

# Education of Minoritised Ethnic Groups and Social Justice as a Case in Japan

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## 日本におけるマイノリティーの教育と社会公正

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### Abstract

Drawing on Nancy Fraser's frameworks of social justice, this article aims to explore cases and causes of injustice in education among the students of foreign descents as a case in Japan. Exploring Fraser's (2008a) question as to framing of social justice and who to be counted as a member of a community, a research is conducted to examine how economic, cultural, and political injustices give influences on the lives of the students of foreign descents. Reaffirming the issues claimed by Fraser, the research findings reveal limitations of existing political framings to fully address the issues of justice in education. The paper concludes by raising a question regarding social membership and injustices in education in the globalised era.

### Introduction

Drawing on Nancy Fraser's frameworks of social justice, this article aims to explore cases and causes of injustice in education among the students of foreign descents as a case in Japan as one of the highest income countries in the contemporary globalised age. Although education is one of the crucial keys to social inclusion, people often move across the continents in the globalised world to live and work in a better condition, which causes the family to face various educational issues of their children who need to be educated for the future. Without gaining the basic social literacy and understanding the language used in the country where they live, it becomes enormously difficult to access various social resources such as welfare system, employment market, and education as well as to claim for cultural recognition, financial redistribution, and political representation. Thus, an exploratory case study was conducted to investigate the interrelation of the policy of education as a case in Japan and the argument presented by Fraser concerning the framing of social justice. The Japanese educational policy for pupils to foreign descents, or lack of it, poses a significant question as to the framing of social justice in education that

Fraser problematises. Fraser states that accelerated globalisation and multiculturalism brings new issues of justice which are no longer able to be addressed solely by territorial states. She also claims that political misframing obstructs both economic redistribution and cultural recognition, thus, results in severe social injustice. Based on such understandings, cases of educational justice for the pupils of foreign descents in the nation are explored in order to examine injustice in education. The research results describe limitations of political representation as well as financial redistribution and cultural recognition within territorial states, thus, confirm Fraser's discussions of mis-framing of justice. The paper was prepared as an assignment of the PhD in Education and Social Justice in the Department of Educational Research at Lancaster University in the U.K. and I am pleased to acknowledge the contribution of tutors and peers in supporting the development of this study.

### Social Justice in Education and the Argument of Fraser

How can we make sure that the society is just for everyone? Who will be included as a member of the society that can claim for justice? As it is commonly discussed, one of the important concepts related with social justice is equality. In a just society, equal right need to be assured for the members of the society. Everyone should be treated equally and have the right to claim for the political, economic, cultural, and educational needs. Thus, providing equal opportunity is vital for a just society. Moreover, the concept of equality leads to the discourse of equity. If some of the members of the society are disadvantaged in some ways, the disadvantage needs to be considered and shall be compensated by treating them differently with special care and by re-distributing some of the social resources or opportunities.

Furthermore, it is crucial to consider the issue of social membership when discussing social justice in education, regarding who to be included as a member of a society or excluded for what criteria. Should resource redistribution in education, for example, be offered only for the members of certain groups? Should equal opportunity in education be ensured for all the residents of the country or only for those who hold legal status? Although it is an ideal to include every individual worldwide, especially when it comes to resource allocation or financial redistribution, it is yet unrealistic to include every individual universally. As Fraser argues, 'who counts as a subject of justice' (Fraser, 2008b p.283) Fraser identifies at least two types of political injustice, political misrepresentation and political misframing. The former type deals with political under-representation that some groups of people are marginalised and their voices are not sufficiently represented. Furthermore, issues regarding the latter type can be particularly problematic according to Fraser as they 'establish the criteria of social belonging' (Fraser, 2008b p.278), regarding who to be considered as a member of a society and who to be excluded from the membership.

According to Fraser, '[o]vercoming injustice means dismantling institutionalized obstacles to

participatory parity'. (Fraser, 2008b p.277) Fraser also alerts the current forms of identity politics because emphasising on group identity based on marginality or privilege may result in separatism and intolerance and fuel group confrontations (Fraser, 2008a). She also argues that identity politics can be risky since it conceals complexity of individual lives and accelerates reification and simplification of the group identity. She continues and proposes the need to shift from group representation to group recognition not only to avoid identity simplification but also to increase respect and esteem for each group.

Based on the argument of Fraser, Olson (2008) clarifies different aspects of social injustice, identifying three domains of justice. The first domain of justice is economic. Economic injustice is brought by maldistribution and reinforced by social class differentiation. Thus, remedy for it shall be redistribution. The second domain of justice is identified as cultural. Cultural injustice stems from misrecognition. Status is believed to be the form of social differentiation that causes cultural injustice. Therefore, remedy for cultural injustice is sufficient or more accurate recognition. Thirdly, political injustice arises due to political marginalisation. Citizenship is considered as the form of social differentiation that leads to political marginalisation. Therefore, social inclusion is identified as the remedy for it. All of these three domains of injustice, however, are interrelated as cultural misrecognition or political marginalisation often results in economic maldistribution. Similarly, being positioned in lower social class economically, it can be enormously difficult to increase cultural status or to claim for political inclusion. Hence, it is crucial to note that each form of social injustice does not stand alone by itself but is correlated and dependent on each other.

In particular, Fraser problematises the justice in the political sphere in the globalised age. According to Fraser (2008c), in the existing Keynesian-Westphalian frame established after the end of the Second World War, issues of social justice have been applied to the territorial state and the national citizenry, which has increasingly become outdated in the contemporary globalised era since 'the social processes shaping their lives routinely overflow territorial borders'. (Fraser, 2008c, 13) She argues that people have become more vulnerable to transnational forces such as global warming, the spread of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) international terrorism, and transnational corporations. As a result, current political structures have been significantly destabilised, which leads to transformation of the framing and discourse of social justice. With the acceleration of globalisation, Fraser states that claims of social justice cannot be addressed solely to territorial states or exclusively for national citizens. Thus, she poses a crucial meta-level question as to framing of social justice, who to be counted as a member of a political community to claim for justice. Fraser begins by problematising the winner-take-all system of single-member-district, for example, whether the system is genuinely 'just' when the voting system functions to silence the voice of minoritised groups. By setting the frame of the political membership, certain groups of people are excluded to claim for 'the rights to have rights' (Hannah Arendt, in Fraser,

2008c, 19), which Fraser calls as ‘meta-injustice’ (Fraser, 2008c, 19). She discusses that the issues of political mis-framing have been revealed by the acceleration of globalisation as well as multiculturalism that fuels various social movements across country boundaries. Consequently, the transnational movements together with multiculturalism give rise to the new social issues of justice that cannot be addressed by the political framing based on the territorial state of the Keynesian-Westphalian frame. Therefore, the territorial state is no longer the appropriate unit of justice for Fraser. Furthermore, Fraser argues that those who are poor, marginalised, oppressed, and more vulnerable to the transnational forces are blocked and unable to claim for justice due to the existing Keynesian-Westphalia frame. Thus, the existing political territorial framing is the very cause of obstructing effective transnational decision-making concerning social justice, according to Fraser.

If political mis-framing can be a defining factor of injustice in a globalised age, a new frame for social justice needs to be developed. Regarding the question of who to be considered for the political framing, Fraser describes two distinct forms of political discourse. The first is called as the affirmative politics of framing, which is based on the existing framing of territorial state. The affirmative politics of framing considers residents of a modern state or those with political memberships in the community of the modern states as subjects of justice. The second version of the politics of framing is the transformative approach. In the transformative approach, it is recognised that structural causes of social injustice are not territorial, though the transformative approach does not aim to abolish the territorial states. Rather, the transformative approach seeks to change and supplement the current territory-based political framing. Then Fraser expresses that a post-territorial mode of political frame-setting is likely to be the ‘all-affected principle’ (Fraser, 2008c, 24), by defining the ground rules that control social interactions.

In addition to the question of who to consider as subjects of justice, Fraser examines another question of how those individuals as subjects of justice shall be determined. She defines three levels of political injustice such as ordinary-political misrepresentation, misframing, and meta-political misrepresentation. While the first political injustice of ordinary-political misrepresentation refers to silencing the voice of the minoritised groups of people by the winner-take-all system of accumulative voting, the second political injustice of misframing deals with the problem of frame-setting that may wrongly exclude those who need to be counted as consisting the political community. The third level of injustice, meta-political misrepresentation, is concerned with the way how such political framing is developed by states and elites who dominate and monopolize the process of frame-setting by blocking democratic participations of those who are more vulnerable. Fraser states that unless those who are more oppressed and vulnerable to the transnational forces become sufficiently represented in the political sphere, there is almost no way for them to claim for the redistribution or recognition. Therefore, she concludes that a paradigm shift is necessary in the theory of justice.

## Education and Justice as a Case in Japan

Based on the arguments presented by Fraser, the next sections will examine how these forms of economic, cultural, and political injustices give influences on the lives of the pupils of foreign descents as a case in Japan in order to consider social injustice in education and to explore the role of education in the contemporary globalised society.

Japan can be considered as maintaining mostly homogeneous society. According to the Ministry of Justice in Japan, approximately 2,190,000 foreign people hold the Alien Registration Certificates in the nation issued by the Japanese government to stay for longer than 90 days at the end of 2009, which accounts for only 1.7 percent of the total population in Japan, 127,510,000. The Oizumi Town in Gunma Prefecture has the highest foreign population in Japan with 15 percent of the total town population. Nonetheless, those foreign population and those with the Japanese nationality but have family roots in foreign countries are expected to continue rising in the next several decades due to the decreasing birthrate and aging population and to substitute the shrinking domestic labour market of the nation.

Although the country may seem largely homogeneous, there have been two major waves of foreigners entering the nation in the contemporary Japanese history, before and after the end of the Second World War in 1945. Firstly, before the end of the war, many Korean, Taiwanese, and Chinese people are brought to Japan from the former colonised areas and countries in Asia as inexpensive labour forces. After the war, many of them returned their home countries but some of them continue to stay in the nation. Though such forced migrations tend not to be openly discussed in the nation, there are still approximately 497,000 Korean and 656,000 Chinese people living in the country since their ancestor's time as of 2015, according to the Ministry of Justice.

Subsequently, in the late 1980s with the bubble economy boom in the country, many Japanese-descents with Japanese ancestors who migrated to Latin American countries from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century entered the nation as supplementary labour force, seeking employment opportunities. With the rapid economic growth from late 1980s to 1990s, the central government faced the demand to enlarge the labor force. Then they turned to the Japanese descents immigrated to Latin American countries during and after the war and lowered the visa requirements for the second and third generations of Japanese descents. Having experienced some criminal cases and frictions with the local Japanese people, in 2000, The Mori Administration considered the selective admission policy, or selective immigration policy, based on the point system to attract more professional or highly educated skilled workers mainly from Asian countries with higher educational or professional qualifications such as teachers, doctors, and financial analysts rather than unskilled workers employed for routine works, which was submitted as a bill in 2009 and enforced in 2011. Yet, as Oishi (2012) points out, the number of foreign workers entered with the point system stays in a low level. Nevertheless, while opening the job opportunities for the fourth generation of the Japanese descents in Latin American

countries, the central government expects that people from Asian countries will be entering the nation to substitute the shrinking market and labor force as they are considered to be culturally closer.

The nation has always been rather reluctant about accepting foreign people in the society. Regarding refugees, the nation accepted a small number of international refugees in 1978 by expressing the Cabinet Approval regarding the settlement permit of the refugees from Viet Nam due to the appearance of 'boat people' arriving at the coasts of Japan, escaping from communist's regimes built in Viet Nam, Laos, and Cambodia, according to Koizumi (2009). Because of such an incident, Japan officially signed the UN Convention Relating the Status of Refugees in 1981. Nevertheless, the current waves of opening doors to foreign workers are not officially regarded as a part of immigration policy in Japan. In fact, the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expressed on October first, 2014, that his administration will not take the immigrant policy. Thus, the central government regards the foreign workers as well as their children in the nation simply as temporal residents, not as long-term immigrants, since most of them do not hold long-term visas but are only issued with short-term visas of two to three years, even though many of them are staying for a longer period by renewing the visas.

Adaptation of the selective admission policy, for example, is a global trend and may result in creation of another social class in the society that has to tolerate social inequality and injustice. The issue here is not only causing the 'brain-drain' of other countries but also exploitation of those people for the benefits of host countries. Such a policy might cause the elect consciousness among the people of the host countries and lead to even severer discrimination against the people of the newly-created social class. Moreover, it is important to consider that behind of those who came across the border, there may be hundreds of thousands of people waiting to obtain official permits to enter as immigrants. Thus, international migration is possibly creating another cause of social discrimination and international injustice. Taking such a viewpoint, it is crucial to simultaneously make efforts to expand the social order based on law and respect for human rights to the outside of the country borders. Moving beyond exploitations of the human resource across national borders, it is necessary to consider how to develop a better lifestyle and stable society both within and outside of the national borders worldwide by defining a ground rule mentioned by Fraser.

As it has been examined above, there are various issues and contradictions regarding the Japanese policies of foreign workers or immigrants. Although the government of Japan is hesitant to accept foreign 'immigrants', the number of foreign people working in the nation is steadily increasing and many of their children are learning in the local schools of the areas. In addition, it is possible to state that the third wave of foreign workers is arriving since the central government revised the Immigration Control Act in December 2018 and enforced in April 2019 to accept more foreign workers from Asian countries to supplement the shrinking domestic labour market. The policy contradictions regarding temporal foreign workers and long-term immigrants make the lives of the immigrant families and

children considerably difficult, though the children who are brought up in the country may eventually feel more attached with the culture of the host nation.

Although the immigrant population is growing in Japan due to the acceleration of the aging society and declining birth rate, educational issues of the immigrant students have gained public attention only recently. Foreign workers in the nation tend to be regarded as an inexpensive labour force in the workplaces with shortage of Japanese employees (Asaka, 2013, 183). In fact, the national survey regarding the number of the children of foreign descents out of school was conducted for the first time in 2019 by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan, which revealed that nearly 20,000 children of foreign descents in total are possibly not attending any schools. Education for the foreign population in the nation tends to be regarded more as a benefit rather than obligation or an issue of basic human right, which can cause various educational injustices such as lack of opportunity for school enrollment, pressure for cultural assimilation, and cultural mis- or non-recognition. Education and sense of belonging can give crucial influence on the identity development (Shigematsu, 2011, 110). With the increasing number of foreign workers, education of immigrant students is a crucial issue if the nation intends to build a multi-ethnic symbiotic society (Kojima, 2006, 4). Due to the absence of the national policy for foreign students, there are many ethnic schools for foreign students that provide educational supports by teaching in their native languages, enhancing their ethnic identities, avoiding exclusion and bullying issues that may occur in local schools, and supporting to expand future possibilities of foreign students in the host nation.

Historically, the Ministry of Education, the former government agency of the current Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, once gave a notice on January 24th, 1948, regarding the control of Korean ethnic schools to oblige Korean children to learn in local Japanese schools together with Japanese children, which was soon canceled on February 11th, 1953 by the notice of the Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau of the Ministry of Education regarding Koreans' school attendance to the compulsory educational schools. The first notice in 1948 reflected the intentions of the American General Headquarters to control Korean schools in Japan due to the risk of communisation of the Korean peninsula and centralisation of Korean ethnic schools in Japan for such a purpose. In 1951, however, when the Peace Treaty was signed in San Francisco and the national sovereignty was re-established in Japan, the Ministry of Education gave the second notice to declare that the compulsory education is not necessary for those who do not hold the Japanese citizenship. Since then, education for foreign pupils in Japan is not obligatory but regarded as a benefit. Thus, the second notice in 1953 formulates basic directions of education for foreign citizens in the nation. For example, if Japanese schooling is accepted favorably, it is required to follow the regulations in the schools. If the student does not attend the school, the right to receive education will not be assured and withdrawal from the school is inevitable. No matter how many foreign students enroll in a class,

education in their mother languages will only be offered in extracurricular activities and cannot be positioned in the formal curriculum in the official schools of the nation defined by the first article of the School Education Act of Japan by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Since the education for foreign citizens is not compulsory, it is in the local education boards' hand to investigate how many foreign children at the schooling age are in the area. Report on School Basic Survey is published every year by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, including the number of truants in the schools. Nevertheless, the number of foreign students without formal schooling had been undetermined because education for them has not been considered compulsory.

According to Matsuo (2017, p.185), the boundary between the Japanese nationals and foreigners has long been swaying, based on the Nationality Act that originates in 1899 and employs *jus-sanguinis*, which aims to approve the national citizenship only to those whose parent holds the citizenship. Matsuo also argues that the educational policy of the nation tends to take symptomatic approaches to those who enter from other countries and often lacks the viewpoints of cultural succession and language preservation. Although the foreign ethnic schools often carry out the role of cultural and language preservation, insufficient financial supports and recognition make the school management enormously difficult in most of the ethnic schools. Thus, Matsuo concludes that it is necessary to transform the mind-set of the dominant group of the society in order to realise multicultural society.

Therefore, the question of social membership arises regarding who shall be counted as holding the full membership to claim for the justice in education. Obviously, it is crucial to receive formal education to gain access to the society in such a globalised world with increasing number of knowledge-intensive labours. Limited educational opportunities in childhood can ultimately give grave influences on the individuals' entire life.

## Research Method

Based on the understandings described above, the research was conducted using a qualitative method. Semi-organized interviews were conducted with the teachers and managers working in some of the ethnic schools mainly for the students of foreign descents in the host nation. All of the ethnic schools visited accept pupils for the age of primary and secondary education until the age of 18. As ethnic schools representing 'old comers' who have been residing in the nation since the time of the Second World War, a few North and South Korean ethnic schools were visited as well as some Brazilian ethnic schools, representing 'new comers' who entered the nation since 1980s. The researcher made appointments to visit the ethnic schools and conducted the interviews with the teachers and school managers. Although most of the interviews were conducted in Japanese, one of interview with a Brazilian ethnic school was conducted partly in Spanish and Portuguese to facilitate the interview



process. Most of the interviews were recorded with the consensus of the interviewees, then translated, and transcribed in English. When the interviews could not be recorded, the researcher took notes during the conversation, which were transcribed after the interview, then translated into English. The ethnic schools have their own curriculum developed by themselves often with the consensus of the national government of the countries of their origins and use their mother tongues, other than Japanese, as the languages of instruction. All of the ethnic schools visited for the interviews are not approved as the official schools defined by the first article of the School Education Act of Japan by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology but regarded as one of ‘miscellaneous educational institutions’ that stand outside of the Japanese national curriculum.

It is crucial to admit that the researcher can be considered as a cultural outsider for the research respondents of the ethnic schools since the researcher is working for a university of the host country. It is possible that the respondents give some positive comments, considering the researcher as representing the hosting nation. To deal with such difficulties as a researcher, therefore, anonymity and confidentiality are confirmed at the beginning of the interviews to assure respondents that giving comments or disclosing personal experiences shall not lead to personal identification or inconvenience. Since one of the respondents indicated hesitation to be identified by the area and type of the school, the total number of the ethnic schools visited as well as the area of the schools will not be disclosed. Although semi-structured interview is beneficial to investigate the phenomena that are difficult to be observed directly and to examine from participants’ viewpoints, it is necessary to consider the data as elicited data from the respondents’ point of view, thus, may be partial and incomplete.

### Research Questions

The researcher explored following questions in the interviews.

- 1, What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of learning in the ethnic schools?
- 2, What are some of the educational needs of the pupils in the ethnic schools?
- 3, Can learning in the ethnic schools be a cause of social inclusion or exclusion?

### Research Findings

Regarding the advantages and disadvantages of learning in the ethnic schools, being able to become fluent in multiple languages is considered as one of the most important advantages. The ethnic schools often employ the immersion programme that uses the languages of the countries of their origins, such as Korean or Portuguese in addition to English as the languages of instruction to give the students opportunities to learn and use the languages. A teacher from the Korean school explains;

“In the Korean ethnic schools, the students are studying in Korean, Japanese, and English. So,

it's a heavy burden for them. We give the classes 100 percent in Korean. But the classes are programmed to be able to adapt to the Japanese society. Before, the Korean schools weren't even qualified for the candidacy of the entrance examinations of the universities in Japan and the doors for the universities were not open for us. But now, with the increasing settling-minds of the Koreans in Japan, the Korean students are studying hard for the STEP English proficiency test, The Japan Kanji Aptitude Test, The Korean Language Proficiency Test, and The Official Business Skill Test in Bookkeeping, etc. In Japan, the students can learn the Korean language only at school. Before entering the elementary school, their Korean language ability is at zero level. But at the last year in the high school, they can listen, speak, write, and read in Korean. Their language acquisition will be completed. When they return home, they speak all in Japanese. But when they enter the gate of the Korean school, they speak in Korean.”

Furthermore, another benefit of learning in the ethnic schools is regarded that it can be a better route to climb the ladder of education to be admitted to the universities in the hosting nation. Although some of the students' and their parents' educational needs are to be educated in the languages of the countries of their origins to be better prepared to return there in the future, many of the students actually choose not to return to the countries of their origins especially when economic situations there seem unfavorable. They often decide to stay as one of the school managers in the Brazilian ethnic schools comments;

“they cannot even return to their home countries if they do not speak their mother tongue well.”

Most of the students with the Brazilian nationality have plans to stay in the host country. Learning in the ethnic schools is regarded as another route to become better prepared to look for a high-profile job in the host nation than learning in local public schools as the school manager in a Brazilian ethnic school continues to mention;

“One of the benefits of these Brazilian ethnic schools is that Japanese universities are looking for the students with fluent English and Japanese abilities. So, they can get admitted to the universities from this school, then look for jobs in Japan...I have long been thinking about which is better, a Japanese school or Brazilian school. But now I think Brazilian ethnic schools are better if we think about their future possibilities of entering universities.”

Simultaneously, however, language is the cause of major difficulty for the pupils of foreign descents

as a teacher of the Korean ethnic school explains;

“The difficulty in learning in an ethnic school is that becoming fluent in all the three languages of Korean, Japanese, and English needs a great amount of efforts. There is also a possibility that everything becomes half-finished. For children, this can be harsh. Learning mathematics or science using the language that they do not fully understand is painful.”

Similarly, many of the students of Brazilian nationality also face difficulties of acquiring the two languages sufficiently, being born in a Brazilian family that speak Portuguese and living in Japan where majority of people use Japanese as the school manager in the Brazilian ethnic school says;

“in my view, roughly only twenty percent of the children of foreign descents in Japan speak well either in Japanese or Portuguese. Many of them cannot speak well in any of Japanese or Portuguese...even though they are in the local Japanese schools, many of them can read and write but cannot understand the meaning of the Japanese words.”

Regarding the educational needs, the school manager in the Brazilian ethnic school mentions about the difficulty for the students to get accustomed with the school culture, which was one of the factors that made her to establish and manage the Brazilian ethnic school;

“Around 1995 the foreign ‘Dekasegi’, migrant workers, brought their families into Japan. But their children did not understand Japanese and not want to go to school, so they stayed at home in their rooms and gradually started to gather around in local amusement arcades, eventually began stealing or using the drugs.”

In contrast, the Koreans residing in Japan have rather complex educational needs. Historically, their ethnic identities have long been the target of discrimination in the nation. Due to the fear for communisation of the Korean peninsula during the Korean War in the 1950s, the Korean ethnic schools in Japan were once absorbed into the public Japanese schools with the intention of the American General Headquarters to control the Korean ethnic schools and to assimilate the Koreans who decided to stay in the nation after the Second World War, which was soon abolished with the cease-fire of the Korean War. Thus, it has been crucial for the Koreans in Japan to recover and preserve the ethnic identity by establishing the Korean schools as the Korean teacher explains;

“We were discriminated when we were students. We feel resentful about being discriminated

since the time of our grandparents, parents, and until our grandchildren. We wish to forget. Those who hope the most about the political issues to be solved as soon as possible are the Koreans living in Japan. ... I want our students to leave for the society in Japan, being confident with themselves. ... It has become possible now in the Japanese society. So, even if they face some struggles, they should learn well... I want the students to be proud as a Korean. I also want many Japanese people to know that the ethnic education consistently exists here since the end of the war... My nationality as well as my name is the legacy left by my parents who are not here anymore. I have children of the Korean nationality because my wife is also a Korean national living in Japan. If my children decide to give up the Korean nationality, I won't agree, but the decision should be made by themselves.”

As the final point of the research questions, the major cause of social exclusion raised by the research respondents is related to the financial redistributions. Although the trend of social inclusion is accelerated by the opening doors for university entrance examinations and participating in various sport competitions, most of the ethnic schools suffer from financial difficulties and request the parents of the students to pay a relatively high tuition monthly. Since all of the ethnic schools visited for the research are not approved by the central government as the official schools defined by the first article of the School Education Act, the ethnic schools tend to suffer from financial difficulties due to the lack of financial supports by the central government of the host nation. Although some of them receive subsidies from the local governments of the area, they tend to be excluded from the financial redistribution activities of the nation as the manager of the Brazilian school comments;

“If our school could receive any financial supports from the town, prefecture, or the country and provide education with lower costs, we will be able to improve the school a little more, for example, by improving the salary for the teachers. Still now we are operating at a loss ... We looked for supports but were unable to find one.”

Also, the North Korean school teacher adds a crucial comment about the correlation of political injustice and financial redistributions for the schools;

“Among all the Koreans living in Japan, roughly only ten percent of them learn at the Korean school because of the large financial burden for the parents. The Korean schools are regarded as ‘miscellaneous educational institutions’ and not as the ‘schools’ defined by the first article of the School Education Act. There is no financial support for us from the central government or the local government of the Prefecture. ... What is discriminative is the problem of the free education

in high schools. The bill of free education in high schools was established when the Democratic Party of Japan took the control of the government. It was stated that “all the foreign ethnic schools will be included”. But the Liberal Democratic Party returned into the power later and the North Korean schools are the only schools that are excluded from the free education of high schools. Japan has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Even so, only the North Korean schools are discriminated and excluded from the tuition free system.”

His comment is significant to consider the interrelations of political, economic, and cultural injustices. As the ethnic groups is culturally devaluated, their voice is hardly heard politically. Due to such cultural and political injustices, it becomes even more difficult for them to claim for financial redistribution, thus, they continue to be economically strained.

At the same time, however, the situation is considerably different for the South Korean ethnic schools possibly due to the relatively favorable political relationships between the two countries as the teacher mentions;

“Although the primary education may be more expensive, the secondary education of this ethnic school can be less expensive than the other private schools because we receive public assistance.”

As for the issues of social exclusion, a Korean school teacher introduced a personal experience of the childhood as a case of cultural exclusion in a local public school, adding that such an obvious case of discrimination is becoming less evident. His personal account gives a significant insight about the issue of social exclusion in a classroom;

“It’s one of my personal experiences. But, in the middle of the class, though he was a history teacher, the teacher said suddenly, ‘let’s ask a foreigner to read the textbook aloud.’ At the time I was using a Japanese name, concealing my ethnicity to prevent problems and all of the other children didn’t know anything about it. When the teacher spoke like that, everyone started talking about it.”

Considering the surprise of a child sitting in a classroom and being pointed out about the hidden ethnicity in such a manner from his teacher in a classroom at school, it is inevitable to admit that education cannot be neutral and that it can be a place of cultivating discrimination.

Nevertheless, the head teacher of a Brazilian ethnic school gives a positive insight for the future change.

“Inside here, there are many Brazilians. So, it’s not easy for Japanese teachers. The Japanese have different culture. Brazilians have different culture too. They have to look at both sides to work with the students here. Students also have to get used to the Japanese culture of respect, completion, and appreciation. The Brazilians are close, open, and sometimes loud but the Japanese are quieter and more reserved. The Japanese teachers here also have to be used to it. Both of them start to understand each other here.”

Her comment gives a significant insight regarding the role of education as the heart of mutual cultural understandings to develop respect and esteem of both sides through the course of education.

## Discussion

The research has revealed that the educational needs of the pupils of foreign descent are not sufficiently addressed in the educational policy of the hosting nation as a case in Japan. Their cultural recognition, similarly, is impeded as their struggles are largely unknown and often marginalised and ignored in the public discourse of the dominant group of the host nation, which illustrates the limitation of current political framing based on territorial states. In such a circumstance, it is also natural that the ethnic schools for the pupils of foreign descents face difficulties to claim for financial redistribution. Reaffirming the issues argued by Fraser, the research results describes that the existing framing of justice is unable to fully address the issues of justice in education because the educational needs of the pupils of immigrant families flow out of the boundary of territorial states. Thus, it is necessary to start a democratic discussion regarding the ground rules, as Fraser mentions, that regulate the social interactions globally including in the sphere of education.

Considering the fact that education as well as basic literacy is the key to gain the membership of the society and to claim for the social justice, the ethnic education offers an opportunity to be taught in their native languages as an alternative option for the students of foreign descents in the host country as the research findings have revealed. Such an option has been necessary for the students to cope with the considerably inflexible educational system, cultural intolerance and exclusiveness of the hosting society. In many cases, there seems to be only one criterion for value judgment in the education of the nation, to be admitted by a prestigious university, which makes it more difficult for the students with diverse backgrounds to survive in the course of education. Simultaneously, in the contemporary globalised world where people move across the continents more freely, the number of knowledge-intensive labour is increasing, which requires more workers to be highly educated and skilled. Thus, high levels of educational backgrounds are necessary not only to gain access to the society but also to increase salary in one of the highly industrialised countries in the world such as Japan. Thus, receiving high levels of education becomes crucial to attain the full membership of the society and in order to claim for the

economic, cultural, and political justice.

Moreover, although the degree and extent may differ, the research also revealed that the ‘old comers’ and ‘new comers’ in the host country share largely similar difficulties and interests, which implies that the homogeneous outlook of the Japanese society has been less interested in the issues of race and ethnicity, even though the country has constantly been accepting foreign people as a form of supplementing the shrinking workforce. The society tends to neglect the ethnic differences and rather forces them to assimilate with the dominant culture. Thus, the existence of cultural, political, financial, and educational issues has largely been invisible and remedies for them have not been sufficiently discussed in the public discourse of the nation. The shrinking labor market and aging society of the nation demand to open the door for so-called foreign workers who are actually immigrants entering to work, live, and become neighbors in the community. Without sufficiently considering measures for overcoming possible difficulties that the children of foreign descents may face, insufficiency of educational system design may lead to dissatisfaction and hopelessness, which could result in increased criminal cases, social disparity, discrimination, and hatred.

Lastly, the research also raises a crucial question regarding who consists of the society. The inflexible educational system and rigid culture in education make it difficult for some students with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds to fit into the local schools of the area. When they fall out of the educational ladder, what can be done next? Should they be left excluded from the social membership even though they may be the future taxpayers who support the economic circulations of the nation? More research and discussions to consider such issues of education in the globalised era should be carried out with regard to the discourse of global citizenship.

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