

Do not cite, excerpt, or reprint this version. Instead, cite:

Moorehead, Robert. 2012. Review of *Minorities and Education in Multicultural Japan: An Interactive Perspective*, edited by Ryoko Tsuneyoshi, Kaori H. Okano, and Sarane Spence Boocock. *Social Science Japan Journal* 15:146-149.

Minorities and Education in Multicultural Japan: An Interactive Perspective, edited by Ryoko Tsuneyoshi, Kaori H. Okano, and Sarane Spence Boocock. London and New York: Routledge, 2011.

Robert Moorehead

Ritsumeikan University

As the academic literature on “multicultural Japan” has developed, it has progressed from challenging notions of Japanese uniqueness and homogeneity, to exploring the experiences of individual groups, to now examining the interconnections between various groups in Japan. It is in this latter vein that *Minorities and Education in Multicultural Japan: An Interactive Perspective* analyzes the diverse world of Japanese education, noting both the diversity within various categories of minorities and the relations between these groups.

The editors, Ryoko Tsuneyoshi, Kaori H. Okano, and Sarane Spence Boocock, pose three questions: how and why do members of various groups interact with each other in Japan; to what extent has Japan’s diversification impacted minority group members; and how well do Japanese schools prepare all children, minority and majority, for their future lives in Japanese society? The various chapters explore these questions for indigenous groups, “oldcomers,” and “newcomers,” including Burakumin, Ainu, Okinawans, Amerasians, Koreans, Brazilians, Chinese, and returnees from abroad. The authors focus on various types of “multicultural interactive space[s]” (15), including policy spaces, and physical spaces where such interactions are intended and where they are unintended but still occur. Their field sites range from areas where various minority groups are concentrated, and areas where such diversity is the exception rather than the norm.

This is an author-produced, peer-reviewed article that has been accepted for publication in *Social Science Japan Journal* but has not been copyedited. The publisher-authenticated version is available at <http://ssjj.oxfordjournals.org/content/15/1/146.full.pdf+html?etoc>.

Do not cite, excerpt, or reprint this version. Instead, cite:

Moorehead, Robert. 2012. Review of *Minorities and Education in Multicultural Japan: An Interactive Perspective*, edited by Ryoko Tsuneyoshi, Kaori H. Okano, and Sarane Spence Boocock. *Social Science Japan Journal* 15:146-149.

The authors offer excellent historical overviews of the changes in government policy at the local and national level, in educational philosophy, and in terminology to refer to minority populations. They also astutely note the failure of existing terms, like oldcomer and newcomer, in capturing the diversity within each category. Old habits die hard, and new terminology has yet to become part of the lexicon on Japan. Thus, the authors inevitably fall back on the old terms, although by placing them in quotation marks they cleverly remind the reader of the limited utility of these terms.

The book's greatest contribution lies in its ability to take otherwise empty signifiers such as "multiculturalism" and "*tabunka kyōsei*" (multicultural coexistence), terms whose meanings have varied so greatly as to render them nearly useless, and connect them to real curricula in real classrooms. Showing the diversity of educational philosophies, Spence Boocock's concluding chapter highlights the strengths and weaknesses of nine different approaches found across Japan. From this, Spence Boocock convincingly argues that there is no "one size fits all" approach to meeting the needs of Japan's minority children, and that educators must instead draw from various methods to serve the specific combinations of children in their classrooms. Nukaga and Tsuneyoshi examine efforts in Kawasaki City to integrate the diversity of a school's student population into the curriculum, showing how teachers are moving beyond a facile "diversity is good" approach to integrate the goals of international understanding with the Japanese educational philosophy of building a tightly knit, cooperative classroom. Beyond the immediate goal of strengthening classroom cohesion, this approach also aims to prepare the children to live as adults in a more tightly integrated world in which they will continue to encounter racial and ethnic others.

The range of cases in the book, and the concomitant range of educational approaches to dealing with diverse student populations, is a strength. Some authors, such as Noiri and Burgess, note the shortcomings of past and present approaches, while others, such as Okano,

This is an author-produced, peer-reviewed article that has been accepted for publication in *Social Science Japan Journal* but has not been copyedited. The publisher-authenticated version is available at <http://ssjj.oxfordjournals.org/content/15/1/146.full.pdf+html?etoc>.

Do not cite, excerpt, or reprint this version. Instead, cite:

Moorehead, Robert. 2012. Review of *Minorities and Education in Multicultural Japan: An Interactive Perspective*, edited by Ryoko Tsuneyoshi, Kaori H. Okano, and Sarane Spence Boocock. *Social Science Japan Journal* 15:146-149.

Spence Boocock, and Shimizu, note how schools' approaches have varied over time and between levels of schools, such as between preschool and elementary school.

The integration with Western theory places these cases in a broader global context, enabling more comparative analyses. Some chapters offer strong analytical foci and deep integration with sociological theory, however other chapters fall short of this goal, relying too much on mere description and failing to extract the full analytical purchase from their data. For example, Noiri examines the relationship between Okinawan ethnic identity and the prefecture's relationships with Japan and the United States. While providing a detailed historical overview, Noiri only hints at an analytical framework, contending that the state's "gap narrative" (87), which has emphasized the disparities between Okinawa and the Japanese mainland, has influenced the identity formation of the Okinawan people. This narrative has contributed to an Okinawan "inferiority complex" (87) that is focused on victimization. Noiri then connects this apparent "identity confusion" (80) to the implementation of public schooling in Okinawa, including the prefecture's ambivalent relationships with Japan and the United States. Noiri contends that these various identity quandaries have limited Okinawans' ability to recognize the parallels between their own victimization and that of Amerasian children in the prefecture. If Okinawans were to "reflect on their own experience of marginalization ... and relate this to that of Amerasians," then they would learn to coexist with Amerasians in the prefecture (78).

In this model, the specific process through which Okinawans would reach this epiphany is unclear. Setting aside Noiri's judgment that Okinawans *should* reach this conclusion, what specifically is preventing them from seeing a commonality between their experiences and those of Amerasians? Is it the access to material resources made available to the prefecture through the gap narrative? Is it Okinawans' subordinate status within Japan? Is it the stigma attached to being Amerasian? Or it is that Okinawans have not spent sufficient

This is an author-produced, peer-reviewed article that has been accepted for publication in *Social Science Japan Journal* but has not been copyedited. The publisher-authenticated version is available at <http://ssjj.oxfordjournals.org/content/15/1/146.full.pdf+html?etoc>.

Do not cite, excerpt, or reprint this version. Instead, cite:

Moorehead, Robert. 2012. Review of *Minorities and Education in Multicultural Japan: An Interactive Perspective*, edited by Ryoko Tsuneyoshi, Kaori H. Okano, and Sarane Spence Boocock. *Social Science Japan Journal* 15:146-149.

time and effort reflecting on the issues? Noiri contends that it's a combination of these factors, but lacking a clear analytical framework for identity formation, the specific mechanisms at play here are unclear. Examining the gap narrative and other key frames as "racial projects" (Omi and Winant 1994), for example, might have provided the theoretical scaffolding with which to more effectively examine the relationship between state narratives and Okinawan identity.

Similarly, Noiri alludes to Okinawans' "identity confusion" (80), "ambivalent identity" (79) and "inferiority complex" (87), however she does not clearly detail precisely what she means by these terms. She provides no data on Okinawan identity, and instead relies on a meta-analysis of Okinawan history to imply various identity problems.

A strength of this book is how it avoids essentializing various groups' identities, and instead notes the identities' fluid and situational nature by highlighting how and when certain identities are explicitly called upon, performed, or suppressed. The chapters by Nukaga and Tsuneyoshi, Spence Boocock, and Burgess, are excellent examples, as they deftly note the specific contexts in which minority identities become most salient and the shifting meanings of those identities. Unfortunately, the book is inconsistent in this regard. For example, Shimizu's chapter on programs for junior high students in Kanagawa contends that the Kanagawa programs enable minority children "to find out about themselves as foreigners" (178) and to "live in Japan as foreigners" (186). However, beyond having the students learn about the histories of their parents' home countries and their ethnic groups' histories of migration, it remains unclear how these foreign identities are constructed, or how foreigners are to be connected to Japanese society.

Shimizu presents minority students' depictions of their foreign identities without sufficiently analyzing these identity constructions. A Cambodian student describes discovering his "true self as a foreigner" (182), while another student who was born in Japan

This is an author-produced, peer-reviewed article that has been accepted for publication in *Social Science Japan Journal* but has not been copyedited. The publisher-authenticated version is available at <http://ssjj.oxfordjournals.org/content/15/1/146.full.pdf+html?etoc>.

Do not cite, excerpt, or reprint this version. Instead, cite:

Moorehead, Robert. 2012. Review of *Minorities and Education in Multicultural Japan: An Interactive Perspective*, edited by Ryoko Tsuneyoshi, Kaori H. Okano, and Sarane Spence Boocock. *Social Science Japan Journal* 15:146-149.

and is of Chinese descent says he cannot live as a Chinese or as a Japanese, and will instead craft his own ethnic identity. Shimizu describes these students' identities and then moves on, leaving the reader wanting to know more about how these programs are informing students' ethnic identities. Shimizu also quotes a Vietnamese student who contends that "to survive in Japanese society, you must stick together with other foreigners" (186), but she does not examine this claim of discrimination and of a need for panethnic solidarity. These are tremendously rich data, but the reader is left wanting more analysis and insight.

Shimizu contends that the programs "function as a space that empowers foreigners ('newcomers' by composition) to survive in Japanese society, but at the same time recognizes differences within the foreigners and, without lumping them together, enables each and every one to live in Japanese society in his or her own way" (187-8). In spite of this individualistic language, the students' individual agency is limited to choosing from the menu of identities laid out before them and convincing others that their chosen identities fit. Again, engaging with theory on ethnic identity would likely have strengthened Shimizu's analysis. Applying King-O'Riain's (2006) tri-level model of ethnic identity formation (self-perception, presentation of self to others, and negotiation with the larger group) might have produced an intriguing and effective comparison, as King-O'Riain applies her model to the case of Japanese Americans negotiating their own ethnic identities. Moreover, Shimizu's approach seems to reinforce the status quo in Japan rather than challenge it by reifying ethnic categories as mutually exclusive and incompatible.

The chapter by Burgess, on the other hand, avoids these shortcomings by noting in nuanced fashion the competing identity frames that minority students face. As Burgess writes, "[B]oth nationalistic and multicultural discourses can work to marginalize foreigners and exclude them from becoming Japanese, suggesting strong pressures against assimilation. Clearly, non-Japanese children encounter a number of contradictory signals. 'They should

This is an author-produced, peer-reviewed article that has been accepted for publication in *Social Science Japan Journal* but has not been copyedited. The publisher-authenticated version is available at <http://ssjj.oxfordjournals.org/content/15/1/146.full.pdf+html?etoc>.

Do not cite, excerpt, or reprint this version. Instead, cite:

Moorehead, Robert. 2012. Review of *Minorities and Education in Multicultural Japan: An Interactive Perspective*, edited by Ryoko Tsuneyoshi, Kaori H. Okano, and Sarane Spence Boocock. *Social Science Japan Journal* 15:146-149.

become like us ... and yet they should know that they are different” (195). Burgess captures this balancing act between integration and exclusion that minority students in Japan navigate on a daily basis.

Beyond the insight this book shares on minority education in Japan, it also offers the added benefit of serving as a primer on the strengths of ethnographic and historical qualitative analysis. Graduate students considering field research in education, in or out of Japan, would benefit from examining the variety of cases and analyses in this text. The chapter by Spence Boocock, for example, highlights the tremendous insights that can be born of unexpected findings.

Even with its occasional shortcomings, this text is a valuable contribution to the scholarship on minorities and education in Japan, offering insight to scholars who are new to this area, and those already well-versed in the debates. The book is appropriate for undergraduate and graduate courses in education, sociology, anthropology, and ethnic studies. The writing is clear and concise, although marred by a few errors in the authors' citations. Also, the book's bar graphs are shaded so dark as to make them extremely difficult to read. Unfortunately, with a list price of US\$130, many readers will likely rely on their libraries to purchase the text, rather than adding the book to their own individual libraries. A digital copy of the book is more affordable, although still expensive, at a list price of US\$62.95.

References

King-O'Riain, Rebecca Chiyoko. 2006. *Pure Beauty: Judging Race in Japanese American Beauty Pageants*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 1994. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge.

This is an author-produced, peer-reviewed article that has been accepted for publication in *Social Science Japan Journal* but has not been copyedited. The publisher-authenticated version is available at <http://ssjj.oxfordjournals.org/content/15/1/146.full.pdf+html?etoc>.