

Migration Policies and Cross-National Marriage in Japan: Routes to Settlement

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Summary

Cross-National marriage in Japan has long been the topic of interest for researchers, but most studies have been focused on the description of some particular groups of marital immigrants. Only few researchers have investigated the influence of immigration policies on cross-national marriage migration. Throughout this paper, I utilise the immigration studies approach to investigate the influence of migration policies on cross-national marriage in Japan. I utilise statistical data from the Ministry of Justice of Japan for 2010. I compare several immigrant groups: “Asian” immigrants, “Westerners,” Nikkeijin, and the new group of Eastern Europe immigrants. I conclude that immigrant communities from the Philippines, Thailand, Romania, Ukraine and Russia contain the largest proportion of marital immigrants; and are also the most feminised communities in Japan. Cross-national marriage with a Japanese partner is a valuable route to settlement for female immigrants from developing countries.

Introduction

In Japan, little research has been conducted on cross-national marriage as a single integral phenomenon. Most researchers differentiate groups of immigrants, focusing on the specific cultural features, types of immigration, and places of settlement. “Asian wives” have been differentiated from “Western” partners (Diggs, 2001; Takeshita, 2001; Satake and Da-anoy, 2006). Takeshita (2001) reveals that the couples with European husbands are more likely to adapt to the husbands’ cultural patterns, compared to the couples with Asian husbands. Asian husbands are more likely to adapt to the culture of their Japanese wives. The wife’s parents are more likely to object to a marriage when the partner is from an Asian rather than European country. Takeshita explains these results by pointing out the higher degree of prejudices against Asian immigrants.

According to Saihanjuna (2011), most studies of European wives of Japanese husbands and Japanese wives in cross-national marriage focus on mutual adjustment of the partners in intercultural relations, whereas literature on Asian “brides” depict foreign spouses as the objects of unilateral acculturation to Japanese culture.

This theoretical opposition of Western and Asian wives does not provide sufficient space for description of the other patterns of cross-national marriage migration, for instance cases of Russian-speaking wives in Japan. Coming from Eastern Europe, most Russian-speaking partners, following this logic, should be placed in the category of “Westerners.” However, because of migration and settlement patterns, they are much closer to so-called “Asian wives”.

Saihanjuna (2011) also indicates that researchers apply different approaches to different categories of immigrants. Cross-national marriages with European wives have been studied within the framework of family sociology, social psychology, and cultural anthropology. The studies on marriages of Japanese wives with Western partners have used the sociological, anthropological, psychological, and intercultural communication approaches. Finally, the studies on “Asian wives” of Japanese husbands approached the issue from the perspective of rural sociology, sociology of local community, psychology, and historical family sociology. Consequently, the comparison of different groups becomes problematic. In general, research concerning cross-national marriage in Japan focuses on specific features of different groups of immigrants, which produces an incomplete understanding of cross-national marriage as a distinct phenomenon.

This paper contributes to theoretical conceptualization of cross-national marriage in Japan as an integral phenomenon. I employ the migration studies perspective to provide general understanding of the phenomenon of cross-national marriage in Japan. I compare several groups of immigrants to illustrate the structural commonalities which are hidden by cultural differences. This paper also has an important social implication. Previous research has described cross-national marriage in terms of the dual relations between the immigrant (often referred to as “foreign”) spouse and the native spouse in addition to the extended family. In this paper I investigate the relationship between migration policies and cross-national marriage, thus questioning the role of the state authorities in structuring the forms and patterns of cross-national marriages.

Migration Studies Perspective

Despite the fact that cross-national marriage is the result of marital migration of the foreign partner, it has been excluded from immigration studies until recently. Researchers focused on the issues of cultural adjustment and social integration of foreign spouses in the local communities.

Piper (2003) first placed cross-national marriage in Japan in the broad context of immigration studies. Piper points out the importance of “explore(ing) the connections between cross-border migration, work and international marriage,” arguing that the latter is often the result of women migrants wanting to break the cycle of repeat migration or in order to break out of limited job categories available to them (as reflected in their visa status) (Piper, 2003, p.457).

Liaw et al. (2010) examine the grounds of the recent feminization of immigration in Japan. Investigating immigration policies of the country, they show that marital migration is one of the few options for women to get access to permanent resident status and stable employment if they are low-skilled workers. In this respect, Liaw et al. address the role of the immigration policies that determine the context of marital immigration.

Migration studies perspective provides the theoretical framework for integral conceptualization of different forms of marital immigration, despite the cultural, ethnic, and regional differences. In this paper, I investigate the influence of immigration policies on cross-national marriage patterns in Japan.

Contemporary Immigration Policies in Japan

Like most advanced industrial societies, Japan experienced labor shortages at the height of the country's rapid economic growth in the 1960s. Japanese officials first tried to avoid importing foreign labor, applying such measures as shifting production abroad, and recruiting women, students, and the elderly, as well as the rapidly growing population of rural migrants and seasonal workers. In the late 1970s to the mid-1980s Japan started to import foreign female workers from the Philippines, Thailand, South Korea, and Taiwan to fill the demand in the so-called entertainment industry, still avoiding the import of foreign unskilled male workers until the late 1980s.

At the height of “bubble economy” (1986-91) Japan became an attractive destination for migrant workers. The growth in demand and supply formed the groundwork for private brokers and intermediaries in Japan and “exporting” countries (mostly Middle East and Asia) that organized and promoted labor migration to Japan. From the late 1980s, large numbers of foreign workers who entered Japan with tourist visas and overstayed their three-month limit, formed a large illegal immigrant population which reached a peak of three hundred thousand in 1993 (SOPEMI (2007) quoted in Chung, 2010, p. 151).

Japanese government officials responded to the internal demand for

foreign laborers through the creation of legal loopholes for immigrant workers. The 1990 revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act reorganized and expanded visa categories from eighteen to twenty-seven. Only four visa categories – permanent resident, spouse or child of a Japanese national, spouse or child of a permanent resident, and long-term resident – allow for unrestricted economic activities. Visa categories that permit work are limited to professional and technical fields, such as professors, artists, engineers, journalists, and researchers, and the law continues to forbid, *in principle*, unskilled working migration.

The most effective way that Japan has been able to import unskilled foreign laborers while maintaining a policy that explicitly prohibits the admission of unskilled foreign laborers has been through the recruitment of *Nikkei* foreign workers. Their visa status allows them to reside in Japan for up to three years and can be renewed an indefinite number of times. Consequently, their legal status parallels that of permanent residents, which makes them the exception to the policy that discourages the permanent settlement of immigrants.

Other foreigners, however, may be granted special permission to work for a designated period of time (Mori, 1997, pp. 95-133). This opportunity is mostly utilized by college and pre-college students, technical interns and on-the-job trainees from China. As in most other countries, these unskilled temporary foreign workers form an available, flexible, dispensable labor force to fill labor-intensive positions at the bottom of the labor market, and protect the capital-intensive skilled and higher-waged segments of the economy. According to Austin and Bauder, they provide “a labor reserve army that can be hired and fired based on seasonal and cyclical economic cycles” (Austin and Bauder, 2012, p. 28).

In this respect, marriage to a national or a permanent resident, which gives the right to unrestricted economic activities and the access to the settlement, is an extremely valuable option. Liaw et al. (2010) indicate the unique character of marital immigration in East Asia. They point out that “marriage has become one of the very few legal channels for people seeking to settle in these societies, and for low-skilled people, marriage is indeed the only channel available for becoming a long-term resident” (Liaw et al, 2010, p. 31).

The immigration of domestic workers, as one of the categories of unskilled working migration, is prohibited in Japan. Consequently, the channels that grant permission to work for low-skilled women are mainly reserved for the category of entertainers (Piper, 1996). Women’s working migration in Japan, therefore, becomes stigmatized (as indirectly related to

the sex industry). In this context, cross-national marriage with Japanese nationals becomes virtually the only legal path to get a work permit in Japan and to avoid stigmatization. Not surprisingly, almost 40% of the 1995-2000 new female immigrants in Japan are the brides of Japanese nationals. This characteristic of immigration policies of Japan distinguishes it from other Asian countries, where domestic and healthcare workers represent the main component of female immigrants (Liaw et al, 2010, p. 20).

One of the important features of the recent immigration in Japan, and marital immigration, in particular, is its feminization. According to the reports of Ministry of Justice of Japan, only 26% of 4,156 couples registered in 1965 were comprised of Japanese husbands and foreign wives. In 1975 the number of cross-national marriages grew to 6,045, and the number of foreign wives rose to 53%. In 1990, the number of cross-national marriages further grew to 25,626, and the number of foreign wives comprised 78% and the tendency at the present is the same. Of 34,393 cross-national couples registered in 2009, almost 78% of foreign spouses were foreign wives, and only 22% were comprised of Japanese wives and foreign husbands (Ministry of Justice, 2010).

Marital immigration, which offers the possibility of obtaining a permanent legal resident status, legal permission to unrestricted work in Japan, and avoidance of stigmatization related to female working migration, becomes one of the most attractive strategies for recent immigrants to Japan. It is an especially valuable alternative for female immigrants. In this respect, I suggest that female immigrants from developing countries are more likely to be engaged in cross-national marriage with Japanese nationals. I also suggest that there should be less marital immigrants among Nikkeijin and skilled workers from developed countries.

Method

Most previous research has only focused on the numerous categories of immigrants in Japan, whereas the minor categories have been neglected. In this study, I argue that it is beneficial to compare different categories of immigrants, no matter how numerous they are. I use the statistical data from the Ministry of Justice of Japan for 2010. For the purpose of this study, I take the total number of immigrants of one nationality as 100%. I compare their characteristics, investigating the similarities and differences in legal status, and gender composition. I investigate commonly studied groups of immigrants, like Chinese (a total of 687,156 persons), Koreans

(565,989), Filipinas (210,181), Thais (41,279), Americans (50,667), British (16,077), Brazilians (230,552), Peruvians (54,636) and compare them with the new group of Eastern Europe immigrants in Japan: Russians (7,814), Ukrainians (1,507) and Romanians (2,409). I also investigate the differences and similarities with French (9,060), and Germans (5,971).

Proportion of Marital Immigrants in Different Communities

To indicate the nationalities which are more likely to employ cross-national marriage as a strategy for migration, I investigate the distribution of immigrant population by types of visa for different nationalities. In Table 1 (a, b) "Proportion of the immigrant population by types of visa for different nationalities," I summarize visa categories which account for more than 5% of the total population of at least one of the nationalities, mentioned above. Of the total 33 visa categories, 13 visa categories remained (Table 1(a), Table 1 (b)).

The distinct settlement pattern is presented by Korea. As much as 69.83% of Koreans reside in Japan as "special long-term residents", and 10.26% as permanent residents. Also 4.78% of Koreans obtain student visas. In other words, the majority of the Korean community in Japan is still comprised of native-born ethnic Koreans – so-called *Zainichi* Koreans, who obtain the status of "special long-term residents." Although categorized as foreign nationals, ethnic Koreans cannot be fully included in the immigrant population, as most of them do not have immigration experience.

The population of immigrants from Brazil and Peru is concentrated in three main categories: permanent residents (51.08%, and 59.33% respectively), spouse of Japanese nationals (13.01%, and 6.27%) and long-term residents (33.55%, and 27.18%). Most of the immigrants from Brazil and Peru are foreign nationals with Japanese ancestry, who enjoy the status of permanent residents, as soon as they enter Japan. The low rates of the spouses of Japanese nationals indicate that only few Brazilians and Peruvians are engaged in cross-national marriages with Japanese partners.

These results concur with Liaw et al. (2010, p. 62), who indicate that "Brazilians (and to a lesser extent Peruvians) have an extremely low propensity to become brides of Japanese nationals." The category of long-term residents includes Nikkeijin and their spouses; the adopted children of Japanese nationals or permanent residents, or the children of Japanese nationals or permanent residents under 6 years old; foreign national who stayed in Japan after divorce or death of the spouse. In the case of the Brazilian and Peruvian communities, this category mostly includes the

spouses and children of Nikkeijin.

The next category of immigrants reveals a considerable proportion of marital immigrants. Marital immigrants receive the status of spouse of a Japanese national, and are eligible for permanent resident status after 4-5 years of marriage. After achieving the permanent resident status, even in the case of divorce or separation by death of the Japanese spouse, the immigrant is eligible for the status of long-term resident. In the group of marital immigrants I include The Philippines, Thailand, Romania, Ukraine, and Russia. The Philippine community indicates the highest rates of immigrants with permanent resident (44.13%), spouses of Japanese nationals (19.63%), and long-term resident (18.02%) status. Together they cover 81.8% of the whole Philippine community in Japan. The Romanian and Ukrainian communities also comprise very high rates of permanent residents (32.75% and 35.57%, respectively), spouses of Japanese nationals (32.17% and 28.40%, respectively), and long-term residents (9.59% and 7.30%, respectively). Together they comprise 74.5% and 71.3% respectively, of the total communities. The Thai and Russian communities comprise reasonably high rates of permanent residents (36.47% and 28.69%, respectively), spouses of Japanese nationals (20.96% and 20.04%, respectively), and long-term residents (8.82% and 7.17%, respectively). Combined, these numbers comprise 66.3% and 55.9% of the whole Thai and Russian immigrant communities, respectively.

China indicates a unique pattern of distribution regarding immigrants' status. The largest categories of immigrants have the status of permanent residents (24.66%) and students (19.57%). The rest of the Chinese immigrant population in Japan is rather equally distributed within several categories: professors (5.01%), technical intern trainees I (5.50%), and A (5.50%), family members (8.67%), spouses of Japanese nationals (7.81%), and long-term residents (4.66%).

Finally, the group traditionally referred as "Westerners" which includes Germany, the USA, France and Great Britain also indicates higher proportions of permanent residents and spouses of Japanese nationals, although not sufficient to be referred as "marital immigrants." American and British communities exhibit moderate numbers of permanent residents (25.79% and 25.85%, respectively), spouses of Japanese nationals (17.46% and 16.57%, respectively), and long-term residents (2.90% and 1.66%, respectively). Together they comprise about 46.15% and 44.08%, respectively, of the total population of American and British population in Japan. German and French communities, comprise a smaller proportion of permanent residents (21.32% and 16.40%, respectively), spouses of

Table 1 (a) Proportion of immigrant population by types of visa for different nationalities. Real numbers.

Country	Total	Instructor	Technique	Professor	Intra-company Transferee	Entertainer	Technical Intern	Technical Intern	Student	Family member	Permanent Resident	Spouse of Japanese National	Long-term resident	Special Long-term Resident
Citizenship							Training (i)	Training (a)						
Total	2,134,151	10,012	46,592	68,467	16,140	9,247	47,716	47,737	201,511	118,865	565,089	196,248	194,602	399,106
Korea	565,989	90	7,050	9,233	2,079	374	-	-	27,066	18,026	58,082	19,761	8,374	395,234
Brazil	230,552	8	47	82	73	159	-	-	377	368	117,760	30,003	77,359	20
Peru	54,636	8	10	14	1	2	8	5	111	38	32,416	3,423	14,849	4
Philippine	210,181	159	1,968	940	777	6,319	2,472	2,610	713	2,197	92,754	41,255	37,870	45
Thailand	41,279	-	232	432	430	136	787	629	3,542	626	15,055	8,651	3,641	10
Romania	2,409	5	39	49	22	121	-	-	94	61	789	775	231	1
Ukraine	1,507	1	15	35	2	73	-	-	83	88	536	428	110	-
Russia	7,814	11	115	615	41	268	-	-	506	835	2,242	1,566	560	7
China	687,156	101	25,105	34,433	6,238	671	37,788	37,841	134,483	59,567	169,484	53,697	32,048	2,668
Germany	5,971	52	178	405	505	6	-	-	812	809	1,273	614	97	13
USA	50,667	5,166	789	6,313	1,286	318	-	-	2,660	4,948	13,065	8,848	1,470	583
France	9,060	72	588	964	414	19	-	-	934	1,353	1,486	1,355	109	56
Gr. Britain	16,044	1,246	395	2,785	450	62	-	-	635	1,102	4,147	2,658	267	70

Source: Ministry of Justice of Japan, 2010. Extracted by author.

Table 1 (b) Proportion of immigrant population by types of visa for different nationalities. Percentage (%)

Country	Total	Instructor	Technique	Professor	Intra-company Transferee	Entertainer	Technical Intern Training (i)	Technical Intern Training (a)	Student	Family member	Permanent Resident	Spouse of Japanese National	Long-Term resident	Special long-term resident
Citizenship														
Total	100%	0.47%	2.18%	3.21%	0.76%	0.43%	2.24%	2.24%	9.44%	5.57%	26.48%	9.20%	9.12%	18.70%
Korea	100%	0.02%	1.25%	1.63%	0.37%	0.07%	0.00%	0.00%	4.78%	3.18%	10.26%	3.49%	1.48%	69.83%
Brazil	100%	0.00%	0.02%	0.04%	0.03%	0.07%	0.00%	0.00%	0.16%	0.16%	51.08%	13.01%	33.55%	0.01%
Peru	100%	0.01%	0.02%	0.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	0.01%	0.20%	0.07%	59.33%	6.27%	27.18%	0.01%
Philippine	100%	0.08%	0.94%	0.45%	0.37%	3.01%	1.18%	1.24%	0.34%	1.05%	44.13%	19.63%	18.02%	0.02%
Thailand	100%	0.00%	0.56%	1.05%	1.04%	0.33%	1.91%	1.52%	8.58%	1.52%	36.47%	20.96%	8.82%	0.02%
Romania	100%	0.21%	1.62%	2.03%	0.91%	5.02%	0.00%	0.00%	3.90%	2.53%	32.75%	32.17%	9.59%	0.04%
Ukraine	100%	0.07%	1.00%	2.32%	0.13%	4.84%	0.00%	0.00%	5.51%	5.84%	35.57%	28.40%	7.30%	0.00%
Russia	100%	0.14%	1.47%	7.87%	0.52%	3.43%	0.00%	0.00%	6.48%	10.69%	28.69%	20.04%	7.17%	0.09%
China	100%	0.01%	3.65%	5.01%	0.91%	0.10%	5.50%	5.51%	19.57%	8.67%	24.66%	7.81%	4.66%	0.39%
Germany	100%	0.87%	2.98%	6.78%	8.46%	0.10%	0.00%	0.00%	13.60%	13.55%	21.32%	10.28%	1.62%	0.22%
USA	100%	10.20%	1.56%	12.46%	2.54%	0.63%	0.00%	0.00%	5.25%	9.77%	25.79%	17.46%	2.90%	1.15%
France	100%	0.79%	6.49%	10.64%	4.57%	0.21%	0.00%	0.00%	10.31%	14.93%	16.40%	14.96%	1.20%	0.62%
Gr. Britain	100%	7.77%	2.46%	17.36%	2.80%	0.39%	0.00%	0.00%	3.96%	6.87%	25.85%	16.57%	1.66%	0.44%

Source: Ministry of Justice of Japan, 2010. Extracted by author.

Japanese nationals (10.28% and 14.96%, respectively), and long-term residents (1.62% and 1.20%, respectively), which forms only 33.22% and 32.56% of the total community. The proportion of long-term residents in these communities is extremely small (1.62% and 1.20%, respectively). This group also indicates a high proportion of professors (17.36% for Great Britain, 12.46% for the USA, 10.64% for France and 6.78% for Germany), technicians (6.49% for France), instructors (10.20% for the USA, and 7.77% for Great Britain), students (13.6% for Germany and 10.31% for France), and family members (13.55% for Germany and 14.93% for France). These job categories are characterized by longer working contracts, the possibility of extension of the contract, and economic stability. It explains why immigrants in this category are not as motivated toward a legally acknowledged marriage with a Japanese national as low-skilled workers with unstable and shorter working contracts are.

There are several important things that come to light after such an examination. The first one is that immigration patterns do not directly correlate with cultural or regional factors. Although situated in Asia, Koreans do not present the characteristics of “Asian wives” in Japan. Surprisingly, there are some similarities in immigration strategies of the Filipinas, Thais, Romanians, Ukrainians, and Russians. Koreans and Chinese, often presented as most common marital immigrants, contain very moderate percentage of the recent spouses of Japanese nationals (3.49% and 7.81%, respectively, of the total population of Koreans and Chinese in Japan). The highest numbers in regards to the proportion of recent marital immigrants are presented by Romania (32.17%), Ukraine (28.40%), Thailand (20.96%), Russia (20.04%), and the Philippines (19.63%). These are the categories, which employ cross-national marriage as the main strategy for migration to Japan.

The Degree of Feminization of Different Immigrant Communities in Japan

Further, to indicate whether women are more likely to employ cross-national marriage as a strategy for immigration to Japan, I investigate the sex-ratios of different immigrant communities in Japan.

Liaw et al. (2010) mentioned feminization as a principal qualitative change in recent immigration to Japan. According to the statistics of Ministry of Justice of Japan, about 54.40% of all immigrants in Japan are women. However, different immigrant categories indicate this tendency to a different extent. In Table 2 “Proportion of female immigrant population by 5 age categories,” I indicate the degree of feminization for 5 age

categories: 1) 20-24 years; 2) 25-29 years; 3) 30-34 years; 4) 35-39 years; and 5) 40-44 years. The afore mentioned age categories are considered to be the “typical” age of marriage.

The analysis of the data (Table 2) indicates four main patterns:

1) Romanian, Ukrainian, Filipina, Thai, and Russian communities show a considerable degree of feminization, where women make up more than 75% of the several age categories (2-3-4 for Romania, 2-3-4-5 for Ukraine, 3-4-5 for Philippine, 4-5 for Thailand, 2-3-4 for Russia).

Table 2 “Proportion of female immigrant population by 5 age categories”
(% of females)

Citizenship /Country	Total	1 20-24years	2 25-29years	3 30-34years	4 35-39years	5 40-44years
Total	54.40%	54.80%	52.60%	54.40%	56.10%	58.60%
Romania	83.10%	74.00%	91.70%	89.70%	84.90%	63.60%
Ukraine	81.20%	66.60%	89.90%	89.10%	86.20%	81.20%
Philippine	78.00%	60.40%	74.30%	82.00%	87.40%	90.70%
Thailand	74.90%	52.30%	55.50%	71.50%	78.50%	87.20%
Russia	69.40%	63.70%	79.80%	81.30%	78.00%	60.80%
China	58.40%	58.60%	56.00%	59.00%	61.90%	64.10%
Korea	54.50%	58.20%	52.10%	51.70%	52.70%	54.50%
Peru	47.30%	48.40%	50.30%	47.90%	46.30%	44.50%
Brazil	45.70%	46.70%	45.80%	44.80%	43.90%	44.50%
Germany	37.20%	54.10%	36.20%	29.40%	30.20%	26.70%
USA	34.00%	47.30%	32.90%	25.20%	24.10%	24.20%
France	30.10%	38.90%	23.30%	20.00%	22.70%	25.10%
G.Britain	21.10%	42.00%	28.40%	21.30%	21.20%	25.50%

Source: Ministry of Justice of Japan, 2010. Extracted by author.

2) The Chinese and Korean communities are slightly feminized. Female foreign nationals (I intentionally avoid applying the term “immigrants” for the ethnic Korean community) comprise 52-62% of the whole number of every age category. The highest proportion of women is indicated in categories 4-5 for Chinese (61.90% and 64.10%, respectively) and 4 for Koreans (54.50%).

3) The Peruvian and Brazilian communities are slightly masculinized. The proportion of the overall female immigrant population comprises 45.70% for Brazilians and 47.30% for Peruvians. The highest proportion of female immigrants is indicated for categories 1-2 for Peruvians (48.40%

and 50.30%, respectively) and 1 for Brazilians (46.70%).

4) The American, British, German and French communities indicate a considerable extent of masculinization. Women make up less than 30% for several age categories (3-4-5 for Germany and the USA, 2-3-4-5 for France and Great Britain). An exceptionally high proportion of women is indicated for age category 1 (20-24 years) for Germany, the USA, and Great Britain (54.10% 47.30%, and 42.00%, respectively).

It is also important to investigate the value of these age categories in the total population of every foreign community in Japan. Below, I present the share of male and female immigrants in every age category in respect to the whole population of that community in absolute numbers (Table 3(a) "Proportion of immigrant male/female population in respect to the total immigrant population by 5 age categories") and in percent (Table 3(b) "Proportion of immigrant male/female population in respect to the total immigrant population by 5 age categories in percentage"). I indicate the proportion of women immigrants in every age category with respect to the total population of immigrants of a particular nationality in Japan. I indicate 3 groups as follows:

Group 1 "Feminized group": Romanian and Ukrainian communities are highly feminized categories. For Romania, women of 25-29 years comprise 23.50% of the total immigrant community; women of 30-34 years – 35.78% of the total community; women of 35-39 years – 11.87% of the total community. These three categories together comprise 71.15% of the total Romanian community in Japan. For Ukraine, women of 25-29 years comprise 21.37% of the total immigrant community; women of 30-34 years – 25.48% of the total community; women of 35-39 years – 16.52% of the total community. These three categories together comprise 63.37% of the total Ukrainian immigrant community. The Philippines and Thailand exhibit high levels of feminization in elder age categories, with women in age categories of 30-34 years (12.72% and 8.30%), 35-39 years (13.49% and 11.60%), and 40-44 years (16.71% and 16.48%) together comprising 42.92% and 36.38% of the total number of Filipino and Thai communities, respectively. For Russia, the number of women in the age categories 25-29 years (14.15%), 30-34 years (18.59%), 35-39 years (13.53%) together comprises 46.27% of the total Russian community in Japan.

Group 2 "Equal sex ratio group": China shows a slightly higher concentration of women in age categories 20-24 years (13.54%), 25-29 years (11.49%), and 30-34 years (8.65%). Together they comprise 33.68% of the total Chinese community in Japan. Three immigrant groups, Korea,

Table3(a) “Proportion of immigrant male/female population in respect to the total immigrant population by Sage categories. Real numbers”

Country	Total number		20-24years		25-29years		30-34years		35-39years		40-44years		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Total	2,134,151	972,481	1,161,670	124,699	151,582	147,196	163,527	124,024	148,174	100,036	127,882	86,007	121,576
Romania	2,409	407	2,002	25	71	51	566	100	862	51	286	48	84
Ukraine	1,507	283	1,224	32	64	36	322	47	384	40	249	16	69
Philippine	210,181	46,216	163,965	5,429	8,269	7,065	20,396	5,868	26,740	4,075	28,349	3,591	35,128
Thailand	41,279	10,364	30,915	1,652	1,808	2,298	2,861	1,366	3,426	1,038	4,789	995	6,804
Russia	7,814	2,391	5,423	210	369	280	1,106	334	1,453	298	1,057	256	397
China	687,156	286,032	401,124	65,770	93,070	62,078	78,970	41,234	59,418	24,756	40,278	17,344	31,002
Korea	565,989	257,761	308,228	14,802	20,643	21,534	23,457	22,255	23,822	23,842	26,565	21,528	25,801
Peru	54,636	28,797	25,839	1,939	1,819	2,201	2,231	2,616	2,403	3,300	2,849	3,848	3,084
Brazil	230,552	125,291	105,261	9,994	8,771	14,514	12,287	15,463	12,552	14,542	11,385	12,727	10,187
Germany	5,971	3,750	2,221	302	356	489	278	529	220	457	198	500	182
USA	50,667	33,420	17,247	2,607	2,338	4,880	2,393	4,132	1,389	3,741	1,191	4,007	1,281
France	9,060	6,330	2,730	631	401	1,268	385	1,246	311	918	270	623	209
Gr.Britain	16,044	11,699	4,345	688	498	1,524	605	1,979	535	1,867	502	1,640	562

Source: Ministry of Justice of Japan, 2010. Extracted by author.

Table 3(b) “Proportion of immigrant male/female population in respect to the total immigrant population by 5 age categories. Percentage (%)”

Country	Total number		20-24years		25-29years		30-34years		35-39years		40-44years		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Total	100%	45.57%	54.43%	5.84%	7.10%	6.90%	7.66%	5.81%	6.94%	4.69%	5.99%	4.03%	5.70%
Romania	100%	16.89%	83.11%	1.04%	2.95%	2.12%	23.50%	4.15%	35.78%	2.12%	11.87%	1.99%	3.49%
Ukraine	100%	18.78%	81.22%	2.12%	4.25%	2.39%	21.37%	3.12%	25.48%	2.65%	16.52%	1.06%	4.58%
Philippine	100%	21.99%	78.01%	2.58%	3.93%	3.36%	9.70%	2.79%	12.72%	1.94%	13.49%	1.71%	16.71%
Thailand	100%	25.11%	74.89%	4.00%	4.38%	5.57%	6.93%	3.31%	8.30%	2.51%	11.60%	2.41%	16.48%
Russia	100%	30.60%	69.40%	2.69%	4.72%	3.58%	14.15%	4.27%	18.59%	3.81%	13.53%	3.28%	5.08%
China	100%	41.63%	58.37%	9.57%	13.54%	9.03%	11.49%	6.00%	8.65%	3.60%	5.86%	2.52%	4.51%
Korea	100%	45.54%	54.46%	2.62%	3.65%	3.80%	4.14%	3.93%	4.21%	4.21%	4.69%	3.80%	4.56%
Peru	100%	52.71%	47.29%	3.55%	3.33%	4.03%	4.08%	4.79%	4.40%	6.04%	5.21%	7.04%	5.64%
Brazil	100%	54.34%	45.66%	4.33%	3.80%	6.30%	5.33%	6.71%	5.44%	6.31%	4.94%	5.52%	4.42%
Germany	100%	62.80%	37.20%	5.06%	5.96%	8.19%	4.66%	8.86%	3.68%	7.65%	3.32%	8.37%	3.05%
USA	100%	65.96%	34.04%	5.15%	4.61%	9.63%	4.72%	8.16%	2.74%	7.38%	2.35%	7.91%	2.53%
France	100%	69.87%	30.13%	6.96%	4.43%	14.00%	4.25%	13.75%	3.43%	10.13%	2.98%	6.88%	2.31%
G.Britain	100%	72.92%	27.08%	4.29%	3.10%	9.50%	3.77%	12.33%	3.33%	11.64%	3.13%	10.22%	3.50%

Source: Ministry of Justice of Japan, 2010. Extracted by author.

Peru, and Brazil, show almost equal sex ratio for all 5 age categories. The number of women in all 5 age categories (from 20 to 44 years old) comprises only 21.25%, 23.56%, and 23.93% of the total number of Korean, Peruvian, and Brazilian communities, respectively.

Group 3 “Masculinized group”: France and Britain form a highly masculinized immigrant community in Japan. For France, the total number of men in three age categories of 25-29 years (14.00%), 30-34 years (13.75%), and 35-40 years (10.13%) comprises 37.88% of the total French community in Japan. The British exhibit a higher degree of masculinization for elder age categories. The total number of men in three age categories of 30-34 years (12.33%), 35-39 years (11.64%), and 40-44 years (10.22%) comprises 34.19% of the total British population in Japan.

The United States and Germany have a more equal distribution of masculinization: the degree of masculinization in every particular category is not very high; however the tendency of slight masculinization is seen for 4 age categories. For Germans, the total number of men for age categories 25-29 years (8.19%), 30-34 years (8.86%), 35-39 years (7.65%), and 40-44 years (8.37%) make 33.07% of the total German population in Japan. For the USA, the total number of men for age categories 25-29 years (9.63%), 30-34 years (8.16%), 35-39 years (7.38%), and 40-44 years (7.91%) make up 33.08% of the total American population in Japan.

The data above supports the idea that the sex composition of an immigrants’ community is related to the patterns of immigration. The majority of Romanian, Ukrainian, Filipina, Thai, and Russian communities are marital immigrants (which may be identified by their residence status). These communities also show considerable rates of feminization. Koreans and Chinese communities are only slightly feminized. This may be explained by the long history of the ethnic Korean community and the different channels of immigration utilized by the Chinese immigrants. Brazilians and Peruvians, enjoy the exceptional policy of Nikkeijin low-skilled workers. Most of them are male working immigrants, who get married in their country of origin and then move to Japan with their families. It is a slightly masculinized community. Finally, Americans, British, Germans and French fall into the category of “professionals and technicians” (which is supported by a higher proportion of immigrants with the status of professors, technicians, and instructors), who enjoy longer and more stable working contracts. It is a highly masculinized category. Thus, cross-national marriage as an immigration strategy is particularly often utilized by female immigrants from economically developing countries.

Conclusion

The implication of the immigration studies approach reveals aspects of cross-national marriage not theorized by previous researchers: 1) immigration policies influence the forms and patterns of cross-national marriage in Japan; 2) as the cases of Romanian, Ukrainian, Thai, Russian, and Filipina immigrants showed, some groups of immigrants exhibit similar immigration strategies despite cultural and regional differences, which means that structural factors (economic development of the country, education, and gender) outweigh cultural differences.

Although previous studies have focused only on major categories of immigrants, this paper demonstrated that the examination of minority categories challenges our understanding of the phenomenon. Despite the overall large numbers of Chinese and Korean marital immigrants in Japan, the proportion of the “spouses of Japanese nationals” among them appears to be the smallest – 3.49% for Koreans and 7.81% for Chinese. Nikkeijin also show very moderate numbers of cross-national marriages with Japanese nationals, which may be also explained by their immigration strategies. Although the group of Westerners shows a rather high proportion of spouses, they employ the immigration strategy of “professionals and technicians” for settlement in Japan, which makes them not so motivated to marry with Japanese nationals.

On the other hand, Romanians, Ukrainians, Thais, Russians, and Filipinas are extremely feminized groups of immigrants, with a rather high proportion of those who obtain spouse visas. For these groups of immigrants cross-national marriage with Japanese nationals becomes the route to settlement in Japan. I conclude that female immigrants from developing countries are more likely to be engaged in cross-national marriage with Japanese nationals. The results that were theoretically deduced from the context of immigration policies are confirmed by the comparison of different immigrant communities in Japan.

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