THE RUSSIAN PRESENCE IN JAPAN: CASE STUDIES IN HOKKAIDO AND NIIGATA

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Introduction[1]

In recent years Japan's internationalization has taken on a human dimension, in addition to the economic dimension, for which the nation's international profile had been well established. Increasing numbers of foreign nationals are entering Japan and growing numbers of Japanese are going overseas, raising specters of a third kaikoku (opening of the country).[2] The number of foreigners coming to Japan has grown significantly—from 2,985,764 in 1989 to 5,771,975 in 2002.[3]

In many ways, the burgeoning human linkages that transcend the nation's borders present Japan with a formidable challenge. The growing size of foreign population in the country is raising serious questions about the very notion of Japanese identity as a homogeneous people. Even though the national government's official policy is designed to control the importation of foreign labor, Japanese companies and the government itself are violating the principles upon which that policy is built.[4]

The nation is in the middle of a debate over how widely it should open its doors to the foreigners seeking opportunities in Japan. Some are arguing that Japan's near-zero population growth and its fast-graying population and consequent labor shortage will severely limit its future economic growth and, therefore, it must open its job market more widely to foreign workers, including unskilled laborers who are currently not allowed to work in Japan. Others are advocating that Japan should keep its restrictive immigration policy in place in order to maintain its assumed ethnic homogeneity and its cherished social order even at the risk of reducing its prominence on the world economic scene.[5] The outcome of the national debate is far from certain.[6]

In local communities some people are warmly embracing and others are at least tolerating the increasing presence of non-Japanese people in their midst. Still others are alarmed by what they see as an erosion of cultural homogeneity and a loss of social cohesion in the face of growing "foreign elements." Although the Japanese as a whole are increasingly accepting of foreigners in their country, there is evidence that their respect for the basic rights of aliens in the country may be

declining. For instance, the Cabinet Office's survey in January-February 2003 showed that the proportion of Japanese who believed the rights of foreigners living in Japan should be protected to the same extent as the rights of Japanese citizens had declined from two-thirds in 1997 to around one-half in 2003. The same survey indicated that most Japanese were aware of the disadvantageous treatment foreigners often received in the country, and yet slightly more than half of those surveyed believed that such treatment was unavoidable because of differences in manners and customs, economic status, and citizenship between the Japanese and the non-Japanese. Only a little over 30 percent of those polled acknowledged that such treatment was an outright discrimination against the foreigners.[7]

There is no doubt that the dilemmas presented by the influx of foreign nationals, with their own cultural identities and social customs, will challenge the sakoku (isolation) mentality of the Japanese and stimulate the age-old Nihonjinron.[8] What may be new, however, is that the discourse on what it is to be Japanese will no longer be limited to the intellectual circles that have long debated whether and how to protect Japan's unique culture and national identity. The discussion will also take place on a more popular level, involving ordinary Japanese citizens who come into contact, enthusiastically or willy-nilly, with non-Japanese members of the fast-diversifying society that is Japan today.

Arguably the most "foreign" among the foreign ethnic communities in Japan today are the Russians, most of whom have come to Japan since the end of the Cold War in search of economic, cultural, and social opportunities. They are a relatively small presence in the country, particularly in comparison with South Korean, Chinese, and other Asian nationals. As such, their presence has yet to attract serious academic attention.[9]

The significance of the Russian presence in Japan is several-fold. First, as just noted, the Russians represent a fairly recent presence, catching many host communities unprepared and causing some social and cultural frictions. Second, serious studies of the present-day Russians in Japan are largely absent although there are some fine studies about the Russians in Japan in the 19th and the early 20th century.[10] Third, studies of Japanese immigration policy generally push the Russians into the category of "others", focusing instead on the larger ethnic groups, such as Koreans, Chinese, Japanese Brazilians, and Filipinos.[11] They are conspicuous by their absence in the growing literature on migrant communities in Japan.[12]

Fourth, the cultural gap between Japanese and Russians is far wider than that between Japanese and more established migrant populations from Asia, the so-called "old-comers". The

Russian residents in Japan are included among the "newcomers" but most others in this category come from Asia or are Brazilians of Japanese ancestry. As such, the Russians are rather unique and their growing presence in the country poses interesting questions about the prospects of social accommodation and cultural assimilation in Japan. Even if we do not accept Samuel Huntington's thesis of "civilizational clash," we must agree that cultural differences between Japanese and Russian people present potentially difficult challenges. We are reminded that the rise of Japanese nationalism and the consolidation of Japanese national identity in the 19th and early 20th centuries had much to do with Japan's uneasy and at times violent encounters with the Russians during those periods.[13] It is also widely known that the two countries' tense relations after the Second World War solidified negative Japanese attitudes toward Russia.[14] How will the contemporary intercourse between the two peoples affect Japanese national identity and their attitudes toward their northern neighbors?

Fifth, the growing Russian population in Japan may have a potentially important impact on future Japanese-Russian relations, which are currently in an abnormal state due to the seemingly intractable territorial dispute between the two countries.[15] A related question is whether human contacts between the "distant neighbors"[16] can bridge centuries of suspicion and hostility. The vast majority of present-day Japanese have never met Russians and yet stubbornly hold negative views of Russians, as evident in all public opinion polls about Japanese attitudes toward foreign countries.[17] In contrast, a good majority of the Russians polled express favorable views toward Japan.[18] Will the growing contact between individual Japanese and Russians alter their mutual perceptions and attitudes?

The present study is motivated by the above considerations. More specifically, we address the following questions: What is the impact of the growing Russian presence in Japan on the Japanese public's views of Russia and Japanese-Russian relations? What opportunities and problems do the Russians in Japan present in those areas of the country where they appear in fairly large numbers? What is the nature of the Russians' experience in living in those communities? Are there serious ethnic, cultural, or social problems facing the Russians residing in or visiting Japan? If so, do the problems rise to the level of threatening the human security of the Russians? Is their presence in any way threatening the human security of the members of the host communities?

We will examine the above questions through a case study of two prefectures, Hokkaido and Niigata. These regions present particularly interesting cases because of the significance their

leaders have long attached to their ties to Russia. The two prefectures and many municipalities there have invested considerable resources in developing sister-city and other partnerships with their Russian counterparts since the Cold War era. Hokkaido and Niigata also provide important case material because Russia attracts a fair amount of attention among their citizens, particularly in comparison with other parts of Japan, where Russia has been seen and continues to be seen as a "distant neighbor." One of the main reasons for Russia's salience in Hokkaido and Niigata is the growing presence of Russian nationals in some of their communities and its visible impact on the local economic and social life.

The current study uses three sources of information. First, several publications and other information supplied by prefectural and city administrations offer some useful background information about the two prefectures' ties to Russia. Second, we conducted small surveys of Japanese and Russian residents in Sapporo and Wakkanai in October 2001, again in Sapporo in March 2003, in Nemuro in June 2003, and in Niigata in August 2003, and they provide valuable information. Although the survey samples are small and are by no means representative of the local citizenry as a whole, they do allow us to canvass the range of views that exist in their communities and raise some important questions that require further study. Many of the views expressed in these surveys are corroborated by the series of interviews we conducted in the cities of Niigata, Sapporo, Otaru, and Wakkanai in October 2001, in Sapporo in March 2003, and in Nemuro and Kushiro in June 2003. These interviews constitute the third source of information employed in this study. Interviewees included prefectural and municipal administration officials, journalists, business people, university professors, and private researchers. We also interviewed some Russian residents in Niigata, Sapporo, Otaru, and Nemuro.

In the following pages, we will first describe the growing presence of Russians in Japan in Hokkaido and Niigata and the factors contributing to the growth. We will then present the main findings from our interviews and surveys in the two prefectures, first findings about the views of Japanese residents and second those regarding the views of Russian residents. We will then compare findings from the two prefectures. We will conclude with a discussion of Japanese and Russian views of each other and implications of differences in their views.

The Growing Russian Presence in Japan

Among the growing number of foreign visitors to Japan, Russians are still a small minority. Out of the 5,771,975 foreign nationals that entered the country in 2002, the largest number came

from South Korea (1,472,096, or 25.5% of the total number of foreign visitors), followed by Chinese from Taiwan (ROC) (909,654, or 15.8%), Chinese from PRC (527,796, or 9.1%), and Filipinos (197,136, or 3.4%). In comparison, far fewer Russian nationals (36,693, or 0.6%) entered Japan.[19] Nevertheless, the number of Russians coming to Japan has steadily grown since the mid-1990s. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. The Number of Russian Nationals Entering Japan

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Number	24,232	26,349	30,120	26,896	23,064	30,290	33,772	36,693
% change from previous year		8.7	14.3	- 10.7	- 14.2	31.3	11.5	8.6
% of total foreigners	0.65	0.62	0.65	0.59	0.47	0.57	0.64	0.6

Source: Japan Immigration Association, Statistics on Immigration Control 1999, Tokyo: Japan Immigration Association, 2000, p. 14; Judicial System Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, ed., Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants, 2003, Tokyo: Kokuritsu Insatsukyoku, Tokyo, 2003, p. v.

What brings the Russians to Japan? Table 2 shows the breakdown of newly arriving Russian citizens by purpose of visit. These statistics are not entirely accurate, for many foreign nationals, including Russians, engage in activities other than those for which they have been admitted into the country. Moreover, these numbers do not include the much larger numbers of Russians who come ashore briefly on special landing permits while their ships are anchored in Japanese ports, such as in Niigata, Otaru, and Wakkanai. Nonetheless, it is clear that among the longer-term Russian visitors in Japan, "entertainment"[20] is by far the most popular purpose of stay, with 5,068 Russians (nearly 16%) entering Japan for that purpose in 2002. By comparison, 2,519 South Koreans and 5,670 PRC Chinese came to Japan for the same purpose. The largest number of foreign entertainers in Japan came from the Philippines (74,729).[21]

Table 2. The Number of New Russian Visitors by Purpose of Entry, 2002

Total	Diplomat	Government official	Professor	Artist	Journalist
31,707	267	321	103	42	2
Business investor/ manager	Researcher	Instructor	Engineer	Specialists in humanities/ international	Intra-firm transfer

				services	
4	34	4	18	30	6
Entertainer	Skilled labor	Cultural activities	Temporary visitor*	College student	Pre-college student
5,068	23	90	25,124	152	24
Trainee	Visiting family	Designated activities**	Dependent of Japanese national	Dependent of permanent resident	Long-term resident
93	185	8	82	1	26

*See Table 3 below for a breakdown.
** Includes working holiday and other activities.
Source: Judicial System Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, ed., Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants, 2003, Tokyo: Kokuritsu Insatsukyoku, Tokyo, 2003, pp. 54 and 57.

Among the 25,124 Russians visiting Japan on a temporary basis in 2002, the largest segment (10,435 people) came as sightseers, followed by 9,978 who came on business and 855 who visited the country for cultural and study activities (Table 3). The number of Russian tourists nearly doubled since 1999, when 5,989 Russians came to Japan for sightseeing. The number of businessmen also increased from 6,713 in 1999.

Table 3. The Number of New Temporary Russian Visitors in Japan, 2002

Total	Sightseeing	Business	Cultural, study activities	Visiting relatives	Other
25,124	10,435	9,978	2,472	654	3,202

Source: Judicial System Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, ed., Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants, 2003, Tokyo: Kokuritsu Insatsukyoku, Tokyo, 2003, pp. 100-101.

The Russian Presence in Hokkaido and Niigata

As of the end of 2002, there were 447 Russians officially registered in Hokkaido, an increase of 24 from 2001, and 219 in Niigata Prefecture, an increase of 29 from the previous year. They represented 7.4 percent and 3.6 percent of the total registered Russians in Japan, respectively. The Russians in Hokkaido were the third largest Russian community in Japan, after that in Tokyo (with 1,430 Russians) and Kanagawa (480 Russians). Niigata was the seventh most popular place of residence among the Russians in Japan.[22] (See Table 4.) As of the end of September 2001, there were 233 and 105 Russian nationals registered as residents in the cities of Sapporo and Niigata, respectively.[23]

Table 4. The Number of Registered Russians by Prefecture, at end of 2002

TOTAL	**Hokkaido**	Aomori	Iwate	Miyagi	Akita	Yamagata	Fukushima
6,026	**447**	62	48	155	36	14	62
Ibaraki	Tochigi	Gunma	Saitama	Chiba	Tokyo	Kanagawa	**Niigata**
247	46	92	236	335	1,430	480	**219**
Toyama	Ishikawa	Fukui	Yamanashi	Nagano	Gifu	Shizuoka	Aichi
120	76	127	9	44	82	177	193
Mie	Shiga	Kyoto	Osaka	Hyogo	Nara	Wakayama	Tottori
39	15	140	218	125	14	11	3
Shimane	Okayama	Hiroshima	Yamaguchi	Tokushima	Kagawa	Ehime	Kochi
25	52	81	40	43	18	22	15
Fukuoka	Saga	Nagasaki	Kumamoto	Oita	Miyazaki	Kagoshima	Okinawa
190	45	96	21	28	5	13	30

Source: Judicial System Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, ed., Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants, 2003, Tokyo: Kokuritsu Insatsukyoku, Tokyo, 2003, p. 167.

Russians in Hokkaido

The number of Russian citizens registered in Hokkaido is on a steady increase, as shown in Table 5 below. They constituted about 2.6 percent of all foreign citizens registered in the prefecture in 2002. They were surpassed by four other groups—Koreans (5,775), Chinese (5,244), Filipinos (979), and US citizens (897).[24]

Table 5. Russians Registered in Hokkaido (at year end)

1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
54	126	190	217	272	332	345	352	440	475	423	447

Source: Hokkaido Somubu Chijishitsu Kokusaika, ed., Hokkaido no Kokusaika no Genjo (The present situation of Hokkaido's internationalization), Sapporo: Hokkaido Somubu Chijishitsu Kokusaika, 2001, p. 78; Judicial System Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, ed., Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants, 2002, Tokyo:Zaimusho Insatsukyoku, Tokyo, 2002, p. 166; Judicial System Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, ed., Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants, 2003, Tokyo: Kokuritsu Insatsukyoku, Tokyo, 2003, p. 167.

Far larger numbers of Russians visit the main port cities of Hokkaido on a special permit while their ships are anchored. In 2001, as many as 58,723 foreign nationals were granted special permits to land at Wakkanai Port, another 27,771 came into Otaru Port, and 22,693 Russians came ashore in Hanasaki Port close to Nemuro. Unfortunately, we do not have a breakdown of these statistics by nationality, but according to the local officials we interviewed, the largest segments were Russian.[25] These numbers far exceeded the total number of foreigners coming to Hokkaido

by air (4,749, including 99 Russians, at Chitose Airport and 1,056 Russians at Hakodate Airport in 2001).[26] In addition, Wakkanai, Nemuro, and Otaru serve as entry and transit points for many Russians (505, 214, and 2,030, respectively, in 2001).[27]

The presence of temporary Russian visitors in some cities of Hokkaido is quite visible, and as we will note below, it is having a visible impact on the local Japanese residents' perceptions of Russians. In 2000, for example, Wakkanai, with a population of 43,000, received 58,473 Russians who were on special landing permits to come into the city. In comparison, there were only 40 Russian residents in the city. Most of the special-permit visitors from Russia were crewmembers of ships that made port calls in Wakkanai. In 2000, there were as many as 3,780 such Russian ships, mostly fishing boats carrying crab and other marine products. Wakkanai also has a ferry service to Korsakov during the May-September period. In 2001, a total of 3,028 Japanese and 1,177 foreigners (mostly Russians) used the service.[28] Many Russian ships also visit the Port of Otaru. In 2000, there were 1,291 such Russian ships. They carried 26,040 Russians who were permitted to land temporarily while the ships were anchored in the port, and another 1,064 who used Otaru as an entry point and went onto other destinations in Japan.[29]

The increasing number of Russian visitors to Hokkaido means growing economic benefits to the local communities in the prefecture. During the 1990s, the number of Russian ships calling in Hokkaido ports increased twelve-fold, from 731 in 1990 to 9,181 in 1999. This represented a doubling of trade turnover, to 88.6 billion yen ($738 million).[30] Russian ships call in local ports, bringing mainly marine and forestry products, and Russian crewmembers purchase used and new cars, office equipment, electronic and electric appliances, furniture, medicine, food, and other consumer goods. According to one estimate, Russian ships coming into the port of Nemuro represented an estimated 9.39 billion yen (about $78 million) in economic benefits for this provincial city in 1999.[31] Comparable figures for Monbetsu and Wakkanai were 15 billion yen ($125 million) and 27.9 billion yen ($232.5 million), respectively.[32]

There are many small-scale private efforts to encourage Russians to visit their communities. For example, an enterprising local businessman in Nemuro has expanded his small retail store into a booming business by attracting thousands of Russian seamen. He employs three Russians to provide interpretation and translation services for the Russian visitors and draw up business contracts with a growing number of business partners in the Russian Far East. He has also opened Russian language classes, with a Russian employee as an instructor. Local banks encourage their employees to attend language classes as part of their training program.[33]

Not all is well, however. There are many troubling stories involving Russian visitors, including alleged thefts by Russians in Otaru, Wakkanai, and Monbetsu. Some local business establishments have displayed signs stating that foreigners (namely Russians) are not welcome. Japanese fishermen have complained that Russian boats operating in waters between the two countries have damaged their fishing nets.[34] Despite these problems, or perhaps because of these problems, prefectural and municipal leaders stress the importance of improving relations with Russia.[35]

Russians in Niigata

The size of the Russian community in Niigata Prefecture is substantially smaller than that in Hokkaido. As of the end of 2002, 219 Russian citizens were registered, representing the seventh largest foreign community in the prefecture.[36] As Table 6 shows, the number of Russians in the province is on a steady increase, from a mere seven in 1991 to 219 in 2002.

Table 6. Russians Registered in Niigata, 1991-2002

1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
7	20	37	51	80	69	97	104	107	180	190	219

Sources: Niigataken Kokusaikoryuka for data for 1991-2000; Judicial System Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, ed., Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants, 2003, Tokyo: Kokuritsu Insatsukyoku, Tokyo, 2003, p. 167 for data for 2001-2002. .

Niigata boasts a few international ports, but far fewer Russian ships visit Niigata ports than Hokkaido ports. In 2001, out of a total of 1,369 foreign-registered ships that called in the Port of Niigata, just 154 ships were Russian-flag carriers, out of 1,075 foreign ships that anchored in Niigata Higashi Port, only 124 were Russian, and 30 out of 294 foreign ships visiting Niigata Nishi Port were Russian-registered.[37] These ships bring lumber, finished wood, paper and pulp products, and produce to Niigata and take automobiles and other transportation equipment, and metal products to Russian Far East destinations. There is also a passenger ship service between Niigata and Vladivostok four times a year.

Niigata Airport serves as an important regional airport, with regular services to foreign destinations, including Khabarovsk, Irkutsk, Vladivostok, Seoul, Shanghai, Harbin, Guam, and Honolulu. In 2000, a total of 225,391 Japanese and foreign passengers used this airport for

international travel. Of these, 19,196 traveled to and from Vladivostok, 17,001 to and from Khabarovsk, and 1,784 to and from Irkutsk.[38]

Factors Contributing to the Growing Russian Presence in Hokkaido and Niigata

Several factors have been contributing to the growth of Hokkaido and Niigata citizens' interest in Russia. The geographical proximity of the two prefectures to the Russian Far East is the most important factor. Also important is the fact that the provinces' distance from Tokyo, the center of Japan's economic life, disadvantaged them during the nation's postwar industrialization, which was focused largely on "Omote Nihon" (the front-side of Japan), namely the coastal areas of the country facing the Pacific Ocean and the Seto Inland Sea. Hokkaido, Niigata and other prefectures in "Ura Nihon" (the back-side of Japan) facing the Sea of Japan suffered through Tokyo's relative neglect during the postwar decades. They looked for economic opportunities across the Sea of Japan, but the Cold War division of Northeast Asia severely limited such opportunities.

When Hokkaido and Niigata sought opportunities to develop ties with their counterparts in the Russian Far East during the Cold War era, the role of the pubic sector, namely the provincial administrations, was critical, with Hokkaido and Niigata governors leading the way in "jichitai gaiko," diplomacy by local autonomous bodies.[39] The regional leaders launched various initiatives to build transportation and communication infrastructure by obtaining the necessary funding from the national government. They sent friendship missions to their counterparts in the Russian Far East, often succeeded in establishing sister or friendship partnerships, and encouraged municipalities to follow their lead. They began direct exchanges of administrative personnel for training and information exchange and encouraged and often subsidized private-sector exchanges and people-to-people diplomacy, including business, educational, and cultural exchanges.

Just a few indicators of these efforts need to be introduced here. Table 7 shows the sixteen formal partnerships that have been established between municipalities in Hokkaido and Russia. They equal all other municipal partnerships between Japan and Russia combined.[40] Eleven of the 18 international sister-city and friendship-city tie-ups involving Hokkaido municipalities are with Russian counterparts in Sakhalin, reflecting the special importance Hokkaido attaches to the closest Russian territory to the north.

Table 7. Hokkaido-Russia Sister Cities

Russian Region	Russian City	Hokkaido Municipality	Year of Establishment
Sakhalin Oblast	Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk	Asahikawa City	1967
	Poronaisk	Kitami City	1972
	Nevel'sk	Wakkanai City	1972
	Kholmsk	Kushiro City	1975
	Ozorsky	Sarufutsu Village	1990
	Korsakov	Monbetsu City	1991
	Dorinsk	Nayoro City	1991
	Korsakov	Wakkanai City	1991
	Tomari	Teshio Town	1992
	Severo-Kurilsk	Nemuro City	1994
	Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk	Hakodate City	1997
	Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk	Wakkanai City	2001
Primorskii Krai	Nakhodka	Otaru City	1966
	Vladivostok	Hakodate City	1992
Khabarovsk Krai	Vanino	Ishikari City	1993
Kamchatka	Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky	Kushiro City	1998
Novosibirsk	Novosibirsk	Sapporo City	1990
Buryat Republic	Ulan-Ude	Rumoi City	1972

Source: Hokkaido Somubu Chijishitsu Kokusaika, ed., Hokkaido to Roshia Kyokuto: Koryu Jisseki to Roshia Kyokuto no Gaiyo (Hokkaido and the Russian Far East: the record of exchange and outline of the Russian Far East), Sapporo: Hokkaido Somubu Chijishitsu Kokusaika, 2002, p. 73.

In contrast, there are only three formal partnerships between municipalities in Niigata and Russia--Niigata with Khabarovsk (established in 1965) and Vladivostok (1991), and Toyosaka with Birobidzhan (1992). Niigata municipalities' interest lies more with China and South Korea, with nine and five sister-city and friendship relationships, respectively, with cities in those countries. Niigata Prefecture also has a formal partnership with Heilongjian Province of China.[41]

Another factor that has been contributing to Hokkaido and Niigata's interest in the Russian Far East is the opening of business opportunities in the Russian Far East following the collapse of the Soviet Union. A good number of Japanese businesses, both small and large, took advantage of the thaw in Cold War tensions during the perestroika period through the mid-1990s. They eyed opportunities in forestry, fisheries, tourism, light manufacturing, and trade, some of them establishing joint ventures and other cooperative arrangements. Unfortunately, most of the businesses lost money because of the absence of a favorable investment climate. Absence of legal protection for foreign investors, contradictory laws and regulations regarding property rights and

corporate ownership and management, political and business corruption, poor transportation and communication infrastructure, lack of modern business culture, and bureaucratic red tape and ineptitude were among the main reasons for the business failures. Some structural limitations also became apparent in the 1990s--e.g., absence of marketable industrial products other than natural resources, lack of hard currency in Russia, and the resulting chronic trade deficits on the Japanese side.

Despite these problems, however, business communities in Hokkaido and Niigata have been encouraged by the provincial administrations not to lose interest in the potential of economic development in the Russian Far East. Even after the ruble crisis of 1997, for example, the Hokkaido government established a permanent prefectural office in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk and has continued coordination of business promotion efforts with the prefecture's business community.[42]

In the development of regional ties in the Russian Far East there is a well-known "division of labor" between Hokkaido and Niigata, with Hokkaido focusing on Sakhalin and Niigata focusing on the continental Far East. This is evident in the way the two prefectures have established sister-city or friendship-city ties in Russia and the way they have developed transportation links to the Russian Far East. While Hokkaido has developed direct air and shipping links to Sakhalin, Niigata has opted for air and shipping access to points in the continental Far East.[43]

Hokkaido occupies a special place in Japanese local initiatives toward Russia in general and toward the Russian Far East in particular. Historically, the island played an important part in defining Japan's territorial, security, political, and economic interests vis-à-vis Russia (and the Soviet Union). This is important in that if the disputed islands were returned to Japan, they would come under Hokkaido's administrative jurisdiction and the vast majority of the former Japanese residents of the Northern Territories currently reside in Hokkaido.[44]

Of particular note are the series of reciprocal visits organized under the bilateral regime, known as "no-visa visits," which allow Japanese and Russian citizens to visit the Northern Territories and Japan without a visa. One of the most difficult but urgent questions for both the Japanese government and Hokkaido in the absence of a peace treaty between the two countries is how to make it possible for former Japanese residents of the disputed islands to visit their ancestral land. The so-called no-visa visits helped the Japanese government circumvent the problem that if Japanese citizens entered the Russian-held islands on a Russian visa, it would constitute de facto recognition of Russian sovereignty over the territories in question. The first delegation of Russian islanders came to Hokkaido in April 1992, followed by a reciprocal visit by Japanese citizens in

May. The no-visa regime has since been expanded to include not only past and present island residents but also other Japanese and Russians. By 2001, a total of 109 Russian delegations comprising 4,724 individuals had visited Japan, and 187 delegations with 8,836 Japanese citizens had visited the Northern Territories.[45]

Another element in the growing human contacts between Hokkaido and the Russian Far East, particularly Sakhalin, is the development of oil and gas off the eastern coast of the Russian island.[46] There are several offshore oil and gas development projects underway, but most progress has been seen in the Sakhalin-1 and Sakhalin-2 projects. Despite the energy development projects' potentially serious environmental consequences for Hokkaido, their promising benefits to the prefecture's economy have energized Hokkaido's business community, particularly in construction, transportation, trade, and service industries. The Sakhalin energy projects have also contributed to the growth of ferry and other shipping activities between Kholmsk and Korsakov on the Sakhalin side and Wakkanai and Otaru on the Hokkaido side, bringing more and more Russians to the Hokkaido port cities.

Niigata is a pioneer in the internationalization *(kokusaika)* movement that has been going on throughout Japan in recent decades. The prefecture's efforts to establish international transportation links to the neighboring countries date back to the 1960s. The public sector in Niigata has played a pivotal role in this prefecture's growth as a regional hub for international transportation. Its geographic location—the proximity to both Russia and the Korean Peninsula—and the considerable size of its population give it a clear advantage over most other prefectures facing the Sea of Japan (East Sea). The postwar governors of Niigata Prefecture and mayors of Niigata City have eagerly sought closer ties with the neighboring Northeast Asian countries, including Russia.

Their efforts have been focused on Nakhodka, Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, and, more recently, Irkutsk. Since 1990, Niigata and the Primorskii Krai and the Khabarovsk Krai have adopted formal action programs designed to promote various exchanges, involving administrative personnel, students, technical experts, and representatives of port authorities. The provincial administration and the business community in Niigata are also exchanging trade missions to promote business opportunities, but so far the impact has been very limited.[47]

Finally, the growing presence of visitors from Russian, particularly from the Russian Far East, is also raising the level of interest in Russia among the local Japanese citizens. As we will see in the next section, there is some evidence to suggest that the growing presence of Russians in

their communities is leaving conflicting impressions on the local Japanese--impressions, unfortunately, leaning toward the negative side but not altogether unfavorable.

Views of Japanese Residents in Hokkaido

Interviews in Sapporo

In order to discern the motivation behind Hokkaido's public and private efforts to develop closer ties with Russia, we conducted a series of interviews and surveys in Hokkaido in October 2001.[48] We interviewed seven individuals in Sapporo, including two officials in the Hokkaido Governor's Office, an official of the Sapporo City Government responsible for international exchanges, two individuals in marine product distribution business, a senior editor of the Hokkaido Shimbun, and a researcher in the same newspaper's research arm (Hokkaido Shimbun Information Institute). In March 2003, we conducted follow-up interviews with three prefectural government officials and three Russians living in Sapporo. We offer some observations directly relevant to the focus of this analysis.

First, the Japanese interviewees all agreed that Russia—particularly Sakhalin and the Russian Far East—had a special importance to Hokkaido. They clearly saw Russia as their neighbor with whom they needed to develop friendly ties.

Second, the Japanese interviewees concurred that Hokkaido was ahead of all other Japanese prefectures in developing relations with Russia, particularly Sakhalin. The two officials of the Governor's Office proudly stated that Governor Hori was personally enthusiastic about the expansion of relations between Hokkaido and Sakhalin.[49] All Japanese interviewees agreed that the people of Hokkaido generally were more interested in Russian affairs than people in other parts of Japan. They admitted, however, that the general public's interest and understanding about Russia was still limited.

Third, there was general agreement among the Japanese interviewees that the dispute over the Northern Territories was an obstacle to the improvement of state-to-state relations between Japan and Russia but that the problem should not and did not seriously affect the local- and regional-level contacts, including those between the citizens of Hokkaido and Sakhalin. One of the prefectural administrators said, "Irrespective of the territorial dispute, we want to continue to improve our relations with Russia based on our (local) interests." His colleague chimed in, "The islands issue is for the national governments to deal with," and added, "The lack of Japanese business presence in the Russian Far East is a result of economic difficulties, not due to the

territorial dispute. The Japanese government today keeps the territorial and economic issues separate." According to the two officials of the Governor's Office, when the prefectural administration began actively promoting regional ties with Russia, particularly Sakhalin, in the early 1990s, the local business community and many members of the prefectural assembly were skeptical about business opportunities in Russia. The skeptics were aware of the difficulties many Japanese businesses were experiencing with their Russian partners. The officials added that the public was focused on the territorial issue and highly critical of the Soviet Union. More recently, however, the criticisms waned and the focus had shifted toward a wider range of issues, including business and cultural ties in Russia. As a result, according to the officials, the public came to hold more favorable attitudes toward the administration's effort to improve relations with Russia. Thee officials of the Governor's Office, as well as the official of the Sapporo City Administration, put greater stress on the importance of improving mutual understanding between the Russians and the Japanese through expanded human contacts than on immediate material benefits.

Fourth, the Japanese interviewees observed that the growing Russian population in Hokkaido and various incidents involving Russian citizens were affecting the local people's attitudes toward Russians. They said the expanding human contacts were a good thing. They pointed out, however, that the local mass media tended to highlight problematic incidents actually or allegedly involving Russian citizens. An official of the Governor's Office said, "At least one incident is reported daily in Otaru, Wakkanai, or Monbetsu." In Wakkanai, for example, a Russian gunned down another Russian on a street corner. In another incident, a pubic bathhouse in Otaru refused to admit Russians because many Japanese clients complained that Russian visitors did not know how to take a bath in sento. The media also reported many cases of car thefts and burglaries involving Russians. The involvement of "Russian mafia" was often suspected in these incidents.

A Survey of Japanese Residents in Sapporo

In October 2001, we conducted a questionnaire survey in Sapporo and Wakkanai and received 61 completed surveys. Because our sample size is small, the views we obtained from these surveys cannot be said to represent those of the entire population of these cities. However, we did not find any comments in the surveys that contradicted the observations we offered above on the basis of our interviews.

About half of the survey respondents in Sapporo reported that they met Russians at or through work on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis, and the other half said they rarely or never met

Russians through work. Generally, those who had direct contacts with Russians had more positive impressions of Russians in general than those who had little or no contact.

Our survey subjects were clearly more favorably inclined toward Russia than the general public in Japan. We asked the subjects if they felt friendly toward Russia. This is a question that has been asked in numerous public opinion surveys in Japan. Eighteen out of 33 respondents said they felt friendly or somewhat friendly toward Russia, while 11 felt somewhat unfriendly or not friendly at all. This balance is contrary to the pattern repeatedly found in nationwide surveys. For example, a Japanese government survey in 2002 found only 15.1 percent of the Japanese polled said they felt friendly or somewhat friendly toward Russia and 77.7 percent said they did not feel friendly toward Russia.[50] We asked our subjects whether they would welcome more Russian visitors to their community. They were generally receptive to the idea, 12 people stating there should be more Russians in their area and only one person disagreeing. When asked what kind of impact the Russian presence had on their community, the balance of assessment was only slightly favorable, with eight individuals thinking there was positive impact, five subjects believing there was some bad impact, and the largest number of people (12) seeing little or no impact. We asked if more Japanese should visit Russia. As many as 13 persons said many more Japanese should visit Russia and five answered somewhat more Japanese should. Only two persons rejected the proposition.

Most of the subjects said they favored more active promotion of ties between their community and Russian partner cities. Even the five individuals who offered a somber assessment of the current Russian presence in their local community supported expansion of relations with Russia. Of the 19 supporters of closer ties, five specifically observed that Hokkaido and Russia (or Sakhalin) were geographic neighbors and should develop closer ties. Interestingly, only one person mentioned the conclusion of a peace treaty and resolution of the territorial dispute between Japan and Russia among the reasons for wanting expanded bilateral ties.

We asked whether they thought the overall relations between Japan and Russia were good. Eight of our 33 respondents believed the bilateral relations were good or somewhat good and 12 people believed they were somewhat bad. Here again, our subjects were more positive about the bilateral relations than the Japanese public in general.[51] Asked to explain their assessment of Japanese-Russian relations, seven of our respondents specifically mentioned the territorial dispute. Another four individuals cited difficulties in economic relations and three persons referred to limited contacts, including complicated and time-consuming visa application procedures. On the

positive side, five people stated that private-level ties were growing between the two countries. On the question of how to improve Russian-Japanese relations, as many as 18 subjects said bilateral exchanges should be expanded, including information exchange, economic and cultural exchange, including citizens' visits. Three people noted that Japan and Russia should solve the territorial dispute and another three stated the two countries should sign a peace treaty, presumably following a territorial solution. It is clear that the territorial issue is on the minds of a good portion of the Japanese respondents.

At the end of our questionnaire, we asked our subjects to write any comments they liked regarding Russia or Russians. All but four people noted that it was either desirable or possible to build mutual trust between the Japanese and the Russians through expanded contacts. Six people acknowledged that there was a great psychological distance between the Japanese and the Russians. Four of them added, however, that it was desirable or possible for both sides to try and bridge that gap. Only one individual mentioned the territorial dispute and wrote, "Russia should return the Northern Territories promptly and the two sides should conclude economic agreements. That would be good for Hokkaido's construction business."

As noted above, our survey sample is too small for us to generalize about the views of the entire population of Sapporo. The most that we can say is that there is a potential reservoir of goodwill in the city toward Russia.

Interviews and A Survey of Wakkanai Residents

Wakkanai is a port city located at the northern end of Hokkaido, directly across the Soya Strait from Sakhalin. As noted earlier, in 2001, this city, with a population of 43,000, was visited by 58,473 Russians who came ashore on special permits while their ships were anchored in the port. In the previous year, 3,760 foreign ships came into the port, of which 3,730 were Russian ships, mostly small fishing and freight ships. Needless to say, therefore, the Russian visitors are very visible in the city, on the streets and in various establishments, such as restaurants and bars and consumer goods stores, and many retailers cater specifically to Russian customers.

Wakkanai is home to an active but dwindling fishing industry. City leaders see expansion of relations with Russia, particularly Sakhalin, as crucial to the city's economic vitality, indeed its future survival. The city established friendship-city (yukotoshi) ties with Nevel'sk in 1972, with Korsakov in 1991, and with Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk in 2001. As mentioned earlier, there is also a regular shipping service between Wakkanai and Korsakov when the Sea of Okhotsk is not frozen.

In 2001, 4,205 passengers used the service. A more permanent Russian presence is very small, however. In 2001, only 59 Russians were registered in the city, but they constituted over one-fourth of the foreign residents in the city.[52]

The city administration actively promotes human and economic ties with the friendship cities in Sakhalin. For example, it sent 62 Wakkanai citizens on two goodwill missions to Sakhalin in 2001 and funded their travel. In addition, the city dispatched one of its administrators to Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk for a three-month stint in 2000 and received four administrators from the Russian city for two weeks each in 2000 and again in 2001. Wakkanai also sent two of its administrators to the Wakkanai Liaison Office in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk in 2001. In 2001, the city budgeted about $134,000 for various programs to promote economic exchange with Sakhalin cities. In addition, the city spent about $161,700 in subsidies for various citizen group activities to promote economic, business, cultural, and educational exchanges with various cities in Sakhalin and the Russian Far East.[53]

The city officials we interviewed, including the mayor and administrators responsible for international affairs, were very clear about their commitment to establish close ties with their counterparts in Sakhalin. Seven businessmen we met also believed that good relations with Sakhalin were very important to the city's prosperity and to their own firms.

Our survey in Wakkanai reveals several interesting patterns. Twenty-one of the 28 respondents were students at Wakkanai Hokusei Gakuen University, a four-year college with a student population of around 360 and one major, in information media. The respondents had very limited contacts with Russians, but, as in Sapporo, direct contacts with Russians appeared to improve their impressions of Russians. Asked if more Russians should come to Wakkanai, only seven individuals thought they should. Eight people said the current level should be maintained, while two people said there should be fewer Russian visitors to their city. Only four people said the impact of the Russians in the city was positive. In contrast, as many as 15 subjects said the impact was negative, citing concerns about public safety. They pointed to the growing incidents of shoplifting, bicycle thefts, and violent crimes in the city.

Do our respondents in Wakkanai feel friendly toward Russia? As many as 15 individuals, including all university students in our sample, said they felt either not very friendly or not friendly at all. Students were not among the nine people who said they felt either friendly or somewhat friendly toward Russia. As to the overall relations between Japan and Russia, only one person (a city government official) evaluated them as "good" and another (a student) thought they were

"somewhat good." Five people said they did not know. The remaining 21 individuals were equally split between "not very good" and "cannot generalize." Among the reasons for the negative assessments, the territorial dispute was cited by the largest number of respondents (8 individuals).

Asked what should be done to improve Japan's relations with Russia, two people said the two countries should conclude a peace treaty and another six people said the territorial dispute should be solved. Eight individuals agreed that more contacts and more communication between the Japanese and the Russians would build trust and friendlier relations. About half of the respondents were aware of the friendship-city relationship between Wakkanai and Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. A slightly smaller portion of the respondents also correctly named Nevel'sk and Korsakov as Wakkanai's friendship partners. Eleven subjects thought these relationships were having a good impact on the overall relations between Japan and Russia, while six said they saw little or no impact, and eleven others said they did not know.

Clearly, a larger sample is necessary to draw more definitive conclusions about Wakkanai residents' views of Russia and Russians. Nonetheless, the marked difference between the adult respondents and the students in our sample is very intriguing. It is also disconcerting that the large number of Russians who pay a brief visit to the city leave a distinctly negative impression on local residents, particularly the young. It is also clear that the territorial dispute is on the minds of many residents of this city. The big challenge for the city, therefore, is how to promote closer ties with Sakhalin for economic reasons, if nothing else, while controlling the negative fallout of the visible presence of Russian visitors. Clearly, improvements are necessary in communication and mutual learning between the visitors and the locals.

Interviews in Nemuro and Kushiro

In examining the impact of Russians in Japan, Nemuro and Kushiro are important areas to look at for several reasons. First, because of the geographical proximity of these cities to the Northern Territories, there is much local interest in Japan's relations with Russia, particularly with respect to the disposition of the territorial dispute between the two countries. Second, for the same geographical reason, there has been a significant presence of Russians in Nemuro and Kushiro, particularly in connection with fishing and trade in fish and other marine products and Russian visitors from the Northern Territories under the special regime of visa-free visits. Third, most of

the former Japanese residents of the disputed islands now live in Nemuro and they represent a unique and important link in the local-level interaction between Japan and Russia.

In June 2003, we interviewed nine Japanese and one Russian resident in Nemuro. In Kushiro we interviewed four individuals associated with the fishing industry. One of them was a former city government administrator and now an advisor to the Kushiro Fisheries Cooperative Association. Another interviewee directed the market development division of the same association. The third interviewee was with Kushiro City's administration and dealt with economic and fisheries development.

The interviews in Kushiro highlighted an important economic dimension to the city's relationship with Russia. Kushiro's economic mainstay, fishing and fish processing industries had experienced continuous declines since the late 1970s, when the Soviet Union and the United States established 200-mile zones around their shores to protect coastal fisheries from Japanese and other foreign fishing. Kushiro, one of the most important bases of Japanese distant-water fishing in the North Pacific, was hit hard by the dwindling fish catch quotas in Soviet and U.S. waters. Declines continued through the 1980s and 90s, shaking the economic foundations of Kushiro. Our interviewees informed us that during the peak years there were as many as 170 salmon and crab fishing boats in Kushiro but today there were only five! Only two years ago over 100 Russian fishing boats visited Kushiro in fishing seasons, but due to the Japanese and Russian authorities' efforts to crack down on poaching and other illegal fishing in Russian waters, the number of Russian boats coming to Kushiro had declined to a mere two in the spring of 2003. Poaching and illegal fishing and fish trading in and around Russian waters had become a major concern to both Russian and Japanese governments because of the depletion of marine resources and the evasion of tax and export duties. The Russian coastguards had stepped up their efforts to control Russian fishing in their waters and the Japanese coastguards and customs office had increased their efforts to control the illegal transfer of Russian catches to Japanese buyers at sea. The industry representatives we interviewed also noted that in the early 1990s there were over 100 fishery joint ventures between Japan and Russia but that none of them had survived.

The interviewees in Kushiro told us they were very interested in the return of the Northern Territories to Japan, believing that both Kushiro and Nemuro would benefit from the resumption of fishing around the islands. One of them admitted, however, that the islands issue was not as critical to the people of Kushiro as it was to the people of Nemuro because of the presence of a large number of former residents of the disputed islands in the city. The fishing industry

representatives told us that in order to make up for the dwindling access to fishery resources in Russian waters and sustain Kushiro's well-developed fish processing industry, they were looking at Kamchatka and its rich marine resources as an attractive alternative.

Kushiro was slowly developing its ties with Kamchatka. In 1998 the Port of Kushiro established a friendship-port partnership with Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. In 2003 the two cities were beginning an exchange of visits by school children. Kushiro's fishing and fish processing industries annually received several Russian trainees to learn fish processing and had sent several fact-finding missions and negotiators to Kamchatka. They had found some promising opportunities, but legislation and regulations in both Russia and Japan was complicating their efforts to cultivate a new supply source of marine resources in Kamchatka.

Our interviews with nine Japanese and one Russian in Nemuro revealed some notable differences between the situation of this city and that of other areas of Hokkaido, e.g., Wakkanai and Otaru, with respect to relations with Russia. The differences had much to do with Nemuro's proximity to the Northern Territories and the importance that the city administration and the residents attached to the resolution of the territorial dispute with Russia.

First, the presence of many former Japanese residents of the disputed islands in Nemuro gave the city a distinct political outlook. One of the interviewees in Nemuro was a former Japanese resident of Habomai, one of the Northern Territories. He headed the Nemuro branch of the League of Chishima-Habomai Islands Residents, an association long dedicated to the mobilization of political and public support in Japan for the return of the Soviet/Russian occupied islands. The association had fifteen branches--twelve of them in Hokkaido, one in Tokyo, and one in Toyama. The individual we interviewed was convinced that territorial resolution was prerequisite to normalizing relations between Russia and Japan. He was very anxious for the settlement of the dispute because as far as he and his fellow former islanders were concerned, the war--the Second World War--would not end until they regained their ancestral land. According to him, about one half of the more than 17,000 Japanese who evacuated the Northern Territories under attack by Soviet troops in 1945 had passed away and the average age of those still alive was 71. He was very concerned that younger generations of Japanese did not appreciate the importance of the territories in question. He admitted, however, that most of the survivors would find it difficult to resettle on the islands today due to the many decades that had separated them from their ancestral land and also because of the poor infrastructure on the islands.

The political and symbolic importance of the Northern Territories issue was not lost on other residents of Nemuro. One of the businessmen we interviewed stated, "People in Wakkanai often complain that we in Nemuro are dragging them down with our staunch, ideological position on the territorial issue. We are indeed concerned about the Northern Territories as an issue of importance to our national identity, but we are also interested in business opportunities." The businessman was an active member of the Japan Junior Chamber of Commerce and was serving as vice chairman of the chamber's commission on Northern Territories and Japanese-Russian affairs. While stressing the importance of resolving the territorial dispute to break out of the constrained bilateral relationship that now existed, he also recognized the need to build trust between Japanese and Russians through expansion of human and business contacts even while the territorial dispute remained unresolved. He had hired Russian employees in his retail store to take advantage of the business opportunities presented by the frequent visits to the city by Russians from the disputed islands on the visa-free exchange regime.

Secondly, the regime of visa-free exchange visits generated a significant amount of business for merchants in Nemuro. Four of our interviewers were devoting a great deal of capital, time, and energy to meeting the needs of the visiting Russians. Two of them were selling consumer goods, another was selling newspapers and magazines and language books, and the fourth interviewee was working at the city's information center frequently visited by Russian visitors. As well, the Russian employee of the Japanese businessman we interviewed probably would not have her job if it were not for her ability to attract Russian visitors from the disputed islands to the retail store where she worked.

Thirdly, the interviewees in Nemuro agreed that most Russians who visited their community were familiar with the local ways and did not cause the kinds of social and cultural problems reported in the other cities of Hokkaido that were being visited by large numbers of Russians. They said that many Russian visitors in Nemuro, particularly those from the Northern Territories, were repeat visitors or had learned about Japanese manners and customs from others who had visited the city before.

Fourth, the interviewees also agreed that among the residents of Nemuro there was a good deal of goodwill toward Russian visitors. In fact, the Russian interviewee had a Russian language program on local radio and her employer sponsored the beginning of a Russian language class for Japanese locals. Another businessman we interviewed was promoting Russian language study in the city and was also an active member of a citizens' group that hosted Russian visitors on the no-

visa exchange. He admitted, however, that people with no contact with Russians were not as favorably inclined toward Russia, and this included many young people who showed little interest in Russia.

The residents of Nemuro were painfully aware of the importance of the Northern Territories to their city's future. When Nemuro became a city in 1957, there were 36,813 residents. At its peak (in 1990), the city's population stood at 49,607. The population had since dwindled and reached 33,510 in 2003.[54] The shrinking population of the city was largely attributable to the declining fishing industry. The mainstay of the city's economy had always been commercial fishing. Today this industry employs 3,275 persons and is the third most important source of employment in the city, after service industry (3,532) and wholesale and retail trading (3,377).[55] With growing efforts in Japan and Russia to control fishing around Hokkaido and the Kurile Islands, including poaching, illegal fishing, and illegal trade in marine resources, it is highly unlikely that the fishing industry in Nemuro can bring back its past prosperity. This highlights the importance of expanding other business opportunities with Russia.

All the interviewees in Nemuro, including the one Russian, agreed that there were many more business opportunities Nemuro could and should develop with the Northern Territories. They acknowledged that today it was illegal for Japanese to conduct business with Russian citizens living on the disputed islands because according to Japan those Russians were illegally occupying Japanese territory. However, they were aware that some Japanese did conduct business with Russian islanders. In fact, a marine product importer we interviewed admitted he was doing business with Russians on the islands. Our interviewees pointed out there were other problems besides the legal and political barriers. The Russian interviewee maintained that Japanese businessmen were quite conservative in their thinking and averse to risk-taking. This was confirmed by the Japanese interviewees who cited the failures of many Japanese-Russian joint ventures in the first half of the 1990s as one of the main reasons why Japanese businessmen were reluctant to invest in Russia.

While some members of the business community in Nemuro were focused on the opportunities and challenges in doing business with Russian partners in the immediate future, the leaders of the city were considering a longer-term vision for their community with the assumption that the Northern Territories would eventually return to Japan. The city recently conducted a study of the future vision of Nemuro and concluded that the development of the Northern Territories must be viewed as an integral part of the city's future prosperity. The study states that Nemuro should

appeal to the nation as a whole and also take its own initiative for the restoration of the prewar state of affairs, in which the current Nemuro District, of which Nemuro is the administrative center, and the Russian-occupied islands were integral parts of the entire region.[56] Our Japanese interviewees agreed that indeed the City of Nemuro should become the center of a reunited administrative district and lead the economic prosperity of the region including the Northern Territories.

Views in Niigata

We also conducted a series of interviews in Niigata City in October 2001. The interviewees included five Japanese and three Russians. One of the Japanese was a city government official in charge of international cooperation and exchange. Another Japanese interviewee was a leader of a non-profit organization called "Habatake 21" (Spread Your Wings 21), which was promoting international exchange among local and Russian children. The third Japanese we interviewed was a senior reporter/writer for the regional newspaper Niigata Nippo. The two other Japanese interviewees were engaged in research and consulting on Russia-related issues of interest to the local community, including the business community. Their company published a monthly newsletter covering developments in Russia and the Russian Far East.

Interviews with Japanese in Niigata

First, there was much local interest in Russia, particularly in the Russian Far East. Niigata has a long history of dealing with the Russian Far East and the individuals we interviewed were quite proud that Niigata was at the forefront of Japan's relations with the Russian Far East.

Second, the city of Niigata devoted a good amount of resources to the development of ties with the Russian Far East. The city hired five foreign nationals at a time as international interns, including Russians, for three years each. In the city's International Exchange and Cooperation Department, there were 21 staff members. Five of them spoke Russian, two had taught Japanese in Vladivostok, and three worked directly on projects related to Russia, which was one more than the staff focused on China projects. This indicates that Niigata is committed to the development of closer ties with Russia.

Third, the Japanese interviewees agreed that there was sustained, if not overwhelming interest among the citizens of Niigata in gaining international experiences themselves and in developing opportunities for local children to meet with foreign children. "Habatake 21" is an example of a volunteer citizens' group which is devoted to international exchanges. The group

members invest their time and money in hosting Russian children and sending their children to Russia for cultural experience. The NPO depends on the 200,000 yen the city provides annually as well as corporate contributions. The most interesting program the association conducts is the hosting of Russian children from the cities of Vladivostok and Khabarovsk. When the local media reported on their activities, many citizens called in and inquired about opportunities for them or for their children to be involved. "Habatake 21" has been unique in being the only Japanese NGO focused exclusively on the Russian Far East. However, in 2001 they decided to invite Chinese children as well. This forced the group, for financial reasons, to reduce the number of children they could bring from Russia.

Fourth, the Japanese interviewees were agreed that Russian visitors to Niigata had become much more open and engaging over the years, as had the Russian authorities in charge of visa issuance and other official functions. They said that in earlier years they faced very high bureaucratic hurdles when they wanted to invite Russians to Japan or when they wanted to visit Russia. The situation has improved considerably in more recent years.

Fifth, the local media were much more positive about relations with Russia than the national media, but still there was much attention given to unfortunate incidents involving Russians and this tended to project a negative image of the Russians in the city. For example, when a Russian man in Niigata murdered a Japanese man, the media paid more attention to the fact of the murder than the fact that the victim used to beat his Russian wife who, reportedly, had her Russian friend kill her husband.

Sixth, the actual contact between the local Japanese and Russian residents or visitors appeared quite limited, thus accentuating the importance of the media coverage of Russian issues. There was no uniform view of the Russians in the local community, but stereotyping happened. In some corners, for example, there was the impression that most Russians were poor because the media depicted only very rich Russians or very poor Russians and rich Russians went to Tokyo and other places in Japan. One of the consultants we interviewed noted that the Japanese tended to "gravitate toward the average," toward conformity, and most of them did not understand that there were important differences among the Russians. Frequent contacts were limited to those local people who lived or worked in or around the entertainment establishments, which reported hired young Russian women, or near Higashi Port, where many Russian crewmen were strolling the streets.

Seventh, there was disagreement on whether the territorial dispute had any impact on the interaction between Russians and Japanese at the local and regional level. On the one hand, the two researcher/consultants we interviewed said that the territorial impasse and the economic situation in Russia and the business downturn in Japan since the early 1990s were obstacles to expanded relations between the two countries. They also said that many Russians they had met, both in Niigata and inside Russia, behaved as if they were superior to the Japanese. The one newspaper reporter we interviewed concurred. On the other hand, the representative of the Japanese NPO said the territorial problem had no impact on her group's activities or on the relationship between the Russians and the Japanese who came into contact with each other through their projects.

The growing human contact between Russians and Japanese in Niigata is generally a welcome phenomenon, but clearly it contains some seeds of trouble.

Views of Russian Residents in Hokkaido and Niigata

Interviews in Sapporo and Niigata

Two of the Russians we interviewed in Sapporo were undergoing training programs lasting several months, one in hotel management and the other in tourism. They said they were kept so busy that they had little time left to socialize outside of their business office--similar to our finding in Niigata. They were nevertheless very appreciative of the training opportunities in Sapporo and said they planned to use the skills and knowledge they were acquiring when they returned home to Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. The third Russian we interviewed in Sapporo, who is married to a city official, also indicated that her contacts outside the family were limited and that her husband was very busy with his job, limiting opportunities to socialize together with other Japanese. Her husband said he was going to be transferred to a small city away from Sapporo, possibly limiting her opportunities further.

We interviewed one Russian researcher and two Russian consular officers, including the consul general in Niigata. We offer the following brief observations from these interviews.

First, there was very little that the Russian residents did as a community. They preferred to lead a rather independent life in Niigata, coming together only when there were some official functions, such as those organized by the Consulate General.

Second, contact between Russians and Japanese outside of the work environment was limited. The Russian researcher we interviewed said his Japanese co-workers did not appear to be

interested in finding out about his personal interests. Nor, in his view, did they appear to be interested in socializing with him or his family. The same individual also noted that local Japanese assumed all Caucasians that they saw on the streets were Americans. Relating the experiences of other Russians in the city, he said that when Japanese locals discovered that they were Russian, they showed little interest in talking to them. Underneath the seeming lack of interest, we can reasonably speculate that a presumed language barrier (very few local Japanese speak English, much less Russian) is a major obstacle.

Third, according to our Russian interviewees, the local people in Niigata did not show any outward sign of discrimination against Russians, but in Higashi Port, where many Russian ships and sailors came in, local authorities tended to look at Russians with suspicion. Local storeowners were also less than friendly toward Russians. Some restaurants even displayed signs saying, "Russians are not welcome." Our interviewees, both Japanese and Russians, attributed these behaviors to the reports of thefts and other incidents allegedly involving Russians. The reluctance to engage Russian customers was not totally groundless because some Russian sailors had committed crimes, such as drug smuggling and petty thefts. However, local media reports on Russian sailors, cars, dealers, drunkenness, and thefts had a lasting impact on the local Japanese images of Russians.

Fourth, the number of Russian residents in Niigata had increased in recent years, particularly women who were married to Japanese men. Often these marriages were marriages of convenience. Through matrimony Russian men and women would be able to stay and work longer in Japan than they could if their spouses were not Japanese citizens.

Fifth, many Russian women felt isolated or rejected by their Japanese husbands because the husbands did not show much intimacy. When relationships soured, we were told, a typical Japanese man wanted to divorce his Russian wife, but the wife wanted to be separated not divorced, so she could remain in Japan. The husband was anxious to officially terminate the marriage so as not to have to bear the burden as legal guarantor for his Russian spouse. This comment echoed the observations offered by two Russian interviewees in Sapporo. When a child was born to a Japanese-Russian couple, typically the child adopted Japanese citizenship because there was no bilateral treaty allowing dual citizenship.

Sixth, many more Russian women than men were coming to Japan, and Niigata had become an important transit point for many of these Russians. We were told there was a public perception that many Russian women in Niigata were engaged in illegal or semi-illegal activities, including

prostitution. Currently there were nearly 100 officially documented Russian residents in the city, about one half of them married to Japanese locals. About 80 percent of those married to Japanese citizens were women.

A Survey of Russian Residents in Sapporo and Niigata[57]

In March 2003, we distributed a questionnaire to Russian residents in Sapporo and received 16 completed surveys from ten females, four males, and two who declined to indicate their gender. Eight respondents were in their 20s, three in their 30s, two in their 50s, and one was a 16-year-old female. Two subjects did not indicate their age. Our Sapporo sample included four university students, one technical institute student, and one secondary school student. Besides these students there was one Russian language instructor, two people working in nonprofit organizations, and two housewives. Two Sapporo residents had lived in Japan for more than a week but less than a month, four had lived in the country over one month but less than a year, two had lived over one year but less than two years, four had lived in Japan over three years, and two had lived over four years.

The survey in Niigata was conducted in August 2003. The sample included eight males, five females, and five individuals who did not indicate their gender. Nine respondents were in their 20s, three in their 30s, and one in his 50s. Five individuals did not indicate their age. Eight of the Niigata residents were university graduates, an additional five had done graduate studies, and five did not indicate their educational background. In terms of occupation, there were five students, three researchers, two teachers, one corporate manager, one engineer, and one government employee. Again, five others did not indicate their current occupation. One respondent had been in Niigata for less than a week, three had lived in Japan over one week but less than a month, five had lived there over one month but less than a year, two had lived in Japan over a year but less than two years, one person had lived two and a half years, four people had lived there between four and five years, one person had lived there for eight years, and another person had lived in Japan for ten years.

Here we summarize our findings from these two surveys.

First, most of our respondents (31 out of 34) in the two cities interacted with Japanese people at work or at school on a daily basis. The frequency of interaction with Japanese outside the work or school environment was somewhat less, but still 22 respondents socialized with Japanese on a daily basis. As we will point out below, these personal experiences proved to be the most important source of information the Russians would use to learn about Japan. Personal

experiences were also the most important basis upon which they formed their views of Japan and Japanese people.

Second, what impressions did our Russian residents in Sapporo and Niigata develop about the Japanese people they had met? At work or at school, the Japanese they had met impressed them as being hard-working, punctual, kind/sympathetic, well-meaning, and responsible. No particular trait left a significant number of the Russians with unfavorable impressions of Japanese. The Russians had equally favorable impressions of the Japanese they had met in social settings. The adjectives used most frequently were “happy”, “cheerful”, “kind”, “caring”, “hospitable”, “friendly”, and “affable”.

Third, how did the Russians rate their own knowledge of Japan and their Japanese language ability? Twenty-two respondents (65%) considered themselves somewhat knowledgeable about Japan, three (8.8%) very knowledgeable, and eight (24%) assessed their knowledge of Japan as inadequate. Seventeen Russians (50%) evaluated their Japanese language ability as good, three (8.8%) as excellent, and 8 (24%) as weak.

Fourth, as we noted above, the Russians in our samples rely on their own personal experience more than anything else for information on Japan. Twenty-four respondents (71%) in the two cities chose personal experience as the most important. TV and radio were the next most important source of information on Japan.

Fifth, one of the interesting questions was what kind of presence the Russians thought they and their fellow countrymen had in the communities in which they lived. Sixteen respondents (47%) thought the number of compatriots in Sapporo and Niigata had increased over the last two-three years. Only two respondents thought the number had declined. Official statistics introduced earlier vindicate their sense of growing Russian presence.

Sixth, what impact did the respondents think the Russian presence had in their communities? The respondents in the two cities were evenly divided between those who thought the Russian presence had a positive impact and those who thought it had little or no effect. It is noteworthy that four of the 18 respondents in Niigata (22%) thought the Russian presence had a negative impact. They cited the involvement of Russian criminal elements in the automobile industry (thefts and illegal exports to Russia of Japanese cars) and Russian sailors’ behavior that was culturally offensive to the local Japanese.

Our respondents in Sapporo offered a variety of views on the possible impact (or lack thereof) of the Russian presence on the local communities. On the positive side, one respondent

noted that Russian teachers were favorably affecting the way their students viewed Russia by teaching them about Russian culture, poetry, and other great achievements of their country. Another observed a general lack of understanding of Russia among the Japanese and stressed that Russian visitors and residents in Japan were increasing Japanese people's interest in Russian culture. A student stated that through personal, direct contact between Russians and Japanese mutual understanding was developing between them. On a neutral note, one respondent stated that if Russians came to Japan with good intentions, they could have a positive influence but that the Japanese people were very cautious. Echoing the same sentiment, another respondent stated that Japanese people did not pay much attention to the fact that there were actually foreigners living in their community. Another person observed that Sapporo had a population of 1.8 million people and the number of Russians in the city was too small to have a significant impact.

Most respondents in Niigata also explained their answers. In their view, they were engaged in intercultural communication and promoting mutual understanding between Russians and Japanese. They saw negative effects in the misconduct of some Russians, particularly law-breaking criminals and culturally misbehaving sailors. One person who saw little or no impact said the Russian presence was insignificant. Another said she had been in Japan only briefly and could not tell if there was any impact. A third respondent wrote, "Russians socialize with only a small number of Japanese primarily in Japanese and according to Japanese traditions. You are lucky if your conversation partners remember that you are not an American!" Explanations for positive impact were phrased thus: "The Russian community introduces Japanese to Russian customs, dances, songs, and cuisine." "The positive influence is connected to the active efforts of the city and prefectural administrations, along with student activity and sometimes with support from the [Russian] consulate. We are able to expand Japanese people's knowledge of Russia and Russians, and occasionally break down their stereotypes." On the negative effect, one person mentioned "the automobile business and the behavior of Russian sailors," referring to the involvement of criminal elements in the export of stolen Japanese cars and the culturally offensive behavior of Russians sailors in public, particularly strolling the streets of Niigata under the influence of alcohol or without a shirt. Another Russian complained, "Only in the districts where there are a lot of Russians is there a lot of trash and you need to lock your car."

Seventh, not surprisingly, most of our Russian respondents expressed friendly feelings toward Japan. Fourteen Russians in Sapporo and sixteen in Niigata said they felt friendly toward Japan and two Russians in each city said they felt somewhat friendly toward Japan. Not one

Russian resident in our two samples revealed negative feelings toward Japan. It is apparent that their life in Japan was a positive experience.

Eighth, the respondents' upbeat feelings toward Japan appear to spill over into their assessment of contemporary Russian-Japanese relations. Nineteen Russians (56%) in the two cities said bilateral relations were good. Only four respondents--all of them in Niigata--thought Russian-Japanese relations were either not so good or very bad. Ten respondents (29%) in the two cities said it was hard to say whether bilateral relations were good. The explanations the respondents gave for their assessments were quite revealing. Five residents in Sapporo acknowledged that the territorial dispute was a major obstacle to improved bilateral relations. However, four of them, as well as four others who did not mention the territorial problem, agreed that Russian-Japanese relations had improved in recent years. Three individuals attributed the improvement of relations to expanding people-to-people contact and two others referred to growing economic ties between the two countries.

Many comments offered by Russians in Niigata reflected a sense of frustration and resignation that the two countries were not genuinely interested in each other and therefore Russian-Japanese relations were rather superficial. One respondent noted "mutual caution and distrust on the official level, strict passport and visa control, and almost non-existent economic interest." He observed that both Russians and Japanese were poorly informed about each other, especially on the Japanese side. He added that the Northern Territories problem served Japan's interest in "covering up a lack of real interest." He also mentioned that cultural exchanges were one-sided and said, "They [the Japanese] pay, and we [the Russians] come." Another individual echoed the same sentiment and wrote, "The peace treaty will not be signed until the territorial issue is resolved. This won't happen in the near future. The Japanese have no particular interest in Russia and know nothing about it. The Russians, in turn, see Japan as a place to get rich." Other respondents also noted a lack of mutuality of interest between the two countries and wrote: "In my opinion, the Japanese government is in no hurry to invest money in the Russian market. Russia only offers cheap lumber of a low quality and imports used cars." "Relations are unsystematic. There is no clear nucleus for relations. The territorial issue interferes with cooperation. As a matter of fact, the mutual benefits from cooperation, as indicated on paper, are not obvious to the direct participants of relations at the basic level." Many Russian residents in Niigata recognized the Northern Territories issue as a serious impediment, whether psychologically or substantively, to the expansion of bilateral relations. Surprisingly, only one respondent mentioned a cultural-

psychological gap between Russians and Japanese as an obstacle in bilateral relations. He wrote, "There is a lot spoken and written about Russian-Japanese relations, but it's all stuck in a rut. I think that Russians and Japanese are so different psychologically that we cannot understand each other any more than we do now. Only if we were to have all Russians visit Japan and all Japanese visit Russia for at least two years." This does not mean others do not recognize problems. One person wrote, "On the cultural level, it's not so bad, but there are still a lot of problems."

Ninth, most Russians were aware of their communities' sister-city partnerships with Russian cities, Niigata with Khabarovsk and Vladivostok and Sapporo with Novosibirsk. Eleven of the 18 respondents in Niigata (61%) thought the sister-city ties with Khabarovsk and Vladivostok were having a positive impact on the overall relations between Russia and Japan and nine out of the 16 respondents in Sapporo (56%) said Sapporo's partnership with Novosibirsk was having a favorable effect on Russian-Japanese relations. Most of the respondents in Sapporo who knew about the Sapporo-Novosibirsk partnership could give only vague and general answers about how that partnership was positively influencing the overall relations between Russia and Japan. Only two of them could cite specific exchange activities between the two cities and their positive impact on the views of their citizens of each other. The Niigata residents generally agreed that sister-city ties, by providing opportunities for direct contacts and exchanges, helped increase interest and improve understanding between the citizens of the partner cities about each other, although some thought sister-city interactions were too limited to have a major impact on Russian-Japanese relations.

Tenth, how did our Russian respondents form their favorable views of Japan and Japanese people? The personal experience of living in Japan and interacting with Japanese people at work/school or in social settings were the most important source of influence on their views. Seventeen respondents (50%) in the two cities chose the personal experience of socializing with Japanese as the most important. Twelve Russians (35%) attributed their views of Japan and Japanese people to their experience working with Japanese or attending school with Japanese. Surprisingly, history lessons in education did not appear to be very important, although they were not totally irrelevant. Only three Russians in the two cities listed pre-university history classes as the most important influence on their views of Japan, no one put them in second place, and four respondents ranked them in third place. In comparison, mass media played a more prominent role in shaping their attitudes toward Japan. Although only one person ranked newspapers and TV as

the most important source of influence, five people rated them as the second most important and eleven respondents said they were the third most important.

At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to offer any comments they wished. All but three respondents in Sapporo shared a fairly elaborate description and an equally sophisticated understanding of the Japan they came to appreciate, or, in several cases, love and admire. Most of these individuals emphasized Japan's social and cultural traditions, particularly sympathetic and caring human relations, hard-working people, aesthetic and well-maintained infrastructure, and the quality services available to the ordinary citizens. Many of them also wrote admiringly about the modern economy and technology they came to appreciate. There were very few critical comments about Japanese society or people. Here are three exemplary comments:

> *Japan is a country that I fell in love with at first sight. Astonishing nature, the Japanese love for all wonderful things, traditional Japanese painting, "haiku" poetry, most beautiful mountains, parks, and kind and caring people--you can't list them all. I am very fond of the Japanese desire to lead a healthy lifestyle and their hard work, which is sometimes simply fanatical. As for negative things, I would note that the hierarchical system in which Japan is highly developed, the subordination of the younger to the older, etc., as well as the lack of freedom for women in comparison with European nations. However, every culture has its pluses and minuses, and the pluses in Japan are far greater.* (A 23-year-old female university student who has resided in Sapporo for a little over one month.)

> *Japan is a wonderful country with a rich culture and many traditions. You can find an object of wonder anywhere in the country, be it a cultural monument or just a corner of nature. And what brings out my admiration for the Japanese is the fact that they value beauty and are able to revel in it, without causing damage. Sure, there is the common opinion that the Japanese are a nation with a closed soul, but my personal experience, albeit limited, has shown the opposite. There are many people here with beautiful and kind souls, who are always ready to help.* (A 25-year-old female who is married to a Japanese citizen and has lived in Japan for about three years.)

> *Japan is a highly developed country where they have been able to preserve Japanese culture and traditions, having introduced cutting-edge technology and economic relations, which are not possible without the introduction of American-European culture. Japanese*

cities are very pretty and clean. The Japanese are very polite and well-wishing people. I have not encountered any negative attitudes directed at myself. At the same time, the Japanese almost never speak directly about things that are unpleasant to another person. And as a result, it is difficult for Russians to adjust their behavior. (A 50-year-old female who describes herself as a "low-skilled worker" and has lived in Japan for about three years.)

Fourteen Russians in Niigata offered open comments. One theme ran through their comments--the formality and superficiality of human relations as they saw them. Eight Niigata respondents wrote that they were experiencing a sense of estrangement and distance from Japanese people. Most of them blamed it on the excessively busy lifestyle, overwhelmingly rigid social rules, and frustratingly formal interpersonal relations that they observed and experienced in Japan. As a result, they said there was little or no time or space to relax and enjoy human contact. Another two respondents in Niigata thought the Japanese were always conscious of the foreign appearance of the Russians they were interacting with and that awareness created an unbridgeable distance between Russians (and other foreigners) and Japanese. By being "polite" and "correct", three other individuals pointed out, Japanese people could not enjoy genuine openness in human relations. The same rules, they observed, stifled Japanese people's creativity and spontaneity. One respondent blamed this fact on the Japanese educational system, which "only wears out children and teenagers, without developing creativity or independence at all." The same individual wrote, "All this leads to the fact that people, because of 'being busy,' don't have time to socialize, they can't form trusting and sincere relationships, and they lose contact even within the family." Another Russian agreed and wrote, "It is very difficult to find sincere people among the Japanese with whom you can be friends. Most Japanese are concerned with social rank, rules, and behavioral norms. They have very few opportunities to express themselves."

In summary what can we say about the views of Russian residents in Sapporo and Niigata? There was surprisingly little difference between the samples from the two cities. The Russian residents' overall assessment of their experience living in Sapporo and Niigata was positive. In contrast to the Japanese who relied heavily on mass media for information about Russia and Russians, the Russian residents used their personal experience to learn about Japan and to form views on Japan and Japanese people. Therefore, it is doubly significant that the Russians' views on Japan and Japanese were quite favorable. In the Russians' views, Japanese people were

diligent, disciplined, and responsible workers and friendly, kind, and sympathetic people. They liked these characteristics of the Japanese.

We were also surprised to find that our samples show a very limited impact of formal education, namely pre-college history classes, in shaping the attitudes of Russians toward Japan.

Some issues were of concern to our Russian residents in Sapporo and Niigata. First, many Russians were not satisfied with the nature of human relations they are experiencing in Japan. While they appreciated the kind, sympathetic, and welcoming attitudes of their Japanese co-workers, classmates, and social acquaintances, they felt the human interaction they were experiencing was rather superficial, formal, and guided by rigid social rules and cultural traditions. They wanted their Japanese colleagues and friends to be more forthcoming, more engaging, and more open with them. Second, there was recognition among some Russians in Sapporo and Niigata that the relations between Russia and Japan were not what they could be. They attributed the less than fully developed bilateral relations to the territorial dispute and, more importantly, to the lack of Japanese interest in Russia and the lack of mutuality of economic interests between the two countries. Third, the negative impressions some of their fellow countrymen were leaving among the local Japanese were troubling to them. Of particular concern was the involvement of some Russian criminal elements in automotive trade and Russian sailors' culturally insensitive behavior, both of which were often reported in the local media.

Conclusion

We see little evidence of impact of local developments involving Russian visitors and residents in Hokkaido and Niigata on the overall relations between Japan and Russia. On local and regional levels, however, our study shows that the growing Russian presence is having an important impact on the members of some host communities with respect to their views of Russia and Russians.

In some areas, local demands for greater interaction between Japan and Russia have eased state control over mutual visits between Russian and Japanese citizens. In Hokkaido, the territorial dispute is a focal point in some Japanese efforts to change the nature of Japanese-Russian relations, and the regime of reciprocal visa-free visits is the most visible result of such efforts. The development of special arrangements for Japanese access to fishery resources in Russian waters is another example of local efforts to engage Russia. In both cases, the approval of national governments was required. It is also true, however, that the inability of the Japanese and Russian

governments to resolve their territorial dispute continues to constrain the regional contact, denying local communities on both sides potentially substantial benefits of expanded economic exchange between Hokkaido and the Russian Far East.

The cases of Hokkaido and Niigata indicate that Japanese people's views of Russia can change significantly as a result of growing encounters with Russian visitors and residents in their communities. The direction of change is not uniform. On the one hand, those who are predisposed toward international and intercultural experiences generally will seek out opportunities to meet Russians and they are likely to develop more differentiated and more balanced views of Russians. On the other hand, those with little or no interest in Russia and no direct contact with Russians are unlikely to change their views of Russia. On the contrary, since they tend to have negative images of Russia and Russians to start with, their unfavorable impressions are bound to solidify when they see or hear media reports on illegal activities or culturally offensive behaviors on the part of Russians in Japan. Such prospect is almost ensured by the tendency of mass media to depict Russians in a negative light even if ill-behaved Russians are but a small part of the Russian presence in the local communities.

What opportunities and problems do the Russians in Hokkaido and Niigata present to the members of the host communities? Opportunities for social interaction and cultural exchange abound. Unfortunately, however, the general public appears unimpressed by such opportunities. Even among those who have opportunities to interact with Russian visitors and residents in their communities, their interaction remains rather formal and superficial in many cases.

Potential business opportunities have captured the imagination of government and business leaders in Hokkaido and Niigata. The role of the Russian Far East in the economic development of Hokkaido and Niigata is likely to grow, and with it, transnational business ties are bound to expand, albeit in a nonlinear fashion. Among the small but growing circles of Japanese citizens, there is a sense that the Russian Far East is their neighbor and that economic ties between their regions will be important to their own future prosperity. The sense of urgency in developing such ties varies from community to community--quite strong in Wakkanai and Nemuro, somewhat strong in Otaru and Niigata, and moderate in Sapporo.

What is the nature of the Russians' experience in living in Japan? Our study shows that their experience has been somewhat mixed. Some of them are frustrated by the quality of interaction they have had with the Japanese locals, feeling a cultural and social distance. Whether imagined or real, the distance is likely to remain unless the local Japanese fully embrace the

Russians in their midst as true neighbors. The perceived cultural divide is a major obstacle. Unfortunately, the negative media coverage of short-term Russian visitors in Hokkaido and Niigata will continue to limit the level of local Japanese interest in their Russian neighbors. On the other hand, many Russians in Sapporo maintain their admiration of and interest in Japanese society and culture, finding the opportunity to live in Japan as rewarding and enriching.

Are there serious ethnic, cultural, or social problems facing the Russians residing in or visiting Japan? Our study suggests that the problems that the Russian visitors and residents are experiencing in Hokkaido and Niigata are primarily of a cultural nature. Although there are social distances some Russians feel from their local community members, they cannot be described as serious problems. With the exception of some thefts and burglaries, as well as a few cases of personal injuries and deaths involving Russians in Hokkaido and Niigata, there are no issues that rise to the level of human security threats to either the Russians or the local Japanese.

In order to prevent the escalation of cultural frictions and social distances into ethnic, social, or political problems that could threat human security, it is important that the local communities work on enhancing the positive impact of the Russian presence in their midst and to limit the negative impact. How can this be accomplished?

Public education efforts are in order. Clearly, a more balanced view of Russia and Russians must be cultivated on the part of local community members. As our study has shown, the best way to achieve this goal is to increase the amount of interaction between Russians and Japanese. Our study has also shown the important role that local media play in the formation of local citizens' views of Russia and Russians. One suggestion would be for public agencies and nongovernmental groups to form an alliance with educational institutions in addressing the problems that both the Russians and the host community members face in their interaction, including those incidents which lead to media reports. Their efforts may include workshops, training programs, and other educational opportunities for Russian visitors, Russian residents, and the local Japanese.

Another area that requires close attention is mass media in Japan, which contribute to the formation and reinforcement of negative views of Russians in the country. This tendency is not limited to Russians; in fact other ethnic minorities are more often the subjects of sensationalist media reports.[58] However, given the Japanese people's heavy reliance on news media for information on Russia and Russian-Japanese relations and the media's influence on their views of

Russia and Russians, how Japanese mass media select and interpret events should be closely monitored.

For most Japanese people, initial introductions to Russia take place within the context of public education, particularly through public school textbooks and classroom discussions. Even a cursory review of Japanese middle and high school history textbooks reveals a fairly uniform, simple, and limited treatment of the history of Japanese-Russian relations, including the origins of the dispute over the Northern Territories. It is reasonable to assume that through formal education most Japanese youths develop a fairly standardized understanding of the territorial dispute supporting the Japanese government's position that the Soviet/Russian occupation of the islands is illegal and unjust. How Japanese youths development their views of Russia and Russians through formal classroom instruction, including but not limited to the territorial issue, deserves careful study.

Notes

[1] This paper has gone through several revisions. The first version was presented at the international seminar on "Human Flows across National Borders in Northeast Asia," held at the United Nations University, Tokyo, November 20-21, 2002 and was included in Tsuneo Akaha ed., with the assistance of Anna Vassilieva and Shizu Naruse, Human Flows across National Borders in Northeast Asia: Seminar Proceedings, United Nations University, Tokyo, Japan, November 20-21, 2002, the Center for East Asian Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, Monterey, California, January 31, 2003 . A slightly revised version of the paper will be published in Japanese Society Journal in 2003. A further revised version was presented at the annual conference of Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast, East-West Center, Honolulu, June 19-22, 2003. We thank all colleagues who have commented on these earlier versions and welcome additional comments on the present paper.

[2] The first opening of Japan was the Meiji Restoration and the second opening was the U.S. occupation of the country following the defeat in the Second World War.

[3] Japanese nationals traveling overseas outnumber foreigners entering Japan by a large margin. In 2002, for example, 16,522,804 Japanese went overseas and 5,771,975 foreign nationals entered Japan—a ratio of roughly 3.5 to 1. These statistics are taken from Japan Immigration Association, Statistics on Immigration Control 2002, Tokyo: Japan Immigration Association, 2003, p. 6.

[4] Wayne A. Cornelius, "Japan: The Illusion of Immigration Control," in Wayne A. Cornelius, Philip L. Martin, and James F. Hollified, eds., Controlling Immigration: A Global Perspective, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994, p. 387.

[5] Hidenori Sakanaka, "21-seiki no Gaikokujin Seisaku: Jinkogensho Jidai no Nihon no Sentaku to Shutsunyukoku Kanri" (Policy toward foreigners in the 21st century: Alternatives for Japan and immigration control in the age of population decline), Sakanaka, Nihon no Gaikokujin Seisaku no Koso (A plan for Japanese policy toward foreigners), Tokyo: Nihon Kajo Shuppan, 2001, pp. 3-21. See also Yuzuki Kaku, "Musubi: Nihongata Moderu no Mosaku_Doshitsusei Shinwa to Minzokukokka Tetsugaku wo Hokisuru Toki" (Conclusion: Exploration of a Japanese model_time to abandon the myth of homogeneity and nation-state philosophy), in Kaku, Uchinaru Mono to Sotonaru Mono wo: Tabunka Jidai no Nihon Shakai (What comes from inside and what comes from outside: Japanese society in the age of multiculturalism), Tokyo: Nihonkeizai Hyoronsha, 2001, pp. 163-201.

[6] Demetrios G. Papademetriou and Kimberly A. Hamilton, Reinventing Japan: Immigration's Role in Shaping Japan's Future, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000, pp. 46-51.

[7] Asahi Shimbun electronic version at http://www.asahi.com/national/update/0412/018.html (accessed April 12, 2003).

[8] For a cogent analysis of the sakoku mentality of contemporary Japan, see Mayumi Itoh, Globalization of Japan: Japanese *Sakoku* Mentality and U.S. Efforts to Open Japan, New York: St. Martin's, 1998. For a comprehensive study of Nihonjinron and its role in reproducing nationalism in postwar Japan, see Harumi Befu, Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of "Nihonjinron", Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2001.

[9] Akaha's correspondence with Professor Takashi Murakami, Director (at the time of correspondence), Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, September 2001.

[10] There are a few recent publications that include studies of the presence of Russians in Japan, but they are mostly concerned about pre-war periods. Examples include: Mitsuo Naganawa, Nikoraido no Hitobito: Nihon Kindaishi no Naka no Roshia Seikyokai (People in the Nikolai cathedral: the Russian Orthodox Church in Japan's modern history), Tokyo: Gendai Kikakushitsu, 1999; Mitsuo Naganawa and Katsuhiko Sawada,

eds., Ikyo ni Ikiru: Rainichi Roshiyajin no Ashiato (Life in a foreign country: Footprints of Russians in Japan), Tokyo: Seibunsha, 2001; J. Thomas Rimer, ed., A Hidden Fire: Russian and Japanese Cultural Encounters, 1868-1926, Stanford, CA: Stanford University and Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 1995, pp. 1-14; and Haruki Wada, Hopporyodo Mondai: Rekishi to Mirai (The northern territories problem: history and the future), Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1999.

[11] See, for example, Atsushi Kondo, "The Development of Immigration Policy in Japan," Asian and Pacific Migration Journal, vol. 11, no. 4 (2002), pp. 415-436; Sakanaka, Nihon no Gaikokujin Seisaku no Koso; Papademetriou and Hamilton, Reinventing Japan; Bartram, "Japan and Labor Migration"; and Vera Mackie, ed., Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity, London: Routledge, 1997.

[12] For example, a 2001 book authored by a high-ranking Japanese immigration official concerning legal and policy challenges presented by the growing foreign population in Japan failed to mention Russian migrants even once (Sakanaka Nihon no Gaikokujin Seisaku no Koso). Similarly, a 2000 analysis of immigration's role in changing Japanese society and economy does not mention Russians in the country at all (Papademetriou and Hamilton, Reinventing Japan). Several recent studies of international migration in Japan do not cite one study dealing with Russians. See, for example, Hiroshi Komai, ed., Kokusaika no Naka no Imin Seisaku no Kadai (Immigration policy issues amidst internationalization), Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2002; Katherine Tegtmeyer Pak, "Towards Local Citizenship: Japanese Cities Respond to International Migration," The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, Working Paper No. 30, University of California-San Diego, La Jolla, California, January 2001; David Bartram, "Japan and Labor Migration: Theoretical and Methodological Implications," The International Migration Review, Spring 2000, pp. 5-32; and Vera Mackie, ed., Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity, London: Routledge, 1997.

[13] For insightful essays on the impact of cultural encounters between Russia and Japan on the development of Japanese national identity, see Marius B. Jansen, "On Foreign Borrowing," in Albert M. Craig, ed., Japan: A Comparative View, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979, pp. 18-48; J. Thomas Rimer, ed., A Hidden Fire: Russian and Japanese Cultural Encounters, 1868-1926, Stanford: Stanford University Press and Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 1995; David Wells and Sandra Wilson, ed., The Russo-Japanese War in Cultural Perspective, 1904-05, New York: St. Martin's, 1999; Tadashi Anno, "Nihonjinron and Russkaia Ideia: Transformation of Japanese and Russian Nationalism in the Postwar Era and Beyond," in Gilbert Rozman, ed., Japan and Russia: The Tortuous Path to Normalization, 1949-1999, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000, pp. 329-356; and Yulia Mikhailova, "Japan and Russia: Mutual Images, 1904-05," in Bert Edstrom, ed., The Japanese and Europe: Images and Perceptions, Richmond Surrey, UK: Japan Library (Curzon Press), pp. 10-171.

[14] See, for example, Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, The Northern Territories Dispute and Russo-Japanese Relations, 2 volumes, Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1998.

[15] There are numerous studies on the territorial dispute. For an excellent study highlighting the symbolic and emotional dimension of the conflict, see Masao Kimura and David A. Walsh, "Specifying 'Interests': Japan's Claim to the Northern Territories and Its Implications for International Relations Theory," International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 42, No. 2 (1998), pp. 213-244.

[16] The expression "distant neighbors" is from Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, Jonathan Haslam, and Andrew C. Kuchins, eds., Russia and Japan: An Unresolved Dilemma between Distant Neighbors, Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1993, and Hiroshi Kimura, Distant Neighbors, 2 volumes, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000.

[17] For example, a 2001 opinion survey conducted by the Japanese Cabinet Office (Naikakufu) revealed that 76.7 percent of the Japanese polled did not feel friendly toward Russia, as compared with 17.9 percent who felt friendly. This contrasts sharply with the high level of Japanese affinity toward the United States (76.5 percent feeling friendly as against 19.9 percent feeling no affinity). (Naikakufu Daijinkanbo Seifukohoshitsu, ed., Gekkan Seronchosa_Gaiko [Monthly public opinion__diplomacy], Tokyo: Zaimusho Insatsukyoku, 2002. See also Hasegawa, The Northern Territories Dispute and Russo-Japanese Relations.

[18] A 2001 survey in Russia showed that 45 percent of those polled said they liked Japan and another 24 percent stated they had both likes and dislikes about Japan, with only 2 percent indicating they disliked Japan (Foreign Ministry, Roshia ni okeru Tainichi Seron Chosa" [Public opinion survey in Russia regarding Japan], August 2, 2001, Foreign Ministry's website: http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/russia/chosa02/index.html).

[19] US citizens entering Japan in 2002 numbered 755,196 and were the third largest group, representing 13.1% of the total number of foreign nationals entering Japan. These statistics are from Judicial System Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, ed., Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants, Tokyo: Kokuritsu Insatsukyoku, 2003, p. v.

[20] The immigration law defines "entertainment" as "activities related to entertainment such as theater, variety entertainment, music performance, and sports." (Sakanaka, p. 264.)

[21] These statistics are from Judicial System Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, ed., Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants, Tokyo: Kokuritsu Insatsukyoku, 2003, pp. 52 and 54.

[22] In comparison, as many as 5,775 Koreans (both North and South) and 5,244 Chinese were officially registered in Hokkaido, and 2,519 Koreans and4,108 Chinese were in Niigata Prefecture in 2002. (Judicial System Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, ed., Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants, 2003, Tokyo: Kokuritsu Insatsukyoku, 2003, pp. 164-165).

[23] These numbers compare with 1,000 Koreans and 1,042 Chinese living in Niigata and 2,710 Koreans (both North and South) and 2,332 Chinese registered in Sapporo. City administrators of Niigata and Sapporo supplied the information.

[24] Judicial System Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, ed., Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants, 2003, Tokyo: Kokuritsu Insatsukyoku, Tokyo, 2003, pp. 164-, 167, and 172.

[25] Hokkaido Prefecture administrators supplied the information. "Special permits" are issued to ferry passengers and crew members who wish to come ashore while their ships are calling in Japanese ports, those who use these ports as transit points, those requiring emergency landing, and others rescued by Japanese coastal authorities.

[26] Hokkaido Prefecture administrators provided the information. Hakodate has regularly scheduled services to Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.

[27] Judicial System Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, ed., Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants, 2002, Tokyo: Zaimusho Insatsukyoku, 2002, p. 7.

[28] Wakkanai City officials provided the information.

[29] Otaru City officials supplied the information.

[30] The most important ports were Wakkanai, Hanasaki, Otaru, and Monbetsu, which received, respectively, 3,691, 1,766, 1,223, and 1,073 Russian ships in 1999. These statistics were provided by the Hokkaido Governor's Office. For the following description of the relationship between Hokkaido and the Russian Far East, we have relied heavily on interviews with officials in the Hokkaido Governor's Office in Sapporo on July 4, 2001 and on Hokkaido, Hokkaido to Roshia Kyokuto: Koryu Jisseki to Roshia Kyokuto no Gaiyo (Hokkaido and the Russian Far East: a record of exchange and outline of the Russian Far East), Sapporo: Hokkaido, 2001.

[31] Shinichi Suzuki, "Nemuro to Tai-Roshia Koryu: Jimoto Minkan Kigyo no Kokoromi" (Nemuro and its interaction with Russia: The efforts of local private enterprises), Charivari, No. 223 (September 2000), p. 33.

[32] The estimate for Monbetsu was made in 2000 and the one for Wakkanai was in 1997. Hokkaido Shimbun, June 1, 2000, p. 22 and January 19, 2000, p. 10.

[33] Shinichi Suzuki, "Nemuro to Tai-Roshia Koryu: Jimoto Minkan Kigyo no Kokoromi" (Nemuro and its interaction with Russia: The efforts of local private enterprises), Charivari, No. 223 (September 2000), pp. 34-35.

[34] Akaha interview with representatives of the Hokkaido Fisheries Association, Sapporo, July 5, 2001.

[35] See the section on interviews in Hokkaido below.

[36] The larger foreign groups in Niigata included 4,108 Chinese, 2,545 Filipinos, 2,519 Koreans (both North and South), 1,283 Brazilians,425 Indonesians, 342 US citizens, and 323 Thais. (Judicial System Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, ed., Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants, 2003, Tokyo: Kokuritsu Insatsukyoku, Tokyo, 2003, pp. 164-166, and 172.)

[37] Niigataken Niigata Kowan Jimusho, Heisei 13-nen, Niigatako Tokei Nenpo (Annual report on Niigata port statistics, 2001), Niigata: Niigataken Niigata Kowan Jimusho, 2002, pp. 32, 34, and 36.

[38] Niigata City officials supplied the information on Niigata Airport.

[39] See, for example, Masao Ichioka, Jichitai Gaiko: Niigata no Jissen-Yuko kara Kyoryoku e (Local autonomous bodies' diplomacy: From practice-friendship to cooperation in Niigata), Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyoronsha, 2000.

[40] All but three Japanese-Russian parings involving Hokkaido municipalities came in the 1970s (four of them) and the 1990s (11). The three exceptions are the sister-city partnerships between Otaru and Nakhodka, Asahikawa and Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk (1967), and Wakkanai and Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk (2001).

[41] Niigataken Kokusaikoryuka, Heisei 14-nendo Kokusai Koryu Gaiyo, pp. 97-98.

[42] See Tsuneo Akaha, "Despite the Northern Territories: Hokkaido's Courting of the Russian Far East," Pacific Focus, vol. 18, no. 1 (Spring 2003), pp. 89-122.

[43] For an account of Niigata's experience in international exchange and cooperation, including in the Russian Far East, see Masao Ichioka, Jichitai Gaiko: Niigata no Jissen-Yuko kara Kyoryoku e (Local autonomous bodies' diplomacy: From practice-friendship to cooperation in Niigata), Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyoronsha, 2000.

[44] See Akaha, "Despite the Northern Territories."

[45] Of the 4,724 Japanese participants in this program, 3,069 were from Hokkaido, indicating the particular importance this regime represents to the prefecture. Hokkaido Somubu Chijishitsu Kokusaika Roshiashitsu, Hokkaido to Roshia Kyokuto: Koryu Jisseki to Roshia Kyokuto no Gaiyo (Hokkaido and the Russian Far East: a record of exchange and outline of the Russian Far East), Sapporo: Hokkaido Somubu Chijishitsu Kokusaika Roshiashitsu, 2002, p. 40.

[46] For analyses about the Sakhalin offshore development and its environmental implications for Hokkaido, see Takashi Murakami, eds., Saharin Tairikudana Sekiyu-Gasu Kaihatsu to Kankyo Hozen (Sakhalin offshore oil and gas development and environmental protection), Sapporo: Hokkaido Daigaku Toshokankokai, 2003.

[47] In 2000, Niigata's trade with Russia as a whole represented only 0.1 percent of its international export and 1.8 percent of its import. In the same year, there were only two Niigata-based companies with a presence in Russia. (Niigataken Kokusaikoryuka, Heisei 14-nendo, Kokusaikoryu Gaiyo, pp. 15-19 and 27-31.)

[48] For a full report on the interviews and surveys, see Tsuneo Akaha and Anna Vassilieva, "Russian Migrants in Niigata and Hokkaido: A Research Update," in Tsuneo Akaha, ed., Human Flows across National Borders in Northeast Asia, Seminar Proceedings, United Nations University, Tokyo, Japan, November 20-21, 2002, Monterey, CA: Center for East Asian Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, January 31, 2003, pp. 71-95.

[49] Governor Hori was born in Sakhalin and spent the first six years of his life there. He left the governor's position when his last term expired in 2003.

[50] Naikakufu Daijinkanbo Seifu Kohoshitsu, ed., Seron Chosa, April 2003, Tokyo: Zaimusho Insatsukyoku, 2003, p. 11.

[51] According to an opinion survey by the Japanese Cabinet Office in 2002, 29.0 percent of those surveyed thought that the bilateral relations were good and 58.1 percent said they were bad.

[52] This information was supplied by the Wakkanai city administration.

[53] This information was also supplied by the Wakkanai city administration.

[54] Nemuro, Nemuro: 2003 Shisei Yoran (Nemuro: survey of the city, 2003), Nemuro: City of Nemuro, 2003, p. 2.

[55] Ibid., p. 3.

[56] Nemuro, Hopporyodo Henkan wo Misueta Nemuro Bijon: Hokokusho (Nemuro vision with a view to the return of the Northern Territories: report), Nemuro: City of Nemuro, 2003, pp. 1-5.

[57] We thank the Russian residents of Sapporo and Niigata who took the time to complete the questionnaire for this survey, the administrators of the Hokkaido Governors' Office who helped us distribute and collect the questionnaire, and the staff of the Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia (ERINA) in Niigata for their assistance in the administration of the survey in Niigata. We also thank Richard Sedgwick, a graduate student assistant in the Center for East Asian Studies, who administered the survey in Niigata while he was an intern with ERINA.

[58] See, for example, Yoshimi Nagamine, "Masu Media no Doko" (Developments in mass media), in Hiroshi Komai, ed., Kokusaika no Naka no Iminseisaku no Kadai (Immigration policy issues amidst internationalization), Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2002, pp. 319-347.