Dispatch Workers as an Irreversible Trend:
A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Representation of Dispatch Workers in Editorials of two Japanese Newspapers

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Abstract
This thesis analyzes the representation of Dispatch Workers in editorials of two Japanese newspapers against the backdrop of the amendment to the Dispatch Workers Law in 2015. The amendment was widely reported in the media, attracting objections from oppositional parties and the public, which argued that the revision would increase job insecurity as Dispatch Workers are at risk of becoming locked in a cycle of losing their employment every three years. Based on a discussion of pros and cons of Dispatch Workers since the enactment of the law in 1985, the thesis aims to disclose what statements in these editorials are established as self-evident and “true” concerning Dispatch Workers’ symbolic value, and what other discourses they are interrelated to in the debate on Dispatch Workers. This discussion is then put in relation to wider social practice, to examine Dispatch Workers’ role in the labor market in public discourses. Data from two major Japanese newspapers, Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun, were examined, using Critical Discourse Analysis. The thesis argues that a tendency of embedded ideology reinforces the newspaper representation of Dispatch Workers. In addition, the thesis suggests that although controversies surrounding Dispatch Workers remain strong, their role in the labor market is becoming naturalized in public discourses as presented in both newspapers.

Keywords
Dispatch Workers, haken, Asahi, Yomiuri, Critical Discourse Analysis, Japanese Labor Relations
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Conventions

The thesis follows the Harvard style of reference. In-text citations are used both for direct quotations and paraphrasing and are given with the surname of the author(s), year of publication and page number(s). Personal names are referred to by Western conventions, with the given name first and surname second. Romanized Japanese words adhere to the modified Hepburn system. Japanese terms are written in italics with parenthesis followed by a footnote in Japanese for clarification, after its corresponding English term. The exception for this is the editorials used in the analysis; quotes in Japanese consist of the author’s English translation in citation marks. The quotes in Japanese are available in the appendix. Footnotes are used in some instances to add more information to a certain subject without disturbing the flow in the text. The titles of the Japanese sources in the reference list are romanized followed by an English translation. Full names of ministries and organizations are mentioned the first time they appear and in abbreviation in subsequent appearances.
1 Introduction

1.1 Background
Non-regular workers are not a Japan-specific phenomenon; the experience of a deregulated labor market has become global. This thesis investigates a specific group of non-regular workers in Japan, namely Dispatch Workers. Dispatch Workers (henceforth *haken*\(^1\)) are mainly employed by private job placement companies (henceforth *haken* agencies). The agencies receive customers’ (henceforth client firms) requests for workers to fulfill certain jobs. These workers are then subcontracted to the client firms, but maintain their employment contract with the agency.

*Haken* employment was initiated with the enactment of the *haken* law in 1985, with the target towards a deregulated and liberalized labor market (Shibata, 2017). This was the first time in post-war Japan that labor-leasing business was liberalized. The four major components of the law are as follows. First, the law restricts by occupation the kinds of job at which *haken* workers can work (Honda, 2014:251). Second, it establishes two types of *haken* in relation to the agencies: regularly employed type (*jōyōgata-haken*\(^2\)) and registered type (*tōroku*gata-*haken*\(^3\)). The difference between these two employment types will be discussed in section 3.2.2. Third, the law requires *haken* agencies to issue a written contract with the client company. Finally, possible violations of the law by *haken* companies will be penalized (Honda, 2014:251).

The enactment of the *haken* law was initially intended to maintain regular workers’ role in employment relations. However, with the economic bubble in the early 90s, the state embraced deregulations as a part of structural reforms on the basis of neoliberalism. This meant reforms in employment structure and human resource management, as the traditional life-time employment (*shūshin-koyo*\(^4\)) had become increasingly obsolete in contemporary Japan. The alluring promises of *haken* employment are flexibility and

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1 派遣: dispatch
2 常用型派遣
3 登録型派遣
4 終身雇用
employability – notions that are gradually becoming more desirable in an intensively globalized environment. Simultaneously, since the enactment of the law, *haken* has stirred controversies with respect to unfavorable deregulations for the workers and workplace inequality – related to the view of *haken* as the ‘main culprit’ of the development of a ‘stratified society’ (*kakusa shakai*⁵) in mass media (Fu, 2012:96).

Thus, *haken* has become a symbol for shifting national and global conditions, as the changing employment structure is met with both positive and negative response. *Haken* has become a platform from which powerful actors and groups compete over symbolic value. In these discourses, one can see both change and continuity at work (Ibid., 15). The need for change is put forward foremost from the position of market-oriented neoliberalism with the proclamation for labor deregulations, while the discourse of resistance emphasizes the alarming problems with respect to workplace inequality and the working poor. Although *haken* workers remain only a small part of all non-regular employees, their publicity has gradually made them a symbol of friction between regular and non-regular employment.

### 1.2 Purpose of research

Media’s framing of the recent amendment to the law in 2015 has been little discussed and needs to be addressed. As such, this thesis’ main focus is on analyzing meanings attached to *haken* in two major Japanese newspapers in order to contribute to research on how they influence the formation of *haken* in Japan. As *haken* remains a controversial issue in Japan, different discourses compete over the meaning and value of *haken*. Therefore, this thesis investigates the representation of *haken* in editorials of two Japanese newspapers, namely *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun*, and analyzes their interdiscursive elements – what previous discourses before the amendment the newspapers are leaning on. The thesis first present the framings of *haken* in previous academic, official and journalistic discourses, and divide them into pros and cons of *haken*. Then, by using Critical Discourse Analysis, the thesis will look at the correlation between these discourses and the depiction of *haken* in editorials from *Asahi Shimbun*.  

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⁵格差社会 – The term *kakusa shakai* was coined by sociology professor Masahiro Yamada in his 2004 book *Kibō kakusa shakai: “Makegumi” no zetsubō kan ga Nihon o hikisaku*. The term connotes the phenomenon of increasing socioeconomic stratification in Japan.
and *Yomiuri Shimbun* in light of the amendment in 2015. The aim is to uncover what statements have been established as self-evident and “true”, and what concepts have become conceivable. By uncovering how the symbolic value of *haken* is produced in these editorials, the thesis aims at providing an understanding of which discourses are used to depict the state of *haken* in the mainstream. As representations established in these newspapers reinforce the public discourse on these issues, this thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of how *haken* are perceived in public discourses in Japan. Therefore, this thesis is primarily not interested in contributing to the field of Media Studies or Critical Discourse Analysis as method, but aims to uncover the understanding of the symbolic value of *haken* constructed for the public and explore how these discourses are related to a wider social context.

### 1.3 Research questions

The thesis aims to examine how *haken* is discursively represented in newspapers in light of the amendment in 2015 and their interrelation with discourses presented in academic, official, and journalistic discourse. In addition, the thesis also aims to explore how these discourses are part of a wider social practice. Therefore, the following research questions have been constructed in accordance with this research purpose:

1. How do *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun* frame controversies concerning Dispatch Workers and the amendment to the Dispatch Workers Law in 2015?
2. What discourses are constructed in *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun* in relation to previous academic, official, and journalistic discourses before the amendment on these matters?
3. What concepts and symbolic value of Dispatch Workers in the labor market become conceivable, and sometimes even seemingly unavoidable, in the light of these framings?

These research questions will be used in the discussion and answered in the conclusion.
1.4 Literature review

As academic discourses on controversial issues concerning *haken* will be introduced in the section on pros and cons, the literature review aims to briefly outline previous research approaches to *haken* as a phenomenon.

The scope of previous research on *haken* published in English is limited and almost exclusively in the realm of Japanese Studies. Huiyan Fu’s 2012 book *An Emerging Non-regular Labor Force in Japan – the Dignity of Dispatch Workers* provides extensive anthropological research on *haken* in Japan. The study includes both the historical perspective on *haken* workers, such as state policies and public perceptions, and the experience of *haken* in real-life through anthropological fieldwork.

Other studies, such as scholarship on labor economics and organizational analytics, previously observed the rise of *haken* and other non-regular employment in regards to changes in employment practices over the last twenty years in Japan (Keizer, 2008; Morris, 2006). These studies have contributed to the understanding of how the economic recession in the 90s generated a shift in Japanese human resource management from the use of a bureaucratic-hierarchical organizational model to a more flexible one, resulting in an increased use of *haken* and non-regular employment (Morris, 2006:1486). In addition, this development has generated a renewed duality in the labor market (Keizer, 2008:408). Thus, *haken* is by these approaches often examined in relation to the historical transformation of industrial and labor relations in Japan.

Scholars within the field of sociology and labor relations have the tendency to focus on controversial issues such as the legislation and increased workplace inequality; the *haken* law itself is framed as being an insufficient framework for ensuring the protection of *haken* workers, and *haken* employment remains gender segregated (Weathers, 2001; Kojima, 2010). These approaches share common elements with other research on *haken* written in the Japanese language – studies which concern practical and legislative issues (Mizuno, 2012; Seno, 2014). This could be considered to be a more pragmatic approach to *haken*, as Japanese scholarship tends to focus on conducting research on *haken* that may be applied directly to improve social, legal and economic policies for *haken* workers.
In summary, different academic fields tend to examine different aspects and issues related to *haken*. These different approaches will be further discussed in the section on pros and cons.

**2 Approaching *haken* through discourse analysis**

The method used in this thesis is discourse analysis, and more specifically Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA). Discourse analysis is often perceived as a “complete package”, in which the method is inseparable from the theory (Jørgensen & Philips, 2000:10). Jørgensen & Philips argues that a researcher adopting discourse analysis as method finds that the acceptance of the philosophical premises is essential in order to conduct discourse analysis. As such, while the theoretical framework introduced in this section is short, the method section aims to introduce theoretical perspectives essential for CDA, as an effort to present theory and method as a “complete package”.

**2.1 Theoretical framework**

With CDA, the theory I adopt here is connected to Social Constructionism. One of the first to establish this social theory was Berger & Luckmann (1966), who described it as reality being socially constructed: people and groups interacting in a social system create concepts that eventually become a system of reciprocal and conceivable roles. When these roles are made available and become an integrated part of other members of the society, the reciprocal interactions become institutionalized.

**2.2 Method**

For this study, I have chosen to adopt emeritus Professor of Linguistics Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional approach to Critical Discourse Analysis. Among different models of discourse analysis, Fairclough’s three-dimensional model is the
most suitable one as it examines not only the linguistic features of a text, but also the interdiscursive elements and the wider socio-cultural practice. Therefore, this section introduces the general method of CDA and its central concepts such as ‘discourse’, ‘order of discourse’, ‘power’ and ‘hegemony’, following Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework as the specific method and theory adopted for this thesis. Finally, the empirical data for this thesis will be introduced, as well as a section that aims to contextualize the role of newspapers in Japan.

### 2.2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

In order to frame the editorials, the thesis will adopt CDA as method. CDA is an interdisciplinary methodological approach to the study of discourse, with origins in ‘critical linguistics’. As such, CDA is not associated with a single approach; in recent years it has been applied in diverse ways across the humanities and social sciences. However, the recurrent approach among most researchers in CDA is the assumption that power relations are discursive (Machin & Mayr, 2012:4). Consequently, the focal point is foremost examining how power is exercised and negotiated in discourses. In addition, CDA assumes that language is a social construction which both shapes and is shaped by society.

The term ‘discourse’ is essential for CDA. Machin & Mayr describe the concept of discourse as language in real contexts of use and functions “[…] above the level of grammar and semantics to capture what happens when these language forms are played out in different social, political and cultural arenas” (Machin & Mayr, 2012:20). Fairclough argues: “Discourse, and any instance of discursive practice, is seen as simultaneously (i) a language text, spoken or written, (ii) discourse practice (text production and text interpretation), (iii) sociocultural practice” (Fairclough, 1995:97). Furthermore, the framework to describe discourse in CDA differentiates itself from other approaches to discourse analysis. According to Jørgensen & Philips, scholars in CDA view discourse as both socially constructive and socially conditioned (Jørgensen & Philips 2000, 67). In other words, discourse both shapes the social and is shaped by social practice. This approach to theory on discourse is essential for scholars in CDA. However, it should be noted that scholars in CDA acknowledge that the discursive
practice regularly challenges the prevailing discursive structure and not only reproduces it.

Interdiscursivity is also an essential term for CDA. Fairclough (in Jørgensen & Philips, 2000:76) refers to interdiscursivity as the ‘order of discourse’. Fairclough argues: “An order of discourse is the socially ordered set of genres and discourses associated with a particular field, characterized in terms of the shifting boundaries and flows between them” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999:58). Therefore, the order of discourse constitutes all discourses and genres in a specific social institution or social domain available to social actors. Thus, the orders of discourse determine and restrict how the world can be perceived and interpreted. However, this is also ever-changing as communicative events both reproduce the current discourse and also challenge it.

CDA is mainly concerned with the persuasive influence of power, and this idea of power is associated with Gramsci and his concept of hegemony (Machin & Mayr 2014, 24). The notion of hegemony allocates the ways through which “[…] dominant groups in society succeed in persuading subordinate groups to accept the former’s own moral, political, and cultural values and institutions” (Ibid., 2012:24).

The notion of power for Gramsci is not coercive by nature, but by routine. Hegemonic attitudes, opinions and beliefs are constructed by ideological discourses, but may appear as ‘common sense’. In extension, ideology may underline certain accepted discourses and obscure how power is sustained and simultaneously limits what can be seen and done (Machin & Mayr 2014: 25). Thus, the notion of common sense plays a crucial part in discourse and ideological formation. Fairclough agrees with Gramsci’s view on the ‘ideological complex’ (i.e. that the formation of ideology is conflicting, overlapping and intersected) and points to the idea that subjects are a part of this ‘ideological complex’ rather than a single dominant state apparatus (Fairclough, 1995:76). Van Dijk (2007:117) also argues that when ideologies tend to become shared widely in a community, they become generally recognized as self-evident or common sense.

Machin and Mayr (2012:214) have pointed out the critique towards CDA, claiming that it can be used by the author in order to interpret texts in line with his/her own subjective opinions and ethnocentric perspective and that CDA itself is ideologically committed to a specific form of interpretation of texts. Machin & Mayr (2012:214)
counter the idea of CDA itself as ideologically driven, as all research is in fact carried out with some conceptualization of what should be investigated, of why certain phenomena and not others should be subjected to research. They refer to philosophers of science such as Polanyi, Popper and Kuhn, all pointing to the fact that scientific investigation and experimentation is always conducted within established paradigms of knowledge that are always arbitrary and culturally bound.

The concept of discourse includes the perception of discourse(s) as never neutral or objectively reproductive of reality – discourses are a linguistic representation that reproduces reality from specific perspectives (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:15-16). An objection to CDA, therefore, is that it only reproduces yet another discourse. As such, it would be meaningless to try to find a more true discourse behind or beyond the discourses that are being investigated (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:28-29). Therefore, the purpose of discourse analysis is to show patterns in discourses and the consequences of discourse formulations for social reality.

2.2.2 Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework

This thesis will use Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework as model of analysis. The three-dimensional framework is suitable for research as it “[…] foregrounds links between the social practice and language, and the systematic investigation of connections between the nature of social processes and properties of language texts” (Fairclough, 1995:96).

In his three-dimensional framework, Fairclough recognizes text (the analysis of texts), discursive practice (the analysis of text production, distribution and consumption) and social practice (the analysis of social and cultural practices which frame discourse practices and texts) as three separated analyses (see figure 3.1) (Jørgensen & Philips, 2000:74). The framework encapsulates the important features of Critical Discourse Analysis, as “analysis of texts should not be artificially isolated from analysis of institutional and discoursal practices within which texts are embedded” (Fairclough, 1995:9).
Thus, the model uses micro, meso and macro-level interpretations. The micro-level involves studying the text’s syntax, metaphoric structure and rhetorical devices. The meso-level involves looking at how the text’s production and consumption is constructed on existing discourses and genres, and the macro-level is concerned with mainly inter-textual relations between texts and how external factors affect the text being studied. The relationship between the text and the social practice is mediated through discursive practice; it is only through discursive practice – where people use language to produce text and consume text – that the social practice can shape the formation of texts. In this interplay, the text’s linguistic features influence both the production process and consumption process (Jørgensen & Philips, 2000:75).

With the discursive practice, the concept of intertextuality is important, as the focus is on the inter-textual relations among discourses – what discourses the text is based upon and how text is built on other texts. When these two dimensions have been analyzed, these ‘boxes’ are put in relation to wider social practice. This contextualization is relevant in regards to two aspects: first, the relation between the individual discursive practice and the overarching order of discourse, and second, the non-discursive social and cultural relations that frame the individual discursive in question (Jørgensen & Philips, 85-90)
As the micro-level analyzes the linguistic features of the empirical data, this section will introduce the analytical tools of this thesis. These tools are extracted from Machin & Mayr’s 2012 book *How to do a Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction*. The thesis focuses on the following tools:

- Modality
- Presupposition
- Rhetorical devices
- Transitivity
- Quoting verbs

**Modality** examines the level of certainty to a proposition in a communicative event (Machin & Mayr, 2012:187). In other words, modality is a grammatical expression that articulates certain intentions and commitments through propositions (statements). This thesis focuses primarily on deontic modality (the event of influencing people and events through the possibility, necessity or volition of a proposition) and epistemic modality (speakers/authors evaluation of the necessity/possibility of a certain expressed proposition).

**Presupposition** is part of a proposition in which a part of the communicative event is assumed as given in an utterance or a text (Ibid.,153). This is often referred to as a ‘pre-constructed element’.

**Rhetorical devices** in this thesis consist of metaphors and personification. In CDA, metaphors are not only a figure of speech, but also utilized to conceal actual processes and create abstractions (Ibid.,167). Personification is the linguistic process in which human qualities or abilities are assigned to abstraction or inanimate objects.

**Transitivity** looks at how subjects (agents/participants) are linked to (or detached from) objects (affected/patient) or processes (Ibid.,105). This is part of the meaning-making in language, and includes not only what is in the texts, but also what is absent from them.
Quoting verbs is the process of how author(s) represent the way participants have spoken. The thesis focuses mainly on meta-propositional verbs, which express the author’s interpretation of a speaker (Machin & Mayr, 2012:60).

2.3 Material

The empirical data for the analysis consists of editorials from two major newspapers in Japan: Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun. For this thesis, the editorials were taken from the respective online database: for Asahi Shimbun, Asahi Shinbun Kikuzo II Visual, and for Yomiuri Shimbun, Yomidasu Rekishikan. The thesis has limited the number of editorials used in the analysis to two for each newspaper. The motive behind this delimitation is twofold. First, this thesis adopts a qualitative approach using Fairclough’s three-dimensional model. Second, since the focal point of the study is editorials’ representation of haken in light of the amendment in 2015, the number of editorials with topics on haken from this period available on the online databases is limited. Furthermore, since the amendment of the law was enacted on September 30, 2015, the time frame for the data collection was set between June 2015 and September 2015.

This approach has noticeable limitations – since CDA is mainly a qualitative method, the approach to corpus analysis is inherently more difficult to statistically verify in a wider context, than with the approach of quantitative studies. However, as argued by Machin & Mayr, “[...] it is often in the smallest linguistic details where power relations and political ideology can be found” (Machin & Mayr, 2012:5). Having this said, for future research, quantitative studies would be beneficial in order to check the findings and hypotheses developed in this thesis.

The reason for the choice of Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun is because they are the two biggest newspapers in Japan, and are considered to have different ideological inclination: Asahi Shimbun is leaning towards the center-left, while Yomiuri Shimbun is considered more conservative. Furthermore, the focus on editorials as object of study is foremost because editorials are considered to be the official opinion of the newspaper. Since opinions presented in editorials refrain from personal bias in Japan, editorials are crucial for understanding different discourses in certain newspapers at the
time of controversies. Le argues that “[...] editorials would give insights into the sources of framing, agenda setting and priming.” (Le, 2010:3). Furthermore, the fact that editorials in Japanese newspapers are unsigned reflects the inclination towards collective judgement of the newspapers. While the editorials can be written by different journalists, the notion of a ‘one voice’ remains crucial to the formation of editorials.

2.4 News and Japan

Machin & Mayr (2012:22) argues that we often think of news as informing us about the events in the world. However, factors such as sourcing, the pressure of filling news space, and the story-telling framings, do not necessarily ascribe news the notion of being the ‘eyes and the ears of the public’. Rather, news and journalism could be considered to be a specific social-cultural practice and reality construction.

Fu (2012:79) claims that in post-war Japan, a complicated relationship between the media and the state occurred in a diversity of areas. As newspapers had to garner larger audiences, they needed to negotiate with a variety of groups – a so-called “pluralist referent” – and create selected images and ideas, in which the audiences could relate or identify with. John Campbell (1996:190), professor in political science, argues that in Japan, press attention was manipulated by the state to shift the public mood towards a new “common sense”. Media can, therefore, be viewed as a popular and effective form of political strategy used by powerful actors to frame problems and establish political sympathy. It is generally uncommon for media organizations to put forward their own political agenda; they generally reflect the views of other important social groups rather than prompting opposition (Campbell, 1996:190). The discourses are established by politicians, business leaders and academics who come together to compete for the legitimacy of a specific subject. Sugimoto argues that the mainstream media in Japan exhibit a high degree of centralization (Sugimoto, 2010:242). In addition, the media in Japan is strongly dependent on Japanese business practice and the information-gathering infrastructure of the exclusive ‘reporters’ club’ (kisha kurabu).
3  *Haken* viewed against the backdrop of labor relations in post-war Japan

In order to position *haken* in contemporary Japan and discuss pros and cons of *haken* as articulated in different discourses, it is important to understand the historical transformation of labor relations in post-war Japan. This section first highlights the Japanese labor relations from 1945 until the introduction of a result-oriented payment system in the early 90s. Second, it discusses the emergence of temporary employment alongside regular and non-regular employment from the 1950s and onwards. Third, it shows recent changes in the law called by the amendment to the Dispatch Workers Law in 2015. Fourth, it introduces the latest surveys on the number of *haken* workers in contemporary Japan.

### 3.1 The history of *haken*

The forms of employment in Japan changed in line with major shifts in management and payment system from the early post-war era to the burst of the economic bubble in the early 90s. This section aims to introduce and highlight this historical process.

The life-time employment system (*shūshin koyō*) is often referred to as the basic principle of employment relations and employment formation in early post-war Japan (Imai, 2011:55; Keizer 2008:409). Shaped by labor struggles and crystallized in agreements between employers and unions, it was a tacit agreement to avoid labor disputes between companies and their cooperatively inclined enterprise-based unions (Kumazawa, 1996:53). Life-time employment manifests itself in immediate employment: on the condition that there are no labor-related conflicts or business-related economic backlashes, the employee can expect to work with the company until retirement (Tamura, 1997:176). Given steady and long-term employment, it is possible to conduct on-the-job training (OTJ). Life-time employment was extensively promoted during the period of rapid economic growth, becoming the conventional means in which firms organized human resource management. As a result, dismissal and adjustment of
labor input became severely restricted (Tamura, 1997:177; Fu, 2012:59). However, the term ‘life-time employment’ is misleading as it is widely associated with regular employees working in big companies, who were only a minority of the working population (Sugimoto, 2003:94).

The seniority-based wage system (nenkō-joretsu-chingin-seido⁶) was likewise important in the early post-war labor struggle (Imai, 2011:19). The system of seniority-based wages was preferable in large firms that hired students directly from schools and situated them in OTJ. This mode, though time intensive, was practical in part because the wages of young workers under the system of seniority-based wages were low (Weathers, 2001: 201). In contrast, women performed mostly routine tasks and sometimes served as office ladies (OL). They were usually expected to quit upon marriage, before they could start to earn significant seniority pay (Weathers, 2001: 201). Women re-entering the workforce after marriage tended to work as low-paid part-timers rather than regular employees.

With the oil crisis in the early 70s, company management began to call for more efficiency and flexibility. Managers started to refuse the unions’ annual spring labor offensive (shuntō⁷) (Kumazawa, 1996:77). They shifted the focus from seniority to actual performance. Their overall goal was to cut back on total wage costs and the total number of employees. The drive towards employment adjustment measures resulted in an unemployment ratio of 2.4 percent in 1977 (Kumazawa, 1996:79). Unions – gradually losing power in the labor struggle – emphasized employment security and maintenance of living standards (Imai, 2011:24).

Japan faced an excessive trade surplus in the 80s, with their focus on export which created trade conflicts, especially with the US. In 1985, the Plaza Accord was signed, an agreement that aimed at devaluing the overly strong US dollar (Iyoda, 2010:73). With the devaluation, the Japanese export industry experienced a shock and successively went into a recession. To cope with the recession, the government initiated a huge emergency spending package and decided to expand the domestic market. Thus, Japan went on a deregulation trend (Imai, 2011:24).

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⁶ 年功序列賃金制度
⁷ 春闘
By the early 90s, the interest in introducing a result-oriented system (seika-shugi\(^8\)) had increased among Japanese employers (Imai, 2011:123). Particularly among big companies – more exposed to international competition and faster product/service changes – the urge for a reconstruction of the core of the employment system was evident. The result-oriented system was introduced to the public by Fujitsu’s President Tadashi Sekizawa in 1994, aiming for managerial reforms based on results and not the amount of working hours (JILPT, 2006: 36). Sekizawa argued already in 1992 that work should be measured in time and that the standards for an employee’s evaluation and compensation must be changed (Ibid., 36). Following this line, “The New era of Japanese Management” (shinjidai no nihonteki keiei\(^9\)) by Nikkeiren (Japan Federation of Employers’ Associations) argued that the wage system should be based upon occupational ability and achievements (Ibid.,37). The Japan Institute for Labor Policy and Training (henceforth JILPT) argues that the driving force from large enterprises made seika-shugi spread also to small and medium enterprises (Ibid., 37).

Arguably, life-time employment and seniority-based payment system have become modified due to downsizing and pressure for change, but some scholars claimed that until recently the system remains robust (Morris, 2006:1493; Tamura, 1997:180).

3.2 Temporary workers

Temporary employment emerged alongside regular and non-regular employment from the 1950s and onwards. As economic needs for structural reforms urged the enactment of the haken law in 1985, this section will also consider the shifting legal, social and economic role of haken in an increasingly deregulated labor market.

3.2.1 Temporary workers in post-war Japan

In post-war Japan, haken remained illegal since temporary worker dispatching business violated article 44 of the Employment Security Act (Mizuno, 2012:106). Behind the act was the use of forced labor and ‘intermediate exploitation’ (chūkan sakushu\(^10\)) (Morioka,

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\(^8\) 成果主義
\(^9\) 新時代の日本的経営
\(^10\) 中間搾取
et.al. 2010:16). However, during the rapid period of economic growth (1955-1975), several companies began to hire temporary workers in order to cope with labor costs, as the expanding economy was struck by labor shortages (Kumazawa, 1996:55). For both regular and non-regular workers, the wage increased due to labor shortage and the unions’ annual spring labor offensive. As mentioned before, the centrality of job protection and prevention of dismissal during this period gave the managers almost full control over job transfer (Fu, 2012:59). Therefore, labor-leasing practices were not unusual during this period. In the 1960s, Japanese companies established subsidiary companies to diversify and expand their industries with personnel comprised of dispatched company workers. Big enterprises transferred surplus regular workers to their subcontracting companies – often referred to as ‘affiliated companies’ (keiretsu gaisha\(^{11}\)) (Ibid., 59). The practice of labor lending became popular in the 70s, although labor-leasing business remained illegal. Two temporary employment types – emerging from labor-leasing practices established through interfirm relations – were temporary transfer (shukkō\(^{12}\)) and permanent transfer (tenseki\(^{13}\)), and both involved labor-leasing practices with specific dynamics in contract and mobility. While tenseki-workers become corporate members of the transferred firm, shukkō-workers remain official members of the big enterprise (Ibid. 59).

Another form of labor-leasing employment is subcontracting (ukeoi\(^{14}\)), which became popular in the 50s. As an employment buffer and almost exclusively pertaining to blue-collar workers, ukeoi played a critical role in maintaining and preserving the existing employment structure (Nagai, 1999:253).

### 3.2.2 The enactment of the haken law

The term haken began to be used for describing the dispatching of clerical works, with temporary workers’ expansion to traditional white-collar employment. As dispatched employment remained unlawful, illegal haken became the symbol of growing differences between labor policies and reality (Imai, 2004:9). By the late 70s, ukeoi and

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11 系列会社
12 出向
13 転籍
14 請負
illegal *haken* had expanded to three new sectors: building maintenance, information
technology and clerical works. With the expansion of illegal *haken*, the experience of a
mismatch in the labor market spurred the need for changes in existing labor laws. In
1984, the Special Committee on Temporary Help Industry in the Central Advisory
Committee on Employment Security submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Labor\(^{15}\)
with regards to the institutionalization of the temporary dispatching work system, and
subsequently the draft of the law passed the diet in 1985 (Imai, 2004:10). Consequently,
temporary worker dispatching practices that already existed in the illegal form of *ukeoi*
and the dispatching of office workers were legalized. As the *haken* law was designed to
created mobility within the labor force to cope with labor market mismatch, agencies
were forced to take responsibility for the *haken* workers (Imai, 2011:59).

MHLW’s definition of the permitted employment structure – extracted from Article
2 (i) in the Worker Dispatching Act – is the following: “Causing a worker(s) employed
by one person so as to be engaged in work for another person under the instruction of
the latter, while maintaining his/her employment relationship with the former” (MHLW
2008). Thus, the employment structure became a triangular comprised of *haken*
agencies, client firms, and *haken* workers (see figure 1.1). This type of employment is
by now often called indirect employment (*kansetsu koyō*\(^{16}\)) (Morioka, et al., 2010:16).

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\(^{15}\) Ministry of Labor was replaced by Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (henceforth MHLW) in 2001

\(^{16}\) 間接雇用
The triangular model was accepted for employment by dispatching agencies and protected by the law. Two employment types came into lawful practice with the enactment (Mizuno, 2012:106). The first one is the “regularly employed type” (jōyōgata-haken), and the second one is the “registered type” (tōrokugata-haken). The difference lies in the employment settings with the private job placement companies (haken agencies). Jōyōgata-haken workers enter an employment contract with the private job placement company, and receive salary from the haken companies whether or not they are dispatch to a client firm. Tōrokugata-haken workers, on the other hand, register as potential dispatch workers at the private job placement company, but enter an employment contract with the agencies only when dispatched. As a result, tōrokugata-typed haken do not receive salary like jōyō-workers and are often more exposed to unstable working conditions (Mizuno, 2012:106).
Following the path of deregulations, a major change in labor policy-making structures in the mid-1990s occurred with the establishment of the Deregulation Committee. The committee was designed by the LDP government in order to execute wide-ranging labor-market deregulation policies (Watanabe, 2012:25). In this committee, the interest of the labor was not represented, which made the system all the more top-down organized. Watanabe argues that political factors were also essential for these changes: labor unions’ political power was weakened in regard to employers, and the shift towards neo-liberalism also affected the deregulation policies presented in the amendments to the haken law in 1999 and 2003 (Ibid., 26). The revision in 1999 called for a relaxation of private job placement – the resolution for this came with the establishment of the Private Employment Agencies Convention, ILO181, and Japan’s ratification of this treaty, as well as their revision of the Employment Security Law (Fu, 2012:70). The goal was not only labor-market flexibility, as it also contained policies aiming at protecting the workers, but the main outcome was more deregulatory than protective (Watanabe 2012, 24).

3.3 The amendment in 2015

As briefly mentioned in the introduction, the amendment abolished the 26 Specialized Business Exemptions (which previously did not apply to the 3-year limit) (MHLW, 2015c:4). Instead, the amendment set a 3-year limit regardless of the type of job. In addition, special haken agencies (tokutei rōdōsha haken jigyō\(^{17}\)) and general haken agencies (ippan rōdōsha haken jigyō\(^{18}\)) were also abolished, with new rules applicable to all areas of business (Yoroi, 2017:1093). With the amendment, all haken businesses needed to obtain permission from MHLW by submitting an application form with necessary information such as the outline of the place of business, etc. According to MHLW, the amendment target was to prevent a shift from regular employment to haken and also to promote employment stability and career improvement for haken (MHLW, 2015a:1). Continued employment with the client firms is ensured by requesting client firms to hire haken directly when they reach their term limits. Additional measures

\(^{17}\)特定労働者派遣事業

\(^{18}\)一般労働者派遣事業
target at providing new client firms for *haken* workers and guaranteeing a non-limited employment with the *haken* agencies.

### 3.4 Hakan in numbers

The amendments to the *haken* law in 1999 and 2003 have spurred a rapid expansion of *haken* workers in Japan. In 1998, the total number reached 307,000, and by 2005 it had climbed up to 1.23 million (Mizuno, 2012:106). Alongside this expansion, the total amount of non-regular workers has also expanded during this period: from 24.9 percent of the whole working population in 1998 to 37.3 percent in 2017 (MIC 2017, 21). The total number of *haken* workers in 2017 reached 1.34 million with a majority of women. Generally, *haken* employment is most common among both men and women between the ages of 25-44 (table 2.1).

**Table 2.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th><em>Hakan</em> workers</th>
<th>Age group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15~24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,340,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>530,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>810,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total hakan workers’ age group unknown*

Source: MIC Labor Force Survey 2017 (*Rōdōryoku chōsa* 2017), MIC.

As such, *haken* employment is perceived as more attractive among a workforce in the beginning or in the middle of their working life. This can also imply that the *haken* employment offers career opportunities and employment stability that these age groups find more desirable than a younger age group.
3.5 Temporary work as a global phenomenon

As mentioned before, the notion of *haken* employment is not a Japan-specific phenomenon: it bears close resemblance to the Temporary Agency Work (TAW) operating in other developed countries. *Haken* is a global trend that has evolved over the last twenty years, in which economic pressure spurs the need for structural reform in labor relations, both domestically and internationally. Temporary employment has gone from being a solution for labor market imperfection to what Galais & Koene (2014:4) call: “[…] less ad hoc, more structural, less opportunistic, and more widespread”.

The legalization and regulation of Temporary Work Agencies have been a recurrent trend in many European countries since the 90s (Galais & Koene, 2014:2). Private temporary employment agencies remained illegal under the ILO Convention 96. However, due to economic pressure in a globalized world, the need for labor-leasing business grew high, and consequently, the Private Employment Agencies Convention ILO181 was established and ratified in several industrialized countries, including Japan (Fu, 2012:70). Nevertheless, TAW remains a controversial subject matter with its implicit link to job insecurity. However, Galais & Koene argue that albeit the debate on TAWs has been around for two decades, “[…] by now most agree that employment flexibility seems to be an irreversible trend” (Galais & Koene, 2014:2).

The Temporary Agency Work Directive was approved by the European Parliament in 2008 (Countoris, 2009:329). The purpose of this directive is to set clear limits to the use of temporary agency work and establish equal treatment between agency workers and workers directly employed by the client firm. Central to this is the notion of “equal pay for equal work”, in which the directive puts forward the need of balance between flexibility and security in the labor market and help both workers and employers to “seize the opportunities offered by globalization” (Ibid., 337).

Japan has experienced a similar trend with *haken*, as it is linked with the global environment where neoliberal market exchange priorities flexible and short-term employment (Fu, 2012:75). Furthermore, the burst of the economic bubble and the rise of unemployment rates led policy-makers and government to look at Western countries for directions and models.
4 Controversies 1985-2015

In the previous section, the thesis provided a brief overview of *haken* in relation to the historical transformation of industrial and labor relations in Japan. However, this section aims to address framings of controversial issues of *haken* and the symbolic value of *haken* constructed in previous academic, official and journalistic discourses. By dividing these framings in pros and cons, this section aims to provide an understanding for how *haken* is represented in different discourses and provide context to examine how the depiction of *haken* in editorials from *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* is interrelated to these framings in the analysis section.

The section is divided into two subsections. The section on pros presents favorable aspects of *haken* from both macro- and micro-perspective, such as MHLW and Japan Staffing Service Association. The section on cons presents unfavorable aspects presented in academic discourses, from the perspective of workers.

4.1 Pros

On a macro-level, *haken* has gradually gained momentum in Japan due to its alluring promises of revitalizing a stagnant economy and having the potential to meet shifting demands in the labor market. *Haken* and other non-regular employment offer cost advantage and are gradually framed as an inevitable part of a diverse and flexible labor market. On a micro-level, notions associated with *haken* such as flexibility and employability are presented as desirable and relevant in an intensive globalized environment. This section aims at introducing discourses on *haken* associated with pros, in both academic discourse and official discourse.

4.1.1 Saving the economy?

With the lack of economic development, the decline in domestic manufacturing and an aging population in the late 90s, demands for reforms in the employment structure and human resource management had gained momentum (Keizer 2008: 407). The previous economic and social systems came to be ineffective in adjusting to a neoliberal
framework and the system of life-time employment halted the layoff of regular workers and labor cost adjustments (Iyoda, 2010:91). As such, with the burst of the bubble and a domestic market in stagnation, the demand for a shift in labor-management relations and business strategies connected with information technology was evident in order for Japanese firms to cope with the hardships of a globalized market.

For the successful implementation of haken in the labor market, economist Toshiki Nagai (1999:225-257) argues the publication of ‘Active Promotion of Microelectronization and its Labor-Management Relations – the Proposal of a “Intermediate Labor Market”’ by the Japanese Association of Corporate Executives (JACE) in 1984, and ‘A New Era of Japanese Management’ by Nikkeiren in 1995, played a significant role. JACE emphasized in their policy document that the foundation for the future economic development in Japan lies in the “microelectronization” (i.e., technological innovations), by which JACE argues that problems with over-employment can be solved through an “intermediate labor market”. Nagai (1999:255) argued from an economic position that in order to create this intermediate labor market, the worker supply business was essential, as the expansion of haken employment would fit this new structure sufficiently.

“A New Era of Japanese Management” was written in regards to the burst of the bubble economy in the 90s, and it proposed lean manufacturing instead of just-in-time (JIT) manufacturing, as well as a reduction of personnel expenses. The report argues that it is inevitable to have excessive labor, particularly white-collar (Imai, 2011:51). The report therefore called for diversification at the organizational level. In this, the expansion of contract workers, haken workers and daily workers became crucial, as they promised a “flexible firm” model with a “multi-track” personnel system, in which the use of core workers and regular employment would be limited (Keizer, 2008:413). The multi-track system divides the employment into three groups: “regular”, “professional”, and “flexible”, with each having different practices. The rise of non-regular employment has economic advantages, insofar as constraining opportunities of young and female employees to non-regular employment contribute to personnel savings.

Scholars like Nagai argued therefore that haken workers play an indispensable role in

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19 ME 化の積極的推進と労使関係 － “中間労働市場” の提案
employment management strategy in order to achieve the capital accumulation desired by today’s large enterprises (Nagai, 1999:257).

“A New Era of Japanese Management” contributed to a shift in human resource management and organizational paradigm in the late 90s. The shifting organization patterns, derived from the New Management in the U.S. and the U.K were defined by more flexible, flat structures, easy to adapt to the new fast-moving environment. In Japan, these ideas have had a profound effect; many firms have moved away from a bureaucratic-hierarchical organizational model to a post-bureaucratic model. Jonathan Morris (2006:1486), professor in Organizational Analysis, argues that the old model appears ineffective and inappropriate in the new business world defined by market volatility, uncertainty and increased competition. As a result, the management has moved towards more flexible employment and the expansion of atypical workers like *haken*. But Morris (2006:1504) argues that this shift in Japan should be looked at carefully; the inclination towards post-bureaucratic forms of organization can be found in Japanese human resource management as well, the practice of life-time employment and seniority-based wage remain robust and deeply embedded. While Japanese companies have maintained benefits for their core workers, the increased reliance on *haken* and other non-regular employees has provided companies with means to reduce labor costs and increase their ability to adjust to economic fluctuation (Cargill & Sakamoto 2005:246).

4.1.2 Official stance

The official discourse on *haken* has changed over the years, from the need to protect regular employment to the neoliberal claim of its necessity for the labor market.

In the White Paper Report from 2016, MHLW claims that in order to expand the diverse and flexible working conditions for young people and women, the treatment of non-regular workers must improve (MHLW, 2016b:234). The main goal is equal pay for equal work (*dōichi rōdō dōichi chingin*[^20^]), a slogan used in the already mentioned Temporary Agency Work Directive from 2008, that proclaimed the stabilization of the relationship between regular and temporary workers in the European Union. Thus,

[^20^]: 同一労働同一賃金
MHLW stresses the formulation of guidelines of what difference in treatment between non-regulars and regulars is ‘reasonable’ and ‘unreasonable’. These guidelines are made by reference to the EU Directive, insofar as they argue the aim is “for a wage difference between regular workers and non-regular employees comparable to European countries” (MHLW, 2016b:234).

On their website, MHLW argues that revisions of the haken law have been made in response not only to economic and industrial needs, but also the “diversification of work style” (rōdōsha no tayōna hatarakikata21) (MHLW, 2008).

4.1.3 Japan Staffing Service Association

JASSA, the Japan Staffing Service Association, represents the haken employers. In response to the public outcry on haken as the main culprit of a stratified society, they published two articles in defense of haken employment called ‘Please Understand Haken Workers Correctly’ and ‘Haken and the Stratified Society’. There they argue that even without haken workers, the stratified society would exist (JASSA 2006:1-2). They insist that haken workers contribute to the prevention of unemployment in Japan and play a dynamic role in supply and demand of labor and therefore, on the contrary, prevent the development of a stratified society (JASSA 2006:1-2). To them, part-timers are the main culprit: as haken workers are only 8% of non-regular employees (JASSA 2006:3). Haken employment is advantageous for those who want to (JASSA, 2008:5):

- Turn their ability to use in the workplace
- Work short-term, as long-term employment is unfeasible
- Work in an employment that is compatible with domestic chores
- Work in order to contribute to their household economy
- Be part of society, but have no need of extra income in addition to their pension etc.

JASSA refers to the decreasing birthrate and aging population (shōshi kōreika22) when they argue for the importance of advancement of ‘employability’ regardless of

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21 労働者の多様な働き方
22 少子高齢化
employment form. JASSA argues that by supporting the diversification of the forms of employment, *haken* can contribute to the development of a flexible economic system. As such, they argue that *kakusa* is the product of a competitive society, and if competition does not exist, the society cannot develop. In the process of globalization, it is important for Japan to maintain international competitiveness, and therefore *kakusa* to a certain degree is inevitable (JASSA, 2006, 4-5).

### 4.1.4 Haken agencies

*Haken* stands out in relation to how non-regular workers are usually depicted: *freeters*, a subgroup of non-regular workers, are often judged by companies as aimless, unmotivated, lazy and hard to integrate into company routines (Amamiya 2007:138). *Haken*, on the other hand, evokes the connotation of being the most institutionally organized workforce among the non-regular workers in Japan (Fu, 2012:38) *Haken* agencies have a unique platform on which they can advertise themselves as bridge-builders between both client firms and workers. This includes attractive promises of a cost-effective, flexible and institutionally organized workforce for client firms. Frequently used taglines which also comprise diversification and popular individual choices are: individuality, self-development and diversity (Ibid., 35). The goal of the *haken* industry is to become a ‘comprehensive personnel service business’ (sōgōtekina jinzai bijinesu) that carries out job placement, vocational education/training, consulting, outsourcing work etc. (Nagai, 1999: 254). As such, it positions itself as an important part of the employment management.

### 4.2 Cons

The unfavorable aspects of *haken* are often allocated at the level of revisions and deregulations. In these narratives, the vulnerability to economic recessions and employment insecurity are often emphasized. Furthermore, *haken* as the “main culprit” to the development of a stratified society in Japan is a recurrent topic. In this section, these framings will be discussed.

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23 総合的人材ビジネス
4.2.1 Unfavorable revisions and deregulations

Controversial issues concerning *haken* are connected to legal issues and labor regulations. Song (2014:24), assistant professor of international studies, argues that while Japan extensively liberalized the labor market for temporary employment and prioritized the institutionalization of the secondary labor market composed of non-regular workers, it did not develop extensive social protection to compensate for those affected by labor market reforms. This contributed to the rapid rise in labor market inequality and dualism over the past two decades. Keizer (2008:410) argues in the same line that this development has led to the renewal of a dualistic labor market in Japan.

Additionally, Mizuno (2012:109) argues that the vulnerability stems from the relaxation of the private job placement through several revisions. The risks for *haken* workers increased mainly in three regards: the actual responsibility taken by employer, short and discontinued contracts, and bad working conditions. The appearing of day-labor *haken* workers is both connected to the revision of the *haken* law in 1999.

Other scholars like Seno (2014:80) argue that internal pay variance and unequal benefits among *haken* have been a problem. Especially for *tōroku-gata haken* has notions such as mid-term termination of contract and benefit restrictions remained a problem.

Scholars like Weathers (2001:209) are also critical of the legal and regulatory framework of the *haken* law, as it does not encourage agencies to protect *haken* effectively, and neither clarifies the responsibility of the agencies or the client firms, leaving them vulnerable for harassments and arbitrary firing. Other scholars like Kojima (2010:25) argue that through neoliberal economic reforms the risk has been shifted from the corporate level to the individuals. Though companies are vulnerable to global economic forces in a neoliberal world, they have been able to minimize such risk systematically by shifting the risk on to *haken*. Kojima claims that issues associated with *haken* are revealed in system collapses (like the economic recession of 2008), in which workers were suddenly left stranded without work, housing, or any source of income – referred to as *haken-giri*24, ‘cutting of’ or laying-off *haken*. Kojima argues that *haken-giri* is associated with job insecurity embedded in the structure of the *haken* law.

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24 派遣切り
Related to *haken-giri* is the term *yatoi-dome* (discontinuation of employment contract), which includes client firms canceling contracts, or not hiring *haken* workers as regular employees after the fixed-term has ended (Seno, 2014:81). As mentioned before, the law was enacted partly to protect regular employment; removing *haken* workers remains relatively easy and swift, in comparison to regular workers.

Criticism of the amendment to the *haken* law in 2015 has also been extensive. This is related to *yatoi-dome*, in which Kojima, North & Weathers (2017:7) argue that the *haken* law was amended in 2015 to lift the restrictions placed on usage and period of employment. This allows client firms to use *haken* workers continuously as long as the worker is not assigned to the same job for more than three years.

Shibata (2017:410) criticizes further liberalization and deregulation of labor policies by the Abe administration. Shibata claims that Abe’s attempt to deregulate Japan’s labor market has resulted in a greater burden on the growing number of non-regular workers who have been losing protection and suffering increased precarity. Cargill & Sakamoto (2008:246) are also critical of the increased use of non-regular workers as this increases job and financial insecurity as well as lower wages often without health care or social security benefits.

### 4.2.2 Stratified society and the media

The term *kakusa shakai*, stratified society, is a term widely discussed in contemporary Japan. Especially in newspapers, TV-programs and popular literature, *kakusa* has been a recurrent theme of discussion (Fu, 2012: 81). The trend of a stratified society is most evident in the realm of employment, and the division between regular employment and non-regular employment. Genda is critical of the growing income gap between these two groups due to the dualistic labor market and the job gap (Genda, 2005:110-111). As the expanding use of *haken* correlates with the rise of a stratified society, this correlation has spurred the notion of *haken* as the ‘main culprit’ (*kakusa shakai no genkyō*) in the media (Fu, 2012:87).

In relation to *kakusa shakai*, the “working poor” have also been discussed. Kumazawa argues that even though the unemployment rate remains low in Japan, the
working poor exist. Not only is this evident in income gaps, but also in the property and assets gap (Kumazawa, 2007: 34-35).

OECD argues that the Gini coefficient in Japan has risen from 0.28 in 1985 to 0.33 in 2006 (see figure 2.3).

![Figure 2.3 Gini Coefficients (1985-2009)](source: OECD 2012)

From this survey, it becomes clear that the income gap in Japan has increased since 1985. In the Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions from 2016, the income gap and the working poor are evident from the number of people with an average annual income below 5,450,000 Yen, which applies to over 61 percent (MHLW, 2016a:11). With 61 percent of the working population not reaching the average income, it is evident that Japan is becoming an increasingly stratified society.

_Haken_ has also been bashed with regards to the discovery of illegal _haken_ activities, especially disguised _ukeoi_. The discovery of disguised _ukeoi_ was first observed in the media, generating headlines and negative publicity for _haken_ agencies and client firms (Fu, 2012:92). As discussed by Fu (Ibid., 96), the media have represented _haken_ as the primary reason for the gap-widening society and NHK’s special TV documentaries about the working poor and _Asahi Shimbun_’s year-long campaign against disguised
ukeoi have been important for this. This has generated intense public concern and critique towards client firms and haken agencies.

4.2.4 Haken and gender

Rigid gender roles formed the structure of the normative family in post-war Japan: the man as the family breadwinner and the woman as housewife (sengyō shufu). The term sengyō shufu itself implies profession and abides to identity on similar terms as that of an employment (Appelgren 2012, 58). Having this said, women have a long history of participation in the labor force, but the expectations have been evidently different from that of men until recently: though women were often ‘full-time’ employed, future advancement in the firm was limited (ibid, 60). Women’s involvement in full-time employment and non-regular employment has been seen as an ‘extension of the domestic role’ and not an alternative (Fu, 2012:106).

The normative conventions have constructed women’s employment around auxiliary jobs (Fu, 2012:107). Furthermore, one can argue that this is still being reproduced in contemporary Japan; the number of female haken workers exceeds that of male haken and it is widely known that office workers consist mainly of female haken (Kumazawa, 2007:127). As noted by Genda & Rebick (2000:95), Japan’s male/female wage differential is among the highest in the developed world. According to OECD, Japan has the third highest gender pay gap in the OECD at 25.7% (OECD, 2017). This has much to do with women dropping out of work to raise their kids, only to return to work later in life as poorly-paid part-timers.

Weathers (2001:201) argues that haken employment has generated gender segregation in the workplace. According to a survey on haken in 2012, 61.4 percent of all registered-type haken were women, while men reached almost 69.4 percent of regular-type haken (Figure 2.1). As regular-type haken is more desirable, steady and resembling regular employment, women generally have less secure haken employment than that of men.
Figure 2.1

Haken’s gender ratio by employment type

Source: Survey on the Reality of Haken Workers (Haken rōdōsha no jittai chōsa), MHLW, 2012.

In addition, the total number of haken has increased from 2015 to 2017 (MIC 2017, 21). However, the amount of men working as haken decreased by 20,000 in 2017 while the amount of women increased by 30,000 (see figure 2.2).
This development points to the fact that women’s dominance in *haken* employment has not diminished over the last year, but on the contrary, deepened.

### 4.2.5 Job insecurity

Masuda claims that the prevailing normative work values in contemporary Japan make temporary and non-regular jobs undesirable for workers. Simultaneously there is a great demand for temporary workers (Masuda, 2015:116). *Haken* is often related to employment insecurity, and perception is as important as the facts. According to a survey conducted by sociologist Sara A. Burgard, the perceived job insecurity in the U.S. is a significant and substantively important predictor of poorer self-rated health, it can have a significantly larger impact than the estimated effects of job losses or unemployment (Burgard, et.al. 2009:784). A survey on *haken* workers’ self-rated employment situation, indicated that workers choosing to work as *haken*, due to not being able to become regular employees, have lower job satisfaction and higher stress.
response (Yoshioka, 2014:2). According to MHLW, 41.8 percent of all haken workers are so-called unwilling haken (fuhon-i hi seiki27) (MHLW, 2016c:9).

Consequently, while life-time employment is still the norm and valued higher than temporary employment, the meaning attached to being a salaryman has transformed from ordinary and desirable to, as Fu argues, “[…] mundane and derided” (Fu, 2012:18). The term salaryman itself has assumed pejorative connotations among young people in Japan today. While young people gradually become alienated from the normative life-time employment, the dualistic labor market also generates a gap between employers and employees; 65 percent of all companies in Japan decline regular employment in favor of the non-regular, while almost 70 percent of all non-regular workers would prefer secure employment (Obinger, 2009:15). Once engaged in insecure employment many find it hard to break out of these working conditions (Amamiya, 2007: 43-44;61).

5 Analysis of Discourse

The previous section introduced discourses on haken, divided into two larger subsections: pros and cons of haken. The purpose of this is to present material for the second and third dimension of the analysis of discourse – the discursive practice and the social context from which the empirical material will be analyzed.

Consequently, this section presents and discusses the result of the CDA. The analysis is divided into three subsections. Using the analytic tools to analyze linguistic features of texts presented by Machin & Mayr (see section 2.2.4), subsection 5.1 analyzes discourses presented in Asahi’s editorials, and subsection 5.2 examines discourses presented in Yomiuri’s editorials. Subsection 5.3 discusses the second and third dimension, which includes the analysis of the interdiscursive events from which text draws on earlier texts, as well as the socio-cultural conditions under which these discourses are constructed. The sentences used in this section are translated by the author, and the original sentences in Japanese are available in the Appendix.

27 不本意非正規
5.1 Discourses in Asahi

The headlines for the two editorials in Asahi are “The proposed amendment: Far from treatment improvement”, published on June 13, 2015, and “The amendment to the haken law: An amendment that protects the rights is needed”, published on September 12, 2015.

5.1.1 Representing participants

What can be observed throughout Asahi’s editorials is the inclination to discursively represent haken workers as victims of certain policies. Simultaneously, construction of sympathy can be identified in the following line “For people working as haken…” (Editorial, Asahi, September 12, 2015). As the outlook is positioned from the perspective of haken workers, the discourse represents them as decent and respected members of the community. This representation can also be seen in another sentence: “…a legal revision that allows haken workers to request equal treatment with those working at client firms” (Editorial, Asahi, September 12, 2015). In this instance, there is a tendency to render workers at client firms as having uniform employment contracts. This collectivization can obstruct the notion that varied types of employment at client firms can exist – such as contract workers, part-timers etc. Having that said, this representation could be considered to be an effort to establish haken workers as equals to other employment types in the labor market. Furthermore, the sentence tends to support the idea of increasing haken workers’ status and power in employment negotiations, and consolidate their position. This idea is also evident in the sentence: “(One) should also consider legislating the right for haken workers to collectively negotiate with employees” (Editorial, Asahi, September 12, 2015). In this sentence, ‘should’ is constructed as a deontic modality – Asahi explicitly state that the legislation presents what ought to be done to empower haken workers.

As opposed to haken workers, haken agencies are generally critically represented in Asahi as “vicious haken agencies…” (Editorial, Asahi, September 12, 2015). The word ‘vicious’ can be considered an excessive description. This representation can ascribe negative connotations to certain haken agencies, in contrast to the sympathetic attitude towards haken workers. In addition, a presupposition is constructed in the sense that the
existence of vicious haken agencies is assumed to be a true statement. As Asahi do not contextualize the statement – as to how and why this phenomenon has come to be – the circumstances remain vague.

Similarly, Asahi tend to frame client firms as responsible for haken workers’ bad working conditions. Asahi state: “…the treatment [of haken workers] will not improve unless the response from client firms changes” (Editorial, Asahi, June 13, 2015). In this sentence, client firms appear as agents with authority to establish better working conditions. ‘Unless’ can be seen as a proposition whose validity is dependent on the client firms’ action – thus this representation can be considered to be that the client firms are at fault. In another sentence, ascribing responsibility for haken workers’ well-being to the client firms is evident: “It is the judgment of client firms that greatly affects the working conditions” (Editorial, Asahi, September 12, 2015). In this sentence, the adverb ‘greatly’ is an excessive description, which could be seen as a way to emphasize the client firms’ obligation towards haken workers.

5.1.2 Metaphors and personification
Rhetorical tropes in form of metaphors in Asahi appear in the following sentence: “…draw the path to become full-time employees” (Editorial, Asahi, June 13, 2015). This sentence establishes the potential for positive outcomes of the amendment in regards to raising haken workers abilities and career advancement. In another instance, the formulation of metaphors is used to express negative associations with the regulation: “…unlawfulness that has slipped through regulations over the employment period has also occurred” (Editorial, Asahi, September 12, 2015). In this sentence, ‘slipped through’ emphasizes illegal activities occurring under the regulations, pointing out negative aspects of the law. ‘Slipped through’ could be interpreted as something becoming loose, or that the foundation is inadequate in the first place.

In addition to the use of metaphors, Asahi has the tendency to refer to the economy in order to construct objection against the current amendment. Asahi state: “Is the deliberation of a heavy law really good for the people and economy as a whole?” (Editorial, Asahi, June 13, 2015). The word “heavy” is an excessive description used to invoke a pejorative stand towards the law. The economy is presented here as an agent.
This tends to obscure actors; the economy itself cannot be an actor and consequently appears as natural and inevitable, something that one needs to respond and adapt to.

5.1.3 Equal treatment and haken rights

‘Equal treatment’ is a recurrent topic in Asahi’s editorials. In one instance, equal treatment becomes connected to the process of raising the economy and is transformed into a goal itself: “While inequality expands among workers, improving the treatment of haken workers is an urgent task for the involved parties and should have been an important initiative in order to bottom-up the overall Japanese economy” (Editorial, Asahi, June 13, 2015). The statement ‘inequality expands among workers’ can be seen as a presupposition. This pre-constructed assumption that inequality has expanded among workers could be seen as a framing of the existing law as having an insufficient framework to confront these problems. In addition, the line “urgent issue” is a predominant lexical choice and a presupposition; in this particular framework, ‘urgent’ evokes the connotation of a time limit and that the movement towards this particular goal is critical. In the next part of the sentence, the ‘involved parties’ is represented as the main actors. However, the involved parties remain ambiguous and impersonalized and consequently it is concealed who believes what and who is responsible for the improved treatment. In the last part of the sentence, actions become generalized and non-specific as Asahi argues that equal treatment is important in order to elevate the economy. The details of what is done here to “bottom-up” the economy are never discussed. However, the notion of the economy can establish credibility and ascribe the importance of equal treatment not only for haken workers themselves but also for the society as a whole. In addition, the line ‘should have been’, which is a strong deontic modality, could be considered both representing the discontent with the actors (parties), and also fortify equal treatment as a priority.

Asahi often promotes ‘equal pay for equal work’ as a goal of equal treatment and stabilization of haken employment. They state that it: “…indicated what the direction should be” (Editorial, Asahi, June 13, 2015). In this line, ‘should be’ is articulated as a deontic modality, in which Asahi expresses a certain mode of how the solution is ought to be. In the next sentence, they state why this is a desirable direction: “This is because
it was stipulated that within one year a law would be made to equalize the treatment between *haken* workers and client firms’ employees” (Editorial, *Asahi*, June 13, 2015) ‘Because’ is constructed as an epistemic modality; the proposition that law’s ability to change the current situation for *haken* is evaluated as true. Furthermore, as the sentence lacks an agent, the sentence could be considered suppression: the law is not something that has the power to change things, but a system that regulates behavior that is processed and interpreted by particular agents.

*Asahi* uses research and surveys as a tool in order to legitimize ‘equal pay for equal work’ in the following sentence: “By capitalizing on these research and surveys…” (Editorial, *Asahi*, September 12, 2015). As Fairclough (in Machin & Mayr, 2012:42) argues, texts can use lexical choices to indicate levels of authority and co-membership with the audience. In this sentence, research and surveys are presented in order promote ‘specialist knowledge’ and ‘science’ that help convey authority on the matter.

Furthermore, a presupposition is made, in which the difference in treatment between *haken* workers and workers at the client firms is assumed to be unfavorable for *haken* workers. However, in what way they are unfair is never articulated.

*Asahi* tends to frame the amendment negatively. However, this is not always the case; positive notions of the amendment are also articulated when they argue that the amendment contains some “beneficial points” (Editorial, *Asahi*, September 12, 2015) for *haken* workers. These beneficial points are ascribed to the amendment from the perspective that the amendment only allows one type of *haken* business, which could possibly strengthen the *haken* employment system.

5.2 Discourses in *Yomiuri*

The headlines of *Yomiuri*’s editorials are: “The amendment to *haken* law – (I) want to increase the effectiveness of treatment improvement”, published on June 20, 2015, and: “Establishment of the amendment to the *haken* law – Will the effectiveness of employment stability increase?”, published on September 12, 2015.

5.2.1 Representing participants

*Haken* workers are often depicted by their function in *Yomiuri*, and, just like in *Asahi*,
as subjects to employment instability and unequal treatment in order to establish sympathy towards haken workers. However, contrary to Asahi, Yomiuri also represent regular employment as the norm: “So far, in order to protect the work of regular employment…” (Editorial, Yomiuri, September 12, 2015). Although Yomiuri does not explicate their attitude towards regular employment, this line could be seen as a presupposition in which the proposition outlines that the protection of regular employment is common sense and the foundation of the employment structure.

Client firms and haken agencies are generally depicted positively. However, Yomiuri also criticizes them in the following line: “Client firms not actively pursuing direct employment…” (Editorial, Yomiuri, September 12, 2015). Yomiuri argues, just like Asahi, that client firms are reluctant to organize direct employment. This narrative can be connected to Yomiuri’s representation of the importance of protecting regular employment, as direct employment is preferable.

They also put forward critique towards haken agencies in the line: “…businesses that make low costs their only sales point could be eliminated” (Editorial, Yomiuri, September 12, 2015). This proposition is also a presupposition as it is assumed that low-cost agencies exist and that the goal is for them to be sifted out.

When referring to the oppositional political parties, Yomiuri tends to represent them as unreasonable, unlike the more rational perspective of the ruling party: “…oppositional parties, such as the Democratic Party of Japan, strongly opposed with the argument that ‘life-time haken’ will increase” (Editorial, Yomiuri, September 12, 2015). In this, the verb ‘opposed’ (hanpatsu) is an expressive meta-propositional verb. This also shows strong disagreement with the oppositional party; in Japanese, the verb hanpatsu can mean opposition, but also refusal and revolt. The adverb ‘strongly’ suggests that the remarks made by the opposition are fiercely condemning. Thus, this line can make the opposition appear less formal.

The deliberation of the law in the House of Representatives was depicted as a sensational and emotional event in Yomiuri. When describing the event, Yomiuri states that the Democratic Party of Japan finally resorted to violence as they opposed that the ruling party tried to conclude the question-and-answer session from the House of Representatives Committee on Health, Labor and Welfare. Yomiuri concluded this with: “The committee chairman suffered injuries which took two weeks to cure” (Editorial,
In the editorial from September, *Yomiuri* also referred to this incident as a lost battle for the opposition, since the amendment incorporated the opposition’s arguments: “…the opposition also buried the hatchet.” (Editorial, *Yomiuri*, September 12, 2015). The phrase ‘buried the hatchet’ is a metaphorical expression. This metaphor can be considered establishing the narrative of the opposition becoming more subservient as agents. In short, the event is portrayed sensational and dramatic in *Yomiuri*, as the narrative of the oppositional parties is transformed from offensive to submissive. In contradiction, this event is not even brought up in *Asahi*‘s editorials.

*Yomiuri* also brings up the word *yatoi-dome* as a problem related to employment instability: “Many people are worried over ‘yatoi-dome’ (end of their employment contract)”. *Yomiuri* establishes co-membership with the audience by sympathizing with workers exposed to this phenomenon, as they ascribe the necessity of employment stability. However, ‘many people’ could be seen as an abstraction, as the amount of people is never described and unspecific as no specific classification of those worried is established.

### 5.2.2 Rhetoric and metaphor

*Yomiuri* uses metaphor when they discuss that official’s ability to ensure strict guidance and supervision: “…holds the key to securing the effectiveness of the amendment” (Editorial, *Yomiuri*, September 12, 2015). The use of ‘holds the key’ indicates the possibility of ensuring that the amendment is effective. Another metaphor is found in the following sentence: “By nurturing good quality agencies, (I) want to settle haken work as an opportunity for career advancement.” (Editorial, *Yomiuri*, September 12, 2015) This metaphor can establish the association of a paternal perspective, with the supervision of agencies/industry as regarded to be essential. The line ‘want to’ is a strong deontic modality, in which the text clearly articulates in what direction the process ought to develop.

### 5.2.3 Protection

The protection of *haken* workers is described by *Yomiuri* as insufficient, and just like in *Asahi*, they emphasize the importance of strengthening it through regulations. However,
Yomiuri tends to frame the recent amendment in a positive connotation, holding the perspective that the amendment has the potential to incorporate these notions and raise the protection system for haken. This is evident in the sentence: “As diverse ways of working expand, the focus shifts from the protection of regular workers at the client firms to the protection of haken workers” (Editorial, Yomiuri, June 20, 2015). This sentence is a presupposition, in which the text assumes that ‘diverse ways of working expand’ is a natural and inevitable development, thus one needs to adapt to it. The explanation to this is also suppressed, as no concrete definition or examples of this are outlined. The protection of regular workers and haken workers are positioned in contrast to each other, with the presupposition that regular workers’ employment is beneficial and ideal. However, the text does not explain the direction of this protection in relation to regular workers and the details are obscured. The verb-phrase ‘turn our attention’ is also an abstraction. The action, therefore, remains generalized and non-specific. The text also lacks actors, thus we are left with goals, circumstances, and processes, but with no one responsible for them. The second sentence is also an epistemic modality, in which the discourse establishes the level of truth of this statement as ‘reasonable’.

In the editorial from September, Yomiuri argues that strengthening the insufficient protection of haken workers is also good for companies: “Based on the diversification of working styles, the amendment – that strengthens the insufficient protection of haken workers – have valid content” (Editorial, Yomiuri, September 12, 2015). In this sentence, we find that the word ‘diversification’ is a nominalization. Thus, this process becomes naturalized from which Yomiuri construct their outlook. We have also an excessive description in form of ‘insufficient protection’, in which this added information reinforces the positive process of the amendment. The suppression of agents is also evident in this sentence, as the transitivity is based on the properties of the amendment.

5.2.4 Equal treatment and stability

In regards to the changes with the amendment, Yomiuri criticizes the lack of certain aspects revolving haken workers: “On the other hand, regulations to protect employment and treatment of haken workers were insufficient.” (Editorial, Yomiuri, June 20, 2015). The sentence is an epistemic modality, in which the text holds that the
regulations were insufficient as a true statement. Just like Asahi, Yomiuri tend to abstractedly criticize this perspective of the law, but do not concretely articulate the reason for the lack of insufficient regulations. However, in the editorial from September, they claim in response to opposition to the amendment that: “…it strengthens the government’s supervision system. If the system works effectively, let’s make it contribute to treatment improvement.” (Editorial, Yomiuri, June 20, 2015). In this, Yomiuri puts forward advantages of the amendment from the perspective of the government. By doing so, they make their statement more official and authoritative. The next sentence has a volitional verb form, which emphasizes the possibility of using the amendment to improve the treatment. This is a deontic modality, in which the text clearly put forward what ought to be done, or ought to look like. Thus, the amendment is treated as something positive, with the potential of contributing to the improved treatment of haken workers.

In the same manner as Asahi, Yomiuri discusses the ‘equal pay for equal work’ in relation to equal treatment for haken. However, while this legislative is mentioned in both editorials in Asahi, Yomiuri only mentions this once in the editorial from September. In addition, Yomiuri’s stand towards the law is vaguer and not as clearly emphasized as in Asahi. However, they remain positive to this legislative, as in the response to the added ‘balanced treatment’ to the proposed amendment, where Yomiuri states: “Given that life-time employment and seniority-based wages remains firmly rooted in Japanese firms, the amendment is realistic” (Editorial, Yomiuri, June 20, 2015). The sentence is a presupposition, in that these employment relations are treated as true statements. Japanese firms are represented with generalization and collectivization; the line ‘remains firmly rooted’ indicates that the post-war employment system remains vital in the Japanese firms, leaving no room for the possibility that Japanese firms can be diverse, and consequently some firms may not be based on this system. The sentence is also an epistemic modality, in which the text assumes, based on a certain assumption and knowledge, that this conclusion is correct.

In the sentence, “The government should pay close attention to trends in haken agencies and client firms, and encourage efforts of employment stabilization” (Editorial, Yomiuri, September 12, 2015), the perspectives of government and officials are represented. The government is represented as authoritative and capable, as the text
represents them as having the potential to execute these processes. The sentence also has a deontic modality, in which the text argues that this process is ought to be done by the government.

5.3 Summary and recent symptoms of naturalization

Asahi tends to sympathize with haken workers and allocates the notion of haken as victims of unfavorable regulations. Furthermore, haken workers are often ascribed the same symbolic value as other workers. From this narrative, it could be argued that this representation establishes public concern and sympathy towards haken, while other workers are collectively represented as having good working conditions and positioned as the standard. Furthermore, from the data analysis presented here, client firms and haken agencies are more antagonistically narrated as responsible for deteriorating working conditions. As such, Asahi recognizes unfavorable aspects associated with haken such as legislative issues and job insecurity. From a wider interdiscursive perspective, this acknowledgment could be seen as analogous to the representation of client firms and haken agencies presented by scholars like Weathers and Kojima (see section 4.2.1). However, in one instance, Asahi emphasizes the economy as an argument for the improvement of treatment of haken. This narrative could be considered connected to the more favorable aspects of haken: its potential to revitalize a stagnated economy and contribute to personnel savings. This discourse is more closely related to the representation of haken in MHLW and JASSA.

Yomiuri likewise represents haken with sympathy as they discuss problems related to haken employment. Their point of departure seems to be regular employment. In Yomiuri's discourse, life-time employment and seniority-based wages remain firmly rooted in Japanese firms, thus Yomiuri is leaning toward defending and maintaining the post-war employment system as it is. As Asahi refrains from discussing this, their position on this matter remains unclear. In addition, similar to Asahi, Yomiuri assumes that diverse ways of working will expand, and society should respond to this inevitable progression. This can be understood as a favorable aspect of haken, which interconnects the idea of maintaining the post-war employment system with core employees, while expanding and strengthening the position of non-regular employment, such as haken.
This discourse is more positioned with favorable aspects of *haken* and presented as beneficial for corporate business: retaining benefits for core workers, while increasing the reliance on *haken* as a means to reduce labor costs and adjusting to economic fluctuation.

*Yomiuri* remains critical to client firms’ behavior, discussing issues concerning their reluctant attitude towards *haken*. However, unlike *Asahi*, they articulate a positive stance to the amendment, claiming that the amendment has the potential to vitalize and change current conditions for the better. They claim that some aspects of the law have been insufficient to establish equal treatment for *haken*, and working conditions remain a problem. Therefore, it could be argued that *Yomiuri*’s discourse in this aspect is twofold; it is comprised of criticisms towards the *haken* law and the client firms, but also upholds the prospects of a new amendment. The potential with the new amendment is situated in the reinforcement of the system: the government’s supervision of the *haken* business will be strengthened and contribute to better working conditions for *haken*. As such, this could be considered a more pro-government stance, as it incorporates MHLW’s strive towards stabilizing employment inequalities.

The topic of equal treatment is discussed in editorials by both *Asahi* and *Yomiuri*. *Asahi* acknowledges some aspects of the law as positive, such as the turn towards a more efficient supervision, and the requirement for *haken* agencies to offer *haken* workers the opportunity for career advancement. However, they remain critical to the amendment, arguing that the regulatory framework does not provide equal treatment and cannot strengthen the rights for *haken*. *Yomiuri*, on the other hand, argues that this strengthening of the government’s supervision can lead to treatment improvement, and consequently they remain more optimistic about its potential. For *Asahi*, the principle of ‘equal pay for equal work’ is depicted in contrast to the *haken* law as a desirable direction for the improvement. *Yomiuri* has a vaguer attitude towards the principles, but still articulate it positively, as it will contribute to the protection of life-time employment and seniority-based wages. As argued by Kojima, North & Weathers (2017:4), the principle of ‘equal pay for equal work’ was established by the Council for the Realization of Work Style Reform in order to reduce inequality between regular and non-regular workers.

As discussed earlier, the main goal for MHLW to expand a diverse and flexible
workforce is to focus on ‘equal pay for equal work’, and create balance treatment. In both *Yomiuri* and *Asahi*, this narrative is represented. Both newspapers argue that the legislation can stabilize the relationship between regular workers and non-regular workers. Furthermore, both newspapers describe that diverse ways of working expand as something inevitable and something we need to adapt to. Thus in these discourses, they give an affirmative stand towards a society with a diversified employment system, which rhymes well with the discourse of official policies and *haken* agencies. Consequently, the narrative in both newspapers is that ‘equal pay for equal work’ should be implemented in order to achieve the goal of making *haken* a naturalized part of the employment system. This framing differs from more fierce criticism such as Satoshi Nishitani, Professor of Law at Osaka City University, who argues that: “The fundamental question arises as to why the *haken* workers system is necessary in the first place” (Yoroi, 2017:1130).

As Machin & Mayr (2012, 38) discuss, suppression of certain important terms that one might expect are absent. In the case of *Asahi*, the case of not discussing the dramatic event in the House of Representatives is one. This can be interpreted in several ways, but as the discourse in *Asashi*’s editorials is inclining towards criticizing the amendment and current labor conditions for *haken* worker, this could be considered unfavorable for this argumentation. This could also point to the fact that *Asahi* is inclining to sympathize with the opposition to the amendment. Suppression can also be found in *Asahi* when they do not discuss *yatoi-dome*. However, this phenomenon is generally part of the discourse that criticizes *haken* employment. From the perspective of *Asahi*, *yatoi-dome* would enable the newspaper to construct even more convincing arguments against client firms. Therefore, deemphasizing the connection between *haken* and *yatoi-dome* could be considered as an effort to normalize *haken*. In addition, the perspective of gender is also absent; as this thesis has discussed, most *haken* workers are comprised of women. However, this aspect is never brought up in the editorials. This implies that although awareness of discrimination against women in the workplace and unequal division of labor is evident in the Japanese society, discourses in both newspapers deemphasize problems associated with gender inequality – problems prominently visible in *haken* employment. As such, this can indicate that discourses on *haken* in editorials from both newspapers tend to take the perspective of a male-
dominated workplace.

In both editorials, two important terms from the framings presented as unfavorable for *haken – kakusa shakai* and *haken-giri* – are omitted altogether. In the case of *Yomiuri*, the amendment to the law is throughout the editorials presented as favorable. Both newspapers argue that the amendment can help stabilize unequal employment relations for *haken*. As such, not referring to controversial issues such as these could be considered an advantage to discourses presented in *Yomiuri*. However, in the case of *Asahi*, as discussed earlier, *kakusa shakai* has been an important term in their previous discourses, often constructing the association of *haken* with the stratified society. In the editorials presented here, these terms are omitted altogether, thus *Asahi* seems to tone down their critique. This can also be related to the view of *haken* as a global phenomenon. By now, most agree that temporary work and employment flexibility are an irreversible trend (Galais & Koene, 2014:2). This might also meet acceptance in Japan. The burst of the economic bubble and the rise of the unemployment rate in the early 90s have led Japanese policy-makers to look again to western countries for models, in which policies based on market-oriented neoliberalism remains the predominant discourse. The renewed duality between regular and non-regular workers has diminished workers’ access to regular employment. The external labor market, comprised of non-regular employment such as *haken*, offers cost-savings, but has also largely contributed to the stratification of the society in view of rising inequality. Prime Minister Shinzō Abe has made ‘Work Style Reform’ (*hatarakikata kaikaku*) part of his core agenda, and one of the policies is the implementation of ‘equal pay for equal work’. Even among labor groups, the inclination towards a reform that is close to EU directives on the principle of non-discrimination is evident (Weathers, 2017:26). As such, the discourse of the EU’s Temporary Agency Work Directive from 2008 is evident in different discourses in Japan. In addition, in editorials from February 2018, *Asahi* states that with ‘equal work for equal pay’, they argue that unreasonable disparity between regular and non-regular workers should be eliminated, and that the parliament should listen to the voices of people from various types of employment.28 *Yomiuri* also argues that ‘equal work for equal pay’ is suitable

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for the diversification of work and contributes to the improvement of working conditions.\textsuperscript{29}

One of the most troubling problems with the Japanese employment system is the drastically increasing inequality in the workplace (Kojima, North & Weathers, 2017:12). Due to international competition and an increasingly harsher labor market, ‘flexibility’ is established as desirable and adaptive to an intensive globalized environment. For individuals, the notions of flexibility, diversity, and self-development are important factors that make \textit{haken} employment and \textit{haken} agencies appear as desirable and relevant in contemporary Japan. As the norms of the post-war employment relations, such as life-time employment and seniority-based wages, are becoming obsolete, \textit{haken}, which emphasizes individual choice and self-development, is perceived as more relevant for the working population.

The editorials of \textit{Asahi} and \textit{Yomiuri} analyzed in this thesis seem to support this development. In both \textit{Asahi} and \textit{Yomiuri}, \textit{haken} is treated as an essential part of the labor market and vital to the economy. They both tend to recognize that diversification in the labor market is inevitable, from which the importance is to elevate and improve the treatment of \textit{haken} workers. In addition, from discourses in both newspapers, “equal pay for equal work” is represented as the goal for establishing equal treatment for \textit{haken} workers. Thus, while \textit{haken} remain a symbol of friction between regular and non-regular employment, from the empirical data presented here, both \textit{Asahi} and \textit{Yomiuri} tend to discursively present \textit{haken} as an essential part of the employment formation. Although both newspapers recognize issues concerning the reality of \textit{haken} workers, their role in the labor market is becoming naturalized in both \textit{Asahi} and \textit{Yomiuri}.

### 6 Conclusion

\textit{Haken} is a non-regular employment type that since its legalization in 1985 has stirred debates and controversies. Under the conditions of an aging population and a stagnated economy, \textit{haken} has been framed as having the potential to revitalize the economy and

\textsuperscript{29} Editorial, \textit{Yomiuri}, March 26, 2018.
meet the companies’ demand for personnel savings. On the other hand, the use of *haken* is also blamed for exacerbating income inequality among Japanese workers and the development of a stratified society. Thus, the symbolic value of *haken* remains divided in Japanese society.

By using Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework, this thesis investigated framings of *haken* in light of the amendment of 2015 in editorials from *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun*. The thesis also analyzed the interdiscursive relation between editorials’ framings and discourses presented as pros and cons of *haken*. This has then been put in a wider social content, with the aim of uncovering how discourses in these editorials reinforce the symbolic value of *haken* for the mainstream public. As *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun* have a different ideological leaning, the framing of *haken* in light of the amendment differentiates. *Asahi* is more critical to the ruling party and tends to discursively represent the law as insufficient, lacking the framework to establish equal treatment for *haken* workers. *Yomiuri*, on the other hand, is more positive towards the ruling party, and tends to frame the law as having the potential to stabilize inequality in employment relations. However, the two newspapers also share common framings; they represent *haken* as an essential part of employment formations in contemporary Japan and they criticize *haken* workers’ current employment situation. In both newspapers’ discourses the concept of ‘equal pay for equal work’ is positioned as a goal to establish equal treatment between *haken* workers and other employment types in Japan. As such, this points to the fact that the representation of *haken* in *Asahi* and *Yomiuri* is interrelated to discourses found in both pros and cons of *haken*. Furthermore, while the inequality in the workplace is problematized in editorials of both newspapers, the conceivable concept of *haken* in both newspapers is that it plays an essential role in the labor market. In a wider social context, this correlates with the view that *haken* is a global phenomenon and perceived by many as an irreversible trend. Therefore, it could be argued that the representation of *haken* in these newspapers encourages efforts of re-regulating the labor market, in which equal treatment of *haken* workers is indispensable. This can imply that in mainstream public discourse, there is a tendency to establish *haken* as a naturalized part of the labor market.

In conclusion, with CDA as method, the lack of using textual analysis in combination with text consumption practices is evident. People’s use of discourses will
vary depending on the social context. Likewise is CDA not a method to explicitly articulate the reality of *haken* workers. In contrast to the symbolic value of *haken* presented in this thesis, which either empowers or denounces the use of *haken*, people’s experience of *haken* in real situations is far more complex and contradictory than discourses presented in these editorials. Therefore, future research should be made on the reality of people working as *haken*. 
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Appendix

Asahi Shimbun


Editorial, Asahi, September 12, 2015. “The amendment to the haken law: An amendment that protects the rights is needed”. 改正派遣法 権利守る改正が必要だ

“For people working as haken…” Editorial, Asahi, September 12, 2015. 派遣社員として働く人たちにとって[…]

“…a legal revision that allows haken workers to request equal treatment with those working at client firms” Ibid., 派遣社員が派遣先の企業で働く人たちと同等の待遇を求められるよう法改正[…]

“(One) should also consider legislating the right for haken workers to collectively negotiate with employees”. Editorial, Asahi, September 12, 2015. 派遣社員が派遣先と団体交渉をする権利を法制化することも検討するべきだ

“vicious haken agencies…” Editorial, Asahi, September 12, 2015. 悪質な派遣会社[…]

“(One) should also consider legislating the right for haken workers to collectively negotiate with employees”. Editorial, Asahi, September 12, 2015. 派遣社員が派遣先と団体交渉をする権利を法制化することも検討するべきだ

“It is the judgment of client firms that greatly affects the working conditions” Editorial, Asahi, September 12, 2015. 労働条件に大きく影響しているのは派遣先の判断だ
“…draw the path to become full-time employees”. Editorial, Asahi, June 13, 2015. […] 正社員になってもらったりする道筋を描く

“…unlawfulness that has slipped through regulations over the employment period has also occurred” Editorial, Asahi, September 12, 2015. […] 期間の規制をすり抜ける不正も起きた

“Is the deliberation of a heavy law really good for the people and economy as a whole?” Editorial, Asahi, June 13, 2015. 国民と経済全体にとって重い法案の審議が果たしてこれで良いのか

“While inequality expands among workers, improving the treatment of *haken* workers is an urgent task for the involved parties and should have been an important initiative in order to bottom-up the overall Japanese economy”. Editorial, Asahi, June 13, 2015. 働き手の間でも不平等が広がる中で、派遣労働者の処遇を改善していくことは、当事者にとって喫緊の課題であり、日本経済全体を底上げするうえでも大切な取り組みだったはずである

“… indicated what the direction should be”. Editorial, Asahi, June 13, 2015. […]あるべき方向を示していた

“This is because it was stipulated that within one year a law would be made to equalize the treatment between *haken* workers and client firms’ employees”. Editorial, Asahi, June 13, 2015. 派遣労働者と派遣先の労働者の待遇を均等にする法律を、1年以上に作ることが規定されていたからだ

“By capitalizing on these research and surveys…” Editorial, Asahi, September 12, 2015. こうした調査・研究を生かして[...]
“…beneficial points”. Editorial, Asahi, September 12, 2015. […] 有益な点も含まれている

Yomiuri Shim bun

Editorial, Yomiuri, June 20, 2015. “The amendment to haken law – (I) want to increase the effectiveness of treatment improvement”. 派遣法改正案 処遇向上の実効性を高めたい

Editorial, Yomiuri, September 12, 2015. “Establishment of the amendment to the haken law – Will the effectiveness of employment stability increase?”. 改正派遣法成立 雇用安定の実効性是高まるか

“So far, in order to protect the work of regular employment…”. Editorial, Yomiuri, September 12, 2015 従来は、正社員の仕事を守るため[…]

“Client firms not actively pursuing direct employment…”. Ibid., 派遣労働者の直接雇用に消極的な派遣先 […]

“…oppositional parties, such as the Democratic Party of Japan, strongly opposed with the argument that ‘life-time haken’ will increase” Ibid., 低コストのみが売り物の業者は淘汰されよう

“The committee chairman suffered injuries which took two weeks to cure”. Editorial, Yomiuri, June 20, 2015. 委員長は、首に全治2週間のけがを負った

“…the opposition also buried the hatchet”. Editorial, Yomiuri, September 12, 2015. […] 野党も矛を収めた
Many people are worried over ‘yatoi-dome’” Editorial, Yomiuri, September 12, 2015.
「雇い止め」の不安を抱く人は多い

“…holds the key to securing the effectiveness of the amendment.” (Ibid., […]改正法の実効性を確保するカギを握る

“By nurturing good quality agencies, (I) want to settle haken work as an opportunity for career advancement.” Ibid., 良質な業者を育てることで、派遣労働をキャリアアップの機会として定着させたい

”As diverse ways of working expand, the focus shifts from the protection of regular workers at the client firms to the protection of haken workers”. Editorial, Yomiuri, June 20, 2015. 多様な働き方が広がる中、派遣先の正社員の保護から派遣労働者の保護に軸足を移す

“Based on the diversification of working styles, the amendment – that strengthens the insufficient protection of haken workers – have valid content Editorial, Yomiuri, September 12, 2015.働き方の多様化を踏まえ、手薄だった派遣労働者の保護を強化する改正案は、妥当な内容である

“On the other hand, regulations to protect employment and treatment of haken workers were insufficient”. Editorial, Yomiuri, June 20, 2015. 反面、派遣労働者の雇用や待遇を守る規定が手薄だった

“…it strengthens the government’s supervision system. If the system works effectively, let’s make it contribute to treatment improvement.” Ibid., […]政府の監督体制を強化する。制度が有効に機能すれば、処遇改善に寄与しよう
“Given that life-time employment and seniority-based wages remains firmly rooted in Japanese firms, the amendment is realistic”. Editorial, Yomiuri, June 20, 2015. 終身雇用や年功賃金の慣行が根強く残る日本の企業社会を考えれば、修正は現実的である

“The government should pay close attention to trends in haken agencies and client firms, and encourage efforts of employment stabilization”. Editorial, Yomiuri, September 12, 2015. 政府は、派遣先や派遣会社の動向を注視し、雇用安定への努力を促すべきだ。