Multicultural Urbanism Structured:
Residential Differentiation of Aliens in Tokyo

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Abstract
Since the late 1980s the number of aliens living in Tokyo has rapidly increased. Although the proportion of immigrants in the population is far smaller than those in Western global cities, there are some neighborhoods in which various distinctive ethnic scenes come into being. This paper demonstrates by using official statistics that Tokyo attracts aliens as sales and service workers and professionals rather than as factory workers. Then by focusing on five major distinctive nationalities in Tokyo –Chinese, Koreans, Americans, Filipinos and Vietnamese – it shows that their occupational and gender compositions differ from nationality to nationality and that while residential differentiation of non-Japanese are affected by their socio-economic status there are specific localities attracting particular nationalities due to the housing and labor markets developing for the specific groups. Multicultural urbanism in Tokyo is structured in such a way that different nationalities tend to have different socio-economic statues and to live in particular neighborhoods due to their own localized systems of immigration.

Introduction
Since the late 1980s, the number of aliens living in Tokyo has rapidly increased. Although the proportion of immigrants in the population is far smaller than those in Western global cities (Sassen 2001), there are some neighborhoods in which various distinctive ethnic scenes come into being. What nationalities are attracted in Tokyo? What kinds of occupation do they tend to have? Where are they likely to live? This paper demonstrates by using official statistics that Tokyo attracts aliens as service workers and professionals rather than as factory workers. However, specific nationalities are not only likely to have specific socio-economic status, but to reside specific areas within the metropolis.
This paper focuses on five distinctive nationalities in Tokyo – Chinese, Koreans, Americans, Filipinos and Vietnamese – and shows that their occupational and gender compositions differ from nationality to nationality and that, while residential differentiation of non-Japanese is primarily affected by their socio-economic status, there are specific localities attracting particular nationality groups due to the housing and labor markets developing for the specific groups as parts of distinctive migration systems. Thus, the paper concludes that multicultural urbanism in Tokyo is structured in such a way that different nationalities tend to have different socio-economic statues and to live in particular neighborhoods due to their own localized systems of immigration.

The number of foreign residents living in Tokyo has rapidly increased since the 1980s. By the end of 1985, as Figure 1 shows, about 146 thousand people were registered as foreign residents \(^1\). Since then the number has jumped to about 422 thousand in 2010. Though it decreased after the great earthquake in 2011, 394 thousand aliens still lived in Tokyo at the end of 2013. Yet the proportion of immigrants in the population has been far smaller than Western global cities. It increased from 1.2 percent in 1985 to 3.2 percent in 2010 and was 3.0 percent as of 2013.

![Numbers of Foreign Residents in Tokyo, 1975-2013, end of each year](image)

**Figure 1** Numbers of Foreign Residents in Tokyo, 1975-2013, end of each year

*Source*: Alien Registration Statistics of Tokyo Metropolitan Government
The trend of immigration in Tokyo appears to be similar to that in the country as a whole. Certainly, the number of foreign residents in Japan has increased since the late 1980s, as Figure 2 indicates. However, it dropped after 2009 due to the world financial crisis, which reduced the demand for manufacturing products in the world market and depressed the manufacturing industry in Japan. As a result, foreign industrial workers have forced to return to their homelands. By contrast, Tokyo was not heavily affected by the crisis because there lived very few industrial workers from overseas.

In fact, Tokyo is the most popular prefecture for aliens in Japan. Calculating location quotients (LQ) by prefecture, Tokyo attracted about twice (exactly 1.89 times) more non-Japanese population than the average in Japan, followed by the Aichi (1.64), the Mie (1.45), and the Osaka (1.42) prefectures in 2013. Then, what kind of workers has Tokyo attracted from overseas? The next section will turn to the issue.

2. Composition of Non-Japanese Workers in Tokyo

Figure 3 shows the proportions of workers by major industry among non-Japanese residents in Tokyo as well as in Japan as a whole in the 2010 census. It is apparent that while one third of non-Japanese workers living in Japan had manufacturing jobs, less than one out of ten foreign workers in Tokyo were employed in the manufacturing industry. The proportion of those engaged in the wholesale, retail and service industries in the alien workers living in
Tokyo was, on the contrary, greater than the average in the country. Also, Tokyo attracted more non-Japanese engaged in the information and communication industries, though the proportion in the workforce was relatively small, only 7.3 percent. Additionally, it is noteworthy that the “unclassified” were disproportionately attracted to Tokyo. It is not clear that what it exactly means, but possibly it indicates that there were a lot of small enterprises that operate many businesses such as some personal services, retailing, and financial activities simultaneously.

As a result, the proportion of blue collar workers in the aliens living in Tokyo is smaller than the average in Japan. As Figure 4 shows, only 14 percent of the foreign workers in Tokyo had blue collar jobs in 2010, while 42 percent of those living in Japan were blue collar workers. By contrast, the proportions of the managerial, the professional and technical, the sales and service, and the “unclassified” workers in the foreign population in Tokyo were greater than the average in Japan. Again, about one third of non-Japanese residents working in Tokyo had “unclassified,” miscellaneous, flexible jobs. Thus, Tokyo attracts from overseas more post-industrial workers and less industrial ones than the average in Japan.

Then, does the occupational composition of the alien workforce differ from that of Japanese workers in Tokyo? Figure 5 tells that the answer is no. It is difficult to say that the Non-Japanese workers in Tokyo concentrate on particular jobs comparing to the natives,
Figure 4  Proportions of Workers by Occupation Among Non-Japanese in Tokyo and Japan as a Whole. 
*Source*: 2010 Census

Figure 5  Proportions of Workers by Occupation for Japanese and Aliens in Tokyo 
*Source*: 2010 Census
except the “unclassified.” Exactly, alien workers are less likely to have blue collar and clerical jobs and more likely to be professionals. In sum, non-Japanese workers tend to be engaged in non-manufactural jobs in corresponding to the post-industrial service economy of Tokyo. This does not mean that the alien workers in Tokyo have an equal chance to get jobs to the natives. Instead, it could be suggested that different nationalities tend to participate in different segments of labor market in the urban economy. Now, we turn to demonstrate this in the next section.

3. Composition of Aliens living in Tokyo by Nationality

As of the end of 2013, Chinese were the most populous among the aliens living in Tokyo, over 160 thousand, followed by Koreans, less than 100 thousand, Filipinos, about 30 thousand, Americans, under 20 thousand, Nepalese and Vietnamese, less than 20 thousand respectively. As for Japan as a whole, Chinese, Koreans, Filipinos, Brazilians, Vietnamese, Americans, and Peruvians were in the order of population (see Figure 6 for the population by major nationality in Tokyo and Figure 7 for those in Japan since the 1980s.)

First of all, it should be noted that Brazilians and Peruvians are less likely to live in Tokyo. Most of them are the first, the second and the third generations of Japanese immigrants who ‘came back’ to industrial towns to work in the automobile and electronics factories. The numbers of Brazilians and Peruvians have significantly increased since the 1990s in Japan,
because the new Immigration-Control and Refugee-Recognition Act of Japan enforced in 1990 permits Japanese-Brazilians / Peruvians to work in Japan without any restrictions if they have visas of “spouses or children of Japanese nationals” or of “settlers.” As a result, Brazilians and Peruvians who came to work in manufacturing factories have increased rapidly as migrant systems have formed to link between Brazil or Peru and Japan (Tan’no 2003). After 2008, however, their populations have been decreasing due to the world financial crisis and a government’s policy for encouraging them to return home. Yet, the effect of the financial crisis on the populations of Brazilians and Peruvians could hardly be observed in Tokyo because Brazilian and Peruvian factory workers were very few. The location quotients of Tokyo were only 0.17 for the Brazilians and 0.38 for the Peruvians.

Secondly, the number of Koreans has not decreased until 2009 in Tokyo, although their population has been declining since the 1990s in the country. The key is a resident status of Koreans. 70 percent of Koreans living in Japan are “special permanent residents,” or those arrived there before 1947 and their descendants). They are decreasing due to naturalization as they live in Japan from generation to generation. In contrast, less than half of the Koreans living in Tokyo are the “special permanent residents,” and LQ of Tokyo for Koreans was 1.83 at the end of 2013, being far lower than Osaka, 3.29, where 80 percent of Koreans were the special permanent residents. These statistics indicate that Tokyo has disproportionately attracted newcomer Koreans. Since 2009, however, the population has

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**Figure 7** Populations by Major Nationality in Japan, 1975-2013

*Source: Alien Registration Statistics of the Ministry of Justice*
decreased due to the economic stagnation of Japan and Korea economies after the world financial crisis. This is understandable if the newcomers are more mobile than the old timers.

Thirdly, Tokyo attracts a lot of Chinese. Although the population of Chinese in Japan has rapidly increased since the 1980s and surpassed the Korean population by 2007 (see Figure 7), the number of Chinese living in Tokyo surpassed that of Koreans in 2001 notwithstanding still increasing number of Koreans (see Figure 6), indicating how Chinese immigrants have concentrated in Tokyo. The location quotient of Tokyo for Chinese was 2.30 at the end of 2013, the largest in Japan. Of 160 thousand Chinese in Tokyo, 50 thousand were “permanent residents” and 35 thousand were students. Thus, Tokyo has attracted Chinese most in the country and Chinese communities have been steadily built in this metropolis.

Finally, Tokyo attracts a lot of Americans. The locational quotient of Tokyo for Americans in Japan was 3.17 at the end of 2013, the second largest in Japan, following that of the Okinawa prefecture. One of the features of Tokyo as a global city located in East Asia is that those people from Western countries move in professionals tend to create urban spaces of western flavor. They are likely to be attracted to gentrified areas around the city center as we will see later.
4. Occupational Composition by Nationality in Tokyo

Although foreign residents in Tokyo are likely to participate in the post-industrial service economy, the occupational compositions differ from nationality to nationality. According to the 2010 census, Americans are most likely to have professional jobs, having higher socio-economic status than the other focused nationality groups (see Figure 8). Most of them are English teachers. Chinese and Koreans are likely to have sales and service jobs, being placed in the middle stratum. Typically, they are traders and shop keepers. Filipinos are more likely to be service and industrial workers and Vietnamese are likely to be manual workers though there are a few professionals in Tokyo.

Other than the class differences, some nationalities are gendered. About half of Chinese and Korean workers in Tokyo are female, though the managerial and the professional and technical workers are more likely to be male. In this case, not nationality but occupation is gendered. Yet, Americans are more likely to be male and professionals and Filipinos are more likely to be female and service and industrial workers (see Figure 9 for Americans and 10 for Filipinos.) Both groups seem to be highly gendered.

Filipinos have gradually increased since the late 1980s. Most of them were female “entertainers,” who migrated to Japan with entertainment visas, working as bar hostesses and hoping to find Japanese men to get married (Ballescas 1996; Takahata 2003; Nishiguchi

![Number of workers by gender by occupation for Americans in Tokyo 2010](image)

**Figure 9** Numbers of Workers by Gender by Occupation for Americans in Tokyo, 2010

*Source: 2010 Census*
2009). As Japan’s government has been criticized as allowing their brokers to violate their human rights, it reduced the number of issues of the entertainment visa since 2006. Still, the pressure of migration from the Philippines remains to be strong. They relatively concentrate in mid-Japan region such as the Gifu, the Aichi, and the Shizuoka prefectures, but are generally dispersed. The location quotient of Tokyo for them was 1.31 in 2010, being slightly higher than the average.

So far, we have looked at the occupational and gender compositions of the aliens living in Tokyo for the five focused groups. Interestingly enough, they are stratified by class and gender. Americans, who are the typical aliens from Western advanced countries, are overwhelmingly male professionals. Peoples from East Asian countries such as Chinese and Koreans participate in the middle stratum of post-industrial service economy. The immigrants from developing countries in South-East Asia like Filipinos and Vietnamese are more likely to have lower service and factory jobs. Filipinos are especially gendered due to the historical background of the immigration system between the Philippines and Japan. Thus, nationalities in Tokyo are closely related to socio-economic status in urban economy. How do these socio-economic characteristics affect residential differentiation of non-Japanese in Tokyo? The next section turns to this issue.

**Figure 10**  Numbers of Workers by Gender by Occupation for Filipinos in Tokyo, 2010  
*Source: 2010 Census*
5. Residential Differentiation of Non-Japanese in Tokyo

Aliens living in Tokyo not only have different kind of jobs but dwell in different localities by nationality and, by doing so, create Tokyo’s multicultural urbanism. Geography of residential differentiation of non-Japanese people partly reflects the residential differentiation by class in Tokyo and partly depends on immigration systems built in specific localities.

5.1 Residential differentiation by socio-economic status in Tokyo

Figure 11 shows that the proportions of upper white collar workers in workforce by municipality in Tokyo based on the 2010 census data. As this map shows, the western part of central Tokyo and the eastern suburban area along the Chuo railroad line attract upper white collar workers. It reflects the well-known pattern of the contrast between Yamanote (hill side), the western part of central Tokyo where upper class families are likely to move in, and Shitamachi (lower side), the eastern part of the city where industrial workers used to live. Since the late 1990s, as deindustrialization goes on, the central areas of both sides have increasingly been inhabited by professional and technical workers, but still remains the difference of the prestige of localities between the west and the east. Basically, the residential differentiation of non-Japanese dwellers by nationality is affected by this general pattern, but there are distinct localities concentrated by particular nationalities.

Figure 11  Proportions of Upper White Collar Workers in Workforce by Municipality in Tokyo
Source: 2010 Census
5.2 Residential differentiation of aliens by nationality

The rate of the aliens in the population by municipality can be calculated from the statistics of foreign residents registered in Basic Residents Registration System and the population estimated by Tokyo Metropolitan Government as of January 1st 2014. The result is mapped as Figure 12. The municipalities in which non-Japanese residents highly concentrated (over six percent) were the Shinjuku (10.3 percent), the Minato (8.5 percent), the Arakawa (7.5 percent), the Taito (7.0 percent) and the Toshima (6.7 percent) wards. In suburban regions, Fussa City was relatively high in the rate of alien population (4.3 percent). O.D. Duncan’s index of dissimilarity which indicates how ‘segregated’ a minority group is in a city was .240 for the aliens in Tokyo.

However, this picture is a sheer combination of different residential patterns of different nationalities. The indices of dissimilarity for the five focused groups were distinct from each other: .388 for Americans, .300 for Vietnamese, .285 for Chinese, .260 for Koreans and .236 for Filipinos. We will see the patterns for the five groups respectively.

Chinese

Chinese concentrate in the Toshima and the Shinjuku wards. Calculating location quotients of municipalities for Chinese in Tokyo at the beginning of 2014, Toshima was the highest

![Figure 12](image)

**Figure 12**  Proportions of Non-Japanese in the Population by Municipality in Tokyo, 2014
Source: Statistics of Aliens Registered and the Population estimated by Tokyo Metropolitan Government
Figure 13  Location Quotients of Municipalities for Chinese in Tokyo, 2014  
Source: Statistics of Aliens Registered and the Population estimated by Tokyo Metropolitan Government

Figure 14  Contours of Location Quotients of Municipalities for Chinese in Tokyo, 2014  
Source: Statistics of Aliens Registered and the Population estimated by Tokyo Metropolitan Government
(3.25), followed by Shinjuku (3.13), as Figure 13 shows. Figure 14 indicates the contours of the location quotients, showing that Ikebukuro located in Toshima Ward and Shinjuku, two major subcenters of Tokyo, are estimated to attract Chinese immigrants most in the metropolis.

Among others, Ikebukuro is a distinguished nodal point for Chinese immigrants. Originally, there located a small Taiwanese community. As mainland China adopted a policy of opening doors in 1978, students from Shanghai and Fujian began to live there because many Japanese language schools located there. Since the mid-1980s, Chinese students have increased rapidly. Then, Ikebukuro attracted many Chinese restaurants, retail shops, and other ethnic services. More recently, several newspapers reported that a certain Chinese merchant organization was planning to build a “China Town” in Ikebukuro, which has created a dispute with the local merchant associations dominated by Japanese shop owners6). Thus, Ikebukuro is a mixed commercial district including a “would-be China Town.”

Koreans

Koreans heavily concentrate in the Shinjuku and the Arakawa wards. The location quotient of Shinjuku was 4.75 at the beginning of 2014, and LQ of Arakawa was 4.03, over four times greater than the average in Tokyo, as Figure 15 shows. Shinjuku attracts many newcomer Koreans as well as other nationality groups from Asia, whereas Arakawa was an

![Figure 15](image.png)

**Figure 15** Location Quotients for Koreans by Municipality in Tokyo, 2014

*Source:* Statistics of Aliens Registered and the Population estimated by Tokyo Metropolitan Government
area in which Koreans came to live in the 1940s and is attracting new Korean immigrants as well.

The Okubo district in Shinjuku Ward is a precursor of new “ethnic towns” or “multicultural areas” in Tokyo. Since the 1990s, Korean businesses have extended rapidly and Okubo has come to be called a Korea Town (Inaba 2008). Still there are many other ethnic businesses and of course shops run by local Japanese merchants who have feelings of resistance toward the label of “Korea Town.” Thus, Okubo would be a showcase for multicultural urbanism in Tokyo.

**Americans**

Americans are likely to live in white collar areas in Tokyo, and especially concentrate in the Minato and the Shibuya wards. Figure 16 shows that Minato Ward attracted Americans 13 times greater than the average in Tokyo, followed by Shibuya (LQ=5.1). This means that they flocked in the Roppongi, the Aoyama, and the Hiroo districts, typical “international” areas in Tokyo. Although Americans represented only 1.6 percent of the residents in the Minato ward, one-fifth of Americans in Tokyo was living there. In Minato, many transnational firms are located and the special housing market develops for western business persons.
Filipinos

Filipinos are relatively less segregated at least in terms of residence because most of them are wives of lower income Japanese husbands and are likely to live in blue collar regions. In fact, they are likely to live in the eastern part of central Tokyo and the north west of the suburban area, an industrial region in Tokyo. Location quotient for Filipinos was highest in Fussa City where U.S. military base locates. They are relatively attracted to Minato Ward as well as the eastern Tokyo, suggesting that they are engaged in consumer services for English-speaking elites.

Vietnamese

Vietnamese are attracted to a few immigrant neighborhoods in Tokyo. As Figure 18 shows, they concentrate in the immigrant belt of the Shinjuku and the Toshima wards. Shinjuku Ward contains the center of new Korean immigrants and Toshima Ward embraces the center of Chinese immigrants. The housing markets of these localities seem to be open to other Asians too. Vietnamese are also attracted to Fussa City in suburban Tokyo, where the manufacturing industry as well as U.S. military base are located and attract Filipino women as described above. Vietnamese are typically engaged in manufacturing jobs as trainees under the rigid control of the state.
Conclusion

Since the late 1980s, the population of non-Japanese residents in Tokyo has rapidly increased. Although the rate of immigrants in the population is far smaller than those in Western global cities, there are some neighborhoods in which distinctive ethnic scenes can be found. This paper described that Tokyo attracts aliens as post-industrial workers such as sales and service workers and professionals. Then, by focusing on five major nationality groups in Tokyo—Chinese, Koreans, Americans, Filipinos, and Vietnamese—this paper demonstrated that their compositions of socio-economic status and gender differ from nationality to nationality and that while residential differentiation of aliens is primarily affected by their socio-economic status there are specific localities attracting particular nationalities.

According to the indices of dissimilarity, Americans are most “segregated” among major nationalities in Tokyo. It is because they have enough resources to find “good” housing in central Tokyo, which in turn develops the housing market for affluent English-speakers and the entertainment and fashionable districts such as Roppingi and Aoyama with international (American) flavor. Vietnamese on the other hand are segregated due to limited financial resource. They have to live in a few localities in which housing markets are open to poor immigrants and/or the opportunities for blue-collar jobs can be found. Filipinos are relatively less segregated at least in terms of residence because most of them are wives of lower income
Japanese husbands and are likely to live in blue collar regions according to the general residential pattern. A few exceptions are Fussa City and Minato Ward, where concentrate consumer service jobs for English-speaking customers. Also, Koreans and Chinese are less ‘segregated’ than Americans and Vietnamese because they are more assimilated into Japanese neighborhoods, while they have their own urban centers and nodal communities such as Shinjuku, Ikebukuro, and Arakawa in the metropolis.

While residential differentiation by nationality in Tokyo follows the general pattern by socio-economic status, a particular nationality tends to live in particular localities due to the distinctive housing and labor markets for immigrants. Thus, multicultural urbanism in Tokyo is structured in such a way that different nationalities tend to participate in different segments of the post-industrial urban economy and to live in particular neighborhoods due to their own localized systems of immigration.

1) Foreign people who plan to stay in Japan for 90 days or longer were required by the Alien Registration Act to register in the municipality where they live. The Act was abolished in 2012, and the registration was integrated to the Basic Residents Registration System previously covering only Japanese residents. Since some immigrants do not apply for the registration, others registered but stay over the permitted days and still others registered but has left Japan thereafter without deregistration, it is difficult to know even whether the figures are overestimated or underestimated. Nevertheless, the growth of immigrants is unquestionable.

2) Non-Japanese are likely to be underrepresented in the census, but there is no other data to show the relationship of nationality with socio-economic situation such as the industry and occupation they are engaged in.

3) After Japan was defeated in the war, Korea was emancipated from the colonial rule of Japan. In 1947, people from the Korean Peninsula and their offspring still living in Japan were assigned to their nationality as “Korea.” In the next year, when both the South and the North Korean governments were established, “Korea” as a legal category of “nationality” in Japan became artificial one that indicates neither North nor South Korea irrespective to their subjective identification. After 1966, due to the establishment of the diplomatic relation between Japan and South Korea, they came to be allowed to register as South Koreans legally if they want. Since 1989, when South Korea liberalized overseas traveling, Korean immigrants in Japan have been growing (Kou 1996). The official statistics published in Japan usually use a category of “South Korea and Korea,” which includes those who came from the Korean Peninsula before 1947 and their descendants holding the nationality of “Korea” and “South Korea” permitted to stay as “special permanent residents” and those newcomers who migrated from South Korea after 1966.
4) “China” as a legal category of nationality is also problematic because it includes Taiwan and Hong Kong as well as mainland China. Since 1979 when the Taiwan government liberalized overseas traveling and since 1986 when the Chinese government enacted the law of emigration control, new Chinese immigrants increased rapidly. It is safe to say that the recent trend is mostly affected by immigrants from the mainland. In 1990, about 40 thousand Taiwanese and one hundred thousand mainland Chinese were registered in the country (Ito 1996: 306).

5) The distinction of Shitamachi and Yamanote appears to be similar to that of downtown and uptown in English, but not exactly the same. This Japanese terminology applied exclusively to Tokyo is based on the geographical features of the regions: Shitamachi (down-town) is a valley where merchants and craftsmen lived, while Yamanote (up-town) is a hill where the ruling elites, or samurai, dwelled in the Tokugawa period. The areas which were called as Shitamachi and Yamanote have historically changed and were always vague. One remnant is the Yamanote line, the belt line railway in Tokyo. Viewing from the eastern, originally plebeian area of Edo, the belt is located in the Yamanote direction.


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