

# The Crisis of the Social Welfare Systems and Social Capital

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## 1. The Introduction

There were once some arguments that international competition among industrialized nations forces governments to cut the expenditure on social welfare to reduce corporate tax and that, with this cut, welfare states would face unprecedented difficulties. But in reality, even neo-liberal governments such as the Thatcher and Reagan administration could not cut the welfare expenditure so drastically.<sup>1</sup> In a sense, the crisis of welfare states has been averted. However, we face more serious problems now.

The globalization of the economy has decreased the manufacturing industries in the developed nations and the unskilled and skilled workers' workplace has been reduced drastically while labor market situations deteriorated. To make matters worse, the computerization of factories and offices reduces the importance of traditional skills and shatters worker pride.

The workers are divided into professional and semi-professional workers (the elite class), and unskilled workers (the suppressed class).

The need for relief to suppressed class has increased quantitatively. In addition, deep commitment to relief become of critical importance due to the weakening of social network. It means that the needs for social relief have been intensified both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Firstly, we will examine the effect of globalization and computerization of our economy on the social welfare in this article. The effect of globalization on the welfare state has been argued by many scholars. We admit that even under globalization each multinational company tries to seek the most appropriate center of its activity. Therefore the growth of multinational companies itself doesn't weaken the power of the central government. Globalization and computerization, apparently, has affected the situation of the workplace. The change in the workplace will be overviewed.

Secondly, we scrutinize some proposal, which aims to cope with the unemployment and social exclusion problem.

Thirdly, we will clarify the significance of the regional socio-economic system as an alternative to the global system in the welfare system. The fact that regional networks have played an important role in resident lives has already been proven by many researchers.<sup>2</sup> In these days, such a social network is called 'social capital'.

However, some scholar haven't recognized properly situations where the function of social capital works well. We would like to explore an appropriate approach to handle social capital in the regional welfare system.

## 2. The Polarization of Societies

### 2.1 Polarization in the United Kingdom

The mass production system called Fordism had been run with a huge workforce placed in factories in the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Owing to such a production system, many people could gain decent wages and maintain their urban lives with pride as skilled workers. As Esping-Andersen describes,<sup>3</sup> standard factory workers could earn decent incomes to keep their families. They held a relatively stable position among employees. In comparison to unskilled service employment, their incomes are higher than unskilled service employment, such as those in the leisure and hospitality sector.

We have witnessed that societies in developed countries have recently been polarized sharply between wealthy professionals and poor unskilled workers.

To begin with, we will observe the situation of the United Kingdom which heralded the industrial revolution. It experienced a marked contraction of its manufacturing base, more so than the most comparable industrialized countries from the 1960s. 36% of the UK population was employed in manufacturing in 1960; by the late 1990s this figure dropped to 15%. The middle class has decreased sharply.

The poorest 30% of the population had been, it is reported, excluded from sharing in economic growth during the 1980s, and real incomes (after housing costs) of those in the poorest tenth of the population fell by 13% between 1979 and 1994, while the average income rose by 40%, and the richest tenth increased their income by 63%. These economic changes affected the condition of children. It is reported that 4.4 million children live in household with less than half of the average income and 34% of

children live in poverty. This figure is alarmingly higher than the figure of 10% in 1979.<sup>4</sup>

Worldwide recessions in 1986 and in 1991 also affected the situation of employment in the United Kingdom significantly. Official estimates of the unemployed topped three million in the worst situation, but there was difference between men and women. It has been asserted that the labor market has become characterized by an expansion of professional and unskilled works and the contraction of skilled work. In another words, a sharp reduction in male full-time work occurred with a rise in female part-time work. The proportion of men who were low paid doubled between the early 1970s and the late 1990s. Associated with this, the service sector which has characteristics such as low-paid, female and part-time work has grown as in other developed countries.

The job market for unskilled workers fluctuates very much. Employers need not try to gain employees' loyalty as much as in the case of skilled workers or professionals. Unskilled workers are often deemed a disposable workforce. The contraction of labor market severely affected particular groups—including young people, older workers, those from minority ethnic groups, and those adults whose ill health caused a disability.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to pauperization and unemployment, U.K has another problem of social exclusion: NEET. Notwithstanding the efforts of the government, the number of NEET hasn't decreased.<sup>6</sup>

## 2.2 The Polarization in the United States

In the United States, the social divide which was already apparent in the 1980s<sup>7</sup> has been intensified as well. The income of the top of fifth households, it is reported, gained surprisingly 43% of the whole income in 1973 and the bottom fifth only 4.0%. In 2002, the top fifth increased their

share up 50% and the bottom fifth dropped 3.7%.<sup>8</sup>

The U.S has many multinational enterprises which have been organizing worldwide production and distribution systems in order to maximize profits. In addition, flexible management systems have been introduced one after another, such as Dell Computer’s direct system.<sup>9</sup>

Many companies have transferred their manufacturing divisions overseas. In addition to this globalization of production, the technology of information severely affected manufacturing processes. Not the manufacturing sector but the service-providing sector is the main workplace, as Table1 illustrates. The manufacturing sector, which has been the skilled masculine workers’ main workplace, shares less than 20% in the overall employment. On the contrary, the service providing sector shares more than 80%.

**Table 1 U.S: Quarterly Average Employment<sup>1)</sup> by category(the second quarter of 2004)**

Category	Unit: thousand, percent	
	Workers	Shares
Nonfarm employment	131,125	100.0
Goods-producing <sup>2)</sup>	21,869	16.7
Construction	6,897	5.3
Manufacturing	14,385	11.0
Service-providing <sup>2)</sup>	109,256	83.3
Retail trade <sup>3)</sup>	15,047	11.5
Professional and business services	16,417	12.5
Education and health services	16,874	12.9
Leisure and hospitality	12,324	9.4
Government	21,548	16.4

- 1) The workers numbers are seasonally adjusted.
- 2) Includes other industries, not shown separately.
- 3) Quarterly averages are calculated based on unrounded data.

Sources Data of U.S.Bureau of labor Statisticsls.gov/cps/  
 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

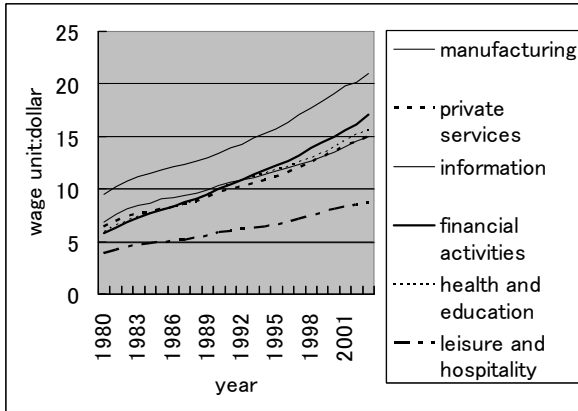
According to the statistics of the labor market, even wages per hour in the manufacturing sector rises by two times during the last two decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the rising rate is less than those in the financial and information sectors. It is the same tempo as the leisure and hospitality sector, in which workers gain the lowest hourly wages among the main sectors, as demonstrated in Table 2.

Among service-providing sectors, the leisure and hospitality sector has the most unskilled jobs. The average working hours in a week are less than 30, and the average hourly wages are very low. Many part-time laborers work there.

Along with the shrinkage of the demand, the working condition of factory workers has been deteriorating in these days. As Table 3 shows, workers in the manufacturing sector enjoyed the better wage than the financial sector and the health and education sector until the 1980s. However, their relative position changed at the beginning of the 1990s. Around 2000, the average wages of private service-providing sectors surpassed the manufacturing sector.

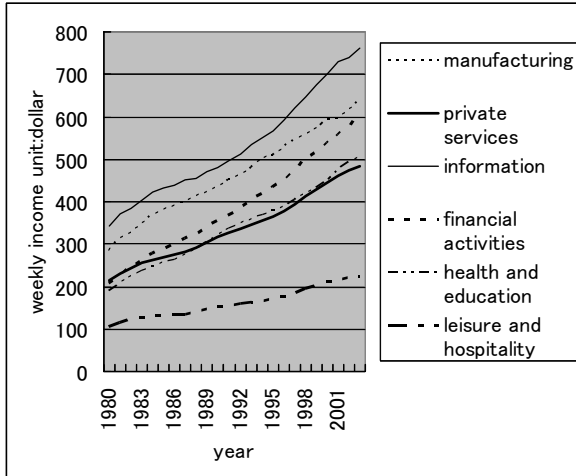
The average income itself in the manufacturing sector is relatively good. However, it cannot be a stronghold for the middle class. Without the shrinkage of the middle class, which has been severely damaged since the 1980s,<sup>10</sup> the huge mass of homeless people, it is estimated as hundreds of thousands, would not exist.

Figure 1 The Trend of Hourly Wages by Category



Source: Data of U.S.Bureau of Labor Statistics

Figure 2 The Trend of Weekly Incomes by Category



Source: Data of U.S.Bureau of Labor Statistics

Table 2 U.S: The Rise of Wages by Category

Year	Manufacturing	Private services	Information	Financial activities	Health and education	Leisure and hospitality
1980	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
1982	115%	114%	112%	117%	118%	115%
1984	130%	123%	122%	132%	129%	124%
1986	138%	129%	128%	144%	139%	126%
1988	145%	136%	133%	154%	151%	134%
1990	154%	147%	139%	169%	168%	145%
1992	164%	156%	149%	184%	183%	152%
1994	177%	166%	160%	200%	193%	160%
1996	185%	176%	172%	215%	204%	168%
1998	196%	193%	188%	239%	220%	186%
2000	208%	208%	204%	256%	236%	202%
2002	218%	221%	215%	275%	259%	211%

Source: Data of U.S.Bureau of Labor Statistics

Table 3 U.S: The Relative Trend of Wages by Category

Year	Manufacturing	Private services	Information	Financial activities	Health and education	Leisure and hospitality
1980	100.0%	93.0%	137.2%	84.3%	85.9%	56.4%
1982	100.0%	90.5%	132.5%	84.0%	86.2%	55.7%
1984	100.0%	91.5%	132.3%	88.0%	88.3%	56.0%
1986	100.0%	91.0%	131.2%	90.9%	89.6%	55.0%
1988	100.0%	92.8%	131.6%	94.5%	93.3%	55.9%
1990	100.0%	94.4%	130.2%	97.1%	97.2%	57.1%
1992	100.0%	95.1%	131.6%	100.0%	100.1%	57.1%
1994	100.0%	95.7%	134.9%	104.0%	101.2%	56.9%
1996	100.0%	96.0%	135.3%	105.5%	101.0%	56.6%
1998	100.0%	99.1%	139.0%	109.6%	102.3%	58.9%
2000	100.0%	100.4%	140.7%	110.6%	103.0%	59.9%
2002	100.0%	100.1%	138.9%	111.2%	104.6%	59.0%

Source: Data of U.S.Bureau of Labor Statistics



### 2. 3 The polarization in Japan

Japanese society faces structural changes, too. Manufacturing companies which have been struggling in the international competitive market moved their factories to neighboring countries where wages are by far lower than those in Japan.

Large Japanese companies had boasted life-long employment in the circumstance of a long developing trend since 1955 and had maintained a good relationship with laborers in order to obtain their loyalty. Manufacturing exodus already began in the 1970s. However, the effect in the labor market was not so serious up till the 1980s as in the 1990s, for the economic expansion was being maintained, albeit at a slower rate than ever. The bubble economy boom, which was triggered by the inflation of asset values collapsed at the beginning of the 1990s and the trend of consumption changed sharply from high-quality expensive goods to decent-quality cheap goods. In addition, the technological development in neighboring countries such as South Korea and China made their products more competitive in the Japanese market.

Under intensified competition companies become less generous in overlooking worker failure and of employing the necessary resources to educate young workers.<sup>11</sup> The workplace condition has become more stressful in these days.<sup>12</sup> The number of worker suicides remains high even in the very recent good economy.<sup>13</sup>

The unemployment among young people and the aged is of critical importance in Japanese society. The most vulnerable suffer from the cruelty of a competitive and stressful society that is emerging from an egalitarian and cozy one. As a result, the jobless rate of the young generation is very high, as Table 4 illustrates.

Table 4 Japan: the Number of Employed and Unemployed (2001)

Years old	People with jobs	Unemployment people	Unemployment rates(1)	Unemployment rates(2)
15～19	102	15	12.8	-
20～24	495	51	9.4	9.1
25～29	703	48	6.4	3.2
30～34	730	39	5.1	2.3
35～39	664	31	4.5	2.5
40～44	633	24	3.7	2.4
45～49	649	22	3.3	2.5
50～54	756	28	3.6	3.0
55～59	695	27	3.7	3.5
60～64	443	27	5.7	6.5
65～	503	9	1.8	2.0
	6373	321		

Source: The statistics of the Ministry of Labor and Welfare

The environment of employed workers is not so good. However, socially-excluded people have to experience more severe situation.

Our society has been polarized regionally as well. In addition to the transfer of manufacturing facilities to overseas, agriculture, forestry and fishery industry in Japan have decreased their activity, facing competition against cheap imported goods. The regional economy, except in Tokyo and other cities where big companies and the financial sector house their center offices remains bleak.

As Table 5 demonstrates, regions such as Kinki and Kyushu, where four major manufacturing regions had developed after WW II, witness high rates of unemployment.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 5 Japan: The Unemployment Rates by Region**

(Unit: percent)

Year	Whole Japan	Hokkaido	Tohoku	Southern -Kanto	Northern -Kanto, Koshin	Tokai	Kinki	Kyusyu
1984	2.7	4.5	2.9	2.5	1.6	2.0	3.0	3.7
1986	2.8	4.2	2.7	2.6	1.8	1.9	3.1	3.8
1988	2.5	3.7	2.4	2.4	1.6	1.9	3.0	3.5
1990	2.1	3.0	1.8	2.2	1.5	1.5	2.5	2.7
1992	2.2	2.9	1.9	2.4	1.5	1.6	2.5	2.5
1994	2.9	3.2	2.5	3.3	2.0	2.5	3.5	3.1
1996	3.4	3.8	3.0	3.7	2.4	2.8	4.1	3.7
1998	4.1	4.9	3.9	4.5	3.0	3.3	4.9	4.6
2000	4.7	5.5	4.4	4.8	3.8	3.7	5.9	5.4
2002	5.4	6.0	5.9	5.4	4.4	4.1	6.7	6.1

Source: Statistics of the Ministry of Welfare and Labor

**Table 6 Japan: The Workforce by the Type of Employment (2003)**

(unit: ten thousands)

Type of employment	Workers	Shares
Regular staff	3581	72.5%
Part-time worker, Arbeit (temporary worker)	1007	20.4%
Part-time worker	689	13.9%
Arbeit (temporary worker)	318	6.4%
Dispatched worker from temporary labour agency	45	0.9%
Contracted or entrusted worker	227	4.6%
Other	81	1.6%
Total	4940	100.0%

Source: Statistics of the Ministry of Welfare and Labor

Many companies try to run their business with the supplement of many part-time workers instead of hiring full-timers. There is a big discrepancy in the employment conditions between full-time and part-time workers. For example, nursing facilities hire many part-time care workers whose cost is estimated about half of full-time workers in an attempt to maintain profitability under the new welfare system of aged people.<sup>15</sup>

More than 3 million people are seeking jobs only to fail. The duration of support by the employment insurance system is not as long as in European nations. To make matters worse, the assured income of old jobless people was decreased in 2003 to maintain the budget of the system. The safety net in Japan to support the poor helps only limited people. It never cover the people who have a kin with a capacity of helping and who are deemed as workable. Therefore, most recipients of the service are aged or handicapped people. As our society is rapidly aging, the share of aged recipients has grown. According to Table 7, more than half of the budget was allotted to medical support.

The cases of young offenders has been reported in newspapers.<sup>16</sup> The inclusion of young offenders is another serious problem we face.

If the stagnant economy continues, the need for this kind of safety net will grow in Japan.

**Table 7 Japan: The Recipient of the Poverty Support Fund**

Year	Aged	Single mother	Handicapped	Other
1992	241,520	56,540	227,500	44,990
1994	253,590	50,620	233,320	37,390
1996	261,670	49,640	248,220	29,470
1998	289,660	49,030	257,700	34,440
2000	330,880	56,120	290,010	42,190
2002	398,200	69,350	307,860	63,140
2003	433,720	75,210	331,080	68,780

Source: Statistics of the Ministry of Welfare and Labor

**Table 8 Japan: The Content of The Poverty Support Fund (2001)**

(unit: billion yen, %)

Daily	Housing	Medical	Total
695	224	1123	2112
33%	11%	53%	100%

Source: Statistics of the Ministry of Welfare and Labor

### 3. The Measures for Inclusion

#### 3. 1 The Cause of Exclusion

It is estimated that unskilled workers are more than 50% of the unemployed and the vast majority of long-term unemployed in Europe. Virtually all the open unemployed are assumed to be unskilled workers in the U.S.<sup>17</sup>

The cause of social exclusion such as unemployment and NEET has been discussed among researchers and policy makers. During the 1990s, the debate was focused on the so-called “skill bias” which seems to characterize the present information technology revolution. New technologies, it is asserted, imply a change in the relative ratio between skilled and unskilled workers with the demand for labor shifting in favor of the former. This tendency in the labor market can imply either lower wages for the unskilled or higher unemployment rates among the unskilled.<sup>18</sup>

As we described in Japanese companies’ transfer of production, globalization apparently affected factory workers’ jobs. Information technology facilitates flexible management system and make globalized management more effective.

#### 3. 2 The Policies for Inclusion

The skill-bias hypothesis puts emphasis not on globalization but on technical change as the main variant of the relative displacement of unskilled workers.

In this context, some policy proposals are based on an incentive in favor of the unskilled workers; for example, policies to push firms to hire unskilled through subsidies are able to affect the relative costs of the different components of the labor force.

Shifting the attention to the employability issue is a way to contest a welfare approach to the problem. The idea is to move resources away from the welfare system, especially from unemployment benefits, in favour of subsidies which can increase the likelihood for an unemployed unskilled worker to be hired. In terms of recipients, the subsidy goes to the firm and not directly to the unemployed.

Various types of subsidies have been discussed. One of the famous proposals is made by Phelps.<sup>19</sup> He proposes a wage subsidy which takes the form of a support to overall employment; this subsidy is planned to decline along a wage ladder.

Some limitations have already been pointed out. Subsidies cause social inefficiency, called “dead-weight” in the terminology of economics. Morale hazards in recipient firms is another problem with this system.

On the other hand, income support systems such as “negative income tax”—was proposed by Milton Friedman in the early 1960s—and the “basic income” is proposed nowadays as a possible outcome of welfare reform.

An income-support system is necessary to facilitate social inclusion. Without enough resources to let recipients to be out of trap, they become dependent. Various improvements have been tried to avert this trap.<sup>20</sup> However, the dependence problem still remains relevant.

We can add the investment in education into the policy selection wagon. Esping Andersen maintains that paid employment is the basic foundation of household welfare, and mobility measures such as lifelong learning and training are crucial so as to avoid poverty entrapment.<sup>21</sup>

We expect that education strengthens workers’ flexibility in the workplace. However, there are some questions whether improved skill allows workers to gain stable positions in the workplace. If the IT development remains influential, not physical but intellectual capacity is of

critical importance to competitiveness. Intellectual work such as software development has different characteristics from physical work.

We expect more output when we input more workforce in a manufacturing factory; it is called “diminishing return”. In software development, however, the more manpower possibly results only in prolonged production time.<sup>22</sup> Integrated conceptualization and concentration play a key role in intellectual work. If education could only add supplementary parts to workers capacity and the hierarchical structure of their ability could not be altered, education would not assure a stable position. As we have many types of characteristics and talents, we need many types of work places.

**Table 9: USA: Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment**

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1991
Less than 4 years of high school	4,6	10,7	8,4	11,4	9,6	12,3
4 years of high school, only	2,9	6,9	5,1	6,9	4,9	6,7
College:1-3 years	2,9	5,5	4,3	4,7	3,7	5
College:4 years or more	1,3	2,5	1,9	2,4	1,9	2,9
Total	3,3	6,9	5	6,1	4,5	6,1

	1992	1995
Less than high schol diploma	13,5	10
High school grduate, no degree	7,7	5,2
Less than a bachelor’s degree	5,9	4,5
College graduate	2,9	2,5
Total	6,7	4,8

Source: Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstracts of U.S. (1996)

### 3. 3 The Unique Support in Inclusion

We cannot surmount our difficulties only by resources brought in from the outside. If we don’t have the motivation to turn back to the ordinary course of life, we easily fall into dependency.

The process of understanding the uniqueness of a client and of developing, in conference with him, a program of participation is in essence a democratic process of social work. The “Same thing for everybody” ideal has any place.<sup>23</sup>

Traditionally, our societies have developed various layers of social networks which have supported people’s lives. However, such networks have been weakened very much.<sup>24</sup> One of the most important reasons is globalization.

#### 4. The Regional System and Social Capital

Historically speaking, people’s activities such as financial and emotional mutual aid, which is now categorized as social welfare, had its origin in voluntarism.<sup>25</sup> However, most people these days think that social welfare services should be supplied by the state and people have the basic rights to demand such services. We should consider whether we can supply each excluded person unique help for inclusion only through official systems.

Supplementary services can be provided as a mutual aid based on neighborhood love. Compared to core welfare service, such services have the characteristic of the uniqueness of users. The content should be decided in the place where the needs take place. In order to assure the quality of service and to constrain the budgetary, those services should be surveyed on the spot. Such supplementary help is to be provided as regional welfare services.

Piore and Sobel, economists, examined industrial districts comprised of small entrepreneurs bound in a complex web of competition and cooperation. They argued that, “The cohesion of the industry rests on a more fundamental sense of community, of which the various institutional forms of cooperation are more the result than the cause.” They



emphasized “ethnic ties” and “shared politics and religion.”<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, Putnam, a political scientist, analyzed the role of social capital in Italy and affected our perspectives greatly.<sup>27</sup>

Their emphasis on communities can be supported by our historical studies of regional economies. Observation over a long period, however, revealed that community ties were not stable, and economic cooperation and community tie were mutually affected. Therefore, community ties cannot be assumed as one of the given economic factors under which entrepreneurs pursue their goals.

Let us evaluate a regional system, which has autonomous political organization and main industries as one of alternative systems in order to cope with critical problems we face now. If limitation of economic activities was lifted and companies expanded their business freely, community bond would fade away. The globalization of economy and excessiveness of automation maintained by consuming natural resources have become serious problems.

The first decisive problem is the environmental problem. As we have developed our economy, many natural amenities have been destroyed. Clear air and water, open space, forests and trees have become scarce. Some scholars asserted that the process of economic growth has been a centuries-long process of substituting man-made goods for natural amenities.<sup>28</sup> If we keep competitive our position in the globalized economy, we must change production sites by considering production and distribution costs. Globalization is difficult to keep consistent with environment-friendliness.

The second problem is the energy problem. Our modern society depends absolutely on fossil-fuel energy.<sup>29</sup> While the limitation of the amount of energy available and the hazardous effect of using it have become apparent,

some people still assert the sustainability of modern economic activity. We admit that there is a possibility of a technological breakthrough in nuclear energy. If we take into consideration that we have to pass on the tremendous volume of dangerous radioactive material to the next generation, it should be accepted that we have failed to find safe energy.

If those problems caused by the globalization and computerization can not be solved, we should take another step to establish a new order of alternatives. Regional socio-economic systems could be one of alternatives.

We could not evaluate the function of Social Capital in societies where mutual bonds have been destroyed under the influence of globalization. We need an alternative policy to maintain regional economic systems instead of global economies. Such an alternative will strengthen the regional social capital and in turn the social capital will positively affect residents' mutual support.

## 5. The Conclusion

The social welfare systems in developed countries have similar problems. The globalization of the economy has decreased the manufacturing industries in developed nations, the unskilled and skilled workers' workplace has been reduced, and working conditions have deteriorated. To make matters worse, the computerization of factories and offices reduces the importance of skill-building in office work.

The workers are divided into professional and semi-professional (the elite class) and unskilled workers (the suppressed class).

The needs for relief to the suppressed class has increased quantitatively. In addition, deep commitment to relief has become of critical importance due to the collapse of social network. It means that the need for social

relief has been intensified both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Under financial constraints, supplementary services could be substituted with voluntary activity. If we strengthen the social capital, we could effectively support inclusion with the standard basic financial service and unique supplementary service.

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## 要旨

社会福祉の危機と社会資源（ソーシャル・キャピタル）

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世界経済のグローバル化と、経済活動におけるコンピュータ化が、先進工業化国の労働の場をどのように変質させたかをイギリス、アメリカ、日本から概観し、そのことが、社会福祉サービスのニーズを量的に拡大させるとともに、質的にも大きな課題をもたらしていることを分析する。

失業者の増加と、雇用の場の変質は、それらの人々を社会統合する社会福祉のニーズを量的に増加させるとともに、質的にも深刻化させている。これにたいして、補助金による雇用機会の確保、所得の保証などの政策が提案されているが、様々な問題がすでに指摘されている。

このように問題に対して、社会資源（ソーシャル・キャピタル）と呼ばれるものを、強化すること、経済の体制をグローバルなものから、地域経済の強化に転換することによって、対応することを提案している。