

**ISA RC06-41 CONFERENCE ON  
CHANGING DEMOGRAPHY ↔ CHANGING FAMILIES**

**Singapore, May 17-19, 2018**

---

**Same-sex Partnership Registrations at the Municipal Level in  
Japan**

*Miwa Sato / Hiroyuki Kubota*

*Ochanomizu University / Nihon University*

In line with the world-wide tidal wave for the rights and recognition of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) people, increasing needs for legal rights to same-sex couples are becoming visible in Japan as well. However, although half a dozen wards and cities have recently installed a symbolic partnership registration system at the municipal level, any other kinds of legal rights and protection for lesbian and gay couples are not yet legislated at the national level in Japan. This paper, then, explores the structural factors that affected these municipal governments introduction of same-sex partnership registration, by comparing six cases involving the implementation of this registration at the municipal level. The research collected data from the newspaper articles, the proceedings of local assemblies and interviews with the PR office of the city and local LGBT groups in each city of Shibuya ward (Tokyo), Setagaya ward (Tokyo), Iga city (Mie), Takarazuka city (Hyogo), Naha city (Okinawa), and Sapporo city (Hokkaido) (table 1; Figure 1). Interviews were conducted between December 2016 and June 2017. In conclusion, leadership of city mayors and local legislators' collaboration with civic movements and LGBT groups could be the main factors to implement the system of same-sex partnership registration.