



International Student Migration in Japan: From the Individual to the Institution

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Abstract

Japan has long been considered as a country of limited migration but, drawing on recent evolutions in policy and original research, I will argue in this talk that it may be fruitful to consider Japanese universities as "migration intermediaries". Research on higher education policy in Japan typically holds that internationalization in Japanese universities is driven by a desire to halt the decline of their research productivity, increase their competitiveness as measured in global rankings, and as a lifeline for the higher education sector in the context of demographic ageing. However, my argument is that this internationalization and international migration to Japan are increasingly entangled, as internationalization in the Japanese context has the attraction of international students and scholars at its heart. Drawing on original research with both groups, I will present preliminary evidence of universities' diverse intermediary roles in managing migration flows to Japan, and briefly introduce my upcoming research project, which seeks to pursue this line of inquiry empirically and reveal in greater detail how and to what effect have Japanese universities become migration intermediaries.

Thomas Brotherhood is an Assistant Professor at the Rikkyo University College of Business. His research is concerned with the relationship between internationalisation of higher education and international migration, and he places a particular emphasis on the roles and experiences of mobile actors including international students, foreign-born faculty, and their dependents.