支援してくれていて、すごく、最大の理解者だったんですけども、その祖父が去年の秋、11月ぐらいに亡くなりまして、そういう、私のそれまで学問を支えてくれていた人がいなくなってしまったということもあって、家族からの反発といいますか。「大学院を終わったのにお金がなさすぎるんじゃないか」というふうなことを言われることが増えたんですね。やっぱりそういうことを考えると、今まで送ってきた学生生活、がんばったら周囲の人が認めてくれていたんですけども、大学院が終わって学生生活が終わった後になると、周囲から理解されにくくなったなというふうを感じる。[...]つまり周囲、それまで私がかんばって学問をしていると、みんなもそれを支援してくれていたんで、自分も自信を持って研究に取り組むことができたんですけども、そういう周囲のサポートがだんだんなくなってくると、やはり研究を進めていくことができるかどうかという自信ですね。自信が非常に低下しているといいますか、小さくなっているということはすごく感じます。ですから、このまま研究者として続けることができるかどうかということは、ものすごく、だんだんと不安が大きくなってきているというふうに感じています。

studies and planning out every step, he appeared to have given up working to fulfill his long-term goals at the time of the last interview. He was only working to fulfill his immediate needs and had given in to pressures from family and his job. The structure he kept seemed like a relic only in place for the time being while he would have to figure out which course to choose in life:

"[...] I use my time in the morning for research, my own research, the preparations for my *hijōkin* job and I write on my papers and read materials. In the afternoon, I use about half the time for work [for his relative], work to earn money and go shopping and do housework. I now do all things at home. [...] In the evening, again I am studying or doing research, and I care for my health. I go for a run or something; that's how my lifestyle changed. I think I only have half the time for research now."<sup>107</sup>

Asked to express how he uses his time during the week in percentages, he explained: "I probably use 20% for research and 10% for my own studies and my health. Of the rest 20% for my part-time teacher job, 20% for the work I had talked about and 30% for the family, so work in the household."<sup>108</sup>

His schedule had shifted from a perfectly planned schedule putting the goal of gaining a full-time position in academia first by prioritizing his own research toward a schedule that was no longer oriented toward a long-term goal. Being overwhelmed means to lose this long-term perspective and to live in the moment. His familial and financial situation were demanding him to spend more time working in other areas, while the pressure from his relatives to earn more money and the lack of support made him lose confidence in his aspirations. He changed his priorities to deal with the financial pressures by engaging in more paid work. He even mentioned that he might teach English at a language school in the future, clearly drifting away

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<sup>107</sup> [...]朝、午前中はだいたい研究を、自分の研究、非常勤講師の準備とか、あとジャーナルに出すための論文の執筆とか資料の、資料を読んだりする時間に充ててますけれども、午後のあとの半分ぐらいの時間は仕事、お金のための仕事と、あと買い物とか家事とか、あと家事ですね。家の中のことをするようになりました。[...]夜とかは、また勉強とか研究とか、あと健康管理ですね。ランニングをしたりとか、というようなスタイルにちょっと変わりました。ですから、研究の時間は半分ぐらいになったんじゃないかなと思いますね。

<sup>108</sup> たぶん研究は20%ぐらいですね。で、10%ぐらいが自分の勉強とか健康管理とかで充てていて、残り20%が非常勤講師、20%はさっき言った仕事で、30%は家計というか家の仕事ですね。

from research, and as many others, changing his focus to education instead. He was furthermore not able to limit the workload for his part-time teaching position as planned. I argue that the way it turned out is not his fault. During the second interview, I was sure that he had everything needed to succeed in the competitive world of academia. In the end, social pressures and his economic burden made his career too difficult to manage.

### **The Settled**

As the name suggests, the Settled were the interviewees who had come to terms with their situation and were therefore not doing much to change the status quo. Most participants of my study were in this category. Compared to the other interviewees, the Settled had a longer working experience and were working as *hijōkin kōshi* for three or more years. As mentioned before, part-time teaching jobs are usually distributed through networks. As a result, those longer on the job were teaching more classes and therefore spending more time for class preparations. This however brought about more economic stability. The Settled lived in the moment. They made the best of their situation and enjoyed their present lifestyle as educators with all its flexibilities and were trying to avoid any thoughts about their uncertain future. They had given up on career advancement and therefore any significant research activity because they either lost hope or interest in getting ahead. Instead, they spent time with family or used their free time for their hobbies.

Kaori was one of the women categorized as Settled. Her start in her student life was troublesome because she was not able to get into a university right away. She did not manage to pass the entrance exams and spent one year studying for the next year's exam. She finally applied to a private university and discovered her interest in her field of Agronomy. Inspired by her professors, she decided to go to graduate school to be able to continue the research she



liked. At that time her declared goal was to finish graduate school and teach what she had learned.

When asked what kind of position she was seeking she told me: "For me, the ideal post [...] would be a position without a fixed-term."<sup>109</sup> Like the other interviewees, she was well aware that publications were necessary to reach such a goal. But she had difficulties to work toward this objective effectively:

"The fact that I do not have time to write papers anymore is the biggest problem for my future outlook. [...] At the moment, I'm happy if I can manage to write papers in the summer or winter holidays, but it's difficult to make time for research."<sup>110</sup>

One reason for that was her high workload. After obtaining her PhD, she started her career as a part-time researcher at her own university but then switched to work as a part-time teacher after half a year. At the time of the interview, she was teaching ten classes per week. She described her preparations as follows:

"Now I don't need that much time for preparations anymore because I can re-use materials I already prepared, but the spring semester was tough with three new courses. It was a balancing act after I finished classes I went home and prepared the classes for the next day. I think I even spent 4 to 5 hours for preparations on days without class. Besides that, [...] I have to grade, 100 people per class, 60 when they are small, sometimes even with 200 students because I teach general education subjects. [...] If you let them write reports or give them homework, the grading takes an awful lot of time."<sup>111</sup>

She could manage to reduce preparation time by re-using materials she had created before, but there was no way for her to circumvent the time she had to spend grading her students, which for her large classes was very time-consuming. She spent the rest of her time socializing with

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<sup>109</sup> 私が理想とするポストとしては、[...]任期がないということで職に就けることかなと思います。

<sup>110</sup> 将来性はかなり、論文を書く時間がやっぱりなくなってしまうというのが一番のネックですね。[...]今は論文を書くのはほとんど夏休みとか冬休みの長期休暇にできればいいかなぐらいで、調査に行く時間もやっぱり厳しい。

<sup>111</sup> 授業が使いまわしできるものに関してはそれほど時間を要さないですけども、前期はけっこうきつかったですね。3コマ新しい科目が増えちゃったので、自転車操業で、授業が終わって帰ってきたら翌日の授業を完成させたいな形なので、たぶん仕事以外で日にパソコンに向かって授業を作って、4時間、5時間ぐらい費やしていることもあるかなと思います。そのほかですと、[...]試験の採点があったりすると、やっぱり1コマ100。私のクラスは教養科目になってくるので、少ないところでも1コマ60人、多いと1クラス200人強になるので、[...]けっこうレポートをやったりとか課題をやらせたりすると、その採点にもものすごく時間がかかったりします。

friends and was involved in various sports. She went swimming and took dancing and aerobic classes on her weekends. She had time to spare but was not using it for her research. Therefore, I came to the conclusion that she had already given up on her career goal. My conclusion was supported by her assessment of her chances in the academic labor market:

"It's quite difficult I guess. I've been to many job interviews for full-time positions, but in the end, I have the feeling that even though they write that they would preferably hire women in the case that they had the same qualifications, they often hire a man in the end. I heard from a woman who got a full-time position already that there is a ranking for people whom they tend to hire. It would be most easy for married men, followed by single men, then single women and most difficult for married women. Even for fixed-term positions, I'm over 30 now. I don't know when I will be able to get married or to have children. There are cases in which they come to the conclusion that it's too risky to hire a woman because when she takes her pregnancy leave while on a fixed-term, the whole project they are working on might be in jeopardy. Some women get jobs because they conceal that they are married. On the other hand, if you get married while on a fixed-term contract your employer might get fed up with you. So I think that they don't hire women in the first place to avoid such a risk."<sup>112</sup>

She seemed fed up with her weak standing in the labor market, and this is certainly related to her spending time for hobbies instead for her research. Furthermore, I gained the impression that she was no longer doing her research because she was not able to carry it out to the extent she wanted to anymore:

"More than the lack of time for research [...] I'm having problems with funding. It's problematic that I can't go far for my research anymore. When I was writing my dissertation, I was funded by the JSPS so that I could go to Hokkaido or Kagoshima for research. At the moment I can't do that anymore. I'm confined to what is reachable by car and only do research that doesn't cost much money. [...] I can't go to do fieldwork and my time for research is consumed by my classes."<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> けっこう厳しいかなというのはありますね。[...]私も何回か常勤で面接まで行ったことがあるんですけども、最終的に、けっこう公募の中でも女性、同じ業績の場合は女性を採りますと書いています。そうした場合でも、結局、男性を採っているケースが多いというのを感じることがあります。[...]すでに常勤になられている女性の研究者からも聞いたんですけども、結婚している男性が一番最初に、その次に独身男性、独身女性、既婚女性という順番で職に就きやすくなる。就けるというような話を聞いたことがあって。

やはり任期付きの場合でも、私の年も30を過ぎている。いつ結婚して、いつ子どもができるか分からない。任期付きの途中で産休を取られてしまうとプロジェクトが止まってしまうから困るというような判断をされるケースもあるので、なかなか女性が、[...]結婚を隠して職に就くという人もいます。一方で、結婚を途中でしてしまうと、「なんだ」と職場からあきれられてしまうというので、最初から危険を回避して採られないということのほうが多いのかなというふうにも感じることがあります。

<sup>113</sup> 調査に行く時間が厳しいというよりも、[...]やはり調査費を工面するのに困ってしまって、遠くの、遠方のほうの調査に行けないという部分が難点かなというのは。なので、博士論文を書いているとき

With her goal getting out of reach she shifted her attention toward another objective. Asked about what she aspired for the next five years she answered:

"Ideally, I don't know whether I will find work or not, but I think it would be okay if it stays like it is because I want to get married. I do not have a partner yet, but I think I want to get married. It would be ideal if I'm married and have kids in 5 years. That and I would be really happy if I can find a full-time position."<sup>114</sup>

This option was attractive for her because she saw the opportunity of doing the work she likes while raising children.

Aside from the lack of progress in her research, she enjoyed her life. She explained how she liked teaching and being in contact with her students and other teachers, but more than that she enjoyed the freedom from obligations. Comparing her life now with her years as a student, she explained that she had been freed from all the obligations that came with being part of a *kenkyūshitsu*. She also gave this as her reason for leaving her part-time researcher position at her old university behind:

"If I would still be affiliated to my *kenkyūshitsu* at XX I would have to go there two, three times per week. And from my home to university it takes me about two and a half hours to get there, and it is costly. If you consider the loss of time, you have more free-time if you don't have an affiliation. It is important for me that I can go home directly [after teaching]."<sup>115</sup>

Asked what she liked most in her daily life, she said:

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は学振、学振はご存じですね。[...]博士課程のときもそれをもたらっていたので、けっこう北海道とか鹿児島  
の調査も行ってたんですけども、今そういう科研も取れない状況になると近隣で、車で行ける範囲とか、なるべく交通費がかからない範囲で調査をするという、[...]なかなか調査にも行けないし、論文を書いている時間が授業を作るのに費やされてしまって、なかなか、なくなってしまうというのが現状かな。

<sup>114</sup> まあ、理想としては、仕事に就けているかどうかというのははっきりとは分かりません。でも、今のまま現状維持でもいいかなというのが1つはあります。なぜかという、私は結婚したい。まだ相手がいるわけではないですけども、結婚したいと考えているので、5年後ぐらいには結婚して子どもがいればいいかなというのが一番の理想。それでなおかつ常勤の職に就けていけば、それはすごい幸せなことだと思います。

<sup>115</sup> 研究室、農大の研究室に所属がまだずっと残っていたとしたら、そちらにも週2回行かなきゃいけないとか、3回行かなきゃいけないというしがらみもあるし、さらに大学から自宅まで片道2時間半かかってしまうので、そういう交通費、交通時間のロスを考えると所属を持ってないほうが自由な時間が多いかな。直帰できるというのが一番のポイントかなと。

"I don't have obligations. If you are affiliated to a university, you have to go there and have to do as asked by the professor. This is really annoying for a lot of reasons. But because I'm a *hijōkin* it's okay just to come in for class. The time before and after I can use freely."<sup>116</sup>

She explained that this freedom was a psychological freedom. Even though teaching ten classes per week that meant only two classes per day and she could plan the rest of the day as she wished. She was, therefore, confident that she had it better than her peers:

"Compared to my classmates from high school? I'm not meeting them regularly nowadays, but I guess I have it better in terms of work. I have free-time while they have to work from 9 to 5. I don't have to work overtime. When it comes to the salary, I guess they get slightly more but comparing myself to someone working full-time I have it better now."<sup>117</sup>

Aside from the points mentioned so far, there were aspects in which she was not like the other Settled. The reason for those differences was her living situation. While working as *hijōkin kōshi*, she was still living at home with her mother who did most of the housework. Even though she only had her low part-time teacher income, she was able to save money and to pay for her pension. She had this advantage because she could live at home. Other participants who settled for non-regular employment in academia were aware of the hazards they may face in the future or when becoming sick but did not do anything about those threats. Kaori, on the other hand, knew that her health was vital to keep her jobs and because she was not covered by social insurance. Therefore she cared for her health and was involved in sports to stay healthy.

Kaori started her career with the ambition to get a full-time position in academia. Over the three years, she accumulated more *hijōkin* posts each year, which were reducing the time

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<sup>116</sup> 何の縛りもない。[...]イメージとして、大学、どこかに必ず席があるとなると、そこに必ず行かなきゃいけないとか、先生のお伺いを立てなきゃいけないとかという、いろんな面倒くさいことがあるけれども、一応、非常勤なので授業だけをしにいけないというイメージがあるので、その授業をするのは、[...]それ以外の前後の時間に関しては自分の自由に使える。

<sup>117</sup> 高校の同級生と比べたら? (...) どうなんだろう。(...) 現状で高校の同級生とあまり会わないので一概には何とも言えないけれども、(...) たぶん職、仕事としては高校の同級生に比べれば割がいいんじゃないか。自由な時間、比較的9時から5時まで行かなきゃいけないとか、9時-6時で残業があるというわけでもないし、給料もおそらく、それなりに似たような、ただ、まだ彼ら彼女らのほうがもらっているとは思いますが、それに、フルで働いている人に比べれば、現状はいいほうかなとは思いますがね。

she had left for other activities. Out of frustration about her chances in the academic labor market as a woman and the lack of funding for her research activities, research came to a complete halt. Starting a family became her new goal, and she enjoyed the freedoms that came with non-regular employment in academia. Without the need to further be involved in research, she spent her time with friends or on her hobbies. She came to like her lifestyle without obligations. Her financial situation was stable, and she was even able to put money aside because she was still living with her mother. She was even willing to sustain this lifestyle because it offered a better chance for work-family reconciliation and she could still work in an area that was interesting for her. Working as *hijōkin kōshi* was limiting the time she had for other things, but because she gave up on research, she still had time for leisure. She enjoyed teaching and was sure that she had it better than other people working full-time.

She freed herself from affiliations and apparently did not feel pressured as a result. I attribute this aspect to the fact that she is a woman. As far as the *normal way* is concerned, the career expectations for women are set low, and it is not considered shameful to work in non-regular employment. A woman can strive for a career and may be acknowledged when successful, but at the same time always has the option to fulfill the socially accepted role of a woman as a wife and mother to avert social pressures. In contrast, the male participants categorized as Settled had a stronger sense of failure in this employment situation. In addition to that, her example proved that women have more difficulty in having a career because of the expectations regarding motherhood. Female PhD graduates enter the labor market at a consequential age, at which they usually have to make decisions about family planning as well. According to Kaori, this is what makes it difficult to enter the academic labor market, and as a result can lead to women settling into their life as part-time teachers. Furthermore, Kaori's example showed that the research area and therefore the costs for research play a major role. If special equipment or extensive fieldwork is needed, the chances are high that young academics

can no longer be active in their field after losing their affiliation as students. However, it can be expected that this is an exceptional case in the humanities and social sciences.

### **The Researchers**

The Researchers were those who spent the least amount of their time for preparing *hijōkin* classes. Instead, they used every free minute of the day to advance their own research. The main difference between them and the other groups regarding employment was that interviewees of this category usually had more stable positions besides their *hijōkin* work. It was most common to work as research assistants or to have research jobs in companies or municipalities. There they would work on fixed-term contracts as well, but they had regular working hours and work only took place during this time. These jobs gave their daily lives a structure and made it easier to make time for other activities such as research. They spent less time for preparing classes because they had fewer classes to teach. As a result of having another stable affiliation, worries of losing their *hijōkin kōshi* positions were apparently not strong and thus the pressure to deliver good work was lower than, for example, for the Overwhelmed. The Researchers had the capacity to focus on their long-term goal of gaining full-time employment in academia and therefore organized their daily lives accordingly. They would even replace their leisure time with time for research.

Naoki was one of the three persons categorized as Researcher in my sample. During the interview, he seemed very focused and put all of his efforts into reaching his goal of a full-time position in academia. According to him, he was already determined to obtain a PhD when he entered university as an undergraduate. The interview took place three and a half years after he had graduated and as a result, he was able to give me insights into his various experiences as a PhD graduate in the labor market. Right after his graduation, he was offered a regular position

at a company where he had already worked on the side during his student days. He accepted, but in consideration of his career goals in academia, he made a special arrangement with his employer to reduce his working hours as well as his income to 60% of a full-time position. The company utilized a software he had learned to use during his studies, so in some way, he was able to use what he had learned during his time at university. He only worked there on three days per week. In addition, he was allowed to take long holidays to do his fieldwork abroad. He used the rest of his time to work as a part-time teacher because he wanted to stay connected to the academic world and thought *hijōkin* posts might get him ahead in his career. Even though he had found stable employment that was even related to his studies, he was willingly making compromises and focused on his career goal. This determination went so far that he quit his regular job and started working on a fixed-term contract at another workplace instead. He told me:

"I'm now working at the research center of a city office. There I'm only working on a fixed-term contract for three years. But my work there is research. [...] At my former workplace I had to work with this software and switching to my own research after getting home was very difficult. [...] Now I can do research all day long. It's not that hard."<sup>118</sup>

This statement shows that he was willing to take risks and devoted his whole life to reach his goal of full-time employment in academia. He, just like the other interviewees, believed research activities and publications were essential to finding a post and therefore actively created an environment that allowed him to spend much of his time on his research. Instead of three days, he was now working four days per week, but because he was working at a municipality, Naoki was no longer required to work overtime, which made his days more predictable. He described a regular workday as follows: "At the moment, [...] I start work at

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<sup>118</sup> 今のところは、あの、市役所の中にある研究センターなんです。で、こっちのほうは任期付きなんですけど、3年間の。ただ、こっちだと、えっと、仕事の内容そのものが研究になるので、[...]前だと仕事をしている間はその業務についてXXXについて、家に帰ってから研究の（レンレイ？）、ちょっと頭の切り替えが大変だったんですね。今のところは研究やって、[...]1日中研究できて、そんなに大変じゃないというイメージですね。

8:30 and finish at 5 in the evening. I would get home at around 6 [...], and from 7 I would usually do my research at home until 11 or 12."<sup>119</sup> Only on Fridays, he taught two classes part-time. It took him three hours to prepare for one class as he noted, which does not differ much from other people in my sample. He, however, made clear that he was not giving his best for the preparations to save time: "I have an idea of how the ideal class, how the ideal preparations have to be, but I don't think that I'm preparing them to that standard."<sup>120</sup> He would usually spend Thursday nights to prepare his classes, and therefore managed to contain the work he invested for his part-time positions. He nonetheless saw a purpose in his part-time teaching posts: "It's life at the bottom of society, [...] where you gain experience for the future."<sup>121</sup> He also seemed to see it as a prerequisite for finding regular employment: "I put the *hijōkin* jobs on my CV when I apply for posts as a university teacher."<sup>122</sup> Other than that he used these posts as affiliation when presenting his own work to other academics: "When I go to conferences about my own research topic I use my affiliation as *hijōkin*, and when I present my research at the XX City Office or when I'm in XX I give the XX City Office as my affiliation."<sup>123</sup> Nevertheless, he saw working as part-time teacher alone as problematic, which is why he made sure to have another source of income. Regarding *hijōkin* work, he told me:

"Recently it got tougher to be a *hijōkin*. Some labor law was revised, and you can't do the same work for longer than five years. That's the case for universities as well. If they employ you longer than five years, they'll have to treat you like a full-time employee. Because that's in place, you can find it in the labor contracts when you start in a *hijōkin* position. Stating your employment will end after four years, or stuff like, there won't be a 5<sup>th</sup> year. I think it's a bit insecure to lead a life just working as *hijōkin*."<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> 今だと、[...]8時半から仕事です。で5時に終わって、まー、だいたい家に帰ってくるのが6時ぐらいですね。[...]7時から、いつもだと11時から12時ぐらいまで、えっと、家で研究をやっています。

<sup>120</sup> やっぱり自分が思う理想の授業、理想の準備があると思うんですけど、そこまでの準備はやっぱりちょっとできてないかなというところはあります。

<sup>121</sup> 下積みっていうやつですね。[...]あの、経験を積んでそれを将来に活かすということですかね。

<sup>122</sup> 非常勤は、私、例えば今、大学の先生に応募をしようとして履歴書を出しますね。そのときには非常勤も書くんですね。

<sup>123</sup> 例えば学会に行つて自分のメインの研究テーマですね、[...]大学の非常勤の肩書を使います。で、えっと、XXでやっている研究について発表するだとか、宇都宮市内だと宇都宮市役所の肩書を使いますね。

<sup>124</sup> 最近は非常勤がちょっとつらいのはですねえ、あの、労働が改正されて、[...]同じ仕事で5年以上雇いたがらないんですね。それは大学も一緒に、あの、5年以上雇っちゃうと正社員と同じ扱いをし



As far as other activities were concerned, he did not do many things other than his research but did not dislike this situation. Naoki had recently married but was living far apart from his wife, who was working full-time at a municipality in another part of the country. As a result, he had to care for his household by himself, but at the same time, he did not have to be considerate to anyone else. Naoki believed that his lifestyle might cause friction between the two of them, were they to live together: "I don't have any private time. That's why I think my wife would regularly get mad at me when we would live together."<sup>125</sup>

During the interview, it became apparent that his financial situation had influenced his life choices in the past:

"When I was doing my masters before I joined the doctoral course, I did job-hunting for one month. [...] The 2<sup>nd</sup> year of masters is the time when you can apply for funding for a PhD course by the JSPS. When you get it, you are paid for doing your research. That's the best start for a career as a researcher, but even if you apply, the chances to get it are only 30%. I felt a bit insecure in case I might not get it, so I applied to companies."<sup>126</sup>

He eventually got funded and entered a PhD course, yet this behavior shows that he did not have much support from his family or did not want to be a burden. This, however, seemed to have pushed him toward employment solutions other than part-time teaching and was, therefore, enabling him to focus on his research. He was living alone after graduation and had to earn his own living, which is why he started to work as a regular employee. Compared to the Overwhelmed or the Settled, the lack of support or his unwillingness to accept any help

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ないといけなくなるんです。[...]そういうがあるので、あの、ここ最近は、非常勤を開始するときです、労働契約書を交わすんですけど、その契約書の中に4年で打ち切りとか書いていますね。5年目はないと今は書いてあるので、なかなか、やっぱり非常勤だけで生活するのはちょっと不安定かなと。

<sup>125</sup> やっぱりプライベートな時間がない。うん。なので、[...]これ、同居、一緒に住んでいたら怒られるというのは常々ありますね。

<sup>126</sup> あの、マスターのときには、ドクターに上がる前ですね、一度、就職活動をひと月だけやったんですね。[...]日本のドクターだと、あの、マスターの2年生の段階で、あの、日本学術振興会というところに研究資金の応募を出して、ドクターから、なんていうんですかね、研究資金と給料をもらって研究職を始めるというのが、まー、一番理想的なスタート方法なんですけど、その申請書を出しながらホントに受かるのかなあみたいな、確率的に3分の1ぐらいなんです。30%ぐらいの採択なので、落ちたらどうしようみたいなことを、不安に少し感じて、民間も少し受けたんですね。

pressured him to choose more stable employment. The interviewees who could rely on their parents as a safety net were able to sustain themselves by just working as *hijōkin kōshi*, only because they had this financial support. As a result, however, they were unable to do much for their own research projects.

As for social pressures, he did not raise many issues that had to do with social expectations. His stable employment situation was apparently enough to protect him from comments regarding his work. Naoki introduced himself as a researcher of the XX City Office when interacting with 'regular people' and used his *hijōkin* posts for academics. As long as he was able to do and publish his own research, it seemed there was no one to cause him trouble. His family did not appear in his story, and he only talked about his wife. However, living far apart, she did not pressure him. What was bothering him was the feeling of not being a real academic since he was not working full-time in his field. This idea of not succeeding could be observed for most interviewees in this sample. Naoki was censoring himself and holding back to not allow for the conclusion that he was not giving his best or worse that he would be in content with his current situation:

"I have *senpai* and peers as well as teachers among my Facebook friends and am afraid to post too much because I'm afraid that rumors might spread. [...] 'Naoki is having fun and not doing his research properly although he has not found a job at a university yet.' That's the kind of judgment I want to avoid."<sup>127</sup>

In Naoki's case, his need to be economically independent helped him to arrange his life toward what he aspired most, a full-time career in academia. On the grounds that he always had an occupation with stable working hours and only taught a few *hijōkin* classes his life remained manageable. With his main income coming from his job at the municipality, he was not dependent on the revenue from the part-time teaching positions and therefore less eager to

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<sup>127</sup> 今フェイスブックに、あの、研究者の先輩だとか、あの、同期だとか、あと先生とかがいるので、まー、なんかそこから口コミというやつですね、噂が広がるのが怖いですね。[...]○はまだ就職もしてないのに、大学の職を持ってないのに、あいつは研究もしっかりやらずに遊んでやがるという噂というか、なんですかね、そういう評価は受けたくないですね。

deliver good classes for the purpose of being rehired. While the Overwhelmed and the Settled had lost control, he was able to think ahead and even optimized his efforts during these first years after graduation. His employment situation provided him with affiliations for both the normal and the *academic way*, and due to his stable situation with another place of employment, he did not seem to care about what other academics might think about him when he gave his *hijōkin* posts as affiliation. Other pressure from friends and family appeared to be absent because he was living apart from his wife and spent the rest of his time for research. Although he had spent all his time on his projects, Naoki was hoping to regain his leisure-time after finding a full-time position.

### **Consequences of Working in Non-Regular Academic Employment**

In the last four chapters, the case of PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences was discussed regarding what they actually do after graduation. It became apparent that judging their situation by their employment status did not help to understand the complexity of their lives.

The first aspect that was addressed was the non-regular occupation of *hijōkin kōshi*. Because all of the interviewees, who were aiming for a career in academia, were or had been working as part-time teachers, this occupation could be identified as an important part of a PhD graduate's life in Japan. In Chapter 4, their numbers and working conditions as well as how their situation compares to other non-regular workers in Japan was discussed, and the particular characteristics of this form of employment were worked out. Furthermore, family support was identified as a factor that enables such precarious employment practices, which would usually not provide enough to sustain the own livelihood at the beginning of an academic career. In Chapter 5, the apparent need for an affiliation in academia to be acknowledged as a scientist

and the resulting strategies to secure such an affiliation by doing additional academic work as part-time researchers or unremunerated visiting researchers was explained. Also, research activities, which were considered the main purpose of an academic and essential for career advancement, were discussed. It was investigated how much time the academics were able to spend for research and what kept them from doing what they considered most important. Chapter 6 was adding to the comprehensive view of the lives of PhDs in precarious employment by considering activities aside from their preparations for *hijōkin* classes and research that had to be accommodated in their free time. This limited time was shared with time spent on housework, which was seen as a means to compensate for the support the participants received when still living with their parents. Also, the time spent with family was analyzed and the presence of children identified as something that changed the participant's goals from career advancement toward family. Additionally, hobbies were taken into consideration, which were in most cases reduced to sports and engaged in for the purpose of preserving the PhD graduates' employability. Finally, it was shown that social pressures resulting from a role conflict between the *normal way* and the *academic way* further complicated matters and had the potential to force the interviewees back onto the *normal way* bowing to pressures from peers, friends and family and their waning support. In this chapter, it was shown how all those activities and occupations come together. The three different types helped to understand what kind of academic work relationships are most problematic and that it was the interviewee's inability to manage their time use, which had big consequences for their research activities and therefore their chances for upward mobility. It became clear that people categorized as 'Overwhelmed,' 'Settled' or 'Researcher,' had found distinct ways to deal with their employment situation. The chapter offered a more detailed view of the possible consequences of precarious employment on academics in Japan. It showed that aspects such as gender, financial background and support, experience, their understanding of what constitutes

a career in academia as well as the employment choices they made, had an impact on their level of objective and subjective precariousness, and therefore the severity of its adverse effects. After summarizing the findings of this chapter, I will address the more general implications of this study.

### *The Overwhelmed, the Settled and the Researchers*

The categories of the Overwhelmed, the Settled and the Researchers represent the three approaches the participants showed in reaction to their career start in precarious academic employment.

The Overwhelmed could be characterized by their inability to focus on long-term goals because they were more concerned with delivering good work to keep their *hijōkin kōshi* positions, and thus sustain their livelihood. All of them were still at an early point in their careers and were forced to spend an excessive amount of time on their *hijōkin* work because of their lack of experience and demands regarding class content and class standards. As a result, they had difficulties managing their time. Work and activities they were obliged to be involved in, either because of a contract or social pressures, received priority in their daily schedules. However, activities they would have to make time for, like their own research or leisure, almost entirely disappeared. Hobbies were only present in this group when they served a clear purpose. To stay healthy meant to keep their jobs, and interviewees who had recognized this connection were trying to stay fit. I used Takashi's example to explain the characteristics of this group. Because I interviewed him multiple times, his shift between categories could be observed. He changed from being a Researcher to an Overwhelmed because many factors demanding more of his free time came together. His *hijōkin kōshi* post took a significant amount of time, while social pressures in the form of expectations from his family forced him to look for other ways

to earn money. His delicate financial situation due to the start of the repayment period of his student loans made him lose focus, and he was questioning himself and looking for an alternative to academia at the time of the last interview. People categorized in this group showed the strongest level of subjective precariousness. Still having their ideals and goals regarding an academic career in mind their ability to follow those aspirations was challenged and they gradually lost confidence in being able to reach these goals. They were clearly suffering from their insecure situation and their low standard of living, just like other non-regular employees, who were working under such circumstances involuntarily as mentioned in Chapter 2 (Taromaru 2009, Tsuru et al. 2011).

The Settled had a more stable economic standing because they taught more classes. They were investing more time for their part-time teaching jobs because they wanted to feel satisfied. Working as a *hijōkin kōshi* was seemingly close enough to what they aspired. They had given up on career advancement and therefore any significant research activity because they either lost hope or interest in getting ahead. As a result, they made the best of their situation and enjoyed their current lifestyles with all its flexibilities, so they pushed away thoughts about their insecure future. Most interviewees could be categorized as 'Settled,' among them all but one of the female participants. This category demonstrates what happens when someone stays in this form of non-regular employment for an extended period of time. Because it took up most of their time, their work as *hijōkin kōshi* was the most influential aspect of their lives. Unable to find a full-time position over an extended period or not satisfied with their progress in research, they transformed their situation into a more pleasant one by giving up on most of their research efforts and allocating their time for leisure activities instead. It was remarkable, however, that research could be one of these recreational activities. In this case, it was carried out for pleasure and not to produce publications. Economic pressures were not problematic, and social pressures seemed to have subsided due to their extended time on this career path.

They were so far from fulfilling expectations from the *normal way* that none of them, nor their social environment, seemed to care anymore. Males in this categories were predominantly mid-aged, but many young women also ended up in this category. Just like in Kaori's case, social expectations pushed them toward starting a family and having children and not much was expected from them in terms of their careers. In this category, the level of objective precariousness was lower compared to the 'Overwhelmed' because they held multiple *hijōkin* positions. Even though the employment insecurity remained, the sheer number of classes they were teaching provided more stability and a higher income. Aspects of objective precariousness could be ignored because their situation would only get problematic when they lose their health or retire. By ignoring those more distant threats, they were able to enjoy their lives in the present, and the level of subjective precariousness was low.

The Researchers had another place of work that was at the center of their attention. Working as *hijōkin kōshi* was not as important for them. They, therefore, were only teaching a few classes and did not spend much time to prepare them. Their regular working hours made it possible for them to advance their own projects and made them the only group in this sample with good chances for a full-time career in academia. Due to their regular working hours on three to four days per week, they led a more structured life and did not spend any additional time for those occupations. The few *hijōkin* classes they taught took some of their free time for preparations but most of their time was still left to their disposal. Social pressures were apparently weakened because of their additional place of employment, and they were able to lead a more stable life with their income. Nonetheless, their discontent with not having reached their goal motivated them to invest every available minute into research, therefore eliminating leisure time. The objective precariousness was lowest for this category, and so was the subjective precariousness.

### *Consequences of Working as Hijōkin Kōshi*

In this study, it became apparent that many of the interviewees worked as *hijōkin kōshi* because they thought it would be normal or even necessary if they want to work full-time in academia. Bad working conditions and the insecurities were seen as a form of honorable suffering that would be temporary and those who managed to bear this aptitude test would succeed and find a regular position. However, this perception was far from reality. The actions of the participants of this study showed that it is easy to get stuck in non-regular employment in academia, especially when working as *hijōkin kōshi*. Many participants had settled in and might not be able to find anything other than part-time teaching jobs in their future. In this sense, it could be seen as a test, but not a test regarding their academic skills. In the first years after graduation, it was far more important how the interviewees were able to manage their lives. I found out that research, the activity necessary to advance their career in academia, had to take place during the interviewees' free time. With no one other than the young researchers themselves interested in their career advancement, they actively had to make time for this activity. However, working as *hijōkin kōshi* made managing their own time more difficult. Instead of having a designated workplace and working hours, only the 90 minutes per class were fixed. Class preparations took place in their own free time without office hours limiting them. The demands in terms of class quality in combination with the insecurity of being a part-time teacher lead many participants to spend a lot, if not all of their free time for this work. The interviewees felt obliged to deliver a good class, because they were being paid, had signed a labor contract and did not want to disappoint the students with whom they had the closest relationship when working part-time.

The three categories above helped to identify working as a part-time teacher as one of the biggest challenges to the participants' ability to manage their lives in a way that made career



advancement possible. The less involved the interviewees were in teaching part-time, the better they could manage their lives and push their career forward.

Similar observations on the adverse effects of part-time teaching were made for the US and Australia (Bérubé and Ruth 2015, Brown et al. 2010, Joullié and Lama 2015). In both countries the share of part-time teachers or adjuncts, as they are called, has reached a bigger dimension than in Japan with about 60% of the teaching staff at higher education institutions only hired temporarily. Comparable to my findings for Japan, it is argued in the Australian discourse that adjuncts only have very limited possibilities to involve in research and to improve their skills (Joullié and Lama 2015). The theory that the adjuncts are unable to manage their time, much of it being consumed by their teaching jobs, is established by Brown et al. (2010) in a comparable manner as well. They argue that the ongoing casualization of Australia's sector of higher education has individualized the responsibility for class quality and that this is leading to self-exploitation among adjuncts, who try to fulfill their personal and professional obligation to their students. Just like the Japanese *hijōkin* many of the Australian adjuncts are giving their best because they hope to be rewarded with a permanent position. However the *hijōkin* in my study, besides those categorized as 'Overwhelmed,' were confident to be in more regular employment five years after the interview. For Australia, 62% of the adjuncts believed that they would still work as part-time teachers after three years (Joullié and Lama 2015).

### ***The Role of Social Pressures***

Through this study, it furthermore became apparent how powerful social pressures can be in Japanese society. The young PhD graduates found themselves torn between two different sets of expectations, the *normal way* enforced by almost all people around them, and the *academic way* on which they had to succeed to make a career in academia. Expectations in

regard to their career or family were making it difficult for the interviewees to stay on course for full-time employment in academia. The interviewees took on extra work to have an affiliation, and therefore a place where they belonged to in the *academic way*, and were expected to make more money because of their high education in the *normal way*. The most critical time for the interviewees was the time between graduation and the age of 35. The timeline of what is expected from people until that age continuously confronted them with their comparably weak standing in the labor market and pushed especially women to make a decision for career or family shortly after graduation. A way to avoid those pressures was to avoid social contacts which most of the interviewees up until this age did, and as a result put many of them in social deprivation. However, the more stable their employment was, the better they could deal with those pressures. Above the age of 35, expectations toward them of having a regular career seemed to subside and allow for them to settle in.

### ***Is Prosperity Enabling Precarity?***

Apparently, the economic situation and whether they were supported by their family also played a role in their chances. However, contrary to the perception that receiving support is something good, this support proved to be one aspect that enabled them to lead their lives only working as *hijōkin kōshi* and was, therefore, causing their inability to spend time on their own research. The interviewees who had to find a position they could support themselves with proved to be better off in the end. They were working regular hours and still able to focus on the goal of becoming a professor by using their available free time for research. A significant finding from this study is therefore that working in non-regular employment in academia is not per se bad when it comes to career advancement. Non-regular employment in academia is only problematic when it interferes with the PhD holders' ability to involve in their own research.

This is clearly the case for *hijōkin kōshi*. Due to bad pay and insecure working conditions, the interviewees' economic situation was precarious. The social pressures from the *normal way* made especially the Overwhelmed avoid social contacts and made their social situation precarious, and finally, both the Overwhelmed and the Settled were unable to prevent their work from taking over their free time, so they felt precarity in the lack of time. The Overwhelmed used all their time to satisfy expectations by employers and their social environment, losing both leisure and research time, while the Settled had decided to use their excess time for leisure, and the Researchers were using it for their own research and abandoned recreational activities.

### ***Objective Precariousness does not Necessarily Cause Subjective Precariousness***

Working as a part-time teacher did not necessarily make the interviewees unhappy. Many of the people I interviewed, especially women and those categorized as Settled, enjoyed the flexibility and the fact that they had no obligations. However, taking a closer look, those who settled as *hijōkin kōshi* might not have had a real choice by that point. They were making the best of the situation and aiming for the next best goals to enjoy their lives for the moment, and in the case of many women, to focus on family. This happiness however heavily relies on staying in good health and not getting old. With the latter certainly happening, it has to be questioned whether it is responsible or not to hire people in a way that most certainly will cause them to live in poverty after they retire. This, however, is again a question that could be posed for all non-regular employees. For the Overwhelmed, objective and subjective precariousness went hand in hand. For the Researchers, the ability to follow their dream of an academic career and being able to use their skills significantly reduced their feeling of precarity.

## 8. Conclusion

In this dissertation, I aimed to provide a more detailed view of the situation of PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences who do not start working in regular employment right after graduation. I asked under what circumstances PhDs are working and living, where and how they work and how their situation is affecting their careers and their life chances. I also aimed to explain what it means for them to be in precarious employment despite their presumably high status and to assess the consequences of precarious employment in academia for the system of higher education. I, furthermore, show what a PhD is worth in Japan. Lastly, I will connect the case of PhD graduates from the humanities and social sciences to those of other non-regular employees in Japan and the discourse on precarious employment, before offering a future outlook on the situation and my advice.

### **The Work and Life of Precarious Academic Employees**

The first two questions were answered by taking a comprehensive look at the interviewees' work and free time arrangements. I was able to identify working as *hijōkin kōshi* as a key component in the participants' careers. All participants had been involved in this form of work, and the way work is organized for part-time teachers made it problematic. Aside from well-known characteristics of non-regular employment like employment insecurity and comparably bad pay, this employment form was taking up one of the most valuable resources the interviewees had: their time. While other forms of non-regular academic employment, like part-time researcher positions at universities or municipalities, provided regular working hours without the need for additional work at home, part-time teachers spent much of their free time on preparing their classes or grading assignments. Their understanding of working as *hijōkin kōshi* as a stepping stone toward a regular career in academia, their values and standards, and

their personal connections to the students made them put more effort and therefore more time into their preparations. Employers, on the other hand, were eagerly utilizing the young academics' vulnerable position and extorted more work out of them by appealing to their values as academics and by setting guidelines for class content and for how the class had to be carried out, which increased their workloads. From the participants' point of view, working as *hijōkin kōshi* was seen as a normal part of an academic's life at the start of their careers. I posited that it is probably one of the biggest hurdles that stand in the way of finding a regular position in academia because the participants demonstrated their inability to manage their own time effectively when they had to do so on their own. As a result, they used their time for work instead of research, which made career advancement difficult.

Aside from working as *hijōkin kōshi*, I took a comprehensive look at the other activities in the participants' lives. Free time, and therefore the time available for their own research, was also influenced by these activities. Among them were other forms of remunerated and unremunerated work, housework, time spent with spouses or children, and hobbies. It became clear that social and economic pressures influenced the degree of involvement in those activities. They were working in additional positions to increase their income, or in order to gain an affiliation they needed for the interactions with other academics (*academic way*). Housework was a means to compensate for their weak economic standing, and a way to repay their parents for providing board and lodging. As soon as children were present in an academic's life, they became their highest priority and were, therefore, taking over their free time, leaving no time for research if they were unable to do it at work. Hobbies often had the purpose of preserving the interviewees' employability. They were taking time from their schedule but helped them to deal with their fear of losing their jobs due to illness.

The interviewees had to manage all of these activities and to satisfy the demands from what I called the *regular way*, which includes social expectations regarding employment and

family life in Japanese society. However, at the same time, demands from the *academic way* had to be accommodated. Also, the interviewees' economic situations had an impact on how they could manage their lives. While satisfying the most pressing demands, they had to earn enough money and make time for their own research to be able to get ahead in their careers. The hardships of PhD graduates in Japan are not only connected to their employment but a consequence of various demands they have to manage by themselves. In this regard, PhD graduates have more in common with people who are self-employed. However, instead of making their business profitable, their goal is career advancement, and therefore, their research should be their priority. In Chapter 7, I could show that the interviewees reacted differently to these demands after graduation. I established the three types of the Overwhelmed, the Settled, and the Researchers, and explained what choices they made, what they prioritized, and what the expected outcome of their behavior was. In conclusion, most of the participants of my study could not continue their research to a degree that enabled them to advance in their careers as academics. They were preoccupied with activities other than research. The Overwhelmed were trying to find a way out of their unfavorable situation by taking on more teaching jobs in or outside academia, which will most likely further bind them to non-regular academic employment. The Settled had already given up on their academic careers and did not think they had a chance anywhere else. Therefore, they enjoyed what they had and lived from day to day. Only the Researchers were able to continue their own research. This, however, was rather the result of their choice of employment than a demonstration of their superior time management skills. They were involved in other non-regular jobs in academia that did not involve teaching, and therefore their work was confined to their working hours. These jobs gave their days enough structure and provided enough stability to relieve them from social and economic pressures and gave them the time to do their research.

## **The Rise of Precarious Academic Employment and the Consequences for Higher Education**

Even though this dissertation was focused on the consequences of precarious academic employment for the individuals working under these conditions, the situation of these academics is likely to have an impact on the system of higher education as a whole. The University Part-time Teacher Union of the Kantō-Region made the argument that the increased reliance on part-time teachers in Japan will lead to a decrease in class quality, should their working and research conditions not be improved (Kato 1998). They argued that less involvement in research activities would threaten their qualification as university teachers. Internationally, decreasing class quality is frequently mentioned as a consequence of the changing composition of the academic labor force with a higher share of casual academics (Bérubé and Ruth 2015, Brown et al. 2010, Joullié and Lama 2015). Other than the inability to develop the own skills due to their insecure employment relationships (Joullié and Lama 2015), Australian scholars show concern about the hiring practices, in which informal job distribution through referrals has replaced rigorous screening of the applicants' qualification (Ibid.). The same aspect is also criticized for higher education in the US (Bérubé and Ruth 2015). However, it has to be noted that 60% of all adjunct teachers in the US only hold a master's degree. A similar tendency became evident in the samples for Australia as well. For both countries, a higher degree is not necessary to become a part-time teacher at university and almost no screening procedures to ensure quality are in place (Bérubé and Ruth 2015, Brown et al. 2010, Joullié and Lama 2015). Studies in Australia show that the comparably weak stand of temporary faculty staff and their employment insecurity causes them to avoid conflicts and to inflate grades of their courses to demonstrate good performance and to be rehired (Joullié and Lama 2015). Their employment insecurity is seen as a threat to academic freedom in the US

because it is difficult for adjunct teachers to address delicate topics in class that might get them fired (Bérubé and Ruth 2015).

The interviewees of this study made clear that a PhD is needed for most *hijōkin* posts in contemporary Japan. Accordingly, it can be assumed that at least people with higher degrees are teaching at universities. However, job distribution of part-time teaching positions is as informal as in the other countries mentioned and therefore no insurance for class quality. Even though the reasoning for decreased class quality in the US and Australia are convincing, it has to be acknowledged for what kind of courses part-time teachers are hired. In Japan, the majority of *hijōkin* teach introductory courses in general education subjects, and it can be assumed that their knowledge level is sufficient for this task. The quality of classes was furthermore ensured through standards set by employers. I do not expect a drop in class quality, even when the number of *hijōkin kōshi* continues to rise, as long as they are employed for introductory courses and seminars are left to teaching staff still active in research.

In the Australian discourse on adjuncts, three possible consequences of decreased class quality are discussed. First, they see decreased class quality as an economic threat. With classes of lower quality, it would become harder to attract international students and threaten the competitiveness of Australia's sector of higher education, which is the country's largest service export industry. Furthermore, they predict consequences for Australia's workforce as a whole, because the decreasing quality of education has an impact on future workers who are educated by adjuncts. Lastly, they anticipate a labor shortage in academia (Brown et al. 2010). With its baby boomer generation retiring in the near future Brown et al. (2010) express concerns that there would be not enough academic staff with the necessary credentials to fill this void.

For Japan, the first two consequences are rather unlikely since the share of part-time teachers is still comparably low, limited to introductory courses and concentrated in private universities. Taking a look at the age structure of Japan's full-time university teaching staff



however it becomes clear that the young cohorts are small. Only 4,133 of the 177,263 *honmusha* are between 25 and 30 years old. The cohort between 60 and 65 consists of 21,777 *honmusha* (MEXT 2013e). Since the cohorts gradually grow it can be assumed that between 15,000 and 20,000 academics are hired mid-career because the number of tenured positions has been relatively stable as was noted in the introduction. This means that those are likely to be recruited from among the *hijōkin kōshi*. Since tenured positions are usually subject to more rigorous screening, it is probable that these posts will be filled by the 'Researchers' and therefore not necessarily pose a threat to the quality of education or research. Nonetheless, it can be anticipated that the quality gap between institutions heavily relying on part-time teachers and those, which employ less of them, will widen. While the resulting bad reputation might influence the hiring practices, it cannot be anticipated that low-quality education would further worsen their chances on the Japanese labor market that, as we have learned, prefers to train their recruits in-house rather than building on what they might have learned at university.

As far as the influence of more precarious employment in academia on research is concerned my data showed that depending on the type of employment the ability to involve in research activities differs significantly. While *hijōkin kōshi* positions reduced the academics' ability to be involved in research, working as part-time researchers made it easier for them to work on their own projects. Interviewees on fixed-term contracts working full-time, on the other hand, were unable to do any research as well. Regularly employed full-time employees had time for research, but it was considerably less than the time part-time researchers had. Currently, one-third of Japan's university teaching staff is exclusively working as part-time teachers, which suggests that Japan is currently only utilizing two-thirds of its capacity for research. The high share of *hijōkin kōshi* in the humanities and social sciences is certainly reducing the research capacity in those fields.

## **What is a PhD from the Humanities and Social Sciences Worth in Japan?**

Taking the various aspects of a PhD that could be shown in this dissertation into account, I conclude that the degree is not enough to call oneself a scientist in Japan, even though it is a necessity for an academic career. The interviewees demonstrated that they did not feel as academics as long as they were not affiliated with an institution of higher education and held a position that proves their involvement in academic work. This perception went so far that the participants in non-regular academic employment felt ashamed to tell others they were researchers as long as they were not at least working full-time. From their point of view, a real scientist is not only a PhD holder but has managed to secure a tenured position. However, it was mainly the academics themselves looking down on their degree, stressing that it seems worthless with the high number of PhDs on the labor market. Regular people, including family and friends or even casual contacts, who did not have any connection to the world of academia, still had the idea of a PhD being something special. However, in their perception this high social standing was connected to the image of a good job and a high salary, thus creating high expectations toward the PhD holders. This gap in the perception of what it means to be a PhD further burdened the young academics who could not fulfill these expectations. From an outside view, the impression could arise that the PhDs must have done something wrong if they have not lived up to this image. Aside from the degree's worth in academia and the public perception, I showed how the PhD is perceived by PhD graduates who started their careers in the private economy and from the employer's side. The PhD graduates who decided to leave academia had the impression that their degree was a handicap. They were sure to be seen as applicants that are socially awkward, have no practical experience and are much older than other new graduates. If at all, they were only using the basic knowledge they acquired during their studies. Employers, on the other hand, were suspicious of PhD applicants for the reason that they decided to leave academia. Furthermore, they meant more work because of the difficulties to

integrate them into the labor force and also higher costs, due to the convention of paying an employee according to their age. For that reason, many companies still seemed reluctant to hire those highly skilled graduates.

### **Non-Regular Employment In and Outside Academia and the Discourse on Precarious Employment**

With the case of PhD graduates in the humanities and social sciences, I was able to explore precarious employment in a profession for the national context of Japan. Compared to other non-regular employees in Japan especially those only working as part-time teachers were worse off. They were earning considerably less, with only 20% of what their full-time colleagues with a similar workload are paid. It also has to be considered that many PhD graduates even teach fewer classes and have an income that is not enough to sustain their livelihood. Non-regular employees in Japan on average earn 63.9% of what regular employees get (Sakurai 2011). The comparison of *hijōkin* and part-time work in Chapter 4 has shown how unfair this comparison is and since their employing universities do not call them part-time workers, *hijōkin kōshi* are by definition contract workers. Contract workers in Japan earn comparably well and have good working conditions even though their situation can differ significantly depending on where they are employed (Taromaru 2009). Contract workers teaching part-time at universities do not share the advantages of other contract employees in Japan. Part-time researchers, on the other hand, seemed to be satisfied with their working conditions and pay and are more comparable to other contract workers in Japan.

The uniqueness of non-regular employment in academia is also connected to the overall characteristics of work in this profession, and the special connection young academics have to their work. As far as work-life balance is concerned, academics have to bear more

responsibility in organizing their lives because their own research has to be accommodated in their free time. Work-life balance in academia allows for more flexibility, makes it easier to combine family and career and is, therefore, a popular choice for those who dislike regular work in the private economy. On the other hand, if not managed properly, it can lock them into non-regular employment with a poor outlook for their retirement.

Academics show a unique connection to their work and, as my study has shown, do not necessarily desire a high income or other benefits that come with a normal career. Many of the interviewees chose this line of work because they wanted to have an impact on society or make what they like most their occupation. For them, the intrinsic benefits of the occupation were most important, such as doing work they considered meaningful and being able to use their skills. Weber (2014) in his description of science as a vocation, stresses that academics need passion for their work. How does the work-life balance of someone look who is passionate about his work? I suppose that there is not much difference between work and life in such a case. People who are passionate about their work are likely to live their passion even during their free time. When asked about their private lives many interviewees pointed out that "flipping the switch" between work and life was difficult and that they could not just stop being an academic in their free time. This aspect is likely the biggest difference between other non-regular workers and people in non-regular academic employment. Their passion and commitment to their academic careers make them to workers willing to invest much of their time for their calling. Murgia (2015:17) identifies similar tendencies for young highly skilled workers in Italy, who find themselves in a "passion trap." For them, their work is a source of income and a source of pleasure, but on the other hand, they are suffering from the adverse consequences of precarious employment. Precarious employment relationships in academia, especially the occupation of *hijōkin kōshi*, seemed to be designed to exploit these characteristics of young academics. Other than those work ethics, the expectations toward a

career start in academia made precarious employment acceptable for many interviewees, and it was recognized as an apprenticeship. The idea of a career in academia being difficult is not new. Weber (2014) already warned about the mediocre years that academics have to endure without the promise of ever succeeding. Nowadays, however, the PhD's willingness to endure difficulties seems to be systemically exploited, and especially part-time teaching positions do not offer them anything in return. Instead, career advancement has become a private endeavor, and the individual bears the burden to ensure the own career progression by making time for research activities. This is a common trait of precarious employment as mentioned in Chapter 2 (ILO 2011, Kalleberg 2009). The Overwhelmed channeled the passion for academia into their teaching jobs and tried to fulfill other demands of daily life, while the Settled became too invested in part-time teaching and seemed to work for the intrinsic rewards of their teaching jobs. Kojima (2015) has identified the same level of commitment for temporary agency workers in Japan who work hard because they see themselves in the work they do. Due to their passion for their work and their ideals, young academics are willingly investing much more into non-regular positions, and these attributes make them exploitable. Their motivation is used against them and they voluntarily self-exploit because they hope it will pay off. Especially young academics tend to lose themselves in the complex demands of employers and social expectations. This is evident for the Overwhelmed in my sample. Working under these circumstances for an extended period without being able to advance the own research and therefore improving their chances to be hired for a regular position, the majority of my interviewees came to terms with their situation as a consequence. At this advanced point of their precarious academic careers, the interviewees started to realize that they might have missed their chance and therefore make the best of their situation or even try to improve it with the help of organized labor. The age structure and the number of classes they teach show that this group is usually featured in the literature on part-time teachers in Japan. The Researchers

were able to avoid this trap by choosing a different form of employment within academia. Research positions unlike teaching positions cannot be broken down to the small unit of a class and therefore offer more stability.

Upward mobility in non-regular academic employment can be assumed to be as bad as for other non-regular employees in Japan. Only the reasons for the lack of mobility are slightly different. Non-regular employees in academia are judged based on their academic achievements when they want to secure a regular position. What is most important for them, therefore, is to build an achievement record by doing research and sharing it with the academic community. The factor of age is not as critical as in other non-regular employment relationships. Other non-regular employees in Japan are more likely to be evaluated by their basic credentials and will have to explain why they started their career in non-regular employment.

Although the employment situation of young academics is more precarious than in the case of other non-regular employees in Japan, there are supposedly two factors that have hindered a comprehensive academic discourse on their plight. The first being the comparably low number of people affected when compared to the entirety of all non-regular workers in Japan and the fact that their employment, or at least their career path, was their choice. Therefore it is not perceived as a pressing problem, which is comparable to the situation of *freeter* when the debate about them started (Genda 2005).

Within this study, I could identify many consequences of precarious academic employment in Japan that were addressed in the general discourse on precarious employment. Even though in another sense, non-regular academics in Japan had less reliable working hours, the quality of their lives was deteriorating due to economic and social factors, and they had a high risk of losing their job in case they get sick. They, furthermore, had decreased career chances due to the lack of adequate training, in their case research activities, and were responsible for developing their skills on their own to stay employable. The respondents

categorized as Overwhelmed and Settled had no long-term perspective, and if they did not marry early, their careers interfered with marriage and having children. Regarding this point, however, a clear difference between men and women could be observed, with women in Japan less strained by their insecure employment situation, since social expectations towards their careers were considerably lower than for men. Precarious academic employment was an attractive choice for women due to its intrinsic values, which made it a flexible and more desirable career compared to other career options available for women in Japan. When evaluated in terms of the objective precariousness alone, many parallels to the discourse on the consequences of precarious employment could be observed. However, the different experience for men and women, but also the various levels of subjective precariousness of the different types I identified in this study, show a more complicated and fractioned experience of precariousness. Despite a high level of objective precariousness, the Settled had come to terms with their situation and developed strategies to manage their plight, thus reducing their subjective precariousness and therefore making their situation endurable if not even enjoyable. This was achieved by systemically ignoring the negative long-term effects of their employment situation. In order to identify the consequences of precarious employment for individuals and the organizational performance, I argue that aspects of subjective precariousness cannot be ignored because they change both the influence precarious employment has on the individual and how they approach their work. In this study, I found out that precarious employment is affecting highly skilled workers in Japan as well. Unlike the case of Germany, where young highly skilled workers pass through precarious employment during their transition to regular employment, Japan has more in common with the cases of Spain and Italy. In both countries highly skilled people become trapped in precarious employment when they start their careers as non-regular employees (Duell 2004, Murgia 2015). The choice of a job that allows for better time management, however, could increase their chances for upward mobility.

## Future Outlook and Advice

One of the questions I posed at the beginning of my dissertation was 'What could be done to support PhD graduates?' Mandatory courses about career management during their PhD course would be one way to assist them. Factors such as 'What is needed to secure a regular position in academia?' should be conveyed to the students, answering questions like: 'How many publications are required?' 'What are the expectations regarding teaching experience?' or 'How does an application for a regular position have to be prepared?' Knowledge about these factors would enable them to identify when they have reached an impasse in their careers and allow them to look for alternatives. Furthermore, strategies to continue their own research activities after graduation should be discussed by addressing questions such as: 'How can you preserve your access to academic journals and books?' or 'What kind of affiliation is required to publish articles or to apply for funding?' Most importantly, employment options for PhD graduates outside academia, and how they can appeal their skills to those employers should be explained. Such courses would help PhD graduates to make informed decisions after graduation. It is, however, unlikely that universities would discourage them to work as *hijōkin kōshi*, thus harming their own interests. Due to obvious conflicts of interest and the graduates being their future employees, there are limits to what can be done at university.

My findings allowed for the conclusion that even if PhD graduates do everything right, there is the possibility of failure. As could be observed in my sample, there were factors outside of the interviewees' control, like financial hardships that made it necessary to rethink their careers and as a consequence made it difficult for them to gain a regular position in academia. There is, furthermore, no way of influencing the academic labor market itself, and with a strong trend toward more non-regular employment, there will not be a regular job for everyone.



Efficient management of their lives and the continuous efforts to advance their research are merely aspects that enhance their chances. The only way to prevent so many people from ending up in precarious academic employment each year is to lower the number of PhD graduates in Japan. Even though such policy changes are unlikely to be considered because too many stakeholders are interested in a large auxiliary labor force for financial reasons, I will nonetheless discuss my suggestion. I propose that candidates who will most likely be unable to gain a regular position in academia after their graduation should be declined access to a PhD course. This would give them the opportunity to start a career outside academia while they still fit the age and skill requirements of non-academic jobs, and therefore the social conventions of the labor market. This kind of change would be a difficult undertaking because PhD students are paying tuition fees and bring funding from the government. There is a financial incentive to take in PhD students each year. This policy should be amended, holding the universities accountable for the career success of their graduates. If PhD graduates are not able to work in another employment form other than part-time teacher three years after graduation, a share of their student loans should have to be covered by the university they graduated from. Universities, as a result, would be more invested in getting their graduates into regular employment and they would only select those of whom they suspect have a good chance. Furthermore, the tracking of PhD careers would gain a higher priority. PhD students becoming a liability would make a quota for their enrollment necessary. This quota should be correlated to the number of full-time positions available. As a result, the most qualified candidates would be able to advance to regular positions faster and put their skills to work. These changes would, therefore, enhance the quality of research in academia. At the same time, fewer academics would be available to fill all *hijōkin* positions, and thus, institutions relying on their services would have to offer better working conditions.

I think drastic changes in higher education in Japan are necessary to reduce the waste of human resources occurring from channeling large numbers of educated people into PhD programs, where much of their potential is wasted in precarious employment. Structural changes are difficult to make because interest groups push their own agendas instead of considering consequences for Japan as a whole and a large number of academics. In my opinion, more effective than policy change might be to inform graduate students about what they are getting themselves into and allow them to make an informed decision about whether to enter a PhD program or not. My respondents described their lives in detail, and these insights can help those who are considering a career in academia. My results showed that even though many of the interviewees stated that they were not dissatisfied, and enjoyed the flexibility a career in academia provided even for non-regular employees, there were many negative aspects in their daily lives with implications for their future. Men especially had difficulties to find a partner, and therefore to start a family if they had not found a suitable mate before they graduated. The reasons were their insecure employment situation after graduation and the lack of social contacts. They were furthermore unwilling to consider a family before they were not economically capable of supporting one. At the time they achieve more financial stability, it may already be too late because they diverted too far from the accepted timeline for marriage. Non-regular employment in academia did not provide the participants with colleagues they could socialize with because their affiliation was seen as temporary by all parties and therefore investing time into these relationships was considered to be redundant. Contact with friends from when they were in university or school became increasingly difficult because of a growing gap in social status and income. As a result, many participants were in a state of social deprivation. Their working conditions were insecure, and they lived with the constant threat of social decline. This situation might be temporary and continue until they find a more permanent position. However, as current trends indicate, they might spend their whole career working and

living under these circumstances. A choice for a career in academia can be a choice for a life in precarity.

Graduate students should know this before they make their decision to enter a PhD course. If they make the choice to get into a PhD course, my advice is to set clear career goals and to establish a timeline for reaching those goals. This plan should include a point at which they will quit their efforts in academia and follow an alternative career plan. They should consider failure as a valid option in academia that is not only owed to their skills but related to the conditions of the academic labor market at the time of their graduation. I advise them to have a plan B, which provides them another option in case they cannot advance in their academic careers. When working in non-regular academic employment, they should furthermore limit their *hijōkin* positions to only one or two classes. The rest of their income should come from part-time researcher positions or other non-regular employment outside of academia. This will most likely allow them to spend time on their research and stay on track with their career goals.

### **Limitations of this Study**

In my survey, I was able to get a good understanding of what it means to work as a *hijōkin kōshi* and made clear that success or failure of an academic career is decided in the academics' free time. How the participants managed the demands from various activities and work was, therefore, influencing their chances on the academic labor market. The findings are limited to the fields of the humanities and social sciences whose graduates show a strong tendency toward work in academia. PhD graduates from the natural science fields and engineering are provided with numerous other career options such as being a postdoc or working in the private economy. Therefore, their case has to be explored separately.

The data I was able to collect provided a more detailed understanding of the working conditions in non-regular employment in academia and could help to refine the categories used in the *Gakkō Kihon Chōsa*. Instead of categorizing those with a fixed-term contract according to working hours and contract length, it makes more sense to introduce a category for *hijōkin kōshi*, unrelated to the working conditions of this employment form. People working as *hijōkin kōshi* could be tracked in this category. How many classes they teach and how many employers they have could be counted. This would allow for a more precise evaluation of their situation. This category should be exclusive for those who only work as part-time teachers. Part-time researchers should be separated into another category, despite their contract length or working hours. People who work as both part-time researchers and part-time teachers should be pooled in this category since they resemble the Researcher type I discovered and were better off than those working only as *hijōkin*. Additionally, a category for unremunerated researcher positions should be created as well. While participants of the *Gakkō Kihon Chōsa* would have to choose between the two employment types of part-time researcher and part-time teacher, the category for unremunerated researchers should be selectable in addition to any form of employment they might be involved in. Lastly, a category for those not working in academia is necessary, directly asking whether they are hired as a regular employee or not. Through these adjustments, it will be easier to grasp the real situation of PhD graduates in Japan, and through additional qualitative studies, the implications of being in one of those categories should be further explored.

In short, my research provides a starting point for further inquiry into non-regular employment in academia. To compliment my study, the situation of PhD graduates in other fields has to be explored, and part-time researcher positions, as well as unremunerated researcher positions, require more attention. Those findings should be brought together and

used to improve the *Gakkō Kihon Chōsa*, which would provide more validity to the survey and allow for informed actions by policymakers and universities.

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