

This file is an English translation of chapter five of part two of the report on the survey of opinions and situations of the foreign residents of the city of Kawasaki in Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan. Kawasaki is located immediately to the west of Tokyo, between Tokyo proper and Yokohama, and is part of the Greater Tokyo urban area. The survey was conducted in 2014 and published in 2015, and the Japanese report is available online at <http://www.city.kawasaki.jp/250/page/0000066982.html> as of 2015/05/27.

This translation is entirely unofficial, and in no way endorsed by the city of Kawasaki. However, the translator (David Chart) was also the author of the Japanese chapter it translates, and served on the committee designing and analysing the survey. I am confident that this translation does not misrepresent the author's intent, but the city of Kawasaki may not agree with some of the choices of phrasing. The footnotes add information that was included in the main report, but is not in this chapter, where that is necessary to understand the text. This translation must not be distributed without this disclaimer.

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Experiences of Discrimination among Foreign Residents of Kawasaki

1. Introduction

Discrimination may have a substantial influence on the living environment of foreign residents. The problem of discrimination is a common topic among foreign residents in Japan, but there has been little reliable data. This chapter describes the results concerning discriminatory experiences and actions extracted from the survey conducted in Kawasaki city. There are many varieties of discrimination (for example, on the basis of family background or sex), but this report focuses on discrimination based on someone's "being a foreigner".

The aim of this chapter is to grasp the scale of discrimination through statistics. It cannot, therefore, provide any information on the details of the discrimination experienced by any individual foreign residents. It is hoped that the interview survey planned to follow this survey will cast light on the nature of this discrimination. Further, the response rate to this survey was low¹, and it is important to bear in mind that these results may not accurately reflect the total experience of foreign residents of Kawasaki.

In spite of the above limitations, the results of this survey do allow the general tendencies and distinctive features of foreign residents' experiences of discrimination to be presented, at least to some extent. Further, one major aim of this chapter is to compare the experiences of discrimination of foreign residents in different categories, to see whether there are any differences. In particular, among foreigners who live or have lived in Japan, it is often said that Westerners do not suffer as much discrimination in Japan as people from east or south-east Asia, and this chapter will investigate whether the evidence supports that claim.

The rest of this chapter will first give the questions from the survey that concerned

1 The response rate was under 20%.

discrimination, and explain the categories used. Then the results of statistical analysis, and their discussion, are presented.

2. Questions on Discrimination

The survey questionnaire did not include any questions exclusively about discrimination. Accordingly, experiences of discrimination are revealed by the choice of particular answers to questions on broader topics. The questions concerning discrimination are given below. The numbers in parentheses are the proportion and number of respondents who reported such an experience.

Q12. Have you experienced any of the following problems while looking for housing in Kawasaki City?

(4) Were refused housing because you were a foreigner (21.9%, 196/893)

Q14. In the past 12 months, have you felt any of the following types of concern or fear?

(3) Concern or fear that you might become a victim of violence at school, workplace, or on the street because you are not Japanese (4.8%, 43/893)

(4) Concern that threats or discriminatory speech might be directed at you on the street because you are not Japanese (10.8%, 96/893)

Q16. In the past 12 months, have you experienced any of the following types of problems when you became ill and sought medical treatment?

(3) Felt discriminated against because of the way the medical staff dealt with your case (4.9%, 49/899)

Q25. Have you had any of the following problems concerning nursery or kindergarten?

(5) Your child felt rejected or bullied by other children at nursery or kindergarten (2.8%, 10/354)

Q28. What are the reasons why your child is (or was) not enrolled in Japanese public school?

(3) Fear that your child may be discriminated against or bullied at school (30.3%, 20/66)

Q29. Does your child currently have any of the following problems at school?

(3) Bullied because of having roots in a foreign country (8.0%, 16/198)

Q30. Do you yourself have any of the following problems or concerns about your children's schooling and plans after graduation?

(9) Worried that your child may face discrimination when seeking a job (15.4%, 45/293)

Q40. Do you have any of the following problems at or complaints about your present job?

(5) Face discriminatory treatment because you are a foreign national (e.g. job assignment, promotion) (9.0%, 56/623)

Q44. Do you have any of the following problems with the immigration and visa control system?

(2) Asked to present your Residence Card (Zairyū card) or the Certificate of Alien Registration as a form of identification at such places as stores, banks, and hotels (14.2%, 126/890)

(8) In the past 12 months, the police stopped you on the street even though you were not doing anything wrong (5.4%, 48/890)

3. Analysis Categories

When considering “discrimination due to being a foreigner”, differences in external appearance are one important factor. Accordingly, respondents were divided into the following categories for this analysis.

First, “East Asia”, which includes China, Korea, and Taiwan. The distinguishing feature of people in this category is that it is often very difficult to visually distinguish them from Japanese people. The next category is “South-east Asia”. This include the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, and so on. People in this category can typically be distinguished from Japanese people on sight, but can normally be identified as Asian. The final category is “Westerner”. This includes people from Europe, the USA, Canada, and Australia. This category might suggest “white people”, but if one considers the racial diversity of the USA, one can see that this is the most ambiguous category. However, we can be confident that the majority of people in this category are clearly distinct both from the Japanese, and from other Asians.²

The 921 respondents included people from Latin America, south Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, but as the numbers were very low no analysis of those categories was performed. The number of people in each of the analytical categories is given in the table below.

Category	East Asia	South-east Asia	Western
Number	569	193	67

4. General Levels of Experience of Discrimination

In order to grasp the overall experience of discrimination, the proportion of respondents who had experienced discrimination was calculated based on the answers to the questions given above. Specifically, a person was defined as having experienced discrimination if they replied affirmatively to one or more of the questions. However, it is not possible to determine how many times a respondent has experienced a given type of discrimination based on this survey.

Further, the questions about child rearing and education (Q25, Q28, Q29, Q30) were only answered by those respondents living with children, and as it is difficult to say that there were enough respondents, they have been excluded from further analysis. In the same way, the question about the workplace (Q40) has been excluded from the general analysis, although it is analysed in the question-by-question analysis, later.

The results from considering the remaining questions appear in the following table.

Total	East Asia	South-east Asia	Western
40.9% (377/921)	40.1%	38.3%	53.7%

² The survey asked for the nationality or territory of the respondents, but not directly for their racial appearance. Thus, the categorisation is based on legal citizenship, which is at best a proxy for racial appearance.

The result of 53.7% for Westerners looks rather higher than the overall proportion of 40.9%, but as the number of respondents is low, the difference is not statistically significant. However, considering the hypothesis that Westerners suffer less discrimination than other foreigners, we can say that this evidence does not support it.

Further, in order to get a handle on the current situation in Kawasaki, the questions limited to the past 12 months (Q15, Q16, Q44(8)) can be considered.

Total	East Asia	South-east Asia	Western
19.7% (181/921)	17.4%	21.2%	31.3%

If we limit attention to experiences in the last 12 months, the proportion for East Asians (17.4%) is significantly lower than the other proportions. However, it is possible that the cause of that is the inclusion of questions such as Q44(8), which we can imagine would be strongly influenced by appearance. This point will be returned to in the analysis of the individual questions.

Further, the results for the last 12 months showed no significant differences based on sex, household income, type of work, Japanese ability³, or ward of residence⁴. On the other hand, the proportion of people who had experienced discrimination did vary depending on highest level of education received and number of years spent in Japan. Considering highest level of education, the proportion of people with at least junior college education who had experienced discrimination (21.8%) was significantly higher than the proportion of those who had only completed high school or below (14.5%). Further, considering years of residence in Japan, the proportion of those who had lived in Japan for ten years or more (16.5%) was significantly lower than that for those who had lived in Japan for less than ten years (24.0%). However, there is a tendency for people with at least a junior college education to have lived in Japan for less time than those with a lower level, and if results are compared for groups that have lived in Japan for the same length of time, the difference based on level of education disappears. Thus, it seems likely that the observed difference based on level of education depends entirely on the difference due to number of years spent in Japan. There are many possible reasons why experiences of discrimination might fall the longer someone lives in Japan, so it is not possible to determine a cause here.

Based on the above analysis, we can say that foreign residents' likelihood of experiencing discrimination does not differ greatly regardless of their citizenship, sex, or immediate environment. Naturally, we must remember that we have only investigated the likelihood of experiencing discrimination. In particular, as we have not investigated the the particular content of the discrimination, the number of times it happened, nor its frequency, we should avoid saying that we have, through this survey, grasped the reality of discrimination against foreign residents.

5. Comparison with Europe

In the general analysis of experiences of discrimination, there was no large difference between the categories. In that case, rather than comparing categories, what can we say about the level of discrimination overall? Naturally, it is difficult to say whether there is a lot of discrimination or a little just from the numbers. For example, if we say that one foreigner in five⁵ has experienced discrimination in Kawasaki in the last year, that might sound like a lot. On the other hand, if we

³ Respondents were asked to assess their own Japanese ability.

⁴ Kawasaki city is divided into seven administrative wards. These areas differ significantly in character.

⁵ The Japanese says "four", which is a typographical error.

say that the majority of foreign residents of Kawasaki have not experienced discrimination, it might sound like a little. Of course, we must not forget that, from the perspective of human rights, even one case of discrimination is one too many.

Nevertheless, we would like to get an idea of how serious the problem of discrimination in Kawasaki, as revealed by this data, is by comparing it to the situation in Europe. In particular, we will compare the results to those of a large-scale survey of discrimination conducted in Europe in 2009. This survey, the EU-MIDIS (European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey), was conducted in almost all countries of the EU, taking a wide variety of minorities as its subjects. Naturally, as the object of that survey differed from that of the survey of Kawasaki, we must be cautious about making simplistic comparisons, and the points below must be borne in mind.

First, this survey of Kawasaki and EU-MIDIS were conducted in different ways. The Kawasaki survey was a postal survey, in which questionnaires were sent to foreign residents chosen at random from those resident in the city. In contrast, EU-MIDIS was conducted through face-to-face interviews with members of minorities. Although it is not clear what influence the survey method might have on the results, this difference must be borne in mind.

Second, EU-MIDIS considered experiences of discrimination in the past year in seeking employment, the workplace, housing, health care, government offices, schools, restaurants etc, retail establishments, and banks, and interviewees who had had nothing to do with a particular category in the last year were excluded from the analysis. Although there are areas that are close to the questions asked in Kawasaki, they are not exactly the same. For example, the overall percentage of people in Europe who had experienced discrimination in Europe in the past year was 30%, while the corresponding number for Kawasaki was 19.7%. This difference could be put down to the fact that EU-MIDIS covered a broader range of possible experiences. On the other hand, if we do not limit the results to experiences within one year, the overall proportion in Kawasaki is 40.9%, but this increase could be put down to the inclusion of events that happened further in the past.

Further, in the EU-MIDIS survey, there were large differences between categories of minorities, ranging from 3% to 64%. In contrast, in Kawasaki the numbers ranged from 38.3% (South-east Asia) to 53.7% (Westerners). Thus, we can say that one difference between Europe and Kawasaki is that the experience of discrimination varies much more between different minorities in Europe.

Bearing the above caveats in mind, if we consider the level of discrimination in Kawasaki objectively, we can say that there is not much difference in the likelihood of experiencing discrimination between Kawasaki (40.9%, 19.7% if limited to the last year), and Europe (30%).

6. Analysis of Each Question

So far, we have considered the overall trends and distinguishing features of experiences of discrimination in Kawasaki. Here, we will focus on the results for each question, comparing with Europe as appropriate.

Q12. Have you experienced any of the following problems while looking for housing in Kawasaki City?

(4) Were refused housing because you were a foreigner

Total	East Asia	South-east Asia	Western
21.9% (196/893)	24.3%	15.1%	19.7%

The result of 15.1% for South-east Asians might look rather low, but there are no statistically significant differences between the categories. Rather, it might seem better to consider the effects of having a Japanese spouse. This is because, if a foreigner lives with a Japanese spouse and leaves the process of finding accommodation to them, the probability of being refused housing for being a foreigner seems likely to fall. Indeed, the proportion of foreigners living with a Japanese spouse who had experienced this form of discrimination was 14.3%, while the proportion of those who either did not have a Japanese spouse or did not live with them was 24.4%, and this difference was statistically significant. It should be noted that even those foreigners who did have a Japanese spouse may have been reporting experiences from before they got married.

In the EU-MIDIS survey, although it was limited to experiences in the last year, the likelihood of encountering housing discrimination was under 10%. Of course, if we do not limit the question to one year, the proportion will naturally rise, so it is not easy to compare these numbers. Nevertheless, the reality that 21.9% of foreign residents of Kawasaki have been refused housing for being foreign should not be taken lightly.

Q14. In the past 12 months, have you felt any of the following types of concern or fear?

(3) Concern or fear that you might become a victim of violence at school, workplace, or on the street because you are not Japanese

Total	East Asia	South-east Asia	Western
4.8% (43/893)	2.9%	9.0%	6.2%

In these results, the 2.9% for East Asians is significantly low, and the 9.0% for South-east Asians is significantly high. Further, the 6.2% for Westerners is not significantly different from the proportion for people who are not Westerners. However, in analysing these results we must be aware that the number of people who reported this experience is low. Incidentally, there is no significant difference between men and women in the response to this question.

This question most nearly corresponds to the category of “Assault or Threat” in EU-MIDIS. There, the result varied from 3% to 10%, depending on category, and thus can be said to be about the same as in Kawasaki.

(4) Concern that threats or discriminatory speech might be directed at you on the street because you are not Japanese

Total	East Asia	South-east Asia	Western
10.8% (96/893)	10.4%	11.7%	16.9%

Although the 16.9% for Westerners looks high, there is no statistically significant difference between these results. Further, there was no significant difference between residents of the various wards of Kawasaki⁶.

This question most nearly corresponds to the “Serious Harassment” category of EU-MIDIS, which does not include violence. The European results ranged from 3% to 18%, but as the wording

⁶ There are anti-foreigner right-wing groups that have held demonstrations in southern Kawasaki, leading to the hypothesis that this might vary based on area of residence.

of the EU-MIDIS question is very strong, it is difficult to make a direct comparison.

Q16. In the past 12 months, have you experienced any of the following types of problems when you became ill and sought medical treatment?

(3) Felt discriminated against because of the way the medical staff dealt with your case

Total	East Asia	South-east Asia	Western
4.9% (44/899)	6.2%	2.6%	6.0%

Although the 2.6% result for South-east Asians looks low, the difference is not statistically significant.

In EU-MIDIS, the responses to a very similar question ranged from 2% to 8% (with an exceptional category at 17%), so we can say that the situation is very similar to that in Kawasaki.

Q40. Do you have any of the following problems at or complaints about your present job?

(5) Face discriminatory treatment because you are a foreign national (e.g. job assignment, promotion)

Total	East Asia	South-east Asia	Western
9.0% (56/623)	10.1%	6.8%	11.7%

There are no statistically significant differences between these categories. Similarly, we analysed the results by type of work (highly skilled work, clerical work, service industry, etc.) and type of employment (regular employee, short-term contract, etc.), but there were no significant differences between the categories.

The results from EU-MIDIS varied from 4% to 19%, but almost all minorities reported rates of over 10%. If we further consider that EU-MIDIS explicitly limited the question to experiences in the past year, we can say that that workplace discrimination in Europe is more serious than in Kawasaki.

Q44. Do you have any of the following problems with the immigration and visa control system?

(2) Asked to present your Residence Card (Zairyū card) or the Certificate of Alien Registration as a form of identification at such places as stores, banks, and hotels

Total	East Asia	South-east Asia	Western
14.2% (126/890)	13.6%	11.9%	22.4%

Although the Western result of 22.4% looks considerably higher than the average of 14.2%, there is no statistically significant difference. This question also serves to discover whether such places correctly understand the law. Under the law, only police officers and immigration officials are allowed to require a foreigner to show the Zairyū card. Although these results are not limited to

the last year, and thus may include earlier events, they do suggest that erroneous understandings of the legal function of the Zairyū card as a means of identification are held in Japan.

As the legal system is different in Europe, there was no similar question on EU-MIDIS.

(8) In the past 12 months, the police stopped you on the street even though you were not doing anything wrong

Total	East Asia	South-east Asia	Western
5.4% (48/890)	2.9%	5.4%	16.4%

The result of 2.9% for East Asia is significantly lower than the results for other people, and the 16.4% for Westerners is significantly higher. It can be supposed that appearance plays a large role in this difference. Many East Asians look very similar to Japanese, and so may be stopped infrequently. On the other hand, the likelihood for Westerners may be high because they often look clearly different from Japanese.

The EU-MIDIS result for a similar question was 20% to 33%. We can, perhaps, say that the likelihood of being stopped by the police in Japan is clearly lower than the probability in Europe.

7. Conclusions

As we said earlier, there are limits to what this survey can tell us about discrimination in Kawasaki. This survey tells us the proportion of people who have experienced discrimination. From that perspective, the interesting results are that the likelihood of discrimination does not vary much based on categories, and the overall level is similar to that in Europe.

Finally, we would like to draw attention to two points concerning this survey.

First, if we look at the questions for this survey, we see many phrases like “felt concern or fear” or “felt discriminated against”. If we ask about impressions, there is a possibility that the respondent’s subjective consciousness of whether they were discriminated against or felt discrimination might vary considerably from one person to the next. In other words, there might be concerns as to whether this survey has captured the objective situation with regards to discrimination. However, “experiences” are closely bound up with that person’s perceptions, and are difficult to measure objectively in any case. Furthermore, when considering the problem of discrimination, it is very important not to limit the investigation to “objective” measures, but to also consider the feelings of those who feel discriminated against, and to take them into serious consideration.

Second, we must remember that this survey may not have thoroughly investigated matters related to this consciousness of discrimination. In particular, people who have actually experienced discrimination often, as a matter of psychological self defence, deny that there was any discrimination involved, whether consciously or unconsciously. While this survey has provided important data on discrimination, it is, as we have emphasised repeatedly, only part of the picture. We hope that the interview survey and other future investigations will shed light on more aspects of this problem.