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Markus Pudelko, Professor

University of Tübingen

Opportunities and Constrains for Japanese Women Pursuing a Career: Between Self-fulfilment and Frustration

This study on Japanese women's current career opportunities finds traditional Japanese gender roles to be mostly still in place, rendering it highly difficult for Japanese women to pursue a career in domestic organizations. It is suggested that Japanese women do not perceive male oppression as the (main) problem and obtaining the same rights and duties not as the solution. Instead, what women mainly require is a substantial redefinition of the work life balance in Japanese organizations. In this sense, the fault lines are not so much between men and women but between organizations and employees.

Furthermore, Japanese women choosing to work for foreign employers in Japan did not so because of professional concerns alone, but also because of emotional factors. As they often reject the constraints of traditional Japanese gender roles, working for foreign employers signifies for them the pursuit of a liberating Western lifestyle. Moreover, Japanese women working for foreign companies often perceive themselves as outsiders in Japanese society, but also as a kind of avant-garde, possibly setting new trends in Japanese working life and perhaps in Japanese society at large.

Markus Pudelko is Professor of International Business at Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, School of Business and Economics and Vice Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences. He has earned Master degrees in Business Studies (Cologne U), Economics (Sorbonne U) and International Management (CEMS) and a PhD (Cologne U). Prior to joining the University of Tübingen he worked eight years for the University of Edinburgh Business School. For longer-term research purposes he visits frequently other universities, such as Columbia U, Melbourne U, IESE, U of Stellenbosch, Fudan U, Peking U, Korea U, Doshisha U, Sophia U and Waseda U. His current research is on headquarters-subsidary relationships, the impact of language on international business, Japanese HRM and cross-cultural management.

The lecture will be given in English. It will take place on **Thursday, April 10, 2014 at 06.30 p.m.** at the DIJ. Admission is free; please register at: forum@dijtokyo.org or