The Identity and Motivation of New Front-Line Workers in the Submerged Welfare State: Evidence from Care-Needs Certification for Long-Term Care Insurance in Japan.

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Outline

1. Introduction
2. Overview of Long-Term Care Insurance in Japan
3. Narrative from Assessors
4. Text Analysis on Free Answers
5. Conclusion and Discussion
Introduction: Background and Research Questions

• Japan has become the most rapidly aging country in Asia.

• As the decentralization of welfare policies in Japan continues, welfare frontline workers play an increasingly important role in shaping the policy outcomes of the welfare state.

• As part of implementing Care-Needs Certification of Japan’s long-term care insurance (LTCI) programs, the government has delegated part of the process of determining eligibility to non-state actors and has provided various incentives to encourage these actors to participate in LTCI administration.
Background and Research Questions CON.

• Suzanne Mettler (2011) points out that such delegation, which constitutes a market-oriented reform, obscures from citizens the private, commercial nature of the execution of public policy, an arrangement that she calls the “Submerged State”.

• The LTCI assessors’ identities, motivations and behaviors in such a submerged welfare state are considered to be different from those of traditional front-line workers.

• What are the identity and motivation of these assessors, “new” front-line workers?
Worthiness of study

• Few studies on the policy implementation process of long-term care insurance system and welfare benefits that include consideration of the “needs” of both the person who receives care and those who take care of the elderly (Ueno 2011), such as family.

• Long-term care is one of the most important policy issues in which affect advanced aging countries.
Research Purpose

• To examine what are the identity and motivation of these assessors for Care-Needs Certification of Japan’s long-term care insurance (LTCI) when assessors evaluate clients.
Overview: Long-term care insurance (LTCI) in Japan

- Mandatory social LTCI introduced in 2000
- Managed on municipal level
- Available to recipients in two categories:
  - 65+ years
  - 40-64 years with health-related disabilities
- Coverage determined on scale of 7 categories/levels, benefits allocated according to person’s level of required care
- Recipients use services based on a long-term care service plan drawn up by a care manager
- Recipients of required to pay out of pocket 10% of the cost of receiving care
Care-Needs Certification in LTCI

• Accreditation Process

1. Application form, assessor visits
2. Data evaluated by a computer-aided and standardized program
3. Evaluation reviewed by Care Needs Certification Board - a committee of medical and other professionals designated by the municipal government
4. Final determination of the applicant’s eligibility, applicants are categorized into 7 levels of needs

• Very distinctive system compared to other countries
Previous Research on New Frontline Workers

• Two main possible behaviors of these New Frontline Workers
  • Minimize but not erase street-level discretion
  • Not changed their role and style.

• Research gaps
  • The research does not clearly identify what factors, such as supervisors and/or clients, may be causing changes in the behavior of the new frontline workers.
  • It remains inconclusive which factors, such as performance management, specialization, or professional norms, most affect the new frontline workers.
Assessors as Frontline Workers: A Different Kind of Bureaucrat

• Assessors must have a greater ability to convey in writing, and during follow-up contact when applicable, the situation and care needs that they observed when visiting clients to local officials and the Care Needs Certification Board.

• LTCI assessors have less unequal relationships with LTCI applicants compared to more traditional interactions between frontline workers and more marginalized and reluctant social services applicants.

• Most LTCI assessors tend to have less incentive to strictly comply with local government priorities compared to traditional street-level bureaucrats.
In-depth interviews

• Design
  - Semi-structured Interviews in 2012 summer.

• Participants and setting
  - 20 all assessors working at Fukui Prefecture.
  - 2 male, 18 female, age range 20s–50s.
  - Working as Assessor 11 months to 12 years.
  - Asked about daily activities and motivation for visiting clients, evaluating and filling out the questionnaire.
The Task Flow of the LTCI Assessors

1. Assessors are assigned application forms which are submitted in person at the counter of a local office. → Appointment with the client and the client’s family

2. The questionnaire that assessors fill out have three sections:
   1) General condition investigation
   2) Basic investigation
   3) Additional notes

3. Additional notes section is filled out by assessors to further elaborate on their answers to other questionnaire items and to more clearly and qualitatively describe the client’s condition – later reviewed by the Care Needs Certification Board.

4. Submit the questionnaire to the local officials

evaluated by a computer-aided and standardized program
Variations in Assessors’ onsite LTCI Visits

- Investigations begin when assessors enter client’s house
- Assessors often adjust adapt to the sociability and condition of the client and caregivers
- Afterward assessors come back to their office or their house and then fill in the questionnaire before the deadline for submission.
- Sometimes follow up to check for overstating or understating regarding the client’s status during the on-site investigation.
- Form and the entry method of the questionnaire also varies according to the local government
- Some local governments provide specific guidance on fill out questionnaire
From Some Assessors Narrative…

• For assessors, after the data is fed into the automated system, certification of long-term care need is accompanied by uncertainty.

• Thus assessors that have the feeling of "I want to demonstrate the hassle of caring for this person as thoroughly as possible", will exercise a variety of methods to accomplish this.

• The Certification Committee has indicated that the provision of a larger amount of information helps increase the likelihood of obtaining a proper determination. Quality and accuracy are also important.

• Assessor sometimes acts as an agent of the government or as an advocate for the applicant, depending on interaction with family members.
Survey Data and Sampling

• Design
  • Self-administered questionnaire survey in the summer of 2012
• Participants and setting
  • Initial sample: 936 all assessors working at Fukui Prefecture.
• Effective response rate 60.0%
• Characteristics
  • 11.7% of the respondents are male, 85.6% female.
  • Average length of time that assessors work, is 67.7 months
  • 3.4% of the assessors are full-time municipal employees
Text Analysis of Free Answer

• **Free Answer of Survey**
  • Q18: When do you think it is *easy* to examine the clients?
  • Q19: When do you think it is *difficult* to examine the clients?
  • 329

• **Word Mapping by Text Analysis of Free Answer**
  • KH Corder, ver2.b.29c
  • Multi Dimensional Scaling Method
  • Word Mapping---Words near each other in responses are placed near each other on the maps; words far from one another in responses are placed far from each other on the map.
Easy to examine the clients

• Neighboring:
  • family, investigation, assistance, understand
  • communication, clear, smooth
  • reply, description, accurate
  • detailed information
  • almost, bedridden

• Assessors feel it is easier to investigate when client’s family is cooperative and it is easy to communicate with clients.
Difficult to examine the clients

- Neighboring:
  - Dementia, problem, action, many
  - Unstable, change
  - Talk, “different by people”
  - Communication, difficult
  - Answer, refuse
  - Daily, relationship, not good
  - Hard to, understanding
  - Living alone

- Assessors feel it difficult to investigate when clients are not cooperative, and client and client’s family have disagreements and relationship tensions
Findings & Discussion

The results of this analysis show...

• Assessors who are a new kind of frontline workers come to their own conclusions based on their beliefs on how other actors, such as local officials and clients, tend to act.

• Assessor evaluation of clients are strongly affected by the relationship between the client and client’s family.
Practical Implications

• The more strictly local officials try to manage assessors, the more sympathetic towards applicants assessors become.

• It is important that local officials rely on assessors’ findings and respect their expertise to some extent but not manage aggressively, with more focus on advising assessors on how to enhance their ability to convey their findings in writing.
Practical Implications CON.

• Measures are needed to examine and evaluate accurately not only the clients’ situation but also the relationship between caregivers and care receiver.

• Otherwise, new frontline workers will be strict against clients more than necessary.
Reference


- Ueno, Chizako. (2011) Care-no-Syakai-gaku Toujitsuyashukuen-no-Fukushi-syakaihe (Sociology of Care, Towards the Welfare Society in which Person concerned has sovereignty), Ota shuppan [In Japanese]
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Thank you for your attention, and I’d be happy to take your questions.

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