

Introduction

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This special issue, “System Transformation and Labour Motivation Problems”, is an outcome of a joint research project, “Comparative Economic Analysis on Labour Motivation Problems”, hosted by Joint Usage and Research Center, Institute of Economic Research, Kyoto University. The objectives of the joint research are twofold. Firstly, it aims to look into the possibility of improving labour productivity, and thus of achieving economic development, through empirical researches on the incentives and motivations of economic agents in Japanese and Russian business enterprises. Secondly, it seeks a possibility for further development of the researches in comparative economic system by clarifying the relationship between the transformation of economic system and labour motivation. While relying on the thesis of the variety of capitalism, this research project has been striving to establish a method of comparative economic system in which labour motivation is used as the criteria of classification, rather than more conventional institutional fields, such as financial system and corporate governance. In particular, this research approaches the issues of interests and motivations of stakeholders surrounding business enterprises from three view points: 1) wage structure and the ways in which employment, as centring around labour market, is organised; 2) interpersonal relations within a business enterprise, and stakeholders’ influence on them; 3) human resource management and skill formation.

This special issue intends to propose a new analytical vantage point for comparative economics, by grasping labour motivation in relation to the transformation of economic system. It will be done by combining empirical researches on the influences of the transforming economic system (i.e. the spread of and convergence to market economic system triggered by the shift to market economy and globalisation) upon labour motivation, and theoretical researches on comparative labour systems. Wood approaches the variety and transformation of institutions from a novel vantage point of sub-national region and economic agents (elites), and his contribution forms the theoretical framework for this special issue. Gurkov shows an archetype of HRM system in Russia based on his research on Russian CEOs, and points out such features as the high flexibility of payment conditions and shortage of skills. By referring to various data, Anikin approaches the reality of labour motivation in Russia from a sociological point of view. It is then suggested that there is a still long way to go before Russia reaches a competitive system based on spontaneous labour motivation. Kolennikova addresses the consciousness of managers from the standpoint of economic sociology, by invoking many researches she has conducted on business

managers. It is argued that the heritage from Soviet era has still exerted a strong influence on managers' consciousness, and it is not easy for them to adapt to market economy.

It is expected that through this special issue, it will be shown that not only employment system but also value, skills, organisational change, transformation of stakeholders, and models of market define unique contents and forms of labour motivation. It will be also suggested that these analytical tools may be imported into comparative economics to enrich the discipline.