

An Empirical Analysis of Social Capital
Outcomes amongst Minority Groups in Japan: With
a particular focus on foreign labor,
immigration policy, and the contemporary status
of foreigners in Japan

ページ, カール, マックナマラ

<https://hdl.handle.net/2324/2236015>

出版情報 : Kyushu University, 2018, 博士 (経済学), 課程博士

バージョン :

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論 文 名 : *An Empirical Analysis of Social Capital Outcomes amongst Minority Groups in Japan: With a particular focus on foreign labor, immigration policy, and the contemporary status of foreigners in Japan*
(日本社会のマイノリティにおけるソーシャル・キャピタルの影響の実証分析—外国人労働者と移民政策の考察を中心に—)

区 分 : 甲

論 文 内 容 の 要 旨

The purpose of this paper is to examine and compare social capital and its effects on various aspects of the lives of minorities in Japan. Particularly in regards to foreign-laborers, to date, there has been ample research on the raw data of foreigners living in Japan, such as total numbers, home country, type of visa, etc. However, where the research is lacking is in terms of quality of life, specifically regarding social, health & economic status. The goal of this paper is to better understand the hotly debated subject of immigration from the prospective of current stakeholders in the hopes to create a more robust and effective immigration policy that is mutually beneficial for both parties.

Firstly, chapter 1 introduces the academic theories, definitions, and measurements of Social Capital (SC) and how this applies to foreign laborers in Japan. As well, the background of the situation in Japan in terms of population decline, labor shortage, along with the history and current status of foreigners in Japan is introduced.

Chapter 2 examines and compares SC and its effects on various aspects of the lives of migrant workers in Japan, specifically highly educated professionals. Reflecting a critical labor shortage in the years to come, Japan's government has recently changed its rules and regulations regarding so-called white collar foreign workers in the hopes of making it more attractive, easier, and more accommodating to enter the country. Therefore, examining the current status of foreign-laborers already in Japan, and discovering what factors influence their position and overall well-being have significance toward future immigration policies. Based on an original survey questionnaire conducted in 2015, the data shows that social capital as calculated by the resource generator has significant effects on the subjective well-beings of foreign-born laborers living in Japan. Specifically, it shows that individuals possessing higher social capital have several positive effects including: higher happiness and better health. In addition, there is a strong correlation for foreign laborers with Japanese language ability and job satisfaction.

Chapter 3 investigates foreign student workforce in Fukuoka by using Interviews & Qualitative Analysis of International student-workers in Fukuoka city. Over the last five years the demographics and size of the foreign students of Japan has drastically changed and increased. This chapter examines the recent trends in Japan in terms of the demographics of the foreign population with regards to immigration policy and how Japan is addressing its labor shortage problem. In particular, there is focus on the rapidly growing groups of Vietnamese, Nepalese, and Sri Lankan populations. It takes a closer look at Japan's side-door, de-facto immigration methods for non-specialized labor or so-called low-skill workers; specifically the

practice of using foreign students and refugee/asylum seekers as a stop gap in a growing labor shortage crisis. Through qualitative interviews with foreign-students and refugee seekers who came to Japan with the intention to work, this chapter offers a snapshot of a significant and rising trend in Japan's immigration system. From these first-hand accounts, we investigate the circumstances surrounding the individuals and gain in-depth and valuable knowledge of the contemporary situation.

Chapter 4 examines factors of criminality amongst foreigners in Japan by using panel data of prefecture level in Japan. In this chapter, based on the recent increase in the number of foreign nationals residing in Japan, we analyzed the factors affecting foreign crime rates by using prefectural level panel data (2005-2016). In addition to the factors considered in the preceding research, for this analysis we focused on the relationships between residency statuses, the level of social security, and crime. The results of the quantitative analysis show that crime (the number of criminal cases prosecuted) committed by trainee/technical internship residents in Japan (per 100) and the overall levels of penal code offenses (per 100 cases) tends to be low in the areas where the ratio of foreign students is high. As well, in the case of areas where t foreign residents is high, the results showed that the ratio of foreign crime within the overall number of criminal cases prosecuted tends to be small. On the other hand, in regions where both the number of illegal workers is large, the propensity for the foreign crime rates tend to increase.

Chapter 5 treats on the relation between social capital and subjective well-being amongst MSM gay app users in Japan/Tokyo Metro Area. Suicide is a major public health problem in Japan, where rates of occurrence are among the highest in the world. Globally, men who have sex with men (MSM) report elevated rates of suicidal ideation and attempts compared to their heterosexual peers. However, there is a paucity of research on suicidal ideation among MSM in Japan, where MSM continue to experience significant stigma and discrimination with still limited codified protections, and where resources are limited for MSM-specific mental health support. This study examined the prevalence and correlates of recent subjective well-being among MSM in Greater Tokyo. We recruited 1,657 MSM for an anonymous, online, cross-sectional survey posted on social mobile applications popular with MSM in Japan (e.g., Grindr, 9Monster). Recent suicidal ideation, measured as suicidal thoughts in the preceding two weeks, was reported by almost one-third (31%) of participants. Participants who reported unemployment or part-time employment (compared to full-time employment) and knowing a heterosexual person who restricted their freedom or excluded them from a group had higher odds of bad health. Being aged 46 years or older, reporting good health, and having a medium or high level of access to social capital networks with other MSM were associated with reduced odds of bad health. Our findings indicate that suicide prevention interventions with MSM in Greater Tokyo and similar urban settings in Japan should work to enhance MSM social networks as a protective factor; attend to employment concerns, especially in younger MSM; and enhance current efforts to address stigma and discrimination in the community.

In Chapter 6, it is clearly demonstrated throughout this research that Japan has a need for expanding immigration and to come up with a well-defined immigration policy to not only help address its labor shortage but to also, make clear the rights and regulations for foreign workers. At the same time, we can clearly see the benefits of Social Capital for minority individuals in terms of health, well-being, and finances while on a societal level Social Capital outcomes are proven to improve public safety, facilitate economic growth, and improve the richness of the culture. Therefore, considering adopting measures that cultivate and improve Social Capital should be a priority for National and Local level governments.