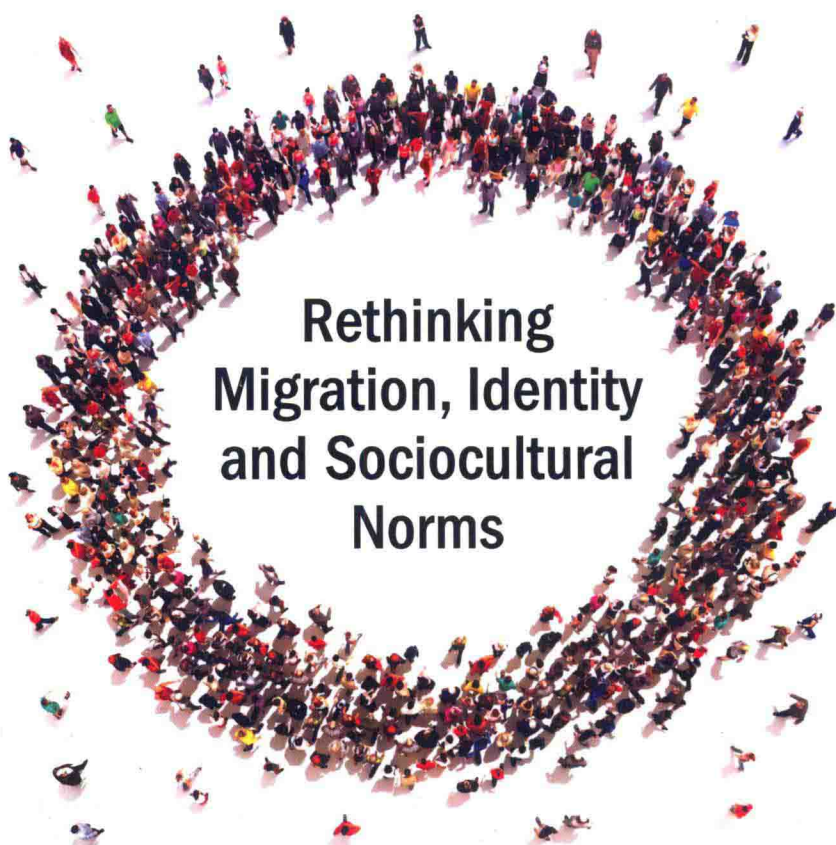


JAPAN'S DEMOGRAPHIC REVIVAL

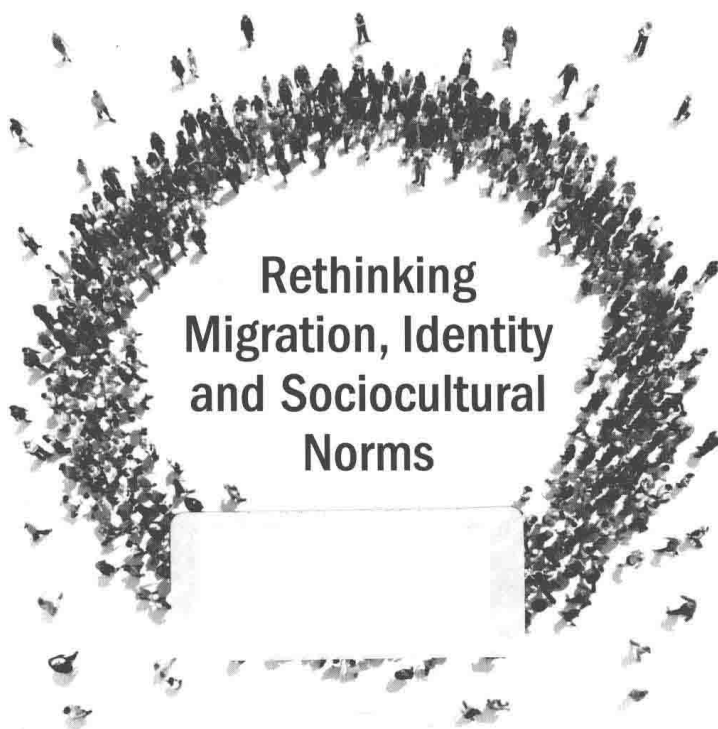


**Rethinking
Migration, Identity
and Sociocultural
Norms**

STEPHEN ROBERT NAGY

Editor

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International Christian University, Japan

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Rethinking Migration, Identity and Sociocultural Norms

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**Rethinking Migration, Identity
and Sociocultural Norms**

*We hope that this volume can provide meaningful analyses
and suggestions to mitigate some of the demographic challenges
that lie ahead for Japan.*

Foreword

When I was asked by Dr. Stephen Nagy to write the Foreword on his book, I was honored so say the least since I have great admiration for this young prolific scholar, whom I have met in several graduate seminars and international conferences over the years. Although I am not a trained demographer, I have done several studies on the economic perspective of temporary labor migration and the movement of natural persons as one of the modes of trade in services. While I have been in Japan on several occasions over the years as Visiting Professor to a number of academic institutions, I do not consider myself as a Japan expert. As an author of books myself, I know that writing the Foreword is a privileged given to someone that author respect highly. So I am indeed grateful for the privilege and honor given me by an expert on Japan Studies from the International Christian University, Tokyo (ICU) to write the Foreword for this comprehensive book.

The book is a welcome, if not a necessary, development in the area of applied demography as it explores the frontiers of knowledge in this field. The major contribution of the book is to go beyond the orthodox response to the challenges of a graying population. After reaping the demographic dividend brought about by low fertility and mortality rates, the challenge of a graying population and an impending decline in population in the future is envisaged to be dismal for the Japanese economy, polity, society, and international competitiveness.

The immigration option is the demographers' orthodox prescription in such a real challenge. Allowing the entry of foreigners to replace the decline in population caused by internal factors is implemented for the purpose of mitigating the dire consequences on social savings, decline in economic activities, political shake-up, and technological set back brought about by population shrinkage. This immigration option has been pursued successfully by the governments of the United States, Canada, and Australia in shaping their economies, political structures, societal make-up, and international competitiveness. However, the collection of essays in this book suggests that adopting the immigration option in a country like Japan may be too simplistic. It is for this reason that I consider the book unorthodox in its treatment of the demographic challenges of Japan. But the authors are pursuing the unorthodox path not just to be different but more importantly to be more realistic.

In developing the frame to understand the demographic challenges faced by Japan, the editor emphasized the multifaceted nature of this contemporary phenomenon. It should be understood along the ethno-cultural themes that pervade in the concept of Japanese identity as applied in citizenship and nationality. The thematic frame also includes some of the major structural, organizational, and institutional obstacles in "coupling, marriage, and childbearing" as well as in time allocation between work and non-work that may have contributed to the rapid decline in fertility rates over time. The third component of the frame includes the difficulties in social integration of foreigners brought about by organizational and cultural factors. The fourth element of the analytical frame is a set of policy options. Among the alternatives being contemplated include the role of inclusive immigration policies, and social integrative initiatives.

Using this frame, the editor assembled essays, case studies, and narratives written by scholars and structured them into three parts. The first part covered the ethno-cultural and structural obstacles in accepting foreign entrants into the Japanese society. The second part focused on organizational and institutional challenges in integrating foreigners as well as the disincentive system in enhancing fertility rates. The third part includes policy options beyond the simple immigration option. It covers the adoption of inclusive immigration policies and programs for social integration of foreigners.

But beyond the inclusion of well articulated essays, convincing case studies and insightful narratives in understanding the contemporary demographic challenges of Japan, there is another major contribution of the book. The collection of articles in the book gives us a glimpse of Japan. The way the editor excellently arranged the essay and put them into the frame gives the reader insights on the Japanese as a people, their behavior, culture, and various dimensions of Japanese social life aside from understanding its demographic challenges. For this reason, the book is a must read for students and scholars of Japan studies not only for its contributions in understanding the implications of a graying and declining population in Japan but also for appreciating Japanese culture and social life.

I congratulate Dr. Nagy for excellently weaving and connecting these essays beyond demography. We should thank him for compiling these relevant essays that tells us about Japanese culture, society, family, social relations, economy, business, and international relations.

Tereso S. Tullao Jr., PhD
Professor of Economics
De La Salle University-Manila
October 14, 2013

Preface

Japan's shrinking and graying population have been prominent stories in newspapers and the subject of numerous academic articles and books. In both cases, mass media and academia often portray Japan as being incompetent at best and racist at worst in terms of reversing its population decline. Arguments as to why Japan has been incapable of reversing shrinking population vary but often immigration is presented as *the* key to solving Japan's demographic atrophy.

Having lived in Japan for more than 12 years and conducted extensive research on Japan's migration and migrant policies (multicultural coexistence/social integration), I was astutely aware of the integration problems migrants faced when settling in Japan. Sharing these views with many of the contributors to this volume, we came to the conclusion that a more comprehensive strategy needed to be employed to deal with Japan's (and many East Asian countries) demographic problem. Simply, if a comprehensive approach was not employed to tackle Japan's demographic conundrum, even with the influx of immigrants into Japan, immigrants, because of structural, cultural, and organizational hurdles, would make the same choices as Japanese in terms of limiting the size of their families, ultimately reproducing the current demographic dilemma.

Key questions that were raised in our discussions included: What were the indigenous causes driving population decline? How were these related to culture? How was the structure of the socio-economic system of Japan contributing to demographic decline? How did the organizational behavior of Japanese corporations drive Japanese people to choose not to marry or have children? What changes were needed at the cultural, organizational, and structural level to encourage Japanese people to reverse this trend?

Considering these questions, I attempted to bring together a group of scholars who could address each of these questions from several disciplinary perspectives. Hand-in-hand with this multi-disciplinary approach to examining Japan's demographic challenges, I thought it prudent to divide the volume into three parts. Part One includes three chapters explaining the endogenous, ethno-cultural, and structural obstacles that link ethno-cultural understandings of citizenship and nationality. Part Two consists of six chapters that provide us insight into the societal barriers that exist in Japan to address demographic issues. Lastly, Part Three shifts its focus away from identifying and analyzing the structural, organizational, and cultural factors that are contributing factors in Japan's demographic challenge towards chapters that are policy oriented.

The contributors to this volume hope that the essays included will provide scholars interested in Japan and migration studies with intellectual stimulus and insight into the complexity of Japan's demographic challenge. In addition, we envision this volume being of interest to scholars and students interested in gender issues, religion as an integrative mechanism for new migrants, Japanese corporate organizational practices and population decline. Lastly, this volume has been organized to also provide transnational comparisons, state-led, top-down approaches, local/grassroots-led, bottom-up approaches and strategies to dealing with demographic change. This was purposeful, as the editor and contributors to this volume believe that, unorthodox and out of the box thinking is

necessary to help Japan and other countries facing a similar demographic conundrum.

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About the Editor



Stephen Robert Nagy has been an Associate Professor in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the International Christian University, Tokyo since September 2014. Previously he was an Assistant Professor at the Department of Japanese Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong from December 2009 to January 2014. He obtained his PhD from Waseda University, Japan in International Relations/ Studies in December 2008 and worked as a Research

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Acknowledgments

I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to all the contributors of this volume for their thoughtful approaches in dealing with one of Japan's (and some East Asian countries') most important challenges.

I have also enjoyed the support and hard work of Ms. Helen Chan Yim Ting, my dedicated Research Assistant and Mr. John M. Skutlin, an M.Phil student at the Department of Japanese Studies, CUHK. Both spent a large number of hours on ensuring that this edited volume was coherent and edited with precision and accuracy. Without their dedication, I would not have been able to complete this volume on schedule.

The reviewers of the volume also played a key role in providing constructive suggestions on each paper for which I am very thankful.

It is also necessary to extend my thanks to those organizations and individuals that have helped with my research along the way such as the Japan Immigration Policy Institute (JIPI), Waseda University's Global Institute for Asian Regional Integration (GIARI), the Salzburg Fellowship, The Chinese University of Hong Kong's International Affairs Research Centre (IRAC) and the Department of Japanese Studies at The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the International Christian University, Tokyo.

Lastly, I would like to express my sincerest thanks to my family who has supported me throughout this project and many more.

Stephen Robert Nagy
(Editor and Contributor)

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