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The EU Migrant Generation in Asia Middle-Class Aspirations in Asian Global Cities

A hybrid *u:japan* lecture by Helena Hof (University of Zurich)

Thursday
2023-04-20
18³⁰~20⁰⁰



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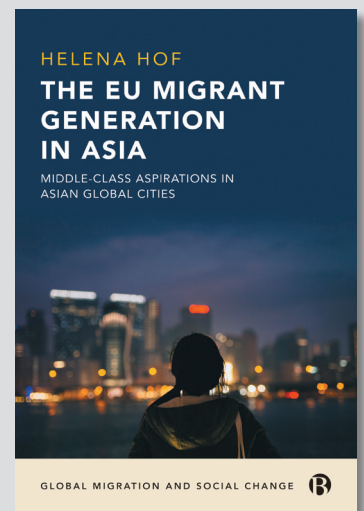
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Looking at young Europeans who migrated to Tokyo and Singapore in the 2010s, this book sheds light on early-career migration and on socio-cultural change in Japan and Singapore. We see how migration to Asian business centres has become a way of distinction and an alternative way of middle-class reproduction for young Europeans. The book also reveals how perceived insecurities in the crisis-ridden EU result in these migrants' migration or prolonged stays in Asia. This pioneering work makes the case for EU citizens' aspired lifestyles and professional employment that is no longer only attainable in Europe or the West. Tokyo and Singapore

have become their temporary homes. Having spent the crucial first life stage of 'full' adulthood and economic independence in Asia, the migrants have established grounds for a middle-class lifestyle that they might not be able to replicate back home. Japan's and Singapore's changing migration regimes, however, pose different barriers to the migrants, which results in ambiguous feelings towards their host societies. The analysis reveals a diametrical change in both country's migration policies and offers a nuanced portrayal of the way continuous ethnic diversification and globalization affect the daily lives of foreign professionals in Tokyo and Singapore.



Helena Hof is Senior Research and Teaching Fellow in Social Science of Japan at the University of Zurich and a Research Fellow at the Socio-Cultural Department of the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity. Her work focuses on Japan and lies at the nexus of migration studies, the sociology of work, gender, ethnicity and race, and global cities and entrepreneurship. She is currently part of a German government-funded collaborative project on the role of skills in labor migration processes in Asia, within which Helena examines foreign entrepreneurs in Tokyo's and Singapore knowledge-intensive startup scene. Helena holds guest researcher affiliations with Waseda's Institute of Asian Migrations in Tokyo and the Asia Research Institute's Migration Cluster at the National University of Singapore and has published widely in academic journals such as *Social Science Japan Journal*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Asia Pacific Migration Journal*, and *Mobilities*.



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