

Cite as: Special Issue, NCTU L. REV., December 2020, at 195

Reflecting on the Historical Process of Foreign Workers Policies of Taiwan and South Korea — A Solution for Current Taiwan’s Direct Hiring System

Chiung-Chih Chen^{*}

Abstract

Taiwan introduced foreign labor for the first time in 1989, and it has been 30 years. The business model of intermediary competition has shaped Taiwan’s migrant market, making high placement fees always an important issue. The direct hiring of joint service centers, which began in 2007, seeks to provide a different channel beyond the existing agency system. However, the proportion of foreign migrants hired through direct hiring is not high, and there is a downward trend.

^{*} Postdoctoral Fellow of Social Practice and Urban Innovation Center of TungHai University; Ph.D., Institute for Social Research and Cultural Studies, National Chiao Tung University. Thanks to the suggestions of two anonymous reviewers to make the structure and discussion of this article more complete. I want to thank the International Center for Cultural Studies of Chiao Tung University for subsidizing Korean research expenses. I also want to thank my Korean friends Jones Espino of Osan Migration Workers Center, Manie (Jong-Man Choi) and Youngsup Jung who helped me during the interview. And also thanks to Grace of DCU (Domestic Care Union).

After the implementation and change of the direct hiring system in the past 12 years, the proportion of hiring foreign workers through direct hiring center is not high, and there is a downward trend. Why are so few people willing to hire directly? This article attempts to review the changes in the direct hiring system, analyze the key actors related to it, and compare the Korean Employment Permit System (EPS), which introduced foreign labor in a government to government manner, and Impacts on broker system in Korea. The reason is that the current system design is to provide another channel other than private agencies, rather than trying to replace it. Therefore, this article proposes three suggestions: 1. Strengthen the function of the direct hiring center platform and the distribution of local services. 2. Strengthen corporate social responsibility and promote direct hiring. 3. Link labor exporting and receiving countries with more key actors, local government, NGOs and academia.

Keywords: Direct Hiring, Placement Fee, Government to Government, Corporate Social Responsibility, Employment Permit System (EPS)