CERS Working Paper 2016

Kate Forbes

Race and racism in Japan

The concept of race cannot be defined down to one fixed term. Weiner (1997) suggests that this is because race is a social construct, fluid in content, whose meanings are determined by historical and national context. Race remains an important aspect of everyday life, due to it being the basis for many cultures and nationalities. Weiner (1997) proposes that there can be little doubt that 'race' remains a primary determinant of social relations (Weiner 1997:vx). Japan for example is a nation in which has used race as the foundation on which they built their national identity. Japan is considered one of the top ten most racist countries in the world today, however, for centuries, Japan has stated that they do not have a 'race problem'. However, their discourse suggests that they view themselves as 'racially distinct', over all other races living in Japan. One reason for this may be because the Japanese viewed bloodlines as an ultimate tie to national identity and being uniquely Japanese, and other ethnic groups living in Japan were not as racially pure as them. Since the end of the 1980s, studies are beginning to describe Japan as a multiethnic or multicultural society, challenging the old view of Japan as a mono-ethnic nation-state (Tia 2004). Since that time, the foreign population in Japan has increased rapidly to approximately 1.9 million in 2002 (Tia 2004). The various ethnic groups in Japan consist of Japanese nationals, including the Ainu and the Buraku, and foreign residents, such as Koreans. Koreans are the largest group of foreign residents in Japan, the majority of whom are former colonial subjects and their offspring (Tia 2004). Some of the large number of Koreans living in Japan have stem from the period in 1939, where they began to be brought to Japan as forced labour. These Koreans were given the right to go back to Korea after the war, however around 600000 of them remained in Japan, becoming Zainichi Koreans. (Tia 2004). One consequence of this was that their citizenship rights were never comparable to those of Japanese, which meant they faced extreme discrimination in areas such as citizenship and education, primarily because of their lack of Japanese nationality. Groups such as the Ainu, who have lived in Japan for centuries, and the Buraku, who are actually Japenese and adopt to Japanese citizenship, are still considered inferior to Japanese nationals. However, it can be argued that the right and status of these groups in Japan today are much better than in previous history. This essay will discuss the racialisation of these three groups in Japan, while identifying the differences of their status in Japan, and how this has changed. This essay will also discuss the citizenship status of these groups in Japan, with particular focus on the Zainichi Korean minority, who have often faced harsher treatment.

Dimension One - The Buraku

   The Buraku, are a group who have lived in Japan for generations, and are believed to be descendants of the outcast communities of the Tokugawa period (Weiner 1997). Unlike other ethnic groups living in Japan however, the Burakumin are actually Japanese, and are still considered a non-ethnically different minority to that of Japanese (Cangia 2012). The Buraku share with other Japanese the same language, religion, customs and physical appearances (Minority Rights Group Report 2015). However, the Buraku, despite being nominally liberated in 1871, have continued to suffer widespread discrimination throughout the modem period (Howell 1996) and were considered by many Japanese to not be truly human. They became increasingly racialised throughout the feudal period in Japan and were considered 'polluted' because, historically, their ancestors did labor that was considered 'unclean' (Brown 2013). Htun (2012) postulates that this is because this labour was associated as being connected with death or ritual impurity. Therefore, their outcaste status became more firmly tied to both the work they did and to the segregated residential areas that they were forced to live in.

   In the seventeenth century, the social status system was established and Buraku people were placed at the bottom of society as Eta (extreme filth) and Hinin (non-human) (Htun 2012). This resulted in

different forms of discrimination faced by the Burakumin people and included unequal rights of citizenship, religious discrimination, employment discrimination, residential segregation, and opposition to 'intermarriage' (Brown 2013).

An example of unequal rights of citizenship is presented by Brown (2013) who argues that at that time of extreme discrimination against the Buraku, they were even proscribed in their style of dress. To make them more 'visible' they had to wear certain types of clothing. They were limited to plain tan clothing and any colourful clothing was prohibited. Along with this, religious discrimination came in the form of not being allowed to enter the shrine, or participate in any of the public ceremonies involving the shrines, due to the belief that they 'pollute' such sacred places or events (Brown 2013). In terms of employment, Buraku people were limited to a fixed set of segregated occupations including those associated with handling deceased people, animal slaughter, meat processing, and leather. In addition, in some places they were legally proscribed from farming, fishing, or owning land at all (Brown 2013). In terms of residential discrimination, Burakumin were forced to live in segregated areas or districts, that were generally located in poorly drained areas or locations not well suited for human habitation (Minority Rights Group 2015). Discrimination was that bad, that in some places, they were forced to hang dead animal skins outside their homes to clearly indicate their outcaste status. Members of the Buraku were also not allowed to marry outside their caste. Therefore this shows that the Japanese clearly saw the Buraku as an inferior group in Japan, who were not worthy of equal citizenship rights as those of Japanese blood, even though the Burakumin shared the same language, religion and customs to that of Japanese. This tells us a lot about Japan, who saw any other group in Japan who did not share full Japanese nationality as subordinate to them. It cannot be ignored however, that the situation for the Buraku began to change towards the 20th century.

One important factor that enforced this change was that throughout the 20th century, the Burakumin organised themselves to resist and try to eliminate prejudice and discrimination. The Suiheisha was launched in March 1922 (Weiner 1997). Brown (2013) argues that the Suheisha were the first organisation among the Buraku to seriously and strenuously, reject the outcaste category that was imposed on them. One of the most effective tactics used by the Suheisha was direct action in the form of organised protests. However, the Suheisha only lasted until 1942 and even though it was successful in challenging acts of discrimination, they were not able to effectively alter the harsh economic conditions faced by the Buraku people (Brown 2013). Brown (2013) further argues that the living conditions of the Buraku did not improve during the 1930s. A 1935 national survey indicated that about three fourths of Buraku areas were located in rural villages, and the rest lived in segregated urban slums such as mountain and hill sides, or near rivers or lakes where 'natural' catastrophes were experienced. This was also combined with poor health and safety issues such as lack of hygiene basic facilities. Along with this in the 1930s, employment discrimination did not improve. When Japan was undergoing rapid industrialisation, 50% of Buraku people were still subsistence farmers (Brown 2013). Therefore, this shows that despite an organisation such as the Suheisha, the situation for the Buraku did not improve during the 1930s.

However, leaders of the Buraku community resumed activity in 1945 and several organisations emerged in the attempt to represent the interests of the Buraku people. The National Committee for Buraku Liberation (NCBL) was formed in 1946 (Brown 2013) and the Buraku Liberation League (BLL) in 1955 (Weiner 1997). However, the postwar conditions faced by the Buraku people remained extremely difficult. And as late as 1964, the job situation of the Buraku had not changed appreciably. It was evident that the Buraku people did not benefit from Japan's rapid postwar economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s.

In 1969 however, the 'Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects' enabled by the Special Measures Law were launched in the form of a Ten Year Plan aimed at solving the Buraku problem (Weiner 1997). Three types of programmes were implemented. First, programmes that targeted the physical environment - improving streets, schools, clinics and community centres. Second, a system of grants paid directly into Buraku families; and third related to education, which included programmes within the school classroom (Weiner 1997). Brown (2013) found that due to these policies, many Buraku people graduated from high schools and universities, and many gained access to professional or other white-collar employment. However, these three programmes came to a halt in 2002. Therefore, all Dowa policies that have benefited Buraku people in Japan have formally ceased to exist as national policy. However despite this, Weiner (1997) found that due to these policies evidence of improved income levels meant that only 52% of Buraku households received livelihood security support in

1993, compared to 75% in 1975 (Weiner 1997:79) Along with this, the entry of Burakumin children into senior high schools was close to that of the mainstream - 91.8% compared with 96% and access to higher education had improved. And most importantly, SML funded projects have eliminated the most obvious differences between Buraku and non-buraku communities (Weiner 1997).

Furthermore, when looking at Japanese racism towards the Buraku, it is clear that the current situation is a lot better for the Buraku community in Japan than it once was. This is evident when looking at the outcomes of the Dowa policies implemented in the 1990s. However, it cannot be ignored that discrimination towards the Buraku still exits within Japan. This is evident when the Dowa policies were not renewed in 2002, indicating that the Japanese government is not willing to fully accept the Buraku as part of their community. Weiner (1997) however argues that there is disagreement about the extent of prejudice and discrimination that still remains. Even the most radical of the Burakumin activists would accept that the situation has improved over the last 40 years. Howell (1996) on the other hand argues that discrimination against the Buraku in matters of employment and marriage persists. Along with this, Htun (2012) argues that although special measures taken by the government from 1969 to 2002 have considerably improved the conditions of Buraku people, they still face many problems regarding living conditions, education and employment, and marriage. Therefore, it is clear that although conditions for the Burakumin are a lot better than they were in the 1950s and before, discrimination still exists.

Dimension Two - The Ainu

 Among the various ethnic groups living in Japan are the Ainu. The Ainu are the indigenous people of northern Japan and are estimated to number over 23,000 in Hokkaido (Htun 2012). This group has lived in Japan for generations, and have shared their homeland with the Japanese people for centuries (Poisson 2002). The Ainu however are still seen as racially subordinate to that of Japanese. The Ainu are described by Weiner (1997) as a 'dying race', losing the struggle for survival. Although now living as an indigenous group in Japan, the Ainu have faced extreme discrimination, and still continue to do so.

The seventeenth century in particular saw extreme subordination towards the Ainu. Efforts to create a Japanese state gradually put a stop to the equal trade relationship between the Ainu and Japanese (Refsing 2001), in which the Ainu were clearly subordinate. Along with this, in the eighteenth century, in 1789, Japanese territorial expansion resulted in the loss of the Ainu's land (Hokkaido) and the total subjugation of the Ainu in 1789. (Htun 2012). This resulted in forced assimilation, in which the Ainu were given small plots of land and were pressed into forced labor in farming and fishing (Htun 2012). They were also made to use the Japanese language, in which gradually resulted in the Ainu entirely losing their language, which was the foundation of their culture. The situation for the Ainu in Japan did not improve in the early twentieth century, in which in 1918, the Ainu were excluded from the national community of Japan (Siddle 2003), showing that Japan was not willing to include the Ainu in their culture. Along with this, in the prewar period, essentialised notions of inferior Ainu 'blood' served to deny Ainu individuals the opportunities afforded to ordinary Japanese in the period of high economic growth (Siddle 2003). Therefore, its consequences came in terms of severe discrimination at school, in marriage and in the workplace.
The situation however began to change in the late 1960s, when a wave of radical citizen protests in Japanese society began to inspire young Ainu. A number of activist groups emerged to confront the agents of discrimination. The Ainu were challenging the dominant notion of an inferior 'dying race' and attempting to create a contemporary Ainu cultural identity (Siddle 2003). This had an emphasis on cultural rights, from basic rights to recognition as a self-defining population with a distinct cultural identity, that of 'indigenous people', who guarantee full citizenship in the sense of political participation, economic benefits, and the elimination of discrimination. (Siddle 2003). This resulted in interface between the Ainu and the state which administered funding for Ainu welfare policies. Along with this, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, most Ainu appeared united with the leading Ainu organisation, the Utari Kyokai, in pressing for the implementation of the so-called 'Ainu New Law', a draft law adopted by the Utari Kyokai in 1984 that became the agenda for Ainu demands against the state. This draft guarantees to enable full citizenship, including political participation, economic

benefits, and rights to cultural identity, in particular the use and revitalisation of the Ainu language (Siddle 2003). This resulted in the Japanese state to recognise the Ainu as their own ethnic minority. Although this was a step in the right direction for the Ainu, the Japanese government still were not ready to acknowledge the Ainu as an indigenous people. On 27th March 1997 however, the Japanese judiciary recognised that not only does the legal category for indigenous people exist, but that the Ainu fit that definition (Siddle 2003). However, introduction to the Cultural Promotion Act 1997 (CPA), in which focused on Ainu culture as its main forte, meant a disconnection for the struggle for indigenous rights, which resulted in officials quashing all attempts to define the Ainu as an indigenous people. However, it can be argued that acquisition of cultural rights, and official recognition of the Ainu as as an indigenous people are important first steps for the Ainu population.

When looking at the Ainu in the twenty-first century, despite the fact that the Diet passed a resolution recognising the Ainu as an indigenous people of Japan in June 2008, the Ainu still remain disadvantaged (Siddle 2003). Htun (2012) presents that the Ainu still fare poorly in terms of education, employment and health, and they also face greater poverty. In 2006, a survey found around 5.2 per cent of Ainu households were found to be on welfare compared to 2.1 per cent nationwide (Htun 2012), and more than 60 percent of respondents to a 2008 survey did not have any experience of preserving their language and culture (Hirano 2009, cited in Htun 2012). Howell (1996) postulates that the Ainu culture has been undermined by assimilative pressure and only a handful of people can speak the language fluently. Despite this however Howell (1996) argues that Ainu affairs have received more national attention during the past few years than at any other time in the postwar period. And as a result of this, the government is finally taking seriously the long-standing attempts of Ainu organisations to win revision of the despised Ainu 'protection' law. Therefore, this shows that although the Ainu are disadvantaged, they are better off than they once were. However despite this, the Ainu still face a long struggle ahead to become part of the normal everyday awareness of the Japanese public and still face discrimination, however, it cannot be ignored that the situation for this group has improved since the introduction of Ainu groups who have pressed for equal rights.

Dimension Three - Zainichi Koreans

After looking at both the Ainu and Buraku in Japan, it is significant to then look at the Zainichi Koreans of Japan, who arguably, face even harsher discrimination than any other group living in Japan. Most of today's Koreans in Japan are second, third or fourth-generation descendants of these Koreans who remained in Japan after the Second World War. These are usually described as Zainichi Koreans because of their long-term presence in Japanese society. Most Zainichi Koreans are the descendants of immigrants who migrated to the Japanese metropole during the colonial period (Htun 2012). This was because large numbers of Koreans were forced to migrate to Japan because of Japan's need for cheap labor in wartime. Under the first Labour Mobilisation Plan (1939), about 53,000 Koreans were taken to Japan as general labour (Kim 2008). As a result, at the time of the Japanese surrender in 1945, approximately 2 million Koreans were residing in Japan proper (Kim 2008). Of these, about 1.5 million Koreans returned to Korea upon the end of the war, but more than half million elected to remain in Japan for some time (Kim 2008). Those who remained were stripped of their Japanese citizenship under the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty (Htun 2012), which deprived Koreans of any legal entitlement to permanent residence (Armstrong 1989) and although thousands of Koreans have annually acquired Japanese citizenship since then, most have remained 'aliens' (Itagaki 2015).

In 1947, the Alien Registration System (ARS) was first established, and Koreans accounted for 93.6 per cent of all registered foreigners in Japan (Kim 2008). The ARS meant that by the 1950s, Zainichi Koreans in Japan were subject to obvious ethnic oppression and the government deprived them of various rights, placing them under severe control and surveillance. It also meant that their economic status and social function were determined by their identity as colonial subjects (Weiner 1997). They were also expected to accept a subordinate identity and to serve the interests of metropolitan Japan. Therefore, it is clear that since the rapid increase of Koreans into Japan around the time of the Second World War, Zainichi Koreans were undergoing harsh surveillance in the early stages of their presence in Japan.

Forms of discrimination in which the Zainichi Koreans faced stemmed from the fact that they were treated as second class not only as regards their citizenship but also in terms of their cultural identity, Tai (2004). This resulted in discrimination in such areas as employment, housing, and education (Tai 2009). The Japanese government also restricted their opportunities in political participation and social welfare (Kim 2008).

Discrimination in terms of employment for the Zainichi was a significant aspect of their position in society. Hostile feelings and prejudice against the Zainichi spread into Japanese society, which made it virtually impossible for them to get desirable jobs with Japanese companies (Mitchell 1967, cited in Kim 2008). When Zainichi Koreans did find jobs, these were 'low-class jobs' such as scrap-iron dealer, junk dealer, day labourer, construction worker. Only a small percentage were employed as professional-technical or managerial workers (Kim 2008). The Zainichi did however, enjoy the same pay rates as their Japanese counterparts, however, with these jobs came a lack of health and safety regulations, in order to reduce social costs (Weiner 1997). This shows that employment was an area in which the Zainichi Koreans were clearly subordinate to the rest of society, even to those indigenous groups in society, placing the Zainichi at the very bottom of Japanese society.

  Furthermore, employment was not the only area in which the Zainichi were discriminated against. Exclusion from the general housing market meant the Zainichi lived in tenements and flop houses or in work camps. As a result, sanitation and basic health care was a constant problem in areas of Korean residence (Weiner 1997:163), and also led to a spread of diseases among Zainichi Korean areas. Thus, despite employment and housing as being the two most significant forms of discrimination towards the Zainichi, resident Koreans were also denied not only voting rights but access to national welfare benefits, and pensions for war veterans. Therefore, after exploring forms of discrimination against Zainichi Koreans, it is clear that they were excluded in almost every aspect of Japanese society. This tells us that the Japanese saw Koreans as 'stateless people', in which ethnic discrimination operated to place Koreans lower in the class structure, and served to reinforce the ethnic prejudice that Koreans were culturally and 'racially' inferior.

The situation for the Zainichi began to improve gradually from the 1960s. A significant contributing factor for this was the Korean War (1950-1953) which resulted in the division of Korea into the Capitalist South Korea and Communist North Korea. As a result of this, South Korea began opening terms with Japan towards the mid 1960s, and in 1965, residency rights for the Zainchi population were discussed as part of the 1965 Normalisation of Ties (Weiner 1997). This facilitated equal access to some welfare benefits and unrestricted access to public education and the public health system for any Zainichi holding South Korean nationality. Along with this, this enabled those Zainichi holding South Korean nationality to receive permanent residency in Japan (Tai 2004). Therefore, this was a significant step for the Zainichi in improving their rights in Japan.

Furthermore, in the 1960s, the high growth of the Japanese economy provided various opportunities even to Koreans due to the great demand for labour, which meant that Japanese companies became more willing to employ Koreans, increasing Koreans' overall job opportunities (Kim 2008). This tendency became much stronger in 1979, when Japan ratified the International Covenants on Human Rights which required equal treatment of nationals and non-nationals in the area of social rights (Kim 2008). Therefore, it is clear that this was a crucial step forward for minorities in Japan, and shows that as time went on, Japan was more willing to accept Koreans as part of their society.

The situation continued to gradually improve during the 1980s and 1990s also, which can be argued stemmed from the protests around this time against the Alien registration system. These protests were clearly led by the younger second and third generation Zainchi, reflecting the change that began in the 1970s (Weiner 1997). Similar protests against the Alien RS were taken up again in 1980s for rights for political registration (Weiner 1997). Alongside the protests, in 1991 'special permanent residency' was given to Korean residents and their descendants in Japan who had lost their nationality under the San Francisco Treaty (Htun 2012).

Along with this, Weiner (1997) found that in 1991, Japan was broadening the opportunities for Zainichi wanting to be employed as teachers in Japanese public schools. Tai (2004) found that cities with large Korean settlements such as Osaka and Kawasaki started hiring resident Korean lecturers. This resulted in resident Koreans being urged to stop passing as Japanese and "come out" as Korean. At the same time, ethnic Japanese were encouraged to respect and appreciate Korean culture. Which

led to recently, Koreans have become eligible to apply for pension, gov housing loans and child allowances, and there has been increasing marriages between Japanese and Koreans (Iwabuchi and Takezawa 2015). Therefore, as naturalisations increased during the 1990s, the number of resident Koreans who retained their Korean nationality decreased, along with resident Koreans as a group. In the mid 1990s, they made up less than 40 percent of the total foreign population, down from more than 80 percent in the 1970s. As a result, resident Koreans were no longer seen as "representative" foreigners in Japan (Tai 2004).

Therefore, it was clear that it was a combination of the Korean divide into North and South Korea, subsequent protests, and the declining significance of ethnicity that contributed to the changing position of the Zainchi Koreans towards the twenty-first Century. It is also clear that discrimination was decreasing significantly amongst the Zainchi Koreans towards the 1990s, however, it cannot be ignored that discrimination still exists today, and that Japan still continue to be prejudice towards the Korean minority. Weiner (1997) proposes that the problem of employment discrimination against Zainichi still exists in Japanese society today, along with the Nationlaity clause, which precludes non-nationals in japan from many positions in public service employment. He concludes that these advances have improved the legal status of foreigners however they still fall short of true citizenship status, and that the acceptance of numerous imbrications of hybrid identity is a step forward in overcoming the problems of the Zainichi that have plagued this population since end of ww2.

Dimension Four - Summative analysis of racialisation of the Buraku, Ainu and Zainchi Koreans.

  When looking at racialisation in a nation such as Japan, it is important to understand the ideology behind the racialisation towards ethnic groups. One of the most significant reasons for this prejudice towards minority groups is the ideology of the 'bloodline'. Japans 'bloodline' system of nationality is often seen as being an outgrowth of a longstanding cultural xenophobia and a major factor in perpetuating racism in contemporary Japan (Morris-Suzuki 2015). The Japanese viewed bloodlines as an ultimate tie to national identity and being uniquely Japanese. This ideology of the bloodline meant the Japanese can distinguish and elevate themselves from minority groups in society. This was clearly applied to the Ainu, Zainhi Koreans, and even to the Buraku, who were themselves Japanese people. This shows about Japanese racism that they saw themselves as a 'pure' nationality and those groups who were not fully Japanese nationals were subordinate no matter what. This racist ideology explains the mistreatment of minorities, even of their own people, and the extreme racialisation which Japan had under control in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and even nineteenth century Soo-im Lee (date not known).

Another explanation for racialisation in Japan is social Darwinism. The idea of social Darwinism shaped Japanese attitudes of minorities during the modernisation of Japan and made views of minorities such as the native Ainu and Koreans who made up the majority of the poor to lower classes seen as unfit to survive in a modern industrial Japan. Law (201) argues Darwinism helped shape Japanese attitudes of themselves as a collective race with superior civilised inherited qualities and capacities (Law 2010). Therefore the exclusion of these groups was viewed as 'natural and inevitable' (Weiner, 1997:12). Therefore, this shows that a significant aspect of it was that the Japanese considered themselves a superior race to any other races living in Japan, and that they, unlike any other ethnic group, were able to adjust to a more modern society, which therefore made them superior.

Therefore, after looking into the ideology behind Japanese racism, and looking at groups who faced most discrimination in Japan such as the Buraku, and Ainu and the Zainichi Koreans, this tells us a lot about racism in Japan as a nation. One of the most important aspects of Japanese racism however is the changing dynamics of racism which has gone on from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century. This can be seen when looking at the Buraku, Ainu and Zainichi Koreans, and noticing that around the mid twentieth century, conditions for these groups began to change for the better, as

discrimination against them grew to a lesser extent as time went on. This can be said for all three groups. It is clear, that these groups do not face as extreme discrimination as they once did, and now have better citizenship rights in Japan. This can be particularly said for the Buraku and the Zainichi Koreans, who's conditions arguably got better due to their own pushing and pressing for better rights. This therefore can be argued to be one of the most significant factors which contributed to the changing dynamics of racism in Japan.

Along with this, this may also be due to, as Maher (2012) argues, the increase in multiculturalism in Japan. For centuries, Japan viewed themselves as a homogenise nation, however, with the number of minorities living in Japan increasing, Japan had to accept that it was becoming a multicultural and multi-national nation state. McVeigh (1998) argues that this was difficult for Japan to accept as because Japan has never been ruled by a foreign power, so they therefore have trouble dealing with foreigners (McVeigh 1998). Therefore, this increase in multiculturalism, along with the events of the nineteenth and twentieth century, in which was a time where minority groups were pushing for equal rights, may explain the changing dynamics of Japanese racism, and may explain why these groups as discussed enjoy a better life in Japan today. However, it cannot be overlooked that these groups still do face discrimination in Japan today, and are still not truly equal to Japanese citizens, if they will ever be.

Furthermore, today, Japan is changing into a society that accepts more diversity. The controversy of Japan arguing to be a homogenous state is evidence of this change in Japanese society (Maher 2012), along with evidence as discussed above which suggests that minority groups in Japan such as the Ainu, Buraku and Zainchi Koreans face less discrimination than they once did living in Japan. One argument for this is that ethnicity is beginning to lose its significance in Japan (Kim 2008), which means that ethnically different groups in Japan such as the Ainu and Zainchi Koreans are not seen as inferior and different as they once were. Therefore this may suggest that the ideology of the 'bloodline' has lost its significance in Japan. This can be said to be true when looking at the current situation of these three groups in Japan today, who, over the years, whether it be from protests and pressure groups, or the changing in dynamics of Japan as a nation, in the fact of becoming more multicultural, have gained much more citizenship rights than they once had. This says a lot about Japan as a nation towards the beginning of the twenty first century, as this was a time where all these groups in Japan began to experience a better life, and was a time where Japan was becoming more multicultural in which they had to accept.

In conclusion, although racism against minority groups in Japan has significantly reduced in previous years, it cannot be said that minority groups are completely free from discrimination, and the notion of racism cannot be completely disregarded. This is because although the situation for the Buraku, Ainu and Zainchi Koreans has improved to an extent, these groups are not completely free from inequality. In fact, these groups still face discrimination, although to a lesser extent, in terms of their citizenship rights and in terms of housing, employment and education (Weiner 1997). Along with this, it can be argued that these groups also face discrimination in other ways which were not so prominent at the time where inequality was at its highest in the seventeenth, eighteenth and even nineteenth centuries. Kim (2008) argues not all discrimination against marginalised groups can be reduced to racism, and that today, class plays a more decisive role than ethnicity in shaping the life chances of minority people and remains a significant dimension of social inequality. Groups such as the Buraku, the Ainu and Koreans in Japan although may have improved rights and status in Japan, are still discriminated against in the sense that they are seen at the bottom of the class structure, and this can therefore form the basis of discrimination in another sense. This therefore makes you ask the question of will full equality of minority groups ever exist in a nation such as Japan? The fact that today, where racial dynamics are more widely accepted globally as a whole, these groups are still seen as subordinate in Japan makes this question a valid one. To conclude therefore, it is clear when looking at the evidence provided above that racialisation in Japan has lessened over the last few centuries, and does not exist the way it once did, and that the Buraku, Ainu and Zainichi Koreans are seen to have a more equal status than than they once had. However, racism will, and arguably always will, exist in Japan despite the increase in multiculturalism in Japan and the ongoing changing dynamics of the view of race today.

Bibliography

Armstrong, B. (1989). Racialisation and Nationalist Ideology. The Japanese Case 4:3. p329-342

Brown, S. E. (2013) Racialisation in a 'homogenous' society? The case of
Buraku people in Japan, Asian Ethnicity, 14:1, 1-28,

Cagnia, F. (2012). 'Children of Kinegawa' and the Transformation of the 'Buraku Identity' in Japan. 19(3)

Howell, D. (1996). Ethnicity and Culture in Contemporary Japan. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 31(1), pp.171-190.

Htun, T, T. (2012) Social identities of minority others in Japan: listening to the narratives of Ainu, Buraku and Zainichi Koreans, *Japan Forum*, 24:1, p1-22.

Itagaki, R. (2015) The Anatomy of Korea-phobia in Japan, Japanese Studies. 35:1, 49-66. Published online: 12 May 2015.

Iwabuchi, K. and Takezawa, Y. (2015). Rethinking Race and Racism In and From Japan. *Japanese Studies*. 35:1. Published 14th July 2014: Routledge

Kim, B. (2008). Bringing class back in: the changing basis of inequality and the Korean minority in Japan. *Ethnic and Racial Studies.* 31:5, p871-898, Published online: 25 Apr 2008.

Law, I. (2010) *Racism and ethnicity : global debates, dilemmas, directions* , London: Pearson Education

Maher (2012). Diversity in Japanese culture. *Diversity In Japanese Culture*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.

McVeigh, B. (1998). The nature of the Japanese state. London: Routledge.

Minority rights group reports (2015): Available online at:
http://minorityrights.org/minorities/burakumin-buraku-people/

Morris-Suzuki, T. 2015. Beyond Racism: Semi-Citizenship and Marginality in Modern Japan. Japanese Studies 35:1. p67-84 Published march 2015

Poisson, B. (2002). *The Ainu of Japan*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Co.

Refsing, K. (2001) Ainu and Koreans in Japan. *Asian Ethnicity.* 2:2, p239-242. Published online: 27 May 2010.

Siddle, R. (2003). The limits to citizenship in Japan: multiculturalism, indigenous rights and the Ainu, Citizenship Studies. In: Weiner, M. (ed.)(1997) Japan's Minorities: The illusion of Homogeneity, London: Routledge.

Soo-im Lee. The Cultural Exclusiveness of Ethnocentrism: Japan's Treatment of Foreign Residents. Available online at:
http://www.biz.ryukoku.ac.jp/~lee/seminar/seminar2004/review/the_cultural_exclusiveness_of_ethno centrism.htm

Tai, E. (2004). "Korean Japanese". *Critical Asian Studies.* 36:3. p355-382. Published online: 08 Aug 2006.

Tai, E. (2009). Between assimilation and transnationalism: the debate on nationality acquisition among Koreans in Japan. *Social Identities*, 15:5
Published online: 17 Sep 2009. p609-629

Weiner, M. (ed.)(1997) Japan's Minorities: The illusion of Homogeneity, London: Routledge.