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Gender inequality and family formation in Japan

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Abstract

The way Japanese culture forms families (ie) has historically provided women with great autonomy. The formation of the ie as a perpetuating, corporate, stem family with impartible inheritance raises the successor's wife's status in the ie above that of the successor's brothers, who leave the ie. The ie's succession of generations functions most smoothly with one son, or a daughter and then a son, the pattern typical of modern industrial societies as well. But Japan's stable gender paradigm Male : Female :: Public : Private :: Breadwinner : Housewife that arises from this way of forming families has now become a hindrance to those women ambitious for opportunity in the wider world once they have fulfilled their duties to their husband's ie. Neither the modernization of Japan nor its economic advance and more recent stagnation have significantly altered this pattern of family gender formation.

Keywords:

Japan gender inequality family ie

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