

Japan's Misguided Policy Approach to "Solving" the Issue of Low Fertility

by Prof. Mary C. Brinton

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The Japanese government has passed a series of policies in the past few decades to address the country's low birth rate. Despite these attempts, the birth rate has changed very little. Why have the policies met with so little success? Moreover, why has Japan continued to exhibit one of the highest levels of gender inequality among postindustrial societies? In this talk, I address these questions and suggest alternative policy options.



Mary C. Brinton is Reischauer Institute Professor of Sociology and Director, Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies at Harvard. Her current research focuses on demographic issues in contemporary Japan, especially gender inequality and the low birth rate. Most recently, she is the author of 縛られる日本人: 人口減少をもたらす「規範」を打ち破れるか (Japan Tied Up in Knots: Can the Norms Leading to Population Decline Be Broken?) published by Chūō Kōron Shinsha in September 2022 and "Theories of Postindustrial Fertility Decline: An Empirical Examination" (2022; with Sinn Won Han), Population and Development Review 48, 2: 303-330.

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