13 Acculturation in East and Southeast Asia

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13.1 Introduction

Some of the largest and most dynamic economies in the world are located in East and Southeast Asia. Buoyant economic performance in the region has attracted large numbers of migrants. Similar to the experience in traditional immigrant-receiving societies in Western nations, the influx of nonnative ethnocultural groups has markedly impacted intercultural relationships (see Leong & Berry, 2010). This chapter will review prominent trends in the acculturation literature on East and Southeast Asia with the aim to identify overarching themes in acculturation and intergroup processes in these two geopolitical regions.

East and Southeast Asia consist of multiple states with ethnoculturally diverse populations. It is therefore beyond the scope of this chapter to assign equal coverage to all countries, but we will examine in greater detail two selected societies in East and Southeast Asia where there is a significant presence of nonnative residents: Japan and Singapore. The acculturation dynamics in Japan and Singapore will be utilized as primary examples within the two regions, although further empirical evidence, that is, from China and South Korea, will be introduced to give a sense of broader acculturation trends in East Asia.

These two advanced Asian economies have been chosen because they represent opposing ends of the demographic spectrum known in Asia. Japan is a largely monocultural society with highly restrictive criteria for in-migration. Singapore, in contrast, is culturally pluralistic, and until lately has had one of the most liberal immigration regimes in Asia. Both societies are known to be "tight cultures" and share similar population imperatives characterized by ultra-low fertility and a rapidly aging society. The two countries, however, embrace highly disparate host acculturation ideologies: Japan is skewed in favor of assimilation to the dominant group (with some exceptions detailed below) whereas Singapore's approach tends to promote integration and multicultural coexistence.

In this chapter, acculturation dynamics in Singapore and Japan will be explored in more detail through a review of literature on intergroup relations, particularly for voluntary, migrant groups – that is, immigrants, long-term/permanent foreign residents and sojourners – as well as an examination of general governmental migrant policies. The chapter will also identify emerging areas of research – specifically, findings in Asian contexts that either challenge

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traditional or conventionally held theoretical perspectives in acculturation psychology or which point to new conceptual directions that can advance understanding of the broader phenomena of acculturation and intercultural relations. The implications will be examined for future acculturation research both within Asia and beyond.

13.2 Acculturation and intergroup relations in Japan

This section begins with descriptions of Japan's migrant group demographics, the social context of acculturation in Japan, and governmental migrant policy. Next, acculturation strategies and dynamics are considered for four representative minority groups: ethnic Koreans, Chinese, Brazilians of Japanese descent, and Westerners to illustrate both the diversity of non-Japanese acculturation experiences as well as themes that unite them. There are many other acculturating groups that deserve attention but are not covered due to space limitations.

13.2.1 Demographics of the non-Japanese population

In Japan, an expanding retiree population and a declining birth rate threaten a debilitating labor shortage. Demographers predict that by 2025 almost 30 percent of the population will be over 65, and only two people between the ages of 15 and 64 will support each retiree (currently, there are three) (Roberts, 2012). One means of mitigating this tightening dependency ratio is to accept more foreign workers – the main issues being how many and which types (e.g., highly versus unskilled laborers or permanent residents versus guest workers). Currently, non-Japanese number about 2.07 million, or 1.6 percent of the entire population of 127.3 million (Japanese Ministry of Justice, 2014) – more than twice as many as in 1990. In terms of country of origin, the ten most populous non-Japanese groups in Japan as of the end of 2013 were, in order, from China (648,980), North and South Korea (519,737), Philippines (209,137), Brazil (181,268), Vietnam (72,238), the United States (49,979), Peru (48,580), Thailand (41,204), Taiwan (33,322) and Nepal (31,531) (Japanese Ministry of Justice, 2014).

Since 2011, almost half of the foreign residents in Japan have held either "special permanent" or "permanent" resident status (Roberts, 2012). So rather than making temporary sojourns, the majority of non-Japanese are settling there – in many cases marrying Japanese (Willis & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008), starting families and building communal bonds that result in mutual acculturation between the couples and their communities over years of residence (Burgess, 2008). This could engender more transcultural identities as migrants acculturate to Japan and raise children who embrace hyphenated forms of national identity.

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13.2.2 Social context of acculturation

Since World War II, Japan has been largely perceived by the Japanese majority as a monoethnic nation (Willis & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008). The presence of non-Japanese workers became a prominent issue in the mid-1980s as foreigners (including Iranians, Bengalis, Thais, Filipinos and Japanese Brazilians) migrated to Japan (or entered illegally) to do jobs that most Japanese considered *kitanai, kitsui*, and *kiken* – that is, "dirty," "demanding," and "dangerous" (Burgess, 2008). What differentiated these workers was not only their numbers, but also their physical distinctness from Japanese and established minority populations of Koreans and Chinese (Graburn & Ertl, 2008). Such visibility made them, according to Burgess (2008), a "potential (though largely symbolic) threat to prevailing notions of Japan as an ethnically homogenous society" (p. 63).

The social context of acculturation in Japan is fraught with contested meanings and interpretations. One position states that Japan, spurred on by a graying, shrinking workforce and a low birthrate, is moving inexorably toward a multicultural society. Willis and Murphy-Shigematsu (2008) observed, "What we are seeing . . . is a transcultural, transnational society with fluid boundaries, constant change, and often innovative cultural formations" (p. 5) consisting "of Others who are both being changed by and who are changing Japan" (p. 6). This perspective frames non-Japanese as valued participants in communities and work organizations who are, according to Graburn and Ertl (2008), "joined in solidarity [with Japanese] based on residency rather than citizenship or nationality" (p. 22). Cultural boundaries between Japanese and non-Japanese are not absolute, that is, with singular group identifications, but dynamic as people adopt different cultural identifications based on context and interpersonal relationship (Willis & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008).

Another school of thought contends that non-Japanese constitute only a sliver of the total population compared to traditional migrant societies, and the government promotes only temporary migration instead of long-term or permanent settlement (Roberts, 2012). Moreover, Japanese construct a sharp dichotomy between themselves and non-Japanese – treating foreigners as perpetual outsiders (McVeigh, 2004). As articulated by Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault and Senécal (1997), "Who can be and who should be citizens of the state [is defined] in ethnically . . . exclusive terms . . . [Moreover], the host majority has no intention of ever accepting immigrants as rightful members of the host society. . . [either] legally or socially" (pp. 374–375).

This school of thought often cites *nihonjinron* – a widespread ideology which shapes Japanese ethnonational identity and acculturation expectations toward minority groups. In this view, Japanese culture and people are homogenous and have unique qualities that separate them from other national and ethnic groups – characteristics commonly attributed to geography, topography, rural community structure or language (Befu, 2001; Goodman, 2008; Sullivan & Schatz, 2009). Moreover, Japanese ancestry, citizenship, linguistic proficiency and culture are coterminous and used to evoke and engender an exclusive national identity. Non-Japanese, particularly

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Westerners, are thought incapable of understanding Japanese culture, becoming fluent or literate in the language, or practicing a mainstream Japanese lifestyle (McVeigh, 2004; Sakata, 2009).

Most writing about acculturation in Japan can be located along a continuum with ideological positions from the two schools of thought as endpoints – though some sources incorporate both viewpoints to frame acculturation dynamics and outcomes. As Komisarof (2011, 2012) observed, many non-Japanese have achieved acceptance as core members of their work organizations by assimilating to Japanese norms or realizing a hybrid organizational culture, while others perceive themselves excluded because of their nationality. Therefore, it is probably fair to conclude that despite tendencies toward an exclusive national identity and sharp dichotomies between Japanese and nonnatives (which discourage acceptance of the latter as full members of society), Japanese increasingly recognize the potential of those not traditionally thought of as Japanese to perform competently in Japanese cultural contexts, contribute to society and even in some cases to adopt a Japanese identity (Komisarof, 2012; Willis & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008) – constituting nascent signs of movement toward a more inclusive sociocultural model of the national in-group.

13.2.3   Japan's immigration policy: present and future

Japan's immigration policy officially targets highly skilled labor (Vogt & Achenbach, 2012), though approximately two-thirds of current migrants do not comprise such; in fact, Japan's economy is now structurally dependent upon such low-skilled workers, as they are willing to take on jobs largely shunned by the Japanese (Chiavacci, 2012). Various municipal governments have established their own policies aimed at "multicultural coexistence" with migrants. Nagy (2012) argued that most of these initiatives enable foreign residents to receive the same services as their Japanese counterparts, but do not encourage acceptance of migrants "as Japanese speakers, as contributors to Japan, as stake holders in Japan" (pp. 9–10), which limits their efficacy in promoting the emotive and cognitive aspects of multiculturalism – namely, a shared national identity that lies outside racial and ethnic boundaries and stems from a common local and national experience. Nor is there broad support to maintain non-Japanese heritage cultures or develop multicultural identities.

Japan's nationwide plans for immigration are commonly framed as extensions of the two major acculturation discourses previously detailed. Proponents of Japan's increasing pluralism predict that the government will open its doors to foreigners as the native population plummets – envisioning an immigrant society where nonnatives are welcomed, become Japanese citizens and share the same rights and responsibilities as other members of Japanese society (Graburn & Ertl, 2008; Willis & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008). The other camp believes that the Japanese government has no such intentions; rather, over concerns that a large foreign influx will threaten public safety and security (Chiavacci, 2012), the Japanese way of life (Nagy, 2012), and social harmony, the government will expand the Japanese workforce by including

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more women and raising the retirement age, all the while remedying shortfalls with transient foreign workers and tacitly maintaining the status quo – that is, the absence of a national policy to encourage the long-term settlement and integration of foreigners as immigrants (Roberts, 2012).

13.2.4   Zainichi Korean residents

Zainichi Koreans, or ethnic Korean residents of Japan, were Japan's largest minority group until 2007. Their tumultuous history has informed their present acculturation psychology. The 600,000 people of Korean descent living in Japan after World War II were stripped of suffrage in December 1945, and had their Japanese nationality and most state services revoked in 1952. In 1965, many Koreans were granted permanent residency, and those divested of Japanese nationality in 1952 were granted "special permanent residency" in 1991. This status does not serve as an eventual path to Japanese citizenship (Ryang, 2013), yet pressure to assimilate culturally has continued, for example, by forced changes to Japanese names or humiliation if they spoke Korean at school (Willis & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008). Numerous *Zainichi* Koreans perceive that they face economic and social barriers in Japanese society (Ryang, 2013; Yoshino, 1997); thus, they may be expected to assimilate but are not rewarded with full-fledged societal membership – a critical component of the assimilation orientation in traditional migrant societies (Bourhis et al., 1997).

Hester (2008) observed a new discourse among *Zainichi* Koreans that advocates naturalizing to Japan while maintaining a bicultural identity – a momentous shift from descent-based, mutually exclusive categories of "Korean" and "Japanese" to identities with fluid boundaries. Yet *Zainichi* Koreans continue to construct many forms of cultural identity and understand their acculturation processes in diverse ways. Some prefer naturalization and assimilation to Japan, while others identify strictly as Koreans who happen to reside in Japan, as both Korean and Japanese or as neither Korean nor Japanese (i.e., as an autonomous diasporic culture) (Lee, 2006; Murphy-Shigematsu, 2006).

13.2.5   Chinese migrants

Since 2007, Chinese have constituted Japan's largest migrant group and currently form roughly one-third of the total foreign population (Vogt & Achenbach, 2012). Japan is now the top importer of Chinese workers, the largest foreign investor in China, and China is Japan's largest trading partner (recently surpassing the United States) (Liu-Farrer, 2011, 2012). This increasingly close relationship has created many jobs for Chinese in transnational business operations and markedly impacted their acculturation.

Notably, Chinese (primarily graduates from Japanese universities) have entered a previously inaccessible labor market in Japanese small- and medium-sized companies, where they serve as cultural and linguistic bridges in marketing and sales, thus

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easing Japanese firms' entry into China and Chinese-speaking markets. While this constitutes progress in access to employment and socioeconomic mobility, Liu-Farrer (2011) and Achenbach's (2012) informants generally lacked job security and perceived glass ceilings due to their ethnicity. Some were promoted to senior positions, particularly if they had naturalized to Japan and were seen as indispensable to their company. However, for most, Liu-Farrer (2011) concluded, "The occupational niche is limiting and the mobility channel within it narrow and short" (p. 800) – its existence "a product of prevailing institutional, structural, and cultural barriers in the host society" (p. 785).

13.2.6 Nikkei Brazilians

Latin American *Nikkeijin* ("Japanese descendants born overseas") migrated in large numbers to Japan in the late 1980s in response to an economic crisis in South America. The revised Immigration Control Act (1990) allowed *Nikkeijin* up to the third generation to enter and work in Japan, reasoning that their Japanese ethnic roots would make their adjustment easier than other foreign nationals. Most *Nikkeijin* migrants are second- or third-generation Brazilians who spoke little Japanese before migrating to Japan (Murphy-Shigematsu, 2006; Tsuda, 2008). Many experience liminal status as neither Japanese nor foreign and consequent identity struggles, leading Sekiguchi (2002) to conclude that the only way for *Nikkei* Brazilians to become fully accepted as Japanese is to speak the language and comport themselves as natives, have an appearance that allows them to physically pass as Japanese, adopt Japanese names and naturalize – in other words, complete cultural and legal assimilation enabled by phenotypical similarity. A hyphenated form of Japanese identity, such as Brazilian-Japanese, was not generally accepted by Japanese.

Nikkei Brazilians potentially challenge long-held notions that Japanese descent makes one culturally Japanese (Tsuda, 2008). While this schism could shake the foundation of Japanese ethnonational identity and lead to new, more inclusive attitudes incorporating the Brazilian *Nikkei* manifestation of "Japanese-ness," Tsuda found that Japanese encountering *Nikkei* Brazilians typically created a more restrictive form of Japanese identity, reasoning that certain cultural traits (e.g., being polite, sensitive and diligent) distinguished them from *Nikkei* Brazilians. They also placed newfound emphasis upon native Japanese linguistic proficiency and cultural competence as intrinsic to Japanese identity (i.e., not only descent) – ultimately concluding that the *Nikkei* were not "real" Japanese. Thus, Tsuda (2008) and Sekiguchi (2002) agreed that ethnonational identities remained narrow as Japanese varied and rationalized their in-group parameters, failing to expand their notions of Japanese-ness to include multicultural possibilities as embodied by *Nikkei* Brazilians.

13.2.7 Westerners

The acculturation experiences of Westerners, that is, those hailing from more developed economies (MDE) in North America, Western Europe and Oceania,

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serve as a counterexample to Koreans, Chinese and *Nikkei* Brazilians, who tend to phenotypically resemble Japanese and also originate from countries with developing economies. Komisarof (2009) and Partridge (1987) both found respectively that Americans and Westerners in general tend to favor integration or assimilation acculturation strategies. The *gaijin* ("foreigner") social role affects acculturation dynamics and outcomes among many Westerners (particularly English-speaking Caucasians) – who may enact it or be expected to do so by Japanese people (Sakata, 2009). This privileged yet marginal position as *okyakusama* ("honored guests") can be traced to the cultural capital associated with English, as well as Western affluence and power. Namely, Japanese feel obligated to speak English and make Westerners comfortable – that is, by adopting what they perceive to be Western communication norms and/or by giving Westerners exemptions from widespread expectations for polite behavior, which can result in "pampered" treatment and "excessive freedoms" (Murphy-Shigematsu, 2006). But such guests are also separated by a "polite distance" (McConnell, 2000) from the core of Japanese work organizations and communities, where sustained, broad participation in daily routines that constitute the shared life of members is sharply proscribed and largely inaccessible to outsiders. Paradoxically, this acculturation orientation – intended to welcome and demonstrate respect – often erects a barrier to meaningful intergroup interaction and adaptation. Komisarof (2011), though, found that while the *gaijin* role influenced some Americans' workplace acculturation, many achieved organizational acceptance across a broad range of contexts and relationships.

Acculturation processes can also vary according to racialization – that is, racial identities attributed by Japanese to Westerners based on their physical appearances. Sekiguchi (2002) and Russell (1991) contended that African Americans face negative stereotypes and discrimination in the workplace and society more frequently than Caucasians. Alternatively, Japanese Americans may more easily "blend in" and be accepted by Japanese than Caucasians, particularly if they are fluent in Japanese, but they also tend to face stricter expectations that they behave according to common Japanese norms and suffer negative sanctions when they do not (Asai, 2006; Kondo, 1990).

13.2.8 Prevalent acculturation themes for migrants in Japan

In synthesizing the literature about these four acculturative groups, several themes emerge. First, there are clearly "valued" and "devalued" migrants (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001), which suggests a national and racial hierarchy by which Japanese rank acculturative groups in terms of their attractiveness and desirability. The Japanese intergroup orientation toward Asian groups has been characterized as largely assimilation – with a strong emphasis on collectivist values and compliance to social norms – but separation when it comes to intercultural contact; conversely, integration is preferred for Westerners, particularly Caucasians, because of their valued-migrant-group status (Inoue & Ito, 1993).

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These perceptions color and reinforce mutual acculturation expectations in a self-fulfilling manner. Westerners (particularly Caucasians) are often expected to express their heritage culture (e.g., to speak English), yet such acts are seen by many Japanese as proof of their inability to acculturate to Japan, which then serves as justification not to include Westerners as core members of work organizations and/or society. In contrast, those not typically afforded guest treatment, such as *Zainichi* Koreans, Chinese, and *Nikkei* Brazilians, are frequently expected to minimize expressions of their heritage culture and follow Japanese norms. But if they can physically and culturally pass as Japanese (or at least come close) and are willing to naturalize, then they face a smoother path to acceptance than those whose physical characteristics clearly mark them to be not of Japanese ancestry. If they cannot pass, though, they are also less likely to experience the full benefits of assimilation ideologies in traditional migrant societies – that is, socioeconomic opportunity and social acceptance.

Recently, nascent signs are emerging of more inclusive acculturation dynamics, such as the recognition of multicultural identities encompassing both Japanese and non-Japanese components (as experienced by some *Zainichi* Koreans) as well as permeable in-group boundaries toward deep acculturators to Japan, regardless of physical similarity to Japanese people. Komisarof (2012) observed that Westerners who do not "look" Japanese but have naturalized feel accepted as Japanese within certain relationships and social contexts – especially when their legal status as Japanese citizens becomes prominent and they command high levels of Japanese cultural and linguistic competence. These migrants challenge long-standing Japanese in-group boundaries constructed around coterminous entities of ethnicity, racialized group and citizenship, and instead promote a more inclusive, achievement-based definition rooted in linguistic and cultural competence.

13.3   Singapore: brief history of racial policies and immigration

Singapore is a small island-state situated at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula. The dynamics of immigration and acculturation are shaped by its history as a British colony. The country was founded by the British in 1819 and for almost one and a half centuries was considered a strategic outpost. The city-state has no natural resources and is surrounded by two large Muslim neighbors in a politically unsettled region. Singapore, unlike Japan, South Korea or China, has a diverse demographic profile that comprises three major ethnic groups: 74.1 percent of the population is Chinese, 13.4 percent Malays, 9.2 percent Indians and 3.3 percent other ethnicities (2010 Singapore Population Census); about 14.7 percent of its population is Muslim. The demographic texture of the nation has remained largely stable since pre-independence (see Table 13.1).

The 1950s and 1960s were a turbulent era for racial politics in Singapore. The British governed with a "divide and conquer" tactic through a division of labor by ethnicity (Lim, 1980): the Chinese and a few segments of the Indian community

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served as traders or civil servants under the colonial government while the Malays formed the rural, unwaged peasant sector. Racial and intergroup dynamics were further complicated by social segregation policies. Residential housing was zoned according to ethnicity (Turnbull, 1977). Similarly in education, separate mediums of instruction were offered for the three major ethnic groups with neither shared curriculum nor opportunities for interethnic interaction (Hirschman, 1979). Collectively, this ensured an unequal society where members of different community groups had minimal contact with one another.

The pluralist formation advocated under British rule in the 1950s was the "construction of essentialized ethnic categories" (Shamsul, 1999, p. 52) around three official racial groups, that is, Chinese, Malay and Indian; this consequently reinforced the stereotypes and prejudice against each ethnic community. The segregation policies of the colonial state made relations between ethnic Chinese and Malays acrimonious. Moreover, the social climate in the 1950s and 1960s was saturated with a strong wave of nationalist, anticolonial rhetoric. The social unrest provoked labor strikes and anti-British street protests.

13.3.1 Management of diversity in the post-colonial state

When Singapore achieved independence in 1965, the newly elected administration advanced a governing model that was the antithesis of its colonial predecessor. It championed equal rights for all ethnic communities and avoided giving primacy to the dominant Chinese culture in managing ethnic identity and relations. This set the tone for the development of national racial and immigration policies in modern-day Singapore. Unlike Japan, where the acculturation context gravitates toward assimilation, Singapore embraces an integrationist ideology where the state recognizes the importance of ethnocultural heritage maintenance within the rubric of an overarching Singaporean identity (Lai, 1995; Ward & Leong, 2006). This ideology underscores the belief that a harmonious and stable society is predicated on a strong heritage identity embedded in a secular and nonthreatening environment. At the same time, the state promotes active participation in the broader society – a condition that Berry coined as the *multiculturalism hypothesis* (Berry, 2013; Berry & Kalin, 1995).

The state advocated equal treatment regardless of ethnicity, and promulgated market-centered, pragmatic policies because economic survival was unquestionably the key priority for the small island-state with no natural resources (Chua, 1994; Lee, 1978). For the country to survive, the multiethnic and multireligious population had to be cohesive, demonstrate mutual respect to out-groups and yet embrace probusiness, market-driven economic strategies (Lee, 1974; Ow, 1986).

Multiculturalism in Singapore is strengthened through its language and housing policies, cemented by its emphasis on ethnic representations in the sociopolitical space, and it is rooted in two sociopsychological principles. First, as emphasized in the multiculturalism hypothesis, a secure socioeconomic identity precipitates willingness to interact with members of the out-group (Berry, 2013; Berry & Kalin,

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1995), and second, as articulated in the *contact hypothesis*, increased intergroup contact alone does not produce positive out-group experience – unless the process takes place in a nonthreatening, equal-status condition, and the quality of contact is not superficial (Allport, 1954; Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013).

The educational system in the Republic requires every child to learn two languages – English is taught as the main national language in addition to a second, native language that is used in his or her ethnic community (Gopithan, 1991; Lee, 2008). The bilingual policy creates a common linguistic platform for intercultural contact via the English language while enabling the intergenerational transmission of cultural values, the preservation of ethnic identities, and providing the psychological pillar for inclusive intercultural engagement (Clammer, 1985; Lee, 2008; Lee, 2000).

About 85 percent of Singaporeans live in state-subsidized public housing (Singapore Population Census, www.singstats.gov.sg). In order to prevent ethnic enclaves, the domestic home ownership policy mandates that the profile of household tenants in each public apartment block follow the national ethnic ratio. In other words, there is proportionate representation of the three major ethnic groups in every residential estate. While this requirement may not necessarily ensure meaningful intercultural contact, it creates a compelling condition for racial interactions.

In terms of sociopolitical presentation, the Constitution mandates that all three major ethnic groups be represented in all national elections via a group representation constituency system. Political candidates must contest as a team consisting of four to six individuals, one of whom must be an ethnic minority, that is, either Malay or Indian (Elections Department Singapore, 2012). This ensures that all groups are represented in parliament regardless of election outcome.

Access to ethnic-based social benefits is regulated by the concept of "collective ownership." The disbursement of financial support and welfare is performed through self-help organizations differentiated by ethnic identities; for example, the Chinese Development Association Council addresses the needs of the Chinese community, the Council for the Development of Malay/Muslim Community attends to Malays, and the Singapore Indian Development Association is for ethnic Indians. The government provides resources to the ethnic-based groups, but the latter decide how those resources are used. Through such decentralization, ethnicities can tackle issues unique to each group and perceptions of intergroup bias are reduced because respective institutions look after their own communities.

13.3.2 Immigration and economic development

The economic success of Singapore is closely tied to foreign investment and immigration (Yeoh, 2007). Singapore maintained a liberal open-door policy for trade and immigration long before it became a sovereign nation. The influx of foreigners – both transient and permanent – ensures the city-state has a predictable supply of skilled and unskilled labor to meet its economic imperatives and to

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Table 13.1 *Singapore's population and ethnic composition (1970–2010)*

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Total population (000)	2,074.5	2,413.9	3,047.1	4,027.9	5,076.7
Resident population (SC + PR)	2,013.6	2,282.1	2,735.9	3,273.4	3,771.7
Singapore citizens (SC)	1,874.8	2,194.3	2,623.7	2,985.9	3,230.7
Permanent residents (PR)	138.8	87.8	112.1	287.5	541.0
Nonresident population (e.g., foreigners on transient work and employment permits, and temporary visas)	60.9	131.8	311.3	754.5	1,305.0
Ethnic ratio (100%)					
Chinese	77.0	78.3	77.8	76.8	74.1
Malays	14.8	14.4	14.0	13.9	13.4
Indians	7.0	6.3	7.1	7.9	9.2
Others	1.2	1.0	1.1	1.4	3.3

Source: Singapore Population Census, www.singstats.gov.sg

mitigate the impact of a declining fertility rate and a fast-aging society. But over the past two decades, the rate of inbound migration has accelerated exponentially. The total number of nonresidents – composed mainly of low-skilled, working-class transient labor – has doubled every decade between 1970 and 2010.

The staggering influx of immigrants and transient labor has not been well-accepted in certain quarters of Singaporean society, even as the majority of Singaporeans are cognizant of the need for immigrants (Yeoh & Lin, 2012). The perceived threats from immigration are both economic and symbolic. On the economic front, Singaporeans now have to compete harder for jobs, education opportunities and housing, and navigate in a crowded and congested space.

From the cultural-symbolic point of view, the perceived erosion of societal norms and values as a result of the influx of nonresidents and immigrants has caused great angst. The demographic landscape has evolved rapidly as the ratio of citizens-to-total-population has dwindled from 90.0 percent in 1980 to 63.6 percent in 2010, and it is projected to fall to about 50 percent by 2029 (National Population and Talent Division, Singapore, 2013). There is also tension over how the ethnic texture will change over time. The ebbs and flows of global talent to Singapore will invariably challenge the existing framework for managing ethnic diversity as the intergroup boundaries are no longer calibrated around ethnic Chinese, Malay and Indian (Yeoh, 2004). This scenario is not well received, especially among minority Malay and Indian groups. In line with the body of research in intergroup relations (e.g., Leong & Ward, 2011), the psychological impact of in-migration and acculturation has a stronger, more negative influence on minority native groups' attitudes – in this case Malays and Indians – than the Chinese majority.

There are signs that the multicultural discourse has steadily shifted from an ethnic-based narrative to one grounded in transnational migration as the number

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of nonnative-born residents soars. In a recent study by the Institute of Policy Studies, 32.1 percent of the respondents said there is much more nationality-related prejudice today than 5 years ago, and just 16 percent and 10 percent said that racial- and religious-based prejudices, respectively, had decreased (Mathews, 2014). Leong's (2014) research on social markers of acculturation also suggests that multiculturalism will remain the cornerstone of future intergroup contact and coexistence with the nonnatives even as there are distinct attributes that call for assimilation, for instance, compliance to military conscription.

Thus, Singapore maintains balance as a pluralist society with a largely open-door policy for economic survival. Since independence, the management of ethnic diversity has shifted from a segregation-oriented framework to a multicultural model by giving equal emphasis to all three major ethnic groups. This is achievable through a range of national policies that promulgate heritage continuation and intercultural contact, including bilingual programs in schools, guarantees of political representation in the parliament and residential requirements that prevent the formation of enclaves. These policies collectively create the necessary sociopsychological conditions needed for multicultural contact, mutual respect and acceptance of diversity.

13.4   Acculturation themes in China and South Korea

China's population has approximately 1.4 billion people with a majority 90 percent of ethnic Han descent. There are fifty-six officially recognized ethnic minorities and at least hundreds of other distinct ethnocultural groups (Mullaney, 2011). In contrast to Japan, the body of acculturation research in China is primarily informed by rural-urban, rather than international migration (Chan & Zhang, 1999). The prominent issues in domestic migration are centered around the economic pull factors behind unskilled rural-urban migration, a rigid *hukou* registration process that limits migrant worker's access to socioeconomic resources, social stigmatization of the rural poor, the mismatch of acculturation expectations and a sharp reduction in psychological well-being following rural-urban migration (see Chan & Zhang, 1999; Knight & Gunatilaka, 2010; Zhang & Song, 2003).

Acculturation literature also addresses concerns over the cultural survival of selected minority ethnic groups. The strong separatist movements and unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang, for instance, are said to have reinforced the Chinese central government's commitment to preserving its national sovereignty, as Beijing is prepared to deploy all measures, including the use of force, to keep the two states within its jurisdiction. The sociopolitical climate in the two regions and the irrevocable determination by the Chinese government to secure its legitimacy and power undermine these minorities' heritage cultural maintenance and inhibit meaningful cultural and political integration with the larger mainland China – outcomes that stand in contrast to other ethnic policies that support affirmative action for minority groups such as preferential policies for family planning (i.e., more than one child),

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priority in college admissions and special quotas for seats in congress and government. These affirmative action policies were implemented to promote national integration, but they have been overshadowed by political schism (Carlson, 2004; Shan & Chen, 2009).

Empirical studies of acculturation in China using Berry's model of acculturation strategies have also begun to appear. Hui, Chen, Leung and Berry (2015) investigated acculturation experiences and intercultural relations in Hong Kong between Hong Kong residents and mainland immigrants in order to assess in dominant and nondominant groups the roles of integration and multicultural ideology in facilitating adaptation and intercultural contact. Their results suggested that integration is more important to intrapersonal functioning (i.e., psychological and sociocultural adaptation), whereas multicultural ideology is more impactful in facilitating social interactions between hosts and immigrants.

Dikotter (1997a, 1997b) emphasized the centrality of racialized identities and the importance of "blood" in constructing a sense of Chinese nationhood. Similar to the Japanese, powerful and cohesive forms of identity are provided by shared descent; one cannot usually "become" Chinese. Chow (1997) noted that Han Chinese, despite an abundance of dialects and local cultures, "have a sense of belonging to a group which shares more or less the same culture, a history and a vague sense of belonging to the 'yellow race'" (p. 34) (yellow being symbolic of grandeur). Similarly, Han may believe they are descendants of the *Yellow Emperor*, a mythic figure in the high antiquity of China (Chow, 1997), or descendants of the dragon – an ancestral symbol (Sautman, 1997). Chinese identity has expanded to include minority groups – Han Chinese being central and other ethnicities within the political boundaries of the Peoples' Republic of China also belonging peripherally by virtue of shared ancestral connections to the *Yellow Emperor* (Dikotter, 1997b; Sautman, 1997). But this construction's boundaries blur when it comes to ethnic minorities who do not physically or culturally resemble the Han, as they may be viewed as "less authentic" Chinese (Sautman, 1997). Moreover, some minority groups themselves (e.g., Tibetans) contest the myth of shared ancestral connections.

The assumption of citizenship based largely on ethnic descent is not unique to China and Japan. South Koreans broadly share the assumption that descent, citizenship and culture are coterminous in defining identity (Seol & Seo, 2014), but in many regards, it is closer to Japan than China – strongly emphasizing homogeneity, "pure" blood and cultural uniqueness (Graburn & Ertl, 2008). South Korea faces similar demographic and economic challenges to Japan due to a low birthrate and graying population, so deciding the extent to which the workforce should be supplemented with foreign labor is a pressing social and policy issue. As of 2011, 2.2 percent of the total population in South Korea was foreign, but the labor market's dependence on imported labor is expected to reach 35 percent by 2050.

Since the late 1980s, globalization has precipitated an influx of labor migrants from other Asian countries, Asian foreign spouses (approximately 10 percent of registered marriages today are binational) and returnees from Korean diasporas in China (Seol & Seo, 2014). Seol and Seo argued that this diversity has challenged

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popular beliefs equating bloodline and culture; consequently, national identity is slowly becoming more inclusive of long-standing cultural outsiders. Such perceptions have not yet transformed migrant policy, though. Nagy (2013) noted that, as in Japan, South Korean policy continues to promote acceptance of guest workers rather than immigrants – a commonality that he attributed to shared "attachments to the idea of being ethnically and culturally homogenous societies" (p. 3).

In summary, in Japan, China and South Korea, citizenship, culture, descent and ethnicity have been broadly conceived as coterminous, making multiple identities, free choice of ethnicity or ambiguity in group membership, which are common features in multicultural Western democracies with established practices of large-scale immigration, broadly unrecognized and unaccepted. On the other hand, all three nations are experiencing unprecedented diversity through globalization. These developments have challenged notions of cultural homogeneity, traditional forms of group belonging, and also produced demands for inclusion from long-term migrants who want the rights and social benefits that accompany denizenship and/or citizenship in their home countries. Although national identity and in-group boundaries are still relatively exclusively and unequivocally defined, the social and political forces unleashed by globalization are resulting in modest shifts toward more inclusive forms of membership.

13.5   Areas of emerging research

This section explores emerging areas of acculturation research in the context of East and Southeast Asia. It will examine acculturation trends and perspectives in these regions with a view to understanding the broader implications for acculturation studies in other parts of the world and as a field in general.

13.5.1 Social construction of adaptation in Asian contexts

Two complementary streams of research addressing the social construction of acculturation illuminate important dynamics of sociocultural adaptation processes and may ultimately lead to broader models of how group membership is achieved in Singapore, Japan and beyond. Namely, Leong (2014) and Komisarof (2011, 2012) are working to identify context-specific indicators of adaptation or norms commonly expected by host society members to gain acceptance in Singaporean society as well as in Japanese workplaces and society, respectively.

In two separate samples of Singaporeans, one group comprising local-born citizens, and the other of foreign-born and immigrant citizens, Leong (2014) asked the two groups of respondents to identify the critical social markers of acculturation in Singapore – that is, what is expected of immigrants in order for them to become socially accepted as naturalized citizens – in terms of attitudes (e.g., "respects multiracial and multireligious practices"), behaviors (e.g., "behaves like a

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Singaporean," "owns residential property in Singapore"), skills (e.g., "speaks conversational English") and experience (e.g., "marries a local born Singaporean").

The results demonstrate the importance of both ideological and symbolic measures of adaptation such as "respect for multiracial, multireligious practices" (84.5 percent), "is gainfully employed" (72.8 percent), "able to speak conversational English" (66 percent) and "his/her male child completes National Service (i.e., military conscription)" (63.1 percent). At the opposite end of the acculturation spectrum, items that are less likely rated as indicators of naturalization include "gives up foreign cultural norms or behavior" (10.9 percent), "behaves like a 'Singaporean'" (18.9 percent) and "supports Singapore products and brands" (28.9 percent). From these results, Leong (2014) concludes that the majority Singaporeans, regardless of native or immigrant background, support multicultural ideology. Behaviors that emphasize assimilation values, such as giving up one's foreign heritage and supporting local products and brands, are not rated highly.

In Japan, Komisarof (2001, 2011, 2012) has identified a set of markers which, when exhibited by non-Japanese and positively acknowledged by Japanese in-group members, can facilitate the former's social acceptance. These markers include the humility of non-Japanese to accept any task assigned to help the group achieve its primary goals, mastery of a skill which the group values and the predilection to engage in empathetic, nonconfrontational and face-preserving communication. Another key is functional, context-specific linguistic and cultural competence (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009) rather than native-like parity in such domains. When, based on adherence to such markers, non-Japanese are believed capable of enacting essential roles in the group (such as serving customers and working in project teams in companies), then they are typically given opportunities to do so; furthermore, as Komisarof (2012) observed, "Involvement in such events allows non-Japanese to gather valuable insider knowledge, reinforce personal alliances, and affect decision-making – all of which further cement one's status as an indispensable, reliable group member" (p. 207).

While social markers exist in any society, Leong's and Komisarof's research suggest that they are particularly important in gaining acceptance in collectivist cultures, where there are usually less permeable group boundaries and stricter criteria for admittance than in individualist cultures (Triandis, 1995). Singapore and Japan are both known to be tight societies that place a high premium on conformity to conventional social norms and expectations; individuals, regardless of host-immigrant status, need to adopt both implicit and explicit codes of conduct for sociocultural behaviors and etiquette (Gelfand et al., 2011). Leong and Komisarof's research also implies that if migrants to these regions act in accordance with these critical norms for belonging and demonstrate related attitudes and skills, then they can improve their acculturation outcomes, particularly in terms of social acceptance and closer interpersonal relationships.

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13.5.2   Alternatives to integration for cultural adaption

Much empirical research in Europe and North America suggests that integration has the most positive sociopsychological and behavioral outcomes (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013), including lower acculturation distress (Scottham & Dias, 2010), higher self-esteem (Berry & Sabatier, 2010), more prosocial behaviors (Schwartz, Zamboanga & Jarvis, 2007), positive workplace well-being (Peeters & Oerlemans, 2009) and improved life satisfaction (Pfafferott & Brown, 2006). However, other scholars contend that different acculturation strategies may be preferable – depending on the selection, definition and assessment of acculturation outcomes as well as the broader social context in which acculturation occurs (Komisarof, 2014; Navas et al., 2005; Nguyen, Messe & Stollak, 1999; Rudmin, 2003). For example, assimilation has been linked to enhanced sociocultural adjustment, but separation is associated with reduced psychological distress (Ward & Kennedy, 1994). It is thus important to differentiate the contexts in which positive acculturation outcomes are better supported by assimilation or other acculturation orientations. Empirical research also suggests that the congruity of the acculturation orientation between host and immigrant groups plays a significant role in determining adaptation (Piontkowski, Rohmann & Florack, 2002; Rohmann, Florack & Piontkowski, 2006; Zagefka & Brown, 2002).

The role of context in determining which acculturation orientations yield the most positive outcomes may be particularly important in Asia. In a study of Japanese and American coworkers in Japan, Komisarof (2009) found that a combination of assimilation and integration acculturation strategies between these groups, otherwise known as "problematic" relations in Bourhis et al.'s (1997) interactive acculturation model, showed no statistically significant differences in their quality of acculturation outcomes when compared with matching integration or assimilation strategies (i.e., "consensual" combinations). In fact, the *incongruity* between assimilation and integration strategies engendered acculturative stress which, when well-managed, galvanized subjects to work toward positive acculturation outcomes such as supportive coworker relationships and job effectiveness. These results suggest that the interactive acculturation model's distinction between consensual and problematic types might need to be refined to account for the positive role played by acculturative stress in intercultural relations, and also question the "supremacy" of integration acculturation strategies regardless of context.

Such findings and others highlight the importance of context to acculturation research in Asia. Using a flexible combination of assimilation and integration orientations in various life domains – with a tendency toward assimilation in public domains like the workplace and other domains where conformity is strongly emphasized (e.g., military service in Singapore) – can promulgate positive acculturative outcomes; moreover, context-specific acculturation outcomes (e.g., respect for authority) may be more reliable indicators of naturalization than context-free measurements such as general well-being, satisfaction and quantity of contact with recipient nationals (Leong, 2014) and demand

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other forms of intergroup orientation (e.g., assimilation) (Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Navas et al., 2005). This is also consistent with collectivist values that emphasize compliance with group norms and cultural tightness.

13.5.3   Inclusive versus exclusive forms of national identity

Prevalent notions of national identity in Japan, South Korea and to a certain extent in China conceive citizenship, ethnicity and culture as coterminous entities, or an ethnicity-based form of exclusive membership. This stands in contrast to more fluid concepts of national identity and in-group membership – that is, those that pose a superordinate national identity coexisting with diverse ethnocultural heritages (as in Singapore and traditional migrant societies where multiculturalism is a prevalent ideology). Thus, *host receptivity* (i.e., host culture members' willingness to grant nonnatives opportunities to participate in local social communication processes) varies, with such receptivity generally being greater where there are more permeable in-group boundaries and openness to foreign-born individuals (Kim, 2001).

Komisarof (2011, 2016) constructed a framework from Japan-based interview data that examines how the compatibility of expectations for host-receptivity and organizational membership between host culture members and nonnatives shapes their respective mutual acculturation dynamics and outcomes. One of the framework's dimensions refers to the likelihood (low versus high) of provisionally accepting nonnatives as functional, competent group members able to enact socially appropriate norms and roles through their mastery of host-cultural and linguistic competencies. At one end of this continuum, acculturation outcomes in Japan and South Korea may be grouped, where those with foreign backgrounds tend not to be admitted as provisional group members (though such acceptance can certainly occur within specific interpersonal relationships and situational contexts). At the other end of the continuum, traditional migrant societies can be located; here, such belonging is comparatively more readily achievable. Somewhat closer to the middle, yet still on the same side as traditional migrant societies, would be "tight" Singapore. This framework can also be used more generally to explain how the compatibility of expectations for acceptance impacts acculturation outcomes – that is, positively when such compatibility is high or negatively when such expectations conflict – leaving nondominant acculturating groups and their host societies at odds as to what extent the former should be admitted as provisional members of that society.

13.6   Conclusion: looking toward the future of East and Southeast Asian acculturation

How can countries, like Japan, with a model of societal membership based on strict compliance with a vast array of social norms (and a relatively exclusive form of national in-group belonging) meet the challenge of incorporating cultural

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diversity in this age of globalization? In the workplace, Komisarof (2011) recommended that Japanese expand group boundaries beyond native Japanese to embrace those who can make significant, positive and long-term contributions to their organizations via tools acquired through acculturation, such as Japanese language ability, cultural competence and proficiency in following social norms that enable them to perform the tasks and roles required of core organizational members. Such means of inclusion can be extended to other collectives, for example, communities or civic organizations, and in the process, satisfy the need of non-Japanese to be psychosocially accepted while also addressing Japanese people's concern for maintaining their cultural identity and the fabric of their society. While Japanese people's strong sense of national identity is laudable, globalization presents a challenge to preserve their heritage culture while admitting a growing nonnative workforce and supporting their acculturative development into productive, fulfilled members of society.

Singapore's model of inclusion echoes that of Komisarof's proposed model in Japan. Both countries emphasize the importance of ethnic identity and are culturally collectivistic, achievement oriented and status conscious. Yet Singapore's model of multiculturalism is seemingly more successful in promoting harmonious coexistence while meeting the socioeconomic imperatives of an aging society. Namely, when viewed in light of the contact hypothesis, equal-status contact is more thoroughly promoted, and Singaporeans also manage to balance a superordinate, inclusive form of shared national identity with distinct ethnic ones. Japanese, on the other hand, have established a hierarchy of ethnicities, and while the national identity shows encouraging signs of becoming more inclusive, it remains largely rooted in ethnicity.

In summary, both countries share similar collectivist and tight cultural values, and both confront similar challenges associated with a rapidly aging society. The demographic profiles of the two successful economies are diametrically opposite; Singapore is historically rooted in multiculturalism, whereas Japan maintains a predominantly monocultural environment. The way forward in managing social diversity in both countries is not to embrace Western acculturation frameworks wholesale, but to selectively emphasize cultural attributes that matter most for maximizing intercultural contact and improving intercultural relations. This perspective will require a rethink of contemporary acculturation paradigms in East and Southeast Asia and beyond – a process to which we hope this chapter will contribute.

13.7   Acknowledgment

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