

Breaking Barriers: A Gender Comparison of Newcomer Chinese Skilled Immigrants in Contemporary Japan

○Waseda University

Jie ZHANG

1. Aim

This paper aims to discuss how newcomer Chinese skilled immigrants breaking the barriers and striving the equality in Japan from the economic, social and cultural aspects under gender comparison. As a significant immigrant group in Japan, with different level of human capital and socioeconomic capital, Chinese immigrant men and women opened up their migration process with different goals and planning after their arrival to Japan. Yet, gender barriers, employment instability even pressure of child raising strictly constrained their life qualities in Japanese labor market.

2. Data & Method

For this purpose, qualitative method is utilized to discuss the gender differences of Chinese skilled newcomers in Japanese labor market. Interviews and participate observations were conducted with 12 men and 15 women. Informants are aged from 25 to 54 who came to Japan the first time between 1996 to 2012, most of them came to Japan as students, while few came as skilled professionals. Considering the generation gap and social environment, informants are limited in first generation.

3. Results

We found that among these Chinese immigrant informants, women are more likely to confronting gender discrimination in Japanese enterprises. Like Japanese women, even many immigrant women entered Japanese companies as “skilled professionals”, some of them are still fell into routine duties in the end. Moreover, for those who have children, they also have to facing more obstacles such as employment instability and work-life balance. On the other hand, Chines men are confronting socioeconomic barriers in labor force participation, such as difficulty of promotion and pressure of taking care of parents.

4. Conclusion

From these findings, this study explores the quests of gender and migration in transnational social spaces. Reflecting on skilled immigrants from China, it explains their engagement in uprooting and redefining their selfhood, cultures and responsibilities as they are resettling as migrants in contemporary Japanese society. This study further reflects the similarities in their circumstances highlighting the growing salience of Chinese skilled immigrants in the different sectors their “new” social space.

References

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