

Review Essay

**Fictionalized “Violence and Criminality” Theory:
The Truth of Buraku Measures Program “Subsidies”**

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Ramseyer, J. and Rasmusen, E. (2018). Outcaste Politics and Organized Crime in Japan: The Effect of Terminating Ethnic Subsidies. *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, 15(1), 192-238. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jels.12177>

Ramseyer, J. (2019). On the Invention of Identity Politics: The Buraku Outcastes in Japan. *Review & Law Economics*, 16(2), 1-95. <https://doi.org/10.1515/rle-2019-0021>

The above two articles depict Buraku people – who work hard every day to seek happiness as human beings and lead honest and decent lives – as violent people and criminals who engage in extortion and racketeering. The articles apply this depiction of whether people are involved with the Buraku Liberation League or not, and without any proper academic explanation. The articles are defamatory of this author’s friends in the Buraku community and are utterly unforgivable. Unless they are researchers, Buraku people cannot write articles in their defense. However, they have read the articles, have clearly understood the contents, and are hurt, deeply saddened, and outraged that their honest and law-abiding ways of life have been so denigrated. Publishing these articles meant spreading misinformation to the world that the Buraku people are violent and criminal, and the problems caused by these articles go beyond the realm of academia. As well as the authors, the editorial board of the journal cannot escape responsibility. How will they be held accountable for the grief and anger they have caused to the Buraku people?

Before condemning the "violent nature" of the two articles, this article will first provide an academic criticism of those articles and demonstrate their lack of scientific grounding.

When quoting from the above articles, this article will refer to them collectively as “the Articles,” (with a capital “A”), using only the page numbers in parentheses, and to Ramseyer and Rasmusen as the Author(s). Words in round brackets in quotation marks have been added by the author of this article for clarity.

1. Introduction

This article is a criticism of the above two Articles. The Articles have two major deficiencies as academic works. The first deficiency is that the Articles use the words of “the economics of social behavior” (4) such as “opportunity cost,” “investment,” and “incentives,” applying “Gary Becker’s general models of human capital and crime” (77). In doing so, the Articles assume the discriminated-against Burakumin (hereafter “Burakumin”) in Japan to be violent and criminal people, creating serious problems in terms of both theory and academic ethics. The second deficiency is that, as they attempt to substantiate their theories, the Articles do not carry out any critical evaluation (such as who wrote or narrated them, and for what purpose) of documentary materials (such as government documents, literature, or individual testimonies) related to Buraku issues. By ignoring the intention or context of discourse, making arbitrary interpretations, making matters worse by creating spurious “facts,” and by making arguments based only on relative differences in data values, the Articles do not provide any insights at all about the actual situation of the discriminated-against Buraku communities (hereafter “Buraku”) in Japan.

Based on the concern that such Articles could be published in academic journals and that such inaccurate information about Buraku and Burakumin could spread through academia worldwide, this article has been written to prevent its further spread. The author of this article is an independent scholar conducting sociological research affiliated with the *Institute of Social Theory and Dynamics*, based in Hiroshima, Japan, also working in collaboration with the Buraku Liberation League (BLL). The author has also never agreed with expressions such as the “BLL-oriented scholars” (70), which denigrate the independence and critical stance of both the BLL and the researchers.

The Articles address various issues regarding Burakumin, including their history from the Edo era (1603-1867) to the present day, the current situation regarding population, poverty, and organizations (the National Levellers’ Association and BLL), and Buraku liberation movements. All their topics of discussion are geared toward validating their theory that “Burakumin are criminals,” but their assertions contain many points demanding criticism. The most important theme which all of those points ultimately relate to is what this article calls “Violence and Criminality” Theory, or VCT. The criticism of that theory will be the focus of this article.

The article published in the *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* focuses its arguments on the BLL, subsidies, crime syndicates, and crime, whereas the article in the *Review of Law & Economics* makes arguments about VCT in the context of the broader history and current

state of Buraku issues. However, the two Articles have been written with the same objectives, topics, and methods, and also make the same assertions. “This article (2019, added) builds on Ramseyer and Rasmusen (2018)” (4). Thus, this article will criticize the two Articles together. Notably, while such criticism would typically provide documentary materials and data to support its assessments, this article will not do so (except for selected materials). As a review article, this article will instead focus exclusively on elaborating the logic of criticism.

2. Outline of the Articles

The Articles assert the following. “We do not contest the multidimensional approaches taken in these studies nor dismiss the humanitarian instincts of many BLL leaders” (202). However, these are nothing but empty epithets, because the Articles do not hold to their own words. The Articles do not pay heed to any prior research, nor do they respect the humanitarian motives of the BLL leaders. The Articles label leading Japanese and Western researchers with whom they disagree as “crude goyō-gakusha (‘at-your-service scholars,’ added)” (6) and “BLL-oriented scholars” (70), excluding them from consideration as the academic argument. Ironically, the Articles rely on the assertions of “BLL-oriented scholars” in several places.

The main topic of the Articles – what this article calls “Violence and Criminality” Theory – can be summarized as follows. “In 1969, Japan launched a massive subsidy program for the ‘burakumin’ outcastes. The subsidies attracted the mob, and the higher incomes now available through organized crime attracted many burakumin. Thus, the subsidies gave new support to the tendency many Japanese already had to equate the burakumin with the mob” (192). “Organized crime is primarily a buraku phenomenon, and the ties between the BLL and the mob run deep” (10). The BLL invented a fictional identity as the “discriminated-against and oppressed Burakumin,” and lobbied the government for a subsidy program, the Buraku Measures Program (BMP). Once the program was implemented, crime syndicates were attracted to the subsidies and obtained massive amounts of money from them. Many BLL leaders became members of syndicates, and young burakumin left school to join the syndicates. “The now higher criminal pressure (and lower buraku educational achievements) induced the government to raise transfer levels even higher, and so it went. An unholy spiral ensued” (3). Due to this trend, antipathy and hostility toward Burakumin from the general public (non-Burakumin) increased. However, once the subsidies were discontinued in 2002, the potential profit to crime syndicates disappeared, and very few Burakumin joined the syndicates after that time. Young people left areas where Burakumin lived and returned to school, leading to outward migration, particularly from the larger Buraku areas. As a result, antipathy and hostility from non-Burakumin decreased, and in fact, they came to realize that

Buraku areas were attractive places to live. This led to higher real estate values, particularly in the larger Buraku areas.

Through its discussion of various issues related to the BMP subsidies implementation and discontinuation, the Articles create the assumption that Burakumin are “violent and criminal” people. This article focuses its criticism on the central points in such “Violence and Criminality” Theory.

3. Basic Facts

Before criticizing VCT, two basic facts that form the precondition for the criticism need to be recognized. The first is that, while there is a small number of pre-war documentary materials and data available which directly indicate the Burakumin crime rate, there are no such documentary materials and data after World War II. As conducting surveys of criminality among Burakumin would in itself be a violation of human rights, it is natural that such materials and data do not exist. Thus, to discuss the crime rate among Burakumin – if it is feasible at all – “rather than explore these questions, however, we focus on externals” (202); in other words, the only option is estimation through indirect but externally-verifiable methods.

The second concerns the keyword, “subsidies.” The Articles contend that the Buraku Measures Program subsidies are the source of the “violence and criminality” of Burakumin, and led the BLL leaders to become members of crime syndicates as they were attracted to the subsidies in search of benefit. The Articles further use certain examples of malfeasance to assert that the “mob dominated the BLL, and used its control over construction contracts to divert large portions of the funds to their private accounts” (84) and that “what was true for Osaka and Konishi (BLL leader, added) generalized” (216).

Such interpretations of the BMP are completely mistaken. The Program is an example of affirmative action which was legislated for based on a report (Report of the Council for BMP [Council for BMP, 1965]) adopted after deliberation in the National Diet spanning 4.5 years (42 times in the General Assembly, 121 times in committee, and 21 times in subcommittee – Buraku liberation movement’s activist Eiji Okada’s information), which was rigorously implemented by local governments nationwide, and which had the support of the Japanese people. It should not have been possible for individuals to divert subsidies into their accounts. There were, indeed, some examples of malfeasance. However, what proportion of the total subsidies was diverted by individuals? Did it exceed the level of malfeasance that (unfortunately) occurs in broader society, to the point that it could be called extraordinary? Of course, even if infrequent, these scandals must be severely criticized. The Articles do not seem at all interested in asking these questions. “It would,’ he (I. Neary,

added) continues (2010:239) ‘be a research project in itself to review and assess these allegations’ of corruption” (7). The Articles extrapolated this malfeasance to apply to the entire BLL, fostering an image of lawlessness and criminality. Such assertions denigrate the local governments around Japan and their officials who – based on the Report of the Council for BMP (1965, preamble) that Buraku are “in an extremely alarming state, and the economic situation, living environment, etc. of the residents in the areas concerned [must] be improved promptly” – quietly implemented the BMP with the desire that discrimination against Burakumin could be eliminated.

4. About Crime Syndicates

1) Crime Syndicates

At the center of the Articles, “Violence and Criminality” Theory, is assertions about “Buraku and crime syndicates.” The Articles contend that “they (The National Levellers’ Association, added) would launch a lucrative shake-down strategy that would reward those burakumin who chose to invest in criminal rather than mainstream careers; that would drive out burakumin who chose to live by standard Japanese behavioral norms instead” (61) and “of the rampant BLL corruption and buraku crime, the evidence has been there for anyone with an inclination to look” (6). In such ways, the Articles persistently assert the “violence and criminality” of the Burakumin and the BLL: the National Levellers’ Association, the BLL, Matsumoto Jiichirō, the Yata Education Discrimination Incident, the Yōka Senior High School Incident, the Sayama Incident, as well as threats, fraud, and demands against local government agencies, etc. To make matters worse, the Articles condemn the action to denounce discriminators as “tactics that were both brutal and violent” (28), further evoking the “self-criticism” demanded by the “Red Guards and Khmer Rouge” (62).

The reader is likely to become disgusted at the lengthy stream of exposés, making reading the Articles feel like they picked up a cheap tabloid of vulgar content. However, such content has an important objective: increasing the persuasiveness of statistical analysis regarding “Burakumin and criminality.”

The exposés continue, next to exhibit the close relationship between Burakumin and crime syndicates or *bōryokudan* (*yakuza*). “Burakumin men comprise a large fraction of the syndicates” (203), “the mob was a creature of the buraku,” (30), and “for a long time, the buraku was the hotbed of the mob (Kadooka, added)” (204). Through such assertions, the Articles work to substantiate the close relationship between Burakumin and crime syndicates – but there is no persuasive data to support this assertion. “The most troubling aspect of this overlap – so inflammatory that academic accounts never mention it – lies in the fraction of

burakumin men who chose to join the mob” (30). To that end, the Articles collect testimonies from writers and journalists about “the proportion of Burakumin in crime syndicates,” particularly emphasizing accounts from journalists with a Buraku background to increase credibility. The Articles then assert that “the empirical results match exactly the substance of the first-person accounts” (44). Thus, the Articles conclude that there are many Burakumin in crime syndicates, as is shown by analysis of crime statistics.

However, individual testimonies are only ever (written) narrations of personal experiences, impressions, assumptions, and observations. They are creations of an individual’s subjective world, have no objectivity which can be evaluated through conceivable processes, and, in other words, are not scientifically-endurable data. Thus, even if it cannot be said that there were no Burakumin in crime syndicates, it is also straightforward to offer criticism that only a few Burakumin engaged in the syndicates. For example, when the author of this article conducted field surveys about the homeless, a middle-aged man who came out to me as Burakumin had this to say. “The discrimination in the gang (crime syndicate, added), was terrible. I hated that they all bullied me. That’s why I left the gang.” His sentiments were echoed by other young men. However, these statements can also not be verified. To begin with, the Burakumin population is much less than 1% of Japan’s total population, and (as discussed later in this article) the pre-war data shows no major difference between the Burakumin and non-Burakumin crime rates. Given the above, the supposition that Burakumin may play a prominent role in crime syndicate membership is itself unscientific. Such a supposition entails a desperate lack of social science knowledge about crime syndicates.

2) Research about Crime Syndicates

A sociologist Abel Polese wrote that “they (crime syndicates, added) also fulfill an important function by informally offering welfare opportunities to the local community. In this ambiguity lies the social acceptance of organized crime organizations whose methods may be considered immoral by both the state and the local community, but whose function is widely accepted, and even praised, by the surrounding community because bringing more short-term benefits to many locals than the state” (Polese, 2021, p. 24), and another sociologist Robert Merton wrote that “any attempt to eliminate an existing social structure without providing adequate alternative structures for fulfilling the functions previously fulfilled by the abolished organization is doomed to failure” (Merton, 1968, p. 135). In other words, even crime syndicates perform a role necessary to society, and - as far as that social structure does not change significantly - elimination of those syndicates will fail, regardless of how strenuous the attempts are. Crime syndicates are products of contradictions in the social structure in Japan too. Thus, *however severe discrimination against Burakumin and*

exclusion might be, there is no way that Burakumin - who are much less than 1% of Japan's total population - account for double-digit percentages of syndicate members. There is much academic research about crime syndicates in Japan¹, but Burakumin do not appear in that research. While this lack of references might occur in some cases because researchers have avoided mentioning Burakumin, it is, fundamentally, because research about crime syndicates is possible without needing to discuss Burakumin.

3) Burakumin in Syndicates

So, what proportion of crime syndicates do Burakumin account for? The Articles work to calculate the proportion in the following way. The 1989 Police White Paper states that a nationwide total of 23,000 people in their 20s and 27,000 people in their 30s are members of crime syndicates (Keisatsu-cho, 1989) (204). Then, "assuming that the Burakumin age composition is similar to that of the overall Japanese population," the Articles calculate the proportion of Burakumin in crime syndicates in the following way (204). Firstly, the Articles calculate the lower limit (minimum number) proportion of Burakumin. The Articles postulate that if they "suppose the burakumin comprised only half the mob" (204)², 11,500 people in their 20s (9.4% of Burakumin) and 13,500 people in their 30s (11.1% of Burakumin) were members of crime syndicates. Next is the upper limit (maximum number). The Articles postulate that if they "suppose that 70 percent of the mob came from the burakumin," and "suppose further that the mob did not recruit its members from the 700,000 burakumin who had faded into the general population, instead recruiting only from the 1.1 million living in the communities that chose to take the subsidies" (204), 21.4% of Burakumin in their 20s and 25.2% of Burakumin in their 30s were members of crime syndicates.

However, these lower and upper limit figures use individual testimonies ("half" and "70%") as the basis for calculating "the proportion of Burakumin in crime syndicates," and so do not merit scientific evaluation. This calculation is a meaningless exercise. Fundamentally, the fact that the proportion can only be calculated in the form of lower and upper limits is itself an admission by the Authors that the figures in the personal testimonies are unreliable.

The Articles further assert that "at one time, 10–25 percent of young burakumin men joined the mob. Now, almost nobody does" (234). "The mob numbers only 47,000, and barely 5 percent of those men (2,300) are younger than 30. Even if 70 percent of these men were burakumin, the number of young burakumin in the syndicates would only come to 1,600" (234). However, these figures also have individual testimonies at their foundation, and so again do not merit scientific evaluation. Thus, in conclusion, the number of Burakumin in crime syndicates remains unknown.

4) Surveys of Companies

The Articles cite surveys of companies conducted by the Japanese Ministry of Justice (JMJJ) about extortion relating to Buraku issues (mainly the coercion to purchase books about Buraku issues at inflated prices). They state that “in 1988 (when the subsidy program was implemented, added), 17.5 percent of the firms reported having been subject to burakumin extortion” (234-235). But after the subsidy program was discontinued, “of the 4,398 respondents in 2013, only 5.1 percent reported extortion attempts” (235). The Articles assert that extortion of companies decreased after the subsidy program ended. However, this assertion is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it is not possible to prove if the decrease in extortion was caused by the ending of subsidies. Secondly, and more importantly, the Articles contend that extortion of companies is the work of Burakumin - even though there is no evidence for this view. Contrary to what the Articles contend, the author of this article has heard that the majority of people conducting such extortion are non-Burakumin racketeers (offshoots of *sōkaiya*, who run protection rackets about stockholder meetings) or members of crime syndicates. However, this can also not be proven. Researcher Andrew Rankin wrote that “yakuza themselves exploit the situation by posing as Burakumin rights groups and pressuring businesses to pay them compensation” (2021, p. 217). It is unclear to the author of this article how Rankin became aware that crime syndicates posed as Burakumin, but it is indeed possible that non-Burakumin could pretend to be Burakumin. Here again, it is unclear who was engaging in extortion. The assertions of the Articles do not withstand academic or scientific scrutiny.

5) Measures against Crime Syndicates

The Articles state that “the Diet voted in 1996 to repeal the subsidies effective 2002; it began strengthening the legal tools against the mob in 1991, and hiked the number of prosecutions in 2000. We do not disentangle the two causes” (235). The Articles further assert that “as the government moved toward ending the subsidies, it also began to restructure the law to facilitate prosecution. In 1991, it authorized prefectural governments to designate the mobs as organized crime syndicates, basing the designations on factors such as the number of members with criminal records” (208). In this way, the Articles assert that the number of crime syndicate members and number of crimes committed (by Burakumin) decreased due to the discontinuation of the subsidy program together with the stronger measures against crime syndicates by the police. However, the timing of the tighter legal restraints on crime syndicates and the ending of subsidies here does not match up. If it were the case that crime was decreasing due to the tighter restraints on syndicates before the subsidies were discontinued (in 2002), then the two would be unconnected.

Naturally, the timing does not match up. There is no relationship between the stronger measures against crime syndicates and the discontinuation of subsidies. The stronger

measures referred to here are the Act on the Prevention of Unjust Acts by Organized Crime Group Members, enacted in 1991, as well as crime syndicate exclusion ordinances passed by local governments which put the Act into practice. Around that time, syndicates had been frequently committing economic crimes in local communities, and conflict was intensifying between increasingly oligopolistic syndicates (such as the Yamaguchi-gumi, Inagawa-kai, and Sumiyoshi-kai), leading to frequent violent incidents in local communities. The Act and ordinances were enacted to protect communities and everyday lifestyles. The crime syndicates transitioning into economic yakuza is related to the intensifying conflict. The conflict was set against a background of declining industrial activity due to the prolonged recession, decreasing levels of public works, governments and companies restraining from lavish hospitality, and crackdowns on the amphetamines trade, all of which depleted the syndicates' sources of revenue and put them under pressure. As a result, the number of crime syndicate members declined. However, the declining trend was driven by the relationship between crime syndicates and broader society and is unrelated to the subsidy program of Burakumin.

5. Statistical Analysis

The most serious issues with the Articles are in its statistical analysis regarding Burakumin crime rate, population migration rate, and Buraku real estate prices. There is a small amount of pre-war data, but critically, no data describing Burakumin crime after World War II. The only data that enlightens us about crime rates are at the prefectural level. Furthermore, population migration and real estate price data are only available at the municipality level. Thus, crime and population migration among Burakumin as well as Buraku real estate price trends can only be approximated using methods that are, though indirect, capable of external evaluation. In addition, Burakumin make up an extremely small proportion of the overall population at both the prefectural and municipal levels. There is a wide range of factors involved between the prefectural/municipal levels and the Burakumin level. The Authors wrote that "the risk of ecological fallacy is obviously real" (22) and that "obviously, a wide range of qualifications are again in order – the ecological fallacy with prefecture-level data, unobserved variables, the fact that the data mix buraku and non-buraku murders, and so forth" (51). We can confirm that the Authors sufficiently understand the complexity of the situation and limitations in the available data. Nevertheless, why did they press ahead with the statistical analysis discussed below? There was their prejudice against the Burakumin and the politics of the researcher who needed the Articles.

1) Crime Rates

a. 1921 Data

The Articles assert that Burakumin were attracted to the subsidies, unjustifiably craved the subsidies, and, as a result, the Burakumin crime rate increased. “The higher the rate of subsidies, the lower the level at which burakumin leave to join the mainstream Japanese society” (84), and “more burakumin staying is associated with higher crime rates” (84). The Articles also quest after the pre-war and post-war Burakumin crime rates. According to Buraku issues researcher Akira Kobayakawa, a small amount of pre-war data is available regarding the number of crimes committed by Burakumin, such as that in Home Ministry (1921), Hiroshima Prefectural Government (1920), and Kobe City Council (1921). This article will examine the Home Ministry data (Tanigawa, 1980, p. 719). It is a table titled “Regarding Crime Statistics,” and, within the types of crimes, it shows the Buraku and nationwide overall population per-person number of occurrences and crime rate. According to the table, criminal offenses are higher for Buraku (0.618) than the overall population (0.342), but for all offenses, Buraku (0.935) is lower than the overall population (1.401). The high rate of criminal offenses for Buraku was likely to be due to a large number of minor offenses such as gambling (gambling was prohibited under the 1884 Gambling Criminal Punishment Regulations). The Home Ministry data was compiled by further adjusting the data sent from each prefectural government. The data lack reliability due to issues such as no uniformity across prefectures in aspects including definitions of crimes (e.g. if gambling is regarded as a crime or not), and methods of counting occurrences and of organizing data (indicated by Buraku issues researcher Yoshikazu Akisada too) (Tanigawa, 1980, p. 690). However, even despite these shortcomings, it can be confirmed that there was broadly no major difference in the crime rate between the Burakumin and non-Burakumin populations. The data from the Hiroshima Prefectural Government and Kobe City Council show a very similar pattern. It, therefore, follows that it is completely pointless to make arguments about the Burakumin crime rate in particular. Thus, this article has omitted criticism of the Articles’ interpretation of the pre-war Buraku crime rate (pp. 48-52 of the Articles).

b. 1993 Data³⁾

Next, the Articles use the 1993 statistics (General Affairs Agency, 1995) (22) to look at the correlation between prefectural-level Burakumin proportion and prefectural-level crime rate. The Articles assert that “at the prefectural level, higher percentages of burakumin were indeed associated with significantly higher rates of crime” (59). In other words, the crime rate is significantly higher in prefectures with a large Burakumin population than those with a small Burakumin population; the Articles have found a positive correlation between them. However,

what do the Articles intend to imply by making this observation? Are they trying to assert that the higher overall crime rates are due to the Burakumin crime rate? If not, it is meaningless to point out such a correlation.

However, the majority of prefectural populations are non-Burakumin. Even in the prefecture with the largest number of Burakumin, they account for only 4.289% of the total population (Table 3) (23). In other words, the prefectural-level crime rate captures the fact that almost all crimes are committed by non-Burakumin. Dividing prefectures using the Burakumin population – which has almost no impact on the prefectural-level crime rate – as an indicator will not provide any insights into the Burakumin crime rate, even if a correlation is found with the crime rates across prefectures with a small or large Burakumin population.

In addition, the prefectural-level crime rate is influenced by a wide range of factors. In addition to the average income, population, population density, fertility rate, and mortality rate at the prefectural level, which the Article controls as constant, there are many more factors that influence the prefectural-level crime rate, such as family structure, industrial structure, judicial administration, regional autonomy, and cultural diversity. The size of the Burakumin population is essentially irrelevant. The Authors themselves recognize the risks in statistical processing, admitting that “obviously, a wide range of qualifications are again in order – the ecological fallacy with prefecture-level data, unobserved variables, the fact that the data mix buraku and non-buraku murders, and so forth” (51).

Burakumin crime data is necessary to understand the relationship between the Burakumin population and the crime rate. More specifically, to demonstrate a relationship between the subsidies and the Burakumin crime rate, it would be necessary to show that the crime rate was higher during the period the subsidies were provided (1969 to 2002) than before and after that period. However, there is no data about Burakumin crime. As described above, there was no major difference between Burakumin and non-Burakumin crime rates evident in pre-war statistics. If that is still the case, it is completely pointless to pose questions about the Burakumin crime rate. If the subsidies did affect the crime rate of the Burakumin, we would need Burakumin-specific crime data to prove it.

The approach taken by the Articles - only looking at the correlation (relative difference) between the prefectural-level Burakumin population proportions and the crime rate - does not provide any insights into the relationship between the subsidies, the Burakumin population, and the crime rate. Advancing arguments about the Burakumin crime rate based on the mathematical logic of correlation and regression when there is no Burakumin crime data available to analyze is not only vacuous, it is also dangerous.

c. Urbanization and the Crime Rate

The Articles also discuss urbanization and the crime rate, stating that “crime rates do track urbanization: the higher the population density, the higher the rate of crime” (51). It is often said that crime rates are high in cities. In addition, there are large Buraku areas in cities, leading to clustering of the Burakumin population there. Such circumstances would be expected to lead to a higher Burakumin crime rate. Data about Burakumin crime is essential to substantiate such a belief – but again, no such data exists.

The urban sociologist, Claude Fischer wrote that “population heterogeneity is correlated to opportunities for deviance” (1975). People congregate in cities, and those urban populations include a wide range of ethnicities, nationalities, languages, and lifestyles, creating a diverse population that is internally heterogeneous. This diversity means that uniformity in behavioral norms throughout a city disappears, increasing opportunities for deviant behavior. One example of deviant behavior is a crime. Based on this logic, it would be expected that the crime rate would increase for *all groups* of people who become urbanized. Thus, there is no reason why questions should be posed about the Burakumin crime rate in particular. It is also impossible to know if the rate of increase in the crime rate of the Burakumin is higher than the rates of increase of other groups. The only way to know it is to compare the crime rate of the Burakumin with those of other groups. However, there is no data for either. Japan's Ministry of Justice publishes only one crime statistic for a particular group: foreign residents in Japan. However, it does not publish figures at the prefectural level, only the national level. Even the correlation between prefectures with high or low numbers of foreign residents and prefectural-level crime rates is unknown.

2) Population

The Articles analyze outward migration from Buraku areas, asserting that “after the programs ended in 2002, out-migration increased most from the municipalities with high-burakumin concentration” (225-226). The method used here (modified difference-in-differences design) (224) is different from that used for the crime rate (least-squares method) (84), but the purpose of looking at the correlation between the size of the Burakumin population and the outflow of the population at the city level is the same. The Articles assert that the population outflow rate of cities with many Burakumin is higher than that of cities with fewer Burakumin (a positive correlation), manipulating statistics in an attempt to ‘prove’ their theory that the discontinuation of the subsidies encouraged the outflow of the Buraku population.

Again, the vast majority of Japanese urban populations are non-Burakumin (in some cases, the city Buraku population proportion is higher than at the prefectural level. But even in that case, we do not know how much the outflow of Burakumin affects the overall city population outflow. Thus, almost all the city-level outward migration is of non-Burakumin. Comparing

city-level outward migration rates using the Burakumin population – which has very little impact on the city-level outward migration rate – as an indicator will not provide any insights into the Burakumin population dynamics. The Articles only discuss the relative differences in city-level outward migration rates.

A wide range of factors is involved in city-level outward migration. Besides the demographic and economic environment, the city's population outflow is affected by factors such as family structure, judicial administration, regional autonomy, and cultural diversity. These factors do not distinguish between Burakumin and non-Burakumin populations. Both the Burakumin and the non-Burakumin populations fluctuate in the same direction.

Again, the Articles tell us nothing about the relationship between subsidies, Burakumin populations, and their outflow. Burakumin population data is necessary to understand trends in the Burakumin population (approximate Burakumin population numbers are estimated from the national census). To show the relationship between subsidies and the Burakumin population, it is necessary to show that the population outflow rate during the period when the subsidy system was in place was lower than the population outflow rate before 1969 and after 2002. According to Column 1 of Table 6, the only period after 2002 when the population outflow rate was relatively high (comparing cities with high and low Burakumin populations) was between 2006 and 2009. The figures do not adequately support the assertion the Articles seek to substantiate.

3) Real Estate Prices

The Articles analyze Buraku area real estate prices, making the following assertions. “once the subsidies neared their end, real estate prices rose in municipalities with burakumin neighborhoods. With the subsidies gone and the mob in retreat, other Japanese found the formerly burakumin communities increasingly attractive places to live” (192). The Articles then compare real estate prices since 2002 between cities with high and low numbers of Burakumin, with the city-level Burakumin population as an indicator, asserting the finding of greater rates of increase in real estate prices in cities with a large Burakumin population than cities with a small Burakumin population; a positive correlation. In this way, the Articles try to prove with statistics the theory that the end of the program prompted real estate price increases in Buraku areas.

On this point as well, it should be noted that the majority of city real estate is positioned in non-Buraku areas, and that city-level real estate prices are almost entirely driven by non-Buraku areas. Comparing real estate prices in cities with large and small Burakumin populations using the Burakumin population - which has almost no impact on city-level real estate prices - as an indicator will not provide any insights into Buraku real estate prices. At

the very least, it must be shown how much the increase in real estate prices in Buraku areas contributed to the increase in city-level prices. However, the Authors have not obtained data showing the impact of the increase of Buraku real estate prices on city-wide prices.

A wide range of factors is involved in city-level real estate price increases. The first factor is the economic environment, such as the macro industrial structure and fluctuations in economic factors, which differ from the prefectural income controlled by the Articles. The broader economic environment does not distinguish between Buraku and non-Buraku areas. Real estate in Buraku areas typically costs less than in non-Buraku areas, but prices fluctuate in the same direction⁴⁾.

Buraku-level real estate price data is necessary to understand trends in Buraku real estate prices, and approximate values can be estimated from the Prefectural Land Price Survey by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism, etc. What was it like in the actual Buraku areas? The Buraku Measures Program enabled local improvement initiatives to move forward, with the appearance of the townscape changing significantly. Buraku real estate prices have increased, particularly in areas with high business activity or residential demand. The Articles assert that “once people knew the subsidies were going away, they began bidding up real estate prices in the buraku. Indeed, the increases already begin before 1998” (232). This statement is incorrect. Real estate prices had begun to rise in Buraku with high demand because of local improvement initiatives due to the BMP. Real estate prices did not rise because developers began investing ahead of the anticipated discontinuation of subsidies.

Moreover, the increase in Buraku real estate prices was also driven by factors unrelated to the BMP. Over time, the locations of many urban Buraku came to be viewed as very desirable. As urban populations increased, urban development progressed, municipalities merged, and the urbanized area expanded. As a result, Buraku – which had been marginalized to the fringes of the former urbanized area – became centrally-located in the new urban area. Being situated on the borders between the former and new urban areas means that Buraku became close to transportation routes and desirably located for both business and housing. This led to increased demand for Buraku real estate, and consequently higher prices. The same pattern occurred in surrounding non-Buraku areas. By contrast, real estate prices in Buraku with low business activity or residential demand have not increased, even if local improvement initiatives have been carried out.

The Articles also assert that “the governments built community centers and public housing. Although the buildings improved the housing stock, they unambiguously identified the areas as burakumin neighborhoods” (193). However, the boundary between Buraku and non-Buraku areas only became evident in a few cases; most Buraku became

indistinguishable at the edges from neighboring non-Buraku areas. To begin with, one of the aims of the BMP was to eliminate the disparities so that Buraku became “just the same as other areas.”

6. Results of Subsidy Discontinuation

The Articles assert that the subsidy program caused the situation of the Buraku and Burakumin to deteriorate. This is not the case. The Buraku Measures Program improved the community and living environment of the Buraku and Burakumin, which had been at a low level. The discontinuation of the BMP prevented those improvements from moving on to the next stage.

1) Poverty Cycle

The end of the Buraku Measures Program removed stability from the lifestyles of the (lowest) Burakumin, and the results of the BMP dwindled (Tsumaki, 2010; Uchida, 2010). The lives of Burakumin are now tending not toward improvement, but rather to stagnation. Put simply, such a situation entails the following. People on low incomes struggle to make a living. People struggling to make a living cannot send their children to further education. Children who cannot attend further education cannot obtain good jobs as adults. People who cannot obtain good jobs cannot earn a good income. People who cannot earn a good income struggle to make a living. This cycle of poverty, which the Articles call “dysfunction” (21), affects income, academic achievement, and work throughout families, and also continues across generations.⁵⁾ Scholarships provided under the BMP expanded learning opportunities for young Burakumin, and employment support expanded job opportunities for young Burakumin as well as their parents, breaking the poverty cycle. Now, the (lowest) Burakumin are losing opportunities to break the cycle.

The Institute with which the author of this article is affiliated was asked by the Buraku Liberation League-Hiroshima Prefecture Federation in 2016 to conduct surveys about the income, education, etc. of Burakumin in Hiroshima Prefecture. The results, from 1,691 respondents across 751 households, showed the following: Firstly, 9.5% of Burakumin had completed higher education (university or graduate school), compared to 28.5% of the overall Hiroshima population. The disparity in academic achievement is clear. In terms of annual income from work, 80.0% of Burakumin earned less than 3 million yen (approximately USD 25,400 as of January 2016 [Bank of Japan, 2021]), compared to 55.9% of the overall Hiroshima population. The work stratum disparity is clear. In terms of household income, 56.3% of Buraku households earned less than 3 million yen annually, compared to 22.0% of the overall Hiroshima population. The income disparity is clear. In summary, there is a clear

disparity between Burakumin and the overall Hiroshima population across academic achievement, work, and income. To a greater or lesser degree, this disparity is likely common to Burakumin throughout Japan. Such inequality is evidence of how Burakumin have been restricted to a low status in the Japanese social structure. Systematic programs to break the poverty cycle facing struggling Burakumin are necessary for them to escape such a structure. The BMP was a policy of affirmative action to *remedy discrimination through discrimination*. It aimed to put an end to the discriminatory and consequently poor living conditions of Burakumin. This is in direct contrast to the understanding of subsidized projects shown by the Articles.

2) Barriers of Discrimination

Even though its achievements were ultimately insufficient, the Buraku Measures Program made a significant contribution to Buraku local improvement initiatives and improving the lives of Burakumin. The BMP energized Burakumin economic activity, leading to greater inward and outward migration from the Buraku (the Buraku population is the net figure after inflows and outflows offset each other). This trend is evident, for example, in increased intermarriage between Burakumin and non-Burakumin. Marriage is an indicator of the closest human interaction. Some Burakumin have left the Buraku after marrying non-Burakumin, and some non-Burakumin have married into the Buraku. This tendency becomes more prominent in the younger age groups (refer to the Table below).

Table: Rate of intermarriage by residents of Buraku districts (2003)

	<age 25	Age 25-29	Age 30-39	Age 40-49	Age 50-59	Age 60-69	Age 70>
Both partners born in Buraku	14.2	24.8	38.4	61.2	72.7	84.6	87.6
One partner born outside Buraku	75.1	70.3	57.2	36.1	23.5	12.4	9.1

Source: Tottori Prefecture Buraku Liberation Research Institute (2003). *Jinken-no kakuritsu-wo mezashite-dōwa chiku jittai haaku-to chōsa* [Aiming to establish human rights: From the Buraku district fact-finding survey.] Tottori, Japan: Author.

In Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute (2004). *Kekkon sabetsu-no genjō-to keihatsu-heno shisa* [The state of marriage discrimination and suggestions for educating people], p.13. Osaka, Japan: Author.

The Table illustrates the increase in non-Burakumin living in the Buraku. The rate of intermarriage with people born outside the Buraku is steadily and rising with each generation. From this, it can be inferred that many of the people born outside the Buraku are non-Burakumin. Notably, the rate of intermarriage has risen rapidly among people in their 30s and younger. Three-quarters of Burakumin 25 or younger have married someone born outside the Buraku. People in their 30s and younger married during the period in which the BMP was operational. It is not clear how much impact the BMP had on this trend in the rate of

intermarriage. However, the BMP certainly was part of the environment encouraging intermarriage by young people. The Articles assert that “several consequences followed from the subsidy-driven association with organized crime and violence. Obviously, the association contributed to the continued reluctance of many mainstream Japanese to let their children marry into the group. Most modern Japanese evaluate potential sons- and daughters-in-law as individuals” (207). In fact, the opposite is true. The subsidies were a background condition for increasing the rate of intermarriage between Burakumin and non-Burakumin.

All the above points serve to rebut the assertion by the Articles about outward migration by young people. The barriers between Buraku and non-Buraku did not become smaller after the discontinuation of the BMP, but while it was running. Those barriers remain to this day. None of this is connected with crime syndicates.

3) Prejudices of Non-Burakumin

The Articles assert that the Buraku Measures Program caused antipathy and hostility toward the Buraku from non-Burakumin to increase. “The subsidy program directly raised hostility against the burakumin. Non-burakumin resented the targeted perquisites” (219), but that when the BMP was terminated, “public bias against the burakumin should have fallen” (220). It is a fact that resentment and antipathy were generated among non-Burakumin toward the BMP. The phrase “the BMP is reverse discrimination” also surfaced. However, excessive focus on only the antipathy and hostility from non-Burakumin toward the BMP runs contrary to the facts. Local governments ran education campaigns aimed at ordinary residents (non-Burakumin) to encourage supportive attitudes toward the BMP. As their recognition of Buraku issues increased, understanding toward the BMP also made progress.

The Institute with which this author is affiliated was asked by a certain local government in Hiroshima Prefecture in 2019 to conduct attitude surveys of city residents regarding human rights issues. The survey involved mailing anonymous-response questionnaires to people chosen at random from among registered voters in the city. 705 replies were received, which – being anonymous and randomly selected – can be considered an almost-completely unfiltered expression of the attitudes of non-Burakumin. Even perfunctory answers seemed to (at least in part) show people’s true intentions.

The survey asked respondents for their assessment of the Buraku Measures Program. The results showed that 25.6% of respondents agreed with the statement “the Buraku Measures Program had an effect toward eliminating discrimination against Buraku,” 14.9% disagreed with this statement, and 54.2% did not know. The proportion of respondents who agreed that the BMP had shown results was higher than the proportion who disagreed. Additionally, among those who answered that they did not know were people opposed to the BMP as well as those who felt that the BMP was insufficient, so clear results were not

obtained. The latter is in support of the BMP. The survey next asked about the elimination of discrimination against Buraku in the future. The results showed that 31.3% of respondents felt that discrimination would not disappear if ignored, 26.0% felt that it would disappear naturally, and 32.5% did not know. In other words, at least one-third of city residents believe that special efforts are necessary to eliminate discrimination. The survey next asked about the relationship between the elimination of discrimination against Burakumin and the respondents themselves. The results showed that 53.5% of respondents felt that they should make efforts toward eliminating discrimination, 8.9% felt there was no such need, and 33.0% did not know. Thus, the majority of city residents believe that they must make personal efforts toward eliminating discrimination against Burakumin.

Attitude surveys have been conducted in many local government areas around Japan, showing very similar trends. This is the state of non-Burakumin attitudes toward Burakumin, 20 years after the discontinuation of the BMP. There are many non-Burakumin who have a negative opinion of Buraku issues and the BMP, and also many who perceive barriers between themselves and Burakumin. However, on the other hand, many non-Burakumin believe that special efforts are necessary to eliminate discrimination, and they too must make such efforts. This is one result of the education campaigns in schools and local communities as part of the BMP. The Articles assert that antipathy of non-Burakumin toward Burakumin heightened during the BMP period, and lessened after its discontinuation. This is not the case. Attitudes among non-Burakumin divided during the BMP period into those who are sympathetic and those who are opposed; the explanation of the BMP's necessity to those opposed through BMP education campaigns has resulted in the present-day situation regarding attitudes described above.

If the education campaigns had served to alleviate (and in some cases eliminate) prejudices of non-Burakumin, then once the campaigns ended together with the BMP, the task of changing non-Burakumin attitudes would be left unfinished. The societal barriers between Burakumin and non-Burakumin would begin to increase again. Since the BMP ended, education campaigns about eliminating discrimination against Burakumin have mostly disappeared, replaced with campaigns promoting respect for human rights more broadly. As a result, non-Burakumin now have far fewer opportunities to learn about Buraku issues, leading to ignorance which is increasingly creating barriers between themselves and Burakumin. This situation also disproves the one-sided claim of the Articles that the BMP has increased the antipathy of non-Burakumin toward the Burakumin.

7. Other

1) Rice Riots

The Articles mention the rice riots which occurred in 1918. The Articles assert that “burakumin across a wide range of prefectures brought violent crime to the center of public attention” (53) and that “at the head of the most violent crowds – were the burakumin” (53). In this way, the Articles emphasize only that Burakumin were actively involved in riotous disorder throughout Japan. The Articles assert that “in Kyoto, Osaka, Hyogo and Nara, burakumin averaged 30 to 40 % of the rioters (Mitani, 1985:82)” (54). What, then, is the basis for their claim that “an average of 30-40% of people in the mobs were Burakumin”? Through their assertions, the Articles imply that Burakumin were up in arms and rioting nationwide. But there is no social science analysis of the rice riots.

The rice riots broke out in 436 towns and cities around Japan, but Burakumin were only involved in municipalities where Buraku were situated (numbers unknown). “The largest Buraku areas of Osaka, Wakayama, Nara, suburbs of Himeji City and Fukuoka had nothing to do with the riots. Even in regions such as Hiroshima Prefecture where the Burakumin participation rate was high, among the total of 554 Buraku and 23,759 Burakumin in the prefecture at the time, a mere 32 Buraku and 1,309 Burakumin participated in the riots (Hiroshima District Public Prosecutors Office Evidentiary Report)” (Inoue & Watanabe, 1959, Vol. 1, p. 113). 8,185 people were arrested throughout Japan due to the riots by the end of 1918, of whom 887 were Burakumin. Given that Burakumin accounted for much less than 1% of Japan’s total population at the time, over 10% of those arrested being Burakumin is a very high figure. But even still, Burakumin were only a tiny proportion of all the people arrested throughout Japan; Burakumin did not riot “across many prefectures.”

The Articles assert that 3 persons arrested due to the riots were sentenced to life imprisonment, and no one was sentenced to death (53). This statement is incorrect: 12 persons were sentenced to life imprisonment (Inoue & Watanabe, 1959, Vol. 5, p. 153), and two persons were sentenced to death (*Ibid*, Vol. 1, p. 111). The two persons who received a death sentence were Burakumin from Wakayama. Such an excessive punishment – a death sentence for rioting – illustrates the aggressive attitude of the law-enforcement authorities toward Burakumin. Burakumin were arrested at higher rates than non-Burakumin. Underlying this issue were the broader social circumstances – even more Burakumin than non-Burakumin were living in poverty, so some Burakumin were leading the riots (*Ibid*, Vol. 1, p. 111). Driven by prejudice and intolerance toward Burakumin police and prosecutors detained Burakumin intensively. There was even an example of an entire Buraku being arrested (Fujino, Y., in *Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute*, Ed., 1986, p. 353). Newspapers reported on rice riots happening around Japan, but most of their focus was on the “mobs.” However, in cities where Burakumin were involved, many articles equated mobs to Burakumin. “Narratives creating an impression as if all Burakumin were in revolt or if

Burakumin are a brutal and savage group became widespread at that time. These narratives were tactics by political leaders or those acting on their behalf in an attempt to prevent the riots from becoming any worse by inciting discrimination and prejudice among the masses, generating a sense of hatred and contempt toward Burakumin, discouraging the general public from acting together with Burakumin“ (*Ibid*, Vol. 1, p. 112). The Articles do not verify any documentary materials relating to the rice riots and Burakumin, and - similar to the newspapers of the time - fall into line with people who believe in the supposed violent tendencies of Burakumin.

2) Slums

With concerning the “dysfunction” of Burakumin lifestyles, the Articles raise an example of the Kamagasaki district, in Nishinari Ward, Osaka City. “The district contains day laborers, flop houses, homeless alcoholics, and drug addicts” (21). This statement is partly correct. However, the Articles continue to make the following assertions. “With 20,000 to 30,000 heavily burakumin residents, it serves as the center for mostly male day workers” (21), and in Kamagasaki, “over 70 % of the buraku children did not attend any school at all” (43).

How can the Articles make such groundless contentions? Kamagasaki is not a Buraku; it is a district characterized by moving day laborers and the homeless. Another characteristic is an unspoken rule that people do not ask each other where they are from. There are likely Burakumin among the residents of Kamagasaki, but there is no way of knowing how many. The author of this article has conducted surveys in Kamagasaki over many years (see for example Aoki, 2000 and 2003), which makes the fictionalized image of Kamagasaki presented by the Authors unbearable. “Osaka’s Nago slum” (48) also has nothing to do with Burakumin. Situated where the bustling Nipponbashi shopping district now stands, Nago Machi (Naga Machi) was a neighborhood of cheap lodging houses, characterized by the poor, travelers, and the homeless that had migrated from other places. The cheap lodging houses were shut down under the 1898 Inn Regulations, and Nago Machi was (forcibly) relocated to its current location in Kamagasaki ahead of the 5th National Industrial Exhibition in 1903. Neither Kamagasaki is nor Nago Machi was a district for long-term residents – as the Buraku are – but instead, they are districts for people who have migrated from other places. It is worth mentioning that one of Osaka’s largest Buraku is located close to Kamagasaki, but Kamagasaki is differentiated from the Buraku community where permanent residents live together as families.

The Authors wrongly believe that Kamagasaki is a Buraku for one reason: their understanding of the Burakumin is expressed as follows. “The term (Buraku, added) has always been a loose identifier for what simply amounts to a dysfunctional under-class” (13), and “they called a neighborhood a buraku……if its families had largely collapsed” (61). And

“the way a city’s residents could respond to a slum illustrates the way they could use the term ‘eta’ and ‘buraku’ to describe behavior rather than lineage” (61). That is to say, the Authors treat “Buraku” as a word referring to the areas of “the lower class and criminals.” Their understanding of Buraku is incorrect, right from the very beginning. Thus, the Authors have been unable (and have not attempted) to distinguish Buraku whose residents live in slum-like conditions, regular slums (former back-court tenement houses, etc.), and flophouse districts (former neighborhoods of cheap lodging houses). At the same time, on what basis can they specify *certain groups* of “the lower class and criminals” to be Burakumin? The Authors have provided no such explanation.

The Articles also assert the following regarding slums. “Japanese slums did not disappear because of government subsidies. They disappeared because Japanese incomes grew” (22). This is not the case. Most of the slums in Japan disappeared because of urban development and slum clearances during the high economic growth era (in the 1960s and 1970s). Only the flophouse districts (also called “yoseba”), where day laborers gather looking for work, remained. By contrast, many Buraku were excluded from urban development, remaining as slum-like areas after being left behind by the high economic growth period. The boundary between Buraku and non-Buraku areas became evident during that time. Then, in 1969, the Buraku Measures Program began, the slum-like conditions of the Buraku were gradually improved, and the boundary between Buraku and non-Buraku areas became invisible. It remains invisible today.

In this way, the Articles’ understanding of slums as well as of the BMP - and consequently their understanding of the changes in the Buraku - are all incorrect. However, although the Buraku’s slum-like living conditions have disappeared, it is not the case that the problems in the Buraku residential environment have been completely resolved. The public housing built through the BMP aged to become slum-like over the years; even reconstruction into high-rise apartments has not broken a vicious circle of rebuilding and decaying into slum-like areas again.

8. Conclusion

This article has demonstrated why the “Violence and Criminality” Theory which saturates both of the Articles is bankrupt in theory and the substance of its accounts. This article has also criticized the vacuous interpretations of data intended to substantiate VCT. The critical keyword involved in their arguments was “subsidies.” Were the subsidies a cause of crime, or a means to eliminate discrimination? The Articles assert the following. The subsidies attracted crime syndicates, gave rise to crime, held young people back to life in the Buraku,

and raised barriers to non-Burakumin. The discontinuation of the subsidies led young people to migrate outward, real estate prices increased, and the emotional distance between the Burakumin and non-Burakumin decreased. Subsidies to Burakumin became the “root of all evil” which hindered the elimination of discrimination.

This article’s understanding of history and the situation is the complete opposite. The Buraku Measures Program carried out local improvement initiatives and improved the lives of Burakumin, and as a result, more young people migrated outward and real estate prices increased. Education campaigns also made progress in ameliorating the prejudices of non-Burakumin. Considering the wide variety of problems facing the Burakumin, the BMP was a “starting point” toward the many improvements required to eliminate discrimination. None of the above had any connection with crime syndicates.

In criticizing the Articles, this article has consciously omitted two tasks. Firstly, as mentioned at the beginning, this article has used only a small amount of documentary materials and data to substantiate its criticism. As a review article, this article focused on laying out the logic of criticizing the Articles. There will be other occasions for providing an empirical demonstration. The second omission relates to how this article focused its criticism on the key point of the Articles, “Violence and Criminality” Theory. The Articles discuss many other topics, including the origins of the Burakumin, poverty, the National Levellers' Association, denunciation, Matsumoto Jiichirō, and the Sayama Incident. Among them are many more points demanding criticism⁶⁾, and all of these topics are background conditions for the Articles’ usage of VCT.

Finally, the author of this article again expresses a sense of regret at the unrealistic and unscientific approach of the Articles, which - based on the economics of social behavior - look upon Burakumin as people motivated only by economic incentives, without any distaste for crime or violence. The Authors can only regard people working every day in the pursuit of happiness and making a decent and honest living as violent and criminal people. It exposes their distorted view about human beings, for which the author of this article can only feel pity.

Notes

- 1) Genuine research into Japanese crime syndicates began with Hiroaki Iwai (1963). Research into crime syndicates is a significant topic in Japanese modern history and social structure research. For example, Shōichi Watanabe conducted a fascinating analysis of attitudes regarding crime syndicate members in prison based on data from the Research Foundation for Safe Society’s 2010 “Survey of Imprisoned Crime Syndicate Members” (Watanabe, 2014).
- 2) If crime syndicates are products of contradictions in the Japanese social structure,

given that there are approximately 120 million people in Japan and that the Burakumin population is 890,000 people (Kataoka, 2021, p. 93), then there is no possibility that Burakumin - who account for a mere 0.0074% of the Japanese population - comprise 50% of crime syndicate members.

- 3) The 1935 data refers to the “National Buraku Survey” by the Central Reconciliation Projects Association. It lists the location, number of households, and population of each Buraku. The Japanese courts have prohibited its viewing or use due to concerns about the dangers of its use in personal background investigations (Kataoka, 2021, pp. 100-102). It was released on the internet in 2015 by a journalist nicknamed “Tottori Loop,” but soon taken down. The act of writing an article using such data should not have passed the ethical screening expected of a scholarly article.
- 4) The Articles assert that “prices in cities with larger burakumin neighborhoods rose more than prices in other cities after 2002……the buraku real estate price increase is a function of the Kansai and Shikoku areas” (232). On the other hand, the Articles also assert that “organized crime is primarily an urban phenomenon, and the significant increase in burakumin out-migration after 2002 appears only among the larger cities” (227). Why would people have migrated outward from Shikoku – which has very few large Buraku nor large cities – in particular, and real estate prices have increased? The Articles do not explain it.
- 5) Shingo Tsumaki (2012, pp.489, 498) terms the process by which families are forced into poverty through the “action of economic factors as well as historical and cultural factors” the “accumulation effect” of poverty, and calls the process by which poverty endures across generations “by poverty being geographically concentrated for an extended period” the “history effect.”
- 6) Based on the assertion that Burakumin are criminals, the Authors conclude that Kazuo Ishikawa “fairly obviously played a key part in the rape-murder” (74), and defend the police who arrested him as “they pretty clearly had the right man” (74). Such statements regarding him - who is petitioning for a retrial (pending in court) - amount to defamation, and a violation of human dignity. They are utterly unforgivable.

* I owed much to Mr. Glen McCabe for his advice and translation of this article.

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