

**The Local versus National  
Approaches to  
Migrant Integration in Japan**

**Yamawaki Keizo, Meiji University  
4 November 2014, Singapore**

# Outline

- Introduction
- Local governments
- National network of cities
- National government
- Exchange with European cities
- Conclusion

# Foreign residents in Japan

- Increase up to 2008
- Impact of the global financial crisis in 2008 and the earthquake in 2011
- 2.1 million (1.6%) as of June 2014
- Chinese, Koreans, Brazilian and Filipinos
- 2/3 are de-facto immigrants

# Japanese population in 2060

- 128 million (in 2008) to 87 million (in 2060)
- productive-age population: 87 million (in 1995) to 44 million (in 2060)
- Aging rate: 26% (in 2014) to 40% (in 2060)
- Half of the municipalities will disappear by 2040

# Response to population decline

- Intensive discussion on the population this year for the first time.
- In June 2014, set the population target of 100 million in 2060 ( by raising the birth rate from 1.4 to 2.1 by 2030)
- Discussed the possibility of the annual admission of 200,000 immigrants, but later denied “immigration policy.”

# Active use of foreign workers

- In June 2014, decision to make active use of foreign workers in construction and shipbuilding. Also considering care givers and domestic helpers.
- They are to be admitted as guest workers.
- Controversial decision because the Technical Intern Training Program is to be expanded.

# Migrant integration by local governments

- 1970s: local governments with a large Korean community
- 1990s: local governments with a large Brazilian community
- 2000s: Tabunka Kyosei policy

# Tabunka Kyosei

- Key concept for local migrant policy
- Tabunka as many cultures, Kyosei as living together or cohesion
- NGOs then local governments started to use the term in the late 1990s
- 2006: Ministry of Internal Affairs made the plan to promote Tabunka Kyosei in local communities



# The national network of cities (1)

- Council of Municipalities with a Large Foreign Population.
- Established in 2001 by cities with migrant workers, mostly Brazilians of Japanese origin.
- 27 municipalities as of 2014.
- Most of them from Tokai region, the centre of Japanese manufacturing industry

## The national network of cities (2)

- Influential in the national government's policy on migrant integration.
- Organizes the most important conference on migrant integration every two years.
- In 2012 debated whether immigration policy or integration policy should come first.

# National government

- 1990s: Piecemeal countermeasures
- 2006: MIC's plan for intercultural communities
- 2006: General measures regarding foreigners as residents
- 2011: Action plan on measures for foreign residents of Japanese descent

# MIC's Plan for Intercultural Cohesion (2006)

- First policy document on migrant integration by the national government
- Model plan for local governments
- Support for communication, support for living and intercultural community building

# Exchange with Intercultural Cities in Europe

- Intercultural Cities Program started in 2008 by Council of Europe. Participation of more than 60 cities.
- Aims at making the most of diversity as well as promoting integration through interaction among different groups.

# Five types of migrant policy

- 1. non-policy
- 2. guest worker policy
- 3. assimilationist policy
- 4. multicultural policy: emphasis on group identities
- 5. intercultural policy: emphasis on interaction, mixing and hybridity

# Summits of Asia-Europe Intercultural Cities

- mayors from Europe, Japan and Korea
- January 2012: Tokyo, 9 mayors (Lisbon etc)
- October 2012: Hamamatsu, 11 mayors (Copenhagen, Dublin and Rotterdam etc)
- October 2013: Ansan (in Korea), 7 mayors (Dublin, Bilbao etc)

# Tabunka Kyosei and Intercultural City

- MIC's plan consists of support for foreign residents and intercultural community building
- Local governments' focus on support for foreign residents so far
- Emphasis on community building may lead to Japanese-style intercultural city
- Tabunka Kyosei defined as intercultural rather than multicultural



# Importance of exchange with European cities

- Because of recent tensions with China and Korea, xenophobic groups are getting more active in Japan
- They quote xenophobic discourse in Europe and regard Europe as 'failed' in migrant integration
- Balanced view on European experience in migrant integration is vital for Japan

# Challenge of Hamamatsu City

- 2001: the Council of Municipalities with a Large Migrant Population
- 2012-2013: the Summits of Intercultural Cities
- 2013: the Intercultural City Vision
- 2015: a new network of intercultural cities?

# Conclusion

- Little interest in migrant integration except for foreigners of Japanese descent by the national government
- Local governments have led the national government in integration policy
- Cities, such as Hamamatsu, may offer a model of integration for the national government.