

## **Learning and Labouring: International Human Resources Development in Japan's Immigration Paradigm, and Lesson from Germany and Australia**

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Whilst Japan's Government and influential lobby groups continue to underscore the strategic significance of admitting an increasing number of highly-skilled foreign professionals (“Japan Revitalization Strategy: Japan is Back”, Cabinet Resolution, June 14, 2013; “Establishing a Path for Growth of the Japanese Economy—Realizing Prosperous Living for the People—”, Keidanren, January 20, 2014; “Basic Plan for Immigration Control, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition”, Ministry of Justice, March 2010), a conspicuous feature of Japan's immigration framework has been the parallel development of immigration as a means of international human resource development and/or international contribution. Approximately 337,000 ostensibly education- or training-seeking immigrants (if one includes technical intern trainees) were registered in Japan at the end of June 2013, constituting a significant 16% of the resident foreign population of 2,049,123 (figures derived from statistics published in the MOJ website in November 2013).

An emphasis on the development of international human resources, as opposed to simple labour procurement, arguably comprises a unique and distinguishing feature of the Japanese immigration model, and this research intends to elucidate trends in, and the impact of what could broadly be termed the “international capacity building” nexus of Japan's immigration framework. In this context, attention will particularly be paid to 1) the admission of international students in the context of former prime minister Fukuda's “300,000 Foreign Students Plan”, a plan that continues to gain momentum with the globalisation of Japanese universities, and developments in programme formation exemplified by 2) the revised technical intern training system, and 3) nurses and care-givers admitted under Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)

As a means of deducing dimensions and variables that lend validity to this research, some emphasis will be placed on defining ‘intellectual contribution’, ‘transfer of technology’, and ‘international human resource development’, as well as eliciting how these concepts are supported by Japan's immigration framework. Simultaneously, the reporter will attempt to examine the influence of national interests, be they external (foreign policy, ‘soft power’) or internal (demographics, domestic

labour market demand) in the formulation of immigration laws and policies, where these are related to the admission of international human resources.

Current research, although acknowledging the ‘human resource development’ elements inherent in Japan's immigration framework, falls short of recognising it as a *fixed and value-added policy contingent*, focusing instead primarily on issues surrounding the domestic implementation of relevant projects. This presentation, through determining and rationalising the significance of the relationship between, on the one hand, human resources development in immigration law and policy, and on the other, foreign diplomacy, sustainable overseas investment, and ‘soft power’ considerations, aspires to add a new, and thus far, largely neglected external dimension to immigration studies.

Moreover, the results of overseas fieldwork, taking the forms of interviews conducted in Germany (March 2012) and Australia (December 2013), provide insights as to how other legal systems pursue “international capacity building” considerations within the immigration framework. Accordingly, the author intends to briefly introduce Australian and German paradigms within this context. The Australian model is significant due to that country’s promotion of an integrated economic growth-oriented immigration policy with a marked emphasis on client group politics/stakeholder engagement and co-operation with Asia. And, in Germany, international economic and security considerations have long (certainly before the enactment of the *Zuwanderungsgesetz (Immigration Act, 2005)*) resulted in a pro-active stance towards temporary immigration from Central and Eastern Europe (“Gastarbeitnehmer”, “Werkvertragsarbeitnehmer”, “Saisonarbeiter”, etc.), a perspective which has now extended to the South Eastern Europe and North Africa. How is the “international capacity building” nexus incorporated into these two countries’ immigration frameworks? Does human resources development play a role? Are there any lessons for Japan?

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