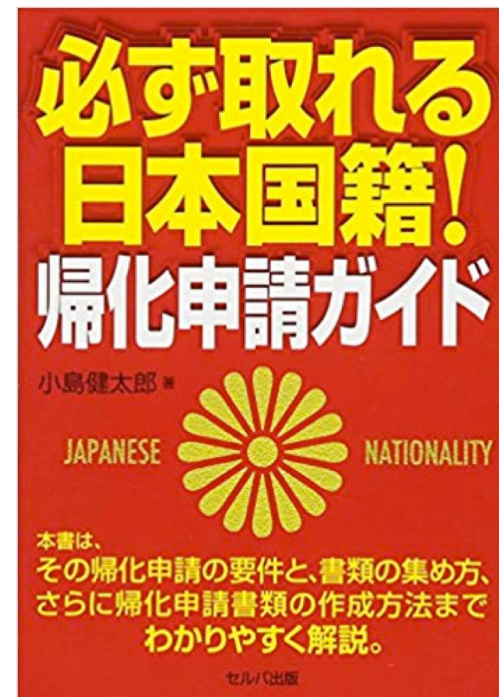




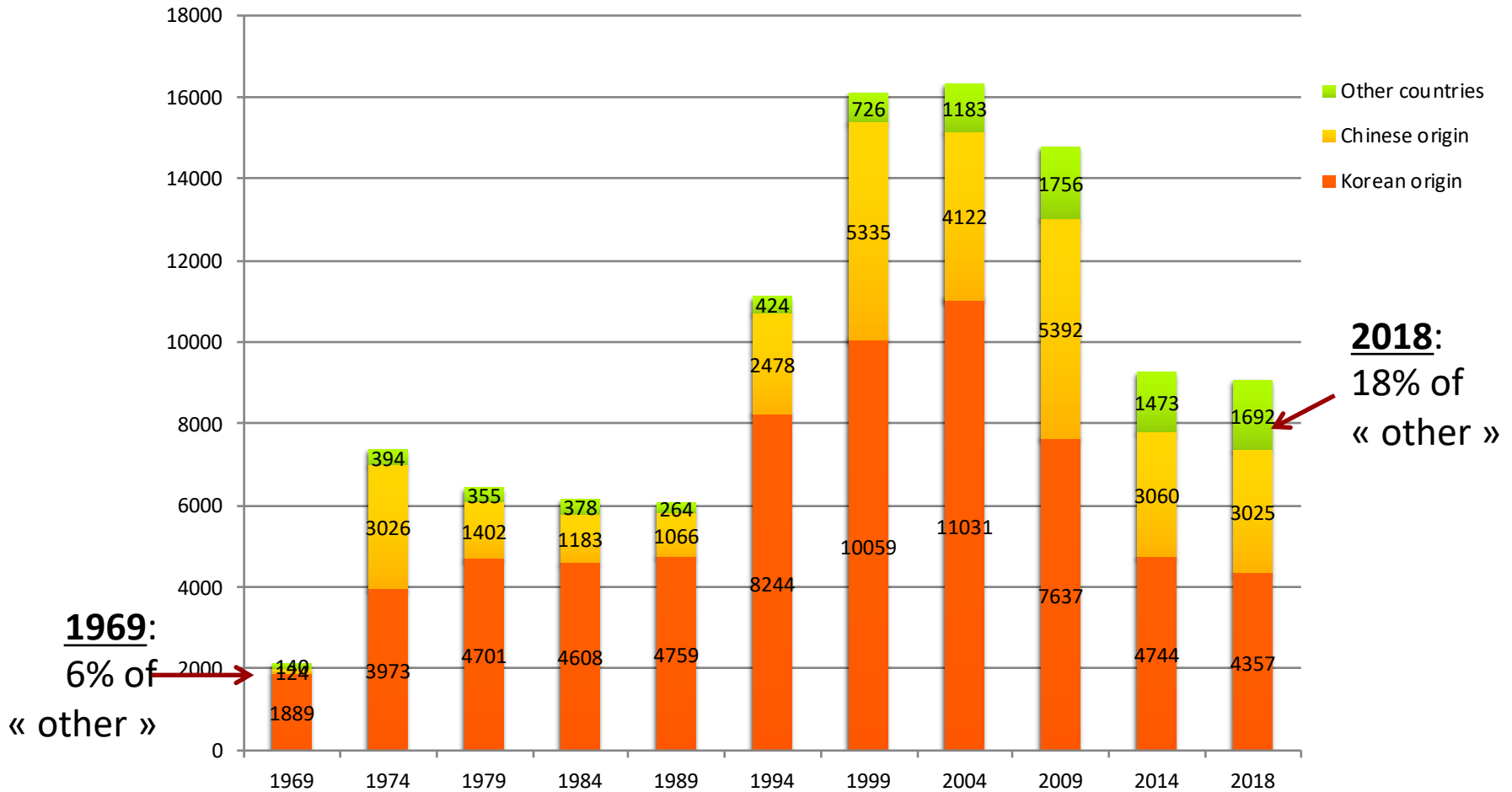
« I am not Japanese »

Identification, Japaneseness and Naturalization strategies of new Japanese citizens



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Citizens of Korea, China and other countries who naturalized to Japan (1969-2018)

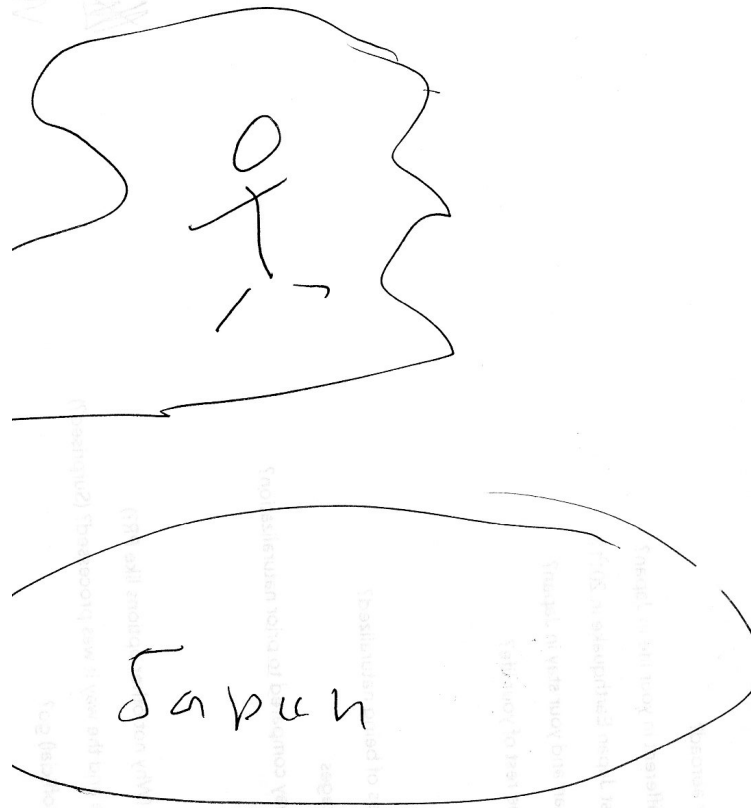


2018: 9,074 naturalizations; 31,451 PR authorized

Naturalization in Japan: Legally easy, Symbolically difficult

Legally easy & advantageous	Symbolically difficult
5 years of residence (10 for PR)	Opaque -> difficult to strategize
No cost for application	Time and resource consuming, stress
Straightforward requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 5-years residence- At least 20 y/o- “Good character”- Not political enemy of the state- Only Japanese citizenship	Renouncing former citizenship (or “taking the risk”) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Renouncing identity, “betrayal”- Estrangement from family
Powerful passport	Discretionary practices
Equal rights to Japanese-born	If rejected, no reason given

Sociogram: Keith (born in the US), 72, married to a Japanese with 2 Japanese children



Scope & Method

- Naturalized citizens (or in application, rejected)
- Main research question:
 - How do naturalized citizens identify (or not) with their country of residence?
- Semi-structured interviews with naturalization applicants (9)
- Sociographs (2)
- In the future :
 - Interviews with « Immigration lawyers », Ministry of Justice officers
 - Manuals & guides for naturalization (to come)
 - Participant observation (to come)

Informants

Name (pseudonyms)	Gender, Age	Place of residence	Job	Family situation	Country of birth	
Oussouby Sacko	M, 50s	Kyoto	University President	Married to Japanese, 2 Japanese-Malian children	Mali	O
<i>Okan</i>	M, 40s	Tokyo	Employee in Trade, Entrepreneur	Married to Turkish	Turkey	O
Eido Inoue	M, 40s	Tokyo	Employee in IT	Married to Japanese, 1 Japanese-American child	US	O
<i>Haeran</i>	F, 30s	Kanagawa Pref.	Employee in Advertisement	Single	China* (ethnic Korean)	X
<i>Kate</i>	F, 40s	Okinawa Pref.	English Teacher	Married to Japanese	Australia*	O
<i>Jia</i>	F, 40s	Ibaraki Pref.	University Lecturer	Dating Japanese	China* (with Japanese ancestry)	O
<i>Ani</i>	M, 50s	Kyoto	University Professor	Dating Japanese	Belgium	O
<i>Keith</i>	M, 70s	Tokyo	Retired (University Professor, freelance journalist)	Married to Japanese, 2 Japanese children	America*	O
<i>Hiro</i>	M, 40s	Aichi Pref.	Machine Operator (freelance journalist)	Married to Filipino, 1 Brazilian child (naturalizing)	Brazil* (3rd generation Nikkeijin)	-

Why Japanese « only legally »?

- Ethnicization of Japanese citizenship
 - Japanese = citizenship + ethnicity + culture
 - Illusion of homogeneity -> if not ethnically Japanese, must be foreign
- Cannot approve or condone ethnic expectation
 - Call for redefinition of « Japaneseness »
- Difficult to secure Japaneseness and thus Japanese identity

Phenotype dilemma: the example of the name strategies

- In katakana, hiragana or kanji
 - タナカ、たなか、田中
- Ethnicity ≠ Phenotype
- Former Chinese citizens: passing or not?
 - Japanese name: renouncing former identity, mutual exclusion of ethnic nationalisms
 - Original name: political statement
- White (and Black?) citizens:
 - Original name: « apolitical » because assumed to be foreign
 - Japanese name: symbolical belonging to Japan

Naming strategies: the example of Haeran

- “Because my name actually is in Chinese, so it’s only kanji, but what the [Ministry of Justice official] said was, “are you going to change your surname?” I said no. My family name is Kim, so he was asking “People are going to know that you’re a foreigner.” “It’s ok. I’m a foreigner.” “And your children will be foreigners too.” I was like “It’s ok”. But yeah, he was kind of, insisting whether I wanted to change my family name.” (Haeran, 34, Employee in Advertisement, Chinese from Korean origin)

(Continued)

- Q: And how did you feel when they were insisting ?
- H: They wanted to, I don't know, they wanted me to blend in? I understand, you know, I totally understand their standpoint. They wanted people to blend in I guess, to be Japanese. For me, growing up as a Korean Chinese, I don't have any belonging. You can ask "Are you Korean?" I'd say yeah. "Are you Chinese?" I'd say yeah. But like, my family name is what I identify myself with. So when they said I could change my family name, I was like "No!"» (Haeran, 34, Employee in Advertisement, Chinese from Korean origin)

Opacity and assimilation

- « When in Rome ... », but to be Japanese is to follow the rules
- Requirement of assimilation until 1980s
- Implicit or imagined? Name and other considerations

Kate (born in Australia), 48, married to a Japanese: display of assimilation

- ➔ Kate “always dressed nicely” and “did all Japanese style greetings” such as *ojama shimasu* when entering the room, *shitsureishimasu* when coming in out of the room.
- ➔ She explains that she “was trying to be as Japanese as possible”. She tried to arrive 5 minutes early at every interview, she used to take off her coat in the lobby instead of in the interview room, to be completely prepared, “**because in traditional Japan**, you have to take off your coat and fold your umbrella before you pass the gate or ring the bell, to be perfectly ready.” She purposely waited for 1 min before her appointment time to go to receptionist and announce she had an appointment. She “was being **super polite in the Kantō way**: never sat down before the officer did, always got up before he did.” (Kate, 46, Language teacher, born in Australia)

Opacity and discretionary practices

- ⇒ **Opacity and possibility for discretionary practices lead naturalization applicants to display assimilatory behavior**
- ⇒ **Assimilatory practices reduce possibility for diversity in Japanese society**