A Perspective in Education Research on Transnational Muslim Immigrants

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Abstract

The size of remittance by immigrant labor transcends the amount of official development assistance today. Their presence can no longer leave the indifference among policymakers and researchers. Recent studies on immigrants regard their movement between multiple locations and its continuity as transnational events. Immigrants are not only an economic issue as labor force but a social issue as education and welfare. Some advancing education research on immigrants in Europe and Americas show two trends relevant to the Japanese societal contexts. The first is the integration of minority groups into the majority society; the other is observation and analysis of the dynamics of cultural and religious backgrounds, especially Muslim immigrants. This research review mainly summarizes 1) the various immigration studies by Castles & Miller (2009); Massey et.al. (2008); Iyotani et.al. (2007); and Brettell & Hollifield (2008), 2) transnational studies by Portes et.al. (1999) and Castles & Wise et.al. (2008), and 3) an education study by Luchtenberg (2004). First, inter-disciplinary approach is confirmed as an effective research stance for recent transnational activities of immigrants. Second, by focusing on Muslim immigrants, social capital theory and non-formal education are set as analysis tools because their surroundings potentially show the “Liberal Paradox,” described by Hollifield (1992), and visualize fundamental education assumptions and issues, differing from general education needs such as academic achievement. The review finally points out the Japanese society also faces issues for non-Japanese students and families but tends to take them all as a generalized interest group so that advanced studies in Europe should be referred more.