UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM | IRiS
Institute for Research into Superdiversity

WASEDA University

INSTITUTE OF ASIAN MIGRATIONS

NODE
NEW AND OLD DIVERSITIES EXCHANGE

UK | JAPAN

The Impact of COVID-19 on Foreign Residents in 'No Immigration' Japan: Structural Inequity, Japanese-style Multiculturalism, and Diminishing Social Capital

Chris Burgess

JAPANFOUNDATION
国際交流基金

E·S·R·C
ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

IRiS Working Paper Series

The Institute for Research into Superdiversity (IRiS) Working Paper Series is intended to aid the rapid distribution of work in progress, research findings and special lectures by researchers and associates of the Institute. Papers aim to stimulate discussion among scholars, policymakers and practitioners and will address a range of topics including issues surrounding population dynamics, security, cohesion and integration, identity, global networks, rights and citizenship, diasporic and transnational activities, service delivery, wellbeing, social exclusion and the opportunities which superdiverse societies offer to support economic recovery.

The IRiS WP Series is edited by Professor Nando Sigona at the Institute for Research into Superdiversity, University of Birmingham. We welcome proposals for Working Papers from researchers, policymakers and practitioners; for queries and proposals, please contact: n.sigona@bham.ac.uk. All papers are peer-reviewed before publication.

The opinions expressed in the papers are solely those of the author/s. They should not be attributed to the project funders or the Institute for Research into Superdiversity, the School of Social Policy or the University of Birmingham.

Institute for Research into Superdiversity
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
B15 2TT
Birmingham UK
www.birmingham.ac.uk/iris

The Impact of COVID-19 on Foreign Residents in 'No Immigration' Japan: Structural Inequity, Japanese-style Multiculturalism, and Diminishing Social Capital

Chris Burgess

Abstract

While few have remained untouched by the effects of COVID-19, migrants have been disproportionally affected by the pandemic in terms of mobility (movement restrictions), employment (loss of jobs), and health (high infection rates). A further risk unique to migrants is that the progress made to date on integrating into host communities could be reversed or even erased. Clearly, increased pressure to "stay home" and "social distance" – institutional restrictions on movement and human contact – has resulted in isolation and loneliness for many; however, for migrants who lack connections, support networks, and social capital in a host society this isolation can be especially debilitating. This paper looks at the impact of COVID-19 on foreign residents in Japan. One finding was that while government health and financial support policies during the pandemic generally treated foreign residents equally, structural inequity meant that many foreigners had difficulties accessing the resources. A key reason for this "gap" is argued to be Japanese-style multiculturalism, a non-integrative policy that provides services to those 'Others' in need of assistance but disempowers them by failing to foster the skills and abilities they need to access resources equitably and become a fully-functioning independent member of society. The paper concludes that a new approach is needed, one that recognises the importance of building social capital in the integration process.

Keywords

Citation

Chris Burgess is a Professor of Japanese Studies at Tsuda University, Tokyo, where he specialises in migration, multiculturalism, and identity in Japan.

Email for correspondence – cburgess@tsuda.ac.jp

Blog on Japanese society – http://abritishprofinjapan.blogspot.com/

Acknowledgements

Contents

Introduction

> "[I]t is the extent to which people can call upon different types of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital that shapes their well-being. People with no bonding, bridging, or linking relationships, for example, are hermits or outcasts" (Woolcock and Sweetser 2002: 26)

While few have remained untouched by the effects of COVID-19, vulnerable populations such as migrants have been disproportionally affected by the pandemic in terms of mobility (movement restrictions), employment (loss of jobs), and health (high infection rates) (OECD 2020a). The latest *International Migration Outlook* (OECD 2020b: 5) highlights a further risk that is frequently overlooked: the risk that the progress made to date on integrating migrants in host communities will be reversed or even erased. Clearly, increased pressure to "stay home" and "social distance" – institutional restrictions on movement and human contact – has resulted in isolation and loneliness for many; however, for migrants who lack connections, support networks, and social capital in a host society this isolation can be especially debilitating.[1] Unfortunately, migrants and refugees have often not been explicitly included in responses to the pandemic (Orcutt *et al*. 2020), something which is particularly apparent in Japan,[2] a country which frames itself as a "No-immigration" country and lacks proper multicultural and integrationist policies.[3]

This paper examines the experience of and support given to foreign residents in Japan under COVID-19. After some background on the development of COVID-19 in Japan in Section 2, Section 3 details how the pandemic has impacted foreign residents in the country. Section 4 looks at support measures and notes that while migrants have generally been treated equally in COVID-19 policy responses, difficulty in accessing these resources has created structural inequity. Section 5 argues that a key reason for this structural inequity is Japanese-style multiculturalism, a non-integrative policy that provides services to foreign residents in need of assistance but at the same time disempowers them by failing to foster the skills and abilities they need to access those resources. Finally, Section 6 highlights the need for a new approach, one that recognises the importance of building social capital in the integration process.

COVID-19 and Japan: Background

Japan was one of the earliest countries to experience COVID-19 when a citizen returning from Wuhan was confirmed positive on January 16, 2020 (HRWG 2020: 45). Prime-Minister Suga declared COVID-19 an infectious disease on January 27th and three days later the Novel Coronavirus Response

---

[1] This is true both physically and mentally. Physically, Fraser and Aldrich (2021) found that, long-term, those communities in Japan with weaker social connections had higher rates of COVID-19 infection. Mentally, Miller *et al* (2019: 5), in a review of 55 studies on mental well-being of international migrants to Japan, found that the presence or absence of social support networks for migrants was the main determinant of mental well-being among foreign nationals living in Japan: a lack of social connections was associated with isolation, stress, and even depression.

[2] For example, the 2017 "National Action Plan for Pandemic Influenza and New Infectious Diseases" says nothing about foreign residents aside from a passing comment on the need to disseminate information clearly for "foreigners and the disabled" (Cabinet Secretariat 2017).

[3] For those not familiar with Japan's immigration policy and attitudes towards foreigners, see Burgess (2020). Here, I argue that Japan's 'no-immigration' principle, an institutionalisation of the ethno-nationalistic 'homogenous people' discourse, has resulted in an under-developed multicultural support system, severely hindering the social integration of newcomers. Kato (2021) calls this *intentional* absence of a migrant policy "a policy of no policy."

Headquarters was established (Ma, Wang, and Wu 2021: 70). The following month the news was dominated by an outbreak on the cruise ship Diamond Princess which was placed under quarantine in Yokohama. Since then, four separate (though largely toothless) national or partly national state of emergencies have been declared (in red in the appendix) amid five waves of infections, illustrated in Figure 1 below:
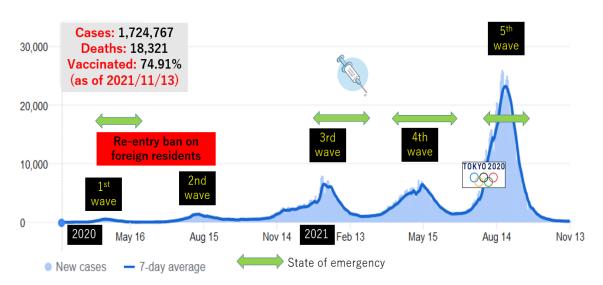
Figure 1: Japan COVID-19 Infections/States of Emergency (Feb. 2020~Nov. 2021)

Source: Graph from Google ("Japan covid-19 cases graph"); data John Hopkins (2021)

The vaccination roll-out in Japan, which began belatedly in mid-February, started later than in most other developed countries (Kosaka *et al.* 2021). Nevertheless, as of November 13th 2021, the vaccination rate had reached almost 75% and the total number of cases in Japan (13,683 per million) – albeit amid a policy of limited (targeted) testing – and particularly the death rate (145 per million) remain some of the lowest in the world (Our World in Data 2021).[4] This is despite the lack of a legally binding lockdown.[5]

In lieu of a strict lockdown, Japan relied on a policy of voluntary "self-restraint" (*jishuku*) which included an emphasis on staying home and, when outdoors, always wearing a mask and maintaining "social distance."[6] Etzioni (2021:53) in a study of the role of communitarian values – individual and social responsibility – in Japan during the pandemic, describes these values as follows:

> Communitarian values require individuals to willingly shelter at home, even if this entails a considerable loss of income and engenders frustrations. Instead of relying on coercive government controls, communitarian societies depend on shared core values

---

[4] Nevertheless, Japan is considered to be one of the worst performers in East Asia (Ma, Wang, and Wu 2021)

[5] Constitutional restrictions are the main reason Japan has not implemented the type of strict mandatory lockdown measures seen in other countries (Reuters 2020). Buchholz (2020) provides a good comparison of Japan's policies in terms of strictness with other countries. One result of this domestic leniency is that government virus countermeasures have tended to focus on strict border control – even for long-term foreign residents as discussed later in this section.

[6] As Okabe-Miyamto and Lyubomirsky (2021: 133) point out, WHO recommends the term "physical distancing" rather than "social distancing" (which implies social isolation); nevertheless, in Japan the latter (*sōsharu disutansu*) remains the most widely used term.

and social bonds – drawing on moral dialogues, persuasion, approbations, shaming, peer pressure and character education – in order to advance the common good.

In other words, while rules were ostensibly "voluntary" there was strong peer-pressure to isolate for the "common good." Incidents of discrimination and harassment against people and families who had been in contact with the infected (including essential workers) and cases of vandalism against non-local vehicles and businesses flouting the rules prompted a "Stop Corona Discrimination" campaign by a Tokyo based public interest incorporated foundation though its effectiveness was limited (The Center for Human Rights Education and Training 2020).

For foreign residents, perhaps more likely to be ignorant of social norms and lacking strong social support networks and community bonds, the risk of approbation, ostracism, and discrimination is higher. For example, in May 2020, disinformation – based on a mistaken reading of MHLW data – claiming that foreigners made up more than half of infections spread on social media (In Fact 2020). In November 2020 infection clusters in foreign communities – including a technical college and a school for Brazilians – garnered much attention in the media, resulting in rumours and discriminatory comments, including social media posts encouraging parents not to let their children play with "foreign" kids (*Asahi Shimbun* 2020a). Then, in May 2021, a health center in Ibaraki warned people "not to eat with foreigners" to prevent spreading COVID-19 (*Nikkei Keizai Shimbun* 2021a). Two months later, just before the start of the Olympics, The Akaska Excel Hotel Tokyu was found to have put up "Japanese only" and "Foreigner only" signs on its elevators (Independent 2021). Finally, as the Olympics draw to a close, at the same time that Prime-Minister Suga was trying to convince a skeptical public that the influx of foreigners was not responsible for a surge in infections, the government announced it would strengthen the testing system for international students and technical intern trainees, apparently in response to a spate of heavily reported clusters in Japanese language schools and foreign worker dormitories (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 2021b). The discourse of foreigners as carriers of disease[7] – not dissimilar to the discourse of foreigners as criminals – had become well and truly established.

A key moment in the formation of the perception of foreigners as more likely to spread COVID-19 than Japanese came in April 2020 when the Ministry of Justice[8] introduced a re-entry ban for all foreign nationals, *including long-term foreign residents*, with exceptions for Special Permanent Residents and those with "special exceptional circumstances."[9] The sudden inability to return home to family and work was greeted with shock and anger by the foreign community in Japan who felt they were being treated like second-class citizens (Japanese citizens were free to return home).[10] Moreover, for those in Japan it meant being unable to visit sick relatives and missing family funerals abroad since there was no guarantee they would be let back in. The discriminatory treatment of foreign residents was

---

[7] Yamagata *et al* (2021) note that frequent contact with foreigners had a mitigating effect on exclusionary attitudes among Japanese – suggesting that discrimination is unlikely to disappear anytime soon.

[8] This was despite the Justice Minister herself featuring in a YouTube video specifically mentioning discrimination against foreigners for the "Stop Discrimination Campaign." The video can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYS00qCxo-0.

[9] HRWG (2020:47) notes that initially the re-entry ban announcement was only available in Japanese "which made it difficult for some migrants to access this crucial information."

[10] Japan was the only G7 country to implement such a draconian policy and was widely criticised by other G7 countries (*Sankei Shimbun* 2020). Nevertheless, re-entry bans *have* been implemented in other countries, such as Australia, which until recently also had a ban on *residents* leaving the country (BBC News 2021b).

highlighted by the response of the Foreign Minister Motegi to a question by a non-Japanese reporter on the scientific basis of the re-entry ban; although the question was asked in fluent Japanese, Motegi side-stepped the question by mocking the reporter's Japanese ability (*Mainichi Shimbun* 2020). And while the policy was finally lifted on August 31 (2020), it left, as the *Japan Times* (2020c) noted, a "scar" on Japan's foreign community, one that had already suffered more than most under the impact of COVID-19.[11]

The Financial and Mental Impact of COVID-19 on Foreign Residents in Japan

As discussed in the Introduction, COVID-19 has impacted people's lives in various ways with vulnerable populations like migrants disproportionally affected. A survey of 300 foreign residents by the Tokyo-based IT company Jellyfish early in the pandemic highlighted some of the key problems for Japan's high-skilled foreign residents:
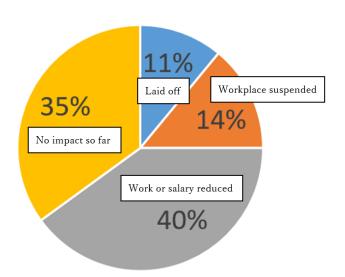
Figure 2: COVID-19 Impact on Livelihoods of 300 Foreign Residents (May 2020)

Source: Jellyfish, quoted in NHK World (2020)

Figure 2 shows that in the early days of the pandemic, COVID-19 had already had a negative financial impact on 65% of foreign residents. A broader follow-up survey in April 2021 of the most common worries of foreigners in Japan found work-related matters (temporary layoff/withdrawal of job offers) to be the main concern followed by information about hospitals (Mixess by Jellyfish 2021). The Jellyfish data is supported by data on the content of 5,600 calls to TOCOS (Tokyo Coronavirus Support Center for Foreign Residents) during fiscal 2020 (*Japan News* 2021c). Here too, economic difficulties (24.4%) were the primary concern, followed by health anxiety (21.8%). Surprisingly, the same was true for international students: one survey showed their second biggest concern[12] was not being able to work part-time, reflecting how many irregular workers have been laid off during the pandemic (Mizuoe 2020: 20). In sum, many foreign residents suffered more than their Japanese counterparts particularly

---

[11] I recently learned (Nana Oishi, personal communication) that the reason for the re-entry ban was apparently a lack of PCR test kits. This begs the question as to why the government didn't offer this explanation at the time.

[12] Their biggest concern was not being able to return home (Mizuoe 2020: 20).

in terms of employment: they tended to be the first to receive pay-cuts, have their hours cut, and lose their jobs as companies struggled, what Suzuki (2021: 11,22) refers to as the "Last hired, first fired" and "Japanese nationals first" principles.

While the pandemic has clearly had a negative effect on many foreign residents, it has been particularly hard for blue-collar workers, such as those on the Trainee and Technical Intern Programme (TITP). Many technical intern trainees – especially Vietnamese interns who now make up the second largest group of foreign residents in Japan and the largest on the TITP – saw their training suspended or were forced to quit: by August 2020 there were an estimated 20,000 TITP workers who had completed their terms but were unable to return home, "forced into destitution and homelessness" (HRWG 2020: 59).[13] Kato (2021) estimates this figure is now closer to 40,000 and highlights how these "disposable" workers have largely been left to fend for themselves – at the same time that the government has been allowing in *new* technical interns from Vietnam. For those still in employment, Tran (2020), in (online) interviews with 16 Vietnamese technical interns, found, as above, increasing anxiety over health, increased financial risk (reduced working hours and a lack of overtime work), and lack of information as the key problems for his respondents. The pandemic specific support provided by the government – and others – to alleviate these problems is detailed in the next section.

COVID-19 Support Measures: Equality vs Equity

In terms of medical support, all foreign residents are eligible for free vaccinations. However, not all foreign residents are necessarily aware of this fact: for example, a national survey of Vietnamese residents found that around 60% did not know the vaccines were free of charge with some 70% feeling worried about the lack of information (*Asahi Shimbun* 2021c).[14] Vaccine vouchers are sent by municipalities by post to registered foreigners, meaning undocumented foreigners would not receive the necessary voucher. Regarding these unregistered foreigners, such as over-stayers and those refused asylum, the government has said that it will try to make sure that all can receive shots regardless of residency status (*Japan News* 2021b); the Health Ministry issued a notice on June 28th 2021 stipulating that local governments can refrain from reporting over-stayers, as they are legally obliged to do, if this would interfere with the vaccination process (Japan News 2021a). In practice, however, this is dependent on the efforts of local authorities: it is probably fair to say that pro-active localities, such as Kawaguchi City (*Asahi Shimbun* 2021d), are the exception rather than the rule. Vaccine reservations, the pre-screening application form, and the vaccination site itself are – except for a few places, such as Shinjuku, with high concentrations of foreign residents – Japanese language only, though multilingual and "plain Japanese"[15] explanations are available (MHLW 2021a). Low-cost

---

[13] For those who have been laid off, homelessness is a real concern since most foreign interns reside in company dormitories. Kato (2021) details an interview with an ex-Vietnamese technical intern who had been sleeping under a bridge and describes the important role Daion-ji Buddhist Temple in Saitama has played in providing a shelter/haven for Vietnamese who have finished or lost their jobs and become stranded in Japan (see also *Asahi Shimbun* 2020b)

[14] As HRWG (2020: 55) points out, migrant workers heavily rely on information shared among their social networks (bonding social capital), networks which have weakened during the pandemic. For example, the suspension of church services has deprived Vietnamese, Filipino, and South-American Returnees (Nikkeijin) of one of their key support networks.

[15] Previously described in English as "easy" or "simple" Japanese, the literal translation of *Yasashii Nihongo*, it has recently started to be referred to as "plain" Japanese following international usage. For example, the 25th February 2021 Ministry of Foreign Affairs sponsored International Forum on Acceptance of Foreign Nationals and their Integration in Japan featured a number of (online) speakers, all but one from inside Japan, presenting on the subject of "Disseminating Information to Foreign Residents in Japan: Current Situation and Issues seen in COVID-19 Pandemic" (MOFA 2021). However, the contrast
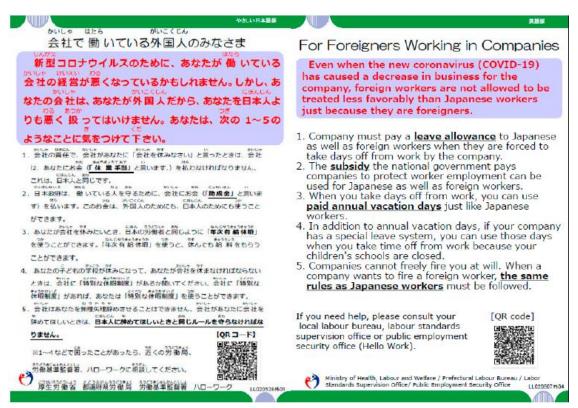
(and, in some cases, free) testing is available to all residents, regardless of nationality, though with the same language barriers as with the vaccinations (Japan Times 2020b).

As for economic support measures, one of the first was a special ¥100,000 ($880) fixed payment (*tokubetsu teigaku kyūfukin*) to all Japanese residents, including non-Japanese nationals.[16] While the payment was, in principle, available to *all* registered foreign residents (undocumented foreigners were not eligible), in practice the Japanese application form was not easy to complete, even for Japanese, illustrating the difference between equality and equity. For example, there were reports of many applicants accidentally checking the (seemingly unnecessary) "do not wish to receive the cash payment" box on the application form by mistake (*Tokyo Shimbun* 2020). Other financial support includes ¥200,000 ($1,750) "Temporary Loan Emergency Funds" (*kinkyū koguchi shikin*) for low-income families struggling with living expenses as a result of temporary stoppage of work or unemployment (MHLW 2021c). Foreign workers are also, in principle, eligible for leave (furlough) allowances (*kyūgyō teatte/shienkin*) which pays 80% of the base salary while laid off (for an exhaustive list of support policies for foreigners see the PDF at MOJ 2021a). Indeed, the government has taken pains to stress that foreigners working in Japan have the same legal labour rights and job security as Japanese workers and are supposed to be treated equally. Figure 3 shows MHLW leaflets in (plain) Japanese and English spelling this out:

---

between the Japanese presenters – who tended to define "plain Japanese" as for non-native speakers/foreign nationals – and the non-Japanese presenter – who defined "plain English" as for various groups of people, including the elderly and those who struggle to read in unfamiliar registers – highlighted the way *yasashii* Nihongo reinforces the Japanese/foreigner binary in Japan. For a more detailed critique see Burgess (2012:12) and Gottlieb (2005:53).

[16] International students had a separate scheme, the emergency student support handout (*gakusei shien kinkyū kyūfukin*). Unlike the \100,000 fixed payment (which had no conditions), this had various requirements attached including attendance and academic performance, meaning only about 30% of international students were actually eligible (Kyodo News 2020).

Figure 3: MHLW Leaflet on the Rights of Foreigners Working in Japan

Source: (MHLW 2021b: 46).

Of course, the problem is that while in theory foreigners do have the same legal rights as Japanese, in practice they are frequently unaware of their rights and/or unable to access such resources[17] resulting in the employment and financial problems outlined in section 2. For example, for those foreign workers whose training was suspended, Asato (2021) estimates that around half were unable to apply for the leave (furlough) allowance because companies "washed their hands" of the workers and didn't issue the application materials they needed to apply. Similarly, for those on the TITP who were forced to quit, the supervising organisations were reluctant to help trainees find new positions as Special Skilled Workers since they would then become ineligible to receive supervising fees from the employers (*Asahi Shimbun* 2021a).

On top of medical and financial support, the government has also introduced extra mental health support measures during the pandemic. Unfortunately, unlike the policies detailed above, which have been characterised by equality, measures to address loneliness and isolation have not specifically included foreign residents. This is despite the overall suicide rate – already the leading cause of death for 15-39-year-olds in Japan – increasing for the first time in 11 years in 2020, with a noticeable spike in the number of women as well as elementary, junior high, and high school students (BBC News

---

[17] One of the largest surveys of foreign residents to date (1600 responses with a response rate of 17.1%), carried out in September 2020, found that the main difficulties faced by foreign residents under the pandemic was not knowing how to find reliable information (20.2%) and not knowing how to apply/use support services (15.4%) (MOJ 2021b).

2021a).[18] In a March 10th editorial, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* (2021a) discussed the reasons for the rise in suicides and highlighted which groups were particularly vulnerable:

> The outbreak of the novel coronavirus has dealt another blow to a situation in which social ties built on community-based and blood relations have been weakened. It seems that the number of people who cannot receive help from those around them is increasing….Many elderly people tend to refrain from going out and stay home for fear of being infected. Some young people say they have fewer opportunities to talk to others as online classes are introduced in universities

The rise in suicides pushed the government into action; on February 12 2021 Testsuhi Sakamoto was appointed as minister in charge of dealing with problems of loneliness (*kodoku*) and isolation (*koritsu*) (*Asahi Shimbun* 2021b). A week later, an office was opened in the Cabinet Secretariat (*kodoku koritsu taisaku tantō shitsu*) to coordinate policy and plans to draw up a revised outline on support for children and youth who were feeling increasingly isolated during the pandemic were announced (*Nikkei Keizai Shimbun* 2021b). The draft outline highlighted the problem of suicide, anxiety, and "unwanted isolation" (*nozomanai koritsu*). The first meeting on March 12th set out a detailed timetable of counter-measures, including emergency handouts for one-parent and low-income households with children, subsidies for NPOs offering suicide support, and a full-fledged survey on the issue of loneliness and isolation amid the COVID-19 crisis (Cabinet Secretariat 2021). However, while both Prime-Minister Suga and "Minister for Loneliness" Sakamoto have vowed to fully support those who need help, the focus has been entirely on women, children, and the elderly; there was no specific mention of perhaps the most isolated and vulnerable group of all, Japan's foreign residents – though this does not, of course, necessarily mean that foreign residents are being excluded. The August 2021 MHLW (2021b: 45-48) annual white paper on the impact of COVID-19 on people's lives did touch on foreign residents (lumped together with the disabled as in the 2017 pandemic preparedness plan) in terms of job-hunting, financial, and language support. Nevertheless, the main focus was on the elderly (cognitive decline as a consequences of reduced social interaction) and women (domestic abuse and the increased burden of child-rearing and housework) with basically no mention of the effects of isolation on foreign residents.

In summarising COVID-19 support, Japan has a raft of measures at the national level that are, on the surface, inclusive – equally available to both Japanese and non-Japanese residents.[19] Universal free vaccination and the ¥100,000 emergency payment are good examples of this. In addition, we have also seen uncharacteristic institutional flexibility, such as the government relaxing rules that prohibit technical intern trainees from switching jobs or extending their contract (*Japan Times* 2020a).

---

[18] Ueda (2019) found that the suicide rates of Koreans and Chinese in Japan was similar to or higher than those of Japanese, while other groups tended to show lower suicide rates. Gilmour *et al* (2019) found that Koreans living in Japan in particular have a very high risk of mortality due to suicide. Finally, Kobori *et al* (2017) found an extremely high mortality rate due to suicide among foreign residents aged 60 or over (this was linked to the fact that mortality rates increased – and even exceeded those of the Japanese population - with long-term residence). It is important to note that these findings were all pre-pandemic and can only have worsened since then.

[19] Here I am focusing on measures during the pandemic which have indeed been characterised by equality. However, as Suzuki (2021: 15-16) points out, the social welfare safety net for foreign residents in general is much weaker than that available for Japanese. For example, social welfare/public assistance (*seikatsu hogo*) is only available to permanent residents and spouses of Japanese. Surprisingly, government statistics show that the number of non-Japanese welfare recipients actually *went down* slightly during the pandemic (MHLW 2021d).

Moreover, those foreign residents who have been dismissed and/or unable to return home became able to apply for a "temporary designated activities" (*tokutei katsudō*) visa which allows them to work for up-to 28 hours a week as well as re-employment support (*saishūshoku no tame no macchingu shien*) (ISA 2021). However, while equality and some degree of flexibility has indeed been a welcome feature of Japan's COVID-19 measures, a key problem has been that access to that support – in particular the language barrier – has created structural inequity (unfair distribution of resources due to a failure to recognise cultural differences in ability to access those resources). Miller *et al*, in a study on how equitably migrants been included in the Japanese response to the COVID-19 pandemic, conclude as follows:

> We found that many policies, while conceptually inclusive and uncharacteristically flexible, were often structurally inequitable. Mutual aid by volunteers and non-profit organizations were consistently left to connect migrants with unmet needs to the available services (Miller et al. forthcoming)

Some local governments[20] – and as the above quote suggests, non-governmental actors[21] – have tried hard to address structural inequities, especially in terms of language support. Nevertheless, volunteers and NPOs, who have had their hands full providing basic medical and financial support, have been unable to fill this gap. The next section argues that one reason for this "gap" might be Japanese-style multiculturalism, a non-integrative policy that provides services to those 'Others' in need of assistance but disempowers them by failing to foster the skills and abilities they need to access resources equitably and become fully-functioning independent members of society.

Japanese-Style Multiculturalism: Non-integration, Exclusion, and Isolation

"Integration" (*tōgō* in Japanese) is almost entirely absent in local and national government discussions and policies on foreign residents. Instead, the term *tabunka kyōsei* (literally multicultural co-existence but here referred to as "Japanese-style multiculturalism") is the dominant term. *Tabunka kyōsei* policies are entirely decentralised in Japan: the national government provides "guidelines"[22] but leaves implementation of concrete policies up to the localities, resulting in significant differences between regions and cities. When attempting to measure "integration" in Japan, researchers typically evaluate these *tabunka kyōsei* policies, almost always in (unrepresentative) municipalities with large

[20] The Tokyo Metropolitan Government, for example, established a free multilingual telephone COVID-19 support service – introduced earlier in Section 3 – called the "Tokyo Coronavirus Support Centre for Foreign Residents" (TOCOS) in April 2020, which handled almost 6,000 enquiries until it was dissolved at the end of March 2021 (*Japan News* 2021c). However, such initiatives have generally been limited to larger localities with sufficient resources.

[21] For example, the Japan-Vietnam Coexistence Support Group (Nichietsu Tomoiki Shienkai) is an NPO that specialises in helping Vietnamese technical interns (nv-tomoiki.or.jp/). Another example is the website (covid19-tagengo.com) providing multilingual information related to COVID-19 run by student volunteers at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS). These services are, however, generally digital access only; in contrast to other recent disasters, the pandemic has seen a dearth of face-to-face volunteers and a withdrawal of CSO (civil society organisation) services: "it is probable that the institutional integrity of the civil society sector itself", warns Slater (2020), "has been damaged by this crisis in ways that will have much longer-term consequences." In a country where such organisations play a key role in supporting foreign residents, this will undoubtedly have serious repercussions for migrant social capital and integration.

[22] The 2006 Plan for the Promotion of Multicultural Community Building (Chīki ni okeru tabunka kyōsei suishin puran) – revised in 2020 – marked the first time the national government had dealt with the topic of multiculturalism in any meaningful way (MIC 2021). However, as Nakamatsu (2014) argues in a detailed analysis, while signaling a change of tone away from assimilationist and anti-migration rhetoric of the past, the "plan" was nothing more than an extension of existing policies to manage and control "foreigners."

concentrations of foreign residents. This approach is also largely the one adopted by the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) (Solano and Huddleston 2020), which measures eight policy areas to integrate migrants in 52 countries: "MIPEX considers Japan's multicultural existence guidelines and programs as integration policy," notes Nagai (2019: 10), "based on the understanding that its policy concerns migrants' incorporation into society."

Unfortunately, equating *tabunka kyōsei* with integration represents a grave misunderstanding of the term. Previously, I (2004a) have argued that *tabunka kyōsei* is a particularly sophisticated discourse that defines, contains, reifies, locks in, and reinforces difference thereby limiting access to social resources and maintaining the power of the dominant group – "Othering" not by exclusion but by inclusion. Many others have also argued that the Japanese brand of multiculturalism is exclusionary and essentialising rather than accepting of difference, an ideology used by the dominant group to affirm its own distinctness and separateness and maintain the sharp Japanese/foreigner distinction. For example, Suzuki (2000: 160) suggests that *kyōsei* (re)produces boundaries that reaffirm foreigners' non-membership in Japanese society. Nagayoshi (2011) shows that Japanese regard their own brand of multiculturalism not as conflicting with but rather as strengthening a homogeneous ethno-national identity. Kashiwazaki (2013) notes that immigrants are expected to be incorporated into the host-society *as foreigners*. Nakamatsu (2014: 151) concludes that *tabunka kyōsei* is more concerned with social cohesion — converting foreigners into 'law-abiding, locally-functioning well-adjusted residents' — than empowerment. And Nagy (2012) finds that local "multicultural" policies, being service-based and non-integrative in nature, do not create a bridge enabling migrants to make a transition from being temporary residents to an accepted, integrated minority, leaving them stuck in a peripheral position in society. In sum, *tabunka kyōsei* is better seen as the antithesis of integration[23] which begs the question – one that has become particularly pressing during the pandemic – how do we understand migrant integration in Japan without falling into the *tabunka kyōsei* policy trap? Here, the concept of social capital offers the possibility of a new approach.

Towards a New Approach: The Importance of Social Capital for Integration

While (non-existent) national and (service-based/non-integrative) local "multicultural" policies shed little light on the integration of migrants in Japanese society, a focus on the individual level can be more illuminating. Although integration is defined variously by different authors, Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas' (2016: 11/14) define it as "the process of settlement, interaction with the host society, and social change…the process of becoming an accepted part of society." Here the focus is on integration as a *two-way process* involving migrants' *interactions* with and *relations* between individuals and groups in the host society.[24] This resonates with my own research (2004b) on female international marriage migrants in Yamagata, Northeast Japan, which found the women to be agents for change, actively pursuing strategies in order to enhance diminished power (social capital) through participation in, contribution to, and the creation of new social networks and identities. Put simply, I (2004b: 230) used the concept of social capital – local assets which often need to be re-accumulated

---

[23] In its 2020 survey, MIPEX places Japan in the category "immigration without integration (integration denied)", illustrating its own error in interpreting *tabunka kyōsei* policies as integration policies (https://www.mipex.eu/key-findings).
[24] Nagy (2012: 120-23), in a review of the integration literature, introduces interactive integration (networks and relationships) and identificational integration (a feeling of belonging to the host society) which have similarities to this approach but again his focus is on *tabnuka kyōsei* policies rather than individuals.

in the host society 'through exchange relationships, reciprocity, trust, and solidarity' – to understand and explain the process of integration. Faust's (1997: 199) definition of social capital was useful in this respect:

> those resources [information/knowledge/status/skills and so on] inherent in patterned social ties that allow individuals [to access] and co-operate in networks and collectivities and/or that allow individuals to pursue their goals

John Morris (2022) has used social capital, what he terms "the horizontal and vertical ties that bind societies together", to describe the support and recovery activities of migrants in Miyagi Prefecture in the aftermath of March 2011 triple disaster (hereafter 3/11). Specifically, he describes the "Miyagi model" as "providing opportunities for foreigners to build their own independent connections with local society and to acquire the social skills necessary to form a foundation for gaining some degree of autonomy." He (2022) frames these activities using the three different types of social capital:

> the Miyagi model emphasized building bonding and bridging social capital both between foreigners and within their communities, while the activities of MIA [Miyagi International Association] itself provided essential linking social capital when specialist support, e.g. an introduction to sympathetic lawyers, was called for. Although we did not know it at the time, we had already intuited that providing multiple forms of social capital and raising people's social skills were the two most effective things that could be done to promote resilience. Moreover, this promoted not only individual resilience, but that of foreign residents' families, and sometimes even in their communities as a whole.

The result, according to a number of local surveys, was migrants feeling accepted and integrated into their communities. He (2022) contrasts this local "success" with the "muddled" no-immigration policy of the national government, epitomised by the TITP:

> making the technical intern trainee programme the basis for Japan's foreign worker intake is its own undoing. The system is designed to prevent the trainees from building any meaningful social capital within Japan, which means that the trainees and the host community are both deprived of the most potent social factor possible to prevent problems arising, either in the context of social friction or of any kind of disaster, natural or otherwise.

The fact that the pandemic has further isolated what is *already* an alienated community, heightening the sense of separation and lack of belonging, raises serious concerns for their well-being. Neither is this an issue solely for technical interns; other foreign residents who have had some success building networks and relations within the host society have seen many of these gains lost. Uekusa and Lee (2018), for example, describe the "strategic invisibilisation" of international marriage migrant women in Tohoku to avoid "sanctions and prejudice", a strategy that, post 3/11, caused further isolation, exacerbating their vulnerability and damaging their mental health. It is likely that COVID-19 has had an even bigger – and long-lasting – effect on these communities.

Conclusion - COVID-19 Highlighting the Need for a New Approach to Integrating Japan's Foreign Residents

The standard definition of an (im)migrant is a person who moves to a country other than their country of usual residence, usually for a minimum time period (e.g. IOM 2021). However, being an immigrant is not simply about crossing a border and living in a new place; it is about becoming part of a community (or communities), joining social networks, and forming relations/connections with others in the host society. In this sense, the UNESCO (2019) definition of a migrant as "any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and *has acquired some significant social ties to this country*" (my emphasis) is closer to the mark. It is this acquisition of social ties – the building of social capital – that I have argued is the key to integration.

One of the consequences of Japan's ad-hoc migration policy – underlined by a "No-Immigration Principle" that refuses to recognise foreign workers as "migrants" and instead sees them as disposable "guest workers" – is a lack of proper support and integration policies. In other words, even before COVID-19, foreign residents occupied a peripheral, "invisible" position in Japan and building social ties and networks required much individual effort. Indeed, even before the pandemic, Japan was not an attractive long-term destination for migrants, including white-collar professionals (Morita 2017; Oishi 2012).[25] Unfortunately, one of the key effects of the pandemic has been to exacerbate migrants' isolation and decimate what social capital they had accumulated, reversing and possibly erasing any progress made to date on integration – making the country even less attractive to live and work in. For a Japan whose demographics mean labour shortages will only get worse, this doesn't bode well, especially as Southeast Asian economies develop and shift to being net recipients of migrants (Asianbusinessmen 2021).[26] In sum, it is tragic that it has taken a global pandemic – and a lot of unnecessary suffering – to highlight the desperate need for a completely new integrative social capital based approach to supporting Japan's foreign residents.

References

Asahi Shimbun. 2020a. "COVID-19 cluster cases spark backlash against foreign residents." Nov 28. https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13971106.

Asahi Shimbun. 2020b. "Saitama temple takes in Exploited Vietnamese Trainees ", Nov 27. https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13968578.

Asahi Shimbun. 2021a. "40,000 foreign trainees enter Japan amid virus as others fired." Jan 21. https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14125024.

Asahi Shimbun. 2021b. "Daijin ni totte Kodoku to wa? Taisaku Ninau Sakamoto "Rakusen toku ni" (What does "loneliness" mean for the Minister? "When I lose an election...")." Feb 16. p.10.

Asahi Shimbun. 2021c. "Group: Use 'plain Japanese' in vaccine info for foreign residents ", July 22. https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14394223.

Asahi Shimbun. 2021d. "Kawaguchi city to vaccinate unregistered foreigners ", June 9. https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14368990.

Asato, Wako. 2021. Migration and COVID-19. Paper presented at the Tokyo University Study Group Zoom Seminar (Online Presentation), Tokyo, March 7.

---

[25] Japan came 27th in terms of appeal (down from 21st in 2016) and 54th in terms of readiness in the 2020 IMD World Talent Ranking (IMD World Competitiveness Center 2021).

[26] This is already happening in China, and is forecast to occur in Vietnam within the next 10 years (Asianbusinessmen 2021). Migrants from these two countries make up Japan's top two sources of migration.

Asianbusinessmen. 2021. "How Japan Risks Losing its Shine for Foreign Workers." August 22.
    https://asianbusinessmen.com/how-japan-risks-losing-its-shine-for-foreign-workers/.

BBC News. 2021a. "Covid and suicide: Japan's rise a warning to the world?", Feb. 18.
    https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-55837160.

BBC News. 2021b. "Covid: Australia to end ban on citizens leaving country." Oct. 27.
    https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-59058945.

Buchholz, Katharina. 2020. "Strict or Lenient? COVID-19 Lockdowns Compared ", June 18.
    https://www.statista.com/chart/22048/university-of-oxford-coronavirus-containment-and-health-
    index-selected-countries/.

Burgess, Chris. 2004a. "Maintaining Identities: Discourses of Homogeneity in a Rapidly Globalising Japan."
    Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies 4 (1), April 19.
    http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/articles/Burgess.html.

Burgess, Chris. 2004b. "(Re)Constructing Identities: International Marriage Migrants as Potential Agents of
    Social Change in a Globalising Japan." *Asian Studies Review: The Journal of the Asian Studies
    Association of Australia* 28 (3), September, pp.223-42.

Burgess, Chris. 2012. "'It's Better if they Speak Broken Japanese': Language as a Pathway or an Obstacle to
    Citizenship in Japan?" In *Language and Citizenship in Japan*, edited by Nanette Gottlieb, pp.37-57.
    London and New York: Routledge.

Burgess, Chris. 2020. "Keeping the Door Closed: The 2018 Revisions to the 'Immigration' Control Act as a
    Continuation of Japan's 'No-Immigration' Principle." *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese
    Studies* 20 (1), April 14. http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/ejcjs/vol20/iss1/burgess.html.

Cabinet Secretariat. 2021. "Kodoku/Koritsu Taisaku ni Kansuru Renraku Chōsei Kaigi (Liason and Coordination
    Council on Policies for Lonliness and Isolation)."   https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/seisaku/kodoku_koritsu/.

Cabinet Secretariat, (Office for Pandemic Influenza and New Infection Diseases Preparedness and Response).
    2017. "National Action Plan for Pandemic Influenza and New Infectious Diseases."
    https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/seisaku/ful/keikaku.html.

Etzioni, Amitai. 2021. "Community and COVID-19: Japan, Sweden and Uruguay." *Survival* 63 (1), Jan. 2, pp.53-
    76. https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2021.1881254.

Faist, Thomas. 1997. "The Crucial Meso-Level." In *International Migration, Immobility, and Development:
    Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, edited by Tomas Hammar, Grete Brochman, Kristof Tamas and Thomas
    Faist, pp.187-217. Oxford and New York: Berghahn.

Fraser, Timothy, and Daniel P. Aldrich. 2021. "The dual effect of social ties on COVID-19 spread in Japan."
    Scientific Reports 11 (1), Jan. 15, pp.1-12. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-81001-4.

Gilmour, Stuart, Haruko Hoshino, and Bibha Dhungel. 2019. "Suicide Mortality in Foreign Residents of Japan."
    International journal of environmental research and public health 16 (17), pp.1-9.
    https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31438491.

Gottlieb, Nanette. 2005. *Language and Society in Japan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

HRWG, (Human Rights Working Group). 2020. *Repression and Resilience: COVID-19 Response Measures and
    Migrants Workers in Major East and Southeast Asian Destinations*. Menteng, Jakarta: HRWG
    (Sasakawa Peace Foundation) (available at https://www.spf.org/en/asia-
    peace/publications/20210128.html).

IMD World Competitiveness Center. 2021. "IMD World Talent Ranking 2020." Aug 24.
    https://worldcompetitiveness.imd.org/countryprofile/JP/talent.

In Fact. 2020. "Shin Gata Korona FactCheck "Kansensha no uchi Nihonjin wa Hanbun mo inai" no Gojōhō ga
    Kakusan (COVID-19 Fact Check: Misinformation that "Japanese don't even make up half of the
    infected" Spreads." May 12. https://infact.press/2020/05/post-5821/.

Independent. 2021. "Tokyo Hotel Apologises for 'Japanese only' Elevator Sign." July 12.
    https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/tokyo-hotel-japanese-only-lift-olympics-b1882652.html.

IOM, (International Organization for Migration). 2021. "Key Migration Terms."   https://www.iom.int/key-
    migration-terms#Immigrant.

ISA, (Immigration Services of Japan). 2021. "Employment retainment support for technical interns whose
    training may not continue due to the COVID-19 pandemic."
    https://www.isa.go.jp/en/nyuukokukanri14_00008.html.

Japan News, (Yomiuri). 2021a. "Fear-free Vaccination OK'd for Visa Overstayers." Nov. 6. p.2.

Japan News, (Yomiuri). 2021b. "Govt to Ensure Foreign Residents get Vouchers." June 19. p.1.

Japan News, (Yomiuri). 2021c. "Tokyo gets 6,000 Inquiries from Foreigners." June 2. p.2.

Japan Times. 2020a. "Japan to allow stranded foreign technical interns to switch jobs." Aug 25. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/08/25/national/japan-stranded-foreign-technical-interns-jobs/.

Japan Times. 2020b. "Need to get a PCR test? Here's what to expect from Japan's new low-cost testing facilities.", Dec. 23. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2020/12/23/lifestyle/low-cost-pcr-test-japan/.

Japan Times. 2020c. "The Pandemic Border Policy that will Leave a Scar on Japan's Foreign Community." Dec 7. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2020/12/07/issues/pandemic-border-policy-foreign-community/.

John Hopkins. 2021. "Japan Overview." https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/region/japan.

Kashiwazaki, Chikako. 2013. "Incorporating immigrants as foreigners: multicultural politics in Japan." *Citizenship Studies* 17 (1), Feb. 1, pp.31-47. doi: 10.1080/13621025.2013.764216.

Kato, Jotaro. 2021. "Policy of No Policy" Toward Immigrants in Japan: COVID-19 Amplifying Desperate Situation of Vietnamese Ex-Technical Interns. Paper presented at the "Vulnerable Migrants and COVID-19 in Japan and the UK" online NODE webinar, Feb. 24.

Kobori, Eiko, Yuko Maeda, and Taro Yamamoto. 2017. "Mortality rates of foreign national residents in Japan: comparison with the Japanese population and a possible healthy migrant effect." *Nihon Koshu Eisei Zasshi* 64 (12), pp.707-17. doi: 10.11236/jph.64.12_707.

Kosaka, Makoto, Takanao Hashimoto, Akihiko Ozaki, Tetsuya Tanimoto, and Masahiro Kami. 2021. "Delayed COVID-19 vaccine roll-out in Japan." *The Lancet* 397, ISSUE 10292 (10292), June 19, pp.2334-5 https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)01220-4.

Kyodo News. 2020. "Only top 30% of foreign students to be eligible for gov't handouts." May 21. https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/05/5d7d3c646139-only-top-30-of-foreign-students-to-be-eligible-for-govt-handouts.html.

Ma, Mingming, Shun Wang, and Fengyu Wu. 2021. "COVID-19 Prevalence and Well-being: Lessons from East Asia." In *World Happiness Report 2021*, edited by John F. Helliwell, Richard Layard, Jeffrey Sachs and Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, pp.57-90 (available at https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2021/covid-19-prevalence-and-well-being-lessons-from-east-asia/). New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

Mainichi Shimbun. 2020. "Minister under Fire for Questioning Foreign Journalist's Japanese at Press Conference." Sept 2. https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20200902/p2a/00m/0na/009000c.

MHLW, (Ministry of Health Labor and Welfare). 2021a. "COVID-19 Vaccine." https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/covid-19/vaccine.html.

MHLW, (Ministry of Health Labor and Welfare). 2021b. "Reiwa 3 nenban Kōseirōdōshō Hakusho: Shingata Korona uirusu Kansenshō to Shakai Hoshō (Honbun) (2021 MHLW White Paper: COVID-19 and Social Security)." https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/wp/hakusyo/kousei/20/.

MHLW, (Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare). 2021c. "Guidance on Temporary Loan Emergency Funds." https://corona-support.mhlw.go.jp/seikatsufukushi/en/index.html.

MHLW, (Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare). 2021d. "Hihogosha Chōsa (Survey of Welfare Recipients)." August 4. https://www.mhlw.go.jp/toukei/list/74-16.html.

MIC, (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications). 2021. "Tabunka Kyōsei no Suishin: Chīki ni Okeru Tabunka Kyōsei Suishin Puran (The Promotion of Multicultural Co-existence: Plan for the Promotion of Multicultural Community Building)." https://www.soumu.go.jp/menu_seisaku/chiho/02gyosei05_03000060.htmlP.

Miller, Russell, Kuniko Arita, Niaya Harper Igarashi, Daiki Fuji, and Aya Yumino. forthcoming. "How Equitably have Migrants been Included in the Japanese Response to the COVID-19 pandemic? : A rapid Realist Review." *Journal of Migration and Health (Special Article Collection on Migration and Covid-19)*.

Miller, Russell, Yuri Tomita, Ken Ing Cherng Ong, Akira Shibanuma, and Masamine Jimba. 2019. "Mental well-being of international migrants to Japan: a systematic review." *BMJ Open* 9 (11), pp.1-8. https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/9/11/e029988.full.pdf.

Mixess by Jellyfish. 2021. "Survey on foreigners in Japan about COVID-19." https://www.mixess.jp/survey-on-foreigners-in-japan-about-covid-19_blog-154.html.

Mizuoe, Norifumi. 2020. "Koronaka de Roken shita Gaikokujin Rōdōsha no Koyō Mondai (The Pandemic Reveals the Foreign Worker Employment Problem)." *Chingin Jijō* (2817), Dec 20, pp.21-5.

MOFA, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). 2021. "Disseminating Information to Foreign Residents in Japan: Current Situation and Issues seen in COVID-19 Pandemic." February 25. https://japan.iom.int/en/events/jointforum_FY2020.

MOJ, (Ministry of Justice). 2021a. "Shingata Korona Uirusu Kansenshō no Eikyō ni taisuru Gaikokujin oyobi ukeire Kikan e no Shiensaku (Gaikokujin e no Shien) (Support Policies for Foreigners and accepting organisations that have been affected by COVID-19: (1) Support for Foreigners) ", February 2. http://www.moj.go.jp/isa/content/001322500.pdf.

MOJ, (Ministry of Justice). 2021b. "Zairyū Gaikokujin ni taisuru Kiso Chōsa (Basic Survey of Foreign Residents)." February. https://www.moj.go.jp/isa/policies/coexistence/04_00017.html.

Morita, Liang. 2017. "Why Japan isn't more attractive to highly-skilled migrants." *Cogent Social Sciences* 3 (1), Jan. 1, pp.1-12. doi: 10.1080/23311886.2017.1306952.

Morris, John. 2022. "Forty-five Years of Multi-culturalism in Japan: A Personal Narrative." In *Open Borders, Open Society? Immigration and Social Integration in Japan*, edited by Toake Endoh. Leverkusen: Budrich.

Nagai, Nobuko. 2019. "Local-Level Intergration Policies in Japan: Exploring Municipal Measure sthrough the MIPEX." *IRiS Working Paper Series* (36), pp.1-37. https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/iris/2020/node-wp-5.pdf.

Nagayoshi, Kikuko. 2011. "Support of Multiculturalism, but for Whom? : Effects of Ethno-National Identity on the Endorsement of Multiculturalism in Japan." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37 (4), May, pp.561-78. doi: 10.1080/1369183X.2011.545272.

Nagy, Stephen Robert. 2012. "From Temporary Migrant to Integrated Resident: Local Government Approaches to Migrant Integration in the Tokyo Metropolis." *Asien: The German Journal of Contemporary Asia* (124), July, pp.115-36.

Nakamatsu, Tomoko. 2014. "Under the Multicultural Flag: Japan's Ambiguous Multicultural Framework and its Local Evaluations and Practices." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40 (1), pp.137-54. doi: 10.1080/1369183X.2013.830498.

NHK World. 2020. "Start-up reaches out to foreign residents." July 1. https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/backstories/1168/.

Nikkei Keizai Shimbun. 2021a. "Ibaraki no Hokenjo 「Gaikokujin to Shokuji Shinai」 to Futekisetsu Bunsho (Ibaraki Health Center Releases Inappropriate Document saying, "Don't eat with Foreigners")." May 23. https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOUE231TG0T20C21A5000000/.

Nikkei Keizai Shimbun. 2021b. " 「Kodoku/Koritsu Taisaku Shitsu」 Naikakukanbō Secchi ("Office for Dealing with Lonelines and Isolation" opened in the Cabinet Secretariat)." Feb. 19. https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQODE192HY0Z10C21A2000000/.

OECD. 2020a. "COVID-19 crisis puts migration and progress on integration at risk." https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/covid-19-crisis-puts-migration-and-progress-on-integration-at-risk.htm.

OECD. 2020b. *International Migration Outlook 2020 Edition*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Oishi, Nana. 2012. "The Limits of Immigration Policies: The Challenges of Highly Skilled Migration in Japan." *American Behavioral Scientist* 56 (8), pp.1080-100. doi: 10.1177/0002764212441787.

Okabe-Miyamoto, Karynna, and Sonja Lyubomirsky. 2021. "Social Connection and Well-Being during COVID-19." In *World Happiness Report 2021*, edited by John F. Helliwell, Richard Layard, Jeffrey Sachs and Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, pp.131-52 (available at https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2021/social-connection-and-well-being-during-covid-19/). New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

Orcutt, M., P. Patel, R. Burns, L. Hiam, R. Aldridge, D. Devakumar, B. Kumar, P. Spiegel, and I. Abubakar. 2020. "Global call to action for inclusion of migrants and refugees in the COVID-19 response." *The Lancet* 395 (10235), pp.1482-3. https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30971-5/fulltext.

Our World in Data. 2021. "Japan: Coronavirus Pandemic Country Profile." https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus/country/japan.

Penninx, Rinus, and Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas. 2016. "The Concept of Integration as an Analyticial Tool and as a Policy Concept." In *Integration Processess and Policies in Europe: Contexts, Levels, and Actors*, edited by Rinus Penninx and Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas, pp.11-29. Heidelberg, New York, Dordrecht, London: Springer Cham.

Reuters. 2020. "'Lockdown', Japan-style: Pressure to conform, not penalties for non-compliance." April 6. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-japan-emergency-ex/lockdown-japan-style-pressure-to-conform-not-penalties-for-non-compliance-idUSKBN21O08J.

Sankei Shimbun. 2020. "Korona de 「Sainyūkoku Kinshi」 ni Nayameru Eijyūkensha G7 de Yuiitsu Seifu 「Kansen Bōshi」 Yuzurazu (Permanent Residents Troubled by Corona "Re-entry Ban": The Only G7 Country to do this but Government not Backing Down on "Infection Prevention")." June 26. https://special.sankei.com/a/society/article/20200626/0002.html.

Slater, David H. 2020. "Vulnerable Populations Under COVID-19 in Japan: A Lull in the Storm?" *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 18/18 (2), Sept 15. https://apjjf.org/2020/18/Slater.html.

Solano, Giacomo and Thomas Huddleston. 2020. "Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020." https://www.mipex.eu/what-is-mipex.

Suzuki, Eriko. 2021. "Shakai no Seijakusei o Norikoeru tame ni: Korona wa Imin/Gaikokujin Seisaku ni Nani o Motarashiteiru ka (In order to Get Over Society's Vulnerabilities: What Influence has Corona had on Policies for Migrants/Foreigners?)." In *Andā Korona no Imin-tachi: Nihon Shakai no Seijakusei ga Arawareta Basho (Immigrants Under Corona: The Place where Japanese Society's Vulnerabilities are Laid Bare)*, edited by Eriko Suzuki, pp.7-32. Tokyo: Akashi Shoten.

Suzuki, Nobue. 2000. "Women Imagined, Women Imaging: Re/presentations of Filipinas in Japan since the 1980s." *U.S. - Japan Women's Journal English Supplement* (19), pp.142-75.

The Center for Human Rights Education and Training. 2020. "STOP! Korona Sabetsu - Sabetsu o Nakushi Tadashii Rikai o Kyanpēn (STOP! Corona Discrimination - Eliminate Discrimination and Understand Properly Campaign) " http://www.jinken.or.jp/archives/21491.

Tokyo Shimbun. 2020. "10 Man'en Shinsei de Misu Aitsugu Chekku Ran ni 「Otoshiana」 Kakujitsu ni Morau ni wa... (Mistake after Mistake in Applications for 100,000 Yen - Check box "trap": How to Receive for Sure)." May 21. https://www.tokyo-np.co.jp/article/16713.

Tran, Bao Quyen. 2020. "Vietnamese Technical Trainees in Japan Voice Concerns Amidst COVID-19." *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 18/18 (2), Sept 15. https://apjjf.org/2020/18/Tran.html.

Ueda, Michiko, Kanako Yoshikawa, and Tetsuya Matsubayashi. 2019. "Suicide by persons with foreign background in Japan." *PLOS ONE* 14 (2), pp.1-10. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211867.

Uekusa, Shinya, and Sunhee Lee. 2018. "Strategic invisibilization, hypervisibility and empowerment among marriage-migrant women in rural Japan." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46 (13), pp.1-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1500885.

UNESCO. 2019. "Migrant/Migration." https://wayback.archive-it.org/10611/20171126022441/http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/migrant/.

Woolcock, Michael, and Anee T. Sweetser. 2002. "Bright Ideas: Social Capital-The Bonds That Connect." *ADB Review* 34 (2), March-April, pp.26-7.

Yamagata, Mei, Tsukasa Teraguchi, and Asako Miura. 2021. "Effects of Pathogen-Avoidance Tendency on Infection-Prevention Behaviors and Exclusionary Attitudes toward Foreigners: A Longitudinal Study of the COVID-19 Outbreak in Japan." *Japanese Psychological Research*, August. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/jpr.12377.

Yomiuri Shimbun. 2021a. "Fuan ni Yorisō Shakai ni Shitai (Wanting a Society that Understands and Comforts those who are Anxious)." March 10, p.3.

Yomiuri Shimbun. 2021b. "Seifu Zainichi Gaikokujin no Korona Kensa Kakujyū e Nihongo Gakkō ni Kitto Mushō Haifu (Government to Strengthen COVID-19 Testing for Foreigners by Distributing Testing Kits for Free At Japanese Language Schools) ", July 29. https://www.yomiuri.co.jp/politics/20210729-OYT1T50247/.

Appendix 1: Key COVID-19 Dates in Japan (2020~2021)

Date	Event
2020	
January 16	First positive COVID-19 case confirmed
March 2	Schools close
March 9	Entry restrictions on visitors from China and S. Korea (14 days quarantine required)
April 3~August 31	Re-entry ban for all foreign nationals (including foreign residents) who have stayed in 73 countries (except for Special Permanent Residents and those with "special exceptional circumstances")
April 7~May 25	1st national state of emergency (urban areas) (extended to all prefectures on April 16)
April 17	Immigration Services Agency launches reemployment assistance program (sai-shūshoku no tame no macchingu shien) ; trainees able to extend stay for up to a year
April 27	All foreign residents with a valid resident card on this date eligible for 100,000 yen special fixed payment
July 1	Japan restricts entry of foreign nationals from 128 countries (with exemptions for business travelers from 8 countries)
August	List of countries covered by entry ban expanded to 153. Entry of technical interns re-started
September 1	Re-entry ban for foreign residents lifted
September	MOJ relaxes rules that prohibit technical interns from switching jobs; now allowed to find jobs in other industries (from 14 designated industries)
October 1	Entry of foreign nationals scheduled to stay over 3 months (mainly students/Specified Skill Workers) allowed on condition of 2 weeks quarantine (入国制限緩和)
December 1st	MOJ gives work permits (28hrs/week) to those foreign residents experiencing difficulties
December 28	Ban on entry of foreign visitors (with exemptions for business travelers from 11 countries)
2021	
January 14	Business/Residence Track Entry Suspended
January 22	Total ban on entry of foreign visitors (no exemptions)
January 6~March 21	2nd state of emergency
February 17	Vaccinations begin
March 1	2nd state of emergency lifted early for 6 prefectures (extended for greater Tokyo area until March 21)
April 5~May 5	Emergency-level measures in 6 cities across Osaka, Hyogo, and Miyagi (Tokyo, Kyoto, and Okinawa added April 12). Extended to 10 prefectures from April 20
April 25~June 20	3rd state of emergency
July 12~Sept. 30	4th state of emergency (extended to 6 prefectures Aug.2 and to 13 prefectures on Aug. 20)
July 23-August 8	Tokyo Olympics
November 8	Entry ban lifted for business travelers, students, and technical interns
November 30	Entry Ban re-instated