

# Research Office Newsletter



## The 18th AP Conference Edition

The annual Asia Pacific Conference (AP Conference), organized and held by Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU), began in 2003. The conference encompasses presentations and panel sessions of a wide range of topics while focusing on the humanities and social sciences. In this issue of the newsletter, we are proud to introduce the 18th AP Conference presentations of Associate Professor KOJIMA Shinji, current Ph.D. student DISSA Syakina Ahdanisa and Master's Program alumna DELMAS Raphaëlle E. We hope that their presentations will inspire you to participate in the next AP Conference, whether it be as a presenter or participant. Enjoy!



College of Asia Pacific Studies (APS)

Associate Professor KOJIMA Shinji

A Critical Assessment of Japan's Labor Reform ("Hatarakikata Kaikaku")



Faculty Database Profile

My AP Conference presentation was based on my research project, which aims to assess the potential benefits that "Hatarakikata Kaikaku", or Japan's Work-Style Reform, may have on the way Japanese people work. The project is funded by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science's Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (Kakenhi Kiban B), and I'm working with a team of researchers based in Osaka. I chose to work on this topic because long working hours and the large pay gap between regular and non-regular workers are two of the most important issues that plague the Japanese workplace. The aforementioned reform, led by former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, is often presented as a solution to resolve said issues, raise productivity, and thereby revive the sluggish economy.

This research focuses on the two major pillars of "Hatarakikata Kaikaku"- revisions to the Labor Standards Act to enforce a limit on overtime work, and legislation of the equal pay for equal work (EPEW) principle. My presentation examined the latter, which aims to close the pay gap between regular and non-regular workers, in greater detail. The new EPEW statute was drafted by drawing on French and German statutes, as well as taking into consideration customarily Japanese employment practices and institutions. The uniquely Japanese EPEW principle shares distinctive similarities and differences compared to its European counterparts. The new EPEW legislations have created loopholes that significantly weaken the purported goal of closing the pay gap. Drawing on qualitative data gathered from fieldwork in Japan and Germany, I showed how the Japanese EPEW is designed to give discretion to employers in determining what is equal and balanced pay and places the burden on workers to 'voice' in correcting employer non-compliance. In addition, weak enforcement of EPEW makes significant improvements in the well-being of non-regular workers unlikely, falling short of former Prime Minister Abe's promises. What is needed to correct the pay gap is a stronger presence of labor unions in determining non-regular staff's wages (as in the case of Germany), as well as a robust enforcement regime.



It was my first time presenting at the AP Conference. As a member of the APU community, the atmosphere felt relatively cozy compared to presenting at international conferences, with familiar faces of graduate students present in the audience. Feedback from the presenters and the audience were helpful in contemplating about my argument.

**NON-REGULAR WORKERS AND THE EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK LEGISLATION: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF ABE'S LABOR REFORM**

**SHINJI KOJIMA**  
RITSUMEIKAN ASIA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

AP CONFERENCE  
14 NOV 2020

**HATARAKIKATA KAIKAKU: 'WORK STYLE REFORM'**

Sept 2016 Formation of the Council on Work Style Reform (Hatarakikata Jitsugen Kaigi)

PM Abe: "Regulate long work hours"  
"Close the pay gap between reg/non-reg. workers"  
"Allow non-regular workers to marry and have children"  
"Restore the middle class"  
"Make workers hopeful of a better brighter future"

March 2017 Reform Council issued a blue print for labor law revisions.

June 2018 Work Style Reform bills passed the Diet.

April 2019 In effect (Some from April 2020)



Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies, Doctoral Program (GSAD)

**DISSA Syakina Ahdanisa**

Human rights for Indonesians with disabilities: Does the CRPD make any difference?

My research investigates the impact of the ratification of one human rights treaty, the Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), in protecting the human rights of people with disabilities in Indonesia. The topic piqued my interest because for decades, scholars have been debating the effect of human rights treaties on whether they improve states' behavior towards protecting their citizens' rights. Additionally, the CRPD is a relatively recent treaty, and Indonesia has a large population of people with disabilities. I am also curious about the condition of people with disabilities from the perspective of the human rights-based approach. Therefore, I chose this topic for my dissertation, hoping that research on the subject would contribute to the ever-growing study on disability rights, especially in the Southeast Asian region.

This year marked my second participation at the AP Conference. I am always looking forward to joining the conference because of the opportunity to present and learn from others. At this year's AP Conference, I presented the progress achieved for the aforementioned research topic. I explained the background and significance of the study. For those who are not familiar with the topic, I also briefly described the United Nation's (UN) human rights treaty system and how CRPD is one out of nine international core human rights treaties of the UN. Subsequently, I also explained my methodology and how it will help me accomplish my research objectives. Lastly, I acknowledged the challenges that may arise, especially concerning data collection. I then explained my 'game-plan' and solutions on how to tackle these challenges.

During the Q&A session, I received insightful comments, questions, and feedback about my research from the chair, fellow presenters and audience members. The chair asked me about the most significant problems faced by persons with disabilities in Indonesia and how my research will help to overcome them. Big question, I know, but this question triggered me to reflect on my journey as a Ph.D. student at APU. As a student who aspires to develop a career in academia, I understand that my research must not only contribute new ideas to the existing academic framework, but also positively impact society. Therefore, I am very thankful for the opportunity to present at the AP Conference. It prompts us, Ph.D. students, to present our research to people from various backgrounds who may or may not be familiar with the topic. Presenting at the conference also teaches me to be more open-minded to criticism and feedback, and the Q&A exchanges have trained me to answer questions more concisely. Furthermore, the conference serves as a platform to exchange ideas and collaborate. At the end of my presentation, a member of the audience, a university professor, offered an opportunity to collaborate on future research regarding persons with disabilities in Southeast Asia. I hope that this can support my goal of positively impacting society.

HUMAN RIGHTS FOR INDONESIANS WITH DISABILITY

**Does CRPD make any difference?**

Dissa Syakina Ahdanisa

	OPEN FOR SIGNATURE	RATIFICATION
ICERD	21 Dec 1965	25 June 1999
ICCPR	16 Dec 1966	23 Feb 2006
ICESCR	16 Dec 1966	23 Feb 2006
CEDAW	18 Dec 1979	18 Sept 1984
CAT	10 Dec 1984	26 Oct 1998
CRC	20 Nov 1989	5 Sept 1990
ICMW	18 Dec 1990	31 May 2012
CPED	20 Dec 2006	-
CRPD	13 Dec 2006	30 Nov 2011



Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies, Master's Program (GSAM)  
(Graduated in the fall of AY2020)

**DELMAS Raphaëlle E.**

International climbers' behavior towards the payment of Mount Fuji's conservation donation

As someone who loves outdoor sports such as hiking and climbing, I was extremely excited to climb Mount Fuji during my first trip to Japan. Unfortunately, I was disappointed by the experience. In addition to the mountain being crowded, there was a lot of trash and buildings, and only a few toilets available. I had no idea that I would be asked to pay a donation fee of ¥1000 or why I had to pay it. That was when I realized that there are great challenges in managing the number of climbers going to Mount Fuji every year. When I began my Master's degree in International Cooperation Policy (Sustainability Science) at APU a few years later, my background in the social sciences and economics, as well as the limited availability of existing research, made my presentation topic "International climbers' behavior towards the payment of Mount Fuji's conservation donation" an ideal one.

Questions that I had aimed to answer in this research presentation include:

- How does the perception and awareness of international climbers influence their payment of the conservation donation?
- What demographic variables affect their willingness to pay?
- What is the ideal price for an entrance fee?

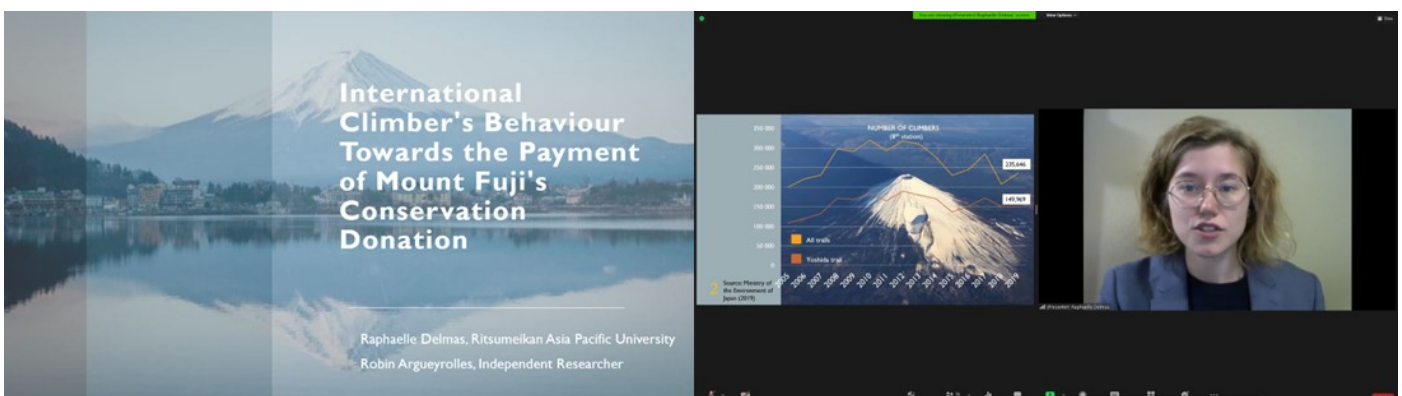
My research process started with an extensive literature review, as well as contacting stakeholders involved in the management of Mount Fuji, including the Ministry of Environment of Japan, the Mountain Hut Association, and the Fujisan Club. After studying various questionnaire methods, more particularly the Contingent Valuation Method (CVM), I did fieldwork for a month to interview the climbers.

At the 18th AP Conference, I presented an overview of my research findings and conclusions. I found that providing information about the donation system at Mount Fuji increases the payment rate by 19%. However, only 23% of respondents knew about the donation prior to the climb, showing an urgent need to increase information available to international climbers. Other factors influencing payment of the donation fee are (1) gender, with women's willingness to pay being ¥500 higher on average and (2) income category, with willingness to pay differing by ¥200 between each income category.

A possible solution for Mount Fuji, which has been introduced in other national parks around the world, is to introduce a mandatory entrance fee. Doing so would increase collection rates at Mount Fuji from 60% to 100%. Furthermore, based on the responses from our survey, 78% of respondents think there should be one. Using CVM, I determined that the entrance fee should be fixed at ¥1,500. This could be easily implemented using a park-and-ride system or a website. However, authorities should be careful of the effects of such measures on visitation rates, as an increase in price will mostly affect local and young visitors.

Presenting my research at the AP conference was a great opportunity to share my work with other researchers and professors. I received interesting questions during the Q&A session and could exchange contact information with researchers who have similar research interests, which can sometimes be hard to do as a Master's student. This was my first time presenting at a conference, and it allowed me to get a taste of what doctoral students and researchers do all year long. I strongly recommend all Master's students at APU to take advantage of the opportunity to present at the AP Conference.

\*\*DELMAS Raphaëlle E. was awarded the 18th AP Conference Best Paper Award for the aforementioned research topic.



We hope you've enjoyed reading through the research content shared by our three presenters. The said content gives an idea of the type of presentations and academic discussions AP Conference participants are invited to engage in every year. While most panel sessions are usually in English, there are also panel sessions held in Japanese to cater to local participants.

In light of the prevailing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the most recent 18th AP Conference, entitled "Asia Pacific and Beyond: A Pursuit for Inclusion and Innovation", was held online. The 2-day conference saw a cumulative total of 196 presenters and 1830 participants. Each year, well-known researchers and prominent individuals are invited to deliver the keynote speech. This year, it was our pleasure to invite Dr. RAZAFIMAHEFA Ivohasina Fizara, Mission Chief of the International Monetary Fund, to deliver the keynote speech. Dr. RAZAFIMAHEFA's speech focused on Sub-Saharan Africa's economic developments and its relations with Asia, and posits that enhancing economic ties between Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia is mutually beneficial to both regions. Dr. RAZAFIMAHEFA even goes as far as to argue that in spite of the existing economic ties, the potential for further gain on both sides is immense. To access the keynote speech, click [here](#) or use the QR Code below.



Director of the Ritsumeikan Center for Asia Pacific Studies, Professor YAMAGATA Tatsufumi, introducing the keynote speaker.



Mission Chief of the International Monetary Fund, Dr. RAZAFIMAHEFA Ivohasina Fizara, delivering the keynote speech.



QR Code: 18th AP Conference Keynote Speech (YouTube)

From a practical standpoint, the AP conference also encourages discourse on real world issues. For example, the special panel sessions organized by APU's Center for Inclusive Leadership (CIL) seek to propagate and stimulate discussion on the concepts of inclusion and diversity, which are relevant topics in this day and age. The 18th AP Conference CIL Special Session topics ranged from inclusive leadership in Oita's healthcare industry to diversity in Japan's national parks.

Further, contrary to popular belief, conference presenters are not limited to researchers, faculty members and graduate students. Undergraduate students are also given the opportunity to present their research in either English or Japanese at the Undergraduate Sessions. This year's conference saw a total of 25 undergraduate presentations (10 in English, 15 in Japanese) at 7 panel sessions. If you're an undergraduate student passionate about a particular research topic and would like to obtain feedback from researchers or professionals in similar fields, be sure to give it a shot at the next AP Conference!



CIL Special Session by the Director of CIL, Professor ALCANTARA Lailani Laynesa.



AP Conference Presentation by an APU undergraduate student at the Japanese/Undergraduate Session.

The APU Research Office would like to thank everyone for joining us at the 18th AP Conference and cordially invite one and all to join us at the next AP Conference. With a bit of something for everyone, you are sure to find something of interest to you! The official AP Conference homepage, which can be accessed [here](#) or using the QR code to the right, not only contains a wealth of information and pictures of the 18th AP Conference, but also provides regular updates for the next conference. Be sure to check it out!



QR Code: AP Conference Official Homepage



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