

# Social Exclusion of *Warikiri* Women: An Aspect of Prostitution in Contemporary Japan

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*In Japan, prostitution by high school girls, or enjo-kōsai, became problematized in the 1990s. In the enjo-kōsai debate, prostitution was separated from the issue of poverty, and “sexual autonomy” was the focus of the debate. However, according to Chiki Ogiue’s report, many women who practice warikiri experience poverty and social exclusion. This paper emphasizes the actual conditions of warikiri women, arguing that the number of women risking poverty and social exclusion is higher than that of men. Although some warikiri women are indeed threatened by or living in homelessness, they do not or cannot receive adequate welfare services. They are also faced with exclusion from social exclusion or meta-level social exclusion. This means social sciences have not effectively problematize prostitution in the studies of social exclusion.*

## 1 Introduction

It is sometimes said that prostitution is “the world’s oldest profession.” Whether these words are true or not, prostitution has been a social issue and is often seen as a symbol of (women’s) poverty. The Japanese government, as well as other governments, have been monitoring *fūki no midare* (風紀の乱れ; the corruption of public morals), and the crackdown on prostitution has been among the common ways of reforming public morals. In Japan, the majority of people think prostitution is illegal and immoral.

Even though the Anti-Prostitution Act banning prostitution was instituted in 1956, people are not punished for simple prostitution (i.e., prostitution of their own free will). People are only reprimanded for controlled or forced prostitution, prostitution mediation, etc. In the Anti-Prostitution Act, two elements of different natures are combined: “control” and “protection.” Although the act provides women’s protection service, it is clearly different from the other welfare services, in that the act is not a law regulating the social welfare system but a criminal law (Sudō 2011).

In most cases, prostitution is practiced in such establishments as “soap lands (ソープランド).”<sup>1</sup> The sex-related industry is called *fūzoku sangyō* (風俗産業), or simply *fūzoku* (風俗), in Japan. The soap land is one of the major business categories in *fūzoku*; however, there are

other categories that offer sexual services without sexual intercourse.

*Warikiri* is an indirect expression for prostitution that disguises the illegality and the immorality of being paid for sex. *Warikiri* is derived from the verb *warikiru* (割り切る). The meaning of *warikiru* is to make simple and clear decisions without doubt, worry, or hesitation. *Warikitta kankei* (割り切った関係) implies that a man and a woman have dates for reasons other than love and that the sexual relationship between them is not necessarily romantic but somewhat businesslike. *Warikiri* is usually practiced outside of *fūzoku* establishments.

According to O’Connell Davidson, there are roughly two perspectives on prostitution. One is the perspective of “feminist abolitionists” who think “all prostitution is a form of sexual violence and slavery that violates women’s human right to dignity and bodily integrity” and that “buying sex is equivalent to the act of rape.”<sup>2</sup> The other perspective is that of “sex work feminists” who regard “free choice” prostitution performed by adults as “an economic activity like any other.” “This perspective emphasizes women’s capacity (and right) to act as moral agents within the prostitution.” From the former perspective, there is little room for women’s agency in sexual activities (O’Connell Davidson 2007).<sup>3</sup>

The word *warikiri* implies that prostitutes make free choices. However, in this paper, I argue that they do not. In the context of contemporary Japan, *warikiri* is a phenomenon of social exclusion.

In the next section, I will take up *enjo-kōsai* as the background of *warikiri*. Thereafter, I will outline sex media and certain points of the *enjo-kōsai* debate in the 1990s. Section 3 will portray the actual conditions of women practicing *warikiri* from the viewpoint of social exclusion. The theme of the section 4 is women’s risk of poverty and social exclusion. This section covers why *warikiri* women do not receive welfare services even though they are homeless. In conclusion, I will make a few comments on *warikiri* in terms of social exclusion.

## 2 *Enjo-Kōsai: A Background of Warikiri*

*Warikiri* is not the only slang word for prostitution. *Enjo-kōsai* (援助交際), or *enkō* (援交) for short, is an example of another slang word for prostitution. It is useful here to give an outline of the debate on *enjo-kōsai* from the 1990s as it gives context to the argument.

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1 Officially, women working at soap lands are only supposed to provide male customers with relaxation services by helping them take baths, and the establishments never control prostitution. However, it is common knowledge that what is done in the private rooms of soap lands is sexual in nature.

2 Hayashi wrote, “Prostitution denies sex as the core of humanity, the mutual identification including mental factors and the sexual relationship in which two personalities are committed, through the intervention of money in sexual communication. For the relationship between the payer and the earner makes that of the ruler and the ruled, and sex, which should by nature be free, apparently becomes the least free.” The “commodification of sex, such as pornography and prostitution, is the denial of women’s personalities, a type of slavery and nothing but enslaving” (Hayashi 1990).

3 Maruyama refers to “feminist abolitionists” as “*jinken-ha* (人権派; advocates of human rights)” and to “sex work feminists” as “*kenri-ha* (権利派; advocates of rights)” (Maruyama 2013: 14-19). This terminology of *jinken* and *kenri* seems complicated or ambiguous. While the former thinks highly of women’s human rights in general, the latter particularly stresses the rights and autonomy of women as (sex) workers.

However, firstly, I will discuss a general view of sex media from the 1990s as the social conditions that made *enjo kōsai* possible. Thereafter, I will examine two analyses of *enjo kōsai* in which it is possible to find a trend problematizing prostitution in the 1990s.

## 2.1 Sex Media in the 1990s

In the 1990s, sex media<sup>4</sup> services such as *burusera* shops (ブルセラショップ), *terekuras* (テレクラ), DIAL Q2 (ダイヤルキュー) by the NTT Group,<sup>5</sup> and *deai-kei* sites arise on the Internet (出会い系サイト).

*Burusera* is a term coined from bloomers (ブルマー) and sailor uniforms (セーラー服). Bloomers are girls' gym shorts, and sailor uniforms are girls' school uniforms. Both bloomers and sailor uniforms are the cultural icons of Japanese school girls. *Burusera* shops are secondhand porn shops selling such fetish items as bloomers, sailor uniforms, and sometimes even unwashed lingerie with photos of the girls who wore them. Many, if not all, *burusera* shops were hotbeds of prostitution. Accordingly, *burusera* shops have been subject to legal restrictions since 1993 and are diminishing.

*Terekura* is the abbreviation for “telephone club.” In telephone clubs, men wait for calls from women for the purpose of making a date. Some women call just to talk, some to find a dinner companion, and others for prostitution. The first *terekura* appeared around 1985. Because of the expansion of the Internet, *terekuras* have been on the decline.

NTT started the DIAL Q2 service in 1989, through which information providers offer programs (fee-based services). Information charges incurred by subscribers were collected by NTT on behalf of the information providers. Many providers offered message dial services on DIAL Q2. Some were called “two-shot dials.”<sup>6</sup> Two-shot dials offered services like *terekuras*. Two-shot dials were frequently used for *enjo kōsai*. As the heavy information charges and prostitution were soon criticized, NTT began to strictly check the contents of the service providers. Like *terekuras*, the number of DIAL Q2 users also decreased, and the service was suspended at the end of February 2014.

*Deai-kei* is now the general term for dating or matching services. It is said that the word *deai-kei* stems from a magazine called *Jamāl* (『じゃまール』), first published in 1995 from Recruit FromA. The magazine labeled itself a “personal ad magazine.” It carried personal ads by organizing them into a number of clusters (*kei*), one of which was *deai-kei* (Ogiue 2011). Thereafter, people came to use the word *deai-kei* as a synonym for the dating sites on the Internet.

The reason women can practice prostitution outside of *fūzoku* establishments is that there

4 Concerning the detailed history of sex media in these thirty years, see Ogiue (2011).

5 The predecessor of the NTT Group was Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Public Corporation, which was one of the three public corporations in Japan. In 1985, it was partitioned and privatized into a group of corporations. To be precise, the providers of the DIAL Q2 service were NTT-East and NTT-West.

6 “Two-shot” originally meant a cinema or television shot of two people together. In 1987, the TV program “*Neruton Benikujiradan* (ねるとん紅鯨団)” started. The MCs were a popular comedian pair, *Tonneruzu* (とんねるず). The weekly program broadcasted a coupling party, and when a man and a woman talked closely, *Tonneruzu* called the scene “two-shot.” Owing to the program, coupling parties got referred to as “*neruton* parties” and “two-shot” came to mean the situation where a man and a woman are alone together.

are places suited for it.<sup>7</sup> In Japan, certain hotels are located in the amusement areas of cities or alongside arterial roads. Such hotels are usually called “love hotels.” People can use love hotels either to stay overnight or for a rest. Although the prices are different depending on the location and facilities, in most cases, people pay a few thousand yen for a couple hours of rest (see Kim 2008, 2012).

Surely, sex media made it easier for “ordinary girls or women” to practice prostitution. *Enjo kōsai* spread on the basis of these forms of sex media.

## 2.2 A Debate on *Enjo-Kōsai*

*Enjo-kōsai* is a compound of *enjo* (援助; support) and *kōsai* (交際; having a date or relationship). The meaning of the word *enjo-kōsai* is likely intended to ease the conscience of the men and women involved. On the one hand, by taking *enjo-kōsai* as a means of “support,” men can think they pay for sex to lend a helping hand, and women can think that earning money for sex is unavoidable because they need financial help. On the other hand, *enjo-kōsai* is thought to be a form of relationship; therefore, payers and earners can enjoy one-time romances.

The word *enjo-kōsai* first came into use in 1953 and at that time meant keeping a mistress. The word became widely used in the 1990s, but some thought *enjo-kōsai* implied prostitution while others thought it meant only having a date for money without sex. The first national newspaper to carry an article about *enjo-kōsai* was *Asahi Shinbun* in September 1994. *Enjo-kōsai* came to refer primarily to prostitution (Miyadai 2006; Maruta 2001).

In the 1990s, prostitution, especially practiced by girl high school students, was called *enjo-kōsai* and criticized in the mass media as a sign of the erosion of sexual morality. Interestingly, some of the critics were the conservatives who desired the preservation of a patriarchal social order, and others were the feminist abolitionists who objected to that order.

A number of writers and scholars viewed *enjo-kōsai* more or less positively. Miyadai, a sociologist and cultural critic, tolerated *enjo-kōsai*. According to Miyadai, *enjo-kōsai* can make it possible for girls to exercise their sexual autonomy. The essence of *enjo-kōsai* is that wives and daughters, who should be the property of patriarchs, sell their sex. Therefore, *enjo-kōsai* conflicts with patriarchalism (Fushimi 2000). In contrast, Ueno, one of the most famous Japanese feminists, argues that patriarchalism and prostitution complement each other. She distinguishes *enjo-kōsai* from prostitution. An *enkō* girl is not a “commodity” but a kind of freelance, self-employed worker who chooses customers (Ueno 1998). Even though *enjo-kōsai* is in conflict with patriarchalism at present, it will preserve patriarchalism in the long run (Fushimi 2000).

The question here is whether it is relevant today to problematize prostitution in relation to patriarchalism and sexual autonomy. Asano criticized this kind of problematization straightforwardly:

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7 *Enkō* girls or *warikiri* women rarely belong to any prostitution rings. *Enkō* girls sometimes get groups together, but it is not the same as organized prostitution since there are usually no operators (except leaders about the same age).

Sex workers are always required to explain why they chose such work and are sometimes forced to make it clear whether or not the choice was of their own free will. That is to say, women who became “prostitutes” are required to explain the reason for being “prostitutes,” and just because they decided voluntarily to be “prostitutes,” they have been made liable for anything that happens subsequently. But the social institution of prostitution and the social mechanism causing the discrimination of prostitutes are left unquestioned (Asano 1998: 121).

Those theorists who emphasize “prostitution of their own free will” and attempt to relate it forcibly to “sexual autonomy,” arbitrarily expect women practicing prostitution to be the images of “sexually liberated women who can sell their own bodies on self-determination,” fabricating such images (Asano 1998: 123).

The arguments of the two prevalent sociologists, Miyadai and Ueno, seem to assume that *enkō* girls did not have serious money troubles.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, is it possible to explicate prostitution without economic factors?

### 3 *Warikiri* Women

Chiki Ogiue, one of the new-generation social and media-cultural critics in Japan, researched *warikiri* for several years, after the economic situation of Japan worsened. He also published a book on *warikiri* women. He used a number of *deai-kei* sites, visited *deai-kissas* (出会い喫茶; dating cafes) or *terekuras* throughout the country, and interviewed 300 *warikiri* women in 2011, 2012, and 2013—100 per year. Though the research data may not be statistically or methodologically satisfactory, his is among the best reports on *warikiri* found today.

Again, *warikiri* is to “individually practice free choice prostitution by using *deai-kei* media to catch customers” (Ogiue 2012: 10). In the case of *warikiri*, having sex is usually taken for granted,<sup>9</sup> whereas *enjo-kōsai* includes having a date without sex.

Incidentally, *deai-kissas* are a new kind of sex media that first appeared in the late 1990s. In most *deai-kissas*, women can drink or eat free of charge. They wait for men to ask for a “talk” in a room partitioned by one-way mirrors. A male customer looks for a woman through the mirrors, and if he finds a preferred type of woman, he pays the shop assistant, moves to another room, and waits for the woman. After they have a chat and consent to the terms, they go out together (Ogiue 2012).

In this section, we will take up some points of Ogiue’s report and bring to light the hardships of *warikiri* women.

8 Indeed, they were aware that *enkō* girls might face money risks, but it seems that they treated such risks lightly, at least in theory.

9 Going out only to eat or drink is distinguished from *warikiri* and called *chameshi* (茶飯; tea and meal). Of course, women can use *deai-kissas* only for a *chameshi*. But most men using *deai-kissas* are regular customers and seek sex partners. Although women going out only for a *chameshi* can make money for a while, it is not long before they are asked for sex. More likely than not, they soon have no choice but to start practicing *warikiri* for money (Ogiue 2012).

### 3.1 Financial Conditions of *Warikiri* Women

Why did the women start *warikiri*? Ogiue points out that women's poverty underlies *warikiri*. It is widely thought that Japan is an affluent, developed society where women do not need to practice prostitution and that if a woman practices *warikiri*, it is a matter of morality. However, some risk factors certainly influence a woman's choice to get involved in *warikiri*. Ogiue consistently focuses on the hardships *warikiri* women face.

Ogiue distinguishes two types of prostitution. One is the "poverty-type (貧困型)", which is practiced to earn money by those who have little income, no jobs, and, in some cases, no home or no one to depend on. The other is the "gap-type (格差型)" of prostitution that is practiced to bridge the (financial) gap between ideal lives and real lives, or in most cases by those who do not live in want (Ogiue 2012). In short, gap-type prostitution is practiced for extra income, delinquency, or pleasure. When *enjo-kōsai* became an issue of public concern, it was this gap-type prostitution that was problematized and discussed repeatedly.

Gap-type prostitution carries the implication that the women do not have any compelling reason for prostitution, and therefore it is easily associated with the erosion of sexual morality. The arguments of Miyadai and Ueno are significant in that they are in opposition to this blame and emphasize the sexual autonomy of women. However, after the animated debates on *enjo-kōsai*, when the Japanese economy slid into a depression and some women got involved in practicing prostitution for compelling reasons, the prostitution debate decreased.

Even though Japan has become an affluent society, "poverty-type" prostitution has not been eliminated. It is wrong to deal with prostitution as if all cases were gap-type, as was the case with the debates on *enjo-kōsai*. In fact, few *warikiri* women practiced *enjo-kōsai* in their high school days; most began *warikiri* from age 18 and continued until their early twenties (Ogiue 2012).

Based on Ogiue's interview data of 300 *warikiri* women, the average age of them is 23.4 years old and the most frequent value is from 22 to 23. In most cases, they get between 15,000 and 20,000 yen for each *warikiri* sex act. Their monthly incomes vary widely, mostly from less than 100,000 yen up to 500,000 yen. The average monthly income is 293,000 yen, and the median is 250,000 yen. Ogiue and Iida (2013) theorize that *warikiri* women may lie about earning more money than they really do. If a woman earned 200,000 yen a month, her annual income would be 2,400,000 yen. This is not very high, as 2,400,000 yen is less than the average annual income of female workers (2,680,000 yen), and even less than half of that of male workers (5,020,000 yen) ("Basic Survey on Wage Structure 2011" by MHLW).

Indeed, not all prostitutes are poor, and not all poor women practice prostitution. There are many factors that can lead to prostitution. In reality, such factors are mutually tangled. But even so, poverty may be one of the most significant factors.

### 3.2 Mental Disorders

Another factor is mental disorder. Among *warikiri* women, the proportion of those with mental disorders is high. Ogiue's data of 100 *warikiri* women in 2011 showed that 30 women consulted doctors for mental disorders such as melancholia or panic disorder, and 17 women experienced self-injurious behavior or eating disorders. In many cases, *yorusyokus* (夜職;

night jobs in the adult entertainment business) require better communication skills than *hirusyokus* (昼職; daytime jobs). Therefore, *yorushokus* are often harder jobs for women with mental disorders than *hirusyokus*. It is then inappropriate to assert that *warikiri* women can and should get proper jobs (Ogiue 2012).

Women with mental disorders sometimes have difficulty working. For example, Ogiue reported a case where a *warikiri* woman was anxious about not being able to go to a *fūzoku* establishment because of a panic disorder. Another *warikiri* woman, when she went to hotel with a male customer, only lay on the bed and did nothing special for him (Ogiue 2012). In *fūzoku* a woman could gain little money if she offered no “emotional labor,” but it is allowed in *warikiri*. *Warikiri* may be a desperate shift for women with mental disorders trying to earn a living.

Thus, it is easy to understand why they got involved in *warikiri*. No one demands a kick-back. They can choose customers. They can change the quality and price of their services depending on customers. They are not restricted in terms of time and place. They are not controlled by anyone and can sometimes cancel appointments as they please. They do not have to give emotional services. They do not incur the risk of meeting acquaintances.<sup>10</sup>

### 3.3 Domestic Violence and Low Educational Level

Other factors that can lead to prostitution are domestic violence and low educational levels. The 2011 questionnaires showed that 33 of 100 *warikiri* women suffered (repeatedly) from violence or abuse by their parents or boyfriends (Ogiue 2012). They ran away from bad home environments and got involved in *warikiri* in order to survive on their own. Ogiue wrote that he never heard about *warikiri* women who were victims of violence or abuse asking NPOs or administrative agencies for help. Most of the *warikiri* women think such organizations are totally unrelated to their lives and some even regard these organizations as enemies (Ogiue 2012).

Bad home environments often deprive women of educational opportunities. **Table 1** shows

**Table 1** Educational backgrounds of 300 *warikiri* women

Junior high school graduates	54	18.0%
Senior high school graduates or dropouts	209	69.7%
Junior college graduates or dropouts	4	1.3%
Vocational college graduates or dropouts	6	2.0%
University students	3	1.0%
University graduates or dropouts	24	8.0%
Total	300	100.0%

Note: data from Ogiue and Iida (2013)

<sup>10</sup> *Warikiri* is under private management and riskier than *fūzoku*. In the case of *fūzoku*, women can depend on the staff when they get into trouble with the customers.

the educational backgrounds of the 300 *warikiri* women Ogiue interviewed (Ogiue and Iida 2013). In 2006, when people who were 25 years old in 2013 were 18, the women's advancement rate for senior high schools was 96.8% and that for higher education was 50.9% (38.5% for universities, 12.4% for junior colleges) ("School Basic Survey 2006" by MEXT). However, in the case of these *warikiri* women, only 82% entered senior high school, and the advancement rate for higher education was no more than 12.3% (Ogiue and Iida 2013: 102-103). As far as the data indicates, the *warikiri* women's educational levels were obviously lower.

Violence and abuse from parents lowers women's self-esteem and can cause mental disorders. If such women escape from their families, they have to live by themselves. Women with inferior education cannot find good jobs to earn enough money. They do not know how or from whom to ask for help. Ogiue calls this "the chain of alienation" or "hereditary misfortunes" (Ogiue 2012: 92).

### 3.4 Social Exclusion and Outside Inclusion

People think *warikiri* women are presuming on the indulgence of the society and that they can and should go without *warikiri*. However, society's repulsion for *warikiri* women prevents them from being hired for a regular job and forces them to continue with *warikiri* work.

The "attractive power" toward *warikiri* surely operates. Most *warikiri* women became acquainted with *deai-kei* through their friends. Women who have already started *warikiri* recruit rookies.<sup>11</sup> *Warikiri* women cannot find other jobs or places to stay safe but need income sources. Instead of social inclusion, they accept "outside inclusion" in the marginal zone of the society (Ogiue 2012: 73-76). Mediators who have already accepted outside inclusion explain its merits to the girls, and *deai-kei* is all the more attractive for women in hardship.

Presumably, it is not because of practicing prostitution that *warikiri* women are excluded from the society. Rather, *warikiri* women started *warikiri* because they experienced social exclusion. Yuasa, a leader of an antipoverty movement group, states that there is a "fivefold exclusion" behind poverty:

Firstly is the exclusion from educational courses. The cause of this stems from poverty of the parents' generation.

Secondly is exclusion from company welfare systems. This refers to falling through employment nets, or into a situation in which they cannot live on their pay in spite of being within the system (i.e. in employment). As is often the case with atypical employment, not only is their income and employment insecure, but they also cannot take out unemployment insurance or social insurances. Therefore, they are in insecure positions during periods of unemployment. They are excluded from those welfare services that permanent employees of an older generation could receive (low-rent dormitories,

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11 One of the reasons why the rate of introduction through friends is so high is that many *deai-kei* services have affiliate systems. Those who introduce someone to dating sites or *deai-kissas* receive a reward.



housing allowances, housing loans, etc.). Moreover, they cannot join labor unions and are excluded from mutual aid systems. Exclusion from company welfare systems refers to all of these.

Thirdly is the exclusion from family welfare systems. This means that they cannot depend on their parents or children. Another scenario is that they have no family support or network.

Fourthly is the exclusion from public welfare systems. Many young people proclaim, “You can still work,” or “Ask your parents to support you.” To mothers with children, “Make your ex-husband pay the childcare expenses,” or “Put your children into a home and find a job.” To homeless people, “You cannot seek protection unless your address is fixed.” Whether they can maintain their existences or not, only the techniques to reject them have become sophisticated. This is the present situation of the livelihood protection policy.

The fifth exclusion is from themselves. Why do they survive? What does it mean? For what purpose do they work? What significance can they find in it? Exclusion from themselves refers to the condition where they cannot be sure of such matters (Yuasa 2008: 60-61).

According to Ogiue, these are all true of *warikiri* women; however, there are two more factors. Factor 6 is exclusion based on gender, and factor 7 is exclusion from social problems (Ogiue 2012). Women’s income is usually lower than that of men, and women often cannot find jobs as easily as men. Additionally, living on the street is riskier for women. As men are considered to be the breadwinners of families, people tend to take poverty among men more seriously and accept women’s poverty. For women facing money troubles, outside inclusion is better than no job.

The last two kinds of exclusion (factor 6 and 7) are very important in relation to this paper’s hypothesis. These possibly, if not wholly, explain why they choose to practice prostitution. In the next section, I will portray the realities of poverty and social exclusion that *warikiri* women face.

## 4 Poverty and Homelessness

Some *warikiri* women get involved in *warikiri* for financial reasons. As we have seen above, the sum of money *warikiri* women make is not so high, and if they stopped practicing *warikiri*, they would soon face serious money troubles. This is true, even if they get relatively much money from *warikiri*. They indeed lead very precarious lives.

Social scientists have emphasized the need to research poverty as a series of dynamic processes rather than as a set of static situations. In some cases, people living in poverty can gain a certain amount of money but will soon spend most of the money and then be as badly off as before. Living in poverty means not so much being in a poor situation, but repeatedly coming in and out of that situation. In addition, poverty is not only an economic issue but a political and cultural issue as well.

In order to grasp such a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, some researchers propose

to use the concept of “social exclusion.”<sup>12</sup> On the one hand, the concept is used to conceal poverty, as is the case with the political context of the EU. For those politicians and government officials who do not want poverty emphasized, the expression of “social exclusion” seems more moderate and favorable. On the other hand, this perspective focuses on social relationships or networks and makes it possible to problematize poverty as the condition of being short of social capital. When comparing and analyzing the two concepts of poverty and social exclusion, Lister admits the empirical evidence of social exclusion is insufficient and that social exclusion is not quite satisfactory as an alternative to poverty. However, she concludes that it “both sharpens the focus on a number of important aspects of poverty and also advances the kind of broad framework of analysis of poverty” (Lister 2004: 98).

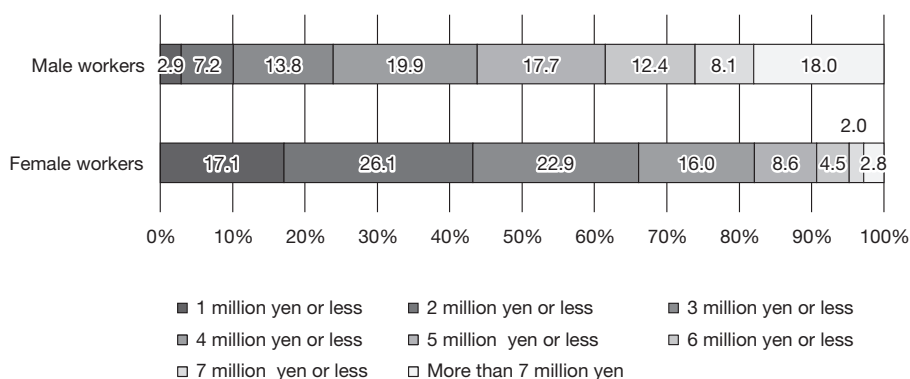
The perspective of social exclusion might be useful in understanding the condition of *warikiri* women.

#### 4.1 Women’s Poverty

The term “feminization of poverty” is sometimes used in the domain of social policies. This term may be misleading in the sense that it sounds as if women’s poverty were a recent phenomenon. Rather, the “feminization of poverty” means the risk of poverty for women is, and has always been, much higher than for men (Lister 2004: 56).

**Figure 1** compares the distributions of women’s and men’s annual income in Japan in 2011. In the indexed figure, the regular male worker’s salary level is 100, while the regular female worker’s salary level is 70.6. However, the wage gap between men and women is also strongly influenced by the fact that more than half of female workers are employed as part-

**Figure 1** Composition of salaried workers by income



Note: data collected from the National Tax Agency’s “Statistical Survey on Salary in the Private Sector” (2011)

<sup>12</sup> Recently, there has been a lot of interest in social exclusion in the domain of sociology and social policies. A few important publications have been translated into Japanese, such as Bhalla and Lapeyre (2004) and Byrne (2005). Moreover, studies of social exclusion in the Japanese context are published one after another (Fukuhara, ed. 2007; Iwata 2008; Iwata and Nishizawa, ed. 2012; Maruyama 2013, etc.).

timers. The average hourly wage of female part-time workers is nearly half (50.3) of regular male workers (“Basic Survey on Wage Structure 2011” by MHLW). In the aspect of earnings, women’s risk of poverty is apparently higher than that of men.

According to Abe (2011), while the poverty rate for men in 2007 was 10.96%, it was 12.61% for women. Poverty rates are higher for women than for men; particularly the poverty rate of mother-children households or households consisting of a single elderly person, which is as high as over 50%. Abe’s data confirms the “feminization of poverty” in Japan. However, when seen by age group, the proportions of women among poor people 0–19 years old, 20–64 years old, and 65 and over were 50.4%, 54.0%, and 63.6%, respectively. Thus, she concluded the “feminization of poverty” is caused by the “aging of poverty” (Abe 2011: 125). To begin with, the population of women is larger than that of men, and elderly people take up not only a large proportion of the poor but also of the population itself.

Moreover, Abe (2011) examined social exclusion in Japan by gender and by attribute in terms of eight headings: lack of basic needs, material deprivation, exclusion from institutions, lack of social relationships, inadequate dwelling, insufficient social participation, economic stress, and low income. She summarizes her analysis in this way. It is probable that social inclusion of the younger age groups of men and women will grow to a social problem hereafter, particularly the younger unmarried people. Unmarried men in the working age group are also at a high risk of social exclusion from social relationships. The social exclusion risks of people seeking work or unemployed is considerably high, and this tendency is especially remarkable for women. Women seeking work or unemployed are at the highest risks of social exclusion (Abe 2011:140).

However, women’s poverty cannot be wholly grasped through statistical data. Many scholars and researchers insist that we should pay attention to “hidden poverty.” Most statistics are based on household heads and overlook the inequality of distribution within families.

Needless to say, unequal systems of distribution do function within social domains other than families:

Women’s hidden poverty reflects their inferior position of power in the gendered division of labor, continued sex discrimination, gender stereotyping, and the realities and ideology of female economic dependence. Together these underpin women’s position in the labor market, family, and welfare state. It is the interaction between the three that determines women’s economic status over their lifetimes and that distinguishes the causes of female poverty from male poverty (Lister 2004: 61).

Katada associates the structure hiding women’s poverty with three criteria of distinctions between “the deserving poor” and “the undeserving poor,” which have inherited social policies since the Poor Law in England. The first criterion is the principle concerning labor. Those who can work have positively been included in social insurance programs through employment, and those who cannot work have been included in allowances and assistances. This principle has generally been applied to men and has constructed “citizens as workers.” The second is the principle concerning families and gender roles. Welfare states have tied women to the private sphere of the family, assigning them the roles of wives and mothers. This principle has generally applied to women and constructed “citizens as housewives (care-

takers).” The principle concerning belonging is the third. Residence and nationality are the prerequisites for welfare entitlement. This principle has constructed the members of a “nation” (Katada 2012).

These three principles bound together have built the “standard families”:

The standard family refers to the kind of family model which is based on a marital relationship and supported by the pair of “citizens as workers”—commodified men and “citizens as housewives (caretakers)”—familized women. It is the model reflecting “the two circumstances of modern welfare states” (Takekawa 2007), capitalism, and patriarchy. In this model, men are expected to be breadwinners and women are expected to be dependent economically on men as well as take unpaid housework (Katada 2012: 116).

In the standard family model, social rights in modern welfare states have been constructed differently on the basis of gender; contributory benefits (social insurances such as unemployment insurance, health insurance, and national pension) are for men, and benefits entailing means tests (public assistance) are for women. Between social insurances and public assistance lies an established order that corresponds to the gender order between men and women (Katada 2012; see also Kawahara 2005).

As long as the patriarchal standard family model is dominant, women are disadvantaged in welfare policies. Additionally, welfare entitlement accepting the family as the basic unit is grounded on the assumption that distribution in a family or between the two sexes is equal and just. This assumption takes no notice of any of disadvantageous conditions of women in the family and hides women’s poverty.

## 4.2 Hidden Homelessness

The “hidden poverty” of women hides female homelessness. According to “National Survey on the Actual Conditions of the Homeless” by the MHLW, there are 8,265 homeless people in Japan; 340 (4.1%) of them are female.<sup>13</sup> Though the risk of poverty is higher for women than for men, why is the number of female homeless so low? Here, two major factors are to be mentioned.

Firstly, the definition of “homelessness” is too narrow. Researchers indicate this point unanimously (i.e., Bandō 2007; Kawahara 2011, 2012; Maruyama 2012, 2013; Murozumi 2012). In Japan, the Act on Special Measures Concerning Assistance in Self-Support of Homeless defines homelessness as “people who have no good reason to occupy a space in a city park, in a riverside, on a street, at a station, and so on, and to lead their everyday lives”

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<sup>13</sup> The estimates of this survey were given by means of counting the people living on the street. The number of the homeless was 15,759 and has consistently been decreasing since then. Although the report of the survey’s review meeting in 2012 admitted that the governmental assistance for the self-support of the homeless was effective to some degree, it also pointed out the possibility that “the homeless in the broader sense” have been increasing. “Less than 10,000 [9,576 in 2012] of homeless people living on the street appear through coming from and going to the greater number of people lack of secure housing. It is necessary to grasp the characteristics of the homeless living on the street in such a structure” (Hōmuresu no Jittai ni kansuru Zenkoku Tyōsa Kentōkai 2012: 1).

(Article 2). However, in Europe, FEANTSA (the European Federation of National Organizations working with the Homeless), an NGO that supports people threatened by, or living in homelessness, classifies homelessness into four categories. These are well known as the “ETHOS typology”:

- (A) Rooflessness (without a shelter of any kind, sleeping rough)
- (B) Houselessness (with a place to sleep but temporary in institutions or shelter)
- (C) Living in insecure housing (threatened with severe exclusion due to insecure tenancies, eviction, domestic violence)
- (D) Living in inadequate housing (in caravans on illegal campsites, in unfit housing, in extreme overcrowding)<sup>14</sup>

In this typology, homelessness comprises rooflessness and houselessness. Nonetheless, the Japanese government considers only the roofless to be the homeless.

Insofar as “homelessness” means “rooflessness,” it is natural that the number of homeless females be far less than that of the homeless males. Living on the street or in the park entails high risks, and women have to hide themselves from dangers such as sexual violence. However, as was seen above, women are more likely to sink into poverty than men. If that is so, female homeless might be much more prevalent than the statistical data show. If this is the case, where do women who live in, or are threatened by, homelessness lead their lives?

This question has much to do with the second factor. The support system for female homeless is different from the system for men. “Basic Policy for Assistance in Self-Support of Homeless,” a notification of MHLW and MLIT, says, “For the female homeless, [the national government and the local governments] not only render thoughtful assistance in self-support with sex taken into consideration, but also cooperate, if necessary, with such relevant institutions as women’s consultation centers and women’s protection facilities” (MHLW and MLIT 2013: 13). This suggests the differentiation of welfare services by gender (Kawahara 2005, 2011; Murozumi 2012).

Male homeless can temporarily stay at Self-Support Assistance Centers and receive assistance for employment. These centers are operated on the supposition that only male homeless stay there. Instead, women’s consultation centers and women’s protection facilities give assistance to female homeless. The legal basis for women’s protection facilities is the Anti-Prostitution Act (1956). They were originally facilities for “women requiring protection (要保護女子),” that is, “women who might practice prostitution in view of their character and conduct, or their environment.” During the first decade of the 2000s, the facilities began to take in female victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. Hence, the facilities for the “protection” of women are counted upon for assistance for female homeless.

Next, we see the conditions of houseless people—people who are about to be in the homelessness category. In the case of the male houseless, earning capacity is questioned. If a man is deemed to have earning capacity, he cannot receive welfare services or public assistance.

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14 “ETHOS Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion” by FEANTSA. <http://www.feantsa.org/spip.php?article120&lang=en>. Accessed December 25, 2013. For more detailed information about this typology, see Edgar and Meert (2005).

**Table 2** Estimates of homeless people in Japan

	Facilities	Men	Women	Total of both sexes
Public Assistance Act	relief facilities	10,347	6,671	17,018
	rehabilitation facilities	1,501	103	1,604
	facilities providing accommodation	218	227	445
Child Welfare Act	maternal and child living support facilities <sup>(a)</sup>		10,367	10,367
Act on Social Welfare for the Elderly	nursing homes for the elderly	19,350	40,351	59,701
Anti-Prostitution Act	women's consulting offices (temporary protection) <sup>(b)</sup>		6,478	6,478
	women's protection facilities <sup>(c)</sup>		569	569
Social Welfare Act	facilities providing accommodation	6,068	623	6,691
Total		37,484	65,389	102,873

Note: Extracted from Murozumi (2012). Data from the "Reports on 'Survey of Social Welfare Institution'" by MHLW and the "Summary of the Report on Implementation Status of Women's Protection Service" by MHLW.

The numerical values of (a), (b), and (c) are for 2009, 2007, and 2008, respectively, and the other values are for 2006; (c) is the sum of members of households. In recent years, the "Reports on 'Survey of Social Welfare Institutions'" did not show the sex of the inmates; hence, slightly older data were used.

However, in the case of the female houseless, it is assumed that women are not the breadwinners, and earning capacity is not regarded as important. Women receive welfare services and/or public assistance easier. Nonetheless, the number of women using shelters is not as large as it should be (see **Table 2**).<sup>15</sup> Maruyama writes:

Women suffer disadvantages in employment and social security. Under the existing social conditions, women have difficulty in making their living independently out of home. However, so long as they accept the humiliating means test questioning even relations with men and the minimum standards of living, women can easily make use of welfare institutions and public assistance. This keeps women from going out on the street (Maruyama 2012).

Regrettably enough, we must not forget that there are still others who are living in poverty but are never described as such. They lead their lives in the conditions of B, C, and D of the ETHOS typology. The Japanese government never counts these people as the homeless. Subsequently, they are outside of welfare systems or protection services.<sup>16</sup> In the case of women

15 To precisely know the actual conditions of the female homeless and the use of women's protection facilities, see Kawahara (2005, 2011), Maruyama (2012), Murozumi (2012), and Sudō and Miyamoto, eds. (2013).

16 Recently, some reports on women living in homelessness have been published. Kuroba (2013) reports on *kami-machi* (神待ち; waiting for a god) girls. A god is someone who offers a room to sleep in to a girl running away home or in homelessness. *Kami-machi* girls look for a god in *deai-kei* services. The theme of Suzuki (2012) is girls who deliver *enkō* services in an underground group. The book of Kainuma (2013) is an ethnography of "what should not exist (あってはならぬもの)" in modern Japan. He wrote about homeless girls who practice an "*idō kyabakura* (mobile hostess bar)." Among them is Ogiue (2012).

in poverty, they often get jobs in *mizu-shōbai* (水商売; night entertainment business) and *fūzoku*. Ogiue and Iida estimated that roughly 300,000 women are working in *fūzoku*, and that 3.6%–5.4% of women have experience working as *fūzoku* women. In reality, *warikiri* women who have never been under the control of *fūzoku* establishments are added to them (Ogiue and Iida 2013).

## 5 Conclusion: From What Are *Warikiri* Women Excluded?

It is apparent that one of the reasons *warikiri* women practice prostitution is poverty and social exclusion, although not all prostitutes are poor. Adequate assistance for women in poverty is needed, but the welfare system in Japan does not function very well. What matters is social justice itself.

### 5.1 Importance of Capability

It is not proper to affirm *warikiri* in terms of autonomy, at least at the present time. As Ogiue argues, autonomy is no doubt significant, but for women who have no choice but to accept outside inclusion, sexual autonomy is “passive autonomy” because the options are too restricted (Ogiue 2012: 158). Indeed, some *warikiri* women (over 10%) earn more than 400,000 yen a month. It may be enough to make a living, but they cannot be said to have freedom.

Amartya Sen’s “capability approach”, for example, is significant for solidifying this point. Sen defines capability as “the various combinations of functionings (beings and doings) that the person can achieve” and “a set of vectors of functionings, reflecting the person’s freedom to lead one type of life or another” (Sen 1992). A person’s well-being is judged in terms of not only what he or she did but how many options he or she had in the process of doing it:

In assessing our lives, we have reason to be interested not only in the kind of lives we manage to lead, but also in the freedom that we actually have to choose between different styles and ways of living. Indeed, the freedom to determine the nature of our lives is one of the valued aspects of living that we have reason to treasure (Sen 2009: 227).

Ultimately, if a woman decides to earn money through prostitution, but has little or no option but to do so, it cannot be called freedom of choice. Her capability is spoiled severely, and “sexual autonomy” is an empty phrase for her.

On the other hand, blaming *warikiri* women for immorality might do more harm than good and only preserves the existing patriarchal social order. It is because most *warikiri* women internalize the morality of patriarchy that they are ashamed of themselves. In fact, many *warikiri* women want to retire as early as possible (Ogiue 2012). So long as this society is patriarchal, emphasizing the sexual autonomy of women may sometimes be oppressive. What is most important is to let women in poverty receive the adequate support and assistance needed to promote their capability and offer them other possible choices besides

practicing unwanted prostitution.

## 5.2 From What Are Warikiri Women Excluded?

The concept of *warikiri* women cannot be grasped through ordinary social research. It is not only because they hide themselves but also because social research is not constructed to understand them. To use the phrase of Kainuma (2013), they are surely “what should not exist (あってはならぬもの)” in this society.

Katada considers prostitutes to be symbols of “women other than housewives” and writes, “Housewives, paired with prostitutes, have supported capitalistic patriarchy” (Katada 2012: 117). As is said in the beginning of this paper, the Anti-Prostitution Act has two different aspects: control and protection. Prostitutes are controlled by protecting them as “women requiring protection.” In this way, the standard families and the capitalistic patriarchy are also protected. Katada severely criticized conventional welfare policies. This is based on the normative model of the standard family. Welfare policies have preserved the double standard of drawing a line between housewives and prostitutes, and have accordingly controlled and divided female lives and sexuality (Katada 2012).

With this criticism taken into account, social theorists and researchers are required to (re)examine if and how the social sciences, consciously or unconsciously, contribute to preserving that oppressive structure. Results of some researches on social exclusion of women have been published, but unfortunately prostitution and prostitutes have not been a major subject of those researches. Indeed, prostitution is very difficult to inquire about; nevertheless, we cannot help but admit that prostitution is not regarded as an important theme to investigate.

Although Ogiue uses the term “outside inclusion,” the conditions *warikiri* women experience cannot be called “inclusion” since “outside inclusion” is a type of exclusion in itself. Consequently, from what are they excluded? In fact, they experience poverty and social exclusion, yet it is not recognized in the view of social sciences. In a sense, they are excluded from (the theory or concept of) “social exclusion.” It is this meta-level social exclusion that contributes to the oppressive social order.

## Glossary

ETHOS: a European Typology of Homelessness and housing exclusion

FEANTSA: the European Federation of National Organizations working with the Homeless

MEXT: the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

MHLW: the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

MLIT: the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism

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