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(Un)welcome Immigrants? Neoliberal Steering in Japan's Immigration Policy toward Migrant Workers

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(Un)welcome Immigrants?
Neoliberal Steering in Japan's Immigration
Policy toward Migrant Workers

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MSc Political Science
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Abstract

This thesis explores recent development in Japan's migration policy toward foreign workers. The theoretical framework builds on theories of neoliberalism and prior research examining the links between neoliberal and migration policy. The study is based on a single case study, employing discourse analysis as its methodology. Official document from the National Diet of Japan and policy paper is analysed through two thematic frames: 'Economic' and 'The Politics of Migration.' This research indicates neoliberal underpinnings in Japan's immigration shift, which manifests itself in the subjugation and commodification of foreign workers primarily on the basis of their economic productivity. It further demonstrates significant neoliberal exposure in contemporary Japanese immigration trends and concludes that the neoliberal quintessence permeates the new Japanese immigration regime through a single cost-benefit policy formulation.

keywords: immigration policy, neoliberalism, migrant workers

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1. Introduction

Japan's immigration policy has been highly restrictive to 'protect' their cultural and ethnic homogeneity (Song, 2020, p. 617). The restrictiveness in Japan's migration policy can be delineated back to the country's 200-year history of alienation. The government enacted nationality laws based on the patrilineal principle of *jus sanguinis* (law by blood), and the Immigration Control Act of 1951 clearly restricts the transnational flow of low-skilled workers into Japan (Onuki, 2016, p. 8). During Japan's economic boom in the mid-1980s, the number of migrants entering the country increased considerably, from 119,100 in 1986 to 600,700 in 1992 (Mori, 1997, p. 20). Despite having the lowest number of migrants among advanced industrial countries, this influx of foreign workers was perceived as a social problem in 1980 (Lie, 1994, p. 3). It thus raised questions on whether the country should accept more foreigners, led to a debate on Japan's immigration policy direction, and urged the government to reform its immigration system (Onuki, 2016, p. 10). The labour deficit problem in the Japanese SMEs is also associated with the nature of 3K (*kiken*, *kitsui*, and *kitanai*- dangerous, difficult, and dirty) in the construction and service industry undesirable for many Japanese. Therefore, the SMEs have been highly dependent on migrant workers who are keen to receive low wages under precarious working conditions (p. 9). As businesses pressed for a greater supply of low-cost workers, the government sought to expand transnational labour inflows by introducing the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) in 1993 while encouraging companies to move overseas. Yet, with the introduction of the TITP program, access to foreign workers is still not sufficient (Strausz 2019: 121–142).

Most developed industrialized countries have encountered a demographic crisis over the past few decades. It has led to a proliferation of the temporary inflow of foreign workers to reduce labour shortages and maintain economic growth and sustainability (Howard, 2009).

When observing the Japanese migration trend, despite its extreme demographic challenges, most Japanese people (64%) prefer to preserve existing immigration levels, while only a few of 23% desire to see more immigrants (Song, 2020). Governed by a conservative and nationalist leader, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japan has firmly insisted that the government would not intend to discuss the immigration policies (Song, 2020, p. 612). Unpredictably, the government switched its approach by extending the admission system for low-skilled foreign workers through the revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law in 2018. The law regulates the acceptance and selection of permanent migrations, refugees, illegal migrants, and foreign workers. Under the amended regulation, the government plans to accept 345,000 foreign workers in five years. The amendment poses a significant turning point in Japan's immigration policy (Kondoh, 2020), making it interesting to explore the dynamics of Japanese immigration. Therefore, this study aims to address the question of *“How has Japan's immigration policy changed to be more receptive towards migrant workers?”*. Having implemented extreme measures while firmly refusing to accept foreigners, especially low-skilled migrants, this thesis argues that the recent shift in Japan's migration policy depicts an imprint of neoliberalism. Accordingly, the neoliberal theory will scrutinize elements pertaining to economic accounts within the new migration policies. The emphasis of this study is limited to labour migrants that divided into high-skilled and low-skilled migrants, as Joppke (2021, p. 77) argues that "migrant distinction of the low- v. high-skilled has become the central axis of immigration policy." Simply put, this distinction will make it easier for us to understand migration policies which usually display fragmentation from high-skilled and low-skilled migrants resulting in two policies with different directions. In addition, labour migration was chosen because of its relevance to the neoliberal transition. Furthermore, there is little discussion in the Asian immigration literature, particularly Japan as the 'new emerging' migration country. The focus on labour migrants is also pertinent as it is central to a neoliberal

scheme that usually entails reform in flexibility and settlement between state, business, and labour (Kong, 2005) .

The finding of this research contributes to the study of migration in several ways. *First*, past migration studies predominantly relied on western scholarship (Boswell, 2007; Frank, 2014; Joppke, 2021; Varsanyi, 2008). Therefore, this research advances the discussion on how to understand migration policy in a broader context and conveys the theoretical framework predominantly in the West to the East by illustrating the case of Japan. Further investigation into this matter will also advance the study of Japanese migration. *Second*, Japan's unique relationship with migration may serve as an intriguing case compared to Western countries. Japan is commonly characterised as an ethnic nationalist regime, where ethnic homogeneity is fundamental to national stability. This condition is distinctive compared to the European Union's member states, where the free movement of people is allowed (Woo, 2021, p. 2). *Third*, the contemporary development in Japan's migration policy is interesting because, considering Japan's conservatism toward migrants, enacting a new immigration policy in 2018 that aims to accept 500,000 low-skilled workers by 2025 is a remarkable development (p. 3). Accordingly, to fill the gaps in the existing literature, this study will conduct a discourse analysis of official documents and policies to investigate Japan's immigration policy dynamics. This method will allow me to explore how the policy evolved and demonstrate the neoliberal underpinnings of this change.

The structure of the thesis is as follows. The literature review for this study is set out in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 describes the neoliberal theory and how it is applied. The research design is presented in Chapter 4, which encompasses case selection, analysis procedure, and operationalisation. The results are discussed, analysed, and linked to the theory in Chapter 5, followed by conclusions.

2. Literature Review

This section engages with the existing scholarly literature on migration studies. It then summarizes the literature describing the development of migration studies, including migration policy, emphasising migrant workers. It will be subsequently argued that the literature in migration policy in the Asian context is limited; therefore, this gap is worth exploring to enrich the study of migration.

2.1 Mapping migration studies

Migration has been studied rapidly in recent decades (Massey et al. 1998; Bommers and Morawska, 2005; Scholten et al., 2015 cited in Pisarevskaya et al., 2021). From the beginning, migration research developed with two empirical traditions: internal and international (King & Skeldon, 2012; Nestorowicz & Anacka, 2018). The field has become increasingly varied in links to broader disciplines (Brettell & Hollifield, 2014; King & Skeldon, 2012) and different methods used (Vargas-Silva, 2012; Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2018). Research on migration policy is also prevalent within migration studies, emphasizing governments' economic interests in promoting labour immigration, immigrants' impact on welfare state systems, and state regimes' capacity to protect immigrants' rights (Freeman, 1995; J. F Hollifield, 1992; Ruhs, 2013).

Hammar (1985, pp. 7–9) maintained that immigration policy diverges into two categories: immigration regulations, which oversee the selection of foreign nationals and the acceptance of temporary workers, and immigration policy, which manages the provision of migrants' welfare. Furthermore, two overlapping themes dominate immigration policy theory, concentrating on the configuration of interests, ideas, and institutions that affect policy (Boswell, 2007, p. 75). The first theme discussed the gap between policy objectives and

outcomes and sought to illustrate why states fail to accomplish the goals in migration policies (Castles, 2004; Cornelius et al., 1992). The second theme explains the gap between public opinion and more inclusive policies, demonstrating why liberal states do not succumb to the forces for closure in democratic and welfare state systems (Geddes, 2000; Hollifield, 2004). To further understand the discourse in immigration policy, Meyers (2000) researched six major approaches in migration policy; (1) Marxism, (2) Realism, (3) Liberalism & Neoliberalism, (4) National Identity, (5) Domestic Politics, and (6) Institutionalism. As an illustration, immigration policies and variations in citizenship policies between destination countries can be explained through a national identity approach, which sometimes partially overlaps. For instance, settler societies such as Australia and Canada accept large-scale immigration. Meanwhile, ethnic states in European countries tend to reject immigration because their membership is tied to shared nationality and ethnicity (Meissner, 1992, p. 70). Another approach is institutionalism that highlights state-level interactions and the state's role in shaping immigration policy. Institutionalists claim that public policy is formed according to the state's interest. It means the state as an independent actor acts according to its interest. For instance, a study of the Canadian case by Whitaker (1987, cited in Meyers, 2000) concluded how the practice of its immigration policy had been deliberately concealed from the public. In a common direction, Simmons and Keohane (1992) argue that the Canadian government holds the complete authority in determining policy shaped by its economic and security agenda.

Furthermore, Boswell (2007) contends that political economics, which assumes the relative power of organised interests where the cost or benefit of migration is concentrated on specific groups, is another dominating approach in migration policy (Boswell, 2007; Freeman, 2004). It implies that the more immigration affects a group's interests, the greater the motivation to advocate a more liberal immigration policy. This can also be linked to the

neoliberal reconstruction of the global political economy in workforce diversification via labour market segmentation (Onuki, 2016). Therefore, neoliberalism stands as one of the commonly used approaches in migration policy research (Boswell, 2007; Frank, 2014; Christian Joppke, 2021; Onuki, 2016; Varsanyi, 2008). For instance, Joppke (2021) researched Denmark's immigration policy shift and argued that neoliberalism influences the dual structure of current immigration policy that favours highly-skilled immigrants than low-skilled immigrants. Along the same line, Varsanyi (2008) studied the rise of neoliberal logic in the US through the Illegal Immigration Relief Act and shows how the enactment of the act exemplify neoliberalisation policies being formed at all levels that in turn create an unintended consequence of fostering illegal migration (p. 295). In addition to that, Frank (2014) compared Sweden's immigration policy and concluded that neoliberalism demonstrates the changes between the two periods by linking the old forms of labour control in a new way (p. 415). Therefore, one may conclude that migration policy covers an extensive topic, explored through various approaches, and chief among these is through a neoliberal perspective.

As previous literature shown above implies a strong focus on the West, the study of immigration policies in other parts of the world needs more attention to broaden the empirical basis for analysing and influencing political variables on immigration policy. Hence, despite the growing attention on immigration, the current literature and underlying assumptions in migration policy limit its ability to explain migration trends in another context, such as Asia. It is aligned with Natter (2018, p. 5) who contends that the tendencies to split the world into migrant destinations in the Global North and migrant origins situated in the Global South cause the issue of migration largely unexplored by Eurocentric scholars. Therefore, an investigation of migration policy in other settings facilitates the expansion of the migration discourse through new empirical tests of the existing theories. Accordingly, studies on non-Western countries,

particularly ones that arise as migration states, become paramount in the contribution of migration policy discourse.

2.2 Japan as an emerging migration state

This section aims to elucidate the discussion around immigration and what approaches are used to study migration in Japan. Following the summary of the existing immigration discourse in Japan, I will demonstrate the literature gaps that this study seeks to fill.

Japan is seen as a 'new' country of immigration following its long isolation history. The government opted to open its border for the first time to foreigners in 1993 through TITP. The existing literature captures several issues, such as perception of the Japanese towards migrants (Green, 2017; Green & Kadoya, 2015; Kage et al., 2018) and the impact of the aging population problem on the economy (Komine, 2018; Okomoto, 2021; Song, 2020). The debate on foreigner acceptance in Japan has also been extensively studied (Mori 2002; Nakagawa 2003 cited in Akashi, 2014). Centered on Japan's immigration policy, Hollifield et al. (2014) argue that Japan is the only liberal state that has resisted immigration and paid the costs in terms of sociodemographic, economic, and political challenges. Endoh (2019) and Komine (2014) examine a similar topic and conclude that restrictions in immigration policy were due to the need for a less skilled workforce (labour inclusion) and minimize the social costs of immigrant integration (human exclusion). Similarly, Akashi (2014, p. 178) identified how Japan's rapidly population decline impacted its immigration policies. Akashi contends that resistance in closing the country to the foreigners owing to the consensus-building difficulty and a disinclination to see migration as a political matter (p. 178). Another study explored the political implication of Japan's institutional changes in migration management (Chi, 2020; Endoh, 2019) and how Japan's migration policy exclusively targets high-skilled migrants (Komine, 2014; Wakisaka & Cardwell, 2021).

From the existing literature, it appears that prior research related to Japan's immigration policy covers the topics on Japan's restrictive stance in immigration that solely targets highly-skilled migrants, along with the aging population issues. Following the latest policy developments, this thesis aspires to fill these academic gaps and provide a more nuanced discussion to complement earlier literature by studying the current changes involving low-skilled migrants. As the preceding research points a strong association between migration policy and neoliberalism (Boswell, 2007; Frank, 2014; Joppke, 2021; Onuki, 2016; Varsanyi, 2008), this study will adopt neoliberalism as the main analytical tool. Neoliberalism is relevant in this research for several reasons: *First*, it is generally agreed that Japan's immigration policies have been highly restrictive; therefore the recent policy transition becomes an intriguing subject to investigate further. *Second*, as current debates have concentrated on labour shortage impact on economic productivity, the neoliberal viewpoint becomes applicable in interpreting the government's attempt to restructure its immigration system. *Finally*, this study will propose new perspectives and a detailed rationale for the recent policy changes by applying the theory beyond the Western context. This study seeks to offer an analysis of how neoliberals restructure the migration sector by opening more employment opportunities while intensifying the labour market segmentation. This space served as the entry point for my study, which seeks to examine the dramatic change in Japan's migration policy to become more receptive to migrants.

3. Theoretical Framework

The preceding discussion brings us to the core theoretical underpinning of this paper—neoliberalism, as one of the dominant theories in studying migration policy. To determine whether the neoliberal approach accounts for the migration policy shift, I will illustrate the

theory and provide specific literature on the topic. Based on this insight, the theoretical framework for this research is established.

3.1 Neoliberalism: a theoretical perspective

As part of neoclassical ideas, neoliberalism is a self-regulating market with core tenets of deregulation and privatisation. Campbell and Pedersen (2011:5) claimed that neoliberalism is a set of formal institutions that organise political and economic activities and policies, such as controlling the state's welfare, taxation programs and business arrangements, a flexible labour market, and the absence of international capital mobility constraints favouring free-market solutions to economic problems. The theory comprises political economy practice with a strong emphasis on fluidity, substantial private property rights, free market and trade, and globalisation with markets as an essential condition for freedom in other aspects of life (Fourcade & Healy, 2007; Harvey, 2007). Under the neoliberal scheme, individuals adhere to as 'entrepreneurial selves' and 'the locus of social agency', entirely responsible for their decisions and lives as well as economic successes and failures (Bettache & Chiu, 2019; Brown, 2015; Longazel & Fleury-Steiner, 2013; Ong, 2006; Sugarman, 2015). Therefore, advancing human entrepreneurial well-being and skills through freedom is an indispensable feature of neoliberalism.

The hallmark of neoliberal thought is the superiority of individual and market-based competition beyond other modes of organisation (Chang, 2003; Venugopal, 2015). Longazel and Fleury-Steiner (2013, p. 360) contend that "immigration law and politics under neoliberalism has been characterised by an encouragement of increased immigration to satisfy economic imperative." As neoliberalism is often used pejoratively as the grounds of a wide range of social-political and economic tribulations, Hayek (2011: 331 cited in Onuki, 2016) argues that instead of a destructive force that threatens institution, neoliberalism can be deemed as a permanent legal framework that facilitates an individual to have a capacity in self-

assurance that in turns reduces human insecurity. Neoliberalism can also be considered a productive means of establishing social relations, such as competition between workers and policymakers. Thus, all social inequalities are legitimised on the condition that the market dictates the rules of the competition (Brown, 2015; Dardot & Laval, 2014; Foucault, 2004). In other words, neoliberalism can be classified as an economic doctrine that facilitates the withdrawal of the state's role in regulating the market and advances individual freedom.

3.2 Neoliberal and the politics of migration

Neoliberalism is considered a formidable force across various policy realms, including migration policy (Peck and Tickell 2002, cited in Dobrowolsky, 2013). The broader impact of neoliberalism in restructuring the labour market has adverse effects on migrants, such as the provision to go through a long and demanding process in the labour market integration and less support in the long-term integration to the society. This, in turn, exemplifies how one of the principles of migration policy within the neoliberal lens is to push for a quick migrants adaption within the economic environment. As argued by Freeman & Kessler (2008), migrants are concocted as "a labour-power or embodied human capital." In other words, the entry of migrant workers into the national labour market is presumed to encourage an abundant labour supply, which is essential to foster national income. Wodak (2015, p. 31) pointed out correctly; neoliberalism yields an economization of migration where "human beings don't matter in migration but the financial advantages in our society (do)". To maximise the benefit from these migrants, states will embrace the most appropriate means to combat irregular migration and limit migrants' access to public benefits. As the state is structurally capitalist, migration policies are set only for certain migrants who can fill the demands of the labour market. Dobrowolsky (2013), underlies neoliberal influence in migration policies throughout the application process of migrants admission that consist of four aspects; (1) intended to capture the "right" migrants;

(2) encourage short-term contract and low-pay; (3) diversify immigration 'entry door' with some flexibility; (4) strict border control and combat undocumented migrants. Employing Canada as a case study, she deduces that neoliberal influence is evident in how government portrays immigration through enhancing economic competitiveness, commodifying, and securitizing immigrants at all levels of government (2013, p. 198).

The theoretical framework in this study was built by integrating Dobrowolsky's (2013) framework, Freeman & Kessler's (2008) notion on labour-power, and existing literature that pertains to neoliberal migration policy. In this thesis, neoliberalism is understood as adopting a policy that aspires to produce an ideal economic condition for profit maximisation (Brown, 2015; Dardot & Laval, 2014; Foucault, 2004; Maronitis, 2019). The economic propensity within the policy can be observed through a sequence of admission schemes towards designated migrants. The differentiation of policy instruments and growing emphasis on benchmarks as a tool for migrant selection indicates the growing intricacies in migration regimes (de Haas et al., 2016). As earlier research exploring the causal mechanism between neoliberal values and migration policies was predominantly based on case studies in the Western states (Dobrowolsky, 2008, 2012, 2013; Frank, 2014; C Joppke, 2021) this study aims to enhance the discussion in migration policy analysis by carrying forward a new perspective from the East.

4. Research Design

4.1 Case selection

This research is established on a case study of Japan's migration policy. Japan offers a unique case because of its long-closed immigration history that has recently shifted into less restrictive. Qualitative research is suitable for this paper because it intends to identify the factors behind

these changes. Japan has opted for a '*use-it, toss-it*' mentality to fill its labour market demand (Jozuka, 2018). Nonetheless, due to inadequate foreign acceptance programs (e.g., Technical Intern Training Program), the government was forced to reform its immigration stance. Following the significant policy changes in 2018, the country received 138,000 new immigrants for a long-term stay (OECD, 2021). The amended policy received adverse reactions from the public regarding security matters (Laurence et al., 2021). It is becoming interesting to see how the government, which holds a high degree of nationalist view with a long-standing hostile relationship with foreigners, undertake a more flexible standpoint in immigration which can be argued as the turning point in Japanese immigration history. The Japanese case is also an intriguing example of how a non-Western country evolves as a new emerging migration state. Accordingly, this study strives to enhance our understanding of economic forces relevance in migration policy formation. This study's outcomes can also help understand the Japanese political dynamics related to immigration.

4.2 Methods of data analysis

The study expects to find neoliberal forces leading to Japan's migration policy adjustment by measuring neoliberal elements (e.g., economics) in Japanese policy through discourse analysis (DA). Discourse can be understood as not simplistic linguistic communications but more as a collection of remarks which meaning varies depending on the context (Gee, 1999). The DA also has been widely used for policy analysis by academics. It can be employed to identify dominant, marginal, oppositional, or alternative discourses within policy documents (Cummings et al., 2020, p. 99). To determine the framing of the discourse and how this relates to the neoliberal principle, the study of messages in verbal and textual form is required.

Data from the National Diet of Japan was gathered through the official website, consisting of parliamentary debates and policy documents. The parliamentary debates are used to portray political dialogue and have fundamental aspects of argumentation and legitimation (Van Dijk, 1997). The 197th House of Representative plenary session (October to November 2018) and two additional committee meetings will be analysed (appendix E). I will also examine the official document of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act 2018 to highlight its main points. Drawing on the analysis of six parliamentary debates, I will demonstrate that neoliberal inclination is not merely a shift towards more flexible in receiving migrants but also for a more significant economic productivity. Besides the institutional texts, this study will also use secondary sources from academic articles, reports, and literature on the field. This research expects the coherent influence of neoliberalism in the government's attempt to ease the border. The accumulated data is subjected to DA with a coding scheme adopted from the previous literature on neoliberalism in migration policy with some adjustments that fit this study's objectives. Two frames of interest are identified: Economic and the Politics of Migration that will be further explained in the next section.

4.3 Operationalisation

As the neoliberalism literature is so extensive, it is necessary to decide elements from the theory relevant to my case to create an analytical tool. This section aims to make theoretical concepts applicable to my empirical research. Prior to that, I will first explicate some essential terms that I use in this study.

4.3.1 Definition

In this study, migration policy is defined as the government's statements in regards to the selection, admission, settlement, and deportation of foreign citizens residing in the country

including laws, regulations, decisions, or orders (Bjerre et al., 2015). This study focuses on migrants that understood as an umbrella term of a person who moves away from her place of usual residence whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons (IOM, 2019). Migrant workers are included as a person whose types of movements are legally-defined that is seeking work or employed in the host countries. Finally, the terms migrants, labour migrants, and foreign workers will be used interchangeably.

4.3.2 Coding scheme

The time frame of this study is limited from 2006- 2020, with emphasis on Shinzo Abe's administration. His primary focus is on fostering Japan's economy; while challenged by the aging population problem, this time frame illustrates a crucial turning point in Japan's immigration system. In designing the coding scheme, I adopt Dobrowolsky's (2013) framework and specify each variable into relevant indicators to scrutinise the documents (see Table 1).

Table.1: Variable and indicator in migration policy within neoliberalism framework

	Variable	Indicator
Neoliberalism in migration policy	Targeted migrants	1. Highly-skilled migrants 2. Low-skilled migrants
	Employment	3. Wages 4. Short-term working contract
	Immigration entry categories	5. Categories enlargement 6. Flexible qualification
	Border control Variable	7. Penalties for undocumented migrants

In the first variable, I diverge high and low-skilled migrants to witness the differential treatment imposed by the government. Regulations concerning the rights and obligations of workers (e.g., wages and employment) are examined in the second variable. The third variable focuses on acceptance system expansion and the last variable stresses policy related to irregular migrants in Japan. I will also incorporate the concept of humans as labour-power capital by Freeman & Kessler (2008) along with existing related literature that links neoliberal and migration policy (de Haas et al., 2016; Dutta, 2021; Horvath, 2014; Kaul, 2019; Lidén et al., 2019; Pallitto & Heyman, 2008; Pianezzi et al., 2021; Wacquant, 2009) to complement current framework and form a more exhaustive coding scheme for the analysis. Therefore, in this thesis, neoliberalism is understood as adopting a policy that aspires to create an ideal economic condition for profit maximisation (Brown, 2015; Dardot & Laval, 2014; Foucault, 2004; Maronitis, 2019). Following a thorough examination of existing literature related to neoliberal migration policy, I have created and adjusted a coding scheme to fit the objective of this research. Two frames of interest identified are 'Economic' and 'The Politics of Migration.' The 'Economic' frame includes the conception of how the mobility of labour migrants affects the productivity of economic growth (Maronitis, 2019); whereas, The Politics of Migration captures views on maximizing the economic benefit from migrants within the policy realms.

As argued by Maronitis (2019), the economy as the first category can be understood as the productivity of economic growth influenced by the mobility of labour migrants. Simply put, foreign workers are seen as being able to advance the country's economic productivity, and the state will evaluate its migrant admission system through a cost and benefit analysis. In a broader sense, the state must ensure that the migrant worker's contribution corresponds or even surpass their consumption of public benefits to maximize their returns. The economic discourse on migration indicates an inclination towards selective migration regimes that concentrate on

skill-based and labour market potential. Under the Economic frame, I create three sub-categories;

- (1) **Labour Market** is understood as a policy that compromises the benefit for the business and the market in Japan. For instance, the introduction of new migration acceptance schemes. It is expected that the policy will solely accommodate migrant inflow limited to particular sectors (Stuesse, 2009, p. 95).
- (2) **Welfare System**, how the government tries to maximize the revenues from the incoming foreign workers by minimizing access to the welfare system is expected. It is presumed that constraints on social security access will be imposed, e.g., strict regulation on insurance enrolment.
- (3) **Precarity** as the primary strategy and effective medium for neoliberal government to maintain a sense of security for domestic workers by embracing minimal rights for the foreign workers (Maronitis, 2019, p. 13) and form of labour control in the economic sector (Gordon & Lenhardt, 2008). While analysing the official documents, the inclination to produce precarious working conditions is expected to be perceptible in the minimum safeguarding provided for the foreigners. Although higher productivity and economic growth targets remain paramount in the policy, the state is assumed to withstand discrimination between domestic and foreign workers.

The second Frame is the Politics of Migration. Neoliberal dominance is discernible within policies that attempt to maximize the immediate profit from incoming migrants; the sub-categories are as follows;

- (1) **Immigration and border control**, this sub-category captures neoliberal realisation of the state's approach in terms of border control. As it is argued by Mulvey and Davidson (2019), neoliberalism and border control are compatible because migration controls are '*unfortunate*' necessary throughout the economic transformation process. A

statement concerning a tough stance on the reception system to combat irregular migration is expected to be found. For example, it encourages the punishment of illegal immigrants through detention centres and deportation.

(2) Immigration: negative, refers to the arrival of migrants as an additional burden to the society, mainly related to the increased consumption of social security funds. It also creates anxiety for the Japanese regarding lower wages and employment opportunities. Imposing quotas, a point-based system, and the dismissal to label the foreign workers as an immigrant are some of the examples.

(3) Immigration: positive, understood as the benefit of taking more migrants to foster economic productivity. For instance, statements mentioning migrants benefit in promoting the economy.

(4) Integration, a particularly relevant sub-category because the neoliberal governments expect labour migrants to be the 'ideal citizen.' e.g., through specific requirements set by the government and language proficiency to ensure that they receive only skilful labour that meets the demand of the internal labour market (Pianezzi et al., 2021). I presume to find statements concerning the establishment of peaceful co-existence and language proficiency in the documents.

Table. 3: Coding scheme

Domain: Neoliberalism
Frame 1: Economic
101. Labour Market
102. Welfare system
103. Precarity
Frame 2: The Politics of Migration
101. Immigration control & border
102. Immigration : Negative
103. Immigration : Positive
104. Integration

Table.3 depicts the coding scheme for the analysis. For a complete description of the codebook, see Appendix A. Through investigating Japan's recent policy changes, the following discussion presents how the changes, reinforced by the capital accumulation and cost-benefit calculation, have constituted migrant workers as precarious subjects in the Japanese labour market. It can be inferred that neoliberalism manifested itself within the current policy changes by altering the discourse from homogeneity towards being subjected to market interests.

6. Result and Discussion

This chapter presents and analyses the collected data. Seven documents comprised of parliamentary debate and Immigration Act 2018 are subjected to discourse analysis. Two analytical frames were applied: 'Economic' and 'The Politics of Migration'. The parliamentary debate is examined thoroughly, but only the parts relating to one of the domains are coded. This chapter provides some numerical references drawn from the data. Relevant parts of the content are subsequently examined in greater depth.

6.2 Analysis of the parliamentary debate

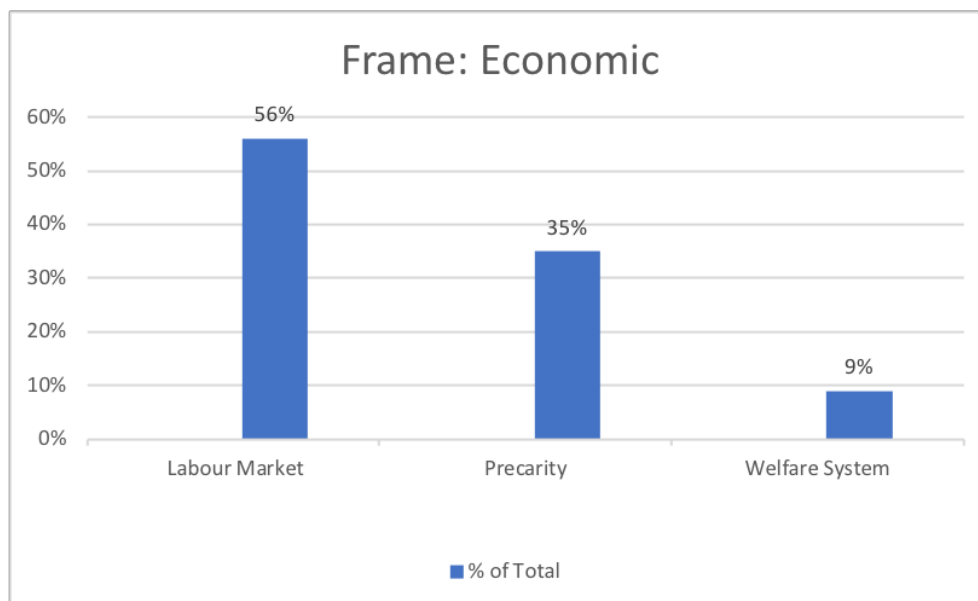
6.2.1 Frame: Economic

In order to answer the research question, a discourse analysis was conducted. The previously constructed coding scheme presented in Table .3 of operationalisation section were used for the coding of the six parliamentary debates of the National Diet of Japan. The discourse on immigration revolves around the argument of foreign workers as embodied labour or human capital (Freeman & Kessler, 2008). This notion is reflected almost in all the plenary sessions

concerning the introduction of the new Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act 2018. Throughout the debate, one thing that stands out is how the Japanese government acknowledges the need to rethink its approach to immigration as one way to solve the labour shortage problem.

Figure .1 shows that the government makes substantial economic references throughout the debates examined in this thesis. A reference to the significance of the economic is often employed to suggest that policies are justified because of the dire needs in the labour supply, notably to sustain the SMEs in Japan. The following figure depicts how positive references to the labour market dominate the migration discourse in Japan, making it the highest among other categories.

Figure. 1: Economic



The quote presented in appendix d highlights the first sub-category of the labour market under the economic frame—labour market. It implies how migrants are commodified and served to fulfil the demand and compulsion subjected to the market dictates. In a broader

context, it becomes apparent that the pattern in Japan's migration discourse is a product of the expansionary logic and forces propelling capitalisation. Thus, it enhances the continuity of economic expansion, which prolongs the commodification of migrants as a labour force. In addition, the Japanese authorities on entry and resettlement propagate differential treatment, especially toward temporary labour migrants. Only those who meet the conditions, possess the required skills and qualifications are entitled to enter; otherwise, migration to Japan is nearly impossible. This findings align with Freeman & Kessler (2008) studies that contend "under the economic discourse, migration used as a means to maximising the advantage to sustain the domestic economy." As a result, immigration flows can be claimed as solely a short-term labour contracts transaction (Modood, 2013, p. 19).

The second reference that accounted for 35% in the discourse is precarity, understood as a tendency of the state to create precarious or uncertain working conditions for foreign nationals. One of the highlights regarding foreign national acceptance discussion in the debate is the aim to suppress labours' expectation of being admitted as permanent residence in Japan by emphasising their residence status limitation and forbidding workers from inviting their family members to come to Japan (for specific skills No.1). One justification for this concern is the likelihood of the family members being unproductive while taking the social benefit. Thus, it implies an exact reversal of neoliberalism's usual framing where individuals are seen as productive economic agents (Pallitto & Heyman, 2008). As cited in appendix d, it is noticeable that, in an attempt to maintain a sense of security and certainty for the domestic workers, the government grants minimal rights for the foreign workers (Maronitis, 2019, p. 13). This can be observed in how the government imposes modest labour market participation while excluding migrants from political involvement and possessing minimum safeguarding such as limited access to social benefit (Shipper, 2011; Takao, 2003). It also aligns with the

"number v. rights" logic by Ruhs (2013) when he illustrates the position of low-skilled migrants in the high-income state. Ruhs further contends that the receiving state will dismiss the family reunification for low-skilled migrants and limit permanent residency and citizenship access. In other words, when a state decides to admit more low-skilled migrants, it also entails conceding them lesser rights. Therefore, migrants are constructed as precarious subjects in the labour market. It is also important to note that the continuous production of a space for migrant commodification is not only in the underdeveloped capitalist economies of the Global South but also in the highly developed Global North (Onuki 2016;5). From this perspective, the low-skilled migrants are subjected to the Japanese market dictates. Thus, the limited rights for foreign workers that exacerbate migrant's workplace precarity can also be seen as a continuous pattern in the demands of neoliberalism under globally networked capitalism (Gill, 1995; Onuki, 2016) .

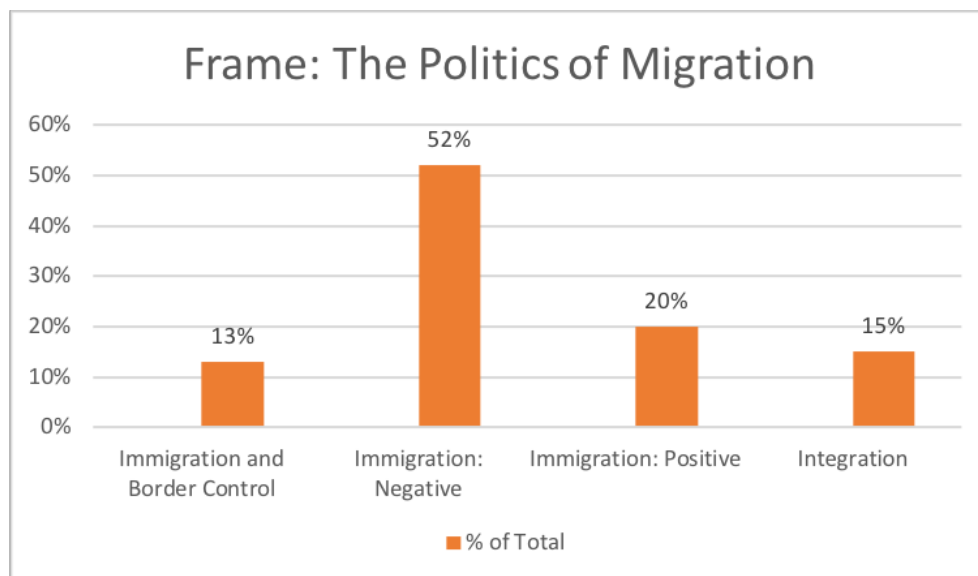
The last category under the economic frame is the welfare system. The discourse concerning the welfare system only forms a small number of less than 10% in the debates (appendix d). It could be observed that, one of the main arguments in the debate is that foreign nationals were seen as a menace that would exploit Japan's social security fund—notably concerning the malicious use of insurance coverage. Consequently, this fear of foreign workers being a potential burden forces strict social security access enrolments. This act is accountable within a neoliberal framework where the precarious migrants' work conditions are denoted by the lack of labour rights, such as narrow social benefits and job insecurity (Dutta, 2021; Endoh, 2019; Geddes, 2000). It appears that ensuring social security is appropriately used consider as one of the main focuses of the Japanese government under the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act 2018.

In sum, from the data shown within the scope of Economic, three things that stand out are, *First* migrants are deemed as capital that commodified and served under the market dictates. Thus, the marketization of labour migration is a force that escalates the alienation and commodification of migrant workers (Onuki, 2016, p. 16). Moreover, adopting specific skills and requirements is essential and prolongs the government's intent to filtrate the migration flow to Japan. *Second*, suppressing labour expectation to obtain permanent residence through the creation of precarious working conditions suggests how Japan strives for a sense of security and certainty directed solely to the Japanese. This findings in line with de Haas et al., (2016) that asserts "economic discourse on migration includes two contrasting economic perspective, that is either focuses on the economic value of migrants or on the threat of migration poses to the interest of working citizens." Therefore, it becomes noticeable that lesser rights will be allocated to foreign workers. *Lastly*, to subdue the cost of taking more migrants to Japan, strict regulation on social benefit evolves as one of the top priorities in the policy. The purpose is to ensure that the incoming migrants should not reap the benefit without contributing to society. Therefore, we can say that neoliberalism manifests itself in Japan's migration policy by demonstrating the inclination to consider migrants as a labour-power that bears potential for market productivity and viewed the matter from a single cost-benefit analysis (Amelina, 2020; Wodak, 2015). Furthermore, the neoliberal pedigree is also noticeable in the government accepting temporary workers with specific skills who can immediately work in the necessitated industrial fields. As Peck (1996 cited in Onuki, 2016) claims, the neoliberal imperative for labour market flexibility has extended labour exploitation by expanding the temporary worker pool and part-time employment. Thus, neoliberal underpinned the shift in Japan's migration policy through the proliferation of precarious employment for foreign workers.

6.2.2 Frame: The Politics of Migration

The finding shows that negative reference to immigration is prominent throughout the parliamentary debates. As indicated in Figure .2 , negative references pertaining to immigration discourse are dominantly reproduced in the parliamentary debate. A substantial 52% and 20% of the frames belong to negative and positive references to migrants, respectively. Whereas, only a fraction of 15% of references pertains to integration.

Figure .2 : The Politics of Migration



Under the variable of Immigration and border control, a total of 13% references were produced throughout the debate with terms of 'deportation,' 'illegal,' and 'security' occurring frequently. It reveals that the discussion about the policy emboldened discourse around securitisation by employing harsh rhetoric (appendix d). Align with Dobrowolsky (2008), the use of harsh rhetoric is highlighted by constructing racialized markers that framed migrants cultural dissimilarities as threats to the quality of the national labour force (Dobrowolsky, 2008, p. 466;474). Therefore, the finding suggests that the government purports to form cost-effective policies by framing the culturally dissimilar immigrants as a menace to Japanese society and social safety nets. Points to Horvath's (2014, p. 115) argument on cost-benefit calculation, it

can be inferred that the primary form in the neoliberal government policy-making relies upon the cost-benefit analysis before any other political logic. Thus, the discourse analysed above firmly explains Japan's neoliberal interpretations of immigration policies where the influx of migrants into Japan, while undoubtedly necessary, was somehow perceived to become a burden to the social fabric. As such, it securitised the discourse around the migrant admission system and shaped the believes that immigrants can harm the composition of Japanese society (appendix d).

Furthermore, it also highlights that one of the government's aims is to enforce rigorous regulations to combat irregular migrants. The government, too, is highly critical in accentuating the prospect of deportation for irregular migrants. Thus, the current migration policy is designated to allow the government to maintain the full authority to manage the foreigner's entry securely. For instance, as alleged by Wacquant (2009), “the neoliberal state will pursue for freedom at the top and insecurity at the bottom.” In other words, a state will create a hierarchical differentiation of deportation policies. It means that the neoliberal migration regime will ensure the mobility and security of residence while at the same time, create a mobility punitive that results in marginalisation for the migrants in precarious condition. This pattern explained the economic function of deportation policies (Horvath, 2014). As it can be observed throughout the discourse, the government is clearly pushing for a more robust regulation on the border and emphasise the possibility of deportation for irregular migrants arriving in Japan, including the over-stayed visa holder (appendix c).

Under the second variable, the positive reference towards migrants account for one-fifth (20%) of total references relying on the notion of foreign workers' contribution in sustaining the economic productivity by filling the market demand. This corresponds to what Goldberg (2012, p. 126) maintains that by depicting migrants as a commodity, migrants are thus viewed as a 'resource holder' that can be automatically transformed into labour-power

(appendix d). It is evident that the government is directing the new migration policy as a solution to the labour shortage in Japan's market. Thus, the role of neoliberalism in Japan's migration policy is prominent in the government's effort to maximize the benefits from the foreign workers to the domestic economy (Boucher & Gest, n.d.; G. Freeman & Kessler, 2008). Contrarily, the unfavourable view towards migrants is more pronounced in the debate. Negative references to foreign nationals focus on the fear of the dire consequences of taking foreigners into Japan. In addition to that, the officials also firmly reject the idea of the current revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act to be equated as an 'immigration policy'. The quotes that suggest denial from the government are cited in appendix d. One possible explanation is that immigration remains highly contentious in Japan. The government attempts not to develop anxiety that can initiate a public backlash. Therefore, the government prefers to use 'foreign human resources' term when referring to immigrants.

Furthermore, it is also worth noting that the opposition employed the welfare system as their mainframe in arguing the adverse consequences of the policy. At the same time, queries on what makes this new bill different from immigration policy were asked frequently. It implies a significant and shared concern by both the government and the opposition about the social benefit redistribution. This view follows a neoliberal agenda in ensuring each individual role is as 'entrepreneurial selves' (Bettache & Chiu, 2019) who take responsibility for their own decisions, economic success and their own lives (Sugarman, 2015). Therefore, it is paramount to oversee the distribution of the social benefit targeting those who contribute to society. Additionally, the consequences from foreign workers' inflow also served as a primary concern linked to employment prospects for Japanese people. This concern prompts more robust protection for domestic workers. It displays the neoliberal precepts in regulating and controlling immigration flow to protect the national interest. One of which is to privilege citizens over migrants by acting rationally based on the economic imperative (Kaul, 2019;

Pianezzi et al., 2021). Thus, as observed in the discourse, the government firmly stressed that the permanent residency for migrants would not be easily acquired, and the interest of Japanese nationals is guaranteed (appendix d).

Following one of the most contentious articles under the specific skills No.2 that maintains the period of stays can be extended indefinitely, the government strongly emphasizes the difficulties in obtaining the permit. Besides the challenging examination that each applicant should pass, a high degree with specific expertise is also required. Thereby, the government confidently asserts that the acceptance rate for the specific skills No.2 will remain low due to its extreme hurdles. As Dutta (2021) pointed out, this structural limit of access to citizenship is deeply intertwined with the precarity of migrant work. Due to the lack of labour protections and the absence of pathways of mobility into citizenship, migrants remain under the hyper-precarity conditions as the interplay of capitalist forces of exploitation. This also applied to the deployment of a neoliberal model of regulation that infiltrates Japan's new migration regime that pushes for a stringent policy to access public benefits and a bold attempt to combat the flow of 'unwanted' migrants. Thus, the findings reinforce Walsh's (2011, p. 865) proposition that migration policy under the neoliberal reorientation will thoroughly analyse immigrants' economic contribution.

The fourth sub-category under the politics of migration is integration. The finding shows that the reference to integration is insignificant in the parliamentary debates, with only 15% of references made. One thing that stands out under the topic of integration is that the Japanese government shows a slight inclination to encourage the adaptation of migrants to society by providing programs for peaceful co-existence between the foreigners and the nationals (appendix d). Though the government promotes language proficiency and provides language education support for foreigners, from the debate, it appears that Japan's multicultural co-existence discourse does not target an actual integration nor naturalisation. Conversely, the

main priority is labour participation in economic activity followed by a quick adaptation to the market dominating the discussion. Therefore, the migrants will directly contribute to society without any obstacles such as language barriers. As affirmed by Lidén et al., (2019), the neoliberal underpinnings within the policy can be observed through direct contribution and removing all the obstacles for the migrants so that they can maximize their potentials. For instance, facilitating immigrants' establishment through language skills is crucial for supporting migrants' productivity in Japanese society.

The preceding analysis presented above highlights two critical notes. *First*, it seems evident that the economic and security tensions dominate the migration discourse in Japan. While the labour shortage was dictated the market openness towards low-skilled workers, the influx of security anxieties from the inflow of foreign workers was also perceived. *Second*, there is a clash between sustaining national economic growth and tightening borders' control. Therefore, it is becoming the government's intent to fill the labour market by expanding the admission category while simultaneously being excessively critical and rigid in reaping the benefits for the markets. It thereby backs the theory of Dutta (2021) concerning the cost-benefit calculation and security consideration in policy-making, pointing to the undeniable mark of neoliberalism in Japan's migration policy. Central to my analyses here is that the neoliberal feature imprint in the interest and ideas of both the government and the opposition that further point to its migration policy direction. The government frequently stresses the economic value of migrants, while imposing specific requirements to fulfil the market demands. Apart from refusing the current policy equated to migration policy, the government circumspection is also echoed throughout the plenary debate. Thus, the neoliberalism and reliance on the economic benefit prevalent in the Japanese policy consistently supported the commodification of migrants and averted any possible hindrance that migrants pose to the interest of the Japanese. This again, conforms Amelina's (2020) argument that supports the

correlation between migration and the cost-benefit analysis where migrants can be seen as something beneficial for the economy.

6.2.3 Policy paper analysis

This section will elucidate the official document of Japan's migration policy under the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act 2018, which aims to control all persons' entry into and departure from Japan. Under the law, the 'Foreign National' is defined as a person who does not have Japanese nationality. The law also regulates residence status and period of stay for foreign nationals. The strong impetus of the national interest and economy throughout the analysis is apparent. The detailed government requirements for the eligible incoming migrants demonstrate the selective nature of the migrants' reception system. The laws states that only Technical Intern Trainee, Highly-skilled Professional and Specified Skilled Workers that are qualified for residence (appendix b). Extract 2 in appendix b also manifests the selectiveness at the core of the government's policy articulations which points to specific requirements for admission to Japan. Apart from being selective in their reception system, the Japanese government also requires migrants to integrate and participate once they have been allowed to stay. Throughout the policy analysis, it appears that the dire needs for labour supply encourage the government to open its border to low-skilled migrants. At the same time, Japan strategically uses the migrant inflow as a means to generate profits for its market productivity (Adamson & Tsourapas, 2020, p. 868). This conveys a message that the neoliberal model highlights how Japan monetize the migration flow through the new policy and commodification of foreign labours.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to explore how Japan alters its approach towards migrants in a more receptive direction. This paper has built upon the neoliberal theory by evaluating the dynamics in Japanese immigration politics. The parliamentary debate of the National Diet of Japan was subjected to discourse analysis. Through careful examination, this thesis demonstrated the neoliberal imprint in recent Japan's migration policy in two forms; *First*, the results indicate that the Japanese government deems foreign nationals as a labour-power that can significantly enhance economic growth and productivity. It is noticeable that immigrants continue to be subjected to precarious working conditions and have lacked access to social security funds. Thus, neoliberalism manifests itself in the current migration policies based on a single cost-based calculation. *Second*, economic and security pressures dominate the migration discourse in Japan, where labour shortages promote market openness to low-skilled migrants, which at the same time raises significant security concerns. Thus, the admission category expansion and highly critical regulations to combat irregular migrants at the border is presumed to be government intentions. The conclusion of this paper suggests a valuable perspective on how neoliberals underlie and influence policy transformation, notably in immigration, by investigating how Japan as a newly emerging immigration country operates in conjunction with its historical immigration context. With this transformation, we notice how the Japanese government embraces a neoliberal regulation model that permeates its new immigration regime, forming cost-benefit policies while securing borders from 'unwanted migrants.' This research is limited in time, and the scope of the discourse investigated is confined to parliamentary debate as the secondary sources. Therefore, future research could include additional relevant elements such as political party manifestos and election programs, government statements, media analysis, or gathering primary sources through interviews.

Another crucial avenue for future research is to explore the other sides of this development, for instance, the role of migrant workers in shaping immigration regimes and the labour market. Taking into account the immigration policies that have continued to develop to date, future research can also consider observing the forthcoming changes and their impact on the Japanese economy.

Appendices

Appendix A: Coding Scheme

<u>Category 1: Economic</u>
101. Labour Market
102. Welfare system
103. Precarity

Category 1: Economic
<u>101. Labour Market</u> The need to foster the sustainability of the market. May include statements concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitating the recruitment of high-skill and low-skill labour• Reference to labour shortage in particular sectors• Employment opportunity on the targeted niche
<u>102. Welfare system</u> The need to limit consumption of public benefit or the welfare provision for immigrants. May include statements concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limiting foreign workers' access to publicly-funded benefits/ social security system (e.g. strict regulation to claim for health insurance and medical benefit, income support) to prevent the potential of public service abuse• Strict enrolment in access to public benefit
<u>103. Precarity</u> The need to lower workers' expectations of any kinds of jobs and living standards within the society. May include statements concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Controlled flows of migrant labour e.g. quota, no-family reunion• The need to protect the 'national interest' and privileges Japanese over foreigner• Emphasis the temporariness of the foreign acceptance system

Category 2: The Politics of Migration
101. Immigration control & border

102. Immigration : negative

103. Immigration : positive

104. Integration

Category 2: The Politics of Migration

101. Immigration & border control

A general statement to maintain a hard stance on migrants' receptive system. Favourable mentions of laws and penalties for illegal foreign workers. May include:

- Promote deportation for the illegal stays and detention centre
- Advance strict regulation of foreigners entering Japan (e.g. face scan)
- Border protection such as providing resources to protect the border and the status of border security

102. Immigration: Negative

General statements that emphasize the need to imposed strict measures for newcomers. May include statements:

- Replacement of the term '*immigrant*' to '*foreign worker*'
- Emphasis the difficulties in obtaining PR
- Strict legalization concerning residence status of immigrants
- Illegal migrants that burden the society

103. Immigration: Positive

General statements that mention foreign workers help to foster the national economy.

104. Integration

A broad category that covers several aspects such as; integration and language, peaceful co-existence, participation in civil society. May include a statement:

- Imposing language requirements/ proficiency
- Providing language courses
- Reduce language barriers
- The need to create an environment for foreigner co-existence

Appendix B: The Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act 2018

Q1 "A Foreign National is to reside in Japan under the status of residence (in the case of the status of residence of "Highly Skilled Professional.... in the case of the status of residence of "Technical Intern Training" associated with that Foreign National's permission for landing,

under the status of residence that the Foreign National has acquired, or under the status of residence following a change to either of these.” (Article, 2(1)

Q2 “activities to be carried out by a person meeting the requirements provided by Ministry of Justice Order as a professional with highly-skilled capabilities, and which are expected to contribute to the development of Japanese academic research or economy.” (Article 7(2)

Q3 : “a person who is indigent or without a fixed dwelling place and is likely to become a burden on the Japanese Government or a local public entity because of an inability to make a living.” (Article 5(3)

Q4 “(1) Except as otherwise provided in the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and other laws, a foreign national is to reside in Japan under the status of residence ... (2); in the case of the "Specified Skilled Worker" status of ... under the status of residence that the foreign national has acquired, or under the status of residence following a change to either of these.” (Article 2-2(1), 2018).

Q4 “... activities to engage in duties that require expert skills specified in Ministry of Justice Order which belong to a specified industrial field designated by the Minister of Justice conducted based on a contract concerning employment signed with a public or private organization in Japan designated by the Minister of Justice.” (Appendix 1, 2018).

Appendix C: Japan’s Immigration Policy

The Basic Plan for Immigration Control and Residency Management 2019 & Comprehensive Measure 2021

P1 “the Prime Minister gave instructions at the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy in February 2018 ... to proceed immediately with specific examination of system revision focusing on the fields that are truly necessary” (p.36).

P2 “There is a need to proactively accept foreign nationals in professional and technical fields, who contribute to the revitalization of Japan’s economy and society, continuous efforts will be made to facilitate smooth acceptance by clarifying the operations and reducing the burden of the procedures involved in determining the status of residence”(p.41).

P3 “the new system for acceptance of foreign workers is to accept work-ready foreign workers, who possess certain expertise and skills in industrial fields where foreign workers are needed.”(p.36).

P4 “... when foreign nationals in professional and technical fields are required afresh owing to changes in Japan’s economy and society... taking into consideration of the impact on the labour market, industry, and people’s lives in Japan”.

P5 *“It is necessary to reliably prevent the entry at the border of terrorists and other foreign nationals who intend to stay illegally in Japan in order to protect the security of Japan and public safety, and such foreign nationals have to be quickly and reliably excluded from Japan. This is also an important mission for the immigration control and residency management administration.”* (p.68)

P6 *“there are still approximately 70,000 foreign nationals staying illegally in Japan, and there are concerns that in the process of aiming for the target number of 40 million foreign tourists visiting Japan by 2020, there will be large numbers of foreign nationals staying behind in Japan beyond their authorized period of stay, and therefore, in response to such eventualities, it is necessary to maintain the appropriate systems, utilize the various types of information held by the Ministry of Justice and to continue strongly implementing effective crackdowns through closely working with the relevant organizations.”* (p.73)

P7 *“With the creation of the new status of residence of “Specified Skilled Worker” and the expected further increase in the number of foreign residents, the existence of imposter residents is an issue that cannot be ignored when conducting proper immigration control and residency management. Therefore, countermeasures are urgently required.”* (p.74)

P8 *“measures against imposter residents will be strongly promoted such as swiftly executing the deportation procedures or procedures for revocation of the status of residence when a person is found against whom these procedures should be taken.”* (p.74)

P9 *“Detainees whom a deportation order has been issued should, in principle, be promptly deported from Japan thus ending the need for detention, but when special consideration is necessary in a case from a humanitarian perspective, it is necessary to avoid prolonged detention as much as possible by flexibly utilizing the provisional release system. On the other hand, some foreign nationals, who do not reach the stage of deportation for various reasons, are not fit for provisional release because they are subject to punishment for past criminal acts, and therefore, they have to be detained, and as a result, since they may avoid deportation and their detention may be prolonged, it is necessary to continue stabilizing the mental state of the detainee through observation of behaviour of detainees by officers and counselling by experts.”* (p.77)

Appendix D: Parliamentary debates

The 197th House of Representatives plenary session No. 1 October 24, 2018

The 197th House of Representatives plenary session No. 2 October 24, 2018

The 197th House of Representatives plenary session No. 3 October 24, 2018

The 197th House of Representatives plenary session No. 5 October 24, 2018

The 197th House of Representatives Legal Committee No. 1 November 9, 2018

The 197th House of Representatives Welfare and Labour Committee No. 1 November 9, 2018

E1 *“We are trying to accept foreign human resources who have the ability to work immediately in Japan with a time limit.” (Abe No.2)*

E2 *“With regard to highly-skilled human resources, we are promoting the development of the professional and technical labour market and promoting the acceptance of human resources who are expected to improve the efficiency of the Japanese labour market.” (Abe No. 3)*

E3 *“The new acceptance system will expand the current acceptance system for foreigners in specialized and technical fields in order to respond to a serious labour shortage, and will have certain expertise and skills only in the industries that are truly necessary. , We are trying to accept foreign human resources who are ready to work in Japan with qualifications for employment.” (Abe No. 3)*

E4 *“The labour shortage, including small and medium-sized enterprises, is becoming more serious, and there is a possibility that the sustainability of Japan's economic and social infrastructure will be hindered. For this reason, in the industrial field where it is still difficult to secure human resources even if efforts are made to improve productivity and secure domestic human resources, we have a certain level of expertise and skills, and we have the ability to work immediately. It is required to build a mechanism to accept foreigners.” (Takashi Yamashita legal committee No.5)*

E5 *“This new system has a certain level of expertise and skills in fields where it is still necessary to accept foreign human resources even if efforts are made to improve productivity and secure domestic human resources in order to respond to a serious labour shortage. It is a system that accepts foreign human resources who have the above for the purpose of employment, and is not simply a system that can accept foreign human resources to meet labour demand.” (Abe No. 5)*

E6 *“As Japan enters an era of full-scale declining birth rate, aging population, and declining population, it is necessary to actively accept foreigners who bring vitality to the economy and society. For this reason, we will strive to further promote the acceptance of highly-skilled foreign human resources by realizing the measures set forth in the future investment strategy, etc.,” (Takashi Yamashita legal committee No.5)*

E7 *“We are willing to accept it, but it does not mean that you will be granted permanent residence in Japan as long as you obtain a status of residence of a specific skill. In order to be granted permanent residence in Japan, you must be well-behaved, have the assets or skills sufficient to earn an independent livelihood, have been in Japan for 10 years or more, and have a working qualification for 5 years or more. Strict conditions such as staying in Japan are imposed.” (Abe No.5).*

E8 *“Therefore, considering that it is an urgent task to deal with the current serious labour shortage, we basically do not allow family members to accompany the first specific skill.” (Abe No.5)*

E9 *“All of the new statuses of residence allow you to stay for a certain period of time, and as you pointed out, you are not allowed to renew unlimitedly.” (Abe No.5)*

E10 *“I would like to see how many foreigners are newly covered by medical insurance and how much the income of insurance premiums and the burden on the national treasury will increase.” (Yuichiro Tamaki No.2)*

E11 *“With the increase in foreign human resources, under the same social security system as Japanese people, there may be obligations for benefits to families in their home countries, and medical insurance may be abused. I am worried about the impact.” (Yoshinori Tadokoro, No.5)*

E12 *“I would like to ask how the government will deal with such impacts on Japan's social security system, such as the abuse of medical insurance due to the increase in foreign human resources, as a comprehensive countermeasure” (Takashi Yamashita, No.5)*

E13 *“It is clearly stated that the relevant administrative agencies will cooperate appropriately, and the status of residence will be revoked for those who falsely obtained the status of residence in order to receive medical treatment exclusively, and the method of certifying dependents will be strict.” Takashi Yamashita, No.5).*

E14 *“... we will not allow people with malicious social insurance premiums to stay in Japan.” (Takashi, legal No.1)*

E15 *“We will steadily work to eliminate the uneven distribution of medical departments. Regarding the use of medical insurance by foreigners, we are making efforts such as strictly confirming the requirements for enrolment, and we will continue to make efforts toward more appropriate use.” (Takumi Nemoto, welfare and labour No.1)*

M1 *“The government is not considering adopting a so-called immigration policy” (Abe, No.2)*

M2 *“It accepts foreign human resources who are ready to work for a limited time, and it is clearly different from the policy I mentioned earlier, and it does not take the so-called immigration policy” (Abe, No.5)*

M3 *“The term immigrant is used in various contexts and is difficult to define clearly, but the Abe administration has set a deadline for foreigners and their families of a certain size compared to the population of the people. There is no idea of adopting a policy of trying to maintain the nation by accepting it without establishing it, the so-called immigration policy.”(Abe, No.5)*

M4 *“We are willing to accept it, but it does not mean that you will be granted permanent residence in Japan as long as you obtain a status of residence of a specific skill. In order to be granted permanent residence in Japan, you must be well-behaved, have the assets or skills sufficient to earn an independent livelihood, have been in Japan for 10 years or more, and have*

a working qualification for 5 years or more. Strict conditions such as staying in Japan are imposed”. (Abe, No.5)

M5 *“Regarding the improvement of the acceptance environment ... efforts are being made to improve the working environment, enhance Japanese language education, support occupancy in housing, and promote participation in social security.”* (Abe, No.2)

M6 *“... actively promoting related measures ... for illegal residents and camouflaged residents.”* (Abe No.2)

M7 *“... it is important to give due consideration to security, including measures against illegal residents and illegal workers”.* (Takashi, No.5)

Appendix E: Table presented in the thesis

Table. 1 : Variable and indicator in migration policy within neoliberalism framework

	Variable	Indicator
Neoliberalism in migration policy	Targeted migrants	1. Highly-skilled migrants 2. Low-skilled migrants
	Employment	3. Wages 4. Short-term working contract
	Immigration entry categories	5. Categories enlargement 6. Flexible qualification
	Border control Variable	7. Penalties for undocumented migrants

Table. 2: list of documents

List of documents	
- The Immigration Control and Refugee Act in 1951, 2006 & 2018	<u>Appendix B</u>
- The Basic Plan for Immigration Control and Residency Management 2019 - Comprehensive Measure 2021	Appendix C
- The 197th House of Representatives plenary session No. 1 October 24, 2018 - The 197th House of Representatives plenary session No. 2 October 24, 2018 - The 197th House of Representatives plenary session No. 3 October 24, 2018 - The 197th House of Representatives plenary session No. 5 October 24, 2018 - The 197th House of Representatives Legal Committee No. 1 November 9, 2018	Appendix D

- The 197th House of Representatives Welfare and Labour Committee No. 1 November 9, 2018	
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Table. 3: Coding scheme

Domain: Neoliberalism
<u>Category 1: Economic</u>
101. Labour Market
102. Welfare system
103. Precarity
<u>Category 2: The Politics of Migration</u>
101. Integration
102. Immigration control & border
103. Immigration: positive
104. Immigration: negative

Appendix F: Figure presented in the thesis

Figure .1: Frame Economic

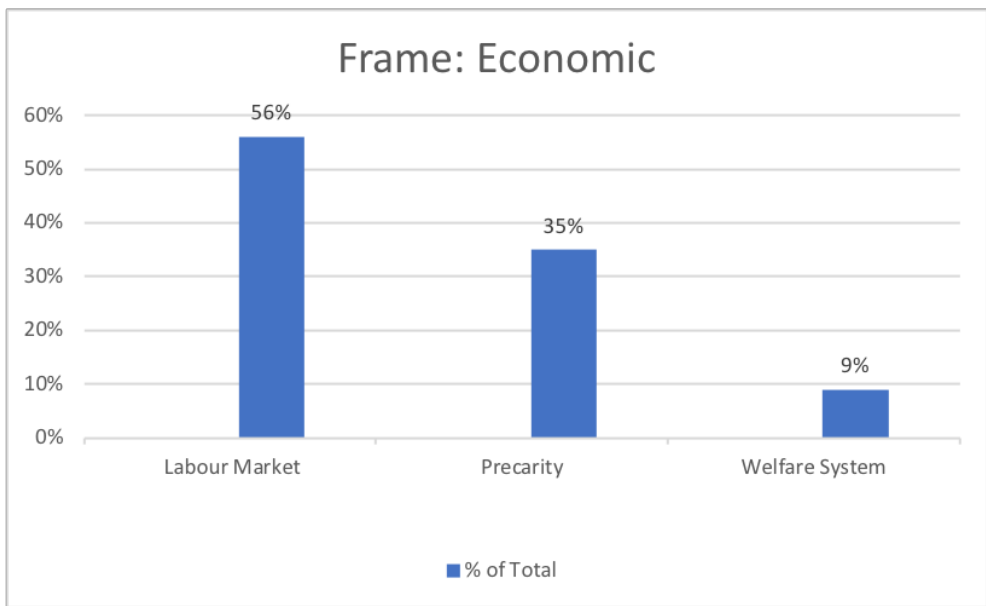


Figure. 2: Frame The Politics of Migration

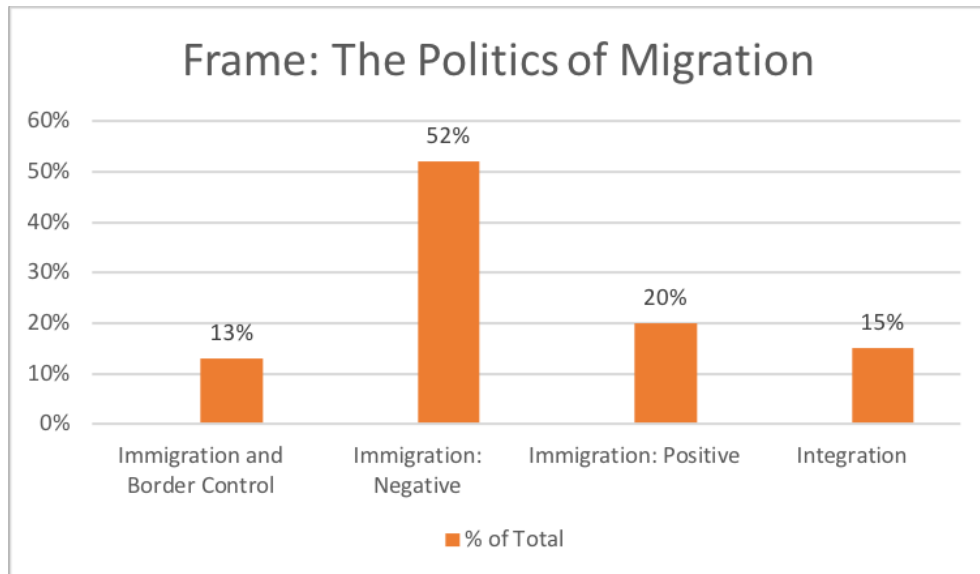


Figure.3: Word cloud



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