

JAMBOR, ADAM, Visiting Researcher, Faculty of Law and Letters, University of the Ryukyus, OKINAWA

Social Capital and Transition to Work in Okinawa

Panel: Social Capital and Well-being in Okinawa and Japan from the Perspectives of the Life Course (Session 2)

Following the burst of the bubble economy in Japan during the early 1990's, university graduates started facing enormous hardships entering the labor market. My research is focused on contemporary developments in Okinawa's labor market. Despite the job crisis, statistics on regional mobility suggest that Japan's youth seem to be more strongly attached to their home regions than before. I argue that young job-seekers prefer their home region because of the effects of social capital on their job-hunting process. Already accumulated (individual) social capital pushes the trend towards regional orientation in many ways: Young adults' individually built social networks make it harder for them to cut off ties with their home region and individual social networks make it easier for graduates to get a job in Okinawa than in other regions.