



Too Few Women At The Top. The Persistence Of Inequality In Japan

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Cornell University Press, New York, 2016, pp. 296

The number of women in positions of power and authority in Japanese companies has remained small despite the increase in the number of educated women and the laws on gender equality. Kumiko Nemoto challenges claims that the surge in women's education and employment will logically lead to the decline of gender inequality and eventually improve women's status in the Japanese workplace. Interviews with diverse groups of workers at three Japanese financial companies and two cosmetics companies in Tokyo reveal the persistence of vertical sex segregation as a cost-saving measure. Women's progress is impeded by corporate customs such as pay and promotion, track-based hiring of women, long working hours, and the absence of women leaders. Gender equality for common businesses requires that Japan fundamentally depart from its postwar methods of business management. Comparison with the situation in the United States makes the author's analysis of the Japanese case relevant for understanding the dynamics of the glass ceiling in U.S. workplaces as well.

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