

Institutions and Migration processes of Muslim Immigrants in Japan

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1. Introduction

This presentation will examine the progression of "institutional completeness" within masjid in Japan, and related issues. We will review the current state of the Muslim community, paying special attention for the processes of establishing Masjids ("Rush to establish Masjids"), and for increasing ethnic resources through solidarity and immigrant business activities. We will also address issues resulting from the progression of the migration process of Muslim immigrants and local Japanese social structures.

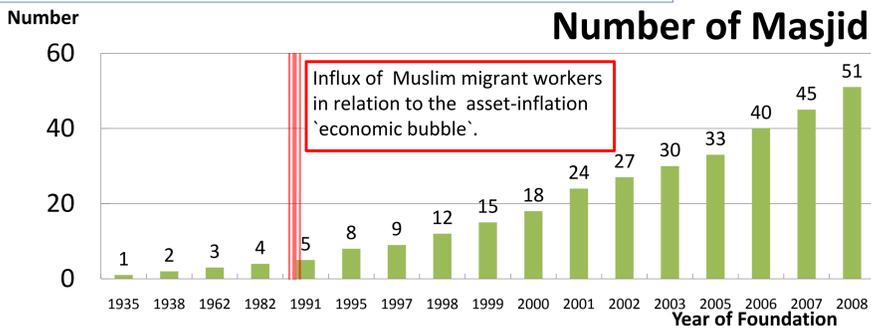
The following questions will be addressed.

1. How are *masjids* established in Japan? [Sections 3 & 4]
2. Has there been any change in the establishment process over the past two decades? (What is the cause of a "Rush to establish Masjids"?) [Section 4]
3. What are the state and meaning of these religious institutions in contemporary, local community of Muslim in Japan? [Sections 5 & 6]

2. The General Situation Today

- 2-1. The foreign Muslim population in Japan
: **Less than 100,000**, or **5%** of foreign residents are Muslim (a relatively small ratio of population among foreign residents)
- 2-2. Diverse nationalities and ethnicities
Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Iranian, Sri Lankan, Indonesian and Malaysian.
- 2-3. Acquiring "**stable**" residence status
Ex. "Personal relationship or status", "College Student", "Trainee".
↔ Transition from "Irregular migrant worker (mid 80's – early 90's)".
- 2-4. The rise of "**Ethnic businesses**"
Used car exporter, *halal* shop
- 2-5. Founding of various kinds of organizations
The recent "rush to establish Masjids".

Japan's mutual visa-waiver agreements with Bangladesh and Pakistan were both suspended in January 1989 and with Iran in April 1992. Japan's Muslim population declined due to political elimination.



3. The Main Theoretical Frameworks

1. Subculture and achievement of 'Critical Mass'

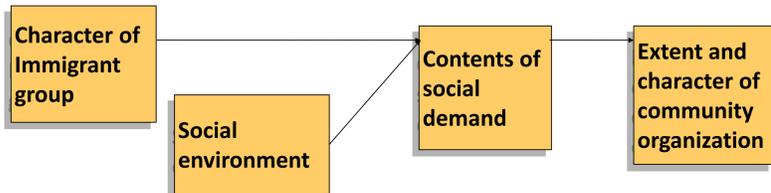
"A set of modal beliefs, values, norms, and customs associated with a relatively distinct social subsystem (a set of interpersonal networks and institutions) existing within a larger social system and culture", "the larger a subculture's population, the greater its institutional completeness"

- Achievement of "critical mass" is as a function of the amount of "population".
- Considering only the viewpoint of "population" it is difficult to describe "how" institutions are established, although this factor lends itself to a description of "why".

2. The "Social Demand" approach

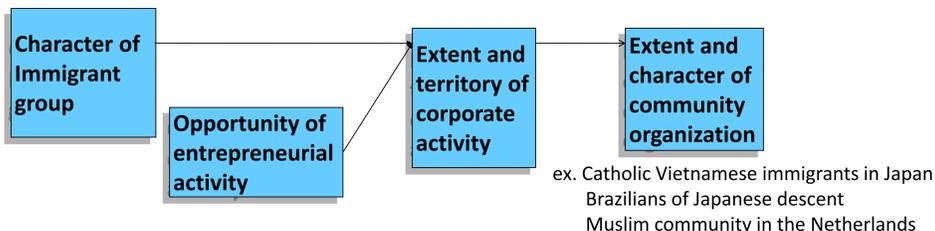
This approach conceives of community organization as "a response to expressed needs on the part of members of a collectivity - needs experienced in the process of coping with their social environment", for example, services, the expression of culture, social support, merchandise and so on.

- Achievement of "critical mass" is as a function of social demand.
- The accumulation of social capital of immigrants (or solidarity based on social networks of immigrants) is important for the achievement of "critical mass" which doesn't confine "population" as a single variable.



3. The "Social Supply" approach

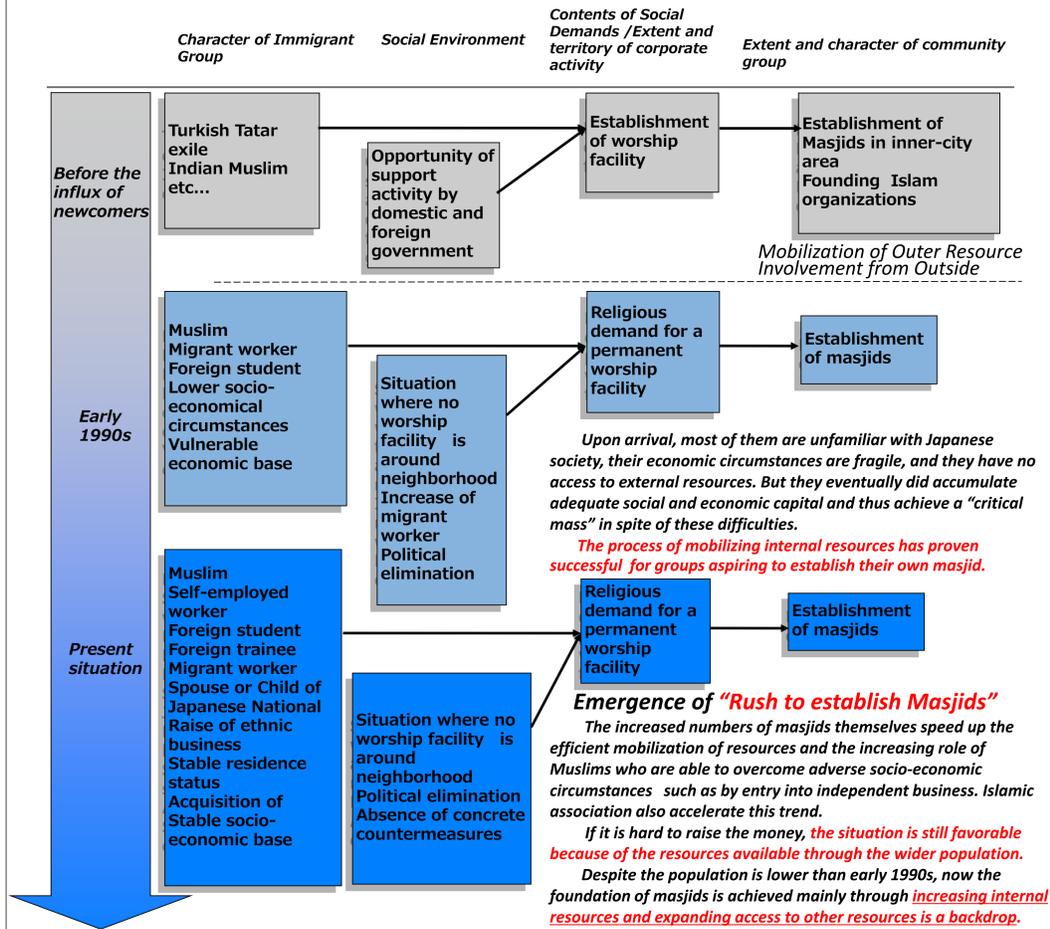
This approach views community organization as a function of the "outcome of entrepreneurial activity on the part of individuals who have access to the resources required for 'community building.'" The social networks of immigrants are dispensable in a "social supply" approach.



4. Emergence of "Solidary Groups"

"Solidary groups are most likely to emerge when demanded goods are not attainable from the state or in market". To the degree that the allocation of good is discriminatory, solidary groups are likely to form among those individuals so affected.

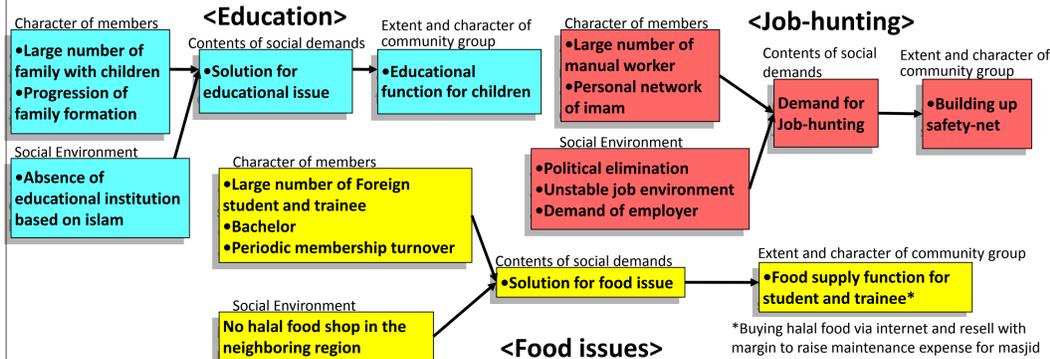
4. The Process of Establishment



5. After the foundation of a masjid

"Functional enhancement" depends on time-course or variation of members

Masjids and *musallah* gradually hold special functions in relation to the host society. Maturity is a factor in the functional enhancement of *masjids*. However, the course of time is only one factor and it seems contemplation of the possibilities of functional enhancement is dependant on various factors unique to each *masjid* and its members.



6. Functional enhancement and Japanese society

Paradox of a "rapidly established hospitable community"

Functional enhancements are accessible as a result of solidarity and mutual aid of Muslims living in Japan. However, we would like to focus on the background in which these functions were rapidly established.

- Ex. 1. How to position of newly established educational function in Japanese educational system.
2. Paradox of existence of informal 'safety net'.
3. Infrequent social interaction between local Japanese residents and Muslims.

"Coexistence" or "Integration"?? - Or a lack of specific policies

There is awareness of a situation in which institutional formation is making rapid progress, before concrete countermeasures are considered by host society.

Until now discussion in Japan surrounding the admittance of immigrants, their adaptation in Japan and the importance of the existence of local ethnicity were mainly focused on those Japanese descended from Brazilians and the terminology used talked about "coexistence" and "integration".

However such discussions still make no provisions for the cultural world of Muslims which covers a wide range of sectors from private space to public space. We have to consider how to adopt these discussions to the Muslims' situation in all its bearings.

7. Conclusion

1. Although in earlier periods of institutional formation there were many constraints, a base of solidarity allowed a religious base to be maintained. The establishment of religious institutions through internal mobilization as a result of growing demands presented itself as a feature.
2. In the founding phase, they evolved local solidarity, but recently the options during foundation have developed to include backing by established *masjids* and Islamic organizations as well as the existence of Muslims involved in ethnic businesses with stable resident status. It can be said that the root of resource mobilization in terms of institutional enhancement has expanded. Due to these factors, the founding of Japanese *masjids* has progressed rapidly.
3. Regarding the situation after founding, *masjids* have come to operate as a network offering members solutions for issues such as educational problems that the larger Japanese society can not resolve.
4. Despite the rapid development of Muslim communities, effective policies addressing their circumstances have not been enacted. How Muslim communities will stand in relation to Japanese society in the future is a critical issue. Understanding the processes and institutions of Muslim immigrants is an important first step.