Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales ICADE

WHY IS IMMIGRATION IN JAPAN FAILING? A CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

Autor: Leonor Rosales March

Director: Covadonga Meseguer Yebra

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Abstract

Migration has become a central component of demographic and economic change in advanced economies, particularly now, due to population ageing and labour shortages. Japan represents a critical case, as it faces acute demographic decline while maintaining a long-standing reluctance to adopt a comprehensive immigration policy.

This study analyses why Japan's immigration policy has failed to meet its stated objectives. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research examines the evolution of migration policy through economic, institutional and cultural variables. It focuses on key policy instruments, including the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) system, the Technical Intern Training Programme (TITP), and the Highly Skilled Professional (HSP) framework.

The findings show that although Japan has expanded its labour migration channels, these reforms have not resulted in a coherent immigration system. Instead, the country still relies on fragmented and temporary side-door channels, which reflect the persistence of the "non-immigration principle," reinforced by institutional rigidity and cultural narratives of homogeneity.

The study concludes that Japan's immigration policy underperforms not due to a lack of economic demand, but because of structural constraints that limit long-term settlement and policy coherence.

Keywords: immigration policy, Japan, labour migration, demographic decline, institutional constraints

Resumen

La migración se ha convertido en un componente central del cambio demográfico y económico en las economías avanzadas, especialmente ahora, debido al envejecimiento de la población y la escasez de mano de obra. Japón representa un caso crítico, ya que enfrenta un marcado declive demográfico a la vez que mantiene una reticencia histórica a adoptar una política migratoria integral.

Este estudio analiza por qué la política migratoria de Japón no ha logrado alcanzar sus objetivos declarados. Mediante un enfoque cualitativo de estudio de caso, la investigación examina la evolución de la política migratoria a través de variables económicas, institucionales y culturales. Se centra en instrumentos clave de la política, como el sistema de Trabajadores Calificados Específicos (SSW), el Programa de Capacitación para Pasantes Técnicos (TITP) y el marco de Profesionales Altamente Calificados (HSP).

Los resultados muestran que, si bien Japón ha ampliado sus canales de migración laboral, estas reformas no han dado como resultado un sistema migratorio coherente. En cambio, el país sigue dependiendo de canales informales, fragmentados y temporales, que reflejan la persistencia del "principio de no inmigración", reforzado por la rigidez institucional y las narrativas culturales de homogeneidad.

El estudio concluye que la política de inmigración de Japón no cumple con las expectativas no por falta de demanda económica, sino por limitaciones estructurales que restringen el asentamiento a largo plazo y la coherencia de las políticas.

Palabras clave: política de inmigración, Japón, migración laboral, declive demográfico, limitaciones institucionales

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Abbreviations

AC	Advisory Council
DI	Discursive Institutionalism
EHI	Engineer / Specialist in Humanities / International Services
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
HSP	Highly Skilled Professional
ICRRA	Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act
ISA	Immigration Services Agency
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBS	Points-Based System
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
SSW	Specified Skilled Worker
TITP	Technical Intern Training Programme
TITIs	Technical Intern Trainees

1. Introduction

Japan needs foreign workers but resists becoming an immigration country. It is currently facing one of the most severe demographic transformations among advanced economies (*Japan Demographics 2026 (Population, Age, Sex, Trends)* n.d.; *World Population Prospects 2022*, 2022). Projections indicate that Japan's total population will continue to decline significantly in the coming decades, while the old-age dependency ratio will rise sharply, placing increasing pressure on economic growth and social welfare systems (*World Population Prospects 2022*, 2022).

In most advanced economies, immigration has been used as a key mechanism to mitigate labour shortages and demographic decline. However, Japan presents a notable exception. Despite clear structural demand for foreign labour, the country has historically maintained a restrictive immigration policy, with relatively low levels of foreign population compared to other developed states (Akaha, 2006a; Green, 2017a).

This creates a central puzzle. Since the late 1980s, Japan has increasingly relied on foreign workers through various programmes and reforms, including recent initiatives such as the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) system. These measures suggest a gradual opening of the labour market. Yet, at the same time, Japanese authorities continue to deny being an immigration country and maintain policies that limit long-term settlement (Rehm, 2024). How can a country that depends on foreign labour continue to resist immigration as a formal policy?

This paper addresses this question by examining why Japan's immigration policy has struggled to meet its stated objectives despite repeated reforms. It argues that the limitations of Japan's approach are not primarily economic but rather stem from structural constraints rooted in institutional arrangements and cultural narratives. In particular, the persistence of a "non-immigration principle," combined with bureaucratic fragmentation and reliance on temporary labour migration channels, has resulted in a system that accommodates foreign workers without enabling long-term settlement.

To explore this argument, the study adopts a qualitative case study approach, combining theoretical insights from migration studies with an analysis of Japan's policy evolution. It focuses on key migration channels, including the Technical Intern Training

Programme (TITP), the Highly Skilled Professional (HSP) framework, and the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) system. By evaluating policy performance through indicators such as uptake, reliance on indirect migration channels, and access to settlement, the study assesses the extent to which Japan's immigration policy can respond to its demographic and economic challenges.

2. Motives

Japan's rapid demographic ageing and the resulting contraction of its labour force have brought immigration to the forefront of political and economic debate. Despite these structural pressures, the country has historically maintained a restrictive migration framework, relying primarily on indirect mechanisms for the admission of foreign labour. As noted in the *International Migration Outlook* (2024), "some of the main immigration destination countries have begun imposing restrictions on other legal migration pathways to curb net immigration and ease pressure on the housing market and on public services." However, countries must strike a balance if they want to remain competitive, as advanced economies face demographic ageing, which reduces the pool of native-born, entry-level workers and creates persistent labour shortages.

Within this context, the present study aims to examine whether recent policy developments, most notably the introduction of the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) system, constitute a substantive transformation of Japan's migration regime or rather reinforce the continuity of its established approach. Japan is selected as a case study because it faces a challenge that many other countries are likely to encounter in the near future: not only population decline, but also low fertility rates, rising living standards, and labour market conditions that make it increasingly difficult for nationals to sustain their livelihoods. As such, Japan may serve as a reference point for other countries, and analysing its successes and limitations can provide insights into how immigration policies might be adapted to address structural labour shortages in advanced economies.

The relevance of this research lies in addressing the apparent contradiction between the increasing economic demand for foreign workers and the persistence of institutional arrangements that constrain long-term settlement. In doing so, the study seeks to demonstrate that migration policy outcomes cannot be explained solely through

economic considerations but must also be understood in relation to institutional constraints, political strategies, and societal attitudes.

Accordingly, the research is guided by the following question: why does Japan's migration policy continue to yield limited results despite the implementation of recent reforms?

3. Methodology

The analysis is structured in two main stages. First, a theoretical framework is developed drawing on migration theory, including economic approaches to labour migration, the concept of the migration state, and institutionalist perspectives such as path dependency. Key contributions on these topics will be drawn from authors such as Hein de Haas, Hollifield, Adamson, Tsournapas and Pierson.

Secondly, the study conducts an institutional and policy analysis of Japan's immigration system, focusing on key migration channels such as the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) programme, the Technical Intern Training Programme (TITP), and highly skilled migration schemes. The analysis combines qualitative interpretation with selected quantitative indicators to assess policy performance. To evaluate success and failure, the research relies on four main indicators to allow a continuous assessment of the policy gap.

Finally, this research adopts a qualitative case study approach to analyse the evolution and performance of Japan's immigration policy. The case study method is particularly suitable for examining complex policy processes within their real-world context, allowing for an in-depth understanding of how economic, institutional and cultural factors interact over time.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 International Migration and Receiving States

There is a consensus that migration is the movement of people across borders; however, the granularity and purpose are disputed.

The process-oriented definition, examined by Castles et al (1998), depicts migration as a dynamic, multi-stage process shaped by macro-structures, which refer to large-scale institutional factors, but also micro-structures, which include the social networks and cultural capital of the migrants themselves. Therefore, it should be understood as a multi-causal process shaped by structural conditions, individual agency, and the interaction between capabilities and aspirations, rather than by simple push–pull factors (Haas, 2007). This process unfolds in several stages, Castles et al (1998) , suggests that since the end of the Second World War, there have been two phases of international migration; The first from 1945 to the early 1970s, where large numbers of migrant workers were drawn from less develop countries into fast expanding industrial areas in western Europe, North America and Australia (Castles & Miller, 1998). The oil crisis changed the world economy. Capital investments in new industrial areas changed world trade patterns, giving way to the second phase of international migration, starting in the mid-1970s. Each migratory movement has its specific historical pattern, but if one were to make a generalisation, identifying some repeated characteristic and dynamics, the patterns can be summarised in a four-stage model (Böhning, 1984).

Figure 1: *The Four-stage Model of Migration*

Stage	Description	Key Characteristics	Outcome
Temporary Labour Migration	Initial movement of young workers to the host country for employment.	Short-term stay; economically motivated; limited integration; "target-earner" mindset.	Migration is temporary and primarily economic.
Prolonged Stay & Network Formation	Migrants extend their stay and begin forming social networks.	Development of kinship ties; mutual support systems; informal networks; adaptation to host society.	Migration becomes more stable and socially embedded.
Family Reunion	Migrants bring family members or form families in the host country.	Spouses join migrants; shift from temporary to long-term orientation; creation of ethnic communities, schools, and social institutions.	Migration becomes self-sustaining and transitions toward long-term settlement (Castles & Miller, 1998).

Permanent Settlement	Migrants become long-term residents and integrate into the host society.	Access to legal status, citizenship (depending on state policy); cultural diversity increases; potential integration or marginalisation.	Formation of either integrated multicultural societies or marginalised ethnic minorities, depending on state policies.

Source: (Castles & Miller, 1998)

In Understanding Global Migration, Stephen Castle argues that "migration" carries a state-centric, problem-oriented connotation, whereas "mobility" evokes fluid, class-skewed movement; he advocates embedding migration in a social-transformation framework that links macro-structures, agency and inequality (Castles, 2010; 2).

James F. Hollifield et al (2015) offer a disciplinary framing when it comes to migration theory. They believe scholars do not share a single definition to describe the phenomenon. They emphasise that, depending on the discipline, the research questions vary and therefore, the level of analysis changes, making the dominant theories different across disciplines. For example, if we look at migration from a political science perspective, the question would be why states have trouble controlling migration. The important variables would be macro, political, and the study of international systems and therefore the dominant theory would be institutionalist and rationalist. Whereas if one were to look at migration from an economist's perspective, predictive models, relying on rationalist theories of human behaviour framing the research question in terms of scarcity and choice, would be at the centre of the debate, and the level of analysis would be placed on micro and individual variables. The macroeconomic perspective explores what immigrants add to the economy of the receiving society, what emigrants take away from the sending societies, what they send back in remittances, and what the net gain is. In a microeconomic perspective, economists view migrants as utility maximisers who assess opportunity in a cost-benefit way and act accordingly (Brettell & Hollifield, 2015).

Christian Joppke (1998) takes a policy-oriented approach when looking at migrations and defines migration operationally by state intent: "unwanted" vs "legal", with historical regimes such as guest-worker, post-colonial and settler migration. He says the phenomenon of unwanted immigration reflects the gap between restrictionist policy goals and expansionist aspirations. Castle further emphasises that movement of the highly skilled has been designated as professional mobility, while that of the lower-skilled is

called unwanted migration (Castles, 2010). Gary Freeman also observes that the politics of immigration are "broadly expansionist and inclusive" (G. P. Freeman, 1995). He gives two reasons: the first is that the benefits of migration are concentrated (e.g. cheap labour), while the costs are diffused (e.g. increase social expense) (Joppke, 1998). This can be linked to J.Q Wilsons "client politics" (Wilson, 1984) dilemma, a group of powerful individuals steer state policy making for their direct gain. In this case, the "clients" would typically be large employers that benefit from cheap labour; therefore, their gain is concentrated while the costs of accepting all these immigrants are diffused. The state becomes entrapped by the client group's preferences, leading to an open stance on immigration that is not necessarily supported by the public, creating a gap between a restrictive rhetoric and expansionist interests. The second is what he calls "the populist norm". This norm works as a counterweight to the rise of populist rhetoric that frames migrants as threats to national identity or welfare. It obliges governments to base migration policy on universalist, rights-based criteria rather than on popular, exclusionary sentiment.

Migration can thus be understood as a multi-dimensional process, a statistical category, a disciplinary object, a policy problem or a sovereignty challenge.

4.2 Economic Theories of Labour Immigration

Let's look at some economic theories of labour migration to analyse the gap explained by Jopkke and why advanced economies structurally demand foreign labour, even when politically reluctant. From a neoclassical labour market theory, migration is the rational response to wage differentials between regions. At a macro level, workers move from a labour-abundant, low-wage country to a labour-scarce, high-wage country to equalise wages once migration costs are covered. The micro formulation views migrants as investors who calculate the expected discounted net return of moving against higher expected earnings abroad. If the net return is positive, migration occurs. George J. Borjas empirical work applies this framework by modelling wages as a function of skills, experience and immigrant status. He argues that immigration policy should target skill

composition because admitting more skilled migrants rises the host countries endowment[1] and reduces the negative wage impact on low skilled natives[2].

The Dual-labour-market theory (DLMT) rejects the single-market view and posits a structurally segmented economy. A primary sector offers secure, well-paid jobs that are largely reserved for natives, while a secondary sector consists of low-skill, low-security positions filled largely by migrants (Piore, 1979: 45). Michael J. Piore suggests migration is driven by a permanent demand for cheap secondary-sector labour, not by wage differentials; employers recruit migrants to absorb seasonal or cyclical fluxes. Douglas S. Massey emphasises "international migration stems from intrinsic labour demands of modern industrial societies" (Massey et al., 1993: 440). According to Piore, immigration is not caused by push factors in sending countries such as low wages or high unemployment, but pull factors of the receiving countries, defined by a chronic need for foreign workers. Entry level workers have traditionally come from two domestic sources. The first is women that have joined the labour force, especially as a primary income earner after rising divorce rates. The second is teenagers, young people that finish their schooling and join the labour force in large cohorts. These groups have shrunk in advanced economies creating a structural shortfall that DLMT says is filled by immigrant labour (Massey et al, 2006). Four structural drivers sustain this demand: (1) structural inflation of wages in the primary sector, (2) motivational problems for natives in low-status jobs, (3) economic dualism separating capital-intensive and labour-intensive sectors, and (4) demographic shrinkage of domestic low-skill supplies. Advanced economies keep a sizeable pool of low-pay, low-security occupations (e.g., seasonal agriculture, health-care support, construction) that native workers increasingly avoid. These jobs create a constant "bottom-labour-market" need that can only be met by a reliable external supply, which explains the persistent labour shortage of low-skill secondary-sector jobs (Piore, 1979). Another silent characteristic of the migration process is that firms in the receiving country act as the primary agents, actively scouting abroad for workers who will fill the identified secondary-sector slots, this will be important to understand Japan's immigration policy. The recruitment process, rather than wage

[1] Skill endowment rises when immigrants possess education or experience that is comparable or exceeds that of native workers, they add to the economy´s stock of human capital.

[2] In a competitive labour market, the wage of a group is roughly the marginal product of its skill level. If many low skill natives compete with a surge of a low-skill immigrants, the marginal product of low-skill labour falls, pulling native wages down (Altonji & Card, 1989).

differentials, shapes the type and volume of migrant inflows; therefore, the underlying characteristic is employer-led recruitment targeting specific occupations. The third important factor is economic and demographic shifts that erode the domestic supply of entry-level work. The increasing ageing population, the digital transition and the lingering effects of the pandemic reduce the pool of native workers available and further amplify the structural shortfall for low-skilled jobs. Lastly, institutional mechanisms identify labour gaps and channel migration towards those sectors to ensure migration flows remain aligned with structural demand. Together, these drivers make migrant labour an integral, recurring component of the host economy's labour market architecture rather than a sporadic, demand-elastic phenomenon (Piore, 1979).

In advanced economies, demographic decline has become a key structural driver of labour migration. Ageing populations and declining birth rates reduce the domestic supply of workers, particularly in low-skilled and entry-level occupations. As a result, migration increasingly functions as a demographic adjustment mechanism, compensating for shrinking labour forces and sustaining economic activity. This dynamic is not limited to a single country but is observable across high-income economies, where migration is expected to play a central role in maintaining labour market equilibrium (OECD, 2024b; United Nations, 2022). For the purpose of this study, Labour shortage will be defined as a specific type of labour, in a specific labour market, with the number of vacancies being above normal for an extended period (*EMN-OECD Joint Study 2024*, n.d.). How a country operationalises this concept determines its policy approach. European cases illustrate how labour shortages can lead to targeted migration policies.

States regulate migration through a combination of policy instruments that shape both the volume and characteristics of migration flows. These include border management measures such as visa regimes and entry restrictions, labour migration programmes and bilateral agreements to recruit workers in specific sectors, as well as talent-attraction schemes such as points-based systems and targeted visas for highly skilled migrants (Castles & Miller, 1998; OECD, 2022).In addition, governments employ integration policies, naturalisation rules and return mechanisms to manage migrants' incorporation and exit, reflecting broader economic and political objectives.

These instruments differ not only in how open they are to admitting migrants, but also in the rights they grant. Ruhs (2013) distinguishes between policies that affect

openness, such as quotas, skill requirements and labour market tests (shape who may enter and under what conditions) and those that determine migrants' rights, including access to welfare, family reunification and long-term residence. In practice, highly skilled migration channels tend to offer broader rights and settlement opportunities, while temporary labour migration programmes are more restrictive and limit long-term integration (Ruhs, 2013).

In the Japanese case, these policy instruments take the form of tightly controlled and segmented migration channels, including the Technical Intern Training Programme (TITP), the Highly Skilled Professional (HSP) system and the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) scheme. These programmes illustrate how states can respond to labour shortages while maintaining restrictive immigration frameworks, as they provide access to foreign labour but constrain long-term settlement and rights.

Economic theories of labour immigration suggest that migration flows are largely driven by structural factors such as wage differentials, labour market segmentation and demographic change. In advanced economies experiencing population ageing and labour shortages, the demand for migrant labour therefore emerges as a persistent outcome of economic development. However, despite these structural pressures, immigration policies in many countries remain restrictive and politically contested. This apparent contradiction indicates that economic explanations cannot fully account for how states regulate migration. To understand why governments simultaneously depend on migrant labour while maintaining strict immigration controls, it is necessary to examine the political and institutional dynamics shaping migration governance and variables that are not purely economic need.

Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) argue that immigration has important implications for democratic politics, but its impact depends largely on the attitudes of native-born majority populations (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014: 226). While traditional political economy approaches explain these attitudes in terms of self-interest, the authors find little empirical support for such explanations. The labour market competition hypothesis, which treats immigration as analogous to trade by linking inflows of workers to wage and employment effects, receives minimal support. Similarly, the fiscal burden hypothesis—according to which low-skilled immigrants impose net costs on the welfare

state and generate opposition among higher-income natives—is not consistently confirmed by the evidence.

Instead, Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) show that immigration attitudes are better understood from a socio-psychological perspective (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014: 230). Individuals tend to evaluate immigration not in terms of personal material interests, but through perceptions of its symbolic impact on the nation. Concerns about cultural identity, language, and social cohesion play a more decisive role, suggesting that opposition to immigration is primarily driven by perceived threats to collective identity rather than by economic self-interest.

4.3 National identity and Ethnonationalism

Immigration challenges how states define membership in a national community. National identity and the nation-state are understood as both institutional and cultural constructs. Anderson describes the nation as an "imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson, 1991: 6) that creates a shared sense of belonging despite members never meeting. William R. Brubaker adds that the nation-state is a "distinctive way of organising and experiencing political and social membership" (Brubaker, 1990: 379) governed by six normative ideals (egalitarian, sacred, national, democratic, unique, socially consequential) while national identity is the perception that state membership should reflect a common language and character. Brubaker compares France and Germany. The former defines citizenry mainly as a territorial community, meaning second-generation immigrants automatically become citizens while in Germany, birth and residency have no bearing and citizenry is restrictively understood as a community of descent (Brubaker, 1990). For Freeman, national identity is a manipulable social construction.

These definitions feed directly into ethnonationalism and immigrant restriction. In Brubaker's German model, the nation is an "organic, cultural, linguistic or racial community" (volksgemeinschaft) (Brubaker, 1990: 386) that privileges jus sanguinis[3] and enforces "territorial closure". It served as an instrument enabling the state to prevent the settlement of ethnoculturally "unwanted elements" (Brubaker, 1990: 397) in their

[3] "Jus soli" – right of soil vs "Jus sanguinis" – right of blood

borders. Anderson quotes Tom Nairn explaining that ""nationalism", is the pathology of modern developmental societies, as inescapable as "neurosis" in an individual…and largely incurable"" (Nairn, 1997: 359). Anderson notes that the "limited" nature of the imagined nation inevitably produces exclusionary boundaries, which ethnonationalist movements sharpen by emphasizing "antique" identity markers (Anderson, 1991). Freeman links such threats to national identity with populist entrepreneurs who mobilize resentment and push "high levels of conflict and a penchant for restrictionism" (G. Freeman, 2000: 4). This can happen when an imagined national identity is perceived to be under threat, because newcomers are thought to dilute the language culture or the ethnic character of the nation. Politicians may well turn that anxiety into a political discourse framing immigration as a danger to the nation's core identity and therefore portraying restriction as a defence of the nation itself (G. Freeman, 2000).

Public opinion and immigration policy reflect these dynamics. Brubaker argues that citizenship status is a "crucial determinant of their place in the polity" (Brubaker, 1990: 385) and that policy is filtered through national self-understandings, producing more inclusive French laws versus restrictive German ones. Freeman (2000) highlights a persistent public-elite disconnect, with bipartisan consensus, to avoid making immigration a contentious election issue, often at odds with popular opposition to expansive migration, and notes that local competition and scapegoating shape policy responses (G. Freeman, 2000). Anderson (1991) further observes and states that because nation-ness is the "most universally legitimate value," immigration debates become contests over whether newcomers threaten the imagined sovereign community, driving support for restrictive measures (Anderson, 1991).

Furthermore, Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) show how ethnonationalisms can be translated into exclusionary attitudes, shaped by group-belonging (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014: 233). This dynamic reinforces ethnocentric biases. Language plays a particularly important role in this process, functioning as a marker of inclusion or exclusion, a silent signal of whether an individual is perceived as part of the national community.

Therefore, while economic pressures and institutional dynamics shape immigration policy, societal factors also play a crucial role in determining how states respond to migration. National identity, public attitudes and perceptions can generate

resistance to immigration even in contexts where migrant labour is economically beneficial.

4.4 The Migration State and the Liberal Paradox

The concept of the migration state provides an analytical framework for understanding how governments manage this tension between economic demand and political constraint.

The migration state follows the garrison (Hollifield et al., 2008) and trading state[4], making the regulation of people as central as security and economic welfare. Its power is now "driven by migration … as much as by commerce and finance" (Hollifield, 2004: 888), and it creates a liberal legal environment where migrants can accumulate rights (Hollifield, 2004). Hollifield's (2004) formulation is reiterated for the United States, where migration regulation is a core state function alongside security and trade. His theory posits that managing migration has evolved into a fundamental responsibility of the state, on par with traditional functions such as national security (the "garrison state") and economic policy (the "trading state"). Adamson and Tsourapas (2019) argue that Hollifield's model is developed from a Global North perspective and must be adapted for the Global South. Their critique is that the concept is rooted in state-capacity and mobility management, assuming states have strong bureaucratic control over their territory and policy implementation and focus on immigration rather than managing all forms of mobility ("out-immigration")[5] (F. Adamson & Tsourapas, 2019) while the broader migration-state literature stresses passports, visas and borders as defining statehood (Natter, 2024). This means the broader theory holds that a defining characteristic of a modern state, its very "state-ness" (Torpey 1997: 240), is its monopoly over the control of movement across its borders.

The paradox captures the clash between two liberal logics: an economic logic that pushes openness to trade, investment and migrant labour, and a political-juridical logic that demands territorial closure to preserve sovereignty and the social contract (Hollifield, 2004). This tension appears in liberal democracies (e.g., the U.S.) where market forces

[4] Defined as a regime that centres its policy in the promotion of commerce, investment and the free movement of goods, making trade a core purpose of state organization.
[5] A strategy of economic development to both alleviate unemployment and secure FDI

urge openness (demand-pull and supply-push) (Hollifield et al., n.d.) while domestic politics demand restriction and is formalised as a "discursive gap" between restrictive rhetoric and more open policies. Autocratic regimes exhibit an "illiberal paradox" (Natter, 2018) that can reverse the gap, allowing liberal entry policies when they serve elite or foreign-policy goals.

The key drivers of immigration policy can be categorised into groups. The first are economic and sociocultural reasons. Demand-pull labour and supply-push demographics and kinship networks create the necessary conditions for migration (Hollifield et al., n.d.). The second is legal and political. The demographic transition during the twentieth century, with falling birth rates and more stable populations, led to a new form of nationalism, and it became increasingly important, in terms of security, for states to identify their citizens (Koslowski, 2000). Therefore, sovereignty, passport/visa regimes, human-rights obligations (e.g., non-refoulement), and security concerns constitute sufficient conditions (Hollifield et al., n.d.).

4.5 Institutionalism and Policy Change

Institutions become entrenched over time through self-reinforcing mechanisms, rules of the game, fixed costs, learning and coordination effects (Pierson, 2000a), that make later change costly and bind successors to earlier choices (Pierson, 2000b).

The concept of path dependency described by Sewell is "that what has happened at an earlier point in time will affect the possible outcomes of a sequence of events occurring at a later point in time" (Sewell, 1996: 262-3). In its broad sense, it simply notes that prior events are causally relevant to subsequent outcomes. In a narrower sense, the conception of path dependency being steps in a particular direction that induce further movement in that same direction is captured by the idea of "increasing-returns". Meaning, there is a self-reinforcing dynamic: each step on a track raises the benefits of staying on it and the costs of exiting (Pierson, 2000b).

Four mechanisms generate this upward feedback. The first is adaptive expectation because actors anticipate that others will continue the same track, making the chosen option appear safer. The second is the learning effects, meaning experience lowers the marginal cost of further investment in the existing technology or institution. The

coordination effects are also essential because the value of an option rises as more actors adopt it (network externalities). Finally, sunk costs, past expenditures that create a "lock-in" because abandoning the path would waste those resources, hence, rising exit costs (Pierson, 2000a).

The combination of these forces produces non-ergodicity, explained by Brian Arthur as accidental events that are remembered and amplified rather than cancelled out, so small contingencies can lead to vastly different long-run equilibria. The result is inflexibility and potential path inefficiency, where the locked-in outcome may be sub-optimal compared with alternatives that were foreclosed.

Empirically, increasing-returns dynamics explain why institutions become entrenched due to early policy choices that set up bureaucratic routines, legal frameworks, and vested interests that make later reforms costly and politically risky. To identify if path dependency processes are at work, political life is likely to be marked by multiple equilibria (several outcomes are possible), a contingency where relatively small events can have a big impact, which also emphasises the critical role of timing and sequencing. Finally, inertia is key because once an increasing returns process is set, positive feedback may lead to a single equilibrium that will be resistant to change (Pearson, 2000b: 263). Therefore, only a critical juncture, an exogenous shock or a centralised decision that reconfigures the institutional matrix can break the path and generate a policy breakthrough.

Institutional arrangements are change-resistant because they evolve in a system of "nested rules", described by Robert Goodin as a set of rules at each successive level in the hierarchy that is costly to change (Pearson, 2000: 490). In contrast to economic organisations that only need to secure the finance to put a new idea on the market, and if enough consumers are interested, the project will be a success. In political institutions, because stability and predictability are important characteristics, designers seek to constrain themselves. It's the "credible commitments" (Pearson, 2000b: 491) literature where, if options are removed from the equation, actors often do better, which is one reason, and the second is that those who design policies wish to bind their successors, because they know continuous control over institutions is unlikely.

However, reforms do happen. Incremental reforms denote modest, step-by-step adjustments that fit within existing institutional arrangements, such as the visa-preference tweaks and the 1986 IRCA (*Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986*, n.d.) that built on earlier structures. Policy breakthroughs are large, discontinuous shifts that overturn or create new paths, exemplified by the 1965 repeal of the national-origins quota and the 1990 Immigration Act that re-oriented U.S. immigration fundamentally. Since migration is closely linked to the labour market and economic forces that pull and push people from sending countries to receiving ones, it is no surprise that these changes were made to satisfy, partly, market demands.

The centralisation of decision-making makes change easier, concentrating authority in a single level of government, allowing the federal state to set dominant migration rules and to bind lower actors, but also reinforcing stickiness (Pierson, 2000b: 490) because concentrated power can lock in institutional trajectories (F. B. Adamson & Tsourapas, 2020). Stickiness describes the resistance to change in the political world, designed to be durable, where legislators embed "large obstacles" (Pearson, 2000b) such as unanimity thresholds, super-majority requirements or entrenched veto points so that later actors cannot easily overturn earlier choices. When decision-making is centralised, a single body can set the dominant rules and embed these durable mechanisms across the whole system. Centralisation thus amplifies stickiness: the concentration of power makes it easier to embed change-resistant designs but also makes it harder for later actors to undo them because the same centralised authority would have to reverse its own earlier choices. Consequently, reforms tend to be incremental, and only a strong, often crisis-driven, central decision can produce a genuine policy breakthrough.

Together, these concepts explain why immigration policy is shaped by durable institutional legacies and why reforms are often slow: established paths generate increasing returns that favour incremental tweaks, while breakthroughs require a critical juncture or a decisive centralised move that can overcome entrenched costs and vested interests.

5. The evolution of immigration policy in Japan

5.1 The post-war immigration paradigm

After World War II, Japan pursued an export-oriented growth strategy that relied on inexpensive, flexible labour to fuel rapid industrialisation. Small and medium-sized firms dominated manufacturing and faced chronic labour shortages, prompting the state to recruit cheap workers, including rural migrants and women, to sustain high-growth output. Japan transformed from a labour-exporter State to a labour-importer State, to sustain economic growth (Lee & Kim, 2016). The post-war model was characterised by a period in which Japan achieved high levels of economic growth without relying on foreign manual workers until the early 1980s. However, as the economy expanded, the lure of higher potential earnings became a factor determining migration (*Japan's Minorities*, n.d.). Yamanaka also notes that because Japan had become a labour-importer, the government assembled policies that were ad hoc, consequently creating disparities between the official policies and their outcomes. Therefore, foreign workers provided additional and replacement labour during growth periods and a flexible source of labour during recessions (*Japan's Minorities*, n.d.: 195). This reflects the dynamics described by Dual Labour Market Theory, where structural labour demand exists, but political and social constraints limit direct immigration, leading to the creation of alternative recruitment mechanisms.

This situation later led scholars to distinguish between two broad categories of migrants in Japan: "oldcomers," referring to individuals who had settled in Japan before 1952 and their descendants, and "newcomers," a term generally used to describe foreigners who arrived from the 1980s onwards (Akaha, 2006a). The emergence of these newcomers was closely linked to Japan´s growing economic influence nationally and internationally. Therefore, several factors contributed to the increase in foreign migration during the late 1980s, including the appreciation of the yen, persistent labour shortages, and the expansion of transnational migration networks, often facilitated by migrant brokers.

As a consequence, the number of visa overstayers, who represented the majority of migrant workers at the time, increased significantly, rising from approximately 100,000 in 1990 to around 300,000 in 1993 (Akaha, 2006a). By January 2005, this figure

had declined to 207,000. Most of these migrants originated from other Asian countries, particularly South Korea, China, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia (*Keidanren Calls for Policy of Inclusion for Foreign Workers | The Asahi Shimbun*, n.d.).

Japan's immigration law explicitly criminalises the employment of unskilled foreigners, reflecting a long-standing "non-immigration principle". In 1990, the Japanese government revised its Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (ICRRA). Three important changes affected unskilled workers and confirmed Japan´s stance on immigration. The first was the state opposing the employment of foreign labour, calling it a "criminal offence" (Yamanaka, 2010: 619). The second was the creation of a new "long-term resident visa for the Nikkeijin (foreign nationals of Japanese ancestry). Finally, the law also created a new category of visa for Kenshusei (industrial trainees) and a government decree implemented the Industrial Trainees System (ITS), which permitted foreign trainees to receive on-the-job training for a period of two years (Yamanaka, 2010). Immigration operated through indirect channels despite official denial, reinforcing the gap between policy and practice. Scholars describe this tension as the "gap hypothesis": in this case, the state seeks to preserve social homogeneity while simultaneously exploiting foreign labour. Consequently, making immigration policies inconsistent and difficult to implement (Yamanaka, 2010).

The cultural foundation of this principle lies in a discursive shift from terms such as *jinshu* and *minzoku* to *nihonjin*, constructing Japan as a homogeneous nation (Kawai, 2015). While terminology changed, the underlying idea of *tan'itsu minzoku* (*Japan's Minorities*, n.d.) (single-ethnic nation) persisted in policy narratives, framing Japan as culturally unified and downplaying historical diversity (Kawai, 2015). The racial purity and hierarchical ordering of people during war time policy supply the conceptual lineage that post-war narratives later recast as "Japanese blood" and continues to shape immigration policy (Dionisio, 2023). This aligns with ethnonationalist approaches discussed in Chapter 4, where immigration is perceived as a threat to cultural cohesion and national identity, reinforcing restrictive policy preferences.

This tension between economic necessity and cultural constraint becomes the central mechanism shaping Japan's immigration policy over time.

5.2 The 1990 Reform: Side Doors Without Settlement

Despite official denial, Japan has experienced sustained immigration since the late 1980s. The first migrants to enter Japan were Indochinese refugees in 1975. The Immigration and Refugee Recognition Act was enacted in 1982 as a result. The arrival of these newcomers was followed by two waves: female entertainers and undocumented migrant workers from South and Southeast Asia, China, Korea and Iran (Chiavacci, 2025).

By the late 1980s, labour market shortages made the government look for solutions. In 1990, non-Japanese of Japanese descent (nikkeijin) were allowed to live and work in Japan on long-term visas that were renewable every 3 years. This exemplifies the Japanese ethnic homogeneity discourse as it prioritises ethnic Japanese migrants (Burgess, 2020). The second solution to address the labour shortage was the Technical Intern Training program (TITP) to help foreigners from specific developing countries gain technical skills (Takaya, 2025). The former was seen as a failure due to integration problems, and the latter was criticised as a guest worker program with human rights issues (Takizawa, 2022). The establishment of these two side-doors is an example again of the restrictive view on immigration and the settlement-rooted discourse of homogeneity (Burgess, 2020). At the same time, this illustrates the liberal paradox (Hollifield, 2004), as economic demand for foreign labour coexists with restrictive immigration policies.

Over the last five decades, four immigration policy debates, shaped by four competing frames, led to the formal controlled opening of 2018 (Chiavacci, 2025). The first frame is Identity and cultural self-definition, based on ethnic homogeneity (*tan'itsu minzoku*) and ethnonationalism. The latter is commonly identified as the ideological ground of Japan's immigration policy and the preferential treatment of the *nikkeijin* (Burgess, 2020). Although ethnic homogeneity has made Japan a unique case, it is also a central argument in its economic success story, with the absence of ethnic tensions. Immigration is therefore often seen as culturally disruptive, a perception partly influenced by comparisons with European immigration challenges (Burgess, 2020).

The growth frame evaluates immigration impact on economic growth, productivity and social cohesion and has been reinterpreted over time. It accepts highly

qualified workers and rejects lower-qualified ones based on welfare risks (Takizawa, 2022).

After the Second world War, with the Yoshida doctrine, Japan shifted from trying to become a military hegemony to focus on economic growth, through state guidance and the continuity of industrial policy (OECD, 2024a). In the 1960s, Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda introduced the principle of shared growth, which effectively made growth a powerful tool for achieving general well-being and social cohesion. In line with economic theories of migration that prioritise productivity through selective labour mobility. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) became guarantors of economic growth. The social contract of shared growth is crucial as it deeply influences immigration policy and has led to Japan's dual and restrictive approach. Highly qualified workers are believed to contribute to economic growth, raise productivity and generate employment, whereas lower-qualified foreign workers are said to deteriorate working conditions and even affect other lower-qualified Japanese workers, consequently, undermining the social contract of shared growth (Takizawa, 2022).

The security frame links immigration to crime, public disorder and loss of control. It is institutionally attached to the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and the police (Takizawa, 2022). Finally, the international standing frame reflects Japan's responsibility as a major economic power and its role in supporting regional development and international cooperation.

Looking at the Immigration Service Agency (ISA) and the Immigration Control Advisory Council policies (AC), these changes in immigration policy can be explained by Japan's effort to balance four drivers: The economic driver, the social driver, the security driver and the rights driver (Takizawa, 2022).

The first driver is linked to market demand of foreign workers to address labour shortages, the second in related to culture and the maintenance of a homogenous society and values such as "Japanese-ness". The third is the wish of the government to sustain law and order, and the fourth is the protection of human rights of migrants and refugees (Takizawa, 2022). The first driver normally trumps the rest, although it is sometimes intercepted by the culture driver or the security driver. This is no different to the analysis of the 2018 reform; the same factors affect decision-making. However, in this section, the

role of the ISA and AC will be analysed, as well as the different foreign worker categories classified by residence status (see Table 1 appendix).

The 2000s were characterised by increasing awareness of demographic decline but limited policy change (OECD, 2024a). While labour shortages intensified, immigration remained politically sensitive, resulting in policy deadlock and continued reliance on indirect labour migration channels such as the Technical Intern Training Programme (TITP) (Chiavacci, 2025; Takizawa, 2022). This period highlights the growing gap between economic needs and institutional constraints.

5.3 The 2018 Reform: A Controlled Opening

The 2018 reform can be considered a "dam break", as it represents a shift from a long-standing policy standstill to a comprehensive reform, brought by a declining security counterargument and the centralization of political decision-making (Chiavacci, 2025).

Nevertheless, others suggest the reform was the continuity of Japan's "no-immigration" principle due to an ethno-nationalistic discourse that has acted as a consistent barrier for social integration (Burgess, 2020). This section examines what changed in the 2018 reform and why it was politically possible after decades of policy deadlock.

The increase in foreign workers from 0.49M in 2008 to 1.08M in 2016 prompted the Abe administration to address this gradual change into a rapid change in 2018 (Takizawa, 2022).

The Prime Minister Abe Shinzō, instructed the chief cabinet secretary Yoshihide Suga and the Minister of Justice that the government should set up a system for professional and foreign nationals, with the conditions of placing an upper limit on the period of stay and that family members should not accompany them, so it would not be considered a permanent immigration policy (Takaya, 2025). Power centralisation mattered. The reform was driven by the PM's office (Kantei). This top-down approach explains why 2018 succeeded where earlier debates failed.

The question is, how did the government justify a reform that contradicted years of official policy? Some say the labour market outcomes were the main reason, that the

economic driver was the one that put pressure and called for change. However, there is a political and institutional explanation too. Takaya suggests that the Abe administration relied on discursive framing and the explicit denial of "immigration" to legitimise the 2018 reform within institutional constraints (Takaya, 2025) .

The first argument supporting this statement is that Japan has relied on a side-door system, with the *nikkeijin*, the TITP, foreign students and economic partnership agreements (EPAs), to address labour shortages without becoming a country of immigration (Takaya, 2025; Takizawa, 2022). This created "de facto" immigration (Burgess, 2020), but the word was never explicitly used. This pattern reflects path dependency, where earlier policy choices constrain future options and lead to the persistence of indirect migration channels. The 2018 reform, with the creation of the Specialised Skilled Worker Program (SSWP), marked a milestone in immigration policy because it institutionalised the side doors (Chiavacci, 2025). This does not imply an ideological breakthrough, simply a political one and from the moment it was implemented, it was clearly stated that it was not an immigration policy (Takaya, 2025).

Therefore, the concept of discursive institutionalisation (DI) could explain the shift and how the deadlock was overcome (Takaya, 2025). The key discourses were, namely, framing the reform as "not an immigration policy", which effectively reassured conservatives, helped in maintaining Japanese-ness and avoided the comparison to other European "failure" narratives (Burgess, 2020; Takaya, 2025). The second was choosing the proper language, instead of the word migrant, using "Foreign human resource" which framed them as an economic asset, not a threat and appealed to competitiveness, not multiculturalism. This strategy can be understood through institutionalist perspectives, where policy change is constrained by existing norms and narratives, requiring reform to be framed as continuity rather than transformation.

At the end of 2018, the full scheme was announced together with the bill to revise the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (ICRRA) to reflect policy changes. This proposal was approved by the Diet, and its implementation started as early as April 2019 (Takizawa, 2022).

The 2018 revisions to Japan´s "Immigration" Control Act introduced two new visa categories and a quota system for blue-collar workers. It also created the ISA, in charge

of Japan´s admission and integration policy (Chiavacci, 2025). This was the first time, after the post-war period, that Japan formally institutionalised the admission of low-skilled labour, which had previously been managed through indirect labour channels, such as the nikkeijin visas, the TITP or foreign students working part-time (Chiavacci, 2025; Takaya, 2025).

Type one visas targeted lower-skilled workers across 14 different sectors, and it's characterised by limited stay, no family reunification and strict monitoring (Takizawa, 2022). It largely formalised the TITP rather than replacing it, which represents the continuity aspect of the reform (Takaya, 2025). Type two had higher skill requirements and theoretically allowed family reunification and was renewable indefinitely, however, in practice eligibility was restricted and implementation delayed (Milly, 2020).

The 2018 reform did not reflect a societal consensus or a normative shift toward immigration, but rather a politically managed redefinition of the concept achieved through DI and centralised decision making (Takaya, 2025). However, the labour market conditions did push for the Abe administration to rapidly adopt the reform and was one of the main reasons the LDP used persuasive language to work around the normative framework (Chiavacci, 2025; Takizawa, 2022).

5.4 The 2020s: Institutional Consolidation and TITP Reform

It has long been argued that Japan maintains restrictive immigration policies in which highly skilled labour is welcomed but lower-skilled labour is largely excluded (Burgess, 2020). However, with labour shortages, the Abe administration did what it could to attract foreign workers (OECD, 2024b). The Japan Revitalisation Strategy (2014) initially focused on attracting highly skilled professionals, while the Growth Strategy 2018 introduced the new status of residence for Specified Skilled Workers (SSWs) across fourteen industries (Takizawa, 2022).

The ISA operates within the institutional framework established by the Cabinet and Prime Minister's Office (PMO), which has increasingly centralised decision-making during the Abe administration (Takaya, 2025). Historically, policy-making in Japan was based on a bottom-up approach where each Ministry would submit proposals to the cabinet for approval. However, with the Abe government, a top-down approach was

implemented (Chiavacci, 2025; Takaya, 2025). Therefore, the ISA's task is to operationalise high-level policies, specifically those related to the immigration inspection of foreigners, the management of foreigners' residences, the deportation of undesirable foreigners and the refugee status determination (Takizawa, 2022). Foreigners may enter Japan after obtaining one of the statuses of residence. The AC is to provide advice on immigration control and management of the status of residence to the Ministry of justice (MOJ) (Takizawa, 2022).

The status of residence system represents the main policy tool used by the ISA to regulate foreign workers by defining acceptable categories of migrants and the conditions of their stay. Incentives are given to those seen worthy by the ISA and disincentives to the less fortunate that are not deemed desirable in the eyes of the ISA (Chiavacci, 2025; Takizawa, 2022).

The first category is Highly Skilled Professionals (HSP), who can bring family members and benefit from longer periods of stay. However, in 2020, they accounted for 1.5% of all foreign workers (OECD, 2024b). This is due to the unattractiveness of the Japanese labour market, with several structural factors such as medical care, housing and primary education not being competitive compared to global standards (OECD, 2024b). There is also a language barrier, as English is not widely spoken. In addition, the employment system is designed to keep foreigners out. For example, employment practices based on seniority (years in the company) rather than specialised skills. Even if the ISA can issue permanent residency in less than a year, it does not compensate for the lack of attractiveness.

The second category is for Specified Skilled workers (SSWs), and it is placed between the HSP and the Technical Intern Trainees (TITIs) (Chiavacci, 2025). The selection is based on merit, and there are no set educational requirements. There are two categories: The first is renewable every four months, six months, or a year for up to a total of five years and doesn't allow family reunification. However, after five years, if they qualify, they can apply for the second category, that does allow for family reunification (Takizawa, 2022). This was heavily supported by the AC as it brought transparency in the management of foreign workers, being workers, and not students or trainees. Nonetheless, this system had several problems. At first, the idea was to allow the companies and individual workers to negotiate the terms of employment based on merit.

However, the governments of the sending countries requested to be involved in the process of selection, which eventually led Japan and eight sending countries to draw bilateral contracts concerning the system's operations (Chiavacci, 2025), making it more complex and bureaucratic. For instance, a quarterly status report must be submitted to the ISA. It has been criticised that it not only resembles the TITP but also effectively extends it. In fact, in March 2020, the ISA allowed the TITIs to sit for a language and technical test to qualify for the SWWs. A large proportion (80%) of SSW workers had previously participated in the TITP program, reinforcing the connection between the two systems (Takizawa, 2022). Despite the introduction of the SSW system, older labour migration channels remain central.

The TITIs started in 1993, for the purpose of training young people in developing countries and transferring technologies. However, with worsening conditions in the labour market, this program has become a de facto system for recruiting unskilled workers from Asian countries for designated industry sectors such as textiles, clothing, construction and nursing care. The wages are not high, which means Japanese workers are not attracted to the sectors and suffer chronic labour shortages. This system has even been categorised as slave labour and has been criticised by domestic rights advocates as a cover for companies to import cheap labour. In November 2016, the government improved the program; the system was not abolished because the business sector benefits greatly from it. Therefore, economic considerations overrule human rights in this case.

Foreign students are the fourth category, and several problems have been identified. First, foreign students are allowed to work up to 28 hours, which is unheard of. During holidays, they are allowed to work full-time. This system benefits companies as student salaries are kept low. Therefore, many foreign students in Japan are indeed workers. The lack of a transparent labour migration policy has damaged its credibility, similar to the TITP. The ISA has taken measures such as granting student visas only if the student's attendance is strictly ensured.

Lastly, permanent residence. The number of permanent residents in Japan has almost doubled from 492,000 in 2008 to 801,000 in 2021. However, the ISA does not grant permanent residency upon arrival, and foreigners must obtain some status of residence and spend several years in the country, as it is granted on a step-by-step basis. The only exception is for the HSPs, who can get it in under a year, but it's not really an

incentive, as the labour market conditions are not attractive. There's a gap between Japanese perceptions of permanent residency and foreigners. The first treasure it and believe it should not be given up easily; the latter are not as eager to obtain it.

Several comprehensive measures were implemented, such as measures to improve the environment of foreign workers, which transformed the role of the ISA from control to support foreign human resources. However, these measures were met with measures to maintain security and prevent illegal entry and stay. This is a recurring strategy, the Japanese government institutionalise of widen a side door, but at the same time implement a mechanism that controls or limits entry to ensure security and social aspects are not compromised.

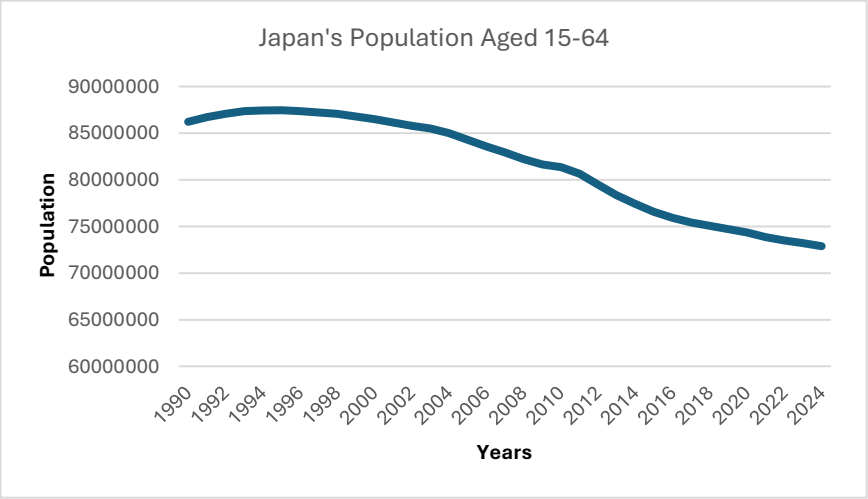
Overall, while the 2018 reform expanded labour admission, it did not resolve the structural contradictions of Japan's immigration system, as it continues to rely on temporary labour channels with limited settlement potential.

6. Evaluation: Why is Japan's Immigration Policy Failing

6.1 Demographic Pressures

Japan has one of the most rapidly aging societies in the world, with people aged 65+ accounting more than one quarter of the population (Green, 2017b) and the working-age population declining (*World Population Prospects 2022*, 2022).

Figure 2: *Japan's Working-Age Population 2024*



Source: UN DESA Population Division

As shown in Figure 1, the decline in the working-age population represents a sustained contraction of Japan's labour force, reinforcing long-term labour shortages. Therefore, the government faces pressure to supplement the domestic labour force through foreign workers. At the same time, however, immigration policy has remained constrained by concerns over social cohesion, cultural homogeneity, and the long-standing reluctance to define Japan as a country of immigration. This tension has shaped the state's response to labour shortages since the 1990s.

Former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi captured this cautious approach in 2005 when he argued that foreign labour should not be admitted too readily simply because labour shortages exist, as this could produce social friction. His statement reflects the broader dilemma at the centre of Japanese immigration policy: economic need has pushed the state toward greater openness, but this has repeatedly been limited by the homogeneity discourse and fears of social disruption (Akaha, 2006b).

Figure 3: *Trends in Population in Japan between 1872-2024*

Year	**Population (1,000)**	Age composition (%)			Change rate of annual basis (%)
		0–14 (%)	**15–64 (%)**	**65+ (%)**	
1990	123,611	18.2	69.7	12.1	0.42
2000	126,926	14.6	68.1	17.4	0.21
2010	128,057	13.2	63.8	23.0	0.05
2020	126,146	11.9	59.5	28.6	-0.15
2021	125,502	11.8	59.4	28.9	-0.51
2022	124,947	11.6	59.4	29.0	-0.44
2023	124,352	11.4	59.5	29.1	-0.48
2024	123,802	11.2	59.6	29.3	-0.44
(Projection, 2023)					
2030	120,116	10.3	58.9	30.8	-0.50
2040	112,837	10.1	55.1	34.8	-0.62
2050	104,686	9.9	52.9	37.1	-0.75
2060	96,148	9.3	52.8	37.9	-0.85
2070	86,996	9.2	52.1	38.7	-1.00

Source: (Statistical Handbook of Japan 2025, n.d.)

Japan´s total population is projected to fall from about 123.8 million in 2024 to roughly 92.8 million by 2060, a drop of around 26 % (*Statistical Handbook of Japan 2025*, n.d.). The share of the population aged 65 and over reached 29.3% in 2024 and is

projected to rise further (38.7%) in the coming decades, while the share of the working-age population continues to fall (OECD, 2025). This combination of population decline and ageing intensifies workforce pressures, weakens the tax base, and places growing pressure on the pension and healthcare systems (*Statistical Handbook of Japan 2025*, n.d.). In this context, immigration has increasingly been discussed as one of several possible responses, alongside higher female labour force participation, delayed retirement, and productivity-enhancing reforms (Dheeranantakul, n.d.).

6.2 Immigration Policy Performance

This section evaluates the performance of Japan's recent labour migration policy by comparing official policy objectives with actual outcomes. The main focus is the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) system, introduced as the centrepiece of the 2018 reform to address acute workforce demand in designated sectors.

The front door is open, but the policy target and actual uptake pose a problem to immigration. The government originally planned to admit 345,150 foreign workers under the SSW system during fiscal years 2019–2023 (*Control de Inmigración y Gestión de Residencia 2025 | Agencia de Servicios de Inmigración*, n.d.). The quota was distributed across 14 designated industries, with particularly large allocations for nursing care, food service, and construction (Dheeranantakul, n.d.).

However, actual uptake was much slower than expected in the early years. By December 2021, the number of foreign nationals holding SSW Type I status was still far below the original target (Dheeranantakul, n.d.). Part of this shortfall can be explained by COVID-19 border restrictions, but the gap also reflects institutional and practical barriers within the system itself. Although the number of SSW holders expanded substantially after the pandemic, the delayed take-off suggests that implementation was weaker than policymakers had anticipated.

Figure 4: *SSW Targets and Actual Uptake*

Metric	Figure (as of latest data)	Observed impact on Japan's labour market
Target intake (5-year total, original plan)	345,150 workers	Set to address acute shortages in 12–14 designated industrial fields.

Cumulative intake up to March 2023	Approximately 150,000 workers (around 43% of target)	Early shortfall slowed sectoral relief; many firms still faced skill gaps.
New SSW (i) entrants in 2024	64,626 workers	Boosted staffing in sectors such as food and beverage manufacturing and nursing care, where the SSW programme has been successful.
Total SSW residents, end-June 2025	336,196 workers (333,123 SSW i + 3,073 SSW ii)6	Near-target stock has has turned the SSW scheme into one of Japan's most important temporary-labour migration channels within the OECD and has increased substantially despite being limited to a fraction of the labour market. It has also been a boon for the agricultural sector by enabling flexible and seasonal deployment.

Source: (Control de Inmigración y Gestión de Residencia 2025 | Agencia de Servicios de Inmigración, n.d.). Part 2

The data suggest that the SSW system eventually expanded into an important labour migration channel, but this does not amount to an unqualified policy success. The gap between the initial target and early uptake reveals limited implementation capacity, while the delayed growth indicates that the system did not provide an immediate solution to labour shortages. In other words, the reform produced expansion, but not rapid or fully effective policy delivery.

6.3 Structural Causes of Policy Failure

Japan's immigration policy underperforms not only because of implementation problems, but because of deeper structural constraints embedded in the design of the migration regime itself. These include continued reliance on side-door migration channels, fragmented residence categories, restrictive settlement pathways, and the limited attractiveness of the Japanese labour market for long-term foreign workers.

6.3.1 Continued Reliance on Side-Door Migration

Although the SSW scheme was presented as a more transparent route for labour migration, it did not replace Japan's older side-door mechanisms. Instead, it was layered onto an already fragmented system in which foreign workers continue to enter through multiple statuses that formally serve other purposes, such as training or education (see chapter 5).

[6] Immigration Services Agency (2025): Part 1: Immigration Control and Residency Management in recent Years. P-44.

Figure 5: *Main Labour Migration Channels in Japan*

Category	Main statuses of residency	Function in labour market
Highly skilled	HSP, EHI, Business Manager	Attract specialised labour
Formal labour migration	SSW	Fill sectoral shortages
Side-door / indirect channels	TITP, Student, Designated Activities	Supply temporary low-wage labour
Settlement statuses	Permanent Resident, Long-Term Resident, Spouse categories	Long-term incorporation

Source: own elaboration

This structure shows that Japan's migration regime is not organised around a single coherent immigration framework. Instead, labour migration is dispersed across several legal categories, many of which were not originally designed as transparent labour admission channels.

Figure 6: *Foreign Nationals Entering Japan 2024 by Status of Residency*

Category	2024	% (of total)
Temporary Visitors	33,358,681	98.1%
Students	167,087	0.5%
TITP	147,922	0.4%
SSW	64,626	0.2%

Source: ISA 2025

The figures confirm that the SSW did not replace the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP). While the SSW system expanded after 2019, the data shows that it supplemented rather than replaced Japan's older side-door labour migration channels, particularly the TITP. Although SSW (i) entries increased from 563 in 2019 to 64,626 in 2024 (see annex Table 4), TITP entries remained much higher, with Technical Intern Training (i)-(b) alone recording 140,621 entrants in 2024. This indicates that Japan continues to rely on older side-door mechanisms for labour migration. The continued importance of student and other indirect categories further shows that labour migration remains dispersed across multiple channels rather than consolidated into a transparent immigration framework.

Since TITP is a temporary status with low settlement potential (*Living and Work Guidebook for Foreigners*, n.d.), its persistence suggests that the no-immigration

principle remains embedded in Japan's migration regime: foreign labour is accepted, but long-term settlement is still restricted.

6.3.2 Administrative Complexity and Fragmented Categories

A second reason for underperformance lies in the complexity of the residence-status system itself. In Japan, the status of residency is based on the Immigration Control Act description in the *Data Section 2025* published by the ISA. Residence statuses are classified according to whether they are based on the foreign national's authorized activities (what they do in Japan) in Japan or on their personal status or social position (who they are). The "Typical duration of stay" reflects the maximum initial period that can be granted under each status (sub-sequent renewals may be indefinite) (*Control de Inmigración y Gestión de Residencia 2025 | Agencia de Servicios de Inmigración*, n.d.). Additionally, every status has core eligibility requirements that difficult settlement potential (see annex Table 2). This differentiated structure allows the state to control entry very precisely but also creates administrative burdens and reduces transparency.

This complexity also reinforces selectivity. High-value migrants are granted more stable and advantageous statuses, while lower-skilled workers are channelled into tightly restricted and temporary categories. As a result, the institutional structure itself reproduces unequal access to rights and long-term residence.

6.3.3 Restricted Settlement Pathways

A third structural problem is that the system continues to limit settlement, especially for lower-skilled migrants. While Japan admits foreign workers to address labour shortages, it does not easily accept them as long-term members of society (see annex Table 1).

This is particularly visible in the contrast between visa categories. Highly Skilled Professionals enjoy more favourable conditions, including longer periods of stay and better access to permanent residence. By contrast, TITP and SSW Type I are clearly designed as temporary statuses. Family reunification is either unavailable or heavily restricted, and long-term incorporation remains uncertain. This creates a hierarchy of incorporation and undermines both policy coherence and integration outcomes.

6.3.4 Labour Market Unattractiveness

Finally, Japan's labour market itself limits the effectiveness of immigration policy, particularly in attracting and retaining highly skilled migrants. Even where legal pathways exist, the domestic employment structure is often less attractive than competing destinations. For example, the Points-Based System (PBS), the gate-keeper for Japan's Highly-Skilled Professional residence status, requires an applicant to accumulate at least 70 points across a set of "core eligibility" categories; only then can the Ministry of Justice issue the Highly-Skilled Professional (i) or (ii) status, the latter also requiring three years of residence and good conduct (Major Policies Related to Immigration Control and Residency Management Administration, 2025). These conditions reduce the appeal for Highly skilled Migrants.

Figure 7: *Summary of Failure Indicators*

Indicator	Evidence	Assessment
Uptake vs quota	SSW below target	Underperformance
Dependence on side doors	TITP/students remain central	Structural contradiction
HSP share	Very low	Weak high-skill attraction
Settlement access	Restricted	Non-immigration orientation
Administrative burden	Complex procedures	Implementation obstacle

Source: (Control de Inmigración y Gestión de Residencia 2025 | Agencia de Servicios de Inmigración, n.d.)

These structural constraints explain why Japan's immigration policy continues to fall short of its stated objectives: while foreign labour is increasingly admitted, the system remains fragmented, temporary, and resistant to long-term integration.

7. Conclusions

This study looks to explain why Japan's immigration policy has struggled to effectively address labour shortages despite clear demographic pressures and repeated policy reforms. By combining theoretical insights with an in-depth case study of Japan's migration system, the analysis demonstrates that the shortcomings of the policy are not primarily economic, but structural, institutional and sociocultural.

First, the findings confirm that demographic decline constitutes a fundamental driver of migration policy in Japan. The rapid ageing of the population and the shrinking

working-age cohort have created sustained labour shortages across multiple sectors. Governments have recognised this challenge and have introduced new migration channels, such as the SSW system. However, these measures have not resulted in a coherent or effective immigration framework. Instead, consistent policy gaps have remained, prioritising short-term labour needs over long-term structural constraints.

Second, the analysis highlights a persistent gap between policy design and policy outcomes. Although the SSW system represents a formal opening of labour migration, its implementation has been uneven and initially fell significantly short of its targets. While uptake has increased over time, this delayed expansion suggests limited institutional capacity and difficulties in translating policy goals into effective outcomes. The gap between planned intake and actual numbers illustrates a broader issue of policy underperformance, reinforcing the argument that reform has been more symbolic than transformative.

Third, and most importantly, the study identifies the continued reliance on indirect or "side-door" migration channels as a central feature of Japan's immigration regime. Programmes such as the Technical Intern Training Programme (TITP) and student visas remain key sources of foreign labour, despite the introduction of new formal pathways. Rather than replacing these mechanisms, the SSW system has complemented them, resulting in a fragmented and multi-layered system. This structural dependence reveals a fundamental contradiction: while Japan increasingly relies on foreign workers, it avoids establishing a transparent and unified immigration policy.

Fourth, the limited success in attracting highly skilled migrants further illustrates the constraints of the current system. Despite the existence of preferential schemes such as the Highly Skilled Professional (HSP) visa, the proportion of highly skilled migrants remains low. This reflects not only institutional barriers, such as the complexity of the Points-Based System, but also broader structural factors, including labour market practices, language barriers and limited international competitiveness. As a result, Japan has not been able to position itself as an attractive destination for global talent.

Finally, the analysis demonstrates that access to long-term settlement remains highly restricted. Migration in Japan continues to be framed as temporary and instrumental, rather than as a pathway to permanent integration. This reflects the

persistence of the "non-immigration principle," which is rooted in institutional practices and reinforced by cultural narratives of homogeneity, particularly the idea of *tan'itsu minzoku*. Even as migration increases in practice, the policy framework continues to limit the possibility of long-term incorporation, thereby preventing the transition from labour migration to immigration.

Taken together, these findings suggest that Japan's immigration policy is characterised by structural inconsistency. Economic demand for foreign labour has led to incremental policy changes, but these have been constrained by institutional path dependency, bureaucratic fragmentation and ideational resistance to immigration. The result is a system that admits foreign workers in practice but avoids recognising itself as an immigration country.

In theoretical terms, the case of Japan illustrates the limits of purely economic explanations of migration policy. While labour market needs are a necessary condition for policy change, they are not sufficient to produce comprehensive reform. Instead, migration policy outcomes are shaped by the interaction of economic pressures, institutional structures and political narratives, as highlighted in the literature on the migration state and the liberal paradox. Japan's experience demonstrates how states can expand labour migration while simultaneously restricting settlement, thereby maintaining control over the social and political implications of immigration.

Ultimately, unless Japan addresses these structural constraints, particularly the fragmentation of migration channels and the limited pathways to settlement, its immigration policy will not fully resolve the demographic and labour challenges it faces. Future reforms would require not only adjustments to policy instruments, but also a broader shift in how migration is conceptualised within the national context.

8. Annex

Table1. A: Key Phases and Framing of Immigration Policy Debates in Japan

Period	Trigger	Main Actors and Frames	Key Debate	Outcomes
Late 1960s – Early 1970s	Labour shortages and exhaustion of surplus labour	Growth frame dominant. Supporters: SMEs, employees' associations and productivity-oriented elites Opponents: Labour unions, Ministry of Labour and new left movements	Whether Japan should introduce a guest worker programme or expand intern schemes to address labour shortages.	Debate ended after the 1973 oil shock. No institutional reforms were implemented.
Late 1980s – Early 1990s	Rapid increase in irregular migration and labour demand	Identity frame (immigration seen as threat to ethnic homogeneity; nikkeijin viewed as "safe" migrants); Growth frame divided between SMEs (pro-immigration) and large firms/MOL (opposed); Security frame linking migrants to crime; International standing frame emphasizing Japan's role as an advanced economy.	Whether Japan should accept "simple workers" (lower-qualified migrants).	1990 Immigration Reform: expansion of side-door channels (nikkeijin visas, interns, students). Contradiction between policy and practice became clearer.
Early 2000s	Demographic forecasts predicting population decline	Growth frame: immigration seen as necessary for economic survival (supported by SMEs and business federations such as Keidanren). Security frame strengthened after the 2001 terrorist attacks. Identity frame reinforced security concerns.	Whether immigration could sustain Japan's future economy and labour force.	Policy deadlock. Strengthening of border controls and reduction of irregular migration. No major reforms adopted.
Mid-2010s – 2018	Severe labour shortages, population ageing and failure of existing side-door systems	Intense debate among policymakers, business actors and government institutions. Economic pressures became increasingly dominant.	How to address labour shortages while maintaining Japan's non-immigration principle.	2018 Immigration Reform, introducing new visa categories and formally expanding labour migration.

Source: Own elaboration

Table 2.A: List of Statuses of Residence (As of April 1, 2025)

Status of Residence	Main Authorized Activities	Example	Period of Stay
Diplomat	Diplomatic and consular activities, including household family members	Ambassador, minister, consulate official	Duration of diplomatic activities
Official	Official business of foreign governments or international organizations, including family members	Embassy or consulate employee, international institution assignee	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, 3 months, 30 days, or 15 days
Professor	Research, research guidance, or education at universities and equivalent institutions	College professor	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 3 months
Artist	Artistic activities generating income	Composer, artist, writer	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 3 months

Religious Activities	Missionary and other religious work	Missionary	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 3 months
Journalist	News reporting and journalistic activities	Reporter, photographer	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 3 months
Highly Skilled Professional (i) Highly Skilled Professional (i)(a) Highly Skilled Professional (i)(b) Highly Skilled Professional (i)(c) Highly Skilled Professional (ii)	 For academic research activities For specialized / technical activities For advanced business management activities Long-term highly skilled activities with broader work flexibility	 University researchers, scholars Engineers, specialists, highly qualified professionals working in companies Senior manager, company executive Established highly skilled resident	Type (i): 5 years Type (ii): Unlimited
Business Manager	Management or operation of business in Japan	Company manager, operator	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, 6 months, 4 months, or 3 months
Legal/Accounting Services	Legal or accounting work requiring foreign qualifications	Attorney, certified public accountant	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 3 months
Medical Services	Medical treatment services by qualified professionals	Physician, dentist, registered nurse	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 3 months
Researcher	Research activities under contract with public or private organizations	Researcher at institute or company	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 3 months
Instructor	Language teaching or education at schools	Language instructor, school teacher	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 3 months
Engineer / Specialist in Humanities / International Services	Technical, engineering, humanities, or international service work	Engineer, interpreter, designer, teacher, marketer	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 3 months
Intra-company Transferee	Transfer within a foreign company to its office in Japan	Overseas office transferee	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 3 months
Nursing Care	Nursing care or care instruction services	Certified care worker	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 3 months
Entertainer	Performing arts, sports, and entertainment activities	Actor, singer, dancer, athlete	3 years, 1 year, 6 months, 3 months, or 30 days
Skilled Labor	Work requiring special industrial skills	Foreign cuisine chef, aircraft pilot, craftsperson	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 3 months
Specified Skilled Worker (i) Specified Skilled Worker (ii)	Work requiring considerable knowledge or experience in designated labour-shortage sectors Work requiring proficient skills in designated industrial fields	Worker in nursing care, construction, food service, agriculture, etc. More experienced sectoral worker	Type (i): up to 1 year or less. Type (ii): 3 years, 1 year, or 6 months
Technical Intern Training (i) Technical Intern Training (ii) Technical Intern Training (iii)	Initial stage of technical intern training under an approved training plan Intermediate stage allowing continued training and work after progression from stage (i) Advanced stage for further continuation after completing stage (ii)	Technical intern trainee	Type (i): 1 year or less; Types (ii) and (iii): 2 years or less
Cultural Activities	Academic or artistic activities without income	Researcher of Japanese culture	3 years, 1 year, 6 months, or 3 months

Temporary Visitor	Tourism, recreation, visiting relatives, conferences, short business activities	Tourist, conference participant	90 days, 30 days, 15 days, or less
Student	Study at university, college, high school, junior high, elementary school, etc.	University student, school student	Period designated individually by Minister of Justice (up to 4 years and 3 months)
Trainee	Training to acquire skills in Japan	Trainee	Usually 1 year, 6 months, or 3 months; some medical cases up to 2 years
Dependent	Daily activities of spouse or child supported by a foreign resident	Spouse or child of resident foreign national	Period designated individually by Minister of Justice (up to 5 years)
Designated Activities	Activities individually designated by Minister of Justice	Working holiday participant, EPA nurse/caregiver candidate, digital nomad	Depending on designation; often 5 years, 3 years, 1 year, 6 months, or 3 months
Permanent Resident	Permanent residence authorized by Minister of Justice	Approved permanent resident	Unlimited
Spouse or Child of Japanese National	Residence based on family relationship to Japanese national	Spouse or child of Japanese national	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 6 months
Spouse or Child of Permanent Resident	Residence based on family relationship to permanent resident	Spouse or child of permanent resident	5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 6 months
Long-Term Resident	Residence authorized for special circumstances	Refugee accepted for settlement, person of Japanese descent	Usually 5 years, 3 years, 1 year, or 6 months; otherwise individually designated up to 5 years

Source: (Control de Inmigración y Gestión de Residencia 2025 | Agencia de Servicios de Inmigración, n.d.): Data Section. Data Section 1. Pp. 185-189

Table 3.A: Short List of Resident Statuses: Core Eligibility Conditions

Category	**Type / Subcategory**	**Settlement Potential**	Core Eligibility Conditions	
Highly Skilled Professional	(i)(a) Academic, (i)(b) Technical, (i)(c) Business Management, (ii) Long-term/unlimited	High	(i) (ii)	≥70 pts (education, career, salary) 70 pts + 3-year stay
Specified Skilled Worker	(i) Restricted temporary worker, (ii) More advanced with broader rights (family allowed)	Medium	(i) (ii)	Skills test + Japanese B1 level Proficient-skill test + Japanese B1
Technical Intern Training Program	(i-) Initial, (ii) Intermediate, (iii) Advanced	Low	(i) (ii) (iii)	Sponsor firm, sector-specific training plan Completion of stage i-b, skill certification Final assessment, possible transition to other status
Student / Trainee	—	Low		
Family / Long-term statuses	Dependent, Spouse/Child, Long-Term Resident, Permanent Resident	Medium-high	Relationship proof, financial support Special eligibility criteria ≥10 years residence, stable livelihood	

Source: OECD 2024: Recruiting Immigrant Workers: Japan 2024. Pp 69

Table 4.A: Changes in the Number of Foreign Nationals Newly Entering Japan by Status of Residence

Status of Residence	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total	28,402,509	3,581,443	151,726	3,423,531	23,751,693	34,015,766
Diplomat	12,206	2,120	2,109	4,849	7,300	6,282
Official	42,934	3,708	1,973	11,811	26,544	27,024
Professor	3,185	992	921	2,645	2,423	2,606
Artist	474	117	13	280	378	426
Religious Activities	949	329	45	1,280	783	1,373
Journalist	69	29	19	44	30	30
Highly-Skilled Professional (i)-(a)	37	26	16	55	40	29
Highly-Skilled Professional (i)-(b)	624	354	74	1,225	1,386	1,247
Highly-Skilled Professional (i)-(c)	118	76	18	393	947	899
Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business Manager	2,237	1,537	474	4,346	5,295	4,483
Legal/Accounting Services	5	2	1	8	5	5
Medical Services	58	38	19	57	82	62
Researcher	364	155	89	364	253	290
Instructor	3,463	1,280	2,757	3,041	3,454	3,715
Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services	43,880	19,705	2,532	35,711	43,787	56,532
Intra-company Transferee	9,964	3,188	497	7,798	8,443	8,765
Nursing Care	4	23	3	42	55	54
Entertainer	45,486	7,218	1,570	24,404	33,646	39,948
Skilled Labor	4,355	1,729	388	4,075	5,269	6,994
Specified Skilled Worker (i)	563	3,760	1,093	20,418	43,626	64,626
Specified Skilled Worker (ii)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Technical Intern Training (i)-(a)	6,300	1,652	218	3,575	4,008	3,544
Technical Intern Training (i)-(b)	167,405	74,804	21,899	163,882	169,774	140,621
Technical Intern Training (ii)-(a)	8	2	0	8	3	2
Technical Intern Training (ii)-(b)	183	116	23	120	190	199
Technical Intern Training (iii)-(a)	226	63	3	148	138	61
Technical Intern Training (iii)-(b)	14,750	7,189	1,280	11,299	8,917	3,495
Cultural Activities	3,793	815	202	2,784	2,850	3,072
Temporary Visitor	27,810,548	3,360,831	71,771	2,861,731	23,132,035	33,358,681
Student	121,637	49,748	11,651	167,128	139,574	167,087
Trainee	12,985	2,392	179	3,859	10,731	10,471
Dependent	31,788	17,056	11,313	47,389	47,989	50,564
Designated Activities	31,712	7,381	3,508	10,006	23,523	32,042
Permanent Resident	—	166	1,861	4,225	4,260	—
Spouse or Child of Japanese National	10,694	6,306	7,356	9,143	7,965	7,345
Spouse or Child of Permanent Resident	1,990	1,151	1,174	1,760	2,467	1,944
Long-Term Resident	17,515	5,385	4,677	13,628	13,523	11,248

Source: (Control de Inmigración y Gestión de Residencia 2025 | Agencia de Servicios de Inmigración, n.d.). PART 1: Immigration Control and Residency Management in Recent Years. Chapter 1, pp.5.

Declaración de Uso de Herramientas de Inteligencia Artificial Generativa en Trabajos Fin de Grado

Por la presente, yo, Leonor Carmen Rosales March, estudiante de Doble Grado en ADE y Relaciones Internacionales de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas al presentar mi Trabajo Fin de Grado titulado "Why is Immigration in Japan failing? An Economic and Cultural Overview" , declaro que he utilizado la herramienta de Inteligencia Artificial Generativa ChatGPT u otras similares de IAG de código sólo en el contexto de las actividades descritas a continuación:

1. **Referencias:** Usado conjuntamente con otras herramientas, como Zotero, para identificar referencias preliminares que luego he contrastado y validado.
2. **Estudios multidisciplinares:** Para comprender perspectivas de otras comunidades sobre temas de naturaleza multidisciplinar.
3. **Corrector de estilo literario y de lenguaje:** Para mejorar la calidad lingüística y estilística del texto.
4. **Generador previo de diagramas de flujo y contenido:** Para esbozar diagramas iniciales.
5. **Sintetizador y divulgador de libros complicados:** Para resumir y comprender literatura compleja.
6. **Revisor:** Para recibir sugerencias sobre cómo mejorar y perfeccionar el trabajo con diferentes niveles de exigencia.

Afirmo que toda la información y contenido presentados en este trabajo son producto de mi investigación y esfuerzo individual, excepto donde se ha indicado lo contrario y se han dado los créditos correspondientes (he incluido las referencias adecuadas en el TFG y he explicitado para que se ha usado ChatGPT u otras herramientas similares). Soy consciente de las implicaciones académicas y éticas de presentar un trabajo no original y acepto las consecuencias de cualquier violación a esta declaración.

Fecha: 24 de marzo de 2026

Firma: **Leonor Carmen Rosales March**

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