

Explaining Exceptionality: Care and Migration Policies in Japan and South Korea

Abstract:

Against the global trend towards increased use of foreign female care workers, Japan and South Korea stand out as two countries that continue to resist their intake. In this paper, I explain why despite serious shortages of care workers, these two countries have maintained highly restricted immigration policies towards migrant care workers. I argue that their resistance can be explained by a combination of social, cultural, and institutional factors that are shaping their care, migration and employment regimes. Their exceptionality in the face of global trend reveals the strength of nationhood narratives and the importance of understanding global trends and how local factors can shape national policy responses to care and migration.

Ito Peng, Ph.D. (London School of Economics) is a Professor of Sociology and Public Policy, and Canada Research Chair in Global Social Policy at the Department of Sociology, and the School of Public Policy and Governance, University of Toronto. She has written extensively on family, gender and social policies, and social and political economy of care, in East Asia. She currently leads a large international partnership research project entitled Gender, Migration, and the Work of Care funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The project brings together over 50 researchers and non-academic partners to examine how the reorganization of care influences the global migration of care workers, and how this in turn impacts family and gender relations, gender equality, government policies, and global governance. She is a senior fellow of Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, and a Research Associate at United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and UN Women. Her new book, co-edited with Sonya Michel, *Gender, Migration and the Work of Care: A Multi-Scalar Approach to the Pacific Rim*, will be out in July 2017.



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