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A field analysis on the emergence of migrant entrepreneurs in Japan and their integration into the Japanese society

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Abstract

Demographic change implies more than the aging of the Japanese population and causes socioeconomic and spatial structural transformation processes. Against the backdrop of demographic change, the issue of integrating migrants into Japanese society is gaining in importance and is increasingly drawing attention to economic policy decisions. The growth of new ethnic populations in Japan since 2000 has made ethnic businesses a matter of importance. The self-employed migrants in Japan includes very heterogeneous social situations. There are among those both low earners in precarious sectors as well as good earners in knowledge-intensive businesses. The different nationality of the interviewees in the analysis is justified by the fact that the process of self-employment is explained not only by the individual characteristics of entrepreneurs, but also by the social structures and cultural background of Japanese society and thus the independence from today's point of view. The public opinion on the migrants or migration to Japan and the opinion of migrants about Japanese society is the subject of the study, which explores migrant, Japanese and immigrant perspectives on migration, integration and self-employment.

Keywords: *migrant entrepreneurs; integration; ethnic population; Japanese society.*

Introduction

Migration is the process of permanently changing people's domicile (Pries 2010:475). The factors that determine the migration to Japan are not different from those that determine the migration to other countries, such as economic, social, political and cultural reasons (Güllüpcinar 2012:53-85). In the 20th century, the immigrants from Korea and China congregated in the metropolis neighbourhoods. E.g. the Chinese settled in Yokohama Chinatown and the Koreans in the Tokyo suburb of Shin Okubo. These immigrants from China and Korea have obtained Japanese citizenship in today's society, while non-citizens have permanent residence permits. There are also Brazilian immigrants of Japanese origin who migrated in the 1990s as planned immigration to Japan because of the lack of numbers labour force in Japanese industry (Winkler 2012:234-243). These Brazilian migrants, up to the third generation, can enter and work in Japan without any restrictions (Kataoka 2015:123-146). The largest group of immigrants are the Chinese, followed by the South Koreans and Filipinos. The number

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of Vietnamese living in Japan has also increased rapidly over the past few years. This is mostly related to the deepening economic relations between the two countries.

At the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe addressed reporters, stating that before refugees could be admitted to Japan, the number of working women and the country's overall birth rate needed to increase. He also stressed the rising need to engage in activities towards the elderly population in Japan (McCurry 2015). This notion has been widely supported by the Japanese public.

However, the results of scientific simulations show that migration will improve the Japanese economy and significantly increase the prosperity of future generations (Shimasawa & Oguro 2009:13-14).

127 million people live in Japan and 2% of the population are immigrants; we can observe that this rate rises day by day. The foreign share of the total population rose from 0.7 percent in 1990 to 2 percent in 2016. This rate is still low in comparison to other industrialised economies, despite this very significant increase between 1990 and the present day (Statistics of Japan 2017). Although Japan is known as a fairly homogeneous society, the demographic characteristics are changing due to immigration and interracial marriages. Furthermore, the number of young people in rural areas and in villages has decreased due to the effect of internal migration to metropolises. According to statistics released by Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Welfare, the number of international marriages in Japan rapidly rose between the 1980s and 1990s, before peaking at over 40,000 in 2006. These figures then started to decline significantly in the following years. The changes made within the Immigration Control Act 2005 are the primary cause of the decline in international marriages. Despite this decline, interest in international marriage is reflected in TV programmes. Over the past few years, international marriages in Japan have been steadily declining (Vital Statistics 2013) but marriages are taking place through various channels like the marriage agencies or with help of matchmaker friends/relatives. According to scientific estimates, by 2030, the population will drop to 120 million as a result of the low birth rate and staff will be inadequate in many sectors. Within 50 years, the population will be reduced by 30%. A recent study, conducted by the Japanese government, shows that increasing the birth rate alone will not be sufficient and 200,000 immigrants will need to migrate to Japan every year in order to keep the population of Japan above one hundred million (Murai 2016). The situation in the survey numbers, demography, industry and other service sectors indicates that Japan will be



in a position to receive immigration in future years (Douglass & Roberts 2014:2-36).

Japan under new migrants?

Five years after the nuclear disaster of 2011, the number of tourists visiting Japan exceeded, for the first time, the number of Japanese travelling to other countries (Japan National Tourism Organization 2016). On the one hand, Japan continues to receive increasing numbers of foreign tourists, however it still maintains its position as a difficult country for those who want to live in Japan. The main obstacles in working or conducting business in Japan are the very strict immigration regulations and the difficulties faced by asylum seekers.

The emergence of immigrant enterprises has been part of the urban landscape in Japan's major metropolises over the past decade, bringing about new changes and arrangements for foreign workers in the business market and in companies (Hayakawa 2010:20). In traditional immigrant countries in Europe, North America and Australia, the process of transitioning from migrant worker to entrepreneur, the role of SMEs in small business environments, the effects of social cohesion and their contribution to the economy have been thoroughly examined among the disciplines for the last thirty years. These are quite new fields of research for Japan in comparison to these countries (Karunaratne 2017:4).

On the one hand, explanations of the politicians, on the other hand, the facts of everyday life, brings in the necessity of re-evaluating Japan and migration due to global changes. Furthermore, with the changing demographic structure, Japan is moving from a homogenous society to a heterogeneous society. New structures require new solutions to resolve the complexities and challenges that surround it.

What is of interest to us here is the migration to Japan after the year 2000 and this group of immigrants being the subject of research. The migrants in this study were those who came to Japan as a result of Free Migration and Mass Migration (Petersen 1970:55-65). They formed a marginal group among all immigrant groups in Japan and are a minority within the minority.

Research

This analysis is based on the data of the field study conducted in Japan's metropolises, Tokyo and Yokohama, in June and September of 2017. The data consists of face-to-face interviews with seven self-employed immigrants from Turkey, India, Bangladesh and Korea, as well as seven



Japanese participants (businessmen, civil servants, teachers and academics). The participants were selected using the snowball technique. Before arriving in Japan, I attempted to arrange some appointments. Migrant solidarity associations and similar non-governmental organizations were also contacted. Because of the shortage of time no appointments were possible.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of Japanese participants

Japanese	Gender	Marital Status	Age	Profession	Educational Level
J1	Male	Married / Japanese	47	Academic	University
J2	Female	Single	46	Instructor	University
J3	Female	Single	45	Teacher	University
J4	Male	Married / Japanese	45	Real Estate Agent	University
J5	Female	Single	49	Office worker	University
J6	Male	Married / Japanese	25	Worker	University
J7	Female	Single	47	Kindergarten teacher	University

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic structure of Japanese participants. The distribution of participating Japanese by gender is 4 females and 3 males. Male participants are married, female participants are single. In terms of educational status, all 7 are university graduates. 6 participants are dependent employees, 1 participant is a self-employed person. 6 of the participants, were born during the second 'Baby Boom' (Ogawa 2011:133-167).

Table 2 shows the socio-demographic structures of immigrant entrepreneurs. All seven participating entrepreneurs are male. 4 participants are married and 3 participants are single (M4 is married to a Japanese wife and then divorced). Three of the participants came from Turkey and four came from Asian countries to Japan. With the exception of the Korean participant, the others form a minority immigrant group within the immigrant groups and conform to the migrant typology described at the beginning of this work. These immigrants are entrepreneurs and are active in the service sector and in Import/Export. None of them are in the manufacturing sector.



Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of immigrant entrepreneurs

Migrant	Country of origin	Gender	Marital Status	Length of Stay in Japan (yrs)	Age	Education
M 1	Korea	Male	Married/ Japanese	13	40	University
M 2	India	Male	Single	5	50	Secondary School
M 3	Turkey	Male	Marrid / Japanese	4	28	University
M 4	Turkey	Male	Single / divorced Japanese	14	28	Elemantar y School
M 5	Turkey	Male	Married / Japanese	17	45	High School
M 6	Sri Lanka	Male	Single	7	30	High School
M 7	Bangladesh	Male	Married/ Banglade shi	15	45	High School

Table 3 shows the profiles of the entrepreneurs

Table 3. Business informations of participants

Migrant	Business Sector	Business	Previous activity	Self employment since (yrs)	Target Market Customer	No of employee
M 1	IT Technologies	Programmer	Programmer	2	international	1
M 2	Food	Restaurant	Cook	3	Japanese and ethnic	2
M 3	Food	Fast food stand	Waiter	1	japanese	1
M 4	Food	Fast food stand	Construction worker	2	japanese	3
M 5	Trade import / export	Souvenirs trade	Seller	10	Japanese and international	2
M 6	Food	Restaurant	Waiter and cook	2	Ethnic and japanese	3
M 7	Food	Food market	Seller	4	Ethnic	3

Purpose of the research

The purpose of the fieldwork presented here is to form an opinion, using data from a limited number of participants, regarding immigration to Japan



and immigrant-based businesses. There is a great difference between social reality and public perception.

Therefore, this research focuses on how self-employed people in Japan perceive themselves, how their lives are perceived in new sociocultural rules and environments, how they reflect the effects of these social structures on their experiences and how they orient themselves to self-employment. The quest of this research is to find out how immigrants and residents perceive these three concepts (Immigration, Migrants and Immigrant-based businesses). The scope of this study is only the migration to Japan in the years following 2000, in order to keep focus on what has the potential to be a very wide-ranging topic.

Historical migration is the subject of other research. It is sometimes impossible to grasp the concept of migration because abstract and psychological variables are involved and cannot be directly observed. The processes, difficulties and experiences are hidden in real life stories. Particularly from the point of view of the participants, who are both actively and passively living the immigration process. In this way, participants can interpret their thoughts from within real life. To be objective, the answer to these questions cannot be explained only by statistical figures; since biographies of immigrants to Japan are not merely expressions of statements, but stories of life (Heide 2009:25). Immigrants experience changes in their social-biographical processes and these changes form the basis of a new debate. The increasing number of immigrants in Japan has a direct impact on the economy, because the economy is not just comprised of only payments and statistical statements. Human factors and behaviours are gaining importance, when we consider economics as the space in which production, sales, use and distribution of goods are decided by the actions under structural complex conditions (Heide 1995:159-175). The answers should be considered as part of the community as a whole, despite the participants reflecting their own views and individual evaluations. The study also seeks to present the possible explanations of the heterogeneous structures of immigrants in Japan on the role of independent employment and how immigrants can use the current economic and social structures.

Methodology

The methodology used in this research is qualitative. A focused interview method emerged as a form of qualitative interviews in the context of communication research analysis (Merton & Kendall 1979:171-204). Qualitative methods have become increasingly popular and accepted in the social sciences in recent years (Flick 2016:22). It is not possible to



understand the position of the persons under investigation in subject-oriented research (Mayring 2002:22) by means of quantitative methods in order to form new opinions (Alheit 1982:36-37). Since the proximity to the research field in the qualitative method is more intimate than the quantitative methods, it is the method used in migration researches where the participants directly participate in the topic. The criteria that apply to demographic surveys, such as validity, reliability and representation power of data, cannot be used in qualitative research because they are fundamentally different scientific approaches (Hermanns 1992:110-141). Any results based on quantitative values can not be generalised to society as a whole due to the small number of participants in this study.

Interviews were conducted in English, German and Turkish. During interviews J5, J6 and J7 Japanese translators were used. It was decided not to use a standard questionnaire application form. Instead, the participants were given only a guideline to express their thoughts. The notes held during and after the interview, and the comments made in the interview protocol, constitute the analysis material.

Method of data collection and analysis

Interviews were held on current immigration movements around the world to discuss the focus of the talks, the understanding of the issues, the participants' ideas. The responses and comments of participants responding to the pre-set issues in the talks were based on the interview guide. Participants were given the opportunity to express themselves freely, as well as to explain aspects of immigration to Japan that I had not foreseen. Immediately after the interview, interview protocols, including a summary of the participants' statements and spontaneous impressions of the interviewer were prepared (Flick 1995:158-169). Interviews were held at the workplaces of the participants and at specific times in their private settings, and some employees were visited and interviewed at noon. The interview duration was 1 to 1.5 hours. Interviews with Japanese participants took place after work.

We can compare the opinions of the Japanese and the opinions of the immigrant entrepreneurs within the basic categories developed during the interviews, based on the narratives of the participants for each group.

Two separate sets of questions were directed to at the two interview groups

To the Japanese

- *How do you evaluate foreign immigration to Japan?*
- *Can Japan accept immigrants in the future?*



➤ *Can you imagine migrants as SMEs?*

To the Migrants

➤ *What are your reasons and motivations for immigrating to Japan?*

➤ *Are you doing business in ethnic or non-ethnic markets and products?*

➤ *How do you evaluate your post-migration situation in Japan?*

The emerging themes based on the results of the interviews

Table 4. Japanese Participants

Comments about social integration of immigrants
Comments about migrants in the labour market and the sectors where they are needed as workers and entrepreneurs
Opinions about the enterprises owned by the immigrants

Table 5. Immigrant Business Owners

Reasons and motivations for migration to Japan
Integration into life in Japan
Setting up their own business

Tables 4 and 5 shows the three main points highlighted by the opinions of the participants.

The social environment (including family), the market and businesses are the three social institutions where daily life is realised and they determine not only the objective possibilities of action but also the subjective. Immigrant life is the whole of an infinite number of variables, experiences and socialised through these three social institutions.

Results

In the research, the names of the participants were anonymised and the opinions were converted into text by coding methods. They are coded and numbered according to their common views as Japanese participants (J1, J2, J3, ...) and Immigrant participants (M1, M2, M3, ..).

Japanese Participants

Comments about social integration of immigrants

In the academic environment, the foreigners are supported by student clubs within the university. They form groups and establish their own community. The Chinese often remain among themselves. Muslims from different countries also form a social bond among themselves. The number of foreign students in Japan increases from year to year, with some of them



wanting to stay in Japan post-graduation. These people do not have many integration problems compared to the other immigrants, thanks to their knowledge of Japanese (J 1 and J 2).

Children in the kindergarten generally know nothing about integration. They grow up at home according to the educational level of their parents. As a rule, the educational differences between informal education at home and formal education at school influence the future integration of these children into the Japanese community (J3 and J7).

The integration of first generation immigrants will be very difficult since the social order in Japan is very different from the countries from where they originate. In the future, the second generation of immigrants, who are born and raised in Japan, will have difficulty in integrating in cases of unemployment (J1, J2, J3, J4 and J7).

It is also true that the older generations of Japanese people (the first 'baby boomers') are not very tolerant towards migrants and are not ready to accept them into society (J2, J3, J4, J5, J6). Japan is an island country and islanders have their own characteristics. Therefore, the acceptance of immigrants by the Japanese will be very difficult (J3 and J5).

The impact of globalisation on trade and travel reflects as an increase in the number of non-ethnic Japanese. Every year, children are born in Japan to bi-national marriages and they are not only from marriages with Americans but also from marriages with immigrants from other countries, who are coming from different ethnic roots, who live in the city centres as well as the suburbs (J6, J7). The absence of a structural framework within the national policies for immigration to Japan, along with the fact that the efforts of accommodating the immigrants being restricted to the municipalities, are the factors that make the integration process of immigrants very difficult (J1, J2, J3, J7).

Preliminary summary arguments:

- The arrival of immigrants in Japan will change not only the demographic structure but also the family structure and values
 - Immigrants stick to their ethnic or religious origins
 - Elderly Japanese people, over 65 years of age, are sceptical about the social integration of the immigrants within the Japanese society
 - Japanese participants particularly emphasise that the integration of migrants should be one of the most important tasks of Japanese politics and shouldn't be left to the tolerance of the public. A concerted effort is needed by the institution and the individuals in the society to achieve this goal.

Comments about migrants in the labour market and the sectors where they are needed as workers and entrepreneurs



Immigrants work in the hidden economy of different sectors most of them in the unskilled labour force. The Japanese population get their information about the types of work performed by foreigners through the social environment and the media (J3, J4 and J6). The Tokyo metropolitan area has foreigners who come to work from surrounding cities and some of them sleep rough in the suburbs of the city (J1, J2 and J4). Internal migration takes place not only by the Japanese, but also by foreigners, who mainly come from China and other Asian countries. They work in the construction industry or similar fields without any security as daily workers (J1, J2, J4 and J6). If the state does not take sufficient measures in labour law, the informal labour market will grow and there will be dramatic consequences for employees (J3, J4 and J2). The immigrants are working mainly at night in mini-markets (These stores are open for very long hours even on holidays, until midnight mostly selling emergency necessities and foodstuff) or in family restaurants, in the kitchen. Many Japanese do not feel the presence of these foreigners (J1- J7). Almost all immigrant families have at least one family member who works in this way (J7). On the other hand, there are students from Asia who come to Japan with an internship visa. They can study and get low-paid jobs in Japan for three years (J1, J4, J5 and J6). They work in restaurant chains that rely on the student workforce (J1 – J7).

In recent years, it has been observed in the Chinese neighbourhoods that the number of newly arrived Chinese immigrants has steeply increased. This resulted in a decrease in the quality of life in this part of city, because there are not enough social workers (J1 and J7).

Immigrants are needed in many areas. The lack of personnel in these sectors is heard not only in the media but also by the people in the social circle. The effects of demographic change and the lack of nursing homes that the elderly population needs are the most evident in this sector in Japan (J1-J7). Many unmarried Japanese live with their parents in order to take care of them in parallel with their working lives. This care is perceived as more as a spiritual support than a financial one (J3, J5 and J7). Japan is particularly lacking in the area of specialist nursing for the elderly people and the lack of staff in home care or hospitals. In everyday life, Japanese who has a social relationship with elderly people can observe the situation (J1, J3, J4, J5 and J7). Some of the families choose their home location in such a way that in case of an emergency they can reach their parents' home in a short time (J1 and J7). The construction sector in Japan, especially in the northern part of the country, requires many workers. The 2020 Tokyo Olympics increased this demand drastically (J1 and J6).

Another sector where human power is lacking is the fishing industry. The migration to the metropolises, the decline of young population and the lack



of interest in this sector make the future of the fishing industry very difficult. The same situation applies to agriculture and forestry. Even if seasonal workers in these sectors can be hired a permanent solution could be provided with planned migration of workers. Since Japan is the country with the largest number of seafood imports in the world, the workforce in this sector can be obtained from neighbouring countries that have a closer culture to the Japanese. Japan needs immigrant workers in these sectors. People from Asian countries, which are culturally close to the Japanese, like Philippines, China or Vietnam, can work in these sectors (J1 and J7). Immigrants should be brought to Japan according to their expertise where they are needed (J2).

Preliminary summary arguments:

- Immigrants who are working illicitly and the employers who employ them will cause the growing of an informal economy which eventually will corrupt the system in Japan
- Immigrants from neighbouring countries to Japan can meet human demand in the fishing, agriculture and forestry sectors in Japan. Immigration from the Philippines can reduce the need for the care sector and immigration from China can help the fishing sector. Consequently, gastronomy, construction, fishing, agriculture, forestry and nursing sectors are experiencing urgent staffing difficulties
- The Japanese government needs to correct demographic structure with controlled migration. The low number of newborns and the lack of measures and action for increasing the birth rate are the factors for supporting immigration

Opinions about the enterprises owned by the immigrants

All of the Japanese who were interviewed said they knew about foreigners from the Gastronomy sector and they all came from Asian countries. Participants all know Chinese, Indian and Korean cuisine well. They talk with foreigners and shopkeepers who work there, but they do not have any information about them where and how migrants come to the land and whether they hold a work permit (J1, J3 and J4).

In Chinatown, there are many restaurants from China's Guangdong region. These are the first places that tourists visited in recent years, so it is possible to see the same shops and restaurants (J2). The Japanese have pointed out the cultural differences between different foreign groups and mentioned also that some foreign products are not available in Japanese market (J4, J5 and J7).

Immigrants and immigrant-based businesses say that it is a long time to see the products they are introducing is possible in some changes over the remaining three years until the 2020 Olympic Games (J1-J7). The new trade



agreement with Japan and the European Union (JEFTA) may emerge in new immigrant but trade-oriented firms (J1 and J2). There are foreign-based businesses that work as subcontractors in the construction sector. Chinese or Turkish immigrants are working in demolition, but electrician and masonry work are carried out by the Japanese. In the construction industry, Japanese companies subcontract low and unskilled jobs to immigrant-based firms (J4 and J6).

Preliminary summary arguments:

- Japanese experience with immigrant-based businesses is limited to the services and gastronomy sectors
- The general opinion is: anyone who can accept the Japanese culture can be successful in Japan
- It is very hard for the Japanese society to accept migrant entrepreneurs outside the catering sector. Service and quality factors are very important for the Japanese consumer. According to the Japanese, the migrants can not offer the same level of service and quality compared to their Japanese counterparts
- It is very difficult to acquire the necessary qualification documents to start a business in the manufacturing sector. Many foreigners can not pass the language test, so it is very difficult to get a business certificate

Immigrant Participants

Reasons and motivations for migration to Japan

Various immigrant narratives show that the reasons for settlement in Japan and migration vary widely and can not be explained with push – pull factors. The immigration process is interpreted differently by the immigrants. In this research, immigration to Japan from immigrant countries is based on political, economic, ethnic and social reasons. The common motivation for migration is to improve living standards and future potential.

Integration into life in Japan

Integration should not be viewed unilaterally. Since some Japanese have condemned the foreigners, the migrants stay away from the Japanese. It makes it difficult for them to communicate with the institutions. They keep their contacts with the Japanese to a minimum or to fulfill the necessary basic needs therefore they communicate with the Japanese society relatively little if ever (M2, M4, M7). The integration of immigrants into the Japanese community is possible not only through the willingness of immigrants, but also through their participation in social life in the form of political cultural and economic participation (M1, M5, M6 and M7). In



marital life with the Japanese, the couples move into a more tolerant and multicultural lifestyle than those affected by the cultures of the other in the social interaction process. They can adapt more quickly to society and institutions. They are incorporated into Japanese society in many respects, with the most important being the learned Japanese language and social contacts with Japanese (M1, M3, M5). Although Japanese citizenship is difficult to get for immigrants, they do not want to lose their original citizenship because they do not feel accepted in Japan (M2 -M7). Participating entrepreneurs plan their future of their families in Japan. They do not intend to return home. They accept Japan as their home without breaking their social and family ties with the country from which they originated (M1, M3, M4, M5 and M6). Because of prejudices in Japan that immigrants are more likely to engage in illegal behaviour, there are many immigrants who have difficulty finding a property to rent, because they are foreigners (M6 and M7). Long working periods leave no time for integration in everyday life (M2, M3, M4, M6 and M7).

Preliminary summary arguments:

- State institutions must take measures to support integration
- Harmonization applies to both the local and the immigrant sides
- Migration to Japan is not a temporary migration but a permanent migration
- The well organized life in Japan is praised by the immigrants and the industriousness of the Japanese people always sets an example for them

Setting up their own business

The easiest way for immigrants to stay in Japan and open their own business is to marry a Japanese citizen (M3). There are also immigrants who are first married and then divorced and founded their own workplace (M4). There are also immigrants who have come to Japan and remain illegally in Japan. They want to marry and stay in Japan. These illegal immigrant typologies do not try to work somewhere, but they intend to open their own small business (M2, M3 and M4). The social experiences of the immigrants take place in their own networks of ethnic groups. Thanks to these networks, they are able to found their businesses and to assert themselves in the market (M4 and M7).

M1. This is a one-man company and is active in the information sector. His company offers complimentary services to the IT sector. The pressure and friction at his previous workplace and the disadvantages of being a foreigner lies behind his decision to start his own business. The company operates in a market area where the quality and price of the service are crucial. He is internationally active without seeing his clients. Previous



professional experience and his own qualifications ensure him the business. The incoming orders come from highly regarded Japanese companies. He has built a business by combining his knowledge and personal skills with his own financial assets. His self-confidence is the result of his university education, his marriage to a Japanese woman and his excellent command of Japanese language. Relational qualifications and professional qualifications are the most important assets of his company.

M2. Thanks to his past professional experiences as a chef in various countries, he first gets a job as a chef in Japan. After practicing his profession in an Indian restaurant in Japan for some time, the owner of the restaurant offers him partnership and he accepts this offer. As a gastronomist, his market and clientele is not limited to any ethnic groups. Therefore he has a very wide customer base. Being a true Indian restaurant with Indian owners is the main reason for its success as the majority of the other Indian restaurants are owned and operated by people from Nepal or Bangladesh. The efficiency of the business comes from its use of the ethnic resources, such as employing the family members instead of hired staff. Its suppliers are Asian food import companies.

M3. After studying in Turkey, he came to Japan to settle there. He has gained his professional experience in Japan by working in other Turkish kebab stores in the kitchen and service area. After his marriage with a Japanese woman, he started his own business with his own financial resources. Since it is not possible to start a business without his Japanese wife, the permits of his business are in the name of his wife. He is officially an employee in his own company. Since he worked as an unqualified worker in the low-wage sector prior to his entry into self-employment, it is an important status symbol to have his own company. Halal meat and döner production companies are its suppliers. The clientele consists of foreigners, people of Islamic origin and Japanese.

M4. After finishing school in Turkey, he came to Japan as an asylum seeker family. When he was 20 years old, he married his Japanese girlfriend. Because of his marriage with a Japanese woman (now divorced), he has already received his work and residency permit. He was an odd-jobber. At first he starts with his own business. The prospect of a higher income is the main reason for the entry into self-employment in Japan. With the help of his small savings as well as the help of acquaintances he buys his kebab shop. He describes his independence as a compelling necessity arising from the lack of money. He hopes to escape the threat of social descent and financial hardship by taking up self-employment- which is associated with risk.



M5. As a first generation immigrant (he arrived in Japan at the beginning of the 2000s), the socializing factors like the Japanese marriage and the interaction with social institutions influenced his decision to be self employed. For procurement purposes he goes to Turkey frequently. He came to Japan as a sales person in a Turkish retail shop selling Turkish souvenir products. After he met his wife (Japanese), he decided to start his own business in Japan. Since he has transferred his past trade and retail experiences from Turkey to his current business, he had a relatively easy and successful start with this new company in Japan. His sales activities are outside the ethnic economy and his customers are mainly Japanese and foreign tourists. His positive assessment of migration and his business success is based on his own minority status in Japan.

M6. The migration to Japan took place by other family members, who came to Japan earlier. Over time the family has returned. He wanted to visit his brother in Japan and then he stayed in Japan and took over the store that belonged to his brother. He has earned his professional experience in the family business. He has kept his business costs low by working both in the restaurant management as well as in the service work. He speaks Japanese. He buys his food from Asian companies. There are no Japanese people in the area. Sri Lankan immigrants have established their own ethnic community among themselves. The business activity of its shop is at the initial stage of the study, but with the business development, the customer base expands more to the Japanese clientele.

M7. He uses his opportunities. He has a small business in which he sells halal food products. His business is aimed at satisfying the needs of an ethnic group in general. With the help of his colleagues from the same ethnic roots, he has mobilized various ethnic resources (capital, procuring the products, labor) to open his shop. The economic activities are interethnic, access to workers and suppliers of the same ethnicity, and the continuous cooperation of family members facilitates the entry into self-employment. Above all, his shop is near the mosque, which guarantees him the certain clientele. From product procurement to distribution and social networks, the entire action takes place in an ethnic context. There are also Japanese customers, mainly because he offers food for a better price.

Conclusion

The cultural and social development of the immigrants play an important role in their decision-making process for starting an enterprise. It seems that some factors may be behind the immigrants' establishing their own business which is of special importance in terms of cause and effect in



each individual case. There are external and internal factors that lead to entrepreneurship. The desire for autonomy is often interpreted as one of dominant drives for self employment both in the interviews and in the literature.

However, the emergence of migrants' establishment of their own workplace stems from the existence of special opportunities, market gaps, competencies and specific skills that can best be applied in their own company as well as the conditions provided by Japan. Owners of immigrant businesses operate in different service sectors where small capital investments are required. One of the best-known examples, as this research depicts, is the field of gastronomy. Immigrant entrepreneurs are also interested in trading ethnic products from their homeland to be consumed in Japan by the immigrant groups. There are numerous other successful ideas in various other sectors. The prerequisite for success is that entrepreneurs should always be open to the local culture and social and economic life.

The interviewed immigrants started living in Japan as employees before establishing their own enterprises. The most common reason to start their own business was the desire to work in an autonomous workplace, a higher standard of living and the need for a higher income. A common consensus is that they do not have any institutional support and want to act as a self-governing leader. Immigrant entrepreneurs have set up their own businesses after working as employees for some time in Japan and then they took the incentive to start their own businesses.

We can list the following findings about the four different business areas dealt with in this field study- Gastronomy, Ethnic Food Market, Trade and Information / Communication Technologies.

The gastronomy sector is a risky sector when long working hours and increasing competition (copycats) from other immigrants are considered. Additionally, the enterprises in this sector do not have professional managements. These companies attract non-ethnic customers by developing a new ethnic identity in non-ethnic communities. They are locating themselves mainly in the business districts and near the metro stations (M2, M3, M4 and M6). Although these companies are founded with great motivations, it is a result of desperate business ideals. Principally they are workers. The migrants attempt to escape their possible unemployment and make themselves independent with their own businesses. This applies in particular to small kebab shops in Japan.

Entrepreneurs who serve ethnic markets have higher chances of success. Due to the growth of ethnic markets because of increasing immigration to Japan and the lack of competition, these businesses can



prove themselves in the market. The ethnic branch- as it is in Halal Food products- has a potential for growth that is specific to the culture, the owners, the tourists, the restaurants that introduce halal products show the continuity of this market (M7). In Japan, we see that these entrepreneurs have established their own workplaces because of opportunistic decisions.

As for the participant who is dealing in trade, his commercial life is the result of years of successful business practices and a successful integration to the Japanese society. This profile is characterized by the provision of services to a broad client base after immigrating to Japan and establishing his own business following a short career as an employee in a company (M5).

Entrepreneurs operating in the field of Information / Communication Technology represent an invisible segment in the society. High profits are possible in this field compared to the other low-return enterprises but they are at a higher risk due to the strong international competition. Since the work is carried out at home, time is managed very efficiently and the costs are almost non-existent. This operation requires a low capital and high experience and competency (M1).

Self employment

Of the seven interviewees, three of them one-man companies. Based on the results of the interviews it can be said that the self employed work of the migrants need more time, energy and resources compared to an employed status. Self employment brings the possibility of earning more money and prestige but this comes at the expense of family time, peace of mind etc.

Consequently, entrepreneurship shows that entrepreneurs have combined traditions from their origins with modern ones in Japan. Thus, they have created characters which are characterized by the newly developed forms of thought and action. In order to overcome the potential tensions between tradition and modernity, the migrant entrepreneurs show qualitatively different ways of dealing with each other. Migrants do not distinguish between private life and business life. The integration of migrants into Japanese society is systematically dependent on psychological, sociological and economic issues.

Solutions and action strategies

We can learn from the examples of Western Europe, North America and Australia that social integration is strengthened by economic integration. Therefore, their experiences should be exploited in order to develop a model of economic and social cohesion suitable for Japan.

Migrant support organizations have limited their activities at the local level. When we interpret integration as a process, government-funded



project work can positively influence this process by allowing migrants to enter a more efficient adaptation scheme both economically and socially. At the same time, they can also support the local economy. Migrant entrepreneurs should be supported primarily by providing Japanese language courses more frequently. The problem of personnel shortages in the above mentioned sectors can be solved by employing migrant workers. "The professional recognition of the foreign qualifications" can be used as a tool for securing the skilled labor need with the migrants both as workers and entrepreneurs in Japan.

The path to the integration of migrants in Japan goes through the conversion of the way of thinking of the locals. Instead of thinking and acting locally, they should think and act internationally. This way, the migrants and the migrant enterprises will be integrated to the Japanese society much sooner.

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