

From an Immigration Country towards an Immigration State? Japan's Current Immigration Policy in a Long-term and Broad Perspective



Speaker: Prof. David Chiavacci

(University of Zurich, Switzerland)

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Time: 17:30-19:00pm

**Venue: Building 19, Room 608
Waseda Campus, Waseda U**

Attendance free, no registration required

This presentation will discuss immigration policy making and immigration policy reforms under the current Abe administration in a long-term and broad perspective. The 2007/08 global financial crisis that hit particularly hard Japan's export industries led to a slowdown in immigration to Japan. However, currently immigration inflows are not only picking up again, but reaching a level significantly higher than those from the later 1980s to the later 2000s. On the policy making level, Japan has currently entered its third immigration debate since the beginning of its new immigration in the late 1980s. Ongoing reforms in its admission policy are incremental and generally path-dependent on earlier policies, but they are in fact the largest reforms since the reform of the immigration law and the introduction of a new foreign trainee system around 1990 and could potentially result in even substantially larger immigration inflows in the coming years. Still, the big question remains if Japan could be undergoing a transformation from an immigration country that has de facto significant immigration inflows to an immigration state that recognizes and uses immigration policy as an important element for the future development of the nation. This paper discusses this question by comparing the institutional setting and ideational frames of the current immigration policy making with Japan's earlier immigration debates.

David CHIAVACCI is Professor in Social Science of Japan at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. His research covers political and economic sociology of contemporary Japan in a comparative perspective. His recent publications include *Social Inequality in Post-growth Japan: Transformation during Economic and Demographic Stagnation* (Routledge 2017, co-edited with Carola Hommerich) and *Re-emerging from Invisibility: Social Movements and Political Activism in Contemporary Japan* (Routledge 2018, co-edited with Julia Obinger).

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