

Transition from university to work under transformation: The changing role of institutional and alumni networks in contemporary Japan

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Abstrak

Institutional and semi-institutional networks between employers and educational institutions have been noted as important mechanisms in the transition from school to work in Japan. At the university level, long-term trust relationships between universities and companies were important ties in the transition of science graduates. During the 1980s and early 1990s, institutionally embedded alumni networks also formed a distinctive transition path between high-ranked universities and large corporations for non-science graduates. However, the lost decade of economical stagnation has been accompanied by changes in the structures of the labor market and the transition process of university graduates. In recent years, the institutional and semi-institutional linkages between universities and corporations show strong tendencies toward disbandment. This paper analyzes these structural transformations in the transition from university to work in Japan. The current de institutionalization tendencies are the result of new forms of behavior among the corporate actors as well as the university graduates. These structural changes are not only a result of the economic stagnation and the falling demand for university graduates in the labor market, but also are a reflection of changes in the social values and attitudes of the younger generation of university graduates.