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研究課題名（和文）Social inclusion and integration of diversity: Employers, newcomer migrant workers, and community response in Japan

研究課題名（英文）Social inclusion and integration of diversity: Employers, newcomer migrant workers, and community response in Japan

研究代表者

ロバーツ グレンダ . S (Roberts, Glenda S.)

早稲田大学・国際学院（アジア太平洋研究科）・教授

研究者番号：40308242

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研究成果の概要（和文）：本研究の初期段階からの関心は、農業分野の外国人労働者が、雇用者や関係者、周辺地域の人々にとってどのような存在であるかであった。その後2019年に新しい仕組み「特定技能外国人制度」がはじまったことで、同制度がいかに行われているか、既存の「技能実習制度」とどのように一線を画しているのかなどの問題意識を抱いた。3年間、愛知県と京都府の外国人を雇用する農家（耕種や養鶏、酪農）および外国人を採用する人材派遣会社、外国人が住む地域の住民や行政担当者、さらに建設業者を、数回にわたって訪問し調査した結果、雇用者にとって外国人労働力が必須であること、しかしその受け入れの仕組みは数々の矛盾があることを発見した。

研究成果の学術的意義や社会的意義

日本の農業の未来は、危機的状況にある。就農人口の高齢化と国全体の人口構造変化の影響を受け、深刻な労働力不足に陥っている。本研究が明らかにしたのは、農家は外国人の労働力に頼らざるを得ないにもかかわらず、誰をどのように、どのくらいの期間雇用する（できる）のか不確かな状況を強いられたり、また昨今の法改正により外国人が長期間滞在する可能性が高まったにもかかわらず、彼らの長期的な能力開発や地域への包摂という重要な課題についても現場に丸投げされていることだ。本研究は移民研究や移民政策をはじめとし、日本社会の労働、社会変化、地方活性化等の領域にも貢献すると考える。

研究成果の概要（英文）：We have been interested in how foreign workers in agriculture are viewed by their employers, their handlers, and the communities where they reside. We wanted to know how stakeholders were utilizing the new Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) system being put in place from 2019, and how they were coordinating the new system with the existing system of TITP. Ultimately, we hoped to better understand the place of foreign workers in Japan's agriculture, which is facing a severe demographic decline that threatens Japan's food security. Over 3 years we visited poultry, dairy, vegetable, fruit, and cut flower farms multiple times, in Aichi and Kyoto prefectures, as well as the construction business owners. From these employers, we learned that foreign labor power is necessary to all phases of production. While they are willing to mechanize to an extent, many jobs need human hands to accomplish. The farmers in our study saw foreign workers as extremely valuable.

研究分野：社会学

キーワード：Migration Foreign workers Agriculture Japan Social inclusion

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研究成果報告

Glenda S. Roberts, Professor, GSAPS, Waseda University  
Noriko Fujita, Adjunct Researcher, WIAPS, Waseda University

1 . 研究開始当初の背景

Japan is gradually becoming a nation that depends on diverse migrant labor. The example of Germany shows that it is important to integrate immigrant populations into the mainstream early in the migration process to avoid later conflicts and mutual mistrust. Thus far, however, the Japanese government has produced no *national* agenda or budget to foster social inclusion of immigrants, despite expanding the categories of acceptable foreign workers, which is now called the SSW (Specified Skilled Worker) scheme, in order to ease the labor shortages accompanying drastic population decline. Until we started the research in the end of 2018, little was known about the ways and limitations of including migrants at local levels.

The key theoretical concept of this study was social inclusion. It is “ *the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society—improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity.* (cont.) ” (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/social-inclusion#1>). This research sought to discover whether the Japanese people are open to social inclusion for the increasing influx of foreign migrant workers, and if so, how they envision it.

2 . 研究の目的

The purpose of this research was to reveal the public opinion in light of new governmental initiatives toward acceptance of guest workers who started working through the Special Zones’ [ *tokku* ] projects and the SSW scheme in agriculture and other fields, as well as to understand what possibilities for social inclusion there would be. Until recently, Japan had not directly accepted *workers* as such in manual labor categories, only the highly-educated and skilled, as well as caregivers on EPA agreements. These new policies indicated an incremental shift toward opening up worker migration based on a perceived need in certain sectors, hence it was significant to study this new development at the time of its inception. There had been little research on what employers and communities desire for the future of foreign migrants in their midst. Most research had focused on the migrants themselves. This research sheds light on the nexus of employer-employee-community as Japan enters a new phase of accepting migrant workers.

3 . 研究の方法

The study utilized the perspective of political sociology and anthropology to investigate the status of social inclusion of migrants at several levels: the macro policy level, the meso level of local government, the employers and community organizations, and the micro level of individual Japanese citizens. We carried out 48 qualitative interviews with management organizations for farming, including

vegetable, flower, poultry, and dairy farmers, MAFF (The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries) officials, and local government officials, in Kyoto and Aichi from December 2018 to January 2022. We chose these prefectures as our fieldsites because both prefectures were involved in the Special Zones' [Tokku] projects of foreigners for agricultural support. Although the farms in Aichi had hired none from the supporters' program, a Kyoto dispatcher who operates both this program and the SSW scheme clarified that the *tokku* scheme can be seen in-between the TITP and SSW schemes. Therefore, fieldwork in two prefectures provided us with good insights to compare all the systems and practices. In addition to the fieldwork in the agricultural sites, Roberts conducted three interviews at the construction industry in metropolitan Tokyo. Under the COVID-19 pandemic, we also conducted Zoom interviews with the Kyoto dispatcher, an agricultural researcher, and one farmer in Aichi.

Beside the interviews, we attended a monthly meeting of farmers who had hired TITP foreigners, held in 2018 by a supervising organization. Invited by the farmers, we also joined informal meetings held in Tokyo in 2019 of politicians and other stakeholders including researchers. We also attended a meeting of members of a local cooperative association and of farmers who sought to promote their businesses. We observed a Japanese language school held by an NPO and visited the residents' association of one community in Kyoto.

#### 4 . 研究成果

Through our research on the farms in Aichi and Kyoto prefectures, as well as on the construction industry, we have found several critical insights concerning both the future social integration of foreign workers and the future viability of agriculture in Japan.

##### (1) Social Integration

###### 1. Problem of labor costs

Although the government encourages farmers to mechanize as much as possible to increase productivity, we found that farmers see limits to this approach due to high cost of technology as well as the limits of technologies. While some farmers have invested considerably in green houses and equipment, they still see the need for the manual workers in many aspects of farming operations. From the viewpoint of farmers, labor cost is a huge concern. The current regulations stipulate that TITP workers must receive at least the minimum wages of the locale. Yet, SSWI workers must be paid at a higher level. Farmers expect higher productivity from the SSWI but they do not want to pay significantly higher wages unless the productivity is significantly higher than that of TITP workers. Yet SSWI is not currently operating as a "step-up system." In some cases, farmers told us that there were TITP workers whose skills were superior to those of SSWI workers who had spent less time in Japan.

Under the COVID-19 conditions, the labor cost situation took on new

complexities. For instance, some farms had to retain workers who had been scheduled to return home, while other farms lost workers who managed to return home yet could not secure new workers to replace them. Dispatchers had to pay extra cost of quarantine and PCR test fees. Furthermore, one farmer discussed the problem of additional fees charged by the sending country to reissue the work permit for workers who had already been staying in Japan. As Xiang and Lindquist (2018) have pointed out, labor migration occurs within a greater infrastructure that includes sending countries' institutions. These negotiations over the price of workers' permits, etc. are not within the jurisdiction of the farmer to decide. If labor costs are too high, farmers will eschew hiring workers; if they are too low, workers will eschew coming to work in Japan, or they may enter industries paying higher wages.

## 2. Length of time of contract

While at the current time, SSWI workers in farming will only be allowed to remain working in Japan for five years, in fact, many of these workers have been employed on Japanese farms for much longer than this, because the vast majority of SSWI people have come from the TITP system first. This means that by the time they finish SSWI, they will have spent up to ten years working in Japan, at close to the minimum wage, with restricted social rights, and with no access to any rigorous or systematic Japanese language educational program. Farmers told us that some workers indeed barely speak Japanese though they have been working in Japan for several years. Farmers also mentioned that they fear employing a young worker for too long, lest that worker miss the opportunity to marry and have children in her home country. SSWI workers do not have the right to family unification, so children and spouses left in the home country are not able to join them in Japan. While one could argue this is not an ethical problem for very short-term workers, it raises concern for those whose employment in Japan spans a decade or more as is the case with many SSWI workers. The political scientist Ruhs, in his seminal work on short-term migration labor schemes (2013: 177), notes that from a human rights perspective, the longest contract period allowed should be four years, after which migrants should enjoy family reunification, access to permanent residency and other social benefits. The larger problem here is how workers could be well integrated into local society in the future. Past research on Germany (Rauer and Bernarz-Braun in Vogt and Roberts, 2011) has attested that for migrants to thrive, the national government must provide thick support in terms of language and training opportunities. Such support is lacking at present.

## 3. Community integration

Currently there is no consensus on the desirability of having foreign workers integrate into the social life of the community. In small rural communities

where there are many elderly people, farmers related that elders in the community showed hesitation to incorporate foreigners into the local life of the community. These farmers thought that with time as younger generations take over, this reluctance will diminish. In more populous areas where there are migrants working in several sectors, local government were more positive and supportive of foreign migrants' integration. There is diversity in reception toward foreign migrants even within one prefecture. More research is needed to determine the reasons behind this.

## (2) Social mobility

Our research has shown that currently, there are no opportunities for migrants on farms to acquire more skills and increase their wages. Farmers told us that if workers could acquire drivers' licenses, and learn to use forklifts and other equipment, those workers could earn a higher wage and would be of greater use to the farm. The fact that they cannot move up in the system is not a problem for truly short-term workers, but as one dispatcher told us, for longer-term workers, this poses a problem. They could form an underclass in the society due to their inability to properly support their livelihood. This is not only a problem of wages, but also the access to education and training for themselves and for their families. This cannot happen without investment of the national government into systematic education and training. Currently there is a pressing problem of succession in the farming industry. In the future, this problem could be partially addressed by the grooming of foreign migrant entrepreneurs as successors. For this to come about, education on management skills would be also necessary. This is beginning to take place in the construction industry for SSWI, as we learned from interviewing construction business owners.

To conclude

There is lack of vision re how these essential workers should be integrated into the greater society. The SSWI system is placed on the top of the existing TITP system, but COVID-19 has showed us the existing pipeline is precarious. There are many contradictions in this schema that must be addressed for the smooth operation of foreign migrant integration going forward.

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〔図書〕 計0件

〔産業財産権〕

〔その他〕

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6. 研究組織

	氏名 (ローマ字氏名) (研究者番号)	所属研究機関・部局・職 (機関番号)	備考
研究分担者	藤田 典子  (Fujita Noriko)  (30898341)	早稲田大学・国際学院 (アジア太平洋研究センター) ・その他 (招聘研究員)    (32689)	

7. 科研費を使用して開催した国際研究集会

〔国際研究集会〕 計0件

8. 本研究に関連して実施した国際共同研究の実施状況

共同研究相手国	相手方研究機関
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