

JAPAN IN CRISIS: DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFICULTIES TO THE FINGERPRINTING OF FOREIGNERS

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Abstract: This paper examines the declining and aging population in Japan by looking at possible population scenarios for Japan in the near future as extrapolated from its current situation by UN and other research. The reasons for this current situation are then explored to see if the factors causing this situation can be modified to effect a positive change in Japan's demographic difficulties. After arguing that they cannot and therefore that mass immigration is inevitable for the maintenance of Japan's internal social and economic stability and manufacturing needs the paper then moves on to how the Japanese government has approached this topic. This naturally brings up the 'Partial Amendment to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act' and the way it was presented to the Japanese public in response to Japan's looming demographic change. By looking behind the façade of the law's public anti-terror rationale this paper brings to light an entirely different motive for its implementation, that of monitoring and thereby controlling the large numbers of foreigners Japan must attract to deal with its demographic difficulties. The conclusion is that this is a law that could backfire and ultimately harm Japan's economic and diplomatic future by discouraging immigration to Japan, something it desperately needs to solve its population problems.

1 - INTRODUCTION

Currently Japan has one of the oldest populations in the world and a huge section of this population (27.3%) will be over 60 by 2025 (Cornelius *et al*, 1994, p.378). This situation has developed due to a number of factors. There is Japan's famously high longevity due to its diet and lifestyle, its low birth rate, also caused by many factors such as the cost of having a baby in Japan, many women putting careers ahead of having families, the 'parasite singles'¹ who do not have families and the easy availability of abortion in Japan. Therefore enormous population problems lie ahead for Japan at this time of global economic recession.

To try and solve these problems Japan must attract large numbers of foreign workers. However Japan is a nation that has infamously not been interested in promoting mass immigration to its shores and the prospect of this worries politicians and citizens alike, as many of their comments in the period before the 2002 FIFA World Cup showed. Therefore it is no surprise that the Japanese government would try to have some measures put in place to deal with any mass immigration of the needed foreigners before they

¹ A popular term for single people who live with their parents long after most of their generation have moved out, and who pay little for their accommodation and food.

actually arrive. The 2007 'Partial Amendment to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act' is just that type of measure. After careful analysis of the demography difficulties facing Japan, the historical record of Japan's treatment of its foreign residents, the details of the new act and its repercussions it should become obvious that this law has the potential to be an international and public relations problem for Japan as well, as possibly having negative economic consequences.

2 - DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFICULTIES

The UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs – Population Division has conducted a comprehensive survey of the population problems facing developed nations (UN, 2001). This survey has therefore examined the situation of Japan in detail (UN, 2001, pp.53-58). The figures and projections for Japan do not make for comforting reading for Japanese politicians. The key figures from the study are the following:

The total fertility rate in Japan fell from 2.75 births per woman in 1950-1955 to 2.08 births in 1955-1960. Total fertility remained at the near-replacement level between 1960 and 1975, and it resumed falling slowly, reaching 1.49 births in 1990-1995. During the same period, the life expectancy at birth for both sexes combined increased markedly, from 63.9 years in 1950-1955 to 79.5 years in 1990-1995. The fertility decline and the increase in life expectancy in Japan brought about an increase in the proportion of the elderly. In 1995, the retired-age population (65 years old and over) represented 14.6 per cent of the total population, as compared to only 4.9 per cent in 1950. The ratio of the working-age population (15-64 years old) to the retired-age population increased from 11.0 in 1920 to 12.2 in 1950. It later decreased rapidly, to 4.8 in 1995. The notable increase in the median age of the population, from 22.3 years old in 1950 to 39.7 years old in 1995, is also indicative of the rapid demographic ageing that has taken place in Japan (UN, 2001, p.53). The survey then examines a number of scenarios based on the 1998 UN Population projections and Scenarios 1 and 2 look at what will happen population and demographics wise if there is zero net migration to Japan.

The 1998 United Nations population projection assumes no net immigration to Japan from 1995 through 2050. According to the medium variant projection, the population of Japan would increase from 125.5 million in 1995 and reach its peak in 2005 at 127.5 million. Then the population would decline to 104.9 million by 2050 (the results of the 1998 United Nations projections are shown in the annex tables of the report). The working age population (15-64 years old) of Japan is projected to decline continuously, from 87.2 million in 1995 to 57.1 million in 2050. The population aged 65 or older would increase from 18.3 million in 1995 to 34.0 million in 2045 and then decrease slightly to 33.3 million in 2050. As a result, the percentage of population aged 65 or older in the total population would more than double, from 14.6 per cent in 1995 to 31.8 percent in 2050. The ratio of the working-age population to the retired-age population would continue declining, from 4.8 in 1995 to 2.2 in 2025 and 1.7 in 2050 (UN, 2001, p.53).

Scenario 3 takes a look at what is needed if Japan wants to maintain its population at the 2005 peak size. According to the medium variant projection of the United Nations 1998

Revision, the population of Japan would reach a maximum of 127.5 million in 2005. If Japan wishes to keep the size of its population at the level attained in the year 2005, the country would need 17 million net immigrants up to the year 2050, or an average of 381,000 immigrants per year between 2005 and 2050. By 2050, the immigrants and their descendants would total 22.5 million and comprise 17.7 per cent of the total population of the country (UN, 2001, p.53). However this maintaining of the population size does not ensure the workforce would be maintained at an efficient level. This requires a larger immigration and is covered by Scenario 4.

In order to keep the size of the working-age population constant at the 1995 level of 87.2 million, Japan would need 33.5 million immigrants from 1995 through 2050. This means an average of 609,000 immigrants are needed per year during this period. Under this scenario, the population of the country is projected to be 150.7 million by 2050. The number of post-1995 immigrants and their descendants would be 46 million, accounting for 30 per cent of the total population in 2050 (UN, 2001, p.53).

Scenarios 5 and 6 deal with the support ratios of workers to retired citizens. Since 1950 this figure has dropped from 12.2 to 4.8 in 1995 and this is a worrying trend for the economic stability of Japan in the future. For example in 1950 one retired person was supported by the tax from 12 workers, while by 1990 the supporting workers were down to 5.5 for every retired person and estimated to be as low as 2.3 by 2020 (Chapple, 2004). This downward spiral of workers to retired ratio urgently needs action as the longevity of Japanese is one of the highest in the world and its population is top heavy with those retiring soon, i.e. within the next decade. This subject is addressed in Scenarios 5 and 6.

Scenario 5 does not allow the potential support ratio to decrease below the value of 3.0. In order to achieve this, no immigrants would be needed until 2005, and 94.8 million immigrants would be needed between 2005 and 2050, an average of 2.1 million per year during that period. By 2050, out of a total population of 229 million, 124 million, or 54 per cent, would be post-1995 immigrants or their descendants (UN, 2001, p.54).

Scenario 6 has even more shocking statistics for those concerned with the racial makeup of Japan. This scenario keeps the ratio of the working-age population to the retired-age population at its 1995 level of 4.8. In order to keep this level of potential support ratio, the country would need 553 million immigrants during 1995 through 2050, or an average of 10 million immigrants per year. Under this scenario, the population of Japan is projected to be 818 million in 2050, and 87 per cent of them would be the post-1995 immigrants and their descendants (UN, 2001, p.54).

Obviously these last two scenarios outlined above are extremely unlikely given the numbers of immigrants needed. Therefore the ageing of Japan's population seems inevitable unless the problematic factors that have caused Japan's low birth rate are dealt with, as the idea of lowering the life expectancies is obviously not an option. The factors that cause the declining birth rate will be examined in the next section, but absent any viable and lasting solution mass immigration is the only option. The only thing to be determined here is to what extent and this obviously depends on the numbers of

immigrants Japan does accept. Not accepting large numbers of immigrants would have even worse consequences economically and socially as no nation has ever had to operate at the support levels Japan would have without mass immigration.

Therefore Japan has no choice but to accept mass immigration of foreigners to head off the inevitable problems it faces and on a scale that could lead to as much as 30% of its population being foreign born if the contributory factors cannot be dealt with. This would still involve a huge number of foreigners for Japan to accept given its own ageing population and would be a difficult task for any nation to accomplish never mind a nation with Japan's history in treating foreigners, a subject that will be covered later in this paper.

3 - CAUSES OF THE POPULATION PROBLEMS

The section above has dealt with the potential population problems Japan could face in detail. However the explanations why Japan's population situation is worse than that of other developed countries has still to be covered to see if there is anything that can be done to help change this situation. There are a number of factors that have all worked in tandem to leave Japan in this difficult demographic situation. First there is the famous longevity of the Japanese population due in part to lifestyle, diet and level of medical care. A detailed analysis of these is out with the scope of this paper but the facts speak for themselves on the effects these have as the average life expectancy of Japanese is one of the highest in the world with UN projections claiming Japan as having the highest life expectancy at birth in the period 2005-2010 and projected to still be in number one position in the 2045-2050 period (UN, 2006, Table A-16). This has obviously negatively impacted the ratio of old to young in Japan and will continue to do so in the future as the idea of arguing for a lowering of the life expectancy rates is ludicrous.

As life expectancy has gone up over the past 50 years, correspondingly the number of births has declined over the same period, giving Japan one of the lower birth-rates in the world currently; and Japan's birth-rate is projected to be in the top ten lowest by 2045 (UN, 2006, Table A-7) and in the top ten for the largest population decrease over the next 50 years (UN, 2006, Table A-9). Once more there are a number of factors for this that are also outwith the scope of this paper to cover in detail but that need to be mentioned briefly to see if they can be 'fixed' to increase the birth-rates.

First of all there is the cost of having and raising children in Japan, the world's most expensive country to live in according to most surveys. These costs of having and raising children are conservatively put at 4,400,000 yen up to age 6 (*"Cost of raising children to age 6 about 4.4 million,"*, 2003). Japan does have a national health service that provides universal coverage, however pregnancy for most women is not covered by this, as pregnancy it is not classed as a sickness. So families have to bear the costs of the medical treatment over the nine months by themselves including the usual five-day stay in hospital for cases where there are no complications, longer (and more costly) when there is a need for further hospitalisation. This all adds up to a huge

financial cost for those who are considering having children. Only in case of medical necessity is the national medical healthcare coverage invoked and even then the patients and their families still have to pay 30% of the bill by themselves if they have no private health insurance, itself a costly purchase. Therefore the costs of having children are prohibitive in modern Japan and the government arguably has no power to change this economic situation given its problems with huge sums of missing pension fund records for up to 50 million people (*"Japan's Agriculture Minister 'Hangs' Himself"*, 2007).

Furthermore many modern women are not in full-time employment and the glass ceiling on their careers has started to be broken. From the 1960's the number of women in employment outside the family business or home overtook that of women employed inside these places (*"The Situation of Working Women in Japan"*, 2003). Partly this was in response to labour shortages and partly for emancipation reasons as women's role in society started to change. With the rise in the numbers of employed women and their emancipation a change in the mindset of modern Japanese women resulted. This led to more and more women having a life of their own and being less reliant on men to some extent. Obviously this also had an effect on the numbers marriages as women were marrying later in life than before, a practice that postponed childbirth for these women and contributed to the overall drop in the birth rate.

Closely connected to this is the phenomenon of the 'parasite singles', briefly mentioned above in the introduction. These are single workers who live with their parents and pay little for their accommodation, leaving them with large disposable incomes. Obviously some of the women mentioned in the preceding paragraph above fall into this category, but so too do some men. With the aforementioned costs of having children this does not appeal to any 'parasite singles', of whom there are more than a few in Japan as the position of the term in the public's consciousness shows, in fact some estimates have their number as high as 13 million (Tran, 2006).

Lastly there is the easy availability of abortion in Japan. Professor Carl Djerassi, inventor of the birth control pill, has written that the number of abortions in Japan is far higher than the official figures of 410,000 annually as of 1996 based on field research undertaken by his research team (Maruyama, 1996, pp.578–580). Irrespective of the truth of his solution of increased availability of birth control pills would obviously not help solve Japan's declining birth.

Furthermore, even if the Japanese government could get policies in place to boost the number of childbirths and overcome these factors where every other attempt to do this has failed, it would not bear fruit (or children who grow up into workers) until 20 or so years later when it would in all likelihood be a case of too little too late given the urgency of the current demographics and its effects on Japan's economic and social wellbeing. So this brings the search for solutions back to mass immigration, as there is no other viable option. To understand how Japan might cope with this an examination of the history of Japan's treatment of foreign immigrants and the way they were monitored is needed.

4 - HISTORY OF FOREIGNER MONITORING IN JAPAN

A brief background of the ways in which foreigners have been treated in the past in Japan is necessary to place the current situation in its proper context. The fear, and fingerprinting, of foreigners coming to Japan, as exemplified by the current law above is not something new to Japan, although the demographic problems Japan faces are. A cursory look through any Japanese history textbook will of course bring up the closing of Japan to foreigners at the time of the Tokugawa *Shogunate*. Less well known is the background to the original Japanese fingerprinting of foreigners policy. This was first set up in 1952 by the Japanese government of the time and occurred almost immediately after they came to power following the end of the U.S. occupation period. Some commentators have suggested this policy was designed to target and identify the ethnic Chinese and Koreans, as they were the foreign ethnic groups who could blend in most easily (Charles, 1992).

However even before coming to power, the U.S. installed Japanese government had already used their limited power to legislate against ethnic Koreans living in Japan. The Japanese government stripped Koreans residing in Japan of their right to vote in December 1945. In 1947, Koreans residing in Japan became subject to the Alien Registration Ordinance. The grounds for this treatment were that Koreans who did not have their "koseki" (family registration) in Japan were not seen as "true" Japanese, even though they were Japanese nationals. Even after the San Francisco Peace Treaty was effectuated in 1952, the Japanese government still treated unrepatriated Koreans outrageously. When the treaty came into effect on April 28, 1952, the Japanese government unilaterally stripped Korean residents of their Japanese nationality. They did not even give Korean residents a choice between a Japanese, or a Korean nationality (Fukuoka, 1996).

Therefore a pattern of viewing foreigners with suspicion and hostility can already be seen both historically, and in more modern times at a governmental level both before, and especially after, the U.S. relinquished power back to the Japanese in 1952. The 1952 fingerprinting law did not pass off without protest, however, as the ethnic Chinese and Koreans were obviously against this, as indeed were other foreigners who were also affected. With the changing geo-strategic needs of Japan vis-à-vis South Korea, the need to make Japanese policies conform to international treaties the government had signed (such as the United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees), pressure from other governments who did not have reciprocal policies, and pressure from foreigners living in Japan who were against the law and refused to be fingerprinted, the Japanese government had serious problems with their policy.

By the mid 1980s over 13,000 people had refused to be fingerprinted and were clogging the legal system with their court cases and the numbers were going up. Furthermore they were not all Chinese or Koreans. When a white woman was arrested for refusing to be fingerprinted in 1982 the Western media took an interest (Aldwinkle, 1998). In response, when the Emperor Showa died in 1989, the government took this opportunity to set up an

amnesty for fingerprint refusniks as an act of benevolence to avoid losing face, and compensation was actually paid to some of those arrested for refusing to give fingerprints (*"School officials, public servants being blackmailed with fabricated scandals"*, 1998). In 1993 permanent residents were no longer required to give fingerprints and after a suitable period of time had passed the law itself was finally abolished in 1998. From then on foreigners were free to enter and reside in Japan without suffering the indignity of being fingerprinted giving them parity with Japanese citizens as they are only fingerprinted if they have been arrested for a crime.

This state of affairs prevailed until November 2007 when the new law came into force. However many powerful groups in the Japanese establishment were not happy with this prior state of affairs regarding the non-fingerprinting of foreigners including the Police. The Japanese National Police Agency (NPA) regularly misrepresents the crime rates by foreigners in Japan to paint foreigners as more likely to commit crimes than Japanese when this is not actually the case (Maciamo, 2004). This is done by various means; by focussing on the total numbers of crimes and offences committed by foreigners (even including immigration 'crime', a crime that Japanese cannot actually commit as their possession of Japanese nationality makes this impossible) and showing an upward swing in numbers without commenting on the fact that the total numbers of foreigners is also increasing and increasing faster than the number of crimes. So in effect a per capita drop in the crime rate by foreigners is presented as a rise in foreign crime.

Also the per capita rate of foreign crime is seldom or never compared to the per capita Japanese crime rate by the PNA. If this was done the Japanese public would be aware that foreigners commit statistically less crimes than their Japanese co-residents, even allowing for the fact immigration 'crimes' such as visa overstays are counted in foreign crime rates while as stated above, Japanese cannot commit these kinds of offence. Also missing from the twice-yearly reports are the crime statistics of Japanese who live overseas. For those interested it is also going up and in 2002 went up by 26.6% (*"School officials, public servants being blackmailed with fabricated scandals"*, 2003). Debito Arudou, the ex-foreign resident who took out Japanese nationality, and human rights activist has an informative section on his website which shows all the details of the NPA statistics as well as highlighting other factors that skew the NPA figures (*"Crime Stats"*, 2003a).

The NPA's misreporting of the foreign crime statistics are not the only problem the foreign community has with their image in Japan. In most cases the mainstream media is much more likely to report foreign crime than domestic, as it is somehow seen as being more newsworthy. This extends from giving prominence to the NPA's misleading reports, the focus the media brings to individual crimes involving foreigners, and in some cases blatant reporting errors regarding foreigners that do not go corrected when the truth comes out (James, 2007).

Politicians also get in on the misreporting act in large numbers too. Again Debito Arudou's page has a wealth of information here (*"Opportunism"*, 2003b). A few select examples are the comments by Liberal Democrat Party politicians Etou Takami, who in

essence said that 1,000,000 foreigners in Japan were thieves and murderers, Koizumi Cabinet Public Safety Commissioner Tanigaki who blamed Brazilians for a crime after it was known that no foreigners were involved at all, and the ever xenophobic Governor of Tokyo, Ishihara Shintaro who warned Japanese to be on alert for rioting foreigners after any natural disaster. (*"Opportunism"*, 2003b) In fact Ishihara has so many anti-foreign quotes it would take most of this paper just to catalogue them. Worst of all in terms of hypocrisy at least, is Justice Minister Hatoyama Kumio, who told a news conference that, "A friend of a friend of mine is a member of al Qaeda involved in a bombing in Bali, adding the alleged member of the terrorist network had gone in and out of Japan a number of times two or three years ago" (*"Minister: 'Friend of a friend' in al Qaeda"*, 2007). Hatoyama was never questioned by police or anti-terrorist experts. Yet this is the man ultimately responsible for publicly pushing for the need for the Japan – Visit program on grounds of helping to preventing terrorism!

Therefore, the general pattern is very clear. The NPA, the mainstream media and the politicians all frequently warn Japanese about foreign crime and criminals so naturally the average Japanese is worried about foreign crime and criminals. This worry can then be seen in the Japanese government's survey on human rights in 2003 where the percentage of Japanese respondents fell from 68.3% in 1993 to 54% in 2003 on the question of 'Should foreigners have the same human rights protection under the law as Japanese citizens' (Karthaus, 2003). Karthaus makes the obvious, but tellingly not obvious to the Japanese government, point of why this question is even necessary. Surely in a so-called democracy that has signed the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination such a question should not need to be asked.

After examining the history and current practices of the Japanese government towards foreigners, many readers are no doubt wondering why Japan lets in any foreigners at all. So when it comes to foreigners that Japan has to take responsibility for after they arrive, i.e. refugees, Japan does not let them in as a rule. For example in 1981 Japan ratified the United Nations Convention on Refugees and from 1982 to 2004 received 3,544 applications for asylum but let in only 330 with only 15 asylum seekers gaining admittance in 2004; this while the UK accepted 12,925 and the US took in 21,148 during the same period (Iwasaki, 2006). Indeed in 2007 the number accepted was still only 41 (*"Japan to accept more refugees"*, 2008). However for migrants that the government is not directly responsible for, i.e. foreign workers, the attitude is markedly different, as Japan needs them due to its demographic situation not providing enough workers. This does not mean however, that the government and right wing elements were happy about this state of affairs nor are they pleased about the lack of oversight towards these workers they had. Therefore, it was no surprise that something would change given Japan's need for more and more workers.

With the xenophobic attitude of many of its powerbrokers communicated to the population at large via the politically pliant mainstream media and misleading police reports having created a general distrust of foreigners, the government was now in a quandary over what to do when faced with the ticking demographic time-bomb that

requires the mass immigration of those very foreign workers. Obviously millions of foreign workers coming to Japan is not what the ruling elites, nationalist or otherwise, in Japan would want, but economically they have little choice. Therefore some sort of monitoring and controlling mechanism would have to be in place before any mass influx of foreigners. Furthermore, having just got rid of such a mechanism with the repeal of fingerprinting of foreigners the government could not just resurrect the same law, not obviously at least. This is where the anti-terror angle comes in.

5 - FINGERPRINTING OF FOREIGNERS

On November 20th 2007 the Japanese government introduced a new law requiring the fingerprinting and biometric scanning of almost all foreigners every time they enter or re-enter Japan, regardless of whether they have been fingerprinted and photographed before or have valid visas or residence permits, claiming that this ID process was necessary to prevent terrorism. The only exceptions to this law are diplomats, children under 16 and Special Status Permanent Residents (Japanese Ministry of Justice, 2007), the special status residents being ethnic Korean and Taiwanese permanent residents if their families have been living in Japan for more than a generation. The law is called the ‘Partial Amendment to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act’ and is currently causing some controversy in Japan.

After the above examination of the background factors prompting this law, namely the declining and aging population in Japan, and the investigation of the terrorism prevention claims in this section below, it should become clear that this law is not about preventing terrorism at all. It is, instead, about setting in place a monitoring and thereby a control mechanism for the millions of foreigners Japan must attract to cope with the problems its demographic situation demands. This section will show that the introduction of this law has been a major public relations disaster for Japan in the eyes of its foreign community and in the wider international context, as well as having potentially damaging longer-term economic and political consequences for Japan. Furthermore the official justification, namely the prevention of terrorism, is nothing but a sham pretext as it does little or nothing to stop terrorists entering Japan as will be seen below.

The Japanese Ministry of Justice stated that, the purpose of this new procedures are to prevent terrorist attacks, all foreign nationals except special permanent residents and some specified others will be required to provide immigration inspectors with biometric[s] [sic] information, i.e., fingerprints and facial photographs, for the purpose of entry examination (Japanese Ministry of Justice, 2007), thereby firmly planting the anti-terror rhetoric in the public’s mind. This message was continually put out on the English and Japanese language newspapers and TV broadcasts and went unchallenged in the mainstream media. A closer examination of some pertinent anti-terrorism facts soon shows this for the sham pretext it undoubtedly is. First of all every terrorist attack in Japan in the last 60 years has been carried out by Japanese groups. The sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway by Aum Shinrikyo, the numerous Japanese Red Army attacks, and assassinations of left wing mayors by *uyoku* ultranationalists have all been carried out by Japanese who would not have been fingerprinted under the new, so-called ‘anti-terror’

law. In fact the only possible foreign ‘terrorist’ attack was in 1991 when the Japanese translator of ‘The Satanic Verses’ was killed. However although his killer was never caught it was likely that fingerprinting the killer would not have stopped the murder as most terrorists, if indeed his killer was a terrorist, do not give their fingerprints to authorities when deciding to become a terrorist. Also recently the government has stated that the provisions of the law would be used to keep protestors (not terrorists) out of Japan for the upcoming G-8 conference in Hokkaido (“*Govt to keep ‘hooligans’ away from G-8 summit*”, 2007), as indeed was the case when the G-8 summit went ahead. For a longer term view of what this law holds for Japan and examination of its U.S. counterpart is instructive.

The U.S. version of the fingerprint-a-foreigner scheme, the US-Visit program has been successful in catching previous visa over-stayers upon re-entry but noticeably less successful at catching actual terrorists (Steinhardt, 2007). Furthermore computer security experts like Bruce Schneider have questioned the program on a cost benefit analysis by looking at the people caught compared with the cost of the program (Schneider, 2004 & 2006). This brings up the obvious question of who benefits from installing such a system. The answer is the company that gets the contract to design, install and run the system, in this case Accenture, the Bahamas based corporation that was previously linked to the infamous Arthur Andersen and which received \$10 billion for this work (EPIC, 2007). Curiously enough the Japanese subsidiary of Accenture was awarded the contracts to research the possibility of reforming Japan’s aging system. This led to Accenture getting the full contract for the Japanese system, the Japan – Visit program after an extremely low, in fact loss leading bid of only 100,000 yen (Gyaku, 2007). No doubt Accenture’s recommendation for reform was for no other company to do the work and coupled with their input on policy and their suspiciously low bid they unsurprisingly got the contract. Luckily for Accenture’s finances, their billing statements for the follow on ‘reform’ and ‘optimization’ work were billed at the much higher and non-loss leading rates of 58,800,000 yen and 94,920,000 yen respectively (Gyaku, 2007). Even luckier still for Accenture was the fact that the Japanese government had no qualms about awarding such a sensitive project to a foreign corporation, a hurdle they only just overcame in the U.S. as they were listed as an ‘expatriate corporation’ (“*Expat offshore firms slammed as ‘unpatriotic’*”, 2004).

So if Accenture benefited financially, and the xenophobic nationalists in the Japanese government benefited politically, there must surely be losers somewhere that must also be looked at. There is no doubt that the average foreign travellers lose out by facing increased bureaucratic and time consuming hurdles to enter the U.S. and there is no reason to doubt that Japan will be any different in the long term. This is self-evident and barely needs stating. However the repercussions of this are not so obvious. Since the U.S. – Visit program has been in operation for much longer than the Japanese one it is a useful benchmark in many ways for the longer term implications and should therefore be looked at to see what could be in store for Japan as a result of its decision to implement this system as part of its immigration laws.

From 2000 until 2006 the number of travellers to the U.S. has dropped by 17% while numbers for destinations outside the U.S. have risen (Discover America Partnership, 2007). This has obviously worried the travel business as this drop has come when the dollar was very weak, something that usually leads to an increase in visitors to the U.S. Other businesses are also worried as business travellers are also included in these lost visitor numbers and are instead going to where the travel restrictions are less onerous. Foreign student numbers are also sharply down from the 2002 highs before the U.S. – Visit policy came into force (*“Schools struggle to combat foreign student drop”*, 2006). The treatment of many of the foreign visitors to the U.S. by immigration officials has also led to many people individually boycotting U.S. products in protest. Although this is hard to measure accurately due to the disorganised nature of such sentiments and actions, these sentiments and actions do exist. More concrete examples of the bad will generated by the policy was the decision by Brazil to fingerprint and photograph all U.S. visitors to Brazil in reciprocity with U.S. practice (*“Brazil anger over U.S. security checks”*, 2004). It is likely, although very difficult to prove given the ‘what if’ nature of the claim, that only the fear of U.S. power has stopped more countries from following Brazil’s example. Japan has much less ‘power’ in this sense than the U.S. so it may draw more of the Brazil type of response.

Now if all these examples are applied to Japan in its current situation a clear picture of the dangers of this policy emerge. Japan currently has a strong currency as a result of the world economic recession, which when combined with the ‘normal’ costs in Japan does not exactly make it a top tourist destination. Given this traditional low level of tourism it is in the middle of a long public relations campaign called Yokoso! Japan designed to bring more foreign tourists to Japan to boost the economy (Yokoso! Japan, no date). The contradictions here between the tourism and immigration branches could not be more obvious. Indeed some local activists have started making posters, flyers and tee shirts with the message Nokoso! Japan (Tokyo Spring, 2007). Furthermore the education ministry has been trying to increase the numbers of foreign students studying in Japan via their Monbukagakusho scholarship (Study Japan, 2007). Once more it is easy to see how one ministry is working at cross-purposes with another one to the overall detriment of Japanese interests. Given the costs of education in Japan and the relative lack of worldwide recognition of the quality of Japanese universities based on having only 4 in the top 100 world universities (TES, 2007), this is not exactly the kind of ‘boost’ these educational institutions need. A similar story is found in business as here Japan is undoubtedly a major regional financial and business centre. However it does have rivals such as Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore who could all reap the benefits if businesses decide to focus their energies there as a result of travel problems for their executives in entering, exiting and re-entering Japan.

Lastly there is the problem with foreign nationals and their governments. To placate the Chinese, Koreans and U.S. governments ethnic Koreans, Chinese and U.S. servicemen were all exempt from the fingerprinting fiasco. Yet these three nations constitute the bulk of the foreigners in Japan, thereby making a mockery of the professed security concerns. With the rest of the foreign population all united to a great degree on this issue Japan runs the risk of alienating foreign workers when it already has problems enticing quality

workers in the first place as the difficulty in recruiting medical and IT staff to Japan has shown. Indeed there have been protests organised by foreign and Japanese groups outside the Justice Ministry shortly after the policy was implemented, (Kubota, 2007).

Furthermore many groups that help foreigners in Japan like Amnesty International Japan and the Solidarity for Migrants in Japan (SMJ) organisations, and unions such as the National Union of General Workers (NAMBU) Foreign Workers Caucus have also spoken out against this policy and encouraged members to protest (SMJ & NAMBU websites, 2007). Even the lawyers of the Japanese Bar Association (JFBA) have come out against the policy (JFBA website, 2007). Japan also risks alienating foreign governments if enough foreign nationals complain to their governments just when it needs international support for its bids to get a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), its bid of the 2016 Olympics for Tokyo and its relatively isolated stance on whaling at the International Whaling Commission (IWC).

6 - CONCLUSION

In summary, the policy of fingerprinting selected groups of foreigners upon entry or re-entry to Japan is not a measure explicitly designed to prevent terrorism. Given all the above information, it is more likely a system designed to set up a program whereby foreigners who enter Japan can be monitored, and to set this up in practice before Japan has to actually allow large numbers of foreign workers into Japan. As such it is a sop to the nationalists, less influential than their fellow Japanese business and bureaucratic brethren on this issue it would seem, as those in need of foreign workers (the corporate employers) seem to have the upper hand over those who are unhappy at the prospect of this influx of foreign workers. These conflicting pressures are difficult for any Japanese government to deal with as all governments in Japan rely on the right wing and big business for support and this issue has the potential to put them at odds. Nor is this law a new expression of xenophobia in Japan, as it is merely an extension of the behaviour and thinking of the past, albeit one with new justifications rather than anything new. However, to ease the passing of this law it was disguised as an anti-terror measure although that is plainly not the case, as has been shown.

From looking at the U.S.'s experience with its similar program it can be concluded that Japan has a lot of problems ahead with its demography difficulties in connection with the repercussions of the new immigration policy it is pursuing to monitor and control its foreign population. The immigration law could drastically reduce the numbers of foreign tourists, students, skilled workers and corporate investors prepared to come to Japan at a time when the stagnant Japanese economy needs them urgently and this has terrible long term consequences for Japan; it could create a feeling of ill will towards Japan from other nations when it needs their support for its aims vis-à-vis the UNSC, the Olympics and the IWC; it could lead to large numbers of talented foreign workers currently in Japan to leave and also their employers to relocate, again when Japan needs them most; and all this risk for a policy to appease xenophobic nationalists who are worried about the influx of foreigners that Japan cannot do without economically and socially. Well the xenophobes should be careful what they wish for as their wishes could come true, namely

foreigners not coming to Japan in large numbers, and that is something Japan cannot do without in the near future of the next 5 to 50 years.

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