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Globalizing households and multi-ethnic community building in Japan

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Globalizing Households and Multi-ethnic Community Building in Japan

Chihiro Ishii*

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Abstract

The East Asian countries are currently experiencing declining fertility rates and aging of their populations. The demographic transition is beginning to affect various societal functions, and increasing international migrants are becoming one of the responses to the transition, despite the historical reliance of these countries on their own domestic populations for economic growth through strict immigration regulations. The working-aged population in Tokyo is on the decline and companies are increasingly recruiting workers from abroad. Depopulating prefectures are welcoming more international brides into their communities. Thus, domestic demographic transition and international migration are no longer unrelated issues that can be considered independently, even in countries like Japan where the sense of ethnic homogeneity is deeply rooted.

This paper uses the limited data available to illustrate some of Japan's current trends in international migration resulting from globalization and structural changes of the

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Keywords: international migration, demography, global householding, Tokyo, Japan

JEL classification: R23, I38, J12

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population. The paper then takes a more in-depth examination of Tokyo as a study case to illustrate the impacts of international migration and adaptation of communities towards a multi-ethnic society. Globalization of households is expanding the dimension of social interaction both of the Japanese and foreign residents in ways rarely seen in the past when foreign residents were largely temporary workers.

Acronyms

GFRs	general fertility rates
IBoJ	Immigration Bureau of Japan
IPSS	Institute of Population and Social Security
JIA	Japan Immigration Association
MHLW	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
MIC	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications
NGO	non-government organization
NPO	non-profit organization
PRB	Population Reference Bureau
TMG	Tokyo Metropolitan Government
TNVN	Tokyo Nihongo Volunteer Network

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1 Introduction

Many in Japan still believe today that they are living in an ethnically homogeneous country with a unique, distinct and uninterrupted culture. But recent statistical figures forecast that many communities in the country are being transformed towards a multi-ethnic society. Despite historical neglect to address immigration issues, the topic is quickly becoming important as East Asian countries begin their transition towards societies characterized with declining fertility and aging populations. Total population figures in Japan have already indicated a declining trend since 2005.

The combination of declining fertility and aging society is a demographic nightmare that affects every facet of Japan's societal functions. Data from the National Institute of Population and Social Security estimate that the share of inhabitants aged 65 and older will increase from 17 per cent in 2000 to 36 per cent by 2050 (IPSS 2006). This means that one out of every 2.8 Japanese will be a senior citizen. Japan's total fertility rate is currently 1.40, and most developed countries share a similarly low rate.¹ The impact on social and economic activities is significant. The absolute working population as well as the support ratio will decrease. A smaller labour force will need to support the growing number of retirees, and the increasing burden on the national treasury will affect social security issues such as pensions, health care, and senior care. In East Asian countries, programmes to raise fertility rates have not been successful, while the working population continues to diminish, and international workers looking for jobs are increasingly entering the country.

Japan's efforts towards improving the living environment for international residents largely target the conventional temporary foreign worker, as the government still does not encourage long-term entrants from abroad. Yet, communities are starting to notice the presence of non-working international residents, such as the brides or wives and children of workers from abroad. Consequently, the government will face difficulties in attempts to formulate guidelines, policy or programmes that address the problem of multi-ethnicity because of the misidentification of the target groups.

Immigration issues can no longer be isolated from this discussion; the government must direct immigration policy from the perspective of the country's demographical changes. Given the continuous decline in the working-aged population, relying on international workers to carry out some of the social functions related to services geared to the care of the elderly will become inevitable. With more guest workers entering Japan, the concern for their liveability cannot be bypassed.

As national-level immigration policy usually takes some time to formulate and implement, some communities and municipal governments have shown immense flexibility in accommodating international residents. This is especially true in communities where international households are growing in number. The globalization of households facilitates the expansion of social spaces of interaction between the Japanese and the non-Japanese, and also encourages collaboration between local residents and the municipal government for better livelihoods for all members of the community.

¹ Fertility rates are also dropping in many other Asian countries (PRB n.d.).

2 Globalizing households in Japan

Foreign residents in Japan are classified into two distinct groups: the old-comer residents and the newcomer residents. Old-comers mainly comprise the Chinese and Koreans, who migrated to Japan starting from 1899 until the end of Second World War, and their descendants. The newcomers began to arrive from the late 1970s onwards, and include women from the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand in the entertainment industry, Indochinese refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos (less than 10,000), descendants of the Japanese who were left behind in China during WWII, and businessmen from Europe and North America and finally, workers who were engaged in labour-intensive jobs such as construction during the bubble economy (Komai 2001). Most arrived without families on a temporary worker visa from the developing countries, a migration pattern explained by the neoclassical migration models (Lewis 1954; Harris and Todaro 1970).

Currently, the profiles of international residents are becoming very diversified, and Japan is beginning to witness more international families and mixed marriages. The emerging migration inflows do not follow the traditional theory of labour migration and thus offer a different angle for examining the immigration issue through concepts such as transnational migration and global householding.

Transnational migration became a popular concept in the 1990s as a study that extended migration to new dimensions that had never been recognized in earlier classical research on migration (Levitt and Dehesa 2003; Orozco 2006; Levitt and Schiller 2004; Sorensen 2005). Global householding, in particular, focuses on the householding process, both from the sending and receiving ends as a function of transnational migration. When 'formation and sustenance of households are increasingly reliant on international movement of people and on transactions among household members originating from or residing in more than one national territory' (Douglass 2006: 2), then such householding becomes global householding. Global householding includes aspects such as mixed marriages, international adoption, raising and educating children abroad, foreign caretakers for the elderly, international migrant workers, and household workers from abroad. Specific examples could be the households in rural villages in Japan that are welcoming Korean brides to keep up the village, or rural villages in Korea and China welcoming Vietnamese brides (Viet-Jo 2007), or Japanese retirees moving to Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. It is now possible for a Japanese family in Tokyo to interact with an Indian family at karate lessons, for example, because many newcomers are able to bring their spouses and children. As households globalize, the points of interaction between the Japanese and transnational migrants have expanded significantly compared to those existing between the local community and transnational community comprised mainly of temporary workers. Thus the globalization of households needs to be captured at a broader level than an individual life course.

The increased options of worldwide migration alter the way households function, and changing household patterns allow migration to occur through different processes. In analysing multi-ethnicity within the current migratory systems, the household globalizing process becomes the crucial factor that needs to be taken into account. With populations shrinking, international migrants are becoming an option for East Asian countries to take on not only economic activities but also to assist in the perpetuation of society, for instance, through international marriages. However, because datasets on the international population are lacking and the trends are not captured empirically, current

immigration policy in East Asian countries might not be able identify their target groups accurately or may possibly address only a small proportion of the actual target population.

East Asian countries represent an interesting case with regard to the overall lack of experience with ethnic minority groups. At the same time, migrants, representing an increasing diversity in ethnicity, are entering the country at a faster pace than the dominant groups can acquire experiences with this diversity. Multi-cultural planning can effectively support communities to build their own multi-ethnic identity. Planners could plan for a 'city for all', as defined by Beall (1997),

... good practice that values difference and works with diversity in urban social development [that] includes an awareness of power imbalances, a willingness to identify and hear all voices, an acceptance of conflict without confrontation ... a desire to learn from own experience and that of others and the courage to confront our own power ...

The public policy dimension of multi-ethnicity must recognize cultural diversity and create social equality for minority members within the group (Castles 2000). The global householding phenomenon could support such a process at the household level.

3 Mapping demographic trends

Currently, 83.6 per cent of the population of Japan are urbanites and this is increasing slowly. The Tokyo Prefecture alone already encompasses 9.6 per cent of the country's total population, and is expected to be the last prefecture to grow in size (MIC 2005). Tokyo Metropolitan Area altogether accommodates 27 per cent² of Japan's total population and the country's three biggest metropolitan areas account for almost half (49.71 per cent)³ (MIC 2005). The rural population, on the other hand, has been decreasing since 1995, and in 2005, dropped 19.49 per cent over the previous year. Out of a total of 1,789 villages and towns, 1,487 are experiencing natural decrease (MIC 2005).

One of the major consequences of depopulation is the decrease in the working-aged population needed to sustain the current economy. The United Nations has estimated that if the ratio of the working-aged population (15-64 yrs) to the population of retirees (65 yrs or older) is maintained at the 1995 equivalent, 87 per cent of Japan's population in 2050 be the post-1995 immigrants and their descendents. For South Korea, immigrants and descendents would account for an unimaginable 99 per cent (UN 2000). At this extreme level, these figures make it unrealistic for countries such as Japan and Korea to introduce any policy responses. A demographic depiction of the current situation and a more realistic future outlook based on real life observation may trigger greater responsiveness from policymakers.

² The Tokyo Metropolitan Area includes Tokyo, Kanagawa, Saitama, and Chiba Prefectures.

³ They are Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka Metropolitan Areas, composed of 9 prefectures.

3.1 Mapping global householding trends in Japan

More than half of the prefectures in Japan have experienced only a slight natural increase of less than 1 per cent or experienced negative natural increase between 1995 and 2000 (Census Japan 1995, 2000). Total fertility rate in Tokyo at 1.07 is the lowest in the nation, yet the large number of childbearing-aged women in the prefecture ensured a positive natural increase. When net migration is taken into account (total population increase), the Tokyo Metropolitan Area, the periphery of Osaka Metropolitan Area, and Fukuoka, Miyagi and Okinawa Prefectures⁴ were the only regions that experienced a noticeable population increase during the same period.

The regional prefectures are faced with two concerns: negative growth in natural increase and population outflow. The continuing economic recession is causing the working-aged population in rural Japan to move to major cities in search of jobs, usually to the closest regional hub that serves as its economic centre, or to Tokyo Metropolis. The synergistic impact of these two factors is the main reason for the negative total growth of the prefectures. In Tokyo, population growth is sustained through the inflow of domestic migrants, yet this increase is projected to continue only until 2015 (IPSS 2007), after which the number of domestic in-migrants will not be sufficient to adequately maintain the city's population growth.

3.2 International populations in Japan

These demographic changes have been an ongoing trend in Japan for the past few decades. The stock of international residents in Japan has been increasing at a greater rate since 2000. Traditionally, Japan accepted international migrants into the country solely for labour purposes, stipulating that these arrive alone, are employed only on a temporary basis, and return home once their visa expires. However, the recent demographic changes are creating a high demand for guest workers to take on such jobs such as nursing and care for the elderly, instead of the factory employment that was common among earlier international migrants. In many rural towns and villages, there is also an interest in international brides. The chairman of the Federation of Economic Organization has highlighted the need to accept more foreign workers for all types of occupations as a response to the shrinking domestic working population (*Asahi Shimbun* 2006a).

In 1995, 76 per cent of all foreign nationals were either permanent or long-term residents (mainly Korean and Chinese) or the foreign spouses and children of Japanese nationals. By 2005, this had dropped to 67 per cent, as more international visitors entered Japan under a diverse range of residence statuses (JIA 1999, 2006). The government still addresses immigration issues by working around existing regulations regarding the status of foreign residents, which were originally created mainly for temporary visits. This is in contradiction to the actual profile of many of the newly-arrived international residents, whose status may not fully comply with any of the established categories. It can be anticipated that as a result of this diversity, there will be varying demands from these international households for improving their livelihood in Japan, and the national government has not been to address the emerging concerns.

⁴ Fukuoka and Miyagi prefectures have capitol cities that are the economic centres of southern and northern Japan, respectively.

3.3 International couples and fertility rates

One measure of the global householding trends in Japan can be observed through the number of international couples. The rate of international couples by ethnicity by prefecture was calculated as follows.⁵

- a) Japanese husband $Rate(Jap, e) = C(Jap, e) / P(Jap)_{15+}^m * 1000$
- b) Japanese wife $Rate(e, Jap) = C(e, Jap) / P(Jap)_{15+}^f * 1000$
- c) non-Japanese, same ethnicity $Rate(e, e) = C(e, e) / P(e)_{15+}^f * 1000$.

The figures generalize some important characteristics about international couples in Japan. First, there is no clear urban/rural divide among the couples. This is especially the case with intermarriages of Japanese husband and Chinese or Korean wife (Figure 1(a)). This contracts the popular perception that rural Japan is conservative about newcomers. In fact, the share of these international couples is above average in the heavily depopulated prefectures in northern and southern Japan. Second, a high proportion of mixed marriages of Japanese wives and foreign husbands are concentrated in prefectures with major cities. This is seen in Figure 1(b); a map indicating the number of international couples with Japanese wives and Chinese husbands. A similar trend is observed for other ethnicities. Lastly, a high ratio of non-Japanese couples of same nationality are clustered in the eastern half of the ‘Pacific Belt’, an industrial zone between Tokyo and Osaka (Figure 1(c)). These generalizations hint at a diverging migration process that causes the different groups of globalizing households to converge in different ways.

Figure 2 represents the maps for general fertility rates (GFR) by ethnicity in 2000.⁶ The general fertility based on mother’s ethnicity by prefectures was calculated as $GFR(e) = B(e) / {}_{50}P(e)_{15+}^f$.⁷

The GFRs of couples of Japanese husbands and foreign wives (Figure 2(b)) are higher in the northern region and the southern tip of Japan, and similar or lower in the other regions.⁸ GFRs for international couples in general are lower in the prefectures in central Japan, and higher in northern and southern parts of the country. This is not the case for Japanese couples, for whom the number of births per 1000 childbearing Japanese females was within the range 40-50 for most prefectures (Figure 2(a)). The Tokyo Metropolitan region, with its positive total population increase, exhibits a fertility rate similar to the most severely depopulating prefectures.

⁵ $Rate(e1, e2)$: rate of couples, $C(e1, d2)$: number of couples, $e1$: husband’s ethnicity, $e2$: wife’s ethnicity, $P(e)_{15+}^m$: total population of Japanese males (f for females) of ethnicity e over age 15.

⁶ Because of the limited online dataset, general fertility rate was used instead of total fertility rate.

⁷ $GFR(e)$: general fertility rate, e : mother’s ethnicity, $B(e)$: number of births, mother’s ethnicity is e , ${}_{50}P(e)_{15+}^f$: Total number of child-bearing females of ethnicity e .

⁸ The calculation of GFR includes the total ethnic female population of childbearing age, implying that the data contain some noise as the numbers may include migrants who arrive under residential status which prevents them from forming families in Japan.

Figure 1
International couples, 2000

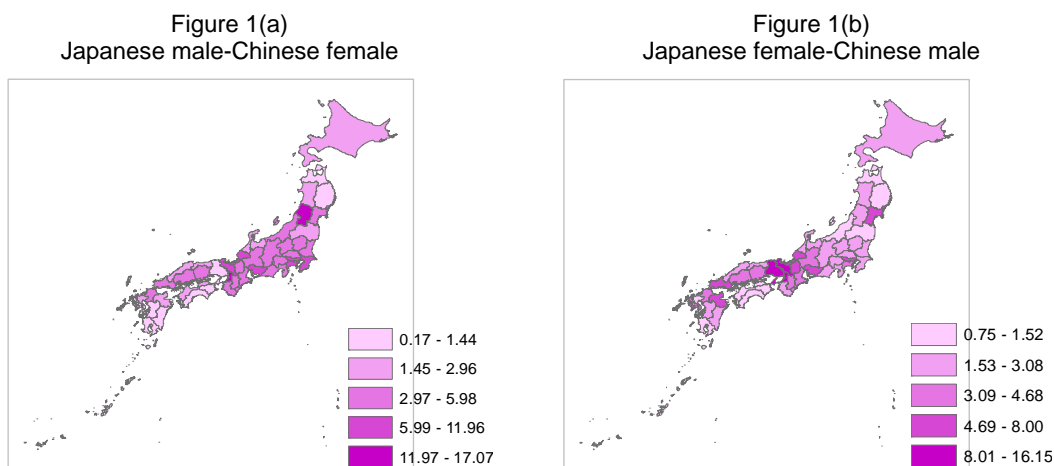
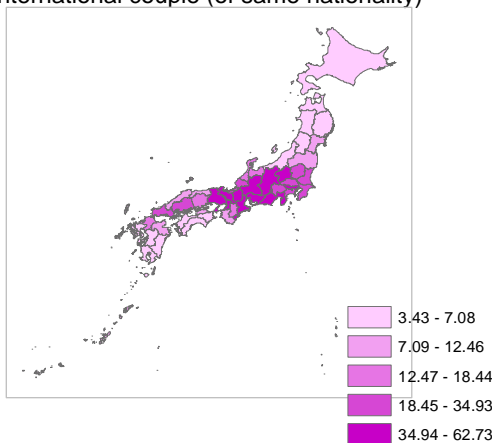
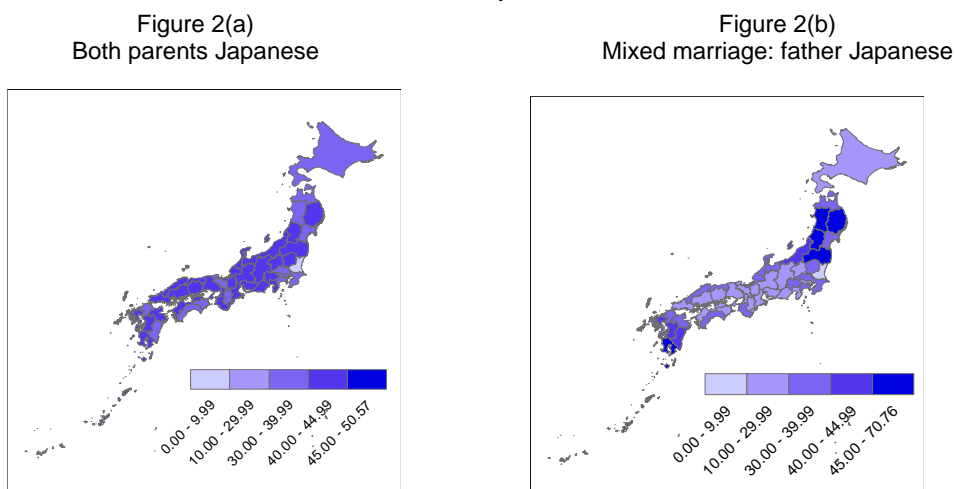


Figure 1(c)
International couple (of same nationality)



Source: Census Japan (2000); MLHW (2000).

Figure 2
General fertility rate, 2000



Source: Census Japan (2000); MLHW (2000).

3.4 Characteristics of international marriages and general fertility rates in Japan

In the economically active metropolitan regions and their periphery, particularly in central Japan (between Tokyo and Osaka), the presence of international workers with their families is more prominent, while in the rural villages, international couples mainly consist of Japanese men and foreign brides. International marriages comprised approximately 5.8 per cent of all marriages in Japan in 2005, an increase compared to earlier periods when the corresponding figure was 3.5 per cent 10 years ago or 1.6 per cent 20 years ago (MHLW 2005).

Generally, the depopulating regions with the highest GFRs among international couples were the prefectures in northern and southern Japan. In the northern prefectures, local governments in the past have supported the practice of arranged marriages with Korean and Chinese women.⁹ Today, social space for foreign wives seems firmly established. Public service offices have posters and brochures available that have been translated into Chinese and Korean, and *kimchi* has become the new local specialty prominently displayed at many local farmers markets. As the number of Korean and Chinese wives increase in an area and social support services for them are expanded, the region can be expected to become a favourite location, attracting others. On the other hand, not all depopulating regions enjoy high rates in fertility or incoming international couples.

Households, communities, and the municipal government in northern Japan have all demonstrated tremendous flexibility in accepting change in order to sustain their households and communities. Yet, if the government fails to address the problem of depopulation in a meaningful manner, international marriages will only be a short-term solution for keeping families in rural areas. The next generation will eventually move to urban centres, and many villages and towns may become deserted if depopulation continues at a faster pace than the global householding process can compensate the decline.

Compared to rural Japan, urban locations continue to attract international households looking for employment opportunities. Figure 1(c) shows that international couples of the same nationality are centred in the eastern half of 'Pacific belt' region where the nation's industries are concentrated, making it the destination of migrant workers in general. In this region are international couples of similar or dissimilar ethnic backgrounds, Japanese or non-Japanese, with or without children. Also the traditional temporary workers who arrive in the country alone converge here.¹⁰

The major problems that international populations face in urban Japan are two-fold: the paucity of support from the national government for urban services and the occasional lack of support as well as the ongoing categorizing of 'foreigners' within their own environment. This can easily lead to their exclusion from the community.

⁹ The support was very short term due to human right protests.

¹⁰ Many temporary workers form new families later on and aspire to stay in Japan.

4 International residents in Tokyo

As of January 2007, there were approximately 0.31 million registered foreigners in the 23 wards of Tokyo Metropolis. The number has linearly increased since 2000, but is still only 3.57 per cent of the city's total population of over eight million.¹¹ Even at such a seemingly insignificant percentage, international residents are starting to make an impact on the communities where they live, and the impact becomes stronger as more people arrive. Using inflammatory headlines, the media often convey very one-sided reports of foreign residents, citing stories of increased crime, the growing numbers of foreign females sex workers, or their agglomeration in unsafe neighbourhoods associated with Japanese mafia, etc. The same attitude has been expressed by Ishihara, the governor of Tokyo, in one of his notorious statements in 2000 that 'many third world people (*sangoku-jin*, an offensive term for foreigners) illegally entering are repeatedly committing brutal crimes' (*Asahi Shimbun* 2000). Despite such sentiment, the globalization wave has come to Japan, and the number of international residents will continue to multiply. There are multi-ethnic efforts at community building by international residents, local Japanese residents, and the municipal government, a process facilitated by the globalizing of households

According to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG), the city's population will begin to decline in 2020 and according to IPSS predictions, the share of the age group 65+ will reach 25 per cent by 2014 (TMG n.d.; IPSS 2007). The decline in the working-aged population implies that the supply of office workers in the Tokyo Metropolitan area will decrease. This will have an immense effect on the economy, and increase the per capita responsibility of the working population to support pensions and the welfare of the elderly. Matsumura (2005) predicts that office workers in Tokyo's 23 wards will decline by approximately 3 per cent per every five-year period from 2005 until 2020, if future population projections of international residents in Japan are not taken into account.

The increase in international residents in Tokyo is explained by the added influx of migrants arriving under the status of three main resident classifications: the professionals and skilled labourers, students¹² and permanent residents as well as their families (JIA 1999, 2006). The rest of this section illustrates the spatial residential patterns and population changes from 2000 to 2006 for the four representative countries that have experienced growing out-migration: China, the Philippines, United States, and India. The Chinese and Filipinos represent the Asian nationalities that have been increasing steadily in Japan for the past few decade; Americans represent the western nationals, and Indians exemplify the Asian populations whose numbers have drastically increased recently, especially IT professionals.

4.1 The Chinese (mainly single): cost-oriented residential pattern

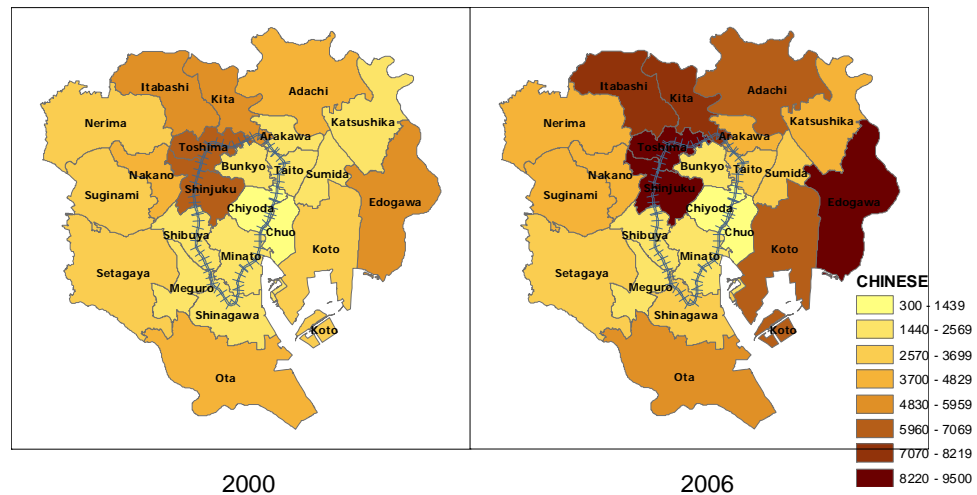
The Chinese population is agglomerating in various districts of Tokyo: central wards (Toshima and Shinjuku), northern wards (Itabashi and Kita) and eastern ward

¹¹ This figure does not take into account the undocumented foreign residents.

¹² Universities are under intense competition for students due to shrinking student population and are soliciting more international students as their internationalization strategy. Many international students are recruited by Japanese companies and become professional workers after graduation.

(Edogawa). Figure 3 shows a distinct trend in the formation of Chinese communities within Tokyo Metropolis; for example, Toshima and Shinjuku wards take in Kabukicho and Ikebukuro, two of the city's major entertainment centres, offer cheap accommodations, and encompass many Japanese language schools as well as universities. The majority of Chinese entrants are students, thus the region provides them with the convenience of low-cost housing, opportunities for work and education, as well as cheap fast transportation within these points.

Figure 3
Population changes for the CHINESE between 2000 and 2006 in Tokyo's 23 wards



Source: TMG (n.d.).

4.2 Filipinos (mainly unmarried): workplace-oriented residential pattern

There are small-scale entertainment districts all over Tokyo, with many Filipino employees. Compared to the Chinese, Filipinos are evenly spread over the metropolitan and show gradual population increases in all the wards. No distinct concentration of Filipinos is noted, with the exception of a few wards in north-eastern Tokyo (Adachi and Edogawa). One speculation as to why Filipinos prefer to live in northern Tokyo may be the fact that the area is known for its cheap housing and the small family-type enterprises and manufacture industries which had earlier attracted numerous Chinese and Korean workers. Filipinos may be replacing this earlier wave and are thus becoming one of the major ethnic groups in Adachi.

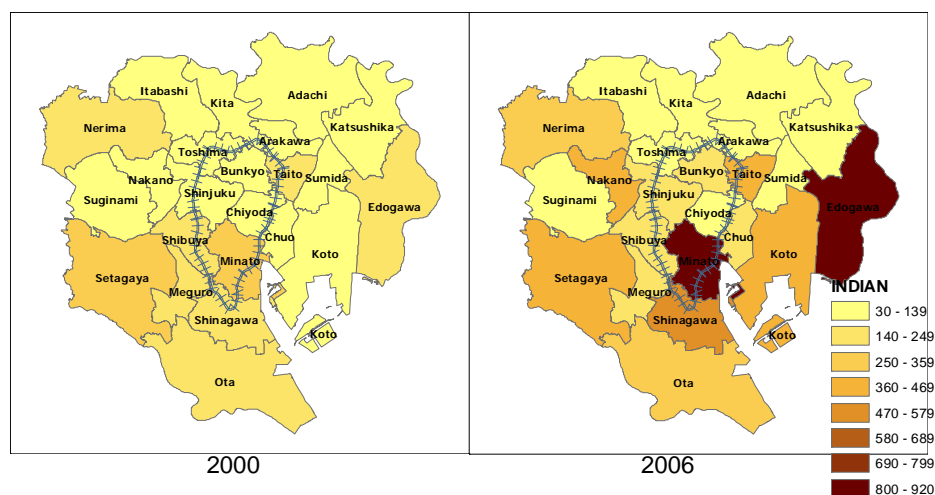
4.3 Americans (mixed profiles): service-oriented residential pattern

There is a distinct cluster of the western expatriate groups in south-western Tokyo, a section of the city that has remained unchanged over the years. Americans, Europeans, Canadians and Australians comprise over half of those who have arrived under the status of technical, academic and international affairs professionals (IBoJ 2003). They are well paid and their priorities in choosing a place of residence are based on the living environment and children's educational opportunities (Inaba et al. 1994). South-western Tokyo is characterized as the preferred residential area, and is also home to many Japanese politicians and international diplomats. The area boasts of many international schools, a western-style townscape and efficient transportation network to central Tokyo, making it the favourite residential choice for these population groups.

4.4 The Indians (mainly families): Workplace, service-oriented residential pattern

Indians in Tokyo constitute a very unique case within the Asian nationalities, not only because the population increase has begun fairly recently, but also because the majority of these immigrants are IT programmers/engineers. They represent the newly emerging Asian middle-class international workers of the city. Central Tokyo (Minato and Shinagawa wards) has always been the information technology centres of Japan, where Sony and NEC headquarters and factories are located. Eastern Tokyo (Koto and Edogawa wards) is starting to attract technologically-oriented companies and is beginning to gain importance as an information sub-centre. The whole area is also being developed for both residential and commercial purposes along with the emerging entertainment districts. This, in general, attracts international residents, but the recent Indian inflow into these wards stands out. One outcome of this sudden surge was the establishment of an Indian school, which opened in Edogawa ward in August 2004 to accommodate the needs of Indian families (India Portal for Japanese 2004). The school was the first of its kind, but was followed by few others.

Figure 4
Population changes for INDIANS between 2000 and 2006 in Tokyo's 23 wards



Source: TMG (n.d.).

5 Urban multi-ethnic community-building efforts

Over time, attention to policy concerning multi-ethnicity has been minimal at the national level: emphasis has been on immigration regulations and policies pertaining to labour and civil law (Terasawa 2000). City-level governments, therefore, need to take more responsibility to protect the safety, health and welfare of their 'residents' (Komai 2001). Among the key institutions able to assist multi-ethnic communities are the non-profit organizations (NPOs). There are not many professional NGOs in the city, but due to their relatively small-scale activities at the grassroots level, they play an important role in introducing foreign cultures to the local community. The local community has also shown great flexibility in accommodating foreign workers. Traditionally, the Japanese are accustomed to strengthening civic communities at the local level through such organizations as neighbourhood associations and, as a result, these have the

mechanisms to efficiently implement local projects. This tradition gave rise to the spirit 'we will take care of our own local problems', which is still true in the disassociating neighbourhoods of Tokyo. Together, they are utilizing their limited resources to become major players in the provision of multi-ethnic services.

5.1 Non-profit/non-government organizations

The non-profit/non-government organizations (NGO/NPO) in Japan have been very active in promoting support to international residents and multi-ethnic co-existence. In addition to conventional cultural activities and legal consultation services, Tokyo is beginning to see yet another type of NPO/NGO originating from the education sector. These include the organizations formed by non-Japanese residents to provide for their children an educational curriculum that matches the country of origin. The Indian schools are the most notable example. The first of these was the Indian International School, a non-profit organization, which opened in Koto ward in August 2004; this was followed by the Global Indian International School in Edogawa ward in 2006. Both wards are experiencing a rapid growth of Indian residents (Figure 4). This group constitutes the middle-classed international residents who are privileged with a visa status that enables the family to accompany the worker and to live comfortably in Japan. For most, the ultimate intention is to leave Japan eventually, thus their main concern is their children's education.

The first school to offer an Indian curriculum was set up because of demand from Indian families. At first, only kindergarten and an elementary level were available, but now secondary school is included. Because the curriculum follows the Indian system, some academic subjects are taught according to India-oriented methods, for example, advanced math and computer classes, and a stronger emphasis on Indian culture. The language of instruction is English, but Hindi and Japanese are also taught. The student body covers different ethnicities: Indians, Bangladeshi, Filipinos, and Japanese (Wada 2005). The credits from this school, certified by the Department of Education in India, are recognized and accepted in India. As a non-profit organization, the school qualifies for grants from the government of Japan, but is also supported by other unofficial groups, such as some of the wives who have accompanied their husbands. Many of these have teaching certifications from India, and teach at the school.

The school actively participates at ward- and community-level events to promote the interaction of students and families with the local people, introducing Japanese culture to both the students and their parents, and having evening classes to teach English to local Japanese. As the principal of this school mentioned, 'I feel the sense of growing multi-culturalism in Tokyo through these English classes. Ten years ago, English was learned from western teachers; no Japanese would have imagined of learning English from an Indian teacher'.

There are also some issues of concern for these non-profit ethnic schools: inadequate school facilities and lack of the official support granted to Japanese students such as morning traffic blockage in the school proximity and various student discounts (the most significant discount being the transportation pass). Without these standard support measures, higher tuition fees are charged in comparison to Japanese public and private schools. Many ethnic schools are trying to reduce tuition, but because additional costs are incurred from operating outside the country's regular educational system, these schools may still be unaffordable to many international residents living on less-than-

average salaries. These children are then educated in Japanese public schools, where many fail as there are no programmes to teach Japanese as a second language.

The issue of the education system will continue to persist as global households grow in number and the preference for multi-cultural schooling becomes a priority for many parents. The case of a non-profit transnational ethnic school like the Indian school presents a new step towards a more affordable multi-ethnic education in Japan, a promising prospect if the government can find ways to collaborate.

5.2 Community groups

Throughout Japan's history, many different regimes tried to control the state by using the local community as a unit of management. Neighbourhood associations are one such example. They are independent community entities but often work with branches of local government in disseminating information or maintaining public facilities (Alagappa 2004). Neighbourhood associations are responsible for various community functions such as running festivals or recycling programmes. This unique collective effort at the local level to comply with residents' needs has, in some cases, worked as a positive avenue for accommodating the new international residents.

Local community groups, using resources available to them through the existing system, have come up with various ways to support their international neighbours. One example is a 'hobby circle', a self-motivating group of people coming together for activities that can range from dancing to singing to reading to knitting. One of the increasingly popular circles in Tokyo is the Japanese language circle, as exemplified by the Edogawa Hirai Nihongo Circle that teaches the local language to international residents, and at the same time provides an opportunity for a cultural exchange among the participants. This type of community circle, made up of neighbourhood members, is very easy to establish and is flexible in its operations. The circle meets at the community centre, charging a small token fee (100 yen or approximately \$0.90) for foreign students and no charge for the volunteer Japanese teachers. Collected fees are used to pay the community centre rent and teaching materials. Participants are generally temporary workers, and wives and children of international workers from the Philippines, South Korea, India, and China. Mr Iwasa, the circle host, hopes to create through these community-based teaching classes a safety-net for international neighbours.

There are numerous similar circles in Tokyo. These Japanese language circles teamed up to establish the Tokyo Nihongo Volunteer Network in 1993 in order to find solutions collectively to common problems such as securing facilities, improving the teaching skills of Japanese language tutors, and solving foreigners' problems (TNVN n.d.). There are 77 volunteer organizations in this network in the Tokyo Metropolitan region, and these operate in the belief that 'Japanese volunteer language groups are not only about language teaching, but about building international grass roots networks' (ibid.).

Another type of group activity are the community-based labour unions. The 'Edogawa Union', established in the Edogawa ward in 1984, was set up for those who could not belong to the corporation-based labour unions, specifically employees of the small- and medium-sized businesses and micro-businesses, as well as parttime staff. This labour union extended membership to international residents in the community, who at that time were mainly from Pakistan, Iran, India, and Bangladesh working in small factories at minimum wages. Since then, Edogawa Union has had an active role in assisting

international workers to find accommodations, to resolve health and labour problems, and to facilitate communications with other union members through hosting various social events. Through these consultation efforts targeted towards union members, it became obvious that the ability of international residents to manage in Tokyo could be greatly increased if they could learn to read Japanese. Thus the Edogawa Union started Japanese language classes that have spread over the years. Currently, language students also include non-union members and overstayers.

Rapid post-war urbanization and globalization in Tokyo and large population influx might convey the impression that the strong and active neighbourhood associations that once existed in Tokyo have weakened. A closer look at some of these areas reveals that the collective support system is still intact and is a major player in supporting the underserved population.

5.3 Households

Households are one of the major factors of the success in multi-ethnic community building. As the principal at the Indian International School mentioned, 'Indian families have a lot of interaction with Japanese families outside school. Many children are involved in after-school activities; for example, a mother taking her son to karate lessons where he interacts with local Japanese boys. The mother naturally starts to chat with the other local mothers there, soon becoming eager to learn more Japanese', could be typical of how the householding function leads to increased interaction with the local community. This may sound trivial but this type of communication between different ethnicities was lacking in Japan until recently because most migrants were temporary, unmarried workers, and their points of contact were limited. A study by Kanegae (2001) shows that personal interaction with international residents is an effective way to develop positive attitudes among the locals towards international residents. Expanded points of interaction will likely help to change the negative, stereotype attitudes of the Japanese towards foreigners.

5.4 Municipal government

The ward government is usually the first government institution to respond to changes at the community level and to have the mechanism in place to provide possible assistance if it is within their capacity to do so. Unfortunately, when it comes to support for international residents, most wards are active only in providing multi-lingual administrative and cultural information, for example, through multi-lingual homepages. The only ward to clearly highlight their multi-cultural coexistence efforts in a visible fashion on their homepage is Shinjuku, which also attempts to collaborate with local NGO/NPO groups.

5.5 Multi-ethnic communities in Tokyo

Past research has examined the process of how negative feelings develop towards international residents in regions where the ethnic communities are evolving (Komai 1999; Kanegae 2001). But close observations in the ethnic communities that are emerging in Tokyo also demonstrate that tolerance towards international residents is most obvious in locations where community-level multi-ethnic community-building efforts actively exist.

Currently, it is mainly the local communities in Tokyo that provide quick flexible support to foreigners, and this seems to create a learning experience and trust building synergy between the international residents and Japanese residents. These community groups have shown their capability to promote collaboration and participation despite the government not taking the lead. This implies that strong and active neighbourhood organizations and/or institutions, including amicable neighbourhood relations at the household level, are an important prerequisite for creating a multi-ethnic community.

On the other hand, there are questions and dilemmas that communities must confront in making plans for a multi-ethnic society. Alagappa (2004) notes the dual structured civil society in Japan. On the one hand, it is composed of a large number of vital small-scale, grassroots civil society organizations which are flexible and prompt to respond, yet do not have much impact at the national policy level, and the other hand there is the small number of large-scale professional groups (2004). If the local community decides to overcome this duality and to apply for support from higher levels of government, the communities may lose some of their efficient functionality, or be caught between organizational mission and obligations imposed upon them by the government. How to incorporate the community-level entities into higher government-level processes with minimal compromise of the volunteerism, flexibility, and efficiency that the procedure currently possesses remains a question that needs further analysis and discussion. Having said this, the current government involvement has not even approached this level of potential controversy, and has not taken the initiative to support community entities even at a minimal level. For instance, many professionals are registered within the municipal government's volunteer translator programme, but frequently these volunteers are not provided with adequate per diem to cover even their transportation costs. Municipal governments have taken much of the local residents' volunteer spirit for granted

Another dilemma facing the community are the different interests not only among various ethnic groups but also among the community's local residents. As greater cultural diversity is being introduced to the community, Japanese conceptualization of 'foreign' will also mature, generating a broader scale of identity. If one of your relatives marries a foreign person and has a child, where should the line be drawn between 'Japanese' and 'foreign'? Senior citizens in care facilities are opening their hearts towards international workers as well, as more of the elderly are being cared for by Indonesian and Filipino nursing staff. The views of those who currently support multi-ethnic community building may change if the community becomes proportionately too 'foreign', and if changes are too drastically and quickly for adjustment. In order for multi-ethnic community building to be successful in the long term, it is important for the community to involve groups with differing opinions on multi-ethnicity and to maintain a continuous dialogue of the vision of the community's future. Also, would the community's experience of, say, an influx of Indian groups, be reflected in their response to the introduction of other different ethnic groups or of other global householding processes such as international adoption and international domestic helpers, situations that are still very rare in Japan?

Lastly, even with active community-level activities supporting multi-ethnicity, an appropriate policy initiative from the government is imperative to further improve the liveability of international residents, especially in urban settings where many services are provided through legal contracts. One example is education. The global householding phenomenon in the cities adds various twists to the education problem.

Indian families are temporary residents and prefer to educate their children in Indian ethnic schools. For many Brazilian parents, children's stronger attachment to the Japanese society prevents them at times from returning home. The growing preference among mix-marriage couples and even among Japanese couples is to provide their children with a multi-cultural education. All three scenarios raise different educational issues, bringing complexity to the problem of multi-ethnicity in education, and government intervention is crucial for re-structuring the Japanese education system to accommodate them. The government has little experience with multi-ethnic policymaking and has much to learn from other countries that are addressing similar problems. The municipal government, in this case, must act as a mediator between the collaborative efforts of the national government and the community.

6 Conclusion

Japan is faced with accelerating diversification of international resident profiles, ranging from ethnicity to household patterns. This impacts on different regions in various ways, and policy and planning responses also must be non-monotonic. If such diversification is developing despite the strict and conservative national immigration policy that Japan still maintains, then the better option for the nation's future is to act positively on these changes. History has seen uprisings demanding change, such as 2005 civil clashes in France and the LA riots in 1992, where liveability issues of certain population groups had been neglected, and this certainly is not a scenario preferred by the government or the citizens.

Liveability of the city for international migrants will also become an important factor when the country needs to start competing on the global scene for international workers. The discussion about creating a liveable environment for international workers in Japan is currently intended for IT professionals and for other high-tech industries such as biotechnology (*Asahi Shimbun* 2006b). Yet, there is the possibility that the same global competition may arise for other professions such as nursing or caretakers for the elderly. These are currently already in high demand in other depopulating countries such as South Korea and Taiwan.

The paper has presented some spatial patterns for different types of global householding and of the fertility rates among different groups of international couples. The paper illustrates that international residents can no longer be categorized as simply unmarried factory workers without children, as this will imply that policies and programmes will continue to misidentify the target populations, producing ineffective outcome. A further understanding of the population makeup will assist policymakers to perform their jobs to the best of their ability by being able to focus on the correct target population.

The growing number of international residents in Japan is introducing local residents with new ways of living and interacting with people. Native Japanese are becoming exposed to different cultures, and are learning to share their living space with those whose language, manners, and customs differ from their own. Fortunately, neighbourhood-level efforts are visible in many Tokyo subregions and they have begun, independently of government support, to incorporate international residents into their social systems. There is a strong neighbourhood-level foundation that can provide guidance to the government in initiating efficient and effective actions. Local

institutions have made a tremendous contribution towards facilitating communication and mutual learning among residents of different nationalities, but obstacles are also faced, as additional needs of international residents are identified that require higher levels of support. An example are the children of the overstayers, as their illegal presence in Japan categorizes them as ‘criminals’. Action is required from the national government to accommodate their special needs. These children have generally been born and raised in Japan and have never been to their parents’ home country, but are inevitably deported even when the parents decide to report voluntarily to the Immigration Bureau to solicit special permission for their children to remain in Japan. Local NGO groups supporting these families have played a crucial role in encouraging the government to establish a guideline to grant special permission of residence to these families.

Assisted by the support they receive, international residents are beginning to build multi-ethnic communities by setting up schools, businesses, and religious centres unique to their own cultures—not as exclusive but as inclusive entities. This process strengthens closer relationships between different ethnic groups, and further enhances neighbourhood community-building efforts. Japan is witnessing a bottom-up process in the construction of a multi-ethnic society. The amicable relationships between Japanese residents and different ethnic groups as seen in many of the country’s communities inspire hope for Japan as a multi-cultural society, and for Tokyo to become a world cosmopolis, a city liveable for all.

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