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REEXAMINING JAPAN IN GLOBAL CONTEXT

Suntory Foundation Research Project

FORUM REPORT 022

Immigration Policy

Reexaming Japan in Global Context Forum, Tokyo, Japan, May 24, 2024

Migration Governance in Europe and North America

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On May 24, 2024, the Reexamining Japan in Global Context forum met at the International House of Japan in Tokyo to compare migration governance trends in North America, Europe, and Japan. Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou gave the first presentation. Dr. Triandafyllidou is an internationally recognized sociologist and migration policy expert whose interdisciplinary research focuses on the governance of migration and asylum; the management of cultural diversity, nationalism, and identity issues; and contemporary challenges of migration and integration across different world regions. Dr. Triandafyllidou holds the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration and Integration and is based at Toronto Metropolitan University.

Dr. Triandafyllidou began by noting that Canada and Japan have much in common. Both are vibrant societies with knowledge-based economies and aging societies. Both are also grappling with interesting and important questions about migration such as, Who is invited to come and permitted to stay? Under what conditions, and with what rights? What does it mean for immigrants to "integrate"? How do our answers to these questions affect labour markets, demographics, national identity, and culture?

It is important to note that Canada is not merely an immigrant country but also a settler-colonial state. Canada has finally been confronting the need to acknowledge its difficult historical (and ongoing) relationship with Indigenous peoples through processes of truth and reconciliation. It is also finally coming to grips with the fact that it has signed but largely failed to observe many nation-to-nation treaties with Indigenous peoples. This context adds further complexity to discussions about how, when, and even whether people from abroad become full members of the Canadian community.

A wide variety of practical considerations shape immigration policy. Historical, economic, technological, and cultural factors all bear. All of these change over time, often in response to immigration patterns. Similarly, integration everywhere is a never-ending process; it is not something societies ever achieve or complete. Different countries' approaches to immigration and integration are shaped by the degree to which they acknowledge or resist these realities and the attitudes they take to the pressures and opportunities presented by migration in a globalized world.

Migration policy is no longer — if it ever was — a matter of concern only for the state. Today, corporations, international organizations, and diaspora networks all play a role. They do so in an increasingly detailed and complicated legal and normative environment. Paradoxically, even though immigration policy touches the very heart of national sovereignty (borders) and national identity (belonging), migration is not something that any country can manage entirely on its own.

Relatedly, the Internet and other communications technologies have created tight connections across the world while also amplifying polarization. People in rural North America can listen to K-pop and watch Japanese anime without ever having to leave town. With social networks, smartphones,

and the decline of traditional news media, we have new power to shape and engage with cultures and events overseas. From the comfort of our homes in Tokyo or Toronto, we can see on our handheld devices — and rebroadcast — what is happening in Sudan, Gaza, or Ukraine.

At the same time, even as people around the world have become more connected, many of us have become more individualized. The Internet has made it easier for people to pick and choose parts of their identity — or even their reality. Although we can now organize communities and assert collective identities more easily, we can also amplify differences, polarize debate, and spread disinformation. As the news and media landscapes have fragmented, so, too, have our political and cultural conversations.

Massive economic and demographic changes have accompanied these context shifts. Where previous generations of migrants often found work in factories, households, small businesses, or care facilities, many Western countries have seen their industrial bases shrink in favour of jobs in the service and information economy, even as demographic growth has stalled and populations have aged. The Internet has also enabled remote work, allowing a new class of digital nomads to decouple where they live from where they earn a living.

These contextual shifts matter for how we think about migration and integration.

Today, migration involves mixed flows and mixed motivations. People can be both refugees and migrants. Migrating always involves a degree of agency, regardless of legal status. This means that there is a continuum of lived reality, not just binary categories, and it is becoming difficult to clearly distinguish those who are migrating to seek protection from those who are migrating to seek economic opportunity. However, we have inherited a postwar international legal architecture that presumes a clear distinction between opportunity-seeking migrants and protection-seeking refugees. This status quo is under pressure, but it is not clear what would be better. For example, without the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol, refugees would be worse off while migrants would not be better off.

With the global context in mind, we can look more closely at Europe and North America.

When it comes to migration and integration, we should consider both the underlying factual reality as well as the feelings and narratives that each country may have about itself. European countries generally view themselves as national states. Demographically, most countries are not true nation-states, but the national majority does enjoy privilege within the state.

European countries take a variety of approaches to ethnic minorities and integration. Many countries embrace a multicultural paradigm. Multiculturalism acknowledges that minorities need to be able to practice their traditions, speak their language, enjoy their culture, etc., and it asserts that the state should support minorities' ability to do so, including with public funding and legal protections. In other words, multiculturalism asserts a collective interest in diversity. The United Kingdom is one example. Canada is another. In Canada, the state has officially embraced multiculturalism since the 1970s. Canada celebrates diversity as something that benefits the country and makes it richer.

In contrast, republicanism sees cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity as a personal matter and discourages its public recognition. Republicanism tends to demand that people assimilate, but may not provide sufficient means for them to do so. France is a prime example of the republican paradigm in Europe.

Multiculturalism and republicanism are ideal types, of course. Most states stake out a hybrid position somewhere along the spectrum between the two. In Canada, for example, the state celebrates and supports multiculturalism but insists that all residents embrace a core set of values and exhibit a core set of virtues, of which tolerance and civility are the two most important.

Any model of integration can have strengths and weaknesses, depending on how it is implemented. Every society has to decide what model they wish to adopt and how to implement it, while understanding that societal integration is a never-ending process for migrants and non-migrants alike.

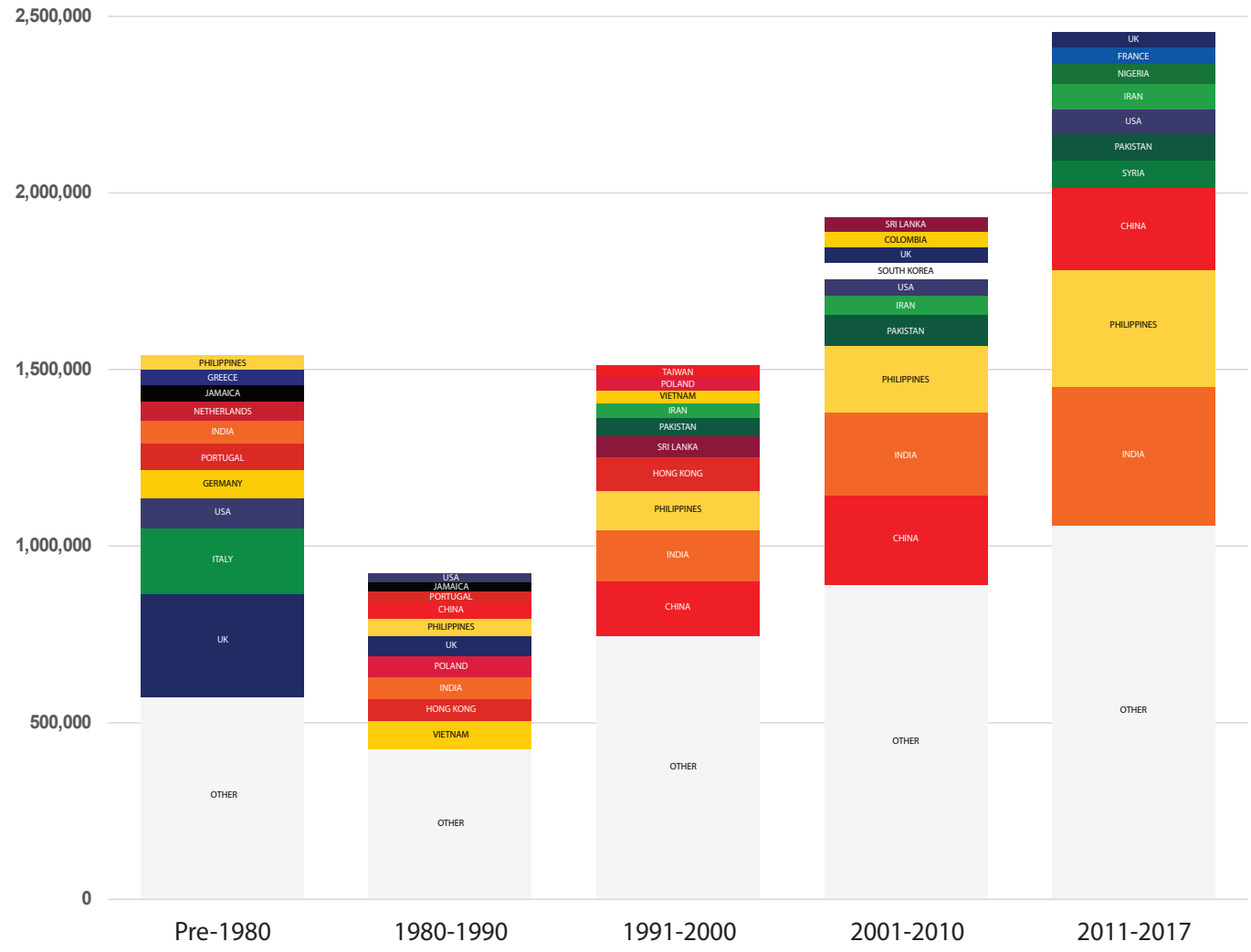
What can we learn from varying policy approaches to immigration? Canada, Spain, and the United Kingdom offer a number of enlightening contrasts.

First, consider Canada. While all three countries have seen immigration as a solution to labour shortages, Canada stands out for the degree to which it has openly acknowledged the economic and demographic benefits of immigration. Unlike Spain and the United Kingdom, Canada has also traditionally seen immigration as a nation-building tool. Canada has actively pursued migrants who will settle long-term and become citizens. Historically, it has even been common for migrants to arrive with permanent residency status.

Canada's population was approximately 40 million people as of the summer of 2023, including citizens, permanent residents, and temporary residents. Some people arrive as temporary residents, while others arrive with permanent residency ("PR") status. After three years, someone with PR status can apply for citizenship. Many temporary residents become permanent residents and eventually citizens. It can be challenging to keep track of immigration numbers because these categories can overlap. For example, many people are already in the country as temporary residents when they receive their PR status.

Canada has a variety of programs that can lead to permanent residency. For the last few years, the country has welcomed approximately 450,000 new permanent residents each year.

Temporary residents are permitted to stay in Canada for a defined period. They may be visitors, workers, or students. Canada has a bewildering variety of temporary residence pro-



Canada: Place of birth by period of immigration

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0349-01, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810034901

grams. Many temporary residents arrive through a particular program, such as the Working Holiday Program, Temporary Foreign Worker Program, International Mobility Program, or International Spouse Program.

Among temporary residents, the number of international students in Canada has increased dramatically in recent years. This is owing partly to the welcoming policies of the Canadian federal and provincial governments — the latter of which have primary jurisdiction over education policy — and to strong global demand for international education. Canadian provinces have been quite willing to meet that demand. Most provinces allow colleges and universities to charge international students much higher tuition fees than they charge domestic students. While provincial education funding has fallen, tuition fees and admissions for international students have continued to rise.

As a settler-colonial state with well-established immigration pathways, it is no surprise that one in three Canadian businesses is owned by someone born elsewhere. One in four Canadian health care workers is an immigrant as well.

Canada has three core policy pathways and narratives for permanent residency: economic, family, and humanitarian. The economic pathway accounts for approximately 60 percent of new permanent residents each year. The family pathway accounts for another 30 percent — mostly spouses and children of citizens or other permanent residents. Finally, the humanitarian category includes refugees resettled from camps abroad, as well as some asylum seekers.

Economic immigration is highly regulated and targeted. To be eligible for permanent residency under the economic pathway, applicants must generally be young and highly skilled. Canada awards points for criteria such as age, skills, education, and French language ability. People arriving in Canada as permanent residents are eligible to receive support from the state, including for language training, childhood education, and finding employment. However, deskilling and discrimination in the labour market do occur. Racialized immigrants with the same skills and levels of education as white European immigrants are particularly likely to experience these.

The economic benefits of immigration in Canada are geographically concentrated. Approximately 90 percent of

Canada's population lives within 200 km of the border with the United States, and most immigrants tend to settle within larger communities. Small, remote towns, which often struggle to attract and retain even people born in Canada, similarly struggle to attract and retain the people they need from overseas. As a result, Canadian provinces have their own programs to attract and retain immigrants as well.

Canada's narrative about economic immigration is instrumental: "The more immigrants, the better for our economy." This narrative has been criticized as misleading, largely owing to the challenges that many new immigrants face in the job market. For example, foreign-trained doctors, lawyers, engineers and other professionals have faced difficulties having their credentials and experience recognized, leading to concerns about "brain waste" in Canada.

Under the family pathway, Canada is very open to immediate family members of citizens and permanent residents. Canada recognizes not only married spouses, but also common law partners and unmarried children up to the age of 22. However, the policy is less open to the parents of adult children, although this approach has been contested. There are now 30,000 places reserved each year for grandparents, but there is a long backlog of applicants.

The family pathway is associated with competing instrumental and moral narratives. The instrumental narrative justifies the restrictive approach for grandparents on the ground that, as elderly people have not contributed to state income, it is unfair for the state to carry their healthcare and social service burden as they age. A contrasting moral narrative argues that it is wrong to cut off new citizens and permanent residents from their aging parents and grandparents and points out that seniors' children and grandchildren will contribute to state coffers.

The refugee pathway accounts for approximately 10 percent of new permanent residents each year. These are people who have already been recognized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as needing protection. Historically, many refugees have been sponsored by the Canadian state. However, groups of citizens or permanent residents, community sponsors, and eligible community organizations can sponsor refugees privately as well. For example, friends and family can sponsor refugees. The sponsor must provide the refugee with sufficient financial and other support during their first year in Canada. Since 2015, a growing number of Canadians have sponsored refugees without having a personal connection to them. Canada has been recognized internationally as a leader for this program. However, some have criticized this on the ground that the state is offloading responsibility to its citizens.

Canada is one of the only countries to acknowledge that when people have family in crisis situations overseas, they should have the opportunity to get those family members to safety and support them in Canada. Canada achieves this through "complementary pathways" — small-to-medium sized programs that reflect Canadians' transnational connections.

The largest recent example was in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Canada has one of the largest Ukrainian diaspora populations in the world, with approximately 3.5 percent of Canadians self-reporting Ukrainian ethnic or cultural heritage in the 2021 census — the tenth-largest reported country of origin. Since Russia's invasion, Canada has sent immigration officers to Poland and approved approximately 1 million applications by Ukrainian passport holders to enter Canada. Of that total, only about 300,000 have come to Canada thus far, suggesting that some may have used the program as a safety net without a clear plan to come to Canada. Uniquely among the complementary pathways, there is no numerical limit under the Ukrainian program, although it is not clear how people under this program would transition to permanent residency. Another example followed the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria in January 2023. Canadians were able to able to secure temporary permits for their families to enter the country, leading in some cases to a permanent resettlement process. There have been similar programs for Gazans, Sudanese, Venezuelans, Haitians, and Colombians.

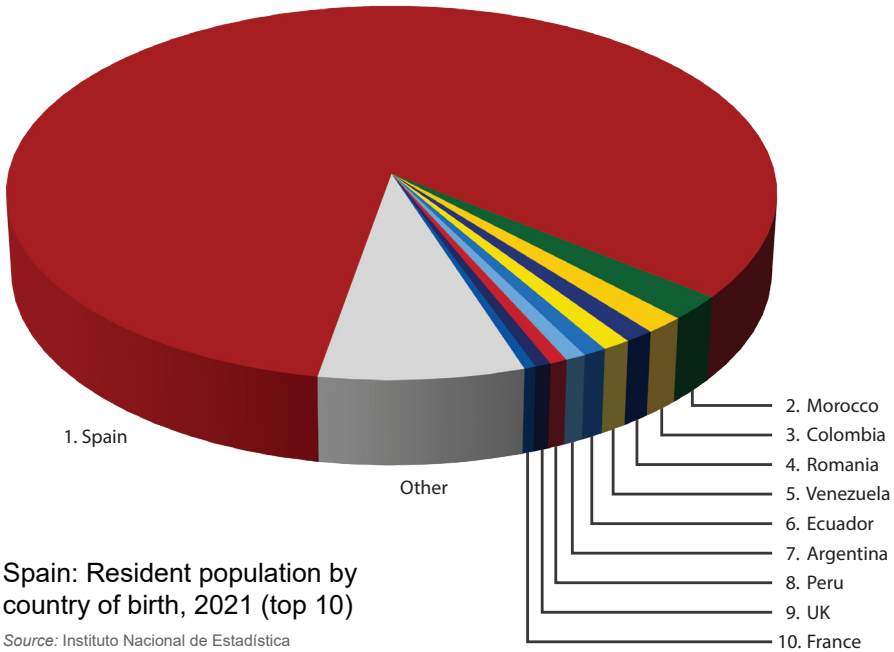
The Canadian system does face challenges. For example, there are transition bottlenecks. Unlike many European countries, where a more progressive, gradual change in residency status is possible, in Canada there is a hard line between temporary and permanent status. This is visible in a symbolic way at airports arrivals counters, where permanent residents line up with Canadian citizens while temporary residents line up with tourists and other foreigners. However, with an increasing number of temporary residents entering the country and wishing to stay, there is growing competition for the relatively small number of PR spots each year. Many temporary residents may have significant links to Canada, but nonetheless receive little support and no guaranteed path to citizenship.

Having surveyed the Canadian context, Dr. Triandafyllidou next considered Spain.

Since the 1980s, Spain has transitioned from being a net source of migrants to being a net destination. In contrast to Canada, however, Spain has taken a reactive, flexible, and demand-driven approach, with comparatively little regulation or planning.

Like Canada, Spain has admitted a high number of immigrants in recent years. In just two decades, the population has risen by approximately 20 percent (Canada's population has grown by approximately 25 percent in the same period). However, the nature of Spain's population growth has been very different from Canada's.

Between 1985 and 2005, many people entered Spain and often began working without legal documentation. During this period, successive Spanish governments favoured policies to "regularize" this population with proactive pathways



Spain: Resident population by country of birth, 2021 (top 10)

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística

to legal status. But Spain has since abandoned this approach, partly in response to pressure from the European Union (EU), as previously-undocumented immigrants to Spain were able to move elsewhere in the EU once they received legal status. Instead, Spain created a system of municipal registration. Under this system, undocumented migrants in Spain are encouraged to register with their municipality, which grants access to childhood schooling and other social rights. After three years, municipal registrants can apply to legalize their immigration status as long as they have a job offer or can demonstrate sufficient ties to Spanish society. Although this process is not referred to as "regularization," it amounts to de facto regularization. Spain is the only European country to have adopted such a system.

Unlike with permanent residents in Canada, Spain does not select migrants based on their skill level, but according to the demands of a fragmented labour market. Regardless of the skills that people have, first-generation immigrants to Spain often find jobs that are "3D" — Dirty, Dangerous, and Demanding. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Spain has experienced significant labour market shortages. As a result, the government has tried to facilitate some international recruitment. However, this has mainly been effective for attracting candidates for higly-skilled white-collar jobs.

Spain is also noteworthy for its enclaves, Ceuta and Melilla, on the North African coast. When people enter these cities, they enter Spanish territory. Once admitted, they can apply for asylum and even move freely to the Spanish mainland, or further into the EU. Spain and the EU have enlisted the cooperation of Moroccan authorities to help enforce the border, making Morocco something of a buffer state. Spain is an attractive destination country for many people, but Spanish and Moroccan border guards have been implicated in human rights abuses and deadly border incidents as they try to prevent irregular entry to Spanish territory.

Another important feature of the Spanish regime is that Spain prioritizes citizenship for Spanish-speaking Latin Americans, owing to their shared language and colonial history. In contrast, although Moroccans constitute the longest-established community in Spain, they have the lowest naturalization percentage. Latin Americans have the highest. Latin Americans can even apply for citizenship after just two years of legal residency, whereas all other non-EU citizens need 10 years of residence in order to apply.

Finally, Dr. Triandafyllidou considered the case of the United Kingdom (UK), which has a total population of approximately 67 million people and net immigration of between 200,000 and 300,000 people per year. This again underscores the dynamism of the Canadian system, which has a smaller population but a larger number of annual immigrants.

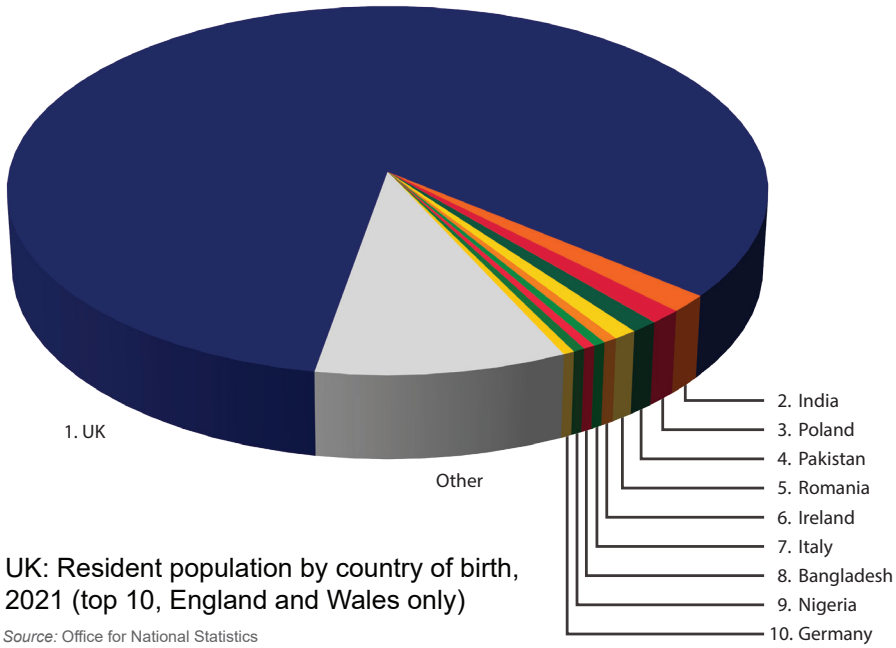
After five years of residency, an immigrant to the UK can apply for "Settled Status," which is equivalent to permanent residency in Canada. In theory, they can also apply for citizenship after five years, but in practice this can take 6–7 years. In comparison, Canada allows citizenship applications after three years as a permanent resident, and Spain after ten.

The UK has seen major changes in its immigration regime in the transitions from empire to the EU then to Brexit. In the late 1990s, the UK economy was very dynamic and faced a worker shortage. The narrative at the time focused on competition to attract the best workers from around the world. In fact, when ten countries joined the EU in 2004, the UK, Ireland, and Sweden were the only countries to grant people from the new member states immediate access to their labour markets.

In the late 2000s, the global financial crisis contributed to a significant change in public opinion about the benefits of immigration. Narratives questioning the free movement of EU citizens became more prominent. These attitudes foreshadowed Brexit in 2016, signalling a new period for the British immigration system.

In 2021 the UK introduced a new points system similar to the Canadian system. The goal was to attract "the best and the brightest." Unlike Canada, however, the UK requires applicants to have a job offer in hand before they can immigrate.

As for integration, the early 2000s saw growing discourse in the UK questioning whether minorities were sufficiently adapting to British values and the British way of life. In the context of the Global War on Terror , terror attacks, and ris-



UK: Resident population by country of birth, 2021 (top 10, England and Wales only)

Source: Office for National Statistics

ing Islamophobia, Muslims and Middle Easterns were subjected to particular scrutiny.

More recent narrative trends have been connected to socio-economic challenges and global financial instability, with certain British people coming to feel that the country no longer has sufficient control over its borders. Of course, this invites a much larger discussion about the degree to which any country has control over its borders and about how globalization has interacted with both the reality and the idea of national sovereignty.

Dr. Triandafyllidou then summarized the key differences between the three cases she examined, and considered whether they hold any lessons that are applicable to Japan today:

- First, all three countries emphasize labour migration; but while Canada and the UK prioritize highly-skilled immigration, Spain has been open to any immigration that might help with labour market shortages.

- Second, Spain has taken a laissez-faire and reactive approach, regularizing migration after the fact. Canada and the UK have been more proactive. Canada has paired targeted policies with a strong narrative that immigration is a key tool for nation-building.

- Third, in terms of citizenship requirements, Canada is currently the most open of the three countries. Spain has taken a mixed approach, privileging some nationalities over others.

Thinking about the future, a key theme for all three countries, which is also relevant for Japan, is how to manage aging societies with complex health needs. Another consideration is the role of technology in connecting us. For example, the Internet can help transnational diasporas maintain close ties to their countries of origin and take a proactive approach to migration. However, the Internet, social media, and fake news have shown their capacity to divide as well as to connect.

Relatedly, in an era of growing and overlapping crises and disasters around the globe, offering people protection and managing migration flows is increasingly challenging. But challenges also mean opportunities. As more people seek protection abroad, countries can offer safe harbour, opportunity, and integration to young, skilled, and wealthy migrants. Both can benefit.

Finally, Dr. Triandafyllidou said that the most important thing to remember is that societies are always changing. This means that integration is not just a matter for immigrants, but a never-ending general process for society as a whole — and one that increasingly requires international cooperation to manage in an orderly way.

Following her presentation, Dr. Triandafyllidou was first asked whether the old "melting pot" narrative, so common in U.S. mythology, is dead. Is the idea of a melting pot still relevant? Do any countries still embracing this approach to integration? Dr. Triandafyllidou replied that no country has ever been a true melting pot. Also, different policies and narratives might also anticipate and produce different outcomes from the same "melting pot" metaphor. In Canada, for example, it is widely expected that there is space for immigrant cultures, but the state also spent many decades attempting to destroy and forcibly assimilate Indigenous cultures. Other countries, such as France, have more commonly promoted the idea that immigrant integration should lead to assimilation with the dominant culture.

The next question concerned citizenship revocation. Can any of the countries she examined revoke citizenship after it is granted? Dr. Triandafyllidou acknowledged that this was discussed after terrorist attacks in Europe in 2015. There was a proposal in France to rescind citizenship for dual citizens suspected of being involved in terrorist attacks, but the proposal was defeated in Parliament. In Canada, permanent residency can be revoked for certain criminal offences. However, when former Prime Minister Stephen Harper proposed revoking citizenship for "disloyalty" during an election campaign in 2015, it was widely recognized as a dog whistle and dismissed. Among other things, revoking citizenship can create statelessness, which violates international law.

Next, Dr. Triandafyllidou was asked about integration policy trends in Canada, Spain, and the UK. Are there signs of a

convergence related to multiculturalism? Dr. Triandafyllidou replied that all three countries have seen changes, but not necessarily convergence. In 2015, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau described Canada as the "first post-national state." Whether or not we agree with that description, it is undeniable that the content of Canadian citizenship is constantly evolving. In Europe, discourse has changed more than policy. For example, leaders in the Netherlands and the UK have increasingly described multiculturalism as a failure, but they have not changed their overall approach much. If there is a trend, it is toward a stronger affirmation of national identity.

The next participant observed that Spanish regularization seems unique. Belgium and Italy have forcibly expelled most of the undocumented immigrants that they have identified. But Spanish regularization seems to prioritize increasing the labour supply. In response, Dr. Triandafyllidou suggested that expulsions in Italy may have resulted from poor policy design rather than a desire to force people to leave. The Italian system required people to prove certain things that could not necessarily be proven, owing to a lack of documentation. It is also important to note that our collective imagination about undocumented migrants is often inaccurate. With respect to the Mediterranean, for example, discourse and news coverage focuses on dramatic stories of small boats arriving from North Africa; but most people arrive legally — for example, as tourists — and simply overstay their visas. In Italy, the typical undocumented migrant is not a young sub-Saharan man who arrived illegally on a boat, as we might imagine, but a middle-aged Eastern European woman working as a family caregiver.

Canada is also planning regularization for certain people who have fallen through the cracks of the existing system. This includes, for example, students who lack status even though they may have lived in Canada for six or seven years. While Canada's immigration regime overall is often considered very open, it is worth noting that Canada does not protect mixed-status families. In other words, Canada may expel an undocumented spouse even if they have Canadian children.

Overall, people in different countries have very different views about regularization, often mediated by their economic and social position and by their understanding of the national interest. For example, farmers or business owners who need workers tend to support regularization, whereas people who feel threatened by more workers tend to oppose it. Younger people and city-dwellers tend to support regularization, and people in smaller rural communities, older people, less educated people, and women who do not work outside the home tend to be less supportive.

Next, Dr. Triandafyllidou was asked how states and international institutions can manage the increasingly dynamic nature of immigration and integration. Dr. Triandafyllidou replied by highlighting that Spain, for instance, has relied on the European border guard agency (FRONTEX) to provide training, equipment, and general assistance with border control. So, international institutions are certainly playing a role. In terms of integration, people will ultimately integrate, often against the odds and despite unwelcoming policies. We should ask whether we want to burden first-generation immigrants, or whether we can make integration more accessible, especially for people who are visibly different from the national majority.

The next question was about international education. In Canada, how much of the growth in international students has been policy-driven, and what are the labour force considerations? For context, there was a recent Japanese proposal to increase the number of Japanese students going abroad, increase the number of foreign students in Japan, and boost the percentage of foreign students who can find work in Japan (from 48 percent to 60 percent) by 2033. How do Canada and other countries encourage certain types of students to stay? Dr. Triandafyllidou observed that international students can be among the best people to attract and retain. However, international student policy has been a growing issue in Canada. For one thing, international students in Canada tend to pay much higher tuition fees than domestic students. International students thus fill gaps in provincial education funding. From a global perspective, it seems unjust for people from middle-income countries to help fund education for Canadians.

In 2014, programs were introduced to facilitate retention of international students. But we can think of Canada as having two types of higher-education markets: education-oriented academic universities, and immigration-oriented vocational colleges. Generally, international students come to universities primarily to study and earn a reputable academic degree. They may or may not try to stay in Canada afterwards. The college sector is very different. International students have come to see the college sector as a path to enter Canada and join the labour market. In some cases, youth who could not enter highly competitive and more expensive universities will enrol in colleges instead. It is also common for people with training and experience abroad — for example, in nursing — to enrol in a college in Canada to study the same thing that they have already trained in abroad. As there is far more demand for permanent residency than supply, the college sector is under growing scrutiny for working at cross-purposes with national policy.

Next, Dr. Triandafyllidou was asked about political polarization. Immigration politics can be messy in any country. In the United States, there is a high degree of polarization between the extreme right and political left. However, stable immigration policy requires long-term public support. How can countries manage political polarization as it relates to immigration policy? Dr. Triandafyllidou suggested that we should distinguish between ideological polarization, which is generally good for democracy, and effective polarization,

which is not. Democracies are healthiest when people can come together and reasonably disagree about policy in good faith. However, social media, bad-faith politics, and disinformation campaigns have facilitated growing polarity and extremism. True far-right parties have not yet gained significant ground in Canada, Spain, or the UK. In Spain, this can partly be explained by the memory of dictator Francisco Franco, whose rule lasted until 1975. If there is an answer to polarization, it will involve treating immigration and integration policies as works in progress. Societies must be vigilant so that nobody feels left behind. Once people feel excluded, it can be very difficult to get them re-engaed in the democratic process, as we have recently seen in the United States.

Next, Dr. Triandafyllidou was asked about the significance of having children of immigrants achieve high office, such as Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in the UK and President Nicolas Sarkozy in France. Does this tell us anything about integration in those countries? Dr. Triandafyllidou observed that both Sunak and Sarkozy adopted right-wing, anti-immigration positions. This certainly demonstrates that the system is working for some people, and that people can acquire national ideologies within a generation. However, migrants and their children should not be assumed to have progressive immigration politics.

Dr. Triandafyllidou was also asked to elaborate on where refugees and asylum seekers fit in global migration governance. Is there something unique about the experience of refugees and asylum seekers today? Dr. Triandafyllidou replied that the global governance regime for asylum seekers today is not very different from in the past. Some asylum seekers will be successful and settle in their new country; others will return later to their country of origin. However, the experience of asylum seekers can tell us something about how countries perceive their sovereignty and immigration regime. For example, Canada's isolated geography gives it a lot of control over its borders. This has generally given Canada the luxury of deciding who gets to come in. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of people entering the United States from abroad but applying for asylum in Canada. The U.S. and Canadian governments worked together to make this more difficult, particularly by means of the Safe Third Country Agreement, which prohibits "forum shopping." An asylum seeker who lands in Canada or the United States must make their refugee claim there. Of course, many people have sought to avoid being turned away at official border crossings by using unmonitored, irregular routes. A prime example is Roxham Road, which links New York State with Quebec but is not an official border crossing. In 2022, approximately 40,000 people crossed the border at Roxham Road to make asylum claims. This attracted a great deal of media attention and generated considerable outrage. But 40,000 is a comparatively small number of people for a country of 40 million people, especially considering that Canada proactively welcomes roughly 450,000 permanent residents and over 1.2 million temporary residents each year. Roxham Road was closed in March 2023, but the disproportionate response to the relatively small number of irregular crossings that took place there tells us something about how countries focus on border control, as well as about how the border experience shapes narratives about which migrants are deemed acceptable. Italy offers a related example. There is comparatively little concern about large numbers of undocumented female care workers and cleaners from Eastern Europe. However, young sub-Saharan African men arriving in boats are highly visible, and this contributes to narratives suggesting that borders are "out of control" and Italy's sovereignty is under threat.

Finally, Dr. Triandafyllidou was asked about the experience of Indians in Canada. While people of Indian origin seem to participate widely in the economy, they are hardly represented in politics. Is there friction or unequal treatment between migrants of different ethnic origins? Dr. Triandafyllidou replied that during the 2016–2021 period, Indians represented the largest immigrant nationality by origin, followed by Filipinos and Chinese. This may be explained in part by India's demographic strength: the country has a rising middle class aspiring for a better future. Social media and the Internet can also make socio-economic progress and migration appear more attainable, increasing demand. Interestingly, some diasporas in Canada, including elements of the South Asian diaspora, are not happy to see so many people from their own countries of origin following them. This counterintuitive example once again underscores a few key themes: namely, that immigration politics can be more nuanced than many narratives suggest; society is always changing; and integration truly is an unending process — for all of us.

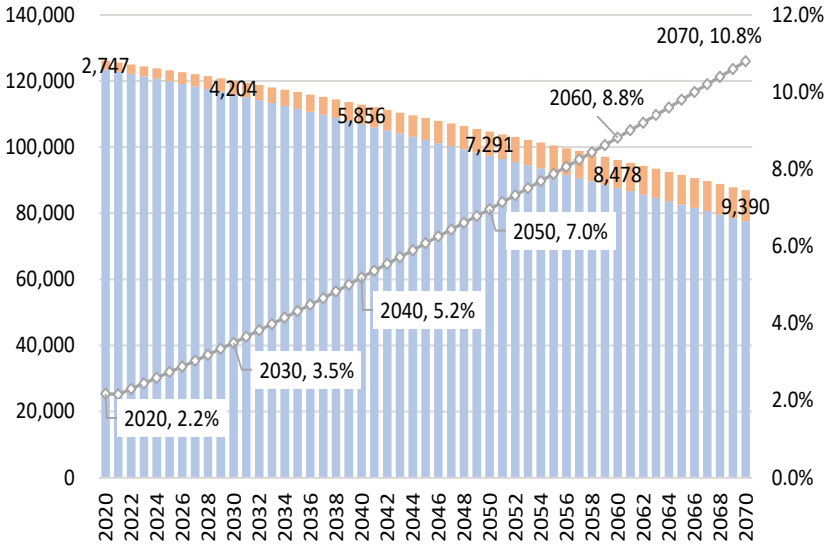
Japan's Immigration Policy in Global Perspective

Yu Korekawa

National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, Tokyo, Japan

The second presentation was delivered by Dr. Yu Korekawa. Dr. Korekawa is the Director of International Research and Cooperation at the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, and a specialist in migration. Dr. Korekawa offered a detailed picture of Japan's place in the international and regional labour market; Japan's approach to recruiting, developing and integrating foreign workers; and what recent trends can tell us about Japan's demographic future.

Dr. Korekawa began his remarks by noting that it has sometimes been said that "there is no such thing as immigration policy in Japan." However, the 3 million immigrants living in Japan today might well beg to differ. At present, Japan is the largest destination country in Asia's international labour market. Japan's popularity as a destination for foreign workers is likely to continue as a result of its comparative advantages and its proposed Skill Developing Worker Program (SDWP), under which foreign workers would be able to integrate into Japan's internal labour market more easily, which would help to minimize wage gaps. In the years ahead, we should expect international labour migration — particularly from Asia — to have a great impact on both Japan's demographics and its labour market.



Projected Japanese and foreign population

Source: IPSS (2023)

In April 2023, the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (IPSS) published updated population projections, based upon Japan's 2020 Population Census. The projections incorporated certain assumptions about fertility, mortality, and migration, and forecast population trends under different scenarios for the 2020–2070 period. The projections included nine different scenarios with combinations of low, medium, and high mortality rates and total fertility rates (TFRs), as well as projected levels of international migration.

Based on the average value from 2016 to 2019, the report assumed that the net number of non-Japanese migrants in 2040 will be 163,791. By 2070, under the medium mortality/medium fertility scenario, Japan's total population is anticipated to be 86,996,000. We can expect approximately 10.8 percent (roughly 9,390,000) of that total to be foreign immigrants, a large increase from the proportion in 2020.

Although Japan's population will decrease significantly from its current level (126.15 million in the 2020 Population Census), the expected drop is slightly less than in earlier projections. For example, while the 2017 projection anticipated a total population of 88.08 million in 2065, the 2023 projection anticipated a total population of 91.59 million in the medium fertility, medium mortality scenario. Relatedly, while Japan's total population will fall below 100 million between 2053 and 2056, the rate of population decline will be slightly lower than in the 2017 forecast owing to a slight increase in life expectancy and the large rise in expected net immigration.

Based on the average statistical value from 2016 to 2019, the 2023 projection more than doubled the expected number of net annual migrants compared to the 2017 projection, which anticipated only 69,275 net annual migrants in 2035. The much higher number of annual migrants expected in the latest projections will make a notable difference for Japan's demographic future, even with a slight decline in the anticipated TFR compared to the 2017 projection. Migration will affect not only the total population, but also the age composition of Japanese society.

250,000 net annual migrants could bring the total population of Japan almost to the same level as the high fertility rate scenario (with a TFR of 1.64), which is considered the upper limit of what might be possible. 500,000 net annual

migrants would have a similar effect on total population as an impossibly high TFR of 2.0. In other words, 500,000 net annual migrants would begin to approach the population replacement level. In case these numbers seem unrealistic, it is worth noting that in 2020 and 2023, Japan experienced more than 300,000 net annual immigrants, and 2024 is continuing the upward trend. In other words, Japan has already exceeded the lower migration scenarios considered in the projections, and these migration rates can be expected to mitigate comparatively low fertility.

Relatedly, 250,000 net annual migrants would have an impact comparable to an unrealisticaly high fertility rate on the percentage of Japan's population over the age of 65. To reiterate, Japan has already been exceeding this level of immigration. Japan has already attained 300,000 net annual immigrants. 500,000 net annual migrants would have an even more dramatic effect, shrinking the proportion of elderly people in Japan.

While this level of migration may sound dramatic, it is important and helpful to place Japan in international context. In 2021, just 2.3 percent of Japan's total population was foreign-born. This means Japan currently has one of the lowest proportionate shares of foreigners out of all Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries. Even if 10.8 percent of Japan's population is foreign-born by 2070, as expected under the medium-mortality/medium-fertility scenario, that would still place Japan near the bottom third of OECD countries today, and well below the current OECD average of 14.3 percent. This context is very instructive for migration policy in Japan. We can conclude that Japan still has plenty of room to accept more international migrants in the decades ahead.

Where does Japan fit in the overall global migration pattern picture?

To begin, Asia is certainly a global hot spot for international migration. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries attract more migrants from Asia than does the United States. Most migrants in Asia move within the region. In contrast, European and North American countries accept many immigrants from around the world. European countries have welcomed large numbers of immigrants from former colonies, for instance, including in Africa. The United States has experienced a great deal of immigration from South and Central America. Whereas Europe and North America have experienced a great deal of South-to-North migration, migration trends in Asia tend to be more horizontal (predominantly South-to-South).

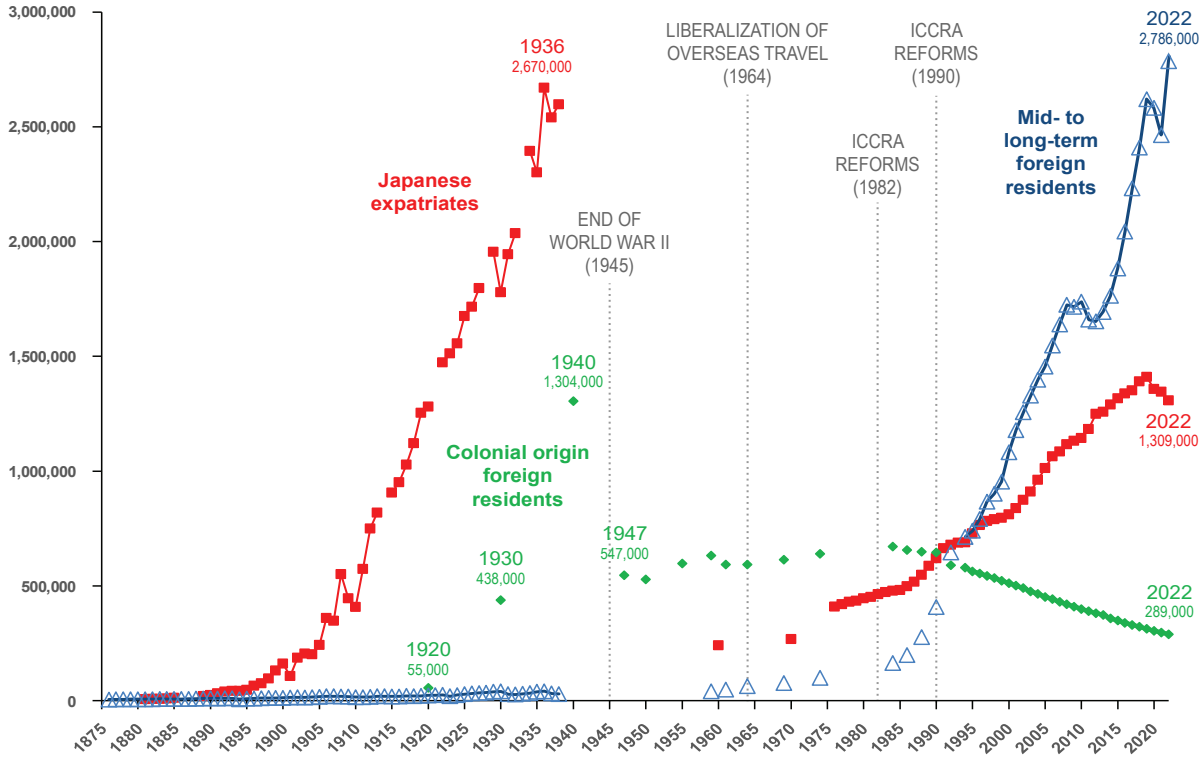
Today, Japan is the largest regional recipient of international migration to a developed country from elsewhere in Asia. There are approximately 5.9 million international migrants in Asia every year, 2.8 million of whom travel to GCC countries, often for dangerous work rife with human rights abuses. Another 2.3 million Asian migrants travel to OECD member states each year. Japan welcomes the largest share (480,000) of this number, followed by Korea (370,000) and the United States (310,000).

Notably, there is a positive relationship between Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and the share of Asian migrants received by Japan and the United States. The higher a country's GDP per capita (measured in U.S. dollars), the more their emigrants go to Japan and the United States. In Korea, we have seen a reversed U-shaped curve. Korea receives a larger share of Asian migrants from countries that have up to approximately $10,000 GDP per capita. After that, the share declines. In GCC countries, there is a negative relationship between economic development and the share of Asian migrants they receive. In other words, the higher a country's GDP per capita, the less attractive the GCC becomes for emigrants. This suggests that Japan has a strong competitive advantage for attracting migrants from countries with comparatively high GDPs per capita.

Japanese migration trends have fluctuated over time. Before World War II, Japan was a country of net emigration. In the 1930s, there were 2.6 million Japanese expatriates in China, the Korean peninsula, and Taiwan. Conversely, there were just 1.3 million colonial-origin migrants in the Japanese islands. Since World War II, migration patterns have gone through four phases. The first phase lasted from 1945 until the 1973 oil crisis. Immediately after the war, following the loss of Japan's colonies, many expatriates returned to Japan and about one half of the colonial-origin people living in Japan returned home. After that, foreign migration to Japan remained very low for decades. The second phase lasted from 1973 until the end of the Cold War in 1989. In this period, more Japanese moved abroad again — for example, as international students and workers in international companies, especially in the United States and Europe. The third phase lasted from 1989 until the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. In this period, Japan became a country of net immigration. By 2003, 2.8 million migrants were living in Japan, and just 1.3 million Japanese were living abroad — a near perfect reversal of the migration balance prior to World War II. The trend continues today.

Across the OECD, it is common for people to migrate for family, humanitarian, and other reasons as well as for work. In the United States, for example, a large proportion of immigrants come to join their families. In the EU, a great deal of migration is free movement in the Schengen Area. In contrast, Asian people tend to migrate for work opportunities. In Japan, as in Canada, migration is significantly weighted toward labour. Migrants' education level and socio-economic status is very important in determining the migration process they follow, the intermediaries they use, the destinations to which they migrate, and the work they perform.

Most international migration in Asia is contract-based and temporary. One key characteristic of international migration in Asia is that commercialized intermediates play an important role in the migration process. For example, highly-edu-



Japan's historical migration patterns

Sources: Various

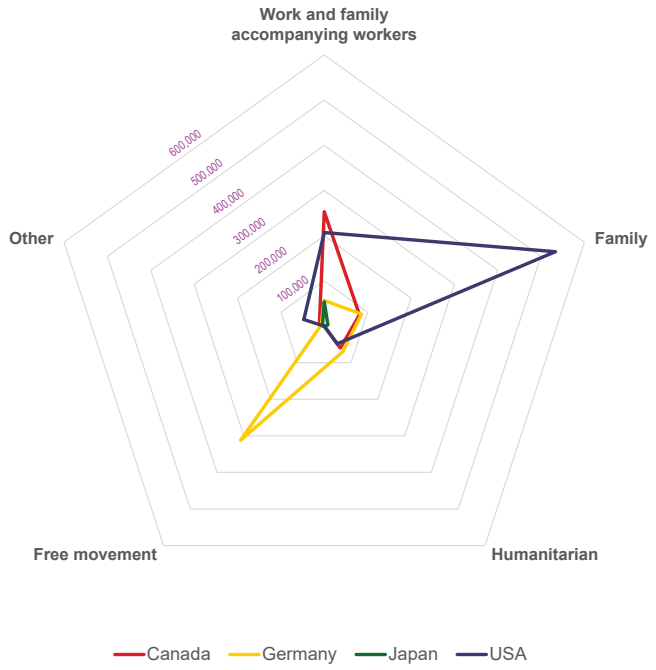
cated people tend to go to universities and language schools in their country of origin. These institutions often help to match migrants with universities in destination countries. Migrants with secondary education tend to use private agencies and brokers to facilitate their migration. In many Asian countries, there are also official sending organizations and government agencies, which provide various services and expertise to help send nationals abroad. For example, migration from Vietnam to Japan tends to involve several layers of intermediaries. There are many types of brokers, and local cities and small towns also play a major role. Common intermediaries include schoolteachers, Buddhist monks, and public employment agencies, all of which can shape the migration path people take. People are dispatched mainly to big cities, where there are many official sending organizations and skill development centres. Migrants are trained, authorized, and dispatched to destination countries. India and other sending countries in Asia take a similar approach.

Japan and Korea tend to accept more highly educated migrants from within the region. Asian migrants with less education tend to go to GCC countries instead. Japan also experiences stepping-stone migration, where migrants will first come under the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) and later return to study in a Japanese language school in pursuit of future opportunities.

Another characteristic of Asian migration is that migrants and their governments often place more weight on economic benefits than human rights. Individual migrants are motivated to make money. This can lead people to overlook human rights and other abuses. For example, migrants might be reluctant to sue an abusive employer and instead simply try to find another job that allows them to earn more.

Looking back at the last three decades, the economic gap between Japan and other Asian countries has rapidly shrunk and migrant flows have changed. Some people have argued that Japan's economic advantage is being lost and that it will not be an attractive destination for international migrants in the future. However, Japan has been experiencing more net immigration, not less. In the last two years, Japan has seen its highest numbers of migrants ever, and this growth is expected to continue. Immigration from fast-growing China grew even as the economic gap between the countries shrank. While this may at first glance appear paradoxical, it is possible that economic growth can accelerate emigration from a country by increasing its population's aspirations and capabilities for migration.

Thus, despite a shrinking economic gap compared to other Asian countries, Japan still has advantages that attract migrants. Notably, the Japanese economy has been relatively stable with a low unemployment rate. Japan's employment style, with seniority-based employment and long-term contracts, tends to reduce uncertainty for migrants as well. In terms of length of stay, immigrants with SSW(ii) status may renew their residency indefinitely, permitting them to work as long as they want. SSW(ii) status is the second category in the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) program. It requires



Immigration pathways

Source: OECD International Migration Outlook 2023

"proficient skills" rather than just the "considerable" knowledge or experience in a Specified Industry Field required for SSW(i) status.

It is also important to note that migration costs and liquidity constraints have been decreasing for many migrants, owing to the depreciation of the Japanese yen. We can see the effects of this today. The positive impact of depreciation for migrants (minimizing their migration costs) has been larger than the negative impact (decreasing their real expected earnings). This helps explain the record number of migrants Japan has attracted in the past two years.

Recent data from Gallup underscore Japan's popularity for Asian migrants. Gallup regularly polls an international audience to ask about their ideal destination countries. Since 2009, Japan has consistently ranked in the top 10. Japan's rank increased slightly after 2015 and became the second-highest ranked country during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of 2023, Japan ranked 4th, having lost some popularity because of its strict border controls. In these results, there is also a positive relationship between education level and Japanese ranking (i.e., more educated people tend to rank Japan as a destination more highly).

Japan's migration policy is evidently very work-oriented. Numerous important policy developments have helped position Japan to attract labour migrants from across the region. In 1989, Japan undertook a second reform of its Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (ICRRA), creating working visas and a new pathway to a permanent visa for foreigners. In 1993, Japan launched the TITP and began welcoming more workers from overseas. There were several other policy developments from 2012 through 2017, and then in 2019, Japan launched the SSW System. This was Japan's first program to include middle-skilled workers. Most recently, in February 2024, the Japanese Cabinet discussed replacing the TITP with the SDWP. This would help mitigate human rights concerns, as the new program would be in line with new standards promoted by the United Nations Global Compact on Migration.

Despite Japan's growing success in attracting foreign workers, Japanese policymaking in this area is not without challenges. The Japanese employment system has characteristics that often have a negative effect on foreign job-seekers and workers even though they initially seem appealing on account of the employment stability they imply. These include Japan's seniority-based promotion system and the long-term, even lifetime nature of employment, which can represent barriers to entry. Other obstacles include unclear job descriptions and lump recruitment from Japanese universities. It has been common for Japanese companies to hire groups of students upon graduation, promote them based on seniority, and employ them until retirement age. Although this model can reduce uncertainty, it also limits labour-market mobility and employment opportunities, especially for people changing jobs, women, and migrants. Qualified external candidates' skills are often overlooked while underqualified employees are kept in their roles. Seen from another perspective, however, the Japanese labour market is not uniquely restrictive to foreigners. These characteristics have historically limited mobility between companies for Japanese workers as well.

Overall, labour mobility within companies tends to be relatively good, and foreigners who stay with the same company can get promoted. There is a wage gap between Japanese and foreign workers, but much of it can be explained by differences in age, company size, hiring cost, and other such attributes, rather than discrimination. The wage gap is also smallest for highly-skilled workers.

It should be noted that the Japanese employment system is not without benefits for foreign workers. For example, the custom of hiring new graduates as a group allows international students to obtain jobs relatively easily. Although it can be difficult to get hired in the first place outside of traditional group recruitment from universities, once a foreign worker is hired, there is no discrimination based on age.

Relatedly, in terms of pathways to permanent residency, studying in Japan plays an important role. Japan is the largest destination country for international study among non-English speaking OECD member states and enjoys a high retention rate of students after 10 years. The TITP does not have a direct path to permanent residency, but the SSW(ii) status does and the anticipated SDWP would. Approximately 40 percent of new permanent residents between 2016 and 2020 began their initial residency as either international students or highly-skilled workers, which indicates a significant degree of step-wise integration over time.

Overall, compared to other advanced economies, Japan still has a lot of room to welcome foreign migrants to miti-

gate its low fertility rate and aging society. Japan is a key and growing player in the international labour market in Asia, where rising GDP per capita is a major driver of international migration and temporary labour migration under contract is common. Japan is an especially attractive destination for highly-educated workers and international students. Immigration policy in Japan is labour-oriented and very selective, but the Japanese employment system still has some characteristics that limit labour market mobility. This leads to moderate integration of migrants into Japan's labour market and society. Ongoing policy development, such as the SDWP, could help boost recruitment and integration of foreign workers in Japan, including middle-skilled workers.

While Japan's long-term population decline will remain significant, the speed and extent of that decline will be limited by international migration. Indeed, migration has the potential to offset Japan's low fertility rates and age composition. In 50 years, Japan's population will be much smaller, but there is every reason to expect international migrants and their children to play a major role in the country's economic and societal future.

A brief but lively Q&A session followed Dr. Korekawa's presentation.

The first question was about currency depreciation. A cheaper yen has clearly created some economic benefits, including for migrants. Should we still be worried about the weakness of the yen vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar when it comes to attracting foreign migrants? Dr. Korekawa acknowledged that depreciation certainly has some negative effects. However, as long as Japan's GDP per capita remains high relative to migrant-sending countries, depreciation will have a limited effect on the number of migrants travelling to Japan. Relatedly, Japan has no real direct competitors in the international labour market. Of course, Australia, Canada, and Germany have higher GDPs per capita than does Japan; but they accept a limited number of international workers. It is true that some migrants prefer to go to other Western countries, but not all of them can do so. This is why we can conclude that Japan has no true competitors, especially for highly-skilled and highly-educated migrants.

The next participant observed that, while Japan's system of accepting foreign migrants has been moving quickly in a positive direction since 2019, South Korea and Taiwan are providing tough competition. Southeast Asian countries are also running out of room to send workers to Japan, so Japan is having to expand its search for the types of workers it wants to attract. Will the number of foreign workers in Japan be able to keep growing? Can Japan truly overcome competition with South Korea and other countries for scarce workers? Dr. Korekawa acknowledged that South Korea and Taiwan have strong foreign worker programs and are popular as destination countries in the international labour market. However, neither country has an effective upskilling process. Even highly educated people struggle to find jobs in South Korea. In fact, the South Korean government has been encouraging Japanese companies to hire talented young South Korean workers in Japan. Similarly, while Taiwan accepts many foreign workers, especially low-skilled workers, they are not effectively upskilled. Japan is very different. The TITP and SSW allow workers to move up the career ladder within the same workplace and even take management and leadership positions in the company. As long as Korea and Taiwan struggle to offer effective upskilling pathways for foreign migrants, they will struggle to compete with Japan for international labour immigration.

The next question was about the TITP, about which there have been many horror stories. Is it truly a system of "slavery," as some have suggested? Or is the current system simply a product of policy trial and error? Dr. Korekawa suggested that the negative aspects of the TITP reflect certain broader realities related to international labour migration in general. In fact, some characteristics of the TITP help to mitigate challenges that are common in international labour migration. However, from the layperson's perspective, the TITP gets blamed as the cause of the problems that workers experience because of its high visibility. Of course, the program is not perfect, but it is helpful to a certain extent.

Finally, a participant asked about Japanese identity and migrant integration. Are recent migration and demographic patterns affecting Japanese understandings of what it means to be Japanese? Are there enough data for us to assess how well second-generation immigrants are integrating into Japanese society? Dr. Korekawa replied that identity is arguably the highest hurdle for Japan when it comes to growing migration and enhancing integration. Although his presentation focused on statistical and policy analysis, there are evidently political and ideational dimensions to consider as well. On the one hand, many foreigners in Japan have established their own lives, built personal networks, and formed deep attachments and connections within Japanese society. We should not neglect this reality. At the same time, social context, collective mind, and politics represent major hurdles that can limit Japanese comfort with the idea of more immigration and can prevent immigrants from feeling accepted. We should think about how to overcome these barriers, especially given the successful integration that is happening. Put another way, there is a concrete reality of integration, and there are the ideas that society has built up about immigration. We should keep both in mind, rather than neglecting one dimension in favour of the other.

Reexamining Japan in Global Context

Immigration Policy

May 24, 202, Tokyo, Japan

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Dr. Yu Korekawa began his professional career as a staff economist of the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, in 2003. He worked for the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy (CEFP), which the Prime Minister chairs, and was a deputy director in charge of policy planning and economic analysis. In 2012, he took up a position at the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (IPSS), where he has been in charge of international migration and migration policy research. Since 2013, he has been a delegate of Japan to the Working Party on Migration and the Expert Group on Migration at the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development. Dr. Korekara obtained a B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from the University of Tokyo, as well as an M.A. from University of California, Irvine.

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