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## Determinants of Open Attitudes towards Foreign Nationals in Japan

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## Determinants of Open Attitudes toward Foreign Nationals in Japan

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### Abstract

With a declining birth rate and an aging population, Japan needs to open the door to immigrants in order to maintain its workforce. "Multicultural Coexistence" or "*tabunka-kyosei*" in Japanese is commonly used to describe the relationship between Japanese people and foreign nationals in Japan. Unfortunately, the definition of this term is entirely unclear. This study defines "Multicultural Coexistence" based on two conceptions, "Willingness for Communication" and "Support or Opposition for the equality of rights." The analyses are based on quantitative data; a sample of 1,823 Japanese persons and a second sample of 292 foreign national persons living in the industrial city of Tokyo (Hamura City). Analyzing the data, the author found that more than half of foreign nationals (65.9%) supported the most positive attitude "Integrated Coexistence." Unlike them, however, only 19.7% of Japanese people supported it, and 33.8% of them supported "Exclusionary Coexistence." Using multinomial logistic regression, the author found out that age, English speaking ability, neighborhood relationships, and interactions with foreign nationals were the determinants of orientations toward coexistence for Japanese people. From the results, the author suggests that neighborhood and multicultural networks are key to promoting a coexistent Japanese society.

## 1. Acceptance of Immigrants<sup>1</sup> in Japanese Society

With declining birth rates and a growing proportion of elderly people amidst the progression of globalization, Japanese society is in a stage of transformation. As the movement of people, goods, and money on a global scale accelerates and the fluidity of society increases, what changes are necessary for the “stable society” that the Japanese have thus far developed? Although the impacts of globalization on societal change are nothing new abroad, in Japan – where ethnic homogeneity within society is high – globalization is the driving force behind much of the salient developments in the interwoven relationships formed between immigrants and the Japanese. In Japan, communal relationships between immigrants and Japanese is termed, “multicultural coexistence (*tabunka-kyosei* in Japanese),” and is a widely used academic and policy term (Yamawaki 2006).

As a measure to fill gaps in domestic labor, there is an increasing demand to accept immigrants, mainly in the manufacturing and welfare service industries. However, there are also concerns about the divisions within society between the Japanese and immigrants. In other words, although a certain degree of demand for immigrants is recognized, there is no agreement in Japanese society on a specific way to coexist with them. In fact, it has often been pointed out that the definition of “multicultural coexistence” is ambiguous despite its frequent use (Ohtsuki 2013).<sup>2</sup>

According to the census, immigrants in Japanese society currently compose only about 1.5% of the total population. In terms of labor or human rights in the context of immigration, there are great differences between Japan and Western societies that have long-accepted immigrants.

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, I use “immigrant” and “foreign nationals” interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> This also indicates that multiculturalism is ambiguous (Colombo 2015).

Nonetheless, regardless of the legitimacy of arguments asserting the necessity of immigration or those that take a cautious stance toward the issue, it is necessary to actively discuss issues of immigrant acceptance and settlement in Japanese society – a society that is experiencing a period of population decline.

Therefore, while considering the question of “how will it be possible to build a healthy coexistence society in Japan,” this study first clarifies which form of coexistence do immigrants and Japanese desire. Then, based on a quantitative analysis, I explicate the social factors that determine orientations toward a “healthy coexistence society.”

## **2. Government multicultural coexistence policy based on “altruism”**

Despite the labor shortage stemming from the declining population, the Japanese government consistently maintains a double standard and ambiguous attitude towards accepting immigrants. In fact, the government shows a positive attitude towards accepting “the elite” engaged in specialized and technical fields. However, regardless of labor demands for low-skilled workers, it continues to hold a passive attitude towards such individuals. However, despite this, substantial levels of low-skilled labor are accepted, and it has even been pointed out that the Japanese government has turned a blind eye to such inconsistent trends (Suzuki 2009).

On the other hand, because the local municipal level directly encounters coexistence challenges, their responses to the issue differ from that of central government. For example, support efforts to help immigrants adapt to the community have been implemented through activities such as Japanese language classes offered by volunteer-run NPOs (non-profit organizations) (Ohtsuki 2016). In other words, although there is reluctance to accept immigrants

at the national level, the municipal level – which has no choice but to respond to immigration as a real-life challenge – has implemented a relatively active response to immigrant residents.

However, such municipal level responses remain unstable, because in administrative services primarily offered by municipalities, multicultural coexistence policies are “top-down” policies by local governments and mayors. Therefore, if a new mayor takes over, such “altruistic” policies are in danger of being reoriented (Kajita et al. 2005). In other words, institutional backing based on a clear philosophy of coexistence is weak, and as the municipalities’ multicultural coexistence policies depend on “altruistic” responses from the government side, the attempt for coexistence becomes one hinged on aspirations that lack institutional reliability (Higuchi 2000).

### **3. Definition of multicultural coexistence and its determining factors**

One major problem in multicultural coexistence policy is that there is no clear definition of the term, “multicultural coexistence.” Originally, the term became commonly used from the latter half of the 1990s through support efforts for reconstruction after the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. However, while it is now used more frequently, it is not clearly defined, and based on such high ambiguity, its definition (or lack thereof) has been criticized already since the 1990s (for example, see Onai 1999).

So how is multicultural coexistence academically defined? As Ohtsuki (2013) has already highlighted the ambiguity of the concept of coexistence, here, I summarize his main points. Ohtsuki (2013, 2016) surveyed the numerous coexistence concepts that had academically been used until then, noting that the concept in sociology refers to mutual “equality” and the “mutual exchanges” that unfold to realize such equality. Specifically, a relationship that balances equality

and mutual exchange is considered to be the most progressive form of coexistence. Furthermore, this balancing of equality and mutual exchange dovetails with “everyday multiculturalism” (Colombo 2015), which focuses on quotidian interactions in which cultural differences are produced and negotiated.

In his analysis of the determining factors for people’s orientations toward coexistence, Ohtsuki finds that interactions with immigrants is a significant predictive factor, after controlling for several social position and consciousness variables. In other words, there is a tendency towards progressive coexistence if a person has had the experience of interacting with immigrants. In Ohtsuki’s analysis, interactions with immigrants was measured using the question, “Do you have or did you have any immigrant friends or acquaintances?” In light of the context of a Japanese society characterized by high ethnic homogeneity, even these casual interactions based on friendships or acquaintanceships with immigrants can theoretically be interpreted as embodying a multicultural network. As such, having a multicultural network promotes a coexistence society.

However, Ohtsuki’s analysis model has caveats. First, perhaps because of the use of macro-level nationwide data, it does not adequately capture micro-level relationships between individuals and their local communities. Next, if one focuses on a multicultural network, it is necessary to consider whether it is important that the network is “multicultural” or whether the network with others by itself is important, regardless of its multiculturality. Therefore, an analysis that compares ethnically homogeneous and multicultural networks is necessary. Additionally, in a highly ethnically homogenous Japanese society, Japanese language is by far, the most dominant language. Given this, in thinking about the effects of multicultural networks, it will be necessary to consider the extent to which people possess speaking abilities in foreign languages.

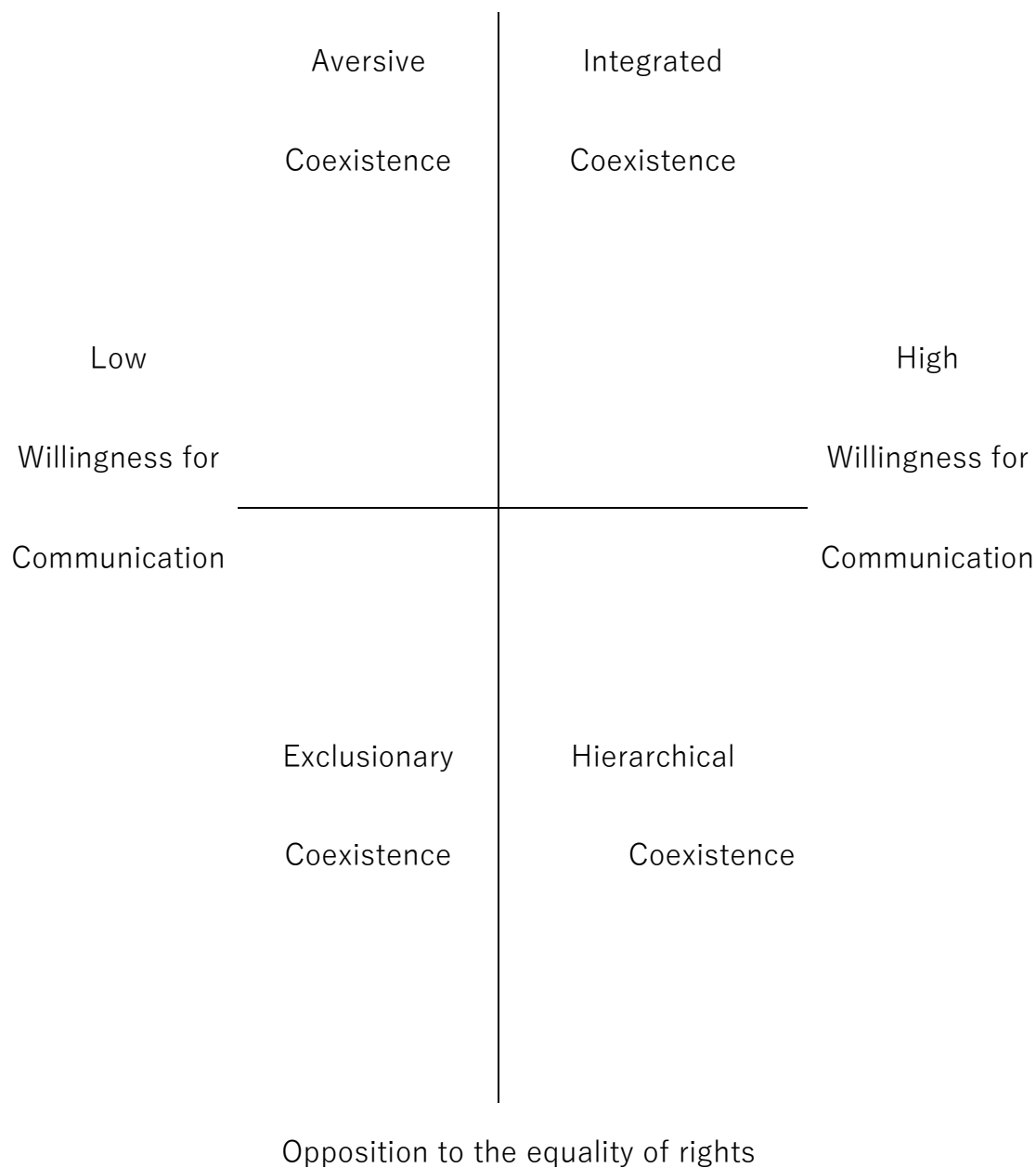
#### 4. Analysis Framework

In this study, I operationalize the highly ambiguous “multicultural coexistence” orientation concept as a concrete index, and examine its determining factors. While noting the aforementioned caveats of Ohtsuki (2013) study, I take “the impact of a multicultural network on a coexistence society” as my theoretical framework, and examine the effect of interactions with immigrants on multicultural coexistence orientation. Furthermore, multicultural coexistence is indexed according to Ohtsuki’s (2013) definition, and consists of measures of orientations toward equal rights and communication that were obtained using responses to the following questions. To measure orientation towards equal rights, if one answered “I agree” or “I somewhat agree” to the statement, “Foreign nationals living in Japan should have the same treatment and rights as Japanese people,” it was assumed that the respondent supports equal rights; and if one answered “I somewhat disagree” or “I disagree,” it was assumed that the respondent opposes equal rights. Regarding orientation on communication, if one answered “I would like to” or “I suppose I would like to” to the question “Would you like to associate with Japanese people where you live (in your neighborhood)?” a high willingness for communication was assumed, while if one answered “I cannot say either way,” “I suppose I would not like to,” or “I would not like to,” a low willingness for communication was assumed.

Figure 1 Type of Coexistence

Support for the equality of rights





As shown in Figure 1, if the two aforementioned dimensions of multicultural coexistence orientation are binarized, multicultural coexistence orientation can be classified into four categories. These categories are Integrated Coexistence, Hierarchical Coexistence, Aversive Coexistence, and Exclusionary Coexistence. Among these, Integrated Coexistence supports the idea that immigrants and Japanese should have equal rights and actively interact. In this study, an



active coexistence of mutual interactions with equal rights is regarded as the most progressive coexistence orientation. In contrast, Exclusionary Coexistence, which does not desire interactions and propagates the inequality of rights, is regarded as the most negative coexistence orientation. While focusing on comparisons between Integrated and Exclusionary Coexistence, I analyze the determining factors of coexistence orientation.

Ohtsuki (2013) also indexed the coexistence concepts as shown above, and analyzed them based on nationwide data. However, as mentioned above, because policies concerning multicultural coexistence have centered on municipalities to promote the revitalization of local communities, in analyzing the determining factors of coexistence orientation, it is preferred to focus the analysis on a specific area, and analyze the attitudes of the people living there. Therefore, in this study, I narrow the research target area to a specific location, namely Hamura City in Tokyo.

## **5. Overview of Hamura City**

This section provides an overview of the surveyed area, Hamura City, Tokyo.<sup>3</sup> Hamura City is about a one-hour train ride from the heart of Tokyo, and is within commuter distance. In the 1960s, when the gross national product of Japan was the second largest in the world, it developed as a leading industrial area in Tokyo as the center for major automobile and electric machinery manufacturing companies. Until the latter half of the 1980s, the population exceeded 50,000 people and showed steady development. However, after the burst of the bubble economy, and as Japan sought to break the vicious cycle associated with its “lost 20 years,” large companies closed their factories operating in Hamura City. Additionally, the immigrant population that rapidly increased in the 1990s as a response to labor force demand in the manufacturing industry also saw

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<sup>3</sup> Details of Hamura City are described in Ohtsuki (2017).

a decrease, and overall, the city's socioeconomic situation is experiencing a downward trend. Currently, amidst the recession since the collapse of the bubble economy, there are no outstanding breakthrough measures, and the economic trend of Hamura City continues to deteriorate. Especially for a city whose development was centered on the manufacturing industry, the impact of the recession caused by the "Lehman Shock" was great, and dire economic situations persist with the withdrawal of business establishments and the closure of factories.

**Table 1. Immigrant population**

Area	Population (N)	Population (%)	South Korea, North Korea		China	Southeast Asia	North America and Europe		South America	Others
Nationwide	1752368	1.4%	21.5%	29.2%	18.2%	3.0%	9.2%	19.0%		
Tokyo	378564	2.8%	19.4%	36.0%	11.2%	4.4%	1.0%	28.1%		
Hamura City	1107	2.0%	7.7%	15.7%	21.7%	8.3%	37.5%	9.1%		

Table 1 presents the immigrant populations by location.<sup>4</sup> The proportion of foreign nationals in Hamura City is 2%; this is lower than that of Tokyo as a whole, but is higher than the national figure. As evidenced by the figures, many people come to Japan from South America (Brazil and Peru). As mentioned in the previous section, Hamura City is a manufacturing hub for industrial products including automobiles, and it is assumed that many of these individuals work (or train) in these factories. Many immigrants hail from Western countries (the UK and the US) and because

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<sup>4</sup> The figures were calculated based on the census (Statistics Bureau of Japan 2017). In addition, in the census categories, "Southeast Asia" is the sum of "the Philippines," "Thailand," "Indonesia," and "Vietnam"; "Western" is the sum of "the UK" and "the US"; and "South America" is the sum of "Brazil" and "Peru." "India" was added to the "others" category.

there is a US military base in the adjacent city, the number of Americans living in Hamura City is relatively large compared to other areas.

## 6. Data

In this study, I analyze data obtained through quantitative surveys conducted on Japanese and immigrants who both live in Hamura City. Survey data for immigrants were collected for comparison with the distribution of coexistence orientations among Japanese people. The survey respondents, sample size, and survey period/method/response rate are as follows:<sup>5</sup>

### \* Japanese survey respondents

- Respondents: Japanese men and women living in Hamura City, Tokyo (aged 20 to 79 years old)
- Sample size: 6,000 (based on random sampling using the voter registration list)
- Survey period: July to August 2015
- Survey method: questionnaire survey in mail format
- Response rate: 30.4% (1,823 questionnaires)

### \* Immigrant survey respondents

- Respondents: immigrant men and women living in Hamura City, Tokyo (aged 20 to 79 years old)
- Sample size: 819 (census survey using the basic resident register)

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<sup>5</sup> Details of the survey data used in this study are described in Ohtsuki (2017).

- Survey period: November to December 2015
- Survey method: questionnaire survey in mail format
- Response rate: 35.7% (292 questionnaires)

For the surveys targeting immigrants, I extracted information from the basic resident register; however, at the time of extraction, the country of origin and language of the respondents were unknown. Therefore, I distributed questionnaires in multiple languages (Japanese, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Tagalog, Chinese, Korean, Thai, and Vietnamese), and made it possible to respond in any language.

The response rates for the surveys for the Japanese and immigrants were 35.7% and 30.4% respectively – both less than 40%. However, in recent years in Japanese society, the collection rate for quantitative surveys has declined because of concerns over the “protection of personal information,” so it is not unusual to obtain response rates of under 30% with mail surveys. Additionally, considering that the surveys for this study were conducted in a suburban area of a metropolis like Tokyo, instead of a rural area, the response rate for this study can be considered as relatively “good.”

## **7. Analysis**

### **7-1 Determining factors of coexistence orientation**

In this study, I explore the determining factors of Japanese orientations toward multicultural coexistence through a quantitative analysis. First, I present the distribution of the dependent variable, coexistence orientation (Figures 2 and 3)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Although 292 and 1823 questionnaires were returned for the immigrant and Japanese samples,

**Figure 2. Orientations towards Coexistence: Immigrants (N=223)**

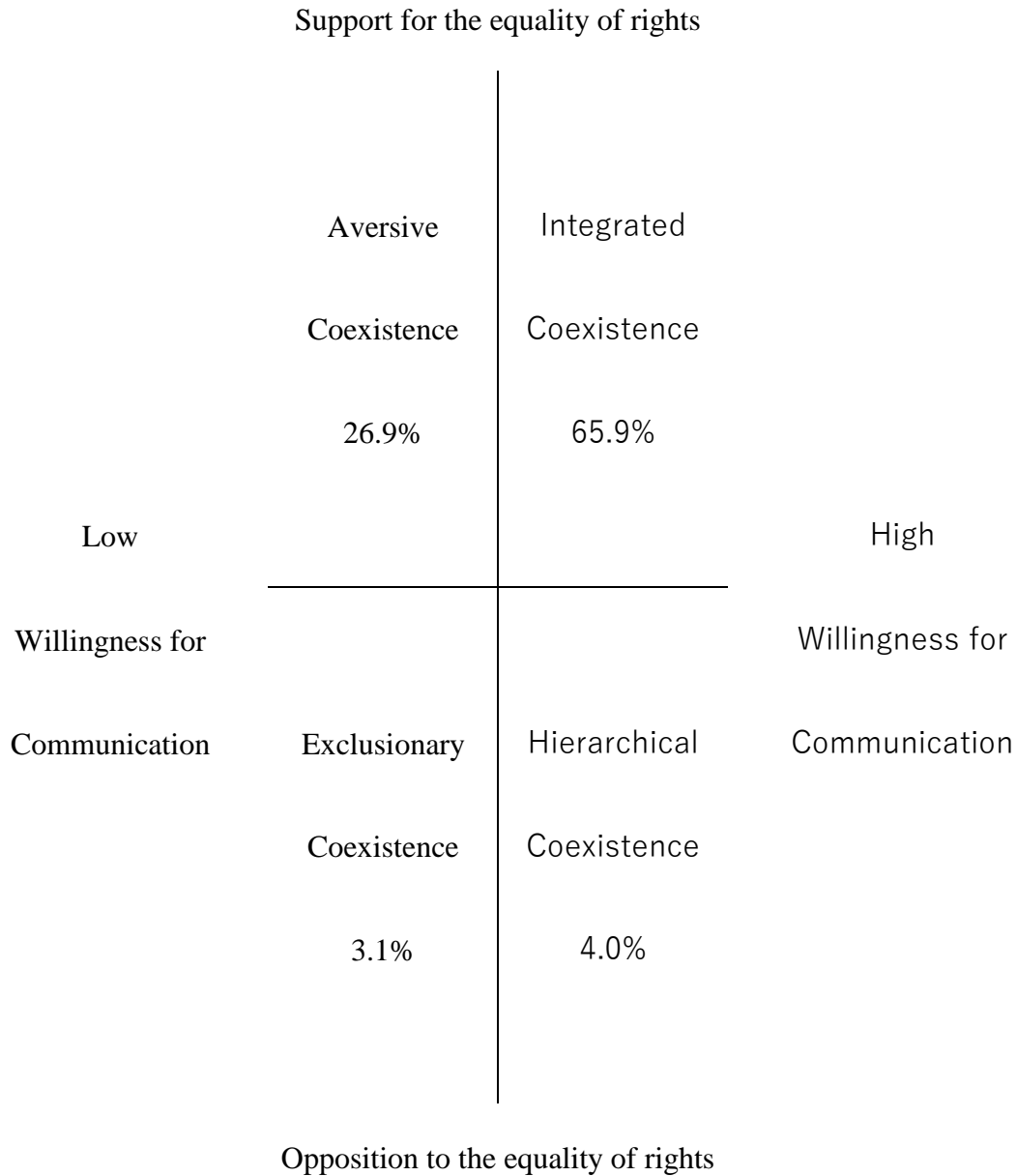


Figure 2 shows the distribution of the coexistence orientations of immigrants. Regarding rights,

respectively, there were Figures 2 and 3 are based off of 223 and 1696 valid responses, respectively.

the proportion of Integrated Coexistence was 65.9%. At 26.9%, the second highest was Aversive Coexistence, which hopes for equality of rights but not mutual communication. From this, we see that Integrated Coexistence is most supported by many immigrants.

As shown in Figure 3, the highest proportion of Japanese people demonstrated a preference for Aversive Coexistence (37.7%), or the acceptance that immigrants have equal rights to Japanese people with the unwillingness to communicate with them as individuals. The next highest was Exclusionary Coexistence at 33.8%. As such, preferences for Aversive and Exclusionary Coexistence together composed more than 70% of the responses, indicating that many Japanese people are reluctant to communicate with immigrants.

**Figure 3. Orientations towards Coexistence: Japanese (N=1696)**

	Support for the equality of rights		
	Aversive Coexistence 37.7%	Integrated Coexistence 19.7%	
Low Willingness for Communication			High Willingness for Communication
	Exclusionary Coexistence 33.8%	Hierarchical Coexistence 8.7%	
	Opposition to the equality of rights		

However, it would be premature to conclude that behind the Japanese respondents' coexistence orientation distribution lies negative feelings toward immigrants. The reason for this is the language barrier. Japanese society is characterized by high ethnic homogeneity, so Japanese

is the most-used language in the country. From the Japanese perspective, it is difficult to converse in a language other than Japanese, so one must also consider the fact that people are reluctant to communicate with immigrants if the interaction necessitates speaking a foreign language. However, despite high proportions of not only Aversive, but also Exclusionary Coexistence, and the fact that the proportion for Integrated Coexistence was only 19.7% in the first place, there is little room to refute the claim that unlike immigrants, the Japanese demonstrate a circumspect attitude towards coexistence with “the other.”

As evident in the comparison between Figures 2 and 3, there is a large discrepancy in orientations between immigrants and the Japanese. While many immigrants support Integrated Coexistence, on the Japanese side, which is the majority group, the proportion oriented towards Integrated Coexistence is less than 20%, and the proportion for Exclusionary Coexistence is higher. The fact that many immigrants aim for coexistence with equal rights and mutual interactions, while the Japanese have higher levels of support for Aversive or Exclusionary Coexistence, suggests that even if ethnic/racial minorities and the majority group of Japanese were to both “support multicultural coexistence” in Japan, there would be a large discrepancy in the concrete ways of coexistence envisioned by the two.

Realistically, to achieve a healthy coexistence society, promoting understandings of a progressive coexistence society – or an Integrated Coexistence society – among the majority who hold more social power is vital. Therefore, below, I examine the determining factors of the majority group’s (or Japanese) orientations towards coexistence.

## **Table 2: Multinomial Logistic Regression Results**

Determinants of Orientations towards Coexistence (Reference=Exclusionary Coexistence)

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	Integrated			Hierarchical			Aversive		
	B	S.D.		B	S.D.		B	S.D.	
Intercept	-1.218	0.493	*	-2.2	0.66	**	0.698	0.425	
Sex_Female=0	0.077	0.174		-0.26	0.238		-0.227	0.142	
Age	-0.031	0.007	***	-0.03	0.009	**	-0.002	0.006	
Degree_Low=0	0.185	0.183		0.84	0.282	**	0.049	0.15	
Family Income	0	0		0	0		0	0	
English skills	0.536	0.115	***	0.676	0.145	***	0.188	0.104	
3rd language skill	-0.144	0.133		-0.196	0.17		-0.496	0.135	***
Neighborhood	0.443	0.113	***	0.235	0.153		-0.033	0.091	
Interaction with Immigrants	0.675	0.185	***	0.786	0.255	**	0.326	0.16	

\*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .01, \*p < .05

N=1241

$\chi^2=209.737$

Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup>=0.169

Table 2 presents the multinomial logistic regression results with multicultural coexistence orientation of the Japanese as the dependent variable. The reference category is the Exclusionary Coexistence orientation. As independent variables, I include “gender,” “age,” “educational background,”<sup>7</sup> “household income,”<sup>8</sup> and “interactions with immigrants.”<sup>9</sup> Additionally, the aforementioned caveats in Ohtsuki’s (2013) analysis were addressed by including “neighborhood interactions” as a measure for ethnically homogeneous networks, and “English speaking ability (self-reported)” and “third language ability (self-reported)” as measures of foreign language

<sup>7</sup> Based on understandings of educational background in Japanese society, high school and lower was deemed as low educational background, and junior college and higher was deemed as high educational background.

<sup>8</sup> Household income was measured in real units of ten thousand yen.

<sup>9</sup> Interactions with immigrants was coded into Yes=1 and No=0.



speaking ability. Similar to previous studies (Hamada 2013; Nagayoshi 2013; Ohtsuki 2013, 2016; etc.), for the key variable “interactions with immigrants,” if the question “Do you have or did you have any immigrant friends or acquaintances?” was answered with a “yes,” it was assumed that “there is interaction.” If the response was a “no,” it is assumed that “there is no interaction.” The reason “neighborhood relationships” is a helpful indicator for homogeneity within a network is that because the survey’s target area is a region where the proportion of immigrants is only about 2%, neighborhood relationships for the Japanese are likely to be relationships with other Japanese neighbors.

In contrast to the Exclusionary Coexistence model, age, English speaking ability, neighborhood relationships, and interactions with immigrants showed significant effects in the Integrated Coexistence model. Second, for Hierarchical Coexistence, age, educational background, English speaking ability, and interactions with immigrants demonstrated significant effects, and for the Aversive Coexistence model, only third language ability had a significant effect.

Regarding age, younger people were more positive about coexistence than older people. In other words, as ethnic homogeneity is historically high in Japanese society, coexistence with immigrants is a major social change that revisits concerns over societal stability. Young people are more receptive to such changes.

However, regarding the positive attitudes of young people, it must be kept in mind that the immigrant population is still small. If immigration acceptance is a means to secure replacement labor that has become necessary as a result of the declining birth rate and aging population, it will be with these young people that these immigrants will eventually compete with in the labor market. Conversely, for the elderly, an increase in immigrants who can bear the expanded demand for welfare services could be a welcome trend (Beck 2014). Considering this, the results pointing to

young people being more positive towards coexistence may be an optimistic attitude stemming from the fact that thus far, they have yet to encounter actual instances of coexistence with immigrants. Therefore, as the number of immigrants increases in the future, it is possible that there might be an increase in conservative sentiments toward immigrants, as already evident in the UK and the USA.

Regarding educational background, extant studies have hypothesized that highly educated people are more positive towards immigration than those with lower education levels (e.g., Hamada 2013, Nukaga 2006). However, the effect of educational background was not necessarily confirmed in these studies, as when other variables were controlled for, the effect of educational background was not statistically significant. In this study, highly educated people showed a tendency to support Hierarchical rather than Exclusionary Coexistence, although the effect of educational background was not confirmed for Integrated Coexistence, the most progressive form of coexistence. Therefore, educational background has a limited effect on orientations toward coexistence, and at the least, it does not seem to fulfill the function of promoting the equality of rights.

The results of the analysis in Table 2 indicate that the ability to speak a foreign language, especially English, is important in promoting understandings of a coexistence society within Japanese society. The percentage of immigrants whose native language is English is not very high in the surveyed area of this study, as most immigrants come from South America and Southeast Asia. Therefore, English is not likely to be their mother tongue. As such, the fact that a high level of English speaking skills is a determining factor for coexistence orientations among the Japanese, indicates that English speaking ability has more meaning than mere conversational ability with immigrants. I would like to present two explanations.

First, it is possible that through English speaking ability acquisition, people find positive meaning in communicating with people who are not Japanese. In the formal education system in Japan, people study English for six years: three years in junior high school and three years in high school. Additionally, even at the university level, most universities require English as a compulsory course, and even though such instruction focuses primarily on reading and writing, by the time a college-bound individual finishes school, he or she will have ultimately learned English for nearly ten years.<sup>10</sup>

However, how to prioritize the four essential language skills has long been debated, and how to improve not only reading and writing skills, but also speaking skills has become problematized (MEXT 2014). The fact that English speaking ability is tied to a positive coexistence orientation may reflect the possibility that the act of communicating in English with people from English-speaking countries may lead to positive attitudes toward communicating with people with different cultural backgrounds from non-English speaking countries. Currently, the Japanese government has positioned English as the common international language, and is promoting improvements in English speaking skills. The results of this analysis indicate that because learning to speak English helps cultivate international perspectives among the Japanese people, the government's efforts to improve the populace's English speaking abilities is a policy that could be effective in constructing a healthy coexistence society.

However, it is also possible that the significance of English-speaking abilities may not always be positive. This is the second explanation. The international perspective cultivated through the acquisition of English-speaking abilities is ultimately an extension of the understandings of the

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<sup>10</sup> Recently, English has begun to be incorporated as a class in elementary school, and it is evident that import has been placed on English as the international *lingua franca* (MEXT 2013).

common ground shared with Western society, so the positive attitude of coexistence that the Japanese have, may merely be an unconsciously imagined coexistence with immigrants from Western societies in particular. As mentioned above, although there is an opportunity to learn English over the mid- to long-run in Japan, in daily life, it is difficult to acquire skills in foreign languages other than English, unless one voluntarily attends a language school or selects a second foreign language in college. In this way, exclusionary stereotypes such as “foreign language is English” and “conversations with immigrants involve English,” may form. Thus, even if people with strong English speaking abilities have a positive understanding of a coexistence society, they may have an inaccurate image of who the coexisting partner is. People may expect an opportunity to test their own English speaking abilities with immigrants from Western countries. However, as shown in Table 1, in reality, many immigrants are from countries whose official language is not English, so their fragile “expectations” for English conversation may crumble.

Interactions with immigrants was also statistically significant in the Integrated and Hierarchical Coexistence models, suggesting its importance for the promotion of understandings of a coexistence society within Japan. Previous studies have repeatedly pointed out that interactions with immigrants cultivate positive attitudes toward immigrants (for example, Nukaga 2006, Hamada 2013, Ohtsuki 2013). These studies measured interactions with immigrants based on whether they had foreign friends or acquaintances.

The theoretical explanation that a positive attitude towards coexistence in society will develop through friendly interactions with immigrants in daily life (i.e. a multicultural network) seems a bit optimistic considering the fact that some Western countries that have accepted immigrants and refugees have started to become more restrictive in their approaches to immigration.<sup>11</sup> However,

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<sup>11</sup> Drawing from Allport’s “contact hypothesis (1954),” Brown (1995) points out that simple interactions

in contemporary Japanese society, where the immigrant population is small and everyday interactions with immigrants are rare occurrences, daily interactions as friends or acquaintances are effective social opportunities for promoting understandings of a coexistence society with immigrants. As the number of immigrants increases in the future, it is unclear whether such interactions will continue to enable the stable maintenance of positive understandings of coexistence. At that stage, to promote positive attitudes, in addition to interactions that are just based on friendships, it might – as the series of “contact hypothesis” studies (Brown 1995) assert – be necessary to engage in meaningful interactions. Nonetheless, for a highly ethnically homogeneous society like Japan to aim for an immigration policy that protects the human rights of immigrants while accepting them, a policy that promotes daily opportunities for interactions among people is precisely what is realistically necessary. I further elaborate on the promotion of interactions with immigrants in the next analysis below.

In Table 1, neighborhood relationships are also a determining factor of coexistence orientation, with neighborhood relationships tending to bring about Integrated rather than Exclusionary Coexistence orientations. The aforementioned relationship between interactions with immigrants and increased understandings of coexistence with immigrants, is not surprising if we consider how both concepts contain multicultural elements. However, in addition, I would also like to emphasize that the effect of the neighborhood relationship found in this study is a unique finding. Here, neighborhood relationships of the Japanese are considered to be ethnically homogeneous networks. This is because, as previously mentioned, immigrants compose 2% of the population of the targeted survey area, and considering the sheer remaining population of Japanese, it is inevitable that neighborhood relationships will consist of interactions between Japanese people. In other

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may actually increase hostility towards outside groups.

words, the interactions between Japanese people in the form of neighborhood relationships (i.e. homogeneous relationships), are a factor in forming heterogeneous relationships of coexistence between the Japanese and immigrants.

As studies that call for the retreat from multiculturalism have noted, the efforts of individuals of each cultural group to respect each other's culture while mutually engaging in non-interference may ultimately lead to divisions in society (for example, Colombo 2015). If this is the case, the homogeneous interactions between the Japanese presented in this study may result in negative attitudes toward coexistence. However, the results of this study suggest that increases in homogeneity help understandings of heterogeneity. It is possible that the reason why homogeneous interactions had no negative effects on understandings of heterogeneity may simply be because in Japanese society, where the immigrant population is small, an increase in immigration is not yet recognized as a definite threat. Therefore, the fact that there is no threat because there are low numbers suggests that, in the future, there is a possibility that if the number of immigrants increases, ethnically homogeneous interactions may lead to critical attitudes towards heterogeneity.

One could also argue that another reason why homogeneous interactions have a positive effect on understandings of heterogeneity is that, given the backdrop of Japanese society's declining and aging population, there is a drastic dearth of personnel who can assume roles of building the local communities. After the Second World War, welfare policies were mainly run by the state or companies. However, due to the long-term recession and the declining population since the 1990s, government support for welfare policies has seen a declining trend. Public organizations such as municipalities have engaged in policy changes that enhance welfare through mutual help schemes among residents rather than public assistance (Ishida 2015). Because those engaged in neighborhood relationships are mostly connected to local communities through these relationships,

they see the decreases in public assistance for welfare as clear and present realities. It may be that those residents who perceive such crises in the local community accept immigrants as a scarce resource that could inherit the reins for the local community's future.

Either way, the fact that interpersonal neighborhood relationships, which in Japan are homogeneous, lead to positive attitudes towards heterogeneity, indicates that merely enhancing support for immigrants is not enough as Japanese society plunges into a new stage of multicultural coexistence. Rather, I would like to emphasize that the results of this analysis suggests that it is necessary to also simultaneously support improvements to the Quality of Life of Japanese people by promoting local community participation (i.e. neighborhood relationships).

## 7-2 Determining factors of interactions with immigrants

Upon examining the determining factors of multicultural coexistence orientations, Table 2 above finds effects for age, English speaking ability, interactions with immigrants, and neighborhood relationships. The tendency for interactions with immigrants to reduce negative attitudes towards immigrants has specifically been verified in previous studies. Therefore, in the following analysis, I take interactions with immigrants as the dependent variable, and examine its determining factors.

**Table 3. Logistic Regression Results: Determinants of Contact with Immigrants**

	B	S.D.	Exp(B)	P
Intercept	-2.486	0.404	0.083	0.000

Sex_Female=0	0.270	0.131	1.310	0.039
Age	-0.022	0.005	0.979	0.000
Degree_Low=0	-0.151	0.140	0.860	0.281
Family Income	0.013	0.037	1.013	0.719
English skill	0.609	0.086	1.839	0.000
Third language skill	0.756	0.114	2.129	0.000
Neighborhood	0.303	0.085	1.354	0.000

N=1297

$\chi^2=242.489$  \*\*\*

Nagelkerke  $R^2=0.231$

Table 3 presents the results of a logistic regression with Japanese interactions with immigrants as the dependent variable. Gender, age, English speaking ability, third language speaking ability, and neighborhood relationships were significantly associated with the dependent variable ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). For gender, men tend to interact with immigrants more than women, but this trend reflects the fact that in recent years, immigrants have come to Japan for economic activities, and because in Japanese society there is a gender divide – typified by full-time housewives – along the lines of the labor market and domestic labor, Japanese men are the ones who tend to have interactions with immigrants in the workplace. Furthermore, if we consider the fact that many immigrant workers are engaged in blue-collar work (Kajita et al., 2005), it is easy to imagine why Japanese men have more opportunities for interactions with immigrants than Japanese women. Regarding age, similar to the analysis above, younger individuals tend to interact more with immigrants than older individuals. This could be because compared to older individuals, younger individuals have more opportunities for social interactions in general.

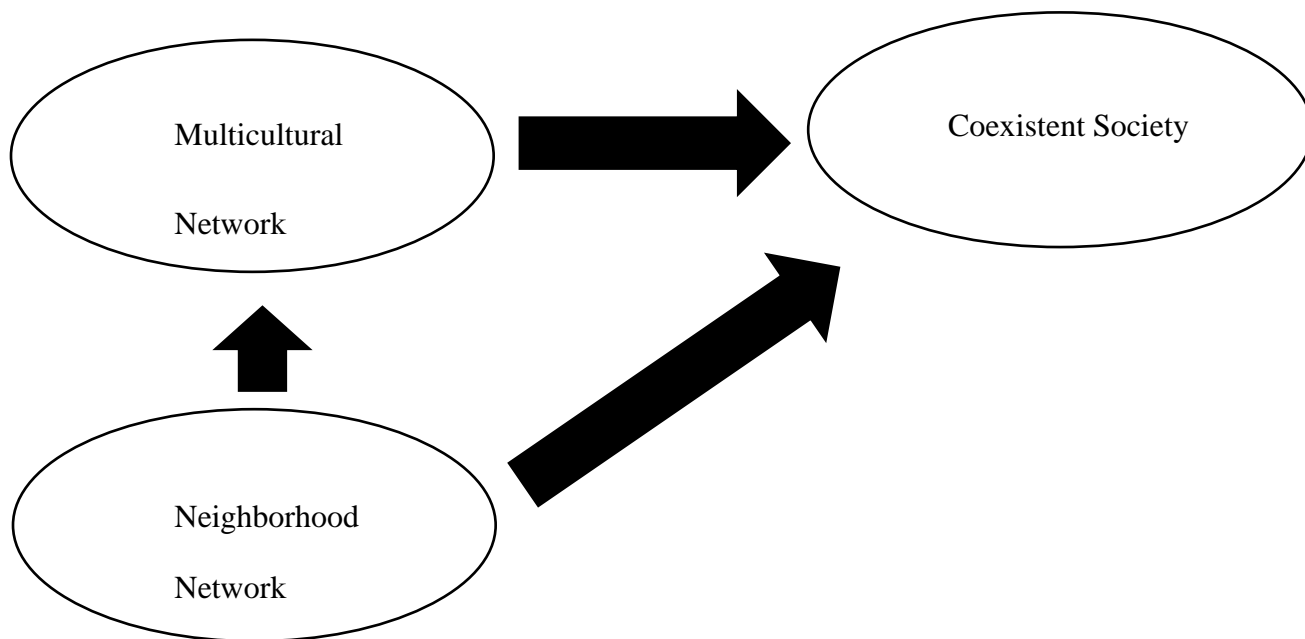
It is also not surprising that high levels of foreign language ability lead to interactions with



immigrants. If the Japanese language ability of immigrants is low, then the foreign language ability of the Japanese becomes the only means by which communication with immigrants can take place. Furthermore, it is notable that high levels of English speaking skills are linked to interactions with immigrants, but not only with those from English-speaking countries. As mentioned earlier, among the immigrant groups in this study's targeted area, the proportion of European and North American immigrants – who are assumed to be from English-speaking countries – is low, and immigrants from South America and Southeast Asia account for the majority. Despite this, the result that a high level of English speaking ability leads to interactions with immigrants indicates that for both the Japanese and immigrants, English is a communication tool used as a common international language.

Finally, I will discuss the effects of neighborhood relationships. People who have developed neighborhood relationships tend to experience interactions with immigrants. As previously shown in the analysis results, neighborhood relationships, or ethnically homogeneous networks, are a determining factor for coexistence orientations. But this relationship is mediated by heterogeneous interactions with immigrants, or multicultural networks as homogeneous neighborhood relationships are a determining factor for multicultural networks, which are themselves a determinant of coexistence orientations.

#### **Figure 4. Towards a Coexistent Society in Japan**



The study's findings in terms of interactions with immigrants is schematized in the diagram above (Figure 4). A multicultural network of interactions with immigrants and a network of neighborhood relationships among the Japanese were identified as the direct determining factors for the promotion of understandings of a coexistence society. Additionally, the network of neighborhood relationships is also a determining factor for multicultural networks.

## 8. From their problem to ours

In Japanese society, characterized by high ethnic homogeneity, accepting immigrants is a major change that has emerged in tandem with globalization. The acceptance of heterogeneity in the form of the acceptance of immigrants has redefined the homogeneity that is a fundamental aspect of Japanese society.

In this study, I examined the concept of “multicultural coexistence” – which is ambiguous as both an academic and policy term – and classified multicultural coexistence into four categories

based on orientations toward equal rights and orientations on communication. These categories are Integrated Coexistence, Hierarchical Coexistence, Aversive Coexistence, and Exclusionary Coexistence. On top of this, I argued that Integrated Coexistence is the most positive type of coexistence society, and examined the determining factors of orientations toward this type of coexistence. The results of the analysis indicated that in contrast to the many immigrants who were oriented towards Integrated Coexistence, there were only a relatively small proportion of Japanese people who thought similarly. Although immigrants desired coexistence with the Japanese, many Japanese people were reluctant to coexist with immigrants. Furthermore, I highlighted English speaking ability, interactions with immigrants, and neighborhood relationships as determining factors of orientations of coexistence. Additionally, the results of the analysis on the determining factors of interactions with immigrants found that homogeneous relationships like neighborhood relationships have a positive effect on heterogeneous relationships such as those involving interactions with immigrants.

The reasons why Japanese people are reluctant to live in a coexistence society are beyond the scope of this study. However, one reason that could be raised is that accepting immigrants solely due to labor market reasoning is not attractive to most Japanese. As studies that call for the retreat from multiculturalism have noted, the acceptance of minorities can have negative implications for people who already suffer from inequality in the host society (typically, women) (Okin 1999). Accepting immigrants as labor power can reduce the potential demand for women and the less educated. To guarantee a place for their activities, a passive attitude towards coexistence with immigrants is taken. If this explains the passive attitude towards coexistence among the Japanese, it is important to rethink the necessity of coexistence with immigrants in the first place. In other words, it is not a matter of labor market demand, but a matter of the promotion of understandings

for a coexistence society that protects human rights.

Currently, the Japanese government has not actively put forth a long-term vision for accepting immigrants (Kajita et al., 2005; Ohtsuki 2016). Given this, it is possible that the acceptance of immigrants through the principles of competition will accelerate, leading to larger discrepancies between immigrants and Japanese people in what coexistence means. To avoid such discrepancies, it would be desirable for the government to present a vision of coexistence from a human rights perspective. In other words, the social policy that is desirable for achieving a coexistence society is not a policy for “them,” the immigrants, but a policy for “us,” not as Japanese, but as fellow human beings.

Even the fact that homogeneous neighborhood relationships have a positive effect on immigrants as a heterogeneous existence, suggests that a shift in thinking “from them to us” is the key to promoting a coexistence society. In other words, the promotion of multicultural coexistence does not solely entail support for immigrants. Support for the Japanese along the lines of improvements to their Quality of Life through enhancements to their neighborhood networks, is also an important consideration that is necessary for the promotion of a coexistence society. It can be interpreted that the transition from multiculturalism to social cohesion that occurred due to the social divisions the former precipitated, can be interpreted as Western societies’ attempt to transform the paradigm “from them to us.” However, for a highly homogenous society like Japan’s, defining multicultural coexistence as “our problem” may be more difficult than it is for Western societies. Therefore, we must uphold human rights in our acceptance of heterogeneity, and fix our gaze on measures that support the realization of such commitments.

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