Abstract of Doctoral Dissertation

# Title: **Analysis of Welfare Politics in Japan**

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This study contains 6 chapters, and Introduction and Conclusion besides. Chapters 4～6 are case studies on specific policy formation processes which formed “Defined Contribution Pension Plan Act (Japan’s 401k)”, “Act on Organ Transplantation” and “Public Nursing Care Insurance Act”.

Chapter 1 introduces a frame of reference to analyze these three processes, which is J. W. Kingdon’s “revised model of garbage can model”. Chapter 2 discusses theoretical perspective of these processes showing a bird-eye view of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and its policies in relation to the whole political process in Japan. Chapter 3 dealing with the history of the Ministry, describes who build that and why that became necessary at that time.

While the purpose of this study is analyzing and characterizing policy processes of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare by gathering findings from individual concrete policy formations, before describing these policy processes, Chapters 1 and 2 concentrate on theoretical investigations. Especially, because an important concept of “policy process” contains two words seemingly contradict each other, that is, rational choice orientation (policy) and irrational and agnostic orientation (process), The former half of Chapter 1 discusses about this concept thoroughly, and the latter half of the chapter follows the discussion from Mills’ criticism toward political process

theory to new policy process theories of R. Bauer, H. Heclo, and J. D. Kingdon. Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical views of recent Japan by Japanese theorists. And Chapter 3 is a brief history as mentioned above.

Chapters 4, 5, 6 are case studies of each policy formation and implementation. As discussed in Chapter 2, when observed from whole political process, from birds-eye, the policy process of welfare belongs to Lowi's "redistributive" arena, but concentrated on the Ministry's policies, we can find several types of policies and their processes among them. These typologies of categories of policies probably help us to understand modern intellectual policies generally as well as welfare policies themselves.

In Conclusion, a model of policy categories is presented, which classifies four policy categories by mutually independent indexes of issue network unity and salience of policies.

It is difficult and probably inappropriate for case studies to use as evidences of theoretical hypotheses because of selection biases and Small-N or uniqueness problem. However, case studies are appropriate instruments for hypothesis building, theory making. After some hypotheses are made, we can promote study of policy formation process to gather more cases in accordance with the hypotheses. This book is a start line of such trial.