

Profile

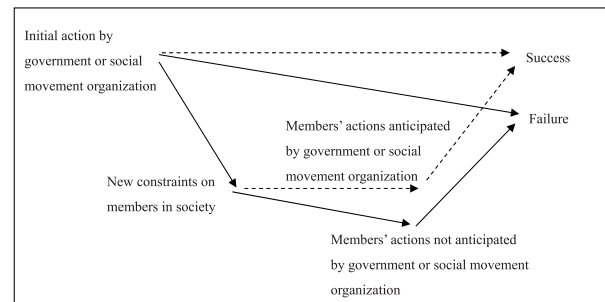
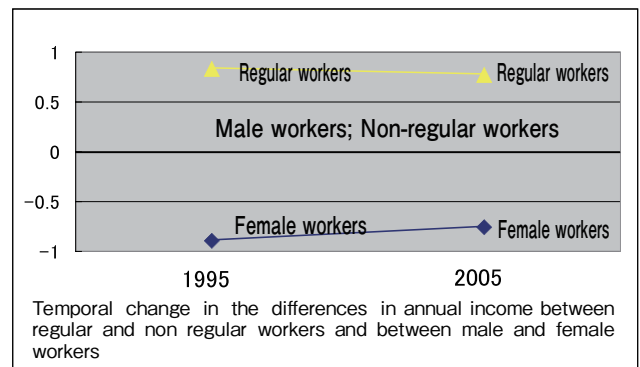


Professor Yoshimichi Sato took up an assistant professorship at Yokohama City University after finishing his course work at the Graduate School of Sociology, University of Tokyo, and was then promoted to associate professor. He joined Tohoku University as associate professor in 1992. After conducting his research as a visiting scholar at the University of Chicago and Cornell University he was promoted to professor in 2002. As the director of the Center for the Study of Social Stratification and Inequality (CSSI) under the 21st Century COE Program, he established an international research and education center and promoted interdisciplinary research projects on social stratification and inequality. He succeeded in getting a five-year grant for the CSSI in 2008 and is advancing studies in this field. He is also internationally active, being designated president of the Japanese Association for Mathematical Sociology, executive member of the International Sociological Association (ISA), and president of Research Committee on Rational Choice of the ISA.

Research Activities

I have been exploring two research topics : social stratification and social change. In the study of social stratification I studied the disparity in income between regular workers and non-regular workers, which is often talked about in the mass media. My analysis of the data of the 2005 Social Stratification and Social Mobility Survey (SSM Survey) shows that the average income of regular workers is 2.13 times as large as that of non-regular workers after controlling for age, gender, and occupation. However, it is not necessarily the case that the disparity has been widening. A comparison of the 1995 and 2005 SSM Survey data indicates that the disparities in income between regular and non-regular workers and between sexes have slightly decreased over the decade.

In the study of social change I have analyzed the mechanism that determines success/failure of “intentional social change”, such as social planning and social movement in which governments and social mobility organizations try to change society. My analysis has revealed that intentional social change fails, because the reactions of people in society to the actions of governments and social mobility organizations accumulate to produce results that were not anticipated by governments and social mobility organizations.



Message

I would never have thought that I would become a scholar, not to mention becoming a sociologist. I was so attracted to radio-controlled airplanes when I was a kid that I dreamed of becoming the owner of a shop of this kind. However, I began to appreciate the beauty of mathematics while I was working out calculations necessary for crafting radio-controlled airplanes. Thus I determined to study mathematics at college. Then after entering college I found myself surrounded by geniuses in mathematics, and understood my limited talent for mathematics would not lead to my being an excellent mathematician. Fortunately, I was also interested in the study of society, so I decided to apply mathematics to it, and have conducted research in the fields of mathematical sociology and quantitative sociological analysis. As regards my character, I am not a born leader with strong leadership skills. However, I have directed the CSSI for five years.

Looking back on my life history, I would say I have developed a career that is different from what I originally intended, and I do not regret that. Having a flexible attitude toward your career is important in order to enrich your life. A mind open to various opportunities will lead you to the higher levels. Do not miss great opportunities by defining yourself narrowly.