IMMIGRATION AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPMENT: CONSIDERING THE JAPANESE CASE

David Green & Yoshihiko Kadoya
Nagoya University Graduate School of Law
Regional Studies Association Winter Conference
22 November 2013
Presentation Outline

• Why immigration in Japan?
• Japanese immigration policy review
• Methodology
• Conclusions
Why Immigration in Japan?

- Japan not a commonly studied case
- Decentralization
- Demographic problems
- Immigration is controversial. Can show extent of regional variation
- Shows how Japanese political system works and how it is changing
Japanese Immigration Policy

- Commonly regarded as closed to immigration
  - Immigrants make up 1.25% of population, the lowest in the industrialized world
- Immigration was not a major issue until 1980s “bubble” era, had more pronounced labor shortages
- Revised Immigration Control Act, 1990
  - Stiff penalties for businesses employing illegal immigrants
  - Opened the door to *Nikkeijin* labor
- Created two main categories of foreign residents: *Zainichi* & *Nikkeijin*
- Larger numbers of *Nikkei* laborers, *Zainichi* population shrinking, other Asian nationalities increasing
Local Immigration Policy

• 47 prefectures, 1730 municipalities (as of 2010)
• Can pass their own policies, but cannot legally contradict national government
• Deal directly with immigrants, have initiated their own immigration policies
• Some local governments more willing to work with local actors and NGOs, has made for inconsistent local policy
• We aim here to show differentiation in public perception to immigrants
Hypothesis

• Testing “Contact Hypothesis” – areas with larger immigrant populations more friendly to them
  • Points to potential policies government can adopt in addressing demographic problems
  • Can show differentiation at regional (and local) levels. Japan not uniform as expected
Methodology

• Divided Japan into six regions: Kanto, Chubu, Kinki, Tohoku/Hokkaido, Chugoku/Shikoku, Kyushu
• Analyzed 2010 Japan General Social Survey (JGSS)
  • Immigration perception as dependent variable
  • Region, along with demographic factors as independent variables
Regions: Industrial

1. Kanto (greater Tokyo)
2. Chubu (greater Nagoya)
3. Kinki (Osaka, Kobe, Kyoto)
Regions: Rural

4. Chugoku/Shikoku

5. Hokkaido/Tohoku

6. Kyushu
Results

Support for Increased Foreigners in Your Community, by Region
Results

Support Compared to Foreign Population in 10,000s

- **Support for Increased Immigration**
- **Foreign pop**

The diagram illustrates the support for increased immigration compared to the foreign population in 10,000s across different regions: Hokkaido/Tohoku, Kanto, Chubu, Kinki, Chugoku/Shikoku, and Kyushu.
Results

Support by Foreign Population per 1,000 Residents

- Support for increased immigration
- Foreign pop per 1000

National Rate
Hokkaido/Tohoku
Kanto
Chubu
Kinki
Chugoku/Shikoku
Kyushu
Conclusions

• Aim to show possibility for regional variation on immigration policy
• Results show differing support across regions
• Possible for locales to implement differing policies, take advantage of immigrant labor
• Initial support for contact hypothesis
• Points to apparent decentralization of a unitary state like Japan