

Institutional Barriers: Insular South Asians in Japan

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“Overstayed Asian workers are at the bottom of the...hierarchy and have no rights and a high level of personal insecurity. Although officially this low position is because of their illegal status, it is facilitated by Japanese government policies that give greater rights and security to ethnic groups” (Shipper 2009:53).

The emergence of a relatively large South Asian population in Japan — roughly more than 200,000 migrants — has ignited discussions about Japan’s integration and immigration policies. Due to push and pull migration patterns, surplus South Asian labor — mainly from India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh — has migrated to Japan. Much of this new migration has been through illegal channels, and the majority of the South Asian population in Japan is overstayed.

This paper explores the engagement of South Asians with the Japanese politic today — their communities, their politics and their voice. As Japan’s replacement level fertility rate continues to be less than its total fertility rate — and thereby setting up the need for increased immigrants — it is necessary to discuss major issues facing the South Asian population, a growing ethnic group in Japan. Because of a lack of literature on South Asians in Japan, a historically underrepresented group in research on Japan, this paper will rely on literature largely based on established immigrant groups — namely Koreans and Chinese. This paper describes the current conditions of South Asians in Japan and possible explanations — and flawed explanations — for the current situation of South Asians in Japan. How insular are South Asians in Japan? What is (or is not) causing their insularity and their exit? To what extent does historical, political and cultural developments play a role in the degree of South Asian insularity? It uses an

institutional lens to analyze why South Asians are insular and lack voice, even when compared to other immigrant groups.

The role of institutions in immigrant integration is well documented (Itzigsohn 2000). The quality of an institution in building bridges of communication between new immigrants and host societies is critical in integrating new immigrants into a host society. Institutional analysis is composed of two parts: the patterns of interactions between different actors and the rules of institutions. For the purposes of this paper, the interaction between South Asians and other immigrant groups, namely Korean and Chinese, is critical to understanding the condition of the South Asian population. Because South Asian-state interactions are limited, institutional rules are important to understand and define. State interaction with immigrant groups are limited by the current institutional rules of the immigration and naturalization system. Institutional indicators of integration include migrant language ability in the host language, political voice and participation, generational advancement, bias (especially around issues of physical and cultural difference) and representation to citizens of the host society (Adler 2008). Indicators of institutional failure also include hostility and crime against immigrant groups (Adler 2008). Japan lacks national level institutions that are designed to integrate new immigrants into the host society. The LDP nor the DPJ have made few moves on immigration in the last fifty years, and the push for local voting rights in the Diet remains limited (Strausz 2010).

Institutions outside of the national government structure are critical to understanding the conditions of immigrants. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) are critical in engaging immigrants. Many NGOs

and CSOs offer services to immigrants — from language classes to social services to basic legal representation. NGOs and CSOs are critical to the expression of voice for many immigrants, especially for those that lack direct voice because of their overstayed status. These institutions not only overcome the collective action problem of participation but also represent immigrants in debates that directly affect them: local voting rights and fingerprinting campaigns are two recent examples where non-governmental institutions have defended the rights of immigrants. Korean CSOs successfully stopped the practice of fingerprinting for Koreans in Japan.

More importantly, institutions and governments on a local level impact the day-to-day life of immigrants. Because national level policy and political rhetoric largely ignores — and even denies the existence of large immigrant groups — local governments are often left responsible for providing limited basic services to immigrants: education, healthcare and integration efforts. In Japan, local-state society relations are more important than state-society relations because local governments provide voice to immigrant groups. Local voting rights campaigns, spearheaded by Korean activists, have gained steam in the last few years; local governments often support these campaigns.

The institutional framework is key in understanding the voice and integration of immigrant groups. Institutions, whether governmental or non-governmental, society driven or immigrant driven, dictate different outcomes for different immigrant groups. In Japan, outcomes are largely driven by historical development of immigrant groups, societal perception, and interaction between different immigrant groups. Through this framework, the voice — and exit — of South Asians in Japan can be analyzed. This paper argues that South Asians ultimately fail the test of institutional factors for

integration; most South Asians lack Japanese language skills, do not have direct or indirect voice and have limited access to the advocacy networks of other immigrant groups.

The Historical Development of Japanese Immigration Institutions

A supermajority of developed nations has problems with immigrant identity and the resulting concerns of social tensions, xenophobia, accommodation and assimilation that can occur when minority ethnic groups mix with majority, established groups – from North Africans in France to Hispanics in the United States. However, even among these general trends, Japan is an exception in the international sphere: it is the only OECD nation to have a fourth-generation permanent resident population that has not been naturalized (Chung, 2010:60 – 61).

Japan's current immigration attitude is often accredited to its post-World War II policies. After a heavy loss in World War II and under American General MacArthur's watchful eye, Japan dramatically shifted its stance on the legal and economic privileges of non-Japanese peoples and consequently developed a citizenship-as-identity paradigm (4). From 1945 to 1990, immigration into Japan was strictly controlled and most immigration debates over civil rights and financial opportunities came from the Korean community already established in Japan during the pre-war era (Chung, 2010:6). During this period, ethnic Koreans set many of the precedents that organizations would later be used in immigration debates after the 1990s.

Japan's post-World War II immigration policy began with the repatriation — and physical removal of — most of the country's colonial subjects (Chung, 2009:4). Next, the nation closed its borders to all immigration, except that of skilled workers in specialized

sectors of the economy (5). The Korean population that was left in the country after these efforts lost many of their rights. Revisions to the Election Law, the Alien Registration Law of 1947, the Immigration Control Law and the conclusion of the San Francisco Peace Treaty eventually led to the “denationalization of...former colonial subjects” (5-8). Instead of naturalizing during this time period, a process that is more difficult in Japan than in other states because of a totalitarian acceptance of Japanese identity and ‘good behavior’ reviews, many first and second generation Korean residents decided not to use their option of ‘voice.’ In fact, “[Korean nationalist and civil rights groups] actively discouraged members of the Korean community from naturalizing — with the explicit warning that naturalization was the final step toward complete assimilation” (7). Because ethnic identity was valued and seen as a social safety net, naturalization numbers remained low for many decades. Only with the emergence of later generations in the 1980s did Korean residents gain rights as ‘special’ residents (Chung, 2010: 20); many gained employment opportunities, national health care insurance, childcare allowances and housing rights as a result of organized protest and strong CSOs (20-22). However, before this recent period of Korean rights gains, Japan chose to largely ignore the problem of immigration, and many of its politicians continue to deny the existence of immigrants within its borders by “a *modus vivendi* between Japanese authorities and Korean community leaders based on mutual noninterference [that] allowed Koreans to develop a relatively autonomous community” (23).

Japan had a dramatic shift in immigration policy after the Second World War. Koreans living in Japan experienced the most change. Stripped of much of their pre-war rights, Koreans, unwilling to leave Japan, developed semi-autonomous institutions and

communities. The historical legacies of the Korean community are vital to understanding the current void in state-society relations for South Asians. The lack of development in government institutions that specialize in dealing with the country's immigrants can largely be credited to state-Korean-immigrant relations after World War II.

The Current Condition of South Asians in Japan

Unskilled, overstayed South Asians, who compose the majority of the South Asian population, are largely excluded from the political dynamic in Japan. They lack access to domestic institutions, NGOs, labor unions and ethnic associations, which are mostly reserved for *zainchi* and *nikkeijin* (Shipper 2008). The response by the South Asian population has largely been one of insularity.

Indian wives, who are brought to the Indian community of Kobe through arranged marriages from outside Japan, “admit that they had not been familiar with Indian tradition until they married and moved to Kobe” (Tsubakitani and Tanaka, 2008:272). Insular South Asian communities often replicate Indian traditions to a higher degree than communities in India. South Asian communities across a wide spectrum of beliefs and ethnicities — Muslims from Bangladesh, Sikhs from India and Hindus from Sri Lanka — have increasingly turned to homeland traditions in Japan. Most South Asian institutions are self-sustaining and do not rely on Japanese support. In Tokyo, shops owned by Pakistanis, Bengalis and Indians are centers for neighborhoods where migrants exchange information and buy cultural goods (Azuma, 2008:261). Sikh temples, in the midst of Tokyo suburbs, provide religious services (263) while mosques and an increasing number of halal shops continue to accommodate Islamic beliefs in the capital city (Kudo, 2009:112). However, South Asian institutions — religious centers, stores and places of

gathering —lack any direct link to the state. The institutions also lack links to advocacy organizations or other voice mechanisms, namely NGOs and CSOs. NGOs and CSOs, unlike storefronts or places of worship, have the ability to engage the state through collective action. As of March 2013, no NGOs and CSOs cater directly to the needs of South Asians. Important issues to the South Asian community, such as gaining rights to permanent residence, workplace conditions and wage rates, are not discussed in the public sphere. Already unrepresented in the Diet, South Asians are also unrepresented at a local level. Local government and society relations are especially important for South Asians because local governments are left with dealing with the brunt of issues that the national government ignores: social services and basic assimilation programs like language classes. If local governments do not have a direct link to South Asian grievances with the state, South Asians are entirely dependent on either CSOs and NGOs that do not cater directly to them or often unfriendly local governments for favorable policy outcomes.

The Fallacy of a Racist Japan

A common argument made by scholars has answered the questions posed by this paper with a radically different answer: Japan is ethnically biased against all immigrant groups. A poll about immigration in Japan returned these results: more than 50 percent of Japanese favor a lesser number of immigrants in their country, more than 80 percent of Japanese want stronger measures against illegal immigrants and 88.9 percent of Japanese think that it is better for a society if groups maintain their distinct customs and traditions (Burgess, 2009:8). Experts have traced back Japanese national sentiment in regards to homogeneity and cultural purity to the Meiji period of rapid industrialization. Japan, a

culturally diverse nation, is still home to more than 600,000 Koreans, 1 million Okinawans and 3 million Buraku. But, Japanese administrations used culture as a uniting tool, especially after the loss of imperial lands. Nihonjinron critic Chris Burgess, states: “[It] reflected a need to recover a sense of identity... but also increase the visibility of the ‘Other’” (3). A response to loss, nihonjinron has often isolated minority groups that do not fit within the Japanese fabric. Poll results show that it has become “a hugely popular consumer item” (4). Japanese problems with immigration are often credited to a vision of cultural homogeneity; many citizens may link purity to less social tension, a key factor for rapid postwar reconstruction and a reason for speedy modernization (Sharpe, 2009:4). It is important to note that ethnocentricity is not simply a racial prejudice. Rather, it has multiple associations with advancement and the rationale behind ‘Japaneseness’ has been sold to the Japanese people over many generations. It is also an oversimplification to state that Japan is resistant to all immigrant groups; it treats *nikkeijin* differently from Chinese who are treated differently than South Asians.

There is no scholarly dispute that ethnocentricity exists in Japan to some degree. The more logical question is: has discrimination and prejudice reached a level that has pushed migrants to leave and/or reject Japan and its way of life? In short, the answer is no. While Japan has certainly limited the rights of its migrant workers, “anti-immigrant violence is considerably lower in Japan than in Europe” (Chung, 2009:9). Believers in a racist Japan turn to studies of political statements and press coverage on immigrants to paint the Japanese in a certain light. While Japanese politicians “have sensationalized stories about foreigners and the growing crime rate in Japan” (9), this is not a story unique to Japan. Conservative American politicians often equate an increasing illegal

immigrant population with social degradation and higher levels of crime, but this rhetoric has not led to national level laws targeted at specific immigrant groups. Indeed, there is a large divide between political rhetoric and policy outcomes.

Cultural attitudes often oversimplify complex issues. Attempts to generalize the Japanese people as unaccepting and intolerant are problematic. Not only does Japan have a diverse history but also “Japanese political behavior...and culture...are responses to broader structural incentives that can be identified through comparative analysis” (Rosenbluth and Thies, 2010:18). A difference in incentives can be seen at the local level of Japanese politics where multiple organizations, many of which are former wings of Korean activist groups, have made great efforts to challenge national integration policies (Abe, 2009:3 -8). In local vicinities in Japan, citizens have reached out to Koreans and Nikkeijin though they still do not have the right to vote (Chung, 2010:40). NGOs, human rights lawyers and Korean umbrella organizations have continued to exercise voice in the public sphere for often-silent non-Korean migrants (50). The issue of immigration and the ‘Other’ in Japan is far from a one-sided debate. Though ethnocentricity and cultural homogeneity have often been a call for unity through a specific identity, these beliefs are not necessarily engrained in the Japanese people in the long run. South Asian choice is based on more concrete inadequacies in the Japanese system. The degree to which ethnocentricity affects Koreans and the Nikkeijin, two of Japan’s largest immigrant groups, are largely divergent from the South Asian experience. These groups have strong civil society bases and/or special residency privileges from the state. South Asian insularity and exit is often credited to the cultural stigmas in Japan, namely manifested in the form of nihonjinron. However, this often oversimplifies and ignores the role of

institutions and engagement mechanisms that ultimately create patterns of voice and exit among immigrant communities.

The First Factor: A Disconnect in Incorporation Attempts

Japan's immigration policy was based around the assumption that colonial subjects would repatriate to their ancestral homelands. When hundreds of thousands of Koreans stayed in Japan or returned to Japan after a short residency in Korea, the nation-state had problems with integration. Many argue "postwar citizenship policies became the principal institutional device employed to sever Koreans from the Japanese body politic and quarantine them from potentially contaminating Japanese society and culture" (Chung, 2010:81). During a period of exclusion, Korean organizations waged battles — whether against employment discrimination as seen in the Hitachi Trials or for local suffrage rights — on the behalf of the Korean community (96-101). After the 1990s, most Koreans had been relatively incorporated into the politic; the group enjoyed many of the same rights that Japanese citizens did (81). Koreans largely achieved their rights by mobilizing and using their status as foreign citizens as a tool to increase their political visibility (121). Through this framework, the national government responded by creating many incorporation programs specifically designed for Koreans. As Korean grievances evolved over time, local and national institutions evolved with the Korean platform. The inability of existing institutions to incorporate a wider set of agendas and immigrant groups is problematic given the growing number of non-Korean immigrants.

South Asian relations to local governments are also limited. Many local governments, especially those with relatively larger percentages of non-Korean foreigners, "have created services specifically for recently arrived immigrants" (156).

However, these services are scarce and mostly cater to Nikkeijin (Sharpe, 2009:10-14). In the last decade, the majority of local energies – in terms of immigration – have been geared towards universal local suffrage rights, and this has led many to argue that local initiatives disproportionately serve the interests of the Korean population (157). A disconnect exists between Korean and non-Koreans who have vastly different agendas. Chung, an authority on Japan and immigration, interviewed a Japanese activist who works with recent immigrants who said:

All the pretty words about multiculturalism, coexistence, and the foreign citizen are just...pretty words that don't reflect reality for most new immigrants. Why would an immigrant who is trying to get special permission to live in Japan after having overstayed his visa for 10 years and established a family in Japan lobby for voting rights? (Chung, 2010:158)

The non-Korean population is vastly underserved in local areas. If a South Asian wanted to assimilate, she would need to overcome not only her lack of basic rights but also the Korean-led advocacy movement that bases its platform on rights she does not enjoy.

Problems with engagement are even more problematic on the national level. Immigration is rarely an issue for leading political parties like the LDP or DPJ, and most parties prefer to remain silent on the issue (Kelly 2009). The problem of engagement is exacerbated at the national level because political discourse has made it “clear that foreigners are in general considered to be temporary; thus, the integration policy hardly becomes an issue” (Abe, 2009:18).

The current civil society and non-governmental organizations in Japan that deal with migrant issues are largely based around the needs of the Korean community because

that has been the group that the Japanese government has largely interacted with on immigration issues and grievances. Therefore, South Asians, who have a different agenda in comparison to Koreans, cannot directly engage the state in an effective manner, which leads to marginally low levels of political and civic activism from the South Asian community. Associative activism, which provides positive externality benefits to South Asians, is an ineffective source for rights gain (Shipper 2009:17).¹ In essence, South Asians lack direct voice.

The Second Factor: Generational Advancement

There are more than 26 million Indians living in 140 nations (Brahmachari, 2011:1). The majority of Indian immigration occurred after the 1970s as skilled and unskilled Indians traveled to different nations for economic opportunity. Indian economic migrants — in the majority compared to those seeking political asylum or a new permanent home — have wanted to work abroad in order to improve situations at home (1). In 2008, Indians abroad remitted more than 52 billion dollars into the Indian economy (1). Remittances, a primary goal of economic migrants, allows for an elevation of social status in their homelands (Adler, 2008:63). Sons from educated and rich families often accept blue-collar jobs and worse living conditions to aid their families back home (Kudo, 2009:115). Immigrants from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan have a central migrant agenda: economic wealth generation while maintaining roots – whether physical or cultural – to their homelands (Brahmachari, 2011:2). Their mechanism for achieving this goal is adhering “to what is perceived as an unchangeable Indian way of life” (Tsubakitani and Tanaka, 2008:275).

¹ When a Korean labor group lobbies for safer workplace conditions for temporary workers, South Asians also benefit. But, because they cannot decide the issues to lobby, South Asians are largely powerless in creating policy changes.

In Japan, first generation South Asian migrant agendas have many similarities to Nikkeijin who “tend to maintain the perspective of sojourners as they are uncertain when or even whether they may leave Japan” (Abe, 2009:21). For migrants who do not know their future residency plans, investment in the Japanese way of life is not worth the opportunity cost. Even the most privileged of migrants, skilled workers (Tokyo-based engineers in this case), are “not planning to stay in Japan permanently” (Azuma, 2008:260). Because of Japan’s entry policies, which provide temporary work permits to immigrants, very few South Asian immigrants envision a permanent life in Japan. Bringing families to Japan or becoming an active citizen with political, civil and social rights — incentives to stay in a host country — are highly unlikely for South Asians in the current landscape. Instead, many migrant groups attempt to create tight knit communities and operate in a *modus vivendi* structure separate from the state. Much like first generation Korean residents, who were unsure of their futures in Japan, South Asians have developed autonomous communities that have their own systems of education, governing and finance (Chung, 2010:23). The primary interests of most first-generation South Asian migrants is maintaining work visas and permissions to work and in the case of illegal aliens, the agenda shifts to evasion from regulatory policies of the nation-state (158). An unsure agenda is problematic when it is combined with Japan’s system of citizenship.

The *jus sanguinis* system of citizenship discourages any attempt at acculturation (Chung, 2010:61). This system of citizenship, different from the *jus soli*, or citizenship by land, form of citizenship used in the United States, determines citizenship by the citizenship status of one or both parents of a given child. Thus, first-generation residents

in Japan, even if skilled and legal, cannot aspire to Japanese citizenship. In the case of South Asians, who have very low rates of interracial marriage (with the rare exception of Japanese women and Pakistani men), second-generation residents cannot gain citizenship. The rates of interracial marriages are predictably low given the economic and social barriers between the two ethnic groups.

There is also little chance of reform in Japan, which decreases the possibility of transitioning the country from the *jus sanguinis* system to a system based on birthplace or residency (Kashiwazaki, 1998:278-281). Instead, Japan's citizenship policy is rooted in decades of historical reinforcement. The nation's naturalization laws were "motivated by the pragmatic aims of implementing a modern legal code and preventing foreigners from assuming positions of power" (Chung, 2010:61). Powerful Westerners who were in Japan as advisors or entrepreneurs during the Meiji Restoration were vying for more authority; by preventing them from gaining citizenship rights, Japan protected its assets. Currently, there is little incentive for immigrants to attempt to assimilate into Japanese culture — an a priori condition for naturalization.

Even for migrants that want to stay in Japan for multiple generations, the process of naturalization has the ability to act as a deterrent. Applicants for naturalization are required to describe detailed family histories (120) and "demonstrate evidence of cultural assimilation" (Chung, 2009:9). For South Asian second and third generation residents, the latter might be especially difficult given the insularity of their communities. Koreans who are heavily assimilated into Japanese culture still have issues with naturalization. A professor of Korean descent who applied for naturalization was told "her desire to be a

Japanese national was too weak and that she did not exhibit enough humility” (Chung, 2010:120).

A positive feedback loop, where the decisions of one generation continue to affect the life choices of the next, might be working against the assimilation attempts of later generations because their parents and grandparents have already made the decision to be insular and not strive towards acculturation. However, it is important to note that this scenario has not played out for the vast majority of the South Asian community, which is still primarily in its first and second generation. Therefore, because of Japan’s citizenship policy and the economic agenda of most South Asian migrants in Japan, little incentive exists to assimilate into the Japanese politic. Incentive, however, also comes in a different form. South Asians must weigh the long-term benefits of acculturation.

The Third Factor: Language

While naturalization might not be an immediate option for South Asian migrants, acculturation still is. In the United States, even short-term residents or temporary workers make an attempt to understand the English language and American culture (Motomura 2007:864). For immigrants who are unsure about their long-term futures in a given country, the value of a country-specific investment is taken into account (865). A common example used by anthropologists is the incentive to learn a host language. The incentive to learn English is higher than the incentive to learn Japanese because the value of Japanese diminishes significantly if the non-citizen leaves Japan (865-866). For South Asian diaspora migrants, who often move host countries in accordance with global labor supply and demand patterns, the incentive to learn a host language is even lower,

especially if the language of everyday life and community business is not the same language as the host language.

Once again, a positive feedback loop is created where first-generation migrants make the decision not to learn the host language and culture (and therefore there is a lesser chance that their children will attain full fluency in the host language and so forth); but, if they end up staying in Japan, their children must continue the insularity of their parents to remain within the autonomous and self-sustaining community that only identifies with South Asian culture. Indians in Japan often go to private schools that do not carry the same academic merit or educational standards as public schools (Abe 2009:12). In essence, the level of input to assimilate is lower than the level of input in preserving the status quo.

Japanese culture and language has less importance on the global scale. South Asians, who often have intentions to return to their homelands or send their children to non-Japanese educational institutions, have less incentive to learn Japanese and Japan's culture. Beyond the economics of language learning, South Asians have limited resources to learn a language. Very few NGOs and CSOs provide language lessons to new South Asian immigrants. Ironically, the lack of interaction between South Asians and Japanese society at large also limits language learning through transference. The failure of South Asians to learn Japanese limits integration; already lacking a platform for voice, the inability to communicate with Japanese government officials, CSOs and NGOs creates further barriers for South Asians.

The Fourth Factor: Institutional Bias

Korean residents were largely able to assimilate into Japanese society because of physical and cultural similarities to the Japanese people. In fact, Japan's forced assimilation policy of many Koreans "was premised on the existence of immutable biological differences" (Chung, 2010:66). Prewar Korean immigrants and their children often went to great lengths to avoid discrimination by attempting to blend in with Japanese culture – the loss of the Korean language and the use of Japanese names (Chung 2009:13-14). For South Asians without physical similarities to the Japanese population, a simple name change will still posit elements of difference with the native populations. Because 'difference' can result in prejudice from the native population, which expects some degree of homogeneity, the ability to assimilate is less of a possibility for South Asians. This is especially true for Muslims in interracial marriages:

Among the other challenges the women face is the fact that the adoption of Islamic practices by their children is often seen by mainstream Japanese as contradicting a taken-for-granted "Japanese homogeneity." When the Japanese mothers ask the school authority for special treatment, their requests may be denied because they are viewed as Japanese and their identities as Muslims may be overlooked or simply ignored (Kudo, 2009:118).

At first glance, physical and cultural difference as a barrier to assimilation appears to be an argument in support of a prejudicial Japan. However, the barrier largely exists because of the failure of institutions to correct for historical biases. If institutions worked towards engagement and assimilation with immigrant communities, South Asian physical appearances would become an issue of individual

bias — a variable largely controlled by the state official (and separate from the overall scheme of the institution). However, Japan's institutions currently tolerate — and even encourage to some degree — naturalization by physical difference.

South Asian Choice in the Institutional Climate

The relative ease of exit from the Japanese body—through insularity in functional insular communities — encourages South Asians to reject acculturation, especially because of the strength of their alternative options. The incentives to meet the demands of acculturation, assimilation and naturalization are low, especially for first-generation South Asians. South Asian insularity does not seem to have hurt the community's short-run prospects. In recent years, vibrant non-Korean, ethnic communities have sprung up in major cities in Japan (Chung, 2009:14) with the emergence of dozens of mosques and halal shops that cater to the needs of Muslims (Kudo, 2009:114). Social gatherings of the Indian community in Tokyo reveal that traditional holidays like Durga Puja and Diwali are celebrated on an annual basis while cultural centers serve host to weddings and other religious festivals for the Hindu community (Dhar, 2004:124).

Japanese institutions — government bodies, NGOs and CSOs — largely fail the four posed factors of institutional strength: incorporation, language, generational mobility and institutional bias. The long run implications for South Asians are problematic; with no hope of citizenship or greater rights, South Asians are stuck in the current institutional climate. The Korean historical legacy in Japan has largely determined the institutional landscape in Japan. CSOs and NGOs lack engagement mechanisms with South Asian groups, and thereby limit the voice of South Asians. Few South Asians are fluent in Japanese, which further exacerbates the problem of direct voice from both a

naturalization and communication perspective. Perhaps most importantly, the current track of South Asian exit and insularity limits the ability of future generations to assimilate and integrate with Japanese society at large.

This type of insularity is problematic for Japan's long-term health, especially as it expects its immigrant population to grow. A growing minority population cannot continue to be self-sustaining and non-engaging — this will create large political and social problems in Japan. Japan's crude birth rate is declining and its population continues to age. For Japan to stabilize its population at its current level, it must increase its immigration population from 2 million to 17 million by 2050 (Haffner 2010). While Japanese movements for immigration reforms remain unlikely in light of recent elections, there are signs that future demographic concerns will force Japan to open up its borders to meet labor shortages in certain sectors (Kelly 2009). If this is true, the exit of South Asians from the politic cannot occur in the long run.

As the immigrant population continues to grow in Japan, the exit of South Asians because of institutional failures has the ability to cause long-term problems in the social and political stability of Japan. If projections and predictions hold true, hundreds of thousands of new South Asians cannot continue to live in insular; they will have to become a part of Japanese society not only to protect the viability of Japanese democracy but also to guarantee the sovereignty of the state. A large insular minority will threaten the political, economic and society stability of Japan.

Inevitably, Japan will need to address its immigration policy. South Asia has long been a hub for unskilled and skilled labor— labor that Japan will soon need. Currently, South Asians, in light of their migrant agendas, which often stress short-term residency

and economic profit, have incentives to remain insular and separate from the Japanese community because of institutional failures. Institutions will need to be adapted and reformed as the South Asian community continues to grow. Migrant agendas are unlikely to change in the status quo because of multiple barriers to assimilation. Instead, South Asians will continue to turn to strong communities that can not only preserve their cultural identities but also require less effort — in the form of voice and resistance — against the grain of the status quo. All four institutional factors for South Asian insularity are important categories for future research on Japan. The explanations help to serve not only as reasons as to why South Asians have made the insular decisions they have but also to isolate certain problems in Japan's future immigration policy. Immigration policy is an issue that many post-industrial nations will have to address as post-industrial demographic transition leads to declining populations. Immigration, especially from labor hubs like South Asia, will be a critical element to combatting this demographic transition and its effects. Nations undergoing this transition must have institutional responses to rapidly growing minority immigrant populations. The real question for Japan is not if but when and perhaps most importantly: will Japan react fast enough to its institutional problems?

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