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## Transition of Multicultural Symbiotic Policies in Japan: Case Studies Analysis of Tokyo, Toyohashi and Minamiuonuma City

Kozue Kashiwazaki\* and Ryo Sato\*\*

### Abstract

How to attract foreign human resources and settle in has been one of the main issues of Japan where is facing depopulation and required to lead local regeneration with diversity. This paper introduces the transition of multicultural symbiotic policies in Japan and case studies at city level based on the collected data by in-depth interview in 2015. Data was collected in three advanced case studies, Tokyo, Toyohashi, and Minamiuonuma city. Through the overview of transition of policies and case study analysis, this paper attempts to find the fundamental and potential gaps between policies and actual condition at national and city levels in Japan.

*Key words: Multicultural symbiotic policies, higher skilled personnel, case study analysis and Japan*

### 1. INTRODUCTION: TRANSITION OF POLICIES

Acceptance of foreign human resources has been promoted as an important growth strategy in Japan, which faces a depopulating society and the upcoming Tokyo Olympics in 2020. This policy is internationally referred to as the multicultural symbiosis policy and is categorized as an acceptance policy of overseas foreigners by the Cabinet Secretariat and a social integration policy by the Education Bureau and Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. However, the ratio of foreign workers in Japan has declined since 2008 and is low relative to that of other major countries, such as China and the United States.

In this context, the “Basic Policy on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform 2018” was issued through a cabinet decision under Prime Minister Abe on June 15, 2018. The policy is attracting a lot of attention because it relies on the history of policies on migration in Japan. Even though the tendency in European and American countries is to utilize migration as a source of urban regeneration (McHugh, 1990; King, 1995) and to promote it as an important element in improving the quality of life (Benson, 2009) worldwide, the discussion in Japan was inadequate, particularly from the aspect of the multicultural symbiotic impact on cities. It is time to open the discussion to all stakeholders not only to promote economic improvement but also as a process toward ensuring a sustainable society through globalization.

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Although the number of foreigners who visit Japan is increasing, policies related to accepting Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare mentioned that, although migrant workers are needed to fill figure gaps in labor, first promoting the domestic younger generation, women, the elderly, and the disabled is important to avoiding a double employment market structure. In contrast, Chapter 3 of the policy, “Important direction,” emphasized the importance of higher skilled personnel from foreign countries to strengthen Japan’s global competitiveness. Given the context, several discussions criticize the limited preparation in accepting foreign workers, particularly as unskilled workers—one reason that this year’s new policy is being seriously discussed.

In terms of higher skilled workers, a new regulation, “Point-based Preferential Immigration Treatment for Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals,”<sup>1</sup> was launched in May 2012 by the Immigration Bureau of Japan. Through several reviews of indicators and categories, the number of registrations reached 12,945. The Japanese government expressed the aim to achieve more than 20,000 by 2020.

Although such policies and regulations were promoted at the central government level, practical implementation as multicultural symbiotic activities is still partially at the city level. The report by Mitsubishi Research & Consulting (2013) recorded that only 9% of Japanese municipalities have adopted a multicultural symbiosis policy for its major directions. Moreover, the research project by Sato and Kidokoro (2014) revealed that 58% of municipalities responded that no organizations or sections of their municipality take care of migrants. Although each section has educational or employment support programs, no integrated management of migrants covers the increasing number of foreigners.

## 2. CASES OF THREE CITIES

In order to expect the creation of attractive society for foreigners in Japan based on the examination of actual condition at city levels, the authors conducted interviews<sup>2</sup> in the different characteristic cities: *Tokyo* as a global mega city, *Toyohashi* as an industrial city, and *Minamiuonuma* as a rural academic city (Table 1). Although these three cities appear to have very different social and economic backgrounds, what they have in common is that their municipalities have promoted multicultural symbiotic activities with local residents. Interview focused two main factors as (1) characteristics of the multicultural symbiosis policies and (2) characteristics of local university and foreign students in each city.

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<sup>1</sup> The professionals are classified into engaging in three categories: 1) advanced academic research activities, 2) advanced specialized/technical activities, and 3) advanced business management activities. The points will be added through the characteristic features of categories, such as academic background, career, salary, and so on.

<sup>2</sup> This survey was supported by the 2014 Research Support Project of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation of Japan (Research Chair: Ryo Sato, Dr. Eng.).

Table 1: Targeted Interviewee

Targeted Cities	University / Organization	Interviewee
Tokyo	[1] Minato Ward Office	- Unit leader of Regional Development Division, Minato Ward Office
	[2] The University of Tokyo	- 7 foreign students in Department of Urban Engineering, The University of Tokyo
Toyohashi	[1] Toyohashi City Office	- Chief of Multicultural Symbiosis Division, Department of Civil Society, Toyohashi City Office
	[2] Toyohashi University of Technology (TUT)	- Chief of Foreign Student Affairs, TUT
		- 1 foreign student in TUT
		- Secretary general of Toyohashi International Association (NPO)
		- Secretary general of Associacao Brasileira de Toyohashi (NPO)
		- Advisor of Asociaci3n Peruana Intercultural de Toyohashi (NPO)
		- Chief Director, Frontier Toyohashi (NPO)
- Counseling Center for Foreign Workers (NPO)		
Minami-uonuma	[1] Minamiuonuma City Office	- Chief of Policy and Planning Division, Minamiuonuma City Office
		- Chief of Commercial and Tourism Division, Minamiuonuma City Office
	[2] International University of Japan (IUJ)	- Head of Students Affair, IUJ
		- Lecturer, Graduate School of International Management, IUJ
		- 6 foreign students in IUJ

## 2.1. Tokyo -Global city-

Tokyo, the capital of Japan, is recognized as the center of economic, political, and social activities. In 2016, the number of foreigners settled in Tokyo was recorded at more than 450,000. This figure is the highest in Japan and indicates that 20% of foreign settlers live in Tokyo. However the percentage in the total population in Tokyo is just 3.32% which is relatively lower figure in global capital cities.

### 2.1.1. Multicultural Symbiosis Policies

In February 2016, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government founded “Tokyo Guidelines for the Promotion of Intercultural Cohesion – Aiming to be a Global City that Leads the World.” With the

2020 Tokyo Olympics in mind, the guidelines state that the focus of the city is to “embrace diversity and build a city where all residents can participate and play an active role in its development and feel safe.” Compared with previous policies, these guidelines cleared the municipality to start including foreigners as permanent residents. The statistical data show that the number of skilled professionals has dramatically increased, in contrast to foreign students who are temporary settlers (Figure 1).

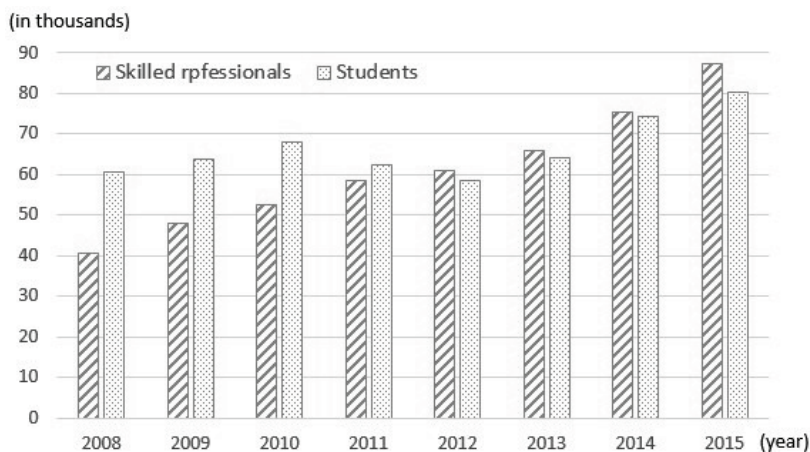


Figure 1: Skilled professionals and students in Tokyo  
Source: Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 2016

The interview in Minato ward—an area that has more foreign residents than other wards—showed that Japanese residents have a stronger intention to participate in activities that support foreigners than do foreign residents. The main reason that foreigners do not rely on activities provided by the municipality is that they already own the knowledge and networks from their community of the same nationality at the company or university. In contrast, many foreign residents intend to participate in local and cultural events, such as summer festivals. By tradition in Japan, some local festivals are open only to registered residents; therefore, recognizing existing communities and connecting them is required.

#### 2.1.2. Local University and Foreign Students

Among the 780 universities in Japan, 131 (and 35 junior colleges) are in Tokyo. Although a comprehensive understanding of the cooperative relationship between cities and universities is difficult to grasp, various exchanges are presumed to be performed at different levels in laboratories, student clubs, and so on. Students groups for each country are comparatively strong and communicate frequently beyond grade, department, and university. Some create interactive opportunities for foreign students and local residents as part of the academic program, particularly in the field of social science.

In recent years, the number of programs that accept foreign students in the countryside and

engage in agricultural experiences is increasing. In that sense, it can be said that exchange relationships beyond the city boundaries is a strong requirement for Tokyo.

## 2.2. Toyohashi -Industrial city-

Toyohashi city is in the southeastern part of Aichi Prefecture and is the central city of an area designated as a core city with a 2015 population of 372,970. Neighboring Toyohashi are Hamamatsu city of Shizuoka Prefecture and Iida city of Nagano Prefecture, which is well known as an industrial city.

Toyohashi city is known as an international industrial city. In the city, Mikawa Port is a major port for domestic and foreign automobile manufacturers and the leading automobile port in one of the world's top countries for automobile exports. Many foreign workers are employed in the factory in Toyohashi city, and they comprise approximately 5% of the 2015 population. The ratio of foreign residents is the second highest in Aichi Prefecture, after Nagoya city. The majority of the foreign population is from South American countries, such as Brazil and Peru, with the Filipino nationality becoming more prevalent in recent years (Figure 2).

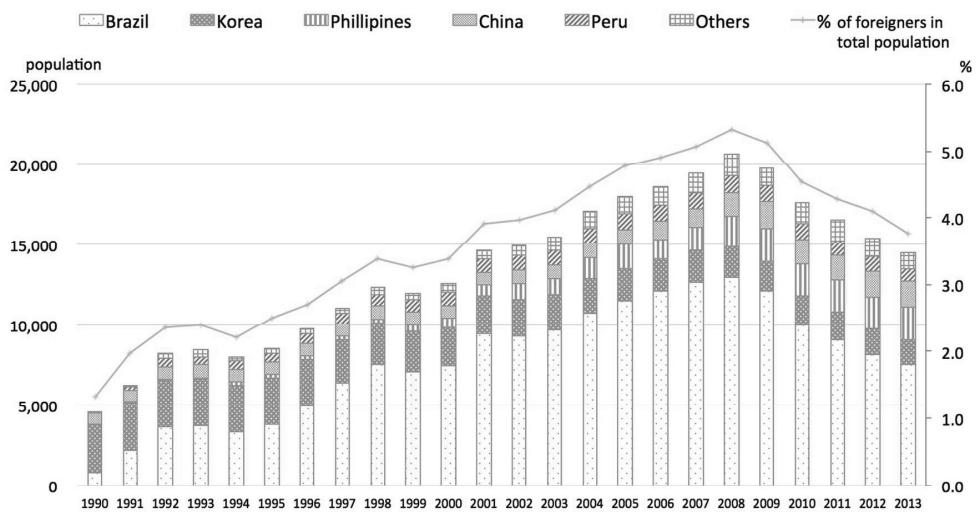


Figure 2: Foreign Residents in Toyohashi City

Source: City of Toyohashi, 2014

### 2.2.1. Multicultural Symbiosis Policy

In March 2014, Toyohashi city formulated the “Plan to Promote Multicultural Coexistence 2014–2018,” and a multicultural symbiosis policy was implemented based on this plan. This plan includes items to support living and job hunting for foreign students and creating networking opportunities with Japanese professionals who have the experience to study or work globally. The municipality provides various programs for both foreign residents and foreign students, such as Japanese classes. Some foreign students at Toyohashi University of Technology participate in Japanese classes at the

Toyohashi International Association. This opportunity is valuable for foreign students to increase their number of Japanese and foreign friends and networks in the city. They can learn and frequently practice the Japanese language, which may motivate them to seek better jobs in the city after graduation.

However, the target in the plan is primarily foreign residents rather than foreign students. For the municipality, the first responsibility is to take care of foreign residents and workers who cannot speak Japanese and English. Although some programs can include foreign students, the number is relatively limited. The interviews with students at Toyohashi University of Technology revealed some of the difficulties faced by foreign students in accessing and participating in multicultural programs in the city. Although many foreign students seek to communicate with not only foreign residents but also Japanese residents, some completely lack information and opportunities. One student from an Asian country received information on multicultural opportunities provided by the Toyohashi municipality through foreign residents from the same country. As the Asian student's case indicates, foreign students still have difficulty accessing information and having opportunities without personal connections in the city, even though the municipality and university officially provide such information. Students require open access to information through the Internet and social networks.

In another interview regarding associations of foreigners with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that support foreign residents, no clear records or examples exist that foreign students were included in their activities. Frequent communication exists within the associations or organizations. However, information available to the public is limited and few integrated networks exist beyond the organization. Opening up opportunities for foreign students who intend to and may settle in the city are needed to implement multicultural symbiotic policies with a longer vision.

### 2.2.2. Local University and Foreign Students

Toyohashi University of Technology, one of three universities in Toyohashi city, has been called a "Super Global University" by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports Science and Technology. In 2016, the university had approximately 170 international students from 29 countries. The university campus is located on the outskirts of the city, and the routine bus from Toyohashi station takes 35 minutes. Most foreign students stay in dormitories or low-rise apartment surrounding the campus.

The university provides international exchange programs with Toyohashi city and its surrounding municipalities, such as Toyokawa city, Shinshiro city, and others. The program covers a wide range of events, such as social gatherings with local residents, local fireworks festivals and other festivals and dances, and English classes taught by international students at local high schools. The total number of foreign students who participated in the program in 2014 was approximately 150, particularly the fireworks display and the English classes. Such information on events is provided on the university's bulletin boards at the request of external organizations, such as the International Association of Local Communities and non-profit organizations (NPOs). The



responsibility of the external events or opportunities is clearly divided between the university that provides the information and the external organizations that offer the opportunities.

### 2.3. Minamiuonuma -Academic city-

Minamiuonuma is a unique city in Niigata Prefecture that has both traditional Japanese and international resources. The city has maintained the ancient resources of Japan, such as Japanese rice fields and hot springs. Minamiuonuma also has the first university in Japan—International University of Japan—that had English as its official language.

#### 2.3.1. Multicultural Symbiosis Policy

Although no exact policy or plan exists to target foreign residents or students, many projects and activities are organized by municipality, and local organizations target not only Japanese but also foreign tourists. In recent years, the number of young tourists to the city has increased notably given the promotion of tourism that utilized the popularity of historical dramas aired and the success of local residents at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics. The municipality creates advertisements through brochures and websites that utilize local resources, such as a sightseeing pamphlet called “Beautiful Women’s Travel” that includes local women as models.

Furthermore, in recent years, the Minamiuonuma Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) project was created because the core hospital in Niigata Prefecture was relocated to Minamiuonuma. The hospital aims to create not only a community with medical treatment but also educational programs that offer international communication with local schools and universities. The target of this project is “active seniors”—not only Japanese but also foreigners regarding their retirement options.

Although Minamiuonuma has many possibilities for developing into a remarkable international academic city, unavoidable problems exist at local organizations and universities. The first problem is related to language. Given differences in conservative local residents and universities with their academic backgrounds as their first priority, no platform exists on which to complement one another’s understanding of languages. Most foreign students get on at a special, large-sized bus that goes back and forth once a week and over the weekend; in fact, it is useful for weekly shopping at a certain large shopping mall in the suburbs of the city. Some students in the region are interested in communicating, some students can speak Japanese but say just one word; however, in situations in which products are in Japanese, which cannot be read and English is not understood, local shopping was abandoned—this was the situation. The distance between the area and international students in the region who are not accustomed to snow is imagined to become even longer when heavy snowfall occurs during the winter season. In a pioneering initiative such as ICLOVE, we devise a way to appeal the effect on residents and students who are new to work and school, and to involve them in a less burdensome manner in a framework as an area beyond the organization. Whether this study proceeds will be important.

### 2.3.2. Local University and Foreign Students

Founded in 1982, International University is a graduate university (master's) with approximately 350 students from 45 countries. Japanese students attending one of the few global universities in Japan represent approximately 15% of the total enrollment. International students receive a number of international and government scholarships, and private school students stay at only 15%. The university's official language is English and it has adopted a boarding school system. The university states that "even if you cannot speak Japanese"—only a few international students can actually speak Japanese. For routes other than scholarships, many are recommended by seniors in their home countries who have completed international university. General public awareness is not high, whereas the network of university officials is strong and robust.

Based on mutual agreement and by recognizing each other as an important partner, Minamiuonuma City and the international university have been engaged in various community activities, such as intercultural exchanges at elementary and junior high schools and English classes. Although the activities tended to be restricted to those propagated from the past personal activities of university faculty members, from 2013 the motivation has been to develop a regional industry support program sponsored by Minamiuonuma City and International University called the International Collaboration for Local Organizations in Venture and Entrepreneurship (ICLOVE). We are working on exchanges and practices in the area. ICLOVE is a program to support the international university and Minamiuonuma City in cooperation with enterprises and business establishments in the city that aim for sales channels and markets overseas, including overseas expansion, JETRO, and Meiji University. By cooperating with Nagaoka University of Technology, efforts such as study sessions, lecture meetings, community farming experiences, and sightseeing promotions are underway. As of February 2015, partnerships were formed with 52 commercial and local businesses and establishments.

### 2.4. Case Study Analysis

Table 2 is showing the comparison of three cities regarding situation of multicultural symbiosis. Through three cases, it was cleared that there are several tendency that promote or impede multicultural symbiosis activities in different cities. The first factor is the characteristics of the multicultural symbiosis policy of the municipality. The main targets of the policy are toward foreign residents who settle in the city and in larger cities such as Toyohashi and Tokyo. In that case, the attention paid to foreign students who stay temporarily is not significant and the students and Japanese residents engage in original/grassroots activities. On the other hands, in smaller cities, even though foreign students receive significant attention, students who cannot speak Japanese tend to be isolated by the language and spatial barrier.

The second tendency is the cooperative relationship between the local community and the university. Many activities exist that facilitate communication between local residents and foreign students, such as ICLOVE, which helps foreign students create local businesses in Minamiuonuma City. However, if the relationship is not close, sometimes the university has a negative attitude about promoting it and students must carry a burden such as voluntary activities.

The third factor is the unclear system that guarantees quality of life for foreign students. Although foreign students are interested in the local community to improve their life activities, they are not familiar with information on multicultural symbiosis policies and projects, and the opportunities tend to be limited.

Table 2: Comparison of Situation of Multicultural Symbiosis in three cities

Tokyo -Global city-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>△More policies for foreign residents</li> <li>△More opportunities to communicate with foreign students and local community</li> <li>▼Less intention to accept foreign residents by local community</li> <li>△More job opportunities for foreign students</li> </ul>
Toyohashi -Industrial city-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>△More policies for foreign residents</li> <li>▼Less opportunities to communicate with foreign students and local community</li> <li>▼Less intention to accept foreign residents by local community</li> <li>▼Less job opportunities for foreign students</li> </ul>
Minamiuonuma -Rural Academic city-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼Less policies for foreign residents</li> <li>▼Less opportunities to communicate with foreign students and local community</li> <li>△More intention to accept foreign residents by local community</li> <li>▼Less job opportunities for foreign students</li> </ul>

Note: △ is superiority and ▼ is possibility as issue

### 3. CONCLUSION

Through overview of transition of Multicultural Symbiosis Policy in Japan and case study analysis in three cities, it was revealed that there are gaps between policies and actual situation as (1) unclear target as foreign settler as higher skilled personnel, foreign students or foreign workers and (2) structural distance between local municipality and academic organization such as university.

It can be said that accepting foreigner as permanent settlers is historical newly endeavor instead of higher skilled personnel especially foreign students who stay temporary for Japanese government and traditional society. The unclear target is caused by gap between multicultural symbiosis policies at national and city level. As case studies are showing, the city is focusing on more foreign settler / workers even though the national policy has been focused on higher skilled personnel. Although municipality have been tries to provide original services and programs utilizing the local resources, most of the information source and accessible network are not so convenient for young foreigner. Furthermore, such official services are comparatively limited to permanent settlers. The situation lead that less opportunities for foreign university students even though the number of them who is desiring to get the job in Japan for the future is increasing.

Another issue is structural distance between local municipality and academic organizations. Especially global city like Tokyo, there are few relationship compare with other global cities where has strong network between university, municipality and local enterprises through cooperative education programs. Learnt from case of Minamiuonuma, city office can be a key stakeholder to connect foreign students and local company and community not only for the student's career development, but also for the social capacity development in this globalizing society. It is expected that these activities with several stakeholders may growth (not just newly create) the multicultural society which Japanese government is admires these years.

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