



WHAT'S MORE

- Junichiro collaborated with the Rainbow Hakodate Project on the installment of an inclusive LGBTQIA+ public event "Walk the Rainbow Together: Show Your True Colors" with students at HUE
- Junichiro is on the Planning Committees for the Japan Association for Migration Policy Studies, and is a board member of the Japanese Association for Canadian Studies and a planning committee member of the Association japonaises des études québécoises.
- Junichiro wants to continue to pursue research that can empower people in both geographic and social spaces

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**BRANDON
UNIVERSITY**

Highlighting Rural Researchers

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Dr. Junichiro Koji

**Department of International
and Regional Studies**

GETTING TO KNOW DR. JUNICHIRO KOJI

Dr. Junichiro Koji is an Associate Professor at the Hokkaido University of Education in Hakodate, Japan. Throughout his life, Junichiro has always been interested in politics. He believes that in order to create a world where people from various backgrounds can live together peacefully, we have a responsibility to understand politics and ensure policies are made by means of inclusivity and being well-informed.

Junichiro is not from a rural town. However, his interest in rural and regional development derived from the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011. Once Junichiro saw the amount of people within the affected areas standing together and rebuild their communities, he became inspired, and wanted to utilize his political science and Canadian background to accompany Japan's regional and rural development.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND INTERESTS

Junichiro currently holds four degrees from Waseda University (Japan), McGill University (Canada) and the University of Ottawa (Canada), specializing in political science and Canadian studies. During his doctoral research the concept of "self-realization" became a prominent point of discussion and interest. Self-realization is fundamentally the fulfilment of self-potential. The ability to flourish. However, in order to achieve self-realization, individuals require capacity and some amount of power. For those who hold marginalized spaces within society, self-realization is not achievable.

Through his international experiences, he noticed that within Japan, youth, women, immigrants, people with disability and members of the LGBTQIA+ community are primarily the people excluded from roles of power. For example, while youth voice their insights, these perspectives are often overlooked and/ or ignored. As well, for the LGBTQIA+ communities, significant social barriers result in discrimination, repression, and neglect.



Why Equity, Diversity and Inclusion? It comes down to citizenship.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These projects were made possible by:



Without positive representation, these barriers will continue to divide society and marginalize citizens. Junichiro is a devoted advocate for equity, diversity and inclusion – prioritizing thorough representation as the first priority in all work.

With regards to community-based work, Junichiro is motivated to implement horizontal governance, where actors come together to create change within societies. He noted that there are always active citizens with strong local identity who want to control their own destinies, and engage in community development work themselves.

ONGOING RESEARCH AND CURRENT PROJECTS

Junichiro is currently collaborating on three community-based projects in Hokkaido. As well, with funding from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), Junichiro is engaging in research to explore how the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) has contributed to enhancing participating communities' capacity to attract and retain newcomers.

The RNIP program aims to build welcoming communities for immigrants in rural Canada, and ensure that newcomers are able to find and achieve employment opportunities. Though each rural community is unique, by exploring the processes and outcomes of RNIP in Canada, Junichiro wants to share how integration strategies could be used in Japan to address the barriers for both newcomers, and those living rurally and remotely by means of economics. These findings may be useful to inform policy design, and expand economic development for newcomers within Japan.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Junichiro Koji has jokingly described himself as an “idealist,” but his approaches to research and motivation to instill an inclusive, peaceful existence within and between communities has resulted in positive social impact throughout various arenas. The students, faculty and staff at Brandon University were incredibly grateful for the opportunities to learn and engage during his campus visit this fall; we are all excited to learn more about the developments from his current work moving forward.



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The Rural Development Institute is grateful to be affiliated with a variety of communities, agencies, academics and students across Canada and beyond. These relationships have facilitated the development of unique networks allowing for collaborative projects to take form, and RDI wants to extend its appreciation to all rural researchers.