

## **Equal citizenship for everyone?**

- Towards the inclusive society, a cross-national comparative study of active citizenship and activation policies for persons with disabilities in Sweden and Japan -

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## **Abstract**

This thesis problematizes the exclusion of disabled people in society and their rights. The emphasis of the research is on persons with severe or/ and multiple disabilities who tend not to have capabilities to politically interact with society. They are one of the most marginalized groups among disabled people in numerous aspects while most of them are already excluded in society. This research especially considers how discourses of their citizenship are translated into the context of national policies in Sweden and Japan. Through a comparative analysis, the problematic concept of ‘active-citizenship’ in the active labour market policies and its impact on persons with severe disabilities will be revealed. The aim of this research is to explore how severely disabled people are recognized within the activation policies in Sweden and Japan and how the country-particular setting causes difference in establishing their citizenship.

*Key words:* persons with severe disabilities, citizenship, active citizenship, activation policy, Sweden, Japan

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Relevance of study and research questions

A rapid expansion of globalization and neo-liberalism emphasizes the high value of a skilled labor force and intensifies the insignificance of less-skilled workers in the global labor market. On the one hand, the workers who have skills and mobility are thriving in global markets, but on the other hand people who do not have those advantages are facing vulnerability and insecurity. Conclusively, globalization has exaggerated the exclusion, inequality and poverty of people in minority groups in the modern world. At the same time, welfare states which have been largely responsible for social security of those disadvantaged groups, are undermining their own reach and are obliged to undergo the reforms partly due to influences of economic globalization. When these welfare states diminish, the disadvantaged groups who are most in need of state provision are largely undermined. As a part of welfare state reform a set of ‘activations’ appeared in the contemporary globalized world. The active employment policy emphasizes the importance of active participation in the labor market and aims to mobilize people on social security benefit into employment. Activation policies recognize entering the labor market as a necessary path to empower people’s citizenship. In Marshall’s idea, full employment is a fundamental source of equality and empowerment, and to avoid unemployment is an essential task of labor movement (Andersen 2005: 77). Under the consensus, people who cannot work are not entitled to have full sense of citizenship. Moreover, labor market economists have claimed that “generous social protection and labor-market regulation gives the unemployed too little incentive to work and keeps ‘reservation wages’ at a level where the market cannot provide a sufficient number of jobs for the less skilled. As a consequence, many less skilled people become entrapped in long-term unemployment” (Andersen 2005: 78). Persons with disabilities are also targeted on activation policies as other groups like unemployed, immigrants etc. However, despite the current trend of active employment policies, it is still undeniable that disabled people are extremely disadvantaged in the current labor market.

Disabled people are disproportionately disadvantaged in the labor market. This is because in western society since at least the eighteenth century, work has been organized around a particular set of values and principles; namely, the pursuit and maximization of profit and competition between individual workers, both of which effectively disadvantage, or disabled people with any form of perceived functional limitation/impairment, whether physical, sensory or intellectual. The more overt the impairment, the more severe the disadvantage or ‘disability’.

(Barnes and Roulstone 2005: 315)

In order to discuss disabled people’s exclusion from mainstream society, Abberley (2002: 135, 136) emphasizes the necessity of developing a theory that is supported by their standpoints because their interest are not explicitly expressed by other social groups no matter how dominant or oppressed these other groups are in society. His argument is grounded on the following three points. First of all, to terminate environmental and

cultural borders associated with capitalism will not create a society where all disabled people are able to work. Secondly, previous social theories such as functionalism, Marxism and feminism are not capable to create a suitable structure to establish policies, which provide equality of employment and living standards for persons with disabilities. The third point is that the notion of paid work does not need to be a significant organizational characteristic of western developed nations in the future.

When dealing with the issue of disabilities, it is significant to understand that disabilities exist in a multitude of levels that can in lesser or greater ways prevent a person from living a normal life. This research especially focused on the issues of persons with 'severe disabilities' because they are one of the most marginalized groups in society in numerous aspects. Therefore, it is important to discuss their issues in this research. While the definition of severe disability can differ depending on each person's perspective and social context, this research refers to severe physical, intellectual or multiple-disabilities as severe disability. In other words, it is the certain degree or/ and kind of disabilities that seriously hinder a person to have the basic quality of life that non-disabled people have. While their disabilities prevent them to live their life as they wish, they often do not have any capacity to convey their wills and needs towards society either due to the conditions of their disabilities. This results in that the attention paid to them and their issues is usually very scarce. Thus, it is necessary and significant that this research discusses their problematic situations and previously disregarded problems. If a particular group of people do not have the ability to advocate themselves by reason of their conditions, especially disabilities in this case, there is a necessity for others to argue for that persons with disabilities should be more included and equally treated and that their rights should be safeguarded in society by discussing their situations, struggles and needs. This is why this research is highly relevant.

Although various issues about persons with disabilities exist in society, this research concentrates upon discussing their rights. It mainly examines the concept of citizenship and active citizenship of persons with disabilities and how these discourses are translated into national policy making. This research is conducted by means of a comparative approach across national boundaries: a cross-national research. By adopting a comparative method, the research aims to develop deeper understanding of social phenomena. For the analysis the cases of active employment policies in Sweden and Japan are chosen because of the commonality between Sweden and Japan; these countries are the most similar among developed countries in terms of achieving greater equality in each society (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009: 183). Both Sweden and Japan are industrialized countries but the structures of welfare states widely differ. While the Swedish welfare state has a universal welfare system supported by a wide range of state provision, the Japanese welfare state has a limited welfare system which largely depends on informal family care and provides restricted public services. Thus, by employing different policy approaches both Japan and Sweden have still established a high degree of social equality. This research focuses on these two welfare states sharing great similarities and dissimilarities by carrying out a policy analysis of Swedish and Japanese active employment policies for persons with disabilities. It is invaluable to explore how different types of welfare states deal with the issue and introduce the same type of policy. Through investigating activation policies in Sweden and Japan, it is revealed how the discourses of citizenship and active citizenship of persons with disabilities are differently translated into these policies depending on the different political natures of the countries. In addition, the effects of the different ways to interpret their citizenship and active citizenship in the Swedish and Japanese activation policies are examined. Therefore, my thesis aims to

answer the following three research questions:

· *How are the citizenship rights of persons with severe disabilities interpreted in an activation policy?*

· *How do representations of their citizenship and active citizenship differ in Swedish and Japanese activation policies?*

· *How do the different interpretations of their citizenship rights affect Swedish and Japanese activation policies?*

## **1.2 Background of study**

### **1.2.1. Welfare state reform**

Welfare states have conducted a fundamental reform by the effects of major structural changes such as globalization, transitions of the labor market and political and social changes (Henman and Fengar, 2006; Berkel and Moller, 2002). The reforms in welfare states have implemented by employing different approaches. Henman and Fengar claim that there are four types of welfare states reform: re-commodification, cost containment, recalibration and administrative reforms. Notably, re-commodification is about to enhance individual's participation in the labor market and restrict alternatives to paid-work by tightening eligibility or cutting benefits. (2006: 6) The range of these procedures is understood as activation measures or active labor market policies under the current reform of welfare states. Meanwhile, the two dimensions are observed as the transformation in European welfare states. Firstly, it is a set of deregulation, privatization and marketization, and other dimension is a shift in the key concept of social policies from social justice to economic investment (Walker, 2005). During the processes of welfare state transformation, the elements of citizenship have also been redefined. This change is paradoxical because some elements are enhanced but other elements are deteriorated. Conclusively, the new developments or reforms of welfare states may have increased the risk of poverty and social exclusion in society (Jensen and Pfau-Effinger 2005: 2).

### **1.2.2 Activation policy**

The 'activation' has played a leading role in welfare state reforms in Europe (Barbier, 2005; Jensen and Pfau-Effinger, 2005; Berkel and Moller, 2002). The main goal of activation policies is to promote active and self-reliant citizens in society. Thus the policy has attempted to shift the way of social protection from passive income transfer payments to active employment approach. A definition of active society and activation policy can be understood as a direct connection between social protection systems and labor-market participation (Larsen 2005: 136).

The concept of activation has both a broad and narrow sense and covers more than general description as all kinds of welfare-to-work programs (Barbier 2005: 113). There is no universally agreed way of conducting activation policies so it can be accepted in different ways and levels depending on differing political, historical, economical and

social backgrounds of each nation state. Concerning activation and active society, the definitions of citizenship, self-reliance, inclusion and exclusion are often treated as significant terms (Larsen 2005: 136). While one of the largest minority groups is unemployed, active engagement in paid work in the labor market is identified as a compulsory path for achieving citizenship under the current welfare states. According to Berkel and Moller (2002: 52), various approaches of activation are classified into four categories: welfare independence optimists, paternalism optimists, autonomy optimists, and activation optimists. For instance, the model of autonomy optimist suggests providing sufficient support in order to enable individuals to use their capacities. Thus, once they meet their needs, they will start actively make effort to be included in society. The approach of welfare dependence optimist attempts to abolish the form of welfare state since it believes state intervention is harmful to active individuals and their inclusion into society. Instead of welfare states, the role of market is important to provide decent paid work and family life. The form of activation optimists treats the individuals' willingness to participate in and contribute to society. This shares a similar ideology that the autonomy optimist has. Lastly, the model of paternalism optimists is the one which has widely influenced many active employment measures in Europe. This form enforces activation on people who are unwilling to make contribution in society.

### **1.2.3 Welfare state reform and activation policy for persons with disabilities**

“Disability and employment is a policy issue of truly global magnitude” (Lunt 2005: 166). According to OECD, disability policy has become a fundamental economic policy area in OECD countries. A growing number of people claiming their disabilities on medical condition causes controversial problems not only for individuals but also the labor market and social policies. While the number of people depending on disability and sickness benefits as their main income is expanding, but the employment rates of persons with disabilities remains low. A group of people with mental health problems has the lowest participation in the labor market, and also is the fastest expanding group of new disability benefit claimants. Behind this trend, there are several reasons such as developments of working environment and failures of education, health and benefit systems. (OECD n.d.)

Sarfati (2004) maintains two main reasons to conduct activation policies for disabled people. Firstly, disability is related with a wide range of social, economic and cultural exclusion and poverty which needs to be corrected. As the second reason, heavy constraints on public budgets and expenditures put a burden on the welfare systems, across the OECD countries. Sarfati (2004) comprehends that the activation improves both of the conditions; persons with disabilities and welfare states, but it needs to overcome a numbers of obstacles to attain success. Barnes and Roulstone claim that there is much evidence that the main theme of welfare reform and retraction are often driven by the concern that disability spending is a key drain on welfare expenditure (Barnes and Roulstone 2005: 19). Floyd and Curtis state that all European governments aim to increase the economic activity of persons with disabilities. The governments define that the expanding cost of long-term disability benefits claimed by disabled people is unsustainable and non-employment brings financial and health risks to them and their families (Riddell and Banks 2005).

## **2. Theoretical Part**

The fundamental debate starts with discussing the concept of citizenship because it is evident that contemporary social policies treat the notion of citizenship as a central concept. Therefore we have to carefully investigate how the concept perceives persons with disabilities, especially severely disabled people. The concept of active citizenship is also discussed by reflecting over the current reform of welfare states and active employment policies. This section concludes with arguing theories for social model of disabilities.

### **2.1 Theory of Citizenship and Disability**

#### **2.1.1 Persons with disabilities in the discussion of citizenship**

One universally agreed definition of citizenship has not been established yet (Rioux 2002: 216). It is a problem that there is no precise definition of citizenship while citizenship has become the key concept of a wide range of social science (Andersen 2005: 75). However, as the commonality, terms of rights, obligation, participation, responsibilities, engagement etc. can be frequently found over the recent discussion of citizenship. Beckett describes the discourses of citizenship as “democracy; liberty; justice; human rights discourses; the nature of polis; the nature of the ‘self’; ‘identity’; ‘difference’; and ‘struggle’” (2006: 22). According to Yuval-Davis and Werbner, the notion of citizenship has a contradictory character such as “universalism and particularism, freedom and order, individual rights and collective responsibilities, identity and difference, nation and individual” (1991: 2).

While the notion of citizenship has been frequently argued for and used as an important tool for contemporary politics, the subject of disabled people has been absent (Beckett 2006, Morris 2005, Carey 2009, Meekosha and Dowse 1997), and their perspectives also have been largely neglected and excluded from the discussion about citizenship (Morris 2005, Meekosha and Dowse 1997). While disability researchers have tried to include the account of citizenship into their discussions, it is not common that the issues of disability and disabled people are discussed by citizenship theorists (Lister 2007: 53). Even feminists, who challenge the dominant and traditional concepts of citizenship, do not include a group of persons with disabilities (Morris 2005: 5). In particular, people with physical and/or sensory impairment, mental health problems or learning disabilities have been exceptionally excluded from the debates (Carey 2009, Morris, 2005; Walmsley, 1991) and they have been traditionally recognized as incapable to attain the status of citizenship (Walmsley 1991: 220).

Yet disability is an essential element in understanding state and market agendas as well as political struggles around citizenship. Power and power relations are fundamental to the comprehension of the position of people with disabilities. To become disabled in contemporary Western society ensures a fundamental loss of political and economic power and status; people with disabilities are not players in the main game. Individuals born with disabilities, particularly developmental disabilities, have usually had very limited access to any form of effective participation within civil society and are regarded as having little/no role in any of the public,



private, domestic or familial spheres.

(Meekosha and Dowse 1997: 51)

### **2.1.2 Ideal Citizens vs. Second-Class Citizens**

The notion of citizenship involves the argument of boundaries between the public and private sphere (Monks, 1999; Yuval-Davis and Werbner, 1999; Rioux, 2002). Moreover, citizenship defines the citizens' rights and responsibilities and also both the state and individuals' responsibilities (Rioux 2002: 216). A number of authors describe the conception of citizenship as the condition of exclusion rather than inclusion (Beckett, 2006; Abberley, 2002; Rioux, 2002). The condition of inclusion in a society and full citizenship are identified by citizenship. To attain citizenship means to be a member of the society. In other words, definition of citizenship sets boundaries to who is included in and who is excluded from society. The people who do not fit the image of an 'ideal citizen' such as people of disadvantaged groups, are problematically recognized as 'failures' of society (Monks, 1999; Beckett, 2006; Abberley, 2002; Lister, 2007). The assumption about lack of capacities strongly stigmatizes and hampers them from accomplishing conditions combined with the image of the 'ideal citizen', such as living an independent life, achieving paid employment and 'responsible' parenting (Beckett 2006: 165). The official image of the 'ideal citizen' is culturally and socially determined in society where inequalities exist and the image is often identified by the dominant groups. The image of an 'ideal citizen' functions as legitimizing social inequality rather than reducing it. As more and more people are seen as failures in society by means of the image of the 'ideal citizen', the 'official' status of equal citizenship becomes meaningless because it fails to balance social inequality (Beckett 2006: 166, 167). For the case of persons with disabilities, their rights and citizenship have been limited because rights are only allowed people who can show a capacity to exercise them (Rioux 2002: 220). To obtain full citizenship, individuals are required to meet a necessary condition, which excludes disabled people (Rioux, 2002; Walmsley, 1999; Monks, 1999). While a citizen is required to have both capacity and rights to participate, persons with disabilities tend not to have either of them. Their capacity for participation is not only limited by legal, social and physical barriers resulting from the system of institution but also the lack of support from both the state and community (Rioux 2002: 217). Thus, disabled people are facing formidable barriers, which are ideologically and socially constructed, that hinders them from exercising their capacity of citizenship entitlements in society (Barton, 1993; Walmsley, 1991). Oliver (1992) states that disability is a denial of citizenship.

### **2.1.3 Socio-liberal, Libertarian and Republic models of Citizenship**

The liberal model of citizenship is described as a matter of status or contract. The notion of liberal citizenship can be classified into two traditions: socio-liberal and libertarian citizenship (Johansson and Hvinden 2007:40). It is also seen as a legal status (Johansson and Hvinden 2007: 33; Carey 2009: 22). The concept of liberal citizenship treats rights, obligation and membership of a community as significant. The idea of freedom is also vital for liberal citizenship. Therefore, a range of fundamental rights and liberties including religious, political, ethical and philosophical opinions are contained in the liberal citizenship (Johansson and Hvinden 2007: 34). Employment and the market play

key roles within the liberal citizenship. Monks identifies the liberal tradition of citizenship as “rights and obligation to the market relation and an obligation to work with a large contribution of voluntary sector and private insurance” (1999: 65). The difference in between social-liberal and libertarian is explained by the degree to which the state intervention can be accepted. While the model of libertarian strictly limits state intervention in order to avoid disruption of individuals’ liberties, socio-liberal is more open to state intervention, redistribution and broader perception of a citizen’s duties (Johansson and Hvinden 2007: 34).

T. H. Marshall (1950/ 2006) played an important role to constitute the concept of socio-liberal citizenship with three elements of individual rights: civil, political and social. These elements are treated as interdependent and they necessitate each other in order to develop extensive citizenship (Johansson and Hvinden, 2007: 36).

The civil element is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom- liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice. [...] By the political element I mean the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body. [...] By the social element I mean the whole range, from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society. The institutions most closely connected with it are the educational system and the social services.

(Marshall1950/ 2006: 30)

Marshall claims that citizenship and the capitalist class system contradict each other since on the one hand citizenship enables individual equality regarding the rights and duties and provides full membership of a community, but on the other hand capitalism intensifies inequality among individuals. In order to overcome these problems of social inequality created by capitalism, it is necessary to enhance the status of citizenship (1950/ 2006: 38). The role of education in social rights is also significant as there is a need to educate citizens to understand political democracy and to train them to be skilled labors. To acquire education and training is a social duty in a community because ultimately it enables citizens to fulfill their other duties (1950/ 2006: 33). While rights and duties are argued as a set, Marshall frequently stresses the significance of duty over rights (Johansson and Hvinden 2007: 35).

The norm of libertarian citizenship treats an individual as a consumer and a participant in the market rather than as a citizen. The concept of individuals’ freedom and a market are the most significant concepts for the libertarian citizenship. In order to enable citizens to fully exercise their freedom of choices in the market, the state intervention should be as minimal as possible (Johansson and Hvinden, 2007). From libertarian’s perspective, a market is identified as “a space where the individual can act freely and rationally following his or her own self-interest” (Johansson and Hvinden 2007: 37). While the model of socio-liberal strives to achieve equal opportunities among citizens, the model of libertarian understands inequality as something unavoidable regarding the nature of

capitalism (Johansson and Hvinden 2007: 38).

While the concept of liberal citizenship can be explained as the idea of constructing the outer framework of human life, the concept of republican citizenship can be understood as its inner core (Johansson and Hvinden 2007:40). The condition of republican citizenship focuses on individuals' direct participation. In the tradition of republican citizenship, an individual is not a citizen from birth but is able to attain citizenship through activities in a community. In addition, the public space and opportunity of community participation is seen as open for all, and all individuals are encouraged to participate in their community and exercise their rights. Moreover, republican citizens are required to be involved in the process of decision-making and deliberation related to public matters. Yet, the duty of participation in the republican tradition is considered to be problematic since the public sphere is not always equal to everyone. To become an ideal republican citizen it is also necessary to have competence to engage in the community (Johansson and Hvinden, 2007; Monks, 1999; Carey, 2009; Morris, 2005).

#### **2.1.4 Liberal and Republic Citizenship for Persons with Disabilities**

The current discussion about public services is grounded on the concept of autonomy and freedom in the neo-liberal perspective on citizenship (Morris 2005: 7). In this manner, citizens are seen as consumers in the market and they can exercise their freedom of choice. However, for disabled people who do not have full capacity to determine their choices, it is not simply sufficient to make them able to exercise self-determination by just being given a choice. In the tradition of liberal citizenship, states exist to secure individuals' liberty, yet it is expected not to violate their freedom of self-determination and independence. The liberal model of citizenship allows only individuals, who possess rationality and freedom, to exercise their rights. It assumes that only individuals with rationality and freedom are capable to make independent and appropriate decisions to enter a social contract in order to pursue their own interest. This means that liberalism determines individuals who are qualified to have legal equality and at the same time excludes those who are not (Carey, 2009; Lister, 2003). According to Carey, regarding the criteria of rationality for the liberal citizenship, persons with disabilities, especially with intellectual disabilities face a fundamental problem. While it is an achievable task to show rationality for physically disabled people by being activists or researchers, it can be extremely challenging for persons with intellectual disabilities. To resolve this they and their supporters strive to prove that low IQ does not automatically connects with absence of rationality, and in addition they insist that the adequate assist enables them to make rational decisions based on their interest. Furthermore, the criteria of independence are exceptionally problematic for disabled people who need some kind of support. The concept of self-determination associates with the idea of autonomy within the current debates on citizenship. The rights of self-determination have so far been emphasized by disabled people and their organizations. However, obstacles hindering persons not having full capacity to make decision, has remained. In order to overcome this, it is necessary to develop the concept of independence into the one within which assistance is an accepted way of achieving autonomy for persons with disabilities. For especially the case of persons without full capacity to make decision, we need to discuss how to not only remove the obstacles but also how to provide sufficient assistance to enable them to make self-decisions (Carey, 2009; Morris, 2005). Carey states that “[j]ust as the receipt of physical assistance should not preclude one from being seen as autonomous, neither should assistance in processing information or learning” (2009: 17).

The republican tradition treats engagement in a community as the key element of being the ideal citizen. According to Monks citizenship it is quality of participation as much as a formal status (1999: 67). Regarding participation of persons with disabilities in a community, certain hindrance remains throughout society within economical, social and political structures to avoid them from attaining citizenship (Rioux, 2002), for instance the barriers such as poverty, inadequate rights and lack of assistance to participation and discouraging attitude towards their participation (Morris, 2005). Consequently, current social conditions, legislation and stigma still exclude and hinder disabled people from engaging in society even though they have a desire to fulfill the duty of social participation.

### **2.1.5 Contribution and Responsibility vs. Rights for Persons with Disabilities**

The term of contribution is also significant for the concept of citizenship. It can be seen as the communitarian tradition to emphasize responsibilities and reciprocity, and with debates on the limits to social rights (Morris 2005: 6). Several researches insist that the notion of citizenship tends to stress the dimensions of obligations and responsibilities more than rights (Barton, 1993; Morris, 2005). According to Habermas's perception, the reason why the term of citizenship has returned to 'the center of stage' is that citizenship could be a strong support for the ideology of "the institutions of constitutional freedom are only worth as much as the population makes of them" (Beckett 2006: 1). Within the debate of citizenship, the importance of fulfilling responsibilities is strongly emphasized as the way to claim rights for individuals in society. Thus, an individual should not be entitled to be an equal citizen and to participate in society unless they can contribute to making an effective society (Morris 2005: 26, 27). Yet, considering the case of disabled persons, they tend to be assumed to be only recipients of welfare resource or individual burdens (Meekosha and Dowse, 1997; Barton, 1993; Carey, 2009; Morris, 2005). It is highly significant to mention that there is a complex paradox within the correlation among the notion of citizenship, contributions, social rights and persons with disabilities. Despite the fact that individuals are required to become someone deserving in order to attain citizenship, it is essential to exercise social rights in order to make contributions for certain groups of people who is lacking capacity such as persons with disabilities. Furthermore, this paradoxical mechanism marginalizes these groups and prevents them from achieving citizenship (Morris, 2005; Rioux, 2002).

Citizenship presumes equality between citizens, as well as equality in the way in which the state operates in relation to individuals. Citizens are presumed to be equal in rights. Thus, the state guarantees equality by marking rights and responsibilities equally available to all citizens. To ensure social rights, then, requires more than formal equality (equal treatment); it requires equality in practice- that is, equality of results.

(Rioux 2002: 217)

If it is true that citizenship is about equality regarding both rights and responsibility, it

should be equally guaranteed that every individual including disadvantaged groups has a way to attain citizenship.

Monks claims that exclusion from full citizenship means more than denial of access to social relations and share of resources. This also connects moral judgments about social acceptability. Moreover, this identifies disabled people and other disadvantaged groups as second-class citizens (Monks 1999: 71). In the traditional manner of citizenship, the presence of persons with disabilities is more than ignored and excluded: They are also denied. Therefore, it is essential to argue that the traditional mode of citizenship is not legitimate in order to consider persons with disabilities as a part of society and citizens. If current social policies and welfare state reform heavily rest on the concept of citizenship, it is vital to develop the concept into a more inclusive one, which can embrace persons with disabilities as a part of society. Beckett forcefully insists, “If citizenship is to be about justice, then unequal status must be fairly appointed according to unequal abilities. In reality, power differentials within society ensure that certain groups remain disadvantaged” (Beckett 2006: 166).

### **2.1.6 New challenges of citizenship**

Contemporary challenges of citizenship have attempted to alter the exclusive feature of citizenship to a more inclusive one (Lister, 2007; Abberley, 2002). The severe limitations of exercising citizenship rights have started to be addressed by different social groups who are marginalized in society and excluded from the debate on the traditional manner of citizenship (Walmsy 1991: 219).

Firstly, it is no longer possible to talk about a sense of citizenship that is ‘universal’. Secondly, understandings of citizenship based upon the idea of ‘national communities’ must also be placed in some doubt. Thirdly, whilst rejecting universalistic understandings of citizenship, it is equally difficult to develop a convincing theory of citizenship that relies upon the recognition of a stable set of ‘differences’.

(Beckett 2006: 61)

Andersen discusses to inequality of social class, gender and immigration in order to add other dimensions to the concept of citizenship. The matter of unemployment is particularly significant of a new challenge to citizenship within the current argument of citizenship (2005: 77).

## **2.2 Theory of Active Citizenship and Disability**

### **2.2.1 Emergence of active citizenship**

To survive the contemporary globalized world, welfare states are forced to conduct reformation and reduction of their own reach by shrinking tax-financed welfare provision and imposing more responsibility on individuals to protect their social security. Barbier (2005) analyzes the transformation of welfare states which has occurred under the general banner of activation and consequences of citizenship. The new image of citizenship,

which is namely active citizenship, is situated as a desirable goal for the recent trend of the welfare state reform. This is strongly influenced by the neo-liberal and communitarian values (Jensen and Pfau-Effinger 2005: 7). The elements of active citizenship are such as autonomy, self-responsibility, flexibility, geographical mobility, a professional education, civil engagement, political activism, volunteering and neighborhood associations etc (Pfau-Effinger 2005: 189). Although these public discourses emphasize the positive dimension of active citizenship, the concept was still strongly contested (Johansson and Hvinden, 2007: 32). The notion of active citizenship stresses a set of individuals' responsibility and choice and limited state intervention (Oskarsdottir 2007: 27).

The socio-liberal mode of active citizenship implies that citizens should be more active to fulfill duties instead of benefiting from state provision. This results in political practice such as active employment policies. The libertarian mode of active citizenship emphasizes citizens' liberty of choice as consumers in a mixed welfare market to protect their social security. According to republican tradition, citizens are required to commit and participate in civil society for their own interests. This constitutes new forms of democratic participation in civil society and governance structures in welfare states (Johansson and Hvinden 2007, Andersen 2005).

### **2.2.2 Active citizens and self-reliant citizens**

In recent trend of welfare state reform, the notion of active participation is mostly connected with paid employment as citizens' duties (Johansson and Hvinden 2007: 43). Hence, activation policies stand for employment but not for inclusion. The most significant goal of the policies is individuals' participation in the labor market, and more specifically it is their independence of social security (Berkel and Rouche 2002: 207). The concern of unemployment has been repeatedly addressed under the modern welfare states. At the same time, the notion of individuals' empowerment has been highlighted through discussion of citizenship and participation in the labor market. In Marshall's view, full employment is a fundamental requirement to attain social rights. This means that social security entitlements are closely connected to participation in the labor market (Andersen, 2005). In this sense, individuals cannot accomplish empowerment and equality without achieving full employment. This is problematic since there is a certain group of people who cannot reach full employment in a contemporary society. There is a clear tendency that active citizenship is particularly targeted on specific groups such as long-term unemployed, people depending on social assistance etc in the socio-liberal manner. "Active socio-liberal citizenship implies that people should not only enjoy the rights associated with citizenship but also fulfill their obligations"(Johansson and Hvinden 2007: 43). The new approach of welfare states does not only focus on enhancing paid employment but also re-emphasizes the arrangement of informal care. In order to be an active citizen, individuals are required to be active care givers as part of the new social rights and this brought revival of informal care within family or social-networks for instance schemes of parental leaves, childcare allowances and paid informal elder care (Jensen and Pfau-Effinger 2005: 7). Thus, the notion of active citizens implies to be self-reliant individuals.

### **2.2.3 Active citizens, inactive citizens or a hybrid**

Under the current reformation of welfare states disadvantaged people such as immigrants, women, the young generation, disabled people, elderly people, tend to need assistance

from states welfare provision and are driven into marginalization. The current manner of activation serves to intensify their status as inactive citizens rather than to activate them because of the fact that they need certain welfare support through state provision to sustain their life and fulfill their citizen responsibility. Especially persons with disabilities tend to be seen as passive citizens and also a key source of expanding demand for states provision while states strive to shrink and decrease their public spending due to their disabilities. Under the debate of active citizenship, they are clearly identified as ‘inactive’ citizens since “(t)he good citizen is embodied as male, white, active, fit and able, in complete contrast to the unvalued ‘inactive’ disabled Other” (Meekosha and Dowse 1997: 50). Meanwhile the active scheme has had a devastating impact on the social status of disadvantaged people, the unexpected way to combine different traditions of active citizenship can be observed. The activation reform has made people suffer by imposing a set of duties brought by the socio-liberal mode of active citizenship. However, this may be a catalyst for the action involved the republican sense of active citizenship such as social movements. “From the view of the marginalized, they are subjected to paternalistic policies that reduce their personal autonomy and freedom of choice, and some of these may resist the turn toward active socio-liberal citizenship, paradoxically promoting a turn to active republican citizenship” (Johansson and Hvinden 2007: 44).

## **2.3 Social model of disability**

### **2.3.1 Concept of the social model of disability**

The matter of ‘disability’ can be differently seen and defined depending on what kind of perspective we possess. The previous norm of disability, ‘medical model of disability’, was built on medical condition of people with disabilities. Instead, the concept called ‘social model of disability’ emerged through disabled people’s movement in Britain. The significant reinterpretation was accomplished as a desired result of the disabled people’s movement which has been established nationally and internationally. While the previous notion was only associated with individuals’ physical conditions, the new definition encompasses all kinds of impairments such as physical, intellectual and sensory. This means the social model can be identified as a more inclusive concept than the medical model. The remarkable difference between the medical and social model is the way to perceive and recognize persons with disabilities. While the medical model defines the cause of problems as biological error of disabled individuals, the social model sees disability as the product of society’s failure to respond to their needs. In other words, the social model explicitly focuses on the social and cultural conditions and obstacles disabling individuals with impairment rather than their impairments (Oliver, 2004; Barnes and Roulstone, 2005; Stanley, 2005). The social model became the principle notion which is widely used among different actors and institutions in order to enhance equality of disabled people, and it is the first central concept of the Disability Movement (Oliver 2004). In UK, the social model has helped to enhance politicization of numerous disabled people and to unify them, and provided a solid ground to develop the materialist account of social construction of disability (Barnes and Roulstone, 2005; Oliver, 2004). The social model was a catalyst for emergence of the rights and independent living movements during the 90’s. In addition, it serves as an analytical framework to explain issues of persons with disabilities caused by a specific perception of ‘disability’. Because the social model is a holistic approach describing problems experienced by persons with disabilities, it is a useful instrument to examine the disabling tendencies lying in a contemporary

society in order to create policies and practices which eliminate their problems (Oliver, 2004). Barnes and Roulstone explain the social model with “it is not a denial of the importance or value of appropriate individually based interventions, whether they are medically, re/habilitative, educational or employment-based, but draws attention to their limitations in terms of furthering disabled people’s empowerment and inclusion in a society constructed by ‘non-disabled people’ for ‘non-disabled’ people”(Barnes and Roulstone 2005: 319). One of the founders of the social model Mike Oliver declares, “(t)he social model of disability is a practical tool, not a theory, an idea or a concept” (2004: 11). He insists that in 21st century the social model has to be fully used for improvement of rights and lives of persons with disabilities more than just being the glue combining the Disability Movement. Rather than discussing the model, it is necessary to actually use it for establishing social and political change.

### **2.3.2 The social model of disability and employment**

The social model of disability pays attention to the connection in between disabled people’s difficulty in getting paid employment in the current labor market and how the concept of work is socially situated. It does not allow the problems of unemployment and underemployment of disabled people without considering barriers which are socially constructed such as physical, cultural, economical, ideological and environmental factors. The model demands drastic modification in the meaning of work since the current social setting only allows employment policies to make limited impact on the issues of employment among persons with disabilities (Barnes and Roulstone 2005: 319).

## **2.4 Analytical framework**

In order to conduct the empirical analysis for answering the research question, the framework is established based on reviewing theories of citizenship, active citizenship and social model of disability. As stated above, the research answers to the following research questions:

- *How are the citizenship rights of persons with severe disabilities interpreted in an activation policy?*
- *How do representations of their citizenship and active citizenship differ in Swedish and Japanese activation policies?*
- *How do the different interpretations of their citizenship rights affect Swedish and Japanese activation policies?*

The social model of disability provides the theoretical and ideological foundation underpinning the whole research. My perspective on considering problems of persons with disabilities closely corresponds to the social model of disability. As the social model of disability stands, my view recognizes that society creates problems and barriers making persons with disabilities suffer. Moreover, each member of society, who does not see individuals with disabilities as equal members of society, is the one



who develops the specific environment which does not allow persons with disabilities to enjoy their lives as much as non-disabled people do.

Firstly, I have a critical perspective on the traditional model of citizenship and active citizenship because they are not fully inclusive of all groups within our society. They are built on a limited assumption, made by people who dominate society and can easily attain the status of 'ideal citizens', without any consideration of marginalized people. Therefore, I disagree with what the traditional model of citizenship and active citizenship implies because it is an unchangeable fact that persons with disabilities exist in all societies and are fighting and struggling to overcome all barriers that hinder them from being 'ideal citizens'.

From this standpoint, five key elements: '**rights**', '**responsibility**', '**contribution**', '**independence**', and '**participation**' are chosen from citizenship and active citizenship theories to set up the analytical framework in order to advance the empirical analysis. Among the theories, these elements mutually relate, supplement and reinforce each other's concepts.

In discussion of citizenship and active citizenship, concepts of rights, responsibility and contribution are treated as a set. Unless an individual fulfills their responsibility, they are not entitled to attain any rights. As Rioux (2002) points out, this fixed set is problematic and hinders persons with disabilities to attain citizenship. Accessing rights is only allowed for qualified individuals who have performed their duties. However, there are specific populations, such as disadvantaged people including persons with disabilities, who cannot fulfill these obligations without exercising the benefits associated with social rights. Moreover, in theories of citizenship and active citizenship responsibilities and contributions tend to be emphasized more than rights (Barton, 1993; Morris, 2005). Thus, the strict condition of citizenship makes persons with disabilities without both citizenship and capacity to participate and make contributions.

In active citizenship, the concept of citizens' duties mainly means active participation in the labor market (Johansson and Hvinden 2007: 43). Hence, employment directly connects to contribution that individuals make and active citizens are supposed to be fully employed in order to access rights. This severely restricts people who do not have great employability, including persons with disabilities. Their employment remains hindered by numerous factors in society. The concept of active citizenship makes them even more inactive and marginalized and exposes them to the extreme vulnerability.

In addition, active citizens are expected to be independent and self-reliant. However, it is difficult for persons with disabilities to be completely independent and self-reliant as many of them require assistance to maintain their life. Therefore, as Carey (2009) and Morris (2005), I argue that these concepts are not applicable for the case of persons with disabilities and need to be modified to the ones which allows for having assistance for independence. In fact there is no single person who can get through all chapters of life without any support. As follows, there is no independence without any kind of assistance because this society is constructed on a mutually dependent relationship. Therefore, it is not abnormal that persons with disabilities also need some help and this does not determine that they are incapable to become independent. Instead, society's failure to provide persons with disabilities their independence should be identified as the result of inadequacy of necessary support from social settings.

Conclusively, as I stated above based on the five elements: '**rights**', '**responsibility**', '**contribution**', '**independence**', and '**participation**', the empirical analysis of

Japanese and Swedish active employment policies is carried out.

### 3. Methodology

In this research, active employment policies for persons with disabilities in Sweden and Japan will be analyzed beyond a national boundary. The central aims of this research are to comprehend how presence of severely disabled people and their citizenship rights are perceived and considered in each society. Then, it also examines how the specific perceptions of their citizenship rights affect the activation policies by revealing the implications of the policies. Simultaneously, it is shown how political, social and cultural settings between Sweden and Japan can differently translate the concept of disabled people's citizenship into politics. To sum up, this research is a so called a cross-national comparative policy analysis focusing on discourses of citizenship and active citizenship of persons with disabilities. As a fundamental method to analyze a policy, a "what's the problem represented to be" approach is adopted.

#### 3.1.1 "What's the problem represented to be?" approach (A WPR approach)

In order to conduct this research, I particularly use the 'what's the problem represented to be?' approach established by Carol Less, Bacchi (2009). A policy is assumed to be something good. Or, there is an assumption that a policy maker finds a 'problem' which needs to be fixed and then formulates a policy in order to solve the problem. Although most policies do not clearly address that there is a problem, there are implied problems sitting behind these policies. This is where the 'what's the problem represented to be?' (WPR) approach takes place (Bacchi 2009).

Bacchi claims that "[r]ather than reacting to 'problems', governments are active in the creation of policy 'problems'. [...] (T)his is an exercise in manipulation or misrepresentation" (Bacchi 2009: 1). A WPR approach attempts to disclose how the 'problem' is represented or constituted in a particular policy but not to identify real problems. By examining the way of representing a 'problem' in a policy, it is revealed the way in which issues is thought about is revealed (Bacchi 2009). A WPR approach is a critical analysis more than descriptive one. It involves critical reflection on the problem representations identified within policies (Bacchi 2009: 39).

In a WPR approach, discourse plays an important role since policies are developed on discourses. Bacchi understands discourse as 'meaning system' and a policy is about 'meaning creation.' Thus a WPR approach is keen to discover how meaning is created in policies. Although a norm of discourse can be different depending on traditions, a WPR approach perceives discourse as knowledge which is socially constructed and influences people's ways of thinking about the world (Bacchi 2009: 35).

A WPR approach is groundbreaking because it challenges three kinds of cross-boundary issues. Firstly, the approach aims to challenge national/ international boundaries and it established a new means of thinking about a comparison of social and political changes beyond space and time. In the approach, to think about connections across borders is highly recommended so such as cross-national and cross-cultural comparisons are treated as useful. Moreover, it also challenges policy specialization. The approach encourages extending the way of considering policy across specific areas and rather than recommending looking at linkage in between different policy areas such as welfare to health, labor to welfare etc. Lastly, a WPR approach aims to encompass not only government but also full members who are involved in governing such as professionals

and social scientists for its analysis (Bacchi 2009: xx). The focus of this approach is on the knowledge of those professionals and their influence on policies rather than their roles as participants in the process of policy formulation (Bacchi 2009: 26). A WPR approach is a systematic methodology for policy analysis to investigate kinds of perspectives placed in government policies. In order to complete this approach, following the six questions are required to be applied to each research.

1. What's the 'problem' represented to be in a specific policy?
2. What presuppositions or assumptions underlie the representation of the 'problem'?
3. How has this representation of the 'problem' come about?
4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be thought about differently?
5. What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?
6. How/ where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced disseminated and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted and replaced?

(Bacchi 2009)

The first question reveals how the issue is seen by policy makers. To solve a particular matter, there are different approaches to deal with and each approach shows how it represents the problem. The approach chosen as a policy response is determined by how policy makers look at the matter. Thus, the policy is a way of problem representations. In order to identify dominant problem representations, Bacchi suggests to focus on how resource is allocated because by looking at the way of budgeting; how policy makers attempt to work on the matter and what the problem is perceived as needs to be solved within the matter. Yet, it is possible that a policy contain more than one problem representation and different types of problem representations may be contradictory to each other. The goal of question one is to identify implied problem representations in specific policies or policy proposals (Bacchi 2009: 4).

The goal of question two is to identify the assumptions underlying the implied problem representations that we attain at the stage of question one. The task is not to find out the policy makers' assumptions or beliefs but rather to identify the assumptions or presuppositions embedded in the problem representations (2009: 5).

Question three aims to achieve two goals. First of all, it seeks to identify the specific conditions which develop the particular problem representations. The second aim is to recognize how these particular problem representations turn out to be dominant within policies. In other words, it attempts to examine that the process or practice causes the specific problem representations in policies (Bacchi 2009: 10). Through accomplishing its objects, it is possible to highlight the power relations that successfully affect creation of the particular problem representations and defeat others (Bacchi 2009: 11).

Question four aspires to identify how the certain matters and perspectives are not represented and discussed within a particular problem representations. This illustrates how some certain matters are misrepresented and simplified. The practice of this question is significant in order to emphasize tensions, disagreements, limitations or imperfections

within a way of representing a 'problem' in a policy (Bacchi 2009: 13).

It is disclosed how a specific problem representation is prevailing but others are invisible (2009: 14).

Question five seeks to highlight the effects lead by the particular problem representations. A WPR approach takes for granted that some problem representations cause more problems towards some social groups than the other groups. In other words, while the specific problem representations may harm some groups, they may benefit the others. According to Bacchi, the question emphasizes that the term of effect used here does not mean a consequence of a policy since a WPR approach does not attempt to examine an outcome as the method of evaluation does (Bacchi 2009:13). Question five provides three kinds of ways to test the process of problem representations by examining discursive effects, subjectification effects and lived effects which are interconnected and corresponding. First of all, by analyzing the discursive effects it is highlighted that if a particular problem representation can make us believe that there is the only one way of thinking about an issue, it is necessary to know that there are other dimensions of the issue at the same time (Bacchi 2009: 40). Secondly, a WPR approach exposes how subjects are created in problem representations (Bacchi 2009: 41). To examine subjectification effects is a difficult task. It is necessary to examine how the 'problem' is represented in particular policies, and how those problems are represented to be 'troublesome' (Bacchi 2009: 42). As the last task, lived effects are investigated in order to identify the relationship between discourses and non-discursive factors. Moreover, through this action it is disclosed how discourse influences people's daily lives because discourse analysis has a tendency to overlook those effects. It is important to maintain that these types of effects analysis contained in a WPR approach offers a new type of policy evaluation. By investigating the process of particular problem representations, outcomes and impacts of policies can be revealed (Bacchi 2009: 43).

The ultimate goals of question six can be divided into two parts. First of all, processes or conditions of creating dominant problem representations are keen to be identified. Then, the question strives to highlight possible resistance against the problem representations considered to be harmful. Here, discourses served as resources for re-problematization (Bacchi 2009: 19).

As mentioned above, a WPR approach encourages employing a cross-cultural comparative method in order to conduct extensive investigation. Unlike other comparative approaches ask why differences occur, a comparative research employing a WPR approach specifically seeks how they represent particular problems in each context. Thus, the approach is helpful to investigate how each policy differently represents specific problems in different cultural settings. By adopting a WPR approach for a comparative study, it identifies processes and similarities in the way of governance across contextual boundaries meanwhile it highlights the contextual factors making a difference (Bacchi 2009: 44).

There are several valid reasons why a WPR approach is chosen for this research. First of all, what the approach strives to achieve is precisely corresponding to my research goals which are to disclose how persons with severe disabilities are identified in society and how perceptions of their presence appear in policies. By examining how their citizenship and active citizenship are represented in active labor market policies, the research seeks to comprehend what kinds of impacts occur on them, their lives and their rights. My ultimate focus is on the perceptions that the policies have about persons with disabilities. Thus the research examines how the activation policies identify them and their employment issues

and also attempts to solve the issues. In addition, this research intends to draw attention to knowledge of, ideas about and insights into disabled people and their issues which are grounded in policy making rather than looking at their actual problems in society. Furthermore, a WPR approach is selected by the reason that it is suitable for a cross-national/ cultural comparison. This seems to be also appropriate for this research proposing to encompass research spheres in Sweden and Japan. This research conducts a comparative study by employing a WPR approach in order to identify how each active employment policy represents persons with disabilities, how the ways of these problem representations are similar and dissimilar across different contexts and how they make impacts on persons with disabilities in different ways in each society.

### **3.1.2 Comparative research method**

A research can be called a cross-cultural/ national and comparative study if two or more societies, cultures or countries are compared in the respect of the same ideas or phenomena in order to explain them or/ and generalize from them. The comparative research usually strives to collect data regarding research aims within different settings and compare them with the purpose of developing a deeper understanding of social reality (Hantrais and Mangen 1996). Comparative research can provide different goals such as contextual description, hypothesis-testing, prediction and classification (Landman 2000: 4). Among these objectives, this research strives to accomplish the aim of contextual description since this research is keen to highlight how Swedish and Japanese political contexts differently perceive and translate the discourses of disabled people's citizenship into politics and how this can yield results in different ways.

### **3.2 Selection of case**

This research focuses on the cases within two countries: Sweden and Japan and analyzes both ways of conducting active employment policies for persons with disabilities. The two countries seem to widely differ in various aspects such as cultural, geographical, political, social and historical aspects. However, Wilkinson and Pickett point out in their book, "The spirit level" (2009), that Japan and Sweden are the most similar in developed countries in terms of establishing economic equality in their societies although their ways of achieving the greater equality are largely different (2009: 183). In Sweden, which is the most highly developed welfare state, the equality is promoted through redistributive taxes and benefits. In contrast, Japan achieves its high degree of equality in society through a greater equality of market incomes and salaries before taxes and benefits but not so much redistribution. The proportions of public social expenditure and national income in Japan are widely different from the Swedish ones (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009: 183, 184). While Sweden is described as the universal welfare state, the Japanese welfare system is constructed by strong dependency on employer and family. On the one hand, the Swedish welfare system, which is supported by high taxes, broadly distributes high levels of welfare support through state provision. On the other hand, Japanese welfare system strictly limits state's responsibility as a welfare provider but places heavy responsibility on family and companies. Even though both countries do not share much similarity within their welfare systems, "the distribution of wealth in Japan has been almost as egalitarian as in Sweden" (Steinmo 2010: 88). According to Miyamoto, it is highly interesting to compare and analyze Swedish and Japanese welfare states because of the combination of similarities and dissimilarities in these countries. Despite the clear difference in between

these welfare states, it is incredible that both Sweden and Japan have achieved an extremely low unemployment rate compared to other industrialized countries, especially during the 70's. Furthermore, both countries shared the experience of growth of their unemployment rate during the 90's; while the Swedish unemployment rate rapidly increased, the Japanese one also gradually rose (Miyamoto 2008: 23, 24). Sweden has accomplished the flat condition of employment across borders of different industries and full employment including female workers by activation policies and wage arrangements. Japan adopted different employment systems and policies depending on each industry and mainly concentrated on employing male workers as breadwinner and attempted to ensure their employments. Japanese labor market enhanced long-term employment and encouraged enriching the corporate welfare. As a consequence of this, male workers started being responsible for their whole household and their salaries became the families' only income (Miyamoto 2008: 27). In other words, the employment system has partially functioned as a welfare system itself in Japan (Miyamoto 2008: 31). Because of the traditional family care in Japan, public care systems for children and elderly people had been immature until recently (Miyamoto 2008: 32).

Conclusively, on account of the fact that Sweden and Japan have both remarkable correspondences and differences, it is highly significant to examine the Swedish and Japanese activation policies to understand how different national contexts affect the ways of perceiving notions of citizenship and active citizenship of persons with disabilities.

### **3.3 Selection of texts**

For the empirical analysis of a WPR approach, texts that should be selected are fairly flexible. In a WPR approach, the process of choosing text is already recognized as the start of research. "To choose policies to examine is itself an interpretive exercise. That is, you will already be involved in analysis when you select a policy or policies for examination" (Bacchi 2009: 20). Since this research has already set a focus point on implications of the active employment policies in Sweden and Japan, text material related to the topic such as legislation or government reports regarding the policies needs to be gathered at the outset. For the analysis of Japanese activation programs, the law called "*The law for supporting independence of persons with disabilities act*" (*Shou gai shya ji ri tsu shi en hou*)(SIPD), which was enforced in 2006, is chosen since I identify it as equivalent to a part of activation policies. Furthermore, '*A 5 year promoting plan from welfare to employment*', which sits under '*A strategy plan for development*' is also included in order to understand how the government sees the employment issues of disadvantaged groups. Following SIPD, the promoting plan was established in 2007 in order to enhance employment of persons with disabilities (Cabinet Office, 2007a). For the analysis of the Swedish activation programs, '*Sweden's Action Plan for Employment*' (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications: 1999, 2000 and 2002) '*Sweden's strategy report for social protection and social inclusion*' (2007, 2008) and '*Sweden's national reform programmes 2011*' (Government Offices of Sweden, 2011) are selected. In addition, three articles from different newspapers are adopted for the analysis since they are relevant to convey how the problem representations possessed by each activation programs are perceived in public. This process is important to highlight other perspective towards issues which are problematized in policies. For the Japanese case, due to the limited amount of documents written in English, I translated Japanese documents to English in order to vividly and accurately convey the real picture of Japanese activation programs. For the Swedish case,

all documents, which I need, are available in English.

### **3.6 Difficulty and Limitation of Analysis**

One of the main possible difficulties is that I am enforced to translate most of the documents that I use for the analysis of the Japanese case due to the limited number of English material. This might create doubts about the legitimacy of the translated document concept and context, as I'm not a professional translator. However, by the fact that I am native Japanese speaker and fully aware of the issue, I believe that I can convey a valid interpretation.

As noted above, the research method, which I employ here, does not seek the actual outcomes of policies. Therefore, the goal is not to illustrate ultimate results of Swedish and Japanese activation policies in this research, and this may be understood as the limitation of the research. However, rather than focusing on the outcomes, my contribution with the research is the comprehension of how issues of citizenship and employment of persons with disabilities are differently problematized, considered and presented in each policy within different national contexts.



## 4. Analysis

### 4.1 The Japanese active employment measures

#### Question 1: What's the problem represented to be?

As noted above, SIPD is the chosen focus in the analysis of Japanese activation programs. The law was introduced under the Liberal Democratic government, which stayed in power over 50 years. It officially started being enacted in October 2005 and was fully enforced in April 2006. In general, the law established a system, which provides welfare service in a holistic manner by removing barriers in between different types of disabilities. The general description of the law states that it conducts various reforms in order to enhance independence, community living and employment of persons with disabilities (Cabinet Office 2005*a*, 2006*a* and 2007*a*). The law aimed to achieve the following five goals.

1. Unifying the systems of providing welfare service across different types of disabilities

(The law establishes a new system, which equally provides welfare service for persons with disabilities across different categories of disabilities)

2. Creating a society which *increases employment of persons with disability*

(The law *encourages the employment of persons with disability, who wants to work*, by establishing programs, which *mobilize them to enter paid employment*)

3. Enhancing use of the social resources for welfare services

(The law enhances deregulation of social resources such as free spaces to enable persons with disability to easily access welfare services.)

4. Simplifying the system of accessing welfare service

(The law simplifies the structure of welfare services in order to enable persons with disabilities to have more equal access to welfare services based on the amount they need.)

5. Reinforcing the system of welfare provision by introducing a *fair* system, *which enables people to equally share the cost of welfare services*, in order to deal with the problem of *expanding service costs*

5.1 Establishing a *fair payment system* for welfare services depending on the amount of service that each individual uses compared with their income

(When persons with disabilities use welfare services, the law *demand*s of them to carry an *equal burden* to pay the cost of welfare services according to the amount that they use compared with their incomes.)

5.2 Clarifying the government's responsibility for the particular service

(The system of welfare services is restructured in order to define the financial responsibility that the government bears.)

(Ministry of Labour, Health and Welfare 2005*a*; emphasis added)

The goals of 2 and 5.1 are especially relevant in order to discuss Japanese activation measures for disabled people. Three major ‘problems’ are represented in SIPD. The first problem is an issue of unemployment among persons with disabilities. The second problem is the expanding cost of their welfare service. These two problems can be identified as a concern of expanding ‘welfare dependency’ among them. The third problem is that persons with disabilities do not appropriately bear the cost of welfare services that they use. Within SIPD, this is expressed as a problem that they do not take individual responsibility or obligation.

**Question 2: What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the ‘problem’?**

A serious concern about increasing welfare dependency is identified within SIPD. Based on its goal 5.1, 10% of the service cost started being imposed on welfare recipients (Cabinet Office 2006*b*: 86). This is one of the major changes caused by SIPD for welfare recipients: people with disabilities that need welfare service to support and sustain their lives. The main purpose to impose 10 % service cost is to restrain the amount of used welfare service.

After SIPD was enacted in 2006, ‘*A 5 year promoting plan from welfare to employment*’ was adopted under ‘A strategy plan for development’ in 2007 (Cabinet Office 2006*c*: 7). The strategy is established with the aim to even out differences within society by improving living conditions of disadvantaged groups in the labor market. In particular, the plan focused on three marginalized groups: people with disabilities, people with social benefits and single mothers. Moreover, it aspired to advance three groups: people who lack opportunities of developing skills, who intend to be independent from social support but struggle with it, and small to middle size of companies aiming to increase wage and productivity but face difficulties.

The promoting plan from welfare to employment strives to *improve independence* and the quality of living conditions for people on social assistance through *employment* while *the social safety net will still be ensured*. To accomplish these goals, this plan will be enforced meanwhile networks across different institutions and industries will be reinforced.

(Cabinet Office, 2007*a*; emphasis added)

The promoting plan considers it important to enhance these three groups to, through employment, be more individually independent rather than welfare dependent. Under Japanese activation measures, there is an implicit assumption that persons with disabilities should be more independent and self-reliant by attaining work. By bearing 10% service

cost, they are also expected to be responsible individuals in society. The financial burden could be assumed to function as an incentive to increase their employment. However, there is a certain group of people who face a great problem because of introducing 10% cost burden of welfare service by cause of their disabilities. Before SIPD was implemented, persons with disabilities were able to unreservedly request and receive as much welfare service as they need because they were not obliged to share the service cost. However, SIPD drastically changed the recipients' conditions to determine how much and what kind of welfare service they request and receive because it always demands them to bear 10% of the service cost (Shiomi and Hamabata 2006). Although a special measure, which reduces the amount of payment for low-income households, was introduced, it is still not comprehensive (Shiomi and Hamabata 2006: 41). In Japan, not single individuals but each household is a subject of means test for social service. Therefore, if a member of their family, who share a same household with a disabled family member, has a certain income, the disabled person is not considered to be lacking financial resources (Ministry of Labour, Health and Welfare, 2005*b*). While a number of persons with disabilities are forced to rely on and live with their families<sup>1</sup> due to the inadequate welfare system and support, their families also face a wide range of difficulties to support them. It is a complex paradox that the persons who has more severe disability have to pay more because they usually needs more welfare assistance even though they often have low income or do not have a capacity to work. Underlying this matter, there is a presupposition that if persons with severe disabilities cannot pay the 10% cost of welfare service, either their families have to pay the cost or have to take care of them without any social support. Moreover, beyond the concept of self-reliance as an individual person, the family responsibility and family dependence are emphasized. It is also assumed that the issue of care for persons with disabilities should be solved in a private sphere.

To sum up, the ideas of equal and responsibility underpin SIPD. In general, all individuals are presupposed to be more independent and self-reliant. This explicitly means that people should to be independent from the state. Moreover, people are forced to be more responsible for themselves and also their families. Without exception, persons with disabilities also are expected to be equally responsible to bear the cost of welfare service by actively participating in the labor market. It is considered to be unfair that they access social service if they remain being only welfare recipients. The element of active citizenship is clearly identified within SIPD; only individuals, who have fulfilled their responsibilities, are allowed to attain citizens' rights.

### **Question 3: How has this representation of the 'problem' come about?**

The key problem representations of 'welfare dependency' and 'responsibility' reflect the concept of active citizenship. In SIPD, the significance of responsibilities is emphasized while the notion of rights is understated. These problem representations have been developed under the Japanese welfare state.

Japan is a complex case to apply the welfare regime model, established by Esping Andersen (1990). Japanese welfare state can be understood as the corporatist model by only looking at the welfare system since it still deeply depends on informal family care as other countries belonging to corporatist regime do. However, the amount of social

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<sup>1</sup> In Japan, the total number of persons with disabilities is approximately 7.44 million, and 92% of them (6.89 million) are living with their families (Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities, 2011).

expenditure is extremely limited compared to those of Germany and France which are corporatist countries. In this sense, Japan should be located in the liberal regime. In spite of this, the employment rate of Japan had been stable as countries in the social-democratic regime until the 90s' (Miyamoto 2008: 17, 18). The development of a Japanese welfare state started in the 70s', which was relatively late comparing to Western welfare states. Immediately after developing welfare systems, Japan faced an oil shock and the Japanese welfare state was forced to shift its way of welfare provisioning from raising social expenditure to increasing the number of employment through providing a large number of public constructions. To sum up, a company and family have mainly performed as welfare providers in the Japanese welfare state. Therefore the issues of care had always been considered to be internal or individual matters within households, which resulted in that care systems for children and elderly were poorly developed until quite recently. However, once the traditional model of welfare through a company and family started collapsing due to the social change, the risk of low income groups suddenly arose because the social security net was not sufficiently secured in Japan (Miyamoto 2008: 33).

In middle of the 90s', Japan, like other welfare states, started conducting welfare state restructuring. During this period, the former structure of employment drastically changed and the amount of welfare expenditure was even more reduced. The traditional system of long-term employment and corporate welfare deteriorated and the size of public construction was diminished. In contrast, the great demand for ensuring social security started growing in order to cope with major crisis caused by these changes of social structure (Miyamoto 2008: 61, 62).

Miyamoto points out two different movements underpinning the reform of Japanese welfare state: a small government model and a universal model. Although the universal model was originally introduced in order to combat the small government model, the small government model ultimately became dominant within the transformation of the Japanese welfare state. Consequently, this also influenced an area of a disability policy. Firstly, the small government model, which is partially influenced by UK and USA, was about to reduce the amount of state provisions for social support by highlighting the shortage of national budget, and also to increased individual burden. This led the beginning of fundamental reforms in pension, medical care, social assistance and child benefits systems in Japan. Secondly, the universal model attempted to transform Japanese welfare systems into a more universal one such as the Scandinavian welfare states. In order to increase the quality of welfare service the universal model enhanced privatization. The privatization caused an increase in the cost burden, imposing upon individuals, but a decrease in demand for welfare services from the low-income group. As a result of this, the amount of public expenditure on social services was reduced (Miyamoto 2008:144). It is a contradiction that both models resulted in the same outcome while the universal model was established to be opposed to the small government model. Without exception, these two models of welfare state reform also influenced persons with disabilities. Under the universal model, a system of service support fees (*Shi en hi seido*) was introduced for individuals with disabilities in 2003. (Cabinet Office 2006b: 81) The system aimed to provide more extensive service to recipients and to enable them to choose services individually as customers according to their necessities. As a consequence, the number of recipients to access welfare services increased and thereby also the cost, which caused the severe lack of a revenue source. In order to deal with this situation, SIPD was introduced in 2006 under the small government model with the intention of limiting and reducing the amount of services supplied by raising the individual cost burden. SIPD is a part of the activation and work-fair program but it did

not succeed to enhance employment among persons with disabilities. Instead, it only functions as regulation of welfare services because of the lack of employment support and undeveloped working environment for persons with disabilities (Miyamoto 2008:157, 163). Subsequently, this increased their dependency on their families and social, financial and physical insecurity since SIPD strictly limited their access to welfare services, which is a necessity for their fundamental living.

Overall, Japanese welfare state has always treated issues regarding welfare as an individual or family matter, and also had a tendency to restrict public welfare expenditure. It is observable that these characters are even further intensified in SIPD.

**Question 4: What is left unproblematic in this representation of the ‘problem’? Where are the silences? Can the ‘problem’ be thought about differently?**

A particular problem representation can limit the visibility of other crucial problems’ existence. Under the specific problem representations within SIPD, persons with disabilities are considered to be the main cause for the problems of welfare dependency and unemployment by being passive, irresponsible and lacking employment skills. However, it is highly possible that these problems are created by other factors. In Japan, the total amount of persons with disabilities is approximately 7.44 million and the amount of persons with disabilities who were employed by companies was 342,973 in 2010. Considering the total number of persons with disabilities, only a very limited number of them have employment in the regular labour market. The size of Japanese activation programs is extremely small and, the amount of public expenditure on the active and passive labour market programs is one of the smallest among OECD countries. In addition, the public expenditure has barely changed between 1998 and 2008, and such low degree of total expenditure on the active and passive measures can be compared to Korea and the USA (OECD 2010: 42, 43).

In particular, it is still difficult to attain employment for persons with severe disabilities in the regular labor market. The employment policies has mainly focused on persons with physical disabilities (OECD 2010: 40). In addition, employment support for persons with disabilities is still extremely limited, especially for severe disabilities (Miyamoto 2008: 157). Although Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare explains the national vocational schools for persons with disabilities as the facility for persons with severe disabilities who cannot access regular vocational trainings (Ministry of Health, Labour, Welfare n.d.), most of their offered courses are for people with only physical disabilities (National Vocational Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities 2011a: 3, 2011b: 2, 2011c: 3). The majority of jobs in the regular labor market are only provided for persons with slight disabilities<sup>2</sup> (Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities, 2011). In addition, it is common that disabled people who work at sheltered employment earn a very small amount of salary (Cabinet Office 2007b). On that account, it is more reasonable to consider that the current social environment hinders the employment and independence of persons with severe disabilities instead of seeing that they are themselves the ones who is creating a problem of unemployment. Furthermore, it is important to identify that there are people who definitely need social assistance as they have an extremely limited capacity to develop their employability due to their conditions

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<sup>2</sup> In 2010, the number of persons with disabilities who were employed by companies was 342,973. Among them, 79% was physically disabled people, 17% was intellectually disabled people, and 2% is mentally disabled people. (Ministry of Welfare, Labour 2010: 2)

such as severe disabilities, even though they desire to attain employment.

### **Question 5: What effects are produced by this representation of the ‘problem’?**

#### **Discursive effects**

The discursive contraction of SIPD leave the unemployed with disabilities as the ‘problem’ by reason of their lack of employability and responsibility. However, these specific discourses of SIPD limit consideration of persons with disabilities who can suffer from the destructive effect of the policy. In fact, they hinder the understanding of other factors behind the problems of unemployment and welfare dependency among persons with disabilities and also the creation of other solutions for them, which would benefit persons with disabilities instead of harming them.

#### **Subjectification effects**

In SIPD, policy makers recognize welfare recipients, who are persons with disabilities, as the problem. Moreover, persons with disabilities are seen to be a financial burden on the government’s budget and as not deserving entitlements unless they fulfill citizens’ responsibilities.

#### **Lived effects**

The identified problem representation of 'welfare dependency' underpins that persons with disabilities should be responsible for their own issues. Based on these specific problem representations, SIPD horizontally imposed 10% cost burden upon all disabled people for their welfare services even though it is obvious that incomes of the groups such as persons with severe disabilities wont increase since it is not possible for them to attain well paid jobs in the contemporary labor market. This made the majority of severely disabled people face extreme difficulties to access welfare services, which they require in order to maintain their life. In addition, this directly leads the increase of a range of burdens for the families of persons with disabilities because SIPD implies the idea that if persons with disabilities cannot carry their responsibilities, their families are the one who should bear their duties and take care of them. In fact, the research done by an organization called Kyosaren (*Kyou sa ren*)<sup>3</sup> “A national association of sheltered employment” in 2010 shows that SIPD raised physical, mental and financial burden on the families of persons with disabilities (Kyosaren 2010).

### **Question 6: How/ where is the presentation of the ‘problem’ produced, disseminated and defended? How can it be questioned, disrupted and replaced?**

Tokyo News Paper (*Tou kyo shi n bu n*) published in 2009 July has an article with the headline ‘How we support independence of persons with disabilities’

“*The law for supporting independence of persons with disabilities act*” is called the name ‘The law for blocking independence of persons with disabilities’ because it increased a financial burden on persons with

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<sup>3</sup> It is a national association of sheltered employment in Japan.

disabilities. [...] It is significant to consider the way to change this law in order to actually help their independence.”

(Tokyo News Paper 2009/7/31)

Asahi News Paper (*A sa hi shi n bu n*) published in 2010 July has another article with the headline ‘Stop making minorities suffer’

“Following SIPD enacted in 2006, our income was drastically reduced because we had to pay the service cost although my disabled son’s salary is originally very low. [...] The amount of service payment is higher than his salary. Therefore if he works at the sheltered employment, he has to pay more service cost than his salary. In the end, he started choosing to stay home instead.”

(Asahi News Paper 2010/07/30)

These article identify SIPD as harmful to persons with disabilities and their independence. Thus, the particular problem representations underpinning SIPD are not promoted but rather considered to be problematic and needs to be replaced. Furthermore, by highlighting devastating effects of SIPD, other ways to thinking about problems of welfare dependency and unemployment can be presented.

## 4.2 The Swedish active employment measures

### Question 1: What’s the problem represented to be?

The following policy documents are employed for the analysis of Swedish active employment programs: ‘Sweden’s Action Plan for Employment’ (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications: 1999, 2000 and 2002) ‘Sweden’s strategy report for social protection and social inclusion 2006-2008’ (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 2007), ‘Sweden’s strategy report for social protection and social inclusion 2008-2010’ (Government Offices of Sweden, 2008) and ‘Sweden’s national reform programmes 2011’ (Government Offices of Sweden, 2011).

*Employment* provides *a firm foundation for participation* in society. An education system that works well is also of key importance if people are to be able to acquire the knowledge they *need for active citizenship*. [...] Entry to the labour market also provides *access to* those parts of *the social insurance system*. [...] Young people, *people with disabilities* and people with a foreign background generally have *a lower employment rate* and are at *greater risk of having little contact with the labour market*.

(Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 2007: 16; emphasis added)

In *recent years* the labour-market situation for *people with disabilities* has *worsened* in some respects. *The proportion of long-term employment has fallen*. There are *wide disparities* between different groups of *disabled*

*people* with regard to the situation in the labour market.

(Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 2007: 17; emphasis added)

***People with mental illness and people with mental disabilities are among those who face the greatest challenges in entering the labour market and thus participating in society.***

(Government Offices of Sweden 2011: 27; emphasis added)

The government has taken several measures to ***bring more people with disabilities into the labour market***. During the term of government, the Government is investing SEK 1000 million extra in ***Samhall*** and ***wage subsidies***. The addition of funds 2008 is SEK 558 million, which is equivalent to just over 2000 wage subsidy places and around 1000 places in ***Samhall***.

(Government Offices of Sweden 2008: 15; emphasis added)

The government has set up the social justice target that ***the number dependent on social welfare grants is to be halved*** between 1999 and 2004.

(Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications 2000: 20; emphasis added)

It is a strong trend that more and more disabled people, especially people with mental disabilities, are left out of the labor market and this is a key problem in Swedish social and employment policies. The Swedish welfare considers active engagement in the labor market as important citizens' duties and responsibilities. Therefore, the government tries to provide a range of employment support for persons with disabilities. Relating to the issue of their unemployment, an increasing number of welfare dependents are represented as a financial problem, which needs to be solved. Overall, disabled people's participation, rights, welfare dependency and responsibilities are identified as key problems.

## **Question 2: What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the 'problem'?**

Sweden has a generous welfare system encompassing all individuals in society. To sustain such a big welfare state, people are strongly encouraged to actively participate in the labor market and pay taxes. This is regarded as citizens' duties. Therefore, active employment measures have been strongly promoted to increase the employment rate of different groups. Unemployment is considered as exclusion from not only the labor market but also from society. It is clearly identified that critical words such as 'employment', 'active', and 'independent' underpin the Swedish activation. Furthermore, it is discouraged to be welfare dependent without working and paying taxes or not even trying to develop employability.



The Swedish welfare system is universal and covers the whole population. It is financed through compulsory charges and taxes. This means that ***everyone pays towards welfare and everyone benefit from it***, not just the ones who have the greatest needs. A universal system has a great redistributing impact in leveling out financial sources and living conditions.

(Government Offices of Sweden 2007: 8; emphasis added)

Activation is an important principle in universal welfare policy. Work is the basis of welfare and is also the foundation on which people's personal and social development rests. Swedish labour-market policy is notable for ***being active, and work or some form of education and training is always preferable to allowances***. A long period of unemployment ***leads to isolation and lack of participation in society***.

(Government Offices of Sweden 2007: 8; emphasis added)

A group of persons with disabilities are also included in the targets of Swedish activation schemes. The government offers different support and systems such as vocational rehabilitation and training, wage subsidy, job support to lead them to the open labor market. For instance, Samhall<sup>4</sup> and supported employment are established to enable more severely disabled people to engage in employment (Samhall n.d.). In addition, the government established the law to forbid discrimination against persons with disabilities in their employment condition.

The government is aiding, in various ways, the integration of the functionally disabled into the labour market, is ***supporting their development on the job and preventing their exclusion from the labour market***.

(Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications 1999: 20; emphasis added)

Persons in active labour market programmes contribute to retaining ***a high effective labour supply in downturns in the economy***. [...] ***A special focus is directed to filling vacancies and towards the unemployed who have the greatest difficulties in entering the labour market; the long-term unemployed, the occupationally disabled*** and many of those born abroad.

(Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications 2002: 20; emphasis added)

***Disabled persons who cannot get work in the regular labour market -***

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<sup>4</sup> Samhall is a state owned company that provides an employment opportunity for persons with disabilities (Samhall n.d.).

either with or without a wage subsidy - *have the possibility of getting specially arranged work with the state-owned business group SAMHALL*. At the close of 1990, 26,900 persons with disabilities were employed by SAMHALL.

(Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications 1999: 21; emphasis added)

*Supported Employment (SIUS)* was made a permanent measure beginning July 1, 1998 after a four-year experiment.

(Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications 1999: 21, 22; emphasis added)

*A law forbidding discrimination in working life against persons with functional disabilities was inaugurated on May 1, 1999.*

(Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications 1999: 22)

While a large number of recipients of social support are considered to be a financial burden on the government budget, to reduce the number of people with welfare dependency is vital for both economic and social policies. In principle, no matter what kind of difficulties or disadvantages people have, all individuals living in Sweden are supposed to actively participate in the labor market since everyone is assumed to contribute to the development of Swedish welfare state as a member of society. To achieve this, sufficient support for overcoming difficulties and obtaining employment is provided.

### **Question 3: How has this representation of the ‘problem’ come about?**

The unemployment among persons with disabilities has been perpetually considered as a problem by Swedish government. In tradition, Sweden has had strong active labor market measures and the concept of ‘employment’ has played the key role for Swedish economic and social policies. On the one hand, participating in the labor market and being employed have been strongly promoted, but on the other hand relying on income support has been discouraged. As a result of this, Swedish employment rate has been higher than most of other European countries. “The ‘work’ principle has strongly influenced the design of both labor market programmes and the social security system, and activation is central to the Swedish economic and social policy model” (Wadensjö 2007: 127). In Sweden, since the Alliance government came in power in 2006 the work-first principle has been more emphasized in order to solve the problem of expanding the number of long-term welfare dependents and their exclusion from the labour market (OECD 2009: 23). The government has allocated about 14 billion SEK to create employment for persons with disabilities. As a result of this, 90,000 persons with disabilities attained employment either through wage subsidies or Samhall jobs, which are for persons with severe disabilities (OECD 2009: 27). According to the European Survey of Income and Living Conditions, almost 20% of the Swedish population, which is among 20 to 64 years old, identifies themselves as having a disability (OECD 2009: 20). In 2008, Sweden’s

number of people who receive disability benefit in working age was among the highest three in OECD countries. During the 70s till 80s, the number of recipients of disability benefit was almost double in comparison to the number of unemployment benefits. Although the number of unemployment benefits exceeded the number of disability benefits after the crisis in the beginning of the 90s, the number of disability benefit has kept increasing and surpassing the number of unemployment benefit since 1999. While the unemployment rate among persons with disabilities or health problems (7.6%) was about half of OECD average (13.7%), the unemployment rate among persons without health problem was double in comparison to the OECD average (OECD 2010). The government currently focuses on enhancing employment possibility among persons with health and disability problems (OECD 2009: 23). About 14 billion SEK has been allocated to facilitate employment of 90,000 persons with disabilities, either through wage subsidies or Samhall jobs for persons with severe disabilities (OECD 2009: 27).

While some changes of the Swedish activation policy were brought about during the 60s, 70s and 80s, the work principle was retained. Until the 80s, the number of persons outside the labor market with the disability pension had increased. This was a result of the generous system of social security; during this period, access to the system was made easier and the amount of compensation was raised. Therefore, the retrenchment of the Swedish welfare state started in the 80s and was even reinforced after the crisis occurred during the 90s in order to increase the employment rate and labor supply (Wadensjö 2007: 140, 141).

According to Wadensjö, Sweden strongly emphasizes the active employment schemes for people with disabilities by international comparison (Wadensjö 2007,127). Sweden has a long tradition of policies for workers with disabilities. In 1915, the first program started in order to support their self-employment. In 1940, programs were implemented in order to help people who were injured by World War Two and since then employment programs for persons with disabilities have been developed (Wadensjö 2007,132). As a result of the long history of active employment programs, the Swedish government still focuses on solving the lower employment rate for disabled workers and obstacles for their participation into the labor market.

**Question 4: What is left unproblematic in this representation of the ‘problem’? Where are the silences? Can the ‘problem’ be thought about differently?**

Swedish government has constantly strove to increase the labor participation of persons with disabilities by implementing a range of employment programs. Under the discourse of active citizenship, people are obliged to have employment in order to become a responsible citizen and to be included into society. It is also identified that the government considers unemployment to be a factor for exclusion. However, a question that is left without being discussed is if persons with disabilities who are employed are fully included in society. On the one hand, the number of employed people with disabilities can be clearly distinguished. On the other hand, it is not possible to measure how much their exclusion is minimized and how much their inclusion is enhanced by means of being employed. In addition, it is necessary to carefully examine the quality of employment programs for persons with disabilities and the employment condition for workers with disabilities in order to see if they are more empowered or included into society through employment.

Wadensjö (2007) and Holmqvist (2009) argue that the existence of Samhall may

discourage and hinder the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labor market. First of all, it is doubtful how much severely disabled people can actually benefit from Samhall. Although its principle states that at least 40% of employees should be severely disabled people such as persons with intellectual disabilities, mental illness or multiple disabilities (Samhall n.d.), the majority of disabled workers had physical disabilities in 2004 (Wadensjö 2007: 132). In addition, it is a problem that a big number of workers remain in SAMHALL for long periods (Wadensjö 2007: 132; Holmqvist 2009: 133) even though SAMHALL states one of its tasks as “Contribute to a certain number of employees making a transition to employment in the ordinary labour market outside Samhall” (Samhall n.d.). Thus, it is possible that their vocational training to transfer their employees to the regular labor market is not successfully provided. Another issue is the quality of work that Samhall offers to workers.

Another declared: “They say ‘meaningful and developing work.’ But sitting gluing paper days on end - do you think that is developing? All we hear is that we should develop, but that doesn’t happen.” [...] A co-worker of his believed: “This is not activation for me, but more a way of having a job.” An employee at another work place said: “There’s no development here, just work.”

(Holmqvist 2009: 146)

While the number of workers with disabilities is often discussed, their working conditions and quality of work are not extensively discussed. Holmqvist criticizes the work provided through Samhall as ‘Dirty work’ and claims that the work at Samhall stigmatizes people who take it (Holmqvist 2009: 152).

Under the Swedish active employment measures, it is recognized that Samhall succeeds to employ a certain number of people who are disadvantaged in the regular market. However, it is noticeable that Samhall is not successful to assist employment of disabled people in the regular labor market and the large amount of them is still excluded from the regular labor market. According to theory of active citizenship, to obtain work means to be included into and to become a citizen in society. However, it is extremely important to discuss if employment has actually contributed to include persons with disabilities into society in terms of physical, social, and mental conditions. This makes us possible to think the issue of unemployment among persons with disabilities in different ways. For instance, instead of seeing their unemployment as a specific problem, their continued exclusion in society can be problematized.

### **Question 5: What effects are produced by this representation of the ‘problem’?**

#### **Discursive effects**

The specific discourses of welfare dependency, employment, and activation are identified within the Swedish activation programs. The unemployed are strongly encouraged to participate in the labor market and to aim to be independent from their welfare dependency. These particular problem representations strictly limit to understand persons with extremely limited capacity or without capacity to work. In addition, it makes it

difficult to recognize problems of the working conditions and the quality the work acquired by persons with disabilities since problem representations exclusively focus on the point of getting employed.

### **Subjectification effects**

The unemployed are constituted as lacking skills, needing education and requiring special support for their employment. While unemployment among other groups remarkably declined, unemployment among disabled people is still problematic in Sweden. Their unemployment is a problem because their long-term dependency on social security is considered to be a financial burden. They are recognized to be a 'problem'. Activation policies are consisted around a targeted group, unemployed with disabilities in order to solve their problems. There is a clear boundary between employed and unemployed, welfare provider and welfare recipients, active and inactive, and policy makers and policy subjects. The Swedish activation polices for persons with disabilities are constructed on the standpoint of people who stand on the opposite side of unemployed with disabilities.

### **Lived effects**

The strong work principle sends the message that participation in the labor market is a goal that everyone should aim for in order to be responsible citizens and a part of society. It also conveys that employment solves problems such as all kinds of exclusion around unemployed and disadvantaged people. However, it is obvious that disadvantaged people are still underprivileged and excluded in lots of aspects in society. By concentrating on the problem of their low unemployment rate, it limits and hinders to think about solving other kinds of unsolved and continued problems such as their social, financial, political and physical exclusion and insecurity.

### **Question 6: How/ where is the presentation of the 'problem' produced, disseminated and defended? How can it be questioned, disrupted and replaced?**

In 2011 January, an article in *The Local* reported that the issue of expanding welfare dependency among young disabled people by interviewing Social Security Minister Ulf Kristersson.

Since the center-right Alliance coalition first took power in Sweden more than four years ago, the number of young people who receive disability pensions has increased by nearly 50 percent [...] Social Security Minister Ulf Kristersson pointed out that a number of these individuals leave the labour market with relatively unclear psychiatric diagnoses instead of receiving help from employers. [...] "We cannot continue to put young people on disability benefits who will never come off them, it is unfair. It is a political catastrophe."

(The local 2011/01/26)

It is represented as a serious problem that the number of young people receiving disability

pensions keeps expanding. They are constituted as people who are not making an effort to be independent and responsible. According to this article, their welfare dependency is problematized and described as unfair and they are encouraged to actively participate in the labor market. It is identified that the article supports the specific problem representations within Swedish activation programs and contributes to establish their legitimacy.

### 4.3 Discussion

In this section, the Japanese and Swedish active employment programs are discussed by highlighting five chosen elements of citizenship and active citizenship theories: **‘rights’**, **‘responsibility’**, **‘contribution’**, **‘independence’**, and **‘participation’** in order to see how these programs differs in terms of the way of perceiving citizenship and active citizenship of persons with severe disabilities. Moreover, the effects of the different ways to interpret their citizenship and citizenship rights on the activation programs are examined.

#### 4.3.1 The Japanese case

Recalling the social model of disability, a multitude of problems and barriers that persons with disabilities face is recognized as society’s failures to provide sufficient assistance of which they need. This is contradicting what the SIPD tries to achieve. Instead, SIPD attempts to impose responsibility for having problems associated to their disabilities on the afflicted persons and their families.

The boundary between the state and individuals or public and private is a key element in the Japanese activation. Individuals are supposed to be responsible for their own problems without depending on the state. Under the Japanese welfare state, the issues of persons with disabilities are expected to be solved in the private sphere, especially within a unit of family recognized as an individual, and not in the public. Thus, their problems are individualized.

Through activation measures, individuals are forced to become customers in the market. This is strongly influenced by the liberal model of citizenship. Under SIPD, social service is no longer public provision by the state that everyone can freely access but it is something that they have to purchase based on their choice in the market. Thus, SIPD tries to emphasize social services as merchandise and persons with disabilities as consumers but not welfare recipients.

While SIPD stresses the significance of ‘responsibility’, ‘contribution’, ‘participation’ and ‘independence’ in citizenship and active citizenship theories as significant, the discussion of ‘rights’ is kept silent. In particular, the notions of responsibility and independence are highlighted. SIPD recognizes the concept of responsibility as not only an individual one but also a collective one as a person with disabilities is a member of both family and society. Therefore, persons with disabilities are supposed to pay the cost of welfare services with the reason of individual responsibility and also collective responsibility. Hence, it is their individual responsibility to pay for what they use and it is also their collective responsibility to sustain the welfare system as members of society and not only being welfare recipients. SIPD also refers to collective and individual responsibility as family responsibility. Thus, families are expected to bear collective responsibility by taking care of their family members with disabilities. This is also seen as individual

responsibility because dealing with problems within the family is considered an individual matter in society. The idea of ‘independence’ in SIPD explicitly means to be independent from public provision. Instead of being independent from the state, individuals with disabilities are still expected to remain dependent on their families. Through SIPD they are enforced to be independent in the public sphere but more and still dependent in the private sphere. By cutting a path to access necessary support, SIPD tries to call this situation their independence even though this is far from a true sense of independence for which persons with disabilities truly aim.

SIPD barely refers to rights of persons with disabilities. Instead, it focuses on how they are not entitled to access rights by drawing attention to the issue of responsibility. Furthermore, it even limits their access to social rights and closes down the path to citizenship rights by highlighting their insufficiency. Compared to responsibility and independence, concepts of contribution and participation are not emphasized in SIPD. It is evident that the current environment surrounding employment and employment support for persons with disabilities remains undeveloped with lots of problems for especially persons with severe disabilities. Moreover, rather than enhancing employment among persons with disabilities, SIPD cuts down financial support for the small size of social organizations, which provide sheltered employment for them, and made these organizations incapable to continue.<sup>5</sup> This means that SIPD even tries to close off the ways that persons with severe disabilities make contribution and participation more than encouraging contribution and participation. Furthermore, this hinders them to become financially independent although it still enforces them to carry heavier burdens.

Besides five elements, ‘fairness’ and ‘equality’ are emphasized in order to explain the reason why persons with disabilities have to bear a cost burden. To the perspective of policy makers of SIPD, it was seen as the problem of unfairness and inequality in society that they do not pay the cost of welfare service. In the liberal model of citizenship, individuals are encouraged to be more responsible in order to qualify citizenship. However, what SIPD actually caused was not the desired but detrimental effect on persons with disabilities. Rather than establishing fairness and equality in society, SIPD reinforced inequality between disabled people and nondisabled people and caused injustice in society.

Even before the SIPD was enacted, a number of people and organizations which are related to persons with disabilities, opposed the law by mounting public demonstrations and argued about its legitimacy. After the law was officially enforced, eight organized groups sued eight local municipalities for the reason that they force persons with disabilities to pay 10% service cost. These groups argued SIPD’s illegality imposing an intolerable financial burden which inhibits them from having a decent life as a human being (Shiyougaishiya-jiritsushienhou-kiso-no-kihon-goui-wo-mezasu-kai, 2011). Meanwhile, the DPJ (Democratic Party Japan) government came to power in 2009 and one of their initial agenda was to abolish SIPD (Democratic Party Japan, 2010). Currently, the DPJ government is aiming to abolish SIPD and introduce a new law (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare n.d.). In ideal activation measures, the government is supposed to put the budget on employment support instead of providing

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<sup>5</sup> The SIPD determined not to provide financial support to a small size of organizations providing sheltered employment for disabled people, which have the number of clients less than 10 persons. This made a big number of organizations incapable to continue providing work for their employees with disabilities (Mainichi News Paper, 2006).

cash benefit for the unemployed in order to develop a sustainable welfare state and to ultimately make them independent. In contradiction, SIPD does not function as activation but rather as inactivation for persons with severe disabilities. Moreover, what SIPD brought about was to reduce the amount of social expenditure by imposing financial burden on persons with disabilities without providing sufficient employment support and creating employable settings.

Notably, 10 % cost burdens of welfare service does not only mean the financial burden upon persons with disabilities. The effect of the financial burden makes them suffer economically but also physically and psychologically. Putting financial burdens limits the amount of welfare services which they access. This means they are in danger of not getting the supports which are required to maintain their life. It is obvious that this creates physical problems for persons with disabilities. In addition, financial, physical and psychological burdens upon their families most likely increase because if they cannot receive the essential amount of welfare support, their families are the ones who have to provide them the necessary financial and or physical help. Overall, this just functions as a negative spiral for persons with disabilities and their families.

Conclusively, SIPD does not succeed to enhance independence of persons with disabilities but its effects could push them into more extreme vulnerability and desperation. The specific problem representations of SIPD further imprint the label of undeserved and second-class citizens upon disabled people. Being refused welfare services and forced into the labor market which does not fully allow persons with disabilities to participate, they increase financial, social and physical insecurities. In contradiction to the name of the law ‘Support Independence of Persons with disabilities’, the way of SIPD perceiving disabled people certainly limits them to be more included into mainstream in society. In consequence, the citizenship rights of persons with severe disabilities are undermined by SIPD, and they and their families suffer from the effect of SIPD in silence.

#### **4.3.2 The Swedish case**

In tradition, a work principle has characterized the Swedish labor market policy, which aims to help individuals to remain in the labor market even though they face injury or illness. In Sweden, disability insurance is for people who have a permanently reduced capacity to engage in work and sickness insurance is for people who are temporarily unable to work by reason of illness. Currently, it is a growing problem that a big number of people permanently or partially leave the labor market and become dependent on social insurance programs (Bergendorff et al. 2005: 187). Overbye claims that “(a)lthough integrating people with clear and well-defined impairments poses challenges, the main problem is the other kind of disabilities” (2005: 162).

The most common reason for being awarded disability insurance for both men and women is musculoskeletal disease. However, this share is decreasing and during the mid-1990s, the share with mental disorders has increased. [...] In general, almost one-third of individuals on long-term sickness indicate that they would like to collect disability insurance benefits.

(Bergendorff et al. 2005: 204)



Hence, there is a trend that most people who are granted a disability pension begin with sickness benefit within a period, often extend the period and transfer from sickness benefit to disability benefit (Wadenjö, 2007; Bergendorff et al. 2005; Overby 2005). Swedish activation employment measures have successfully reduced unemployment. As the result of this, the employment rate in Sweden is considerably high among OECD countries but so is the disability benefit rate (OECD, 2010*b*). This paradox between the low rate of unemployment and the high rate of disability dependency can be found in other Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, which also have a great ambition for activating the unemployed. (Overbye, 2005; Holmqvist, 2009) This phenomenon is called 'hidden unemployment' (Holmqvist 2009: 155).

By "disabling" people, and thus accommodating them in large-scale welfare programs, there is the potential for politicians to "solve" pressing social issues such as unemployment, particularly in regions where there is a weak labor market, concomitant with a form of state-sanctioned provision of inexpensive labor to industry that could contribute to regions' or countries' overall competitiveness.

(Holmqvist 2009: 155)

The group of 'disabled people' who have been discussed above is not exactly the same group of people whom I have particularly addressed in this research. Borrowing a word from Overbye (2005: 161), my focus is on 'typical' disabled individuals not on 'the new disabled'. It seems that the center of attention in discussions about activation for persons with disabilities is often focused on 'the new disabled'. For instance, Overbye (2005) emphasizes the importance of re-integration and gate-keeping in order to solve the problems of the expanding population on disability benefit. Thus, the main focus is on people who used to participate in the labor market but currently depends on welfare benefits. Hence, the dominant issue is how to re-integrate these people and how not to make them long-term welfare dependants. However, what I strive to discuss is how Swedish active employment policy tries to work on the problem of employment and unemployment for persons with severe disabilities or persons with permanently reduced employment capacity.

While Sweden is recognized as a country, which has strongly promoted active employment measures, Samhall, which offers sheltered employment for persons with reduced employment capacity, is seen as the distinctive character of Swedish activation policy. Occupationally disabled people are expected to ultimately transfer from sheltered employment to the regular labor market because employment in the regular labor market is considered a path for them to be more included and to become a member of society. As Holmqvist (2009), Wadenjö (2007) argue, although sheltered employment is expected to function as a place providing vocational training and promoting employment of persons with disabilities in the regular labor market, the current condition rather makes them stay there for a long period or permanently. In addition, despite the goal of Samhall to employ at least 40% of severely disabled people, the majority of the employees are physically disabled (Wadenjö 2007: 132). Moreover, Holmqvist (2009) states that the system of Samhall constructs the condition that people working there tend to become even more disabled, stigmatized, and excluded from society.

It seems plausible to suggest that Samhall is an example of an activation program that, contrary to its intentions, breeds passivity. Despite the idea that Samhall is a central part of the new policy emphasis on activating disabled people through empowerment and rehabilitation, the organization shares features of many traditional disability programs, such as disability pensions and residential or institutional care, in the sense of people becoming progressively locked into a situation of disablement, incapacity and helplessness

(Holmqvist 2009: 152)

Among the five elements of citizenship and active citizenship theories, Swedish activation measures clearly highlights the notions of participation, contribution, independence and responsibility. These concepts are mutually related to the image of ideal citizens which Swedish activation presupposes. Thus, there is a strong idea that the individual should be empowered and included into society through engaging in the regular employment including disabled people. However, it is doubtful if the current programs and systems for activation actually contribute to the employment of persons with severe disabilities in the regular labor market and also their inclusion through employment into mainstream society in a true sense. There is no established path and space for persons with severe disabilities to participate in the regular labor market. Furthermore, what they get as a job is the kind of work that the rest of the population does not willingly take and this stigmatizes them in society (Holmqvist 2009: 152). Thus, whether persons with disabilities take a job or not, they may still be considered second-class citizens and segregated from mainstream society. In active Swedish society, they are allowed to make a contribution and being 'active' by carrying out work without desirability and this is the only way for them to fulfill their responsibilities as active citizens. Recalling theories of active citizenship, the access to citizenship rights are only allowed to individuals with entitlements which can be earned through employment in the regular labor market. In this manner, although persons with disabilities have work, they are still not considered to be equal citizens as far as they stay in a sheltered employment. In conclusion, the particular way of Swedish activation, which considers persons with disabilities and their citizenship, enforces them to bear duties and responsibilities through employment without guaranteeing their citizenship and the equal status as non-disabled workers in society. Moreover, rather than contributing to inclusion of persons with severe disabilities, the effect of the specific problem representations in the Swedish activation policy may further exclude and stigmatize them by locating them in inactive and isolated employment as their citizens' responsibility.

#### **4.3.3 The Comparison of the Japanese and Swedish case**

This analysis has examined two cases of active employment programs conducted by two different welfare states, which have widely different systems. Recalling a typology of activation, it is clear that Sweden and Japan adopted different types of activation measures. In the Japanese case, the approach of the welfare dependence optimist model was employed. Japanese active measures aim to limit the state's responsibility and to enhance the role of the market. In addition, individuals are given more autonomies as customers and are encouraged to actively engage in the labor market. The goals of Japanese activation are to diminish the size of welfare state by reducing public provision

and reestablish informal care given by the family. However, the Japanese activation did not make disabled people empowered individuals with greater autonomies as the model of welfare dependence optimist intended. Furthermore, a large number of them have suffered from devastating effects that the particular problem representations of SIPD produced. While SIPD accompanies manipulative terms as ‘fair’ and ‘equal’ and ‘independence’, it makes persons with disabilities in Japan more marginalized, passive and dependent on their families under the conditions of the current society and labor market. Against the wills of persons with disabilities and their families, SIPD was still enacted because their existence is obscure and neglected, and most of them do not have any voice in society.

For the Swedish activation, the approach of the autonomy optimist model was chosen. In this model, individuals are strongly encouraged to be active in the labor market, and Swedish government provides a range of employment support in order to include as many individuals as possible in society. Therefore, disabled people are also supposed to be included in the some form of employment since employment is mandatory for becoming empowered, included and active citizens. Yet, the current circumstances surrounding employees with disabilities have not succeeded in contributing to their empowerment and inclusion in a real sense. Moreover, the particular problem representations of their unemployment, independence and inclusion in Swedish activation policy directly influence them. While the social structure has not established a way to include them in the regular labor market or provide them decent work, they are forced to choose the title of either underclass workers or irresponsible welfare dependents. As a consequence, rather than enhancing their equal status as citizens, the current activation intensifies their exclusion and the barriers in between the first-class citizens and second-class citizens.

Conclusively, it has been identified that there is a difference between how Japan and Sweden have introduced active employment measures. Different manners and purposes of employing the elements of citizenship and active citizenship theories can be found by looking at how citizenship and active citizenship of disabled people are differently represented in each activation policy. Moreover, by focusing on the different ways of perceiving citizenship rights of persons with disabilities in the activation policies, the effects of different problem representations on policies and their life were highlighted.

Both the Japanese and Swedish cases of activation programs have a number of unsolved problems hindering disabled people’s inclusion into the mainstream society. Recalling the five elements of citizenship and active citizenship theories chosen for the empirical analysis, the core problem of both Japanese and Swedish activation policies is that the concept of citizenship rights of persons disabilities are rarely discussed while other elements are largely emphasized. As a result of this, both the active employment measures victimize them and create build new obstacles to their integration into society rather than helping them to be more empowered citizens. In order to develop an activation policy which enables disabled people to become an active citizens in a true sense, the theories of citizenship and active citizenship needs to be drastically changed to a more inclusive ones which allow them to have a full sense of citizenship. In addition, each state needs to carefully observe the current problems they face regarding the effect of activation programs and condition of the labor market and take effective political actions for creating the active states where everyone can become ‘ideal citizens’.

## 5. Conclusion

In this thesis, the implications of disabled people's citizenship and active citizenship have been considered since these concepts have been vital in the current social policies among welfare states. In order to examine how the citizenship and active citizenship of persons with severe disabilities are interpreted and represented in the policies, an empirical analysis of the Japanese and Swedish activation policies is conducted.

The comparative research in the two cases of activation has been valuable to comprehend different ways of introducing the same type of policies. Through this research, it was identified how the citizenship of persons with disabilities is differently represented in Japanese and Swedish activation policies. Furthermore, it was highlighted how the difference in interpretations of their citizenship rights affects the policies. In conclusion, both manners of Japanese and Swedish activation policies and the effects brought on by these policies appeared to be different. Policy makers of each policy have thought about the problems of unemployment, exclusion, welfare dependency, etc. among persons with disabilities based on different perspectives towards their citizenship rights. This has led different manners and goals of Japanese and Swedish activation policies. As a result of this, the direct impact on disabled people also differs in between Japanese and Swedish cases. While both countries have declared to develop a society, which enables persons with disabilities to be more empowered and included through a range of activation programs, both activation programs still have not fully accomplished their goals because of unsolved problems regarding inclusion of disabled people, especially severely disabled people, into the regular labor market and mainstream society. These problems are caused by the lack of necessary support and consideration for them in the activation policies. Furthermore, it is problematic that persons with disabilities are not originally taken into account in the concepts of citizenship and active citizenship which underpin an activation policy. Therefore, the concepts need to be modified to the one which sufficiently regard them.

Traditionally, persons with disabilities have experienced difficulties with all kinds of limitations in social settings and lack of resources that they need to survive. In contemporary society, it seems that their problems were largely reduced with developments in technology and medical equipment. However, it is controversial that they still have not attained the equal status and rights that non-disabled people enjoy in the 21-century. Moreover, we have obviously created new barriers for persons with disabilities and disempowered them by introducing the ideology of active citizenship which has a clear limitation of activating them due to the lack of consideration to them.

This research has particularly focused on persons with severe disabilities since there is a clear distinction between them and others with disabilities. While there are people who are capable of having an enriched life even though they carry disabilities, there is a part of the population who suffers from their disabilities and is still largely marginalized. As most of them have limited or no capacity to advocate their wills or to determine what they need due to their disabilities, the attention paid to this group is extremely scant. If their voice is not carried, they will be in a position of even greater disability, as they will not be able to participate in political decision-making. This is why it is important to focus on their rights and problems.

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## **Executive summary**

This thesis problematizes the exclusion of disabled people in society and their rights. The emphasis of the research is on persons with severe or/ and multiple disabilities who tend not to have capabilities to politically interact with society. This research especially considers how discourses of their citizenship are translated into the context of national policies in Sweden and Japan. Through a comparative analysis, the problematic concept of ‘active-citizenship’ in the active labour market policies and its impact on persons with severe disabilities will be revealed. The aim of this research is to explore how severely disabled people are recognized in the process of policy-making in Sweden and Japan and how the country-particular setting causes difference in establishing their citizenship.

A rapid expansion of globalization and neo-liberalism emphasizes the high value of a skilled labor force and intensifies the insignificance of less-skilled workers in the global labor market. On the one hand, the workers who have skills and mobility are thriving in global markets, but on the other hand people who do not have those advantages are facing vulnerability and insecurity. Conclusively, globalization has exaggerated the exclusion, inequality and poverty of people in minority groups in the modern world. At the same time, the welfare states which has been largely responsible for social security of those disadvantaged groups, is undermining its own reach and is obliged to undergo the reforms partly due to influences of economic globalization. When these welfare states diminish, the disadvantaged groups who are most in need of state provision are largely undermined. As a part of welfare state reform a set of ‘activations’ appeared in the contemporary globalized world. The active employment policy emphasizes the importance of active participation in the labor market and aims to mobilize people on social security benefit into employment. Activation policies recognize entering the labor market as a necessary path to empower people’s citizenship. In Marshall’s idea, full employment is a fundamental source of equality and empowerment, and to avoid unemployment is an essential task of labor movement. Under the consensus, people who cannot work are not entitled to have full sense of citizenship. As a consequence, many less skilled people become entrapped in long-term unemployment”. Persons with disabilities are also targeted on activation policies as other groups like unemployed, immigrants etc. However, despite the current trend of active employment policies, it is still undeniable that disabled people are extremely disadvantaged in the current labor market.

When dealing with the issue of disabilities, it is significant to understand that disabilities exist in a multitude of levels that can in lesser or greater ways prevent a person from living a normal life. This research especially focused on the issues of persons with ‘severe disabilities’ because they are one of the most marginalized groups in society in numerous aspects. Therefore, it is important to discuss their issues in this research. While the definition of severe disability can differ depending on each person’s perspective and social context, this research refers severe physical, intellectual or multiple-disabilities as severe disability. In other words, it is the certain degree or/ and kind of disabilities that seriously hinder a person to have the basic quality of life that non-disabled people have. While their disabilities prevent them to live their life as they wish, they often do not have any capacity to convey their wills and needs towards society either due to the conditions of their disabilities. This results in that the attention paid to them and their issues is usually very scarce. Thus, it is necessary and significant that this research discusses their problematic situations and previously disregarded problems. If a particular group of people do not have the ability to advocate themselves by reason of their conditions,

especially disabilities in this case, there is a necessity for others to argue for that persons with disabilities should be more included and equally treated and that their rights should be safeguarded in society by discussing their situations, struggles and needs. This is why this research is highly relevant.

Although various issues about persons with disabilities exist in society, this research concentrates upon discussing their rights. It mainly examines the concept of citizenship and active citizenship of persons with disabilities and how these discourses are translated into national policy making. This research is conducted by means of a comparative approach across national boundaries: a cross-national research. By adopting a comparative method, the research aims to develop deeper understanding of social phenomena. For the analysis the cases of active employment policies in Sweden and Japan are chosen because of the commonality between Sweden and Japan; these countries are the most similar among developed countries in terms of achieving greater equality in each society. Both Sweden and Japan are industrialized countries but the structures of welfare states widely differ. While the Swedish welfare state has a universal welfare system supported by a wide range of state provision, the Japanese welfare state has a limited welfare system which largely depends on informal family care and provides restricted public services. Thus, by employing different policy approaches both Japan and Sweden have still established a high degree of social equality. This research focuses on these two welfare states sharing great similarities and dissimilarities by carrying out a policy analysis of Swedish and Japanese active employment policies for persons with disabilities. It is invaluable to explore how different types of welfare states deal with the issue and introduce the same type of policy. Through investigating activation policies in Sweden and Japan, it is revealed how the discourses of citizenship and active citizenship of persons with disabilities are differently translated into these policies depending on the different political natures of the countries. In addition, the effects of the different ways to interpret their citizenship and active citizenship in the Swedish and Japanese activation policies are examined. Therefore, my thesis aims to answer the following three research questions:

*· How are the citizenship rights of persons with severe disabilities interpreted in an activation policy?*

*· How do representations of their citizenship and active citizenship differ in Swedish and Japanese activation policies?*

*· How do the different interpretations of their citizenship rights affect Swedish and Japanese activation policies?*

The fundamental debate starts with discussing the concept of citizenship because it is evident that contemporary social policies treat the notion of citizenship as a central concept. Therefore we have to carefully investigate how the concept perceives persons with disabilities, especially severely disabled people. The concept of active citizenship is also discussed by reflecting over the current reform of welfare states and active employment policies.

The liberal model of citizenship is described as a matter of status or contract. The notion of liberal citizenship can be classified into two traditions: socio-liberal and libertarian citizenship. The concept of liberal citizenship treats rights, obligation and membership of a community as significant. The idea of freedom is also vital for liberal citizenship. Therefore, a range of fundamental rights and liberties including religious, political, ethical and philosophical opinions are contained in the liberal citizenship. Employment and the market play key roles within the liberal citizenship. The condition of republican citizenship focuses on the concept of direct participation. It sees that an individual is not a citizen from birth but can attain citizenship through activities in a community. In the tradition of republican citizenship, the public space and opportunity of community participation is seen as open for all. According to the republican manner, all individuals are encouraged to participate in their community and exercise their rights. The current discussion about public services is grounded on the concept of autonomy and freedom in the neo-liberal perspective on citizenship. In this manner, citizens are seen as consumers in the market and they can exercise their freedom of choice. However, for disabled people who do not have full capacity to determine their choices, it is not simply sufficient to make them able to exercise self-determination by just being given a choice. The concept of self-determination associates with the idea of autonomy within the current debates on citizenship. The rights of self-determination have so far been emphasized by disabled people and their organizations. However, obstacles hindering persons not having full capacity to make decision, has remained. In order to overcome this, it is necessary to develop the concept of independence into the one within which assistance is an accepted way of achieving autonomy for persons with disabilities.

The term of contribution is also significant for the concept of citizenship. It can be seen as the communitarian tradition to emphasize responsibilities and reciprocity, and with debates on the limits to social rights. Several researches insist that the notion of citizenship tends to stress the dimensions of obligations and responsibilities more than rights. Yet, considering the case of disabled persons, they tend to be assumed to be only recipients of welfare resource or individual. It is highly significant to mention that there is a complex paradox within the correlation among the notion of citizenship, contributions, social rights and persons with disabilities. Despite the fact that individuals are required to become someone deserving in order to attain citizenship, it is essential to exercise social rights in order to make contributions for certain groups of people who is lacking capacity such as persons with disabilities. Furthermore, this paradoxical mechanism marginalizes these groups and prevents them from achieving citizenship.

In the traditional manner of citizenship, the presence of persons with disabilities is more than ignored and excluded: They are also denied. Therefore, it is essential to argue that the traditional mode of citizenship is not legitimate in order to consider persons with disabilities as a part of society and citizens. If current social policies and welfare state reform heavily rest on the concept of citizenship, it is vital to develop the concept into a more inclusive one, which can embrace persons with disabilities as a part of society.

The transformation of welfare states which has occurred under the general banner of activation and consequences of citizenship. The new image of citizenship, which is namely active citizenship, is situated as a desirable goal for the recent trend of welfare states reform. This is strongly influenced by the neo-liberal and communitarian values. The elements of active citizenship are such as autonomy, self-responsibility, flexibility, geographical mobility, a professional education, civil engagement, political activism, volunteering and neighborhood associations etc. Although these public discourses emphasize the positive dimension of active citizenship, the concept was still strongly

contested. The concept of active citizenship stresses a set of individuals' responsibility and choice and limited state intervention.

The socio-liberal mode of active citizenship implies that citizens should be more active to fulfill duties instead of benefiting from state provision. This results in political practice such as active employment policies. The libertarian mode of active citizenship emphasizes citizens' liberty of choice as consumers in a mixed welfare market to protect their social security. According to republican tradition, citizens are required to commit and participate in civil society for their own interests. This constitutes new forms of democratic participation in civil society and governance structures in welfare states.

The matter of 'disability' can be differently seen and defined depending on what kind of perspective we possess. The previous norm of disability, 'medical model of disability', was built on medical condition of people with disabilities. Instead, the concept called 'social model of disability' emerged through disabled people's movement in Britain. The significant reinterpretation was accomplished as a desired result of the disabled people's movement which has been established nationally and internationally. While the previous notion was only associated with individuals' physical conditions, the new definition encompasses all kinds of impairments such as physical, intellectual and sensory. This means the social model can be identified as a more inclusive concept than the medical model. The remarkable difference between the medical and social model is the way to perceive and recognize persons with disabilities. While the medical model defines the cause of problems as biological error of disabled individuals, the social model sees disability as the product of society's failure to respond to their needs.

The social model of disability pays attention to the connection in between disabled people's difficulty in getting paid employment in the current labor market and how the concept of work is socially situated. It does not allow the problems of unemployment and underemployment of disabled people without considering barriers which are socially constructed such as physical, cultural, economical, ideological and environmental factors. The model demands drastic modification in the meaning of work since the current social setting only allows employment policies to make limited impact on the issues of employment among persons with disabilities. In order to conduct the empirical analysis for answering the research question, the framework is established based on reviewing theories of citizenship, active citizenship and social model of disability.

In this research, the social model of disability provides the theoretical and ideological foundation underpinning the whole research. My perspective on considering problems of persons with disabilities closely corresponds to the social model of disability. As the social model of disability stands, my view recognizes that society creates problems and barriers making persons with disabilities suffer. Moreover, each member of society, who does not see individuals with disabilities as equal members of society, is the one who develops the specific environment which does not allow persons with disabilities to enjoy their lives as much as non-disabled people do.

I have a critical perspective on the traditional model of citizenship and active citizenship because they are not fully inclusive of all groups within our society. They are built on a limited assumption, made by people who dominate society and can easily attain the status of 'ideal citizens', without any consideration of marginalized people. Therefore, I disagree with what the traditional model of citizenship and active citizenship implies because it is an unchangeable fact that persons with disabilities exist in all societies and are fighting and struggling to overcome all barriers that hinder them

from being ‘ideal citizens’. From this standpoint, five key elements; ‘rights’, ‘responsibility’, ‘contribution’, ‘independence’, and ‘participation’ are chosen from citizenship and active citizenship theories to set up the analytical framework in order to advance the empirical analysis. Among the theories, these elements mutually relate, supplement and reinforce each other’s concepts.

As a fundamental method to analyze a policy, a “what’s the problem represented to be” approach is adopted. There are several valid reasons why a WPR approach is chosen for this research. First of all, what the approach strives to achieve is precisely corresponding to my research goals which are to disclose how persons with severe disabilities are identified in society and how perceptions of their presence appear in policies. By examining how their citizenship and active citizenship are expressed and used in active labor market policies, the research seeks to comprehend what kinds of impacts occur on them, their lives and their rights. My ultimate focus is on the perceptions that policies have about persons with disabilities. Thus the research examines how the activation policies identify them and their employment issues and also attempts to solve the issues. In addition, this research intends to draw attention to knowledge of, ideas about and insights into disabled people and their issues which are grounded in policy making rather than looking at their actual problems in society.

This analysis has examined two cases of active employment programs conducted by two different welfare states, which have widely different systems. Recalling a typology of activation, it is clear that Sweden and Japan adopted different types of activation measures. In the Japanese case, the approach of the welfare dependence optimist model was employed. Japanese active measures aim to limit the state’s responsibility and to enhance the role of the market. Individuals are given more autonomies as customers and are encouraged to actively engage in the labor market. The goals of Japanese activation are to diminish the size of welfare state by reducing public provision and reestablish informal care given by the family. However, the Japanese activation did not make disabled people empowered individuals with greater autonomies as the model of welfare dependence optimist intended. Furthermore, a large number of them have suffered from devastating effects that SIPD produced. While SIPD accompanies manipulative terms as ‘fair’ and ‘equal’ and ‘independence’, it makes persons with disabilities in Japan more marginalized, passive and dependent on their families under the conditions of the current society and labor market. Against the wills of persons with disabilities and their families, SIPD was still enacted because their existence is obscure and neglected, and most of them do not have any voice in society.

For the Swedish activation, the approach of the autonomy optimist model was chosen. In this model, individuals are strongly encouraged to be active in the labor market, and Swedish government provides a range of employment support in order to include as many individuals as possible in society. Therefore, disabled people are also supposed to be included in the some form of employment since employment is mandatory for becoming empowered, included and active citizens. Yet, the current circumstances surrounding employees with disabilities have not succeeded in contributing to their empowerment and inclusion in a real sense. Moreover, the particular problem representations of their unemployment, independence and inclusion in Swedish activation policy directly influence them. While the social structure has not established a way to include them in the regular labor market or provide them decent work, they are forced to choose the title of either underclass workers or irresponsible welfare dependents. As a consequence, rather than enhancing their equal status as citizens, the current activation intensifies their exclusion and the barriers in between the first-class citizens and second-class citizens.

Conclusively, it has been identified that there is a difference between how Japan and Sweden have introduced active employment measures. Different manners and purposes of employing the elements of citizenship and active citizenship theories can be found by looking at how citizenship and active citizenship of disabled people are differently represented in each activation policy. Moreover, by focusing on the different ways of perceiving citizenship rights of persons with disabilities in the activation policies, the effects of different problem representations on policies and their life were highlighted.

Both the Japanese and Swedish cases of activation programs have a number of unsolved problems hindering disabled people's inclusion into the mainstream society. Recalling the five elements of citizenship and active citizenship theories chosen for the empirical analysis, the core problem of both Japanese and Swedish activation policies is that the concept of citizenship rights of persons disabilities are rarely discussed while other elements are largely emphasized. As a result of this, both the active employment measures victimize them and create build new obstacles to their integration into society rather than helping them to be more empowered citizens. In order to develop an activation policy which enables disabled people to become an active citizens in a true sense, the theories of citizenship and active citizenship needs to be drastically changed to a more inclusive ones which allow them to have a full sense of citizenship. In addition, each state needs to carefully observe the current problems they face regarding the effect of activation programs and condition of the labor market and take effective political actions for creating the active states where everyone can become 'ideal citizens'.