Introducing “Foreign Human Resources for Domestic Work Support” in Japan: An Inquiry into the Abe Administration’s Strategy to Promote Women’s Participation

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Summary

In its revised Japan Revitalization Strategy, adopted in June 2014, the Japanese government included a measure to introduce “Foreign Human Resources for Domestic Work Support” in National Strategic Zones. Given that foreign domestic workers have long been excluded from the Japanese labour market, this measure marks a substantial change in its immigration policy. The government justifies this new measure in the name of “promoting women’s participation and reforming working styles.” Among the industrialized countries Japan holds a unique position for having avoided any resort to foreign domestic workers. What is the reasoning behind this change? Will it truly encourage greater participation from women in the labour market? What are its implications for immigration policy as a whole?

Profile

ITŌ Ruri is Professor of Transnational Sociology at Hitotsubashi University. She is interested in the gender dimension of immigration policies and the globalization of the reproductive sphere. Her publications include International Migration and “Cross-border Gender Regimes” (co-edited with Mariko Adachi, 2008, in Japanese); “Crafting Migrant Women’s Citizenship in Japan: Taking ‘Family’ as a Vantage Point,” International Journal of Japanese Sociology, 2005.