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Life Course Events and Attitudes toward Immigrant  
Inflow in Japan: An Analysis of the Japanese Life  
Course Panel Survey Data

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# **Life Course Events and Attitudes toward Immigrant Inflow in Japan: An Analysis of the Japanese Life Course Panel Survey Data**

**Kenji Ishida**  
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## **Abstract**

This paper aims to investigate associations between several life course events, changes in socio-economic and household statuses, and attitudes toward immigration inflow. Many scholars have regarded Japanese society as a negative case of an immigration state, which is usually much reluctant to welcome immigrants. However, the number of immigrants has rapidly increased since the revision and amendment of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act. Japan is gradually becoming an immigration society, and immigrants are becoming visible for local Japanese people. However, it has not been realistic yet to assume that immigrants deprive the employment opportunities of Japanese people. The group threat thesis is not necessarily applicable to Japanese society now, but changes in life course situations will affect people's social attitudes and interests.

With a panel data analysis, we found socio-economic factors are not associated with the attitude toward immigrant inflow in Japan. For Japanese women, instead, changes in household situations such as marriage, having little children and owning a house affect the attitude toward immigrants. We suggest the effectiveness of utilizing a panel data for investigating the formation of attitudes toward immigrants and discuss these results from the viewpoint of responsibilities of family lives in Japan.

## **1. Introduction**

### **Japan as an Emerging Immigration Society**

Migration scholars are aware that the foreign population in Japan is small. Many regard Japan as a latecomer to immigration or a negative case (Bartram 2000; Hollifield et al. 2014). With respect to the foreign population proportion, Japan is indeed different from other immigrant societies. Foreign residents in Japan comprise only 1.9% of the total population, which is much lower than in other OECD countries (OECD 2018). Moreover, the current Cabinet of Japan, administered by the Liberal Democratic Party, is reluctant to make immigration policy.

Meanwhile, Japanese society is becoming an emerging migration state (Hollifield and Sharpe 2017), which means that the country is in a transitional situation. From a temporal viewpoint, population censuses show that Japan's foreign population has increased more steeply since the early 1990s. This is due to the re-organization of the residential status framework. In 1990, the Japanese government revised the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, under which long-term resident visas can be obtained by second- and third-generation Nikkeijin (Japanese descendants), mainly from Brazil and Peru. Also, the technical intern training visa was introduced in 1993, providing another form of residential status that has mostly been utilized by Chinese and Vietnamese. Following these changes, the number of foreign residents doubled from 1990 to 2017, exhibiting an almost monotonic upward trend over this period. A recent simulation study estimated that the share of Japan's population with foreign roots will exceed 10% in 2065 (Korekawa 2018). It is, thus, no longer reasonable to see Japan as a non-immigrant country.

### **Purpose of the Present Study**

This study aims to reveal how people form attitudes toward immigration in contemporary Japan, where the foreign population is steadily increasing. It adopts the life course perspective to empirically analyze and discuss this topic. Since the mid-1990s, Japanese society has experienced a long-term recession, population aging, birthrate decline, and foreign population expansion. With these social changes, many young Japanese people have become unable to experience life course events such as getting a full-time (stable) job, marriage, childbirth, and home-ownership, which were generally accessible to the previous generation. Therefore, there is now variation in life course risk both within a cohort and in individual lives. Within a cohort, some people can attain desired social and economic statuses, while others cannot. Moreover, an individual may

succeed in some respects but fail in others. The between- and within-individual life course risks represent social and economic vulnerabilities, and people in a more vulnerable situation are more inclined to feel fear and anger, and experience low social cohesion (Thoits 1989; Simon and Nath 2004; Vergolini 2011; Jakoby 2016). These negative sentiments can provoke hostility and opposition toward outgroups (Kim 2016).

Japan is a good example for deepening understanding of the formation of anti- or pro-immigration sentiment. This is because the country differs from traditional immigration societies in which the immigrant research framework has been developed. In terms of immigrant population scale, Japan is a latecomer (Hollifield et al. 2014). The local situation should be considered in developing theoretical arguments, as a given research framework will have different implications among the several types of immigration situation (Bartram 2000).

Relatively few studies have examined how people form attitudes toward immigration from a view of the latecomer society, which have not traditionally welcomed immigrants. Typical frameworks such as the group threat and intergroup contact theories (Quillian 1995; McLaren 2003; Ceobanu and Escandell 2010) implicitly assume that the number of immigrants is already non-negligible, and that it is normal for native people to see them in their daily lives. These assumptions hold in immigration societies but also seem to have been applied in empirical studies in Japan (Nukaga 2006; Ohtsuki 2007; Nagayoshi 2008). According to the Ministry of Justice's Foreign Residents Statistics, as at the end of 2017, 46% of the total foreign population actually live in 6% of local districts (city, ward, town, and village). Since most of these districts are located in metropolitan areas, Japanese people in most local districts have no daily contact with foreign people. Applying the perspective developed for immigration societies, it is difficult to explain how such people form anti- or pro-immigration attitudes because Japan's foreign population is just an abstract group for them. It is, therefore, necessary to focus on more general social attitudes, as well as those concerning threat, to better understand how attitudes toward immigration form in the emerging immigration society of Japan. The implications of this study have potentially broad application: as the influx of migrants continues expanding around the world (OECD 2018), current non-immigration countries could be transformed into societies of immigration in the near future. Thus, beyond the focal country of Japan, this study's findings could provide some insight regarding possible emerging immigration countries.

## **2. Research Framework and Previous Findings**

### **Life Course Perspective and its Significance**

Social status and role are embedded into one's life course and are obtained through life course events. In life course studies, the individual is regarded as undergoing a sequence of transitions in social status and role that characterize "the lives of individuals, population subgroups, and populations" (George 1996: 249). The life course approach focuses on the heterogeneity among individuals' life course trajectories. This perspective differs from the developmental approach, which basically focuses on a single trajectory in line with age at the population level, with little interest in variance. Scholars focusing on the life course perspective try to explain what happens after status changes and how other life situations differ among heterogeneous life course patterns (Elder 1985; George 1993).

The social-psychological approach investigates the effects of contemporaneous social environments on individuals' subjective states and behaviors. Many scholars interested in attitudes toward immigration adopt this approach, and usually investigate "Who is against immigration?" using cross-sectional analysis (Mayda 2006). They primarily emphasize "here and now" aspects, with the temporal aspect often beyond their research scope (George 1996: 253).

Whether we should consider the temporal aspect conceptually and analytically depends on purpose of each research. Nonetheless, the life course perspective will contribute to furthering understanding of how attitudes toward immigration form. The former argument about ethnic competition, which mainly focus on factors causing anti-immigration attitudes, does not necessarily exclude the dynamic aspect of racial prejudice (Blumer 1958; Lancee and Pardos-Prado 2013). From the ethnic competition perspective, on which many immigrant scholars rely, the degree of one's socio-economic advantage/disadvantage defines inter-ethnic relationships. Because this situation varies across an individual's life course, the relationship among ethnic groups can also change.

In addition to the level of socio-economic advantage, transitions in social status and role also shape one's social situation and interests, since failure to behave and perform in accordance with associated expectations will result in social sanctions. In most prior studies of attitudes toward immigration,

scholars have scarcely considered changes in social status and role expectations across one's life course, focusing instead on inter-ethnic relationships. However, it cannot be assumed that inter-ethnic relationships will be shaped by socio-economic power throughout today's Japanese society. The ethnic competition perspective is certainly theoretically persuasive and worthy of empirical examination in Japan; however, it assumes that immigrants are visible for Japanese people. Although this assumption is gradually becoming more applicable in Japan, there remains a substantial difference in foreign population size between metropolitan and rural areas, as mentioned in the previous section. In addition, there is no clear evidence that the foreign labor force deprives Japanese workers of labor market opportunities (Nakamura et al. 2009).

Whereas the ethnic competition perspective is somewhat limited in scope, the assumption that transitions in social status and role affect one's social, economic, and political interests, from which attitude toward immigration emerges, is more widely applicable. The life course perspective assumes that anti- or pro-immigration feelings emerge from not only ethnic competition but also broader daily life experiences. In addition, the life course perspective is more relevant in current Japanese society, and can contribute to the concept of inter-ethnic relationships. The life course and inter-ethnic relationship perspectives are not mutually exclusive since opportunities for both immigrants and natives in the host society interdependently determine relationships between the two groups. Previous studies have tended to focus primarily on immigrants, considering the size of the immigrant population and their socio-economic situation. While these aspects are clearly important, the standpoint of people in the host society has largely been neglected by scholars. As an emerging immigration society, whether Japan proceeds to become an immigration state or remains reluctant to open up to immigrants depends on public opinion about immigration. The present study will provide findings to enrich understanding of inter-ethnic relationships in Japan.

### **Age-based and Event-based Approaches**

There are two main types of life course approaches. One focuses on age levels, while the other concentrates on events across the life course. This subsection briefly introduces the two approaches and explains why this study especially relies on the latter.

What this paper terms the age-based approach suggests that age represents “a basis

of historical differentiation through cohorts and of social differentiation according to age-graded statuses and role sequences” (Elder 1985: 26). In an industrialized society, the vast majority of people follow a common sequence of socially distinguished events, which are closely connected through institutional settings and social norms (Mayer 2005; Diewald and Mayer 2009). Under the standardized life course trajectory paradigm, each stage of the sequence strongly corresponds to a certain age level (Elder 1994). In other words, “the timing of life course transitions is usually operationalized as either the average or median age at which a transition occurs or the age by which a majority of cohort members” (George 1993: 359). Given the assumption that an age level can represent a life course stage at the population level, we can interpret the effect of age as that of life course events, or transitions. Some empirical studies have adopted this view (Alwin and Krosnick 1991; Eaton et al. 2009). Life course scholars interested in the age effect’s specification have recently employed the Age-Period-Cohort decomposition approach, interpreting the impact of age as the influence of life stage after considering the period and cohort effects (Yang 2008).

In contrast, the event-based approach directly examines the effects of life course events on outcomes. While life course events and aging are inseparable in the age-based approach, the event-based approach distinguishes between them, taking greater interest in the meanings of life events themselves, rather than life stages. Changes in social status represent shifts in social roles and the degree of socio-economic advantage, which are inter-related. In the social role view, life course transitions, through which social status changes, represent entry into and exit from social roles (George 1993). Socio-economic vulnerability causes negative and pessimistic social perspectives, since downward social mobility usually deprives one of the social roles one is supposed to perform (Thoits 1989; Aneshensel 1992; Jakoby 2016). These aspects do not always change along with aging, and the timing of life events can vary among people. For scholars interested in specific events across the life course, it is more straightforward to operationalize and examine their effects.

This study adopts the event-based perspective to empirically analyze the relationship between attitude toward immigration and life course transitions. Based on prior research findings, we especially focus on how social and economic life events influence anti- or pro-immigration feelings. In other words, our focus is not on the effect of aging. The aging effect can be interpreted as the composite effect of life course events assumed to be age-graded. However, it is difficult to identify the impact of each specific event using the age-based approach. It is questionable whether aging represents what people experience at a certain life stage. Scholars point out that the life course trajectory



in industrialized societies is increasingly becoming de-standardized, introducing variance in the timing and order of each event (Brückner and Mayer 2004; Iwai 2006). While some youths can still follow the traditional life course, an increasing proportion of young people will only experience certain life events, like marriage and having a stable job, later in life, if at all. Especially regarding public opinion on immigration, there is little evidence of the influences of life events from a longitudinal or dynamic view. As the following section will elaborate, we utilize a panel data including information on both attitudes toward immigration and life events. This data enable us to examine within-individual changes in attitude from the life course perspective, focusing on social roles and interests.

### **Several Types of Life Events**

In analyzing attitudes toward immigration, it is a widespread approach to empirically consider socio-economic situations. This is because immigrant researchers usually assume that socio-economically vulnerable people feel deprived of opportunities by immigrants. However, socio-economic situations do not represent only a individual's vulnerability, but social roles and interests. Household situations are especially related to what matters to people in their daily lives. In this subsection, we briefly review previous findings to discuss how the household situation, socio-economic status, and other social and cultural factors affect attitudes toward immigration.

#### *Household Situation*

One's social position within the household or family is related to responsibility for other members. Gender-role attitude is a typical example associated with family position. Previous studies reveal that both men and women have more traditional views about the gender-role when they become parents (e.g., Perales et al. 2018). However, at least one study argues that the relationship between parenthood and gender-role attitude in Japan is empirically questionable (Yu and Janet 2018), but also advocates focusing on the life-course perspective.

Parenthood also influences attitudes on government responsibility. In an empirical study using European Social Survey data, people with children at home were found more likely to think that governments should contribute to social welfare policies (Banducci et al. 2016). The same study found that married people have more traditional social views.

Home-ownership is another important household event. Real estate is an expensive asset, and its value depends on living standards in the area. Ethnic composition is a key component of the environment, and people do not want their houses to decrease in value. Empirical studies have shown that housing value can depreciate as the number of

immigrants increases (Saiz and Wachter 2011; Accetturo et al. 2014). Some scholars in the United States have examined the white flight hypothesis, which predicts that white people leave neighborhoods in which there are a large number of minority people (Crowder 2000; Crowder and South 2008).

In the few studies of attitudes toward immigration that focus on social roles within the household, findings indicate that the household situation is related to many social attitudes, including issues of immigration. From the interest-based perspective, parenthood, marriage, and home-ownership can be expected to negatively influence pro-immigration attitudes because the inflow of immigrants makes the local people in the host society to communicate with people from various ethnic backgrounds and changes in one's living environment. It is anticipated and harmonious for people in the host society to live in homogeneous groups (Guest et al. 2008), and social roles stemming from positions within the household may generate sensitivity to ethnic heterogeneity in one's living area.

#### *Socio-economic Status*

Prior research has typically investigated the relationship between socio-economic status and immigration sentiment, and the perceived threat theory is frequently cited (Quillian 1995). It presumes that people with high socio-economic vulnerability are more likely to oppose immigration inflow. For people in a lower socio-economic group, immigrants may be perceived as depriving local people of jobs by accepting lower pay. From the self-interest view, it is rational for them to reject immigrants so as to protect their job opportunities.

Many researchers regard educational level as a major socio-economic factor affecting attitudes toward immigration. Education not only makes an individual more employable but also has a liberalizing force, providing "broader knowledge, increased reflexivity, a more critical stance, greater personal and familial security, substantial exposure to foreign cultures, higher acceptance of diversity, or the generation of cosmopolitan social networks among the young adults living in urban settings" (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010: 319). Numerous studies report that people with a higher educational level have more positive sentiments toward immigrants (Kunovich 2002; Mayda 2006; Rustenbach 2010), including empirical findings from Japanese data (Ohtsuki 2007; Nagayoshi 2008). However, most previous studies have utilized cross-sectional data. Moreover, the effect of education is controversial, since a study examining unobserved heterogeneity in the fixed effect model demonstrates that education does not positively influence attitudes toward immigration (Lancee and Sarrasin 2015). With the panel data

used in this study, it is difficult to examine the effect of education since most respondents had already finished their schooling at the time of the survey. Unobserved heterogeneity captures a large part of the education effect, so we need to control for the time-invariant factor in order to more accurately identify other time-variant, life-course related factors.

Employment opportunities also determine one's socio-economic living standards. Where local people and immigrants compete in a given labor market sector, the former may attribute the risk of unemployment to immigrants. From the perceived threat theory, we can predict that unemployment will lead local people to reject immigrants because they believe their chances of securing employment are higher with a small immigrant population. Previous empirical studies support the effect of unemployment on negative attitudes toward immigration (Kunovich 2002; Schneider 2008; Lancee and Pardos-Prado 2013).

Even among the employed, there are supporters and opponents of immigration inflow. From the social class perspective, people in a class without socio-economic power lack resilience in the face of an economic downturn. One prominent example is the manual class, and prior research in Western societies shows that socio-economic vulnerability in this class negatively influences opinions on immigrant inflow (Quillian 1995; Kunovich 2002; O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006). In the Japanese context, immigrants are generally not permitted to provide manual labor. However, the Technical Intern Training Program (*gino-jissyu-seido*) allows certain immigrants to perform these jobs, and the number of technical intern trainees, who mainly comprise immigrants from East and South East Asia, exceeded 270,000 at the end of 2017. Furthermore, many immigrants from South American countries (e.g., Brazil) are likely to be manual workers because their long-term resident visas usually allow them to perform such jobs. Thus, the relative impact of immigrants in the manual class seems likely to increase, and we can posit from the group threat perspective that Japanese manual workers are likely to oppose immigration. As in Western societies, previous studies in Japan have reported a negative association between being manual class and pro-immigration attitudes (Hamada 2008).

These prior findings are insightful for developing our understanding of how attitudes toward immigrants form in Japan. However, few studies in any region have adopted a longitudinal approach (with Lancee and Pardos-Prado (2013) and Lancee and Sarrasin (2015) being two rare exceptions). Most previous studies cited in this section rely on cross-sectional data, but this approach cannot control for unobserved heterogeneity among individuals. It is necessary to empirically consider the time-invariant difference to correctly estimate the effects of life course events, since heterogeneity often has a confounding bias in the relationship between independent and

dependent variables. Another methodological issue is the importance of the longitudinal view in analyzing attitudes toward immigration. As mentioned in the Introduction, Japan is currently an emerging immigration society; changes in the policy context surrounding immigrants since the early 1990s mean that inter-ethnic relationships between Japanese citizens and immigrants may also be evolving. Changes in these relationships are shaped not only by societal factors such as GDP, unemployment, and crime rates but also by changes in one's life course situation, which have received little prior attention from most immigrant scholars. In the present study, we try to fill this research gap and propose an additional approach to complement the group threat, intergroup contact, and other typical theories.

### **3. Data and Method**

#### **Data and Variables**

To examine whether one's life course events affect attitude toward immigrants, we empirically analyze data from the Japanese Life Course Panel Surveys (JLPS). The first wave of the JLPS was conducted in 2007, and the randomly selected original respondents were aged from 20 to 40 at the end of 2016. The youth sample, aged from 20 to 34 years old, is termed the JLPS-Y, while the middle-aged sample, aged from 35 to 40 years old, is termed the JLPS-M. Response rates of the first wave of the JLPS-Y and JLPS-M were 34.5% and 40.4%, respectively, for a total sample size of 4,800 in the first wave. Follow-up surveys have been carried out annually since the first wave in 2007, and the response rate in each wave is around 80%. The JLPS also recruited an additional sample aged from 24 to 44 in 2011, comprising 712 youths and 251 middle-aged respondents. We use both the original and additional samples from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> wave in 2017 in the present study.<sup>1</sup>

The dependent variable is attitude toward immigrant inflow. In the JLPS, this item is measured by the following question: "It would be good to have more foreigners coming to Japan to settle down." Responses range from 1 (Agree) to 5 (Disagree), and we reversed the values so that higher values represent more positive agreement. Figure 1 shows the means for the dependent variable across survey waves. The average score for this item is slightly below 3 (Neither agree nor disagree), which indicates that Japanese

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<sup>1</sup> See the JLPS project website for more information (<https://csrda.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/en/panel/overview/>).

people feel slightly negative toward immigrant inflow. However, the score has increased over the last 10 years, reflecting that negative sentiments have gradually been mitigated. This change is partly due to within-individual aspects, since the intra-class correlation (ICC) is 0.476 for the male sample and 0.448 for the female sample. The ICC describes within-individual variance as a proportion of the total variance, so these figures imply that individual changes contribute to almost half of the variation in immigrant sentiment in our data.

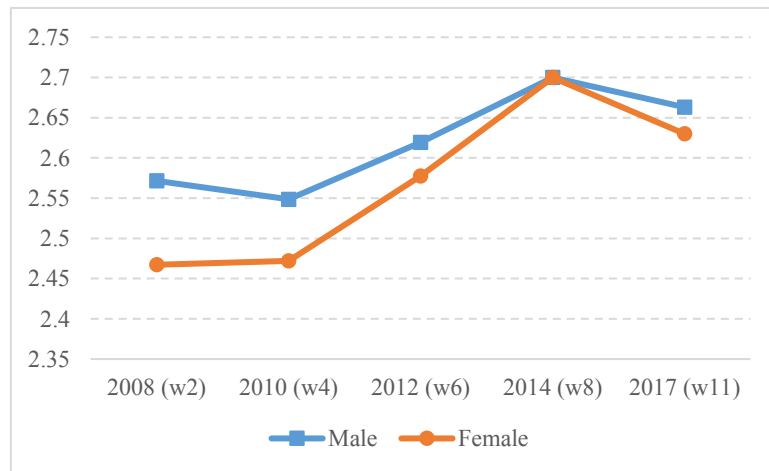


Figure 1. Mean Score by Gender for Attitude toward Immigrant Inflow in Each Wave of the Japanese Life Course Panel Surveys

We primarily focus on two sets of independent variables in this study. The first category is socio-economic status, for which we use three variables in the following analyses. Employment status indicates one’s employment opportunities. We assume that non-regular employment, which includes part-time, temporary, and fixed-contract jobs, and unemployment will be associated with greater opposition to immigrant inflow. We also use occupational status, comprising upper, lower non-manual, and manual classes.<sup>2</sup> In addition, we investigate the effect of personal income.

The second set of key independent variables concerns family- and household-related factors. An individual’s marital status, their household size,

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<sup>2</sup> In the following analyses, the lower non-manual class includes those without a job because we estimate the effects of both employment and occupational statuses. The effect of unemployment is adequately captured by a dummy variable for employment status, and we can interpret dummy variables for occupational status as the effects of the upper non-manual and manual classes compared to the lower non-manual.

and whether they have children define their role in the household. In the child-situation variable, we consider the age of the youngest child as child care responsibility is greater in early childhood. Since primary and lower-secondary education up to 15 years old is compulsory in Japan, we distinguish those whose youngest child is below 15 from those whose youngest child has reached this age. We also utilize home-ownership to indicate the degree to which one is embedded in the neighborhood.<sup>3</sup>

We include several other time-variant covariates in our empirical models. Regarding hopes for Japanese society and for one's future job and life, people with higher values are more hopeful. The perspective on one's living standards can be similarly interpreted. We also use subjective social class, the strength of an individual's political interest, and how favorably they feel toward Japan, the U.S., and China. In addition to these attitudinal covariates, the dummy variable of each wave, respondents' residential area, and respondents' prefecture are controlled in the following fixed effect models. Although we do not focus on socio-economic circumstances, which may have confounding effects on the relationship between the focal explanatory variables and the outcome, the wave, residential area, and prefecture dummy variables can control for these effects. Finally, we will perform a complementary analysis on the effect of education, categorizing educational level into four groups. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the independent variables.

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<sup>3</sup> This item concerns whether one's family lives in an owned house, regardless of the actual home owner.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Independent Variables**

	Male Sample				Female Sample			
	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
Employment Status (Ref: Regular)								
Executive / Self-employed	0.113	0.317	0	1	0.057	0.232	0	1
Non-regular	0.094	0.292	0	1	0.350	0.477	0	1
Other	0.002	0.048	0	1	0.003	0.056	0	1
Unemployed	0.034	0.181	0	1	0.218	0.413	0	1
Student	0.024	0.154	0	1	0.015	0.120	0	1
Occupational Status (Ref: Lower Non-manual + Unemployed)								
Upper Non-manual	0.253	0.434	0	1	0.207	0.405	0	1
Manual	0.398	0.489	0	1	0.189	0.391	0	1
Personal Income (Ref: 250-350 million yen per annum)								
No income	0.023	0.150	0	1	0.173	0.378	0	1
Less than 150 million yen	0.072	0.259	0	1	0.333	0.471	0	1
150-250 million yen	0.100	0.300	0	1	0.174	0.379	0	1
350-450 million yen	0.187	0.390	0	1	0.089	0.285	0	1
450-600 million yen	0.210	0.407	0	1	0.059	0.237	0	1
600-850 million yen	0.152	0.359	0	1	0.017	0.129	0	1
850 million yen or more	0.062	0.241	0	1	0.004	0.060	0	1
Do not know	0.011	0.104	0	1	0.013	0.114	0	1
Marital Status (Ref: Married)								
Never married	0.396	0.489	0	1	0.301	0.459	0	1
Widowed	0.001	0.027	0	1	0.004	0.066	0	1
Divorced	0.025	0.155	0	1	0.043	0.202	0	1
Youngest Child's Age (Ref: Less than 15 years old)								
No child	0.519	0.500	0	1	0.414	0.493	0	1
15 years or older	0.045	0.206	0	1	0.088	0.283	0	1
Single Household (Yes)	0.123	0.328	0	1	0.075	0.263	0	1
Occupy Owned House (Yes)	0.661	0.473	0	1	0.691	0.462	0	1
General Trust (Ref: Depends on circumstances)								
Yes	0.270	0.444	0	1	0.258	0.438	0	1
No	0.092	0.289	0	1	0.072	0.259	0	1
Hope for Japanese Society (1: Disagree – 5: Agree)	2.588	1.062	1	5	2.593	0.947	1	5
Hope for One's Future Job and Life (1: Disagree – 5: Agree)	3.281	0.901	1	5	3.292	0.850	1	5
Perspective on One's Living Standards (1: Poor – 5: Affluent)	3.235	1.094	1	5	3.074	1.000	1	5
Subjective Social Class (1: Bottom – 10: Top)	5.192	1.664	1	10	5.017	1.519	1	10
Strength of Political Interest (1: Not interested at all – 4: Very interested)	2.861	0.890	1	4	2.415	0.835	1	4
Favorable Feelings toward Japan (0: Dislike – 100: Like)	55.287	24.960	0	100	57.405	21.938	0	100
Favorable Feelings toward the U.S. (0: Dislike – 100: Like)	50.507	18.951	0	100	49.803	17.546	0	100
Favorable Feelings toward China (0: Dislike – 100: Like)	26.823	21.248	0	100	27.086	19.952	0	100
Waves (Ref: W2)								
W4	0.172	0.377	0	1	0.173	0.378	0	1
W6	0.211	0.408	0	1	0.216	0.411	0	1
W8	0.204	0.403	0	1	0.214	0.410	0	1
W11	0.176	0.381	0	1	0.190	0.392	0	1
Residential Area (Ref: Cities of 200 thousand people or more)								
Metropolitan Area	0.369	0.483	0	1	0.319	0.466	0	1
Other Cities	0.325	0.468	0	1	0.347	0.476	0	1
Town or Village	0.074	0.263	0	1	0.079	0.270	0	1
Education (Ref: Senior high school)								
Junior high school	0.016	0.124	0	1	0.008	0.088	0	1
Technical or Junior college	0.220	0.415	0	1	0.438	0.496	0	1
Undergraduate or Graduate degree	0.495	0.500	0	1	0.293	0.455	0	1
Number of Observations		6,823				8,005		
Number of Individuals		2,172				2,465		

Notes. Descriptive statistics are calculated based on observations.

We also control for the prefectures where respondents live in each wave.

## Method

We employ fixed effect models in the following analyses to control for unobserved time-invariant heterogeneity. This model is expressed as follows:

$$y_{it} = \mu + \alpha_i + \beta x_{it} + e_{it} \quad (1)$$

$$y_{it} - \bar{y}_i = \mu + \gamma(x_{it} - \bar{x}_i) + e_{it} \quad (2)$$

In Eq. (1),  $\alpha_i$  indicates unobserved heterogeneity, which is difficult to control

in a pooled OLS (conventional regression) model. Because  $\alpha_i$  does not change across time, we can remove that heterogeneity by taking person-mean deviations for both independent and dependent variables. Eq. (2) is the fixed effect regression model, and we rely on the results from this model in the present study.

A shortcoming of the fixed effect model is that we cannot estimate the coefficients of time-invariant covariates. We use educational status as a time-invariant variable because it changes for most people in the current Japanese society. Because it is not possible to consider the unobserved heterogeneity, we also employ between effect models. The person-mean is used in the between effect model, which is expressed as follows:

$$\bar{y}_i = a + b\bar{x}_i + e_{it} \quad (3)$$

The estimates from this model correspond to previous studies using the cross-sectional approach.

#### 4. Results

Table 2 shows the results of the fixed effect models for attitude toward immigrant inflow. Male and female samples are analyzed separately because men and women have different social contexts in Japanese society. The ICCs are high for all models in Table 2, meaning that the residuals of observations nested in each individual are not independent and OLS models would not be adequate. Since high ICC values except for Model 1-2, these results imply the necessity of using a fixed effect model, as time-invariant unobserved heterogeneity affects both the independent and dependent variables.

Models 1-1 and 2-1 are the fixed effect models including only socio-economic and household-related variables for the male and female samples, respectively. Labor market events are not related to attitude toward immigrants for both men and women, but family and household events have some impacts on attitudes toward immigrants for women. In Model 1-1, neither labor market or household events have an impact on attitude toward immigrant inflow among Japanese males. Although “No income” is positively significant, we cannot conclude that personal income overall has some effect because the other dummy variables in this category are not statistically significant. Aside from this result, only two of the wave dummy variables are found to be statistically significant. However, for Japanese females, the results for Model 2-1 shows some significant effects for marital



status, the youngest child's age, and home-ownership. The "Never married" dummy variable for marital status has a positive effect on attitude toward immigrants, suggesting that women become more opposed to immigrant inflow when they marry. Women whose youngest child is aged at least 15 years old are more positive about immigrants than those with a child below that age. Finally, living in an owned home is negatively related to attitude toward immigration among women.

**Table 2. Estimates from the Fixed Effect Models**

	Male Sample				Female Sample			
	Model 1-1		Model 1-2		Model 2-1		Model 2-2	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Employment Status (Ref: Regular)								
Executive / Self-employed	0.059	0.083	0.070	0.082	-0.009	0.071	-0.011	0.070
Non-regular	-0.104	0.066	-0.109	0.066	-0.005	0.044	-0.011	0.043
Other	0.386	0.244	0.418	0.242	0.204	0.181	0.152	0.179
Unemployed	-0.044	0.104	-0.042	0.103	0.014	0.057	0.014	0.056
Student	-0.142	0.113	-0.199	0.112	0.164	0.098	0.120	0.096
Occupational Status (Ref: Lower Non-manual + Unemployed)								
Upper Non-manual	-0.008	0.063	-0.010	0.062	-0.040	0.052	-0.027	0.051
Manual	-0.035	0.057	-0.035	0.056	-0.007	0.041	-0.003	0.041
Personal Income (Ref: 250-350 million yen per annum)								
No income	0.278 *	0.133	0.259	0.132	-0.063	0.062	-0.071	0.061
Less than 150 million yen	0.113	0.078	0.117	0.077	-0.014	0.047	-0.018	0.046
150-250 million yen	0.056	0.058	0.051	0.057	0.008	0.041	0.008	0.041
350-450 million yen	-0.061	0.047	-0.072	0.046	0.017	0.047	0.010	0.046
450-600 million yen	-0.070	0.056	-0.084	0.056	0.109	0.062	0.084	0.061
600-850 million yen	-0.074	0.071	-0.097	0.071	0.151	0.105	0.137	0.103
850 million yen or more	-0.147	0.100	-0.176	0.099	-0.065	0.213	-0.121	0.209
Do not know	0.045	0.136	0.072	0.135	-0.194	0.110	-0.215 *	0.108
Marital Status (Ref: Married)								
Never married	-0.045	0.075	-0.042	0.074	0.135 *	0.058	0.136 *	0.058
Widowed	0.298	0.672	0.417	0.664	0.272	0.267	0.252	0.262
Divorced	-0.106	0.119	-0.051	0.118	-0.029	0.089	-0.013	0.088
Youngest Child's Age (Ref: Less than 15 years old)								
No child	0.016	0.064	0.031	0.063	0.076	0.057	0.071	0.056
15 years or older	0.008	0.071	0.000	0.070	0.119 *	0.047	0.110 *	0.046
Single Household (Yes)	0.063	0.065	0.054	0.065	-0.016	0.066	-0.037	0.065
Occupy Owned House (Yes)	-0.046	0.047	-0.042	0.047	-0.107 **	0.036	-0.093 **	0.036
Generally Trusting Others (Ref: Depends on circumstances)								
Yes			0.071 *	0.035			0.030	0.029
No			-0.042	0.050			0.015	0.046
Hope for Japanese Society			0.120 ***	0.016			0.179 ***	0.014
Hope for One's Future Job and Life			0.023	0.020			0.028	0.016
Perspective on One's Living Standards			0.026	0.017			0.011	0.014
Subjective Social Class			0.013	0.011			-0.006	0.010
Strength of Political Interest			0.001	0.021			0.006	0.018
Favorable Feelings toward Japan			-0.001	0.001			-0.001	0.001
Favorable Feelings toward the U.S.			0.002	0.001			0.001	0.001
Favorable Feelings toward China			0.003 ***	0.001			0.003 ***	0.001
Waves (Ref: W2)								
W4	-0.030	0.034	-0.039	0.035	-0.006	0.028	-0.009	0.028
W6	0.029	0.034	0.062 †	0.035	0.108 ***	0.028	0.132 ***	0.029
W8	0.116 **	0.036	0.109 **	0.038	0.229 ***	0.030	0.198 ***	0.031
W11	0.103 *	0.041	0.095 *	0.042	0.191 ***	0.034	0.182 ***	0.034
Residential Area (Ref: Cities of 200 thousand people or more)								
Metropolitan Area	0.065	0.105	0.047	0.104	-0.026	0.080	-0.007	0.079
Other Cities	-0.027	0.092	-0.030	0.091	-0.064	0.069	-0.063	0.067
Town or Village	0.145	0.137	0.138	0.136	-0.130	0.102	-0.124	0.100
Intercept	2.780 ***	0.331	2.081 ***	0.346	2.974 ***	0.314	2.374 ***	0.320
$\sigma_u^2$	1.090		1.001		0.805		0.758	
$\sigma_e^2$	0.633		0.618		0.491		0.473	
ICC	0.633		0.618		0.621		0.616	
$corr(u_i, x_{it})$	-0.473		0.020		-0.475		-0.425	
$R_{within}^2$	0.0210		0.0459		0.0381		0.0738	
$R_{between}^2$	0.0006		0.0197		0.0002		0.0106	
$R_{overall}^2$	0.0013		0.0204		0.0002		0.0157	
No. of Observations	6,823		6,823		8,005		8,005	
No. of Individuals	2,172		2,172		2,465		2,465	

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$  (Two-tailed test)

Note: The prefectures where respondents live are controlled in all models.

In Models 1-2 and 2-2, we added covariates concerning social and political attitudes. Even after introducing these variables, the coefficients of the life course event variables exhibited little change. The effect of hope for Japanese society is significantly positive for both men and women, but hope for one's future job and life does not have a significant effect. Favorable feelings toward China also has a positive effect on attitude toward immigrants, but such feelings toward Japan and the U.S. are insignificant. For the male sample, the dummy variable of generally trusting others has a positive effect, but this is not found in the female sample.

Finally, Table 3 shows the results of the between effect models, in which we added the educational status variable. Other independent variables are the same as in the fixed effect models of Table 2.

For both men (Model 3-1) and women (Model 4-1), the dummy variable of undergraduate or graduate degree has a positive effect on the dependent variable. However, in Models 3-2 (male sample) and 4-2 (female sample), that dummy variable is not statistically significant and the magnitude of the coefficient also decreases by half. This means that a considerable part of the effect of education results from the social attitudes of more educated people.

The results for labor market and household-related life events differ from those in the fixed effect models in Table 2. In the between effect models, labor market events seem to be more important. For the male sample, the manual dummy variable shows a negative coefficient in Model 3-1, while the coefficient for non-regular employment is significantly negative in Model 3-2. For the female sample, non-employment also has a negative impact in Models 4-1 and 4-2. These results are consistent with those of previous studies.

By contrast, the household situation shows almost no significant effects. An exception is the negative coefficient for having a youngest child aged 15 or older. However, this becomes insignificant after introducing other social attitude variables in Model 4-2. Thus, the household-related factors seem to be irrelevant to attitudes toward immigration in the between effect models.

**Table 3. Estimates from the Between Effect Models**

	Male Sample				Female Sample			
	Model 3-1		Model 3-2		Model 4-1		Model 4-2	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Employment Status (Ref: Regular)								
Executive / Self-employed	0.094	0.071	0.057	0.067	-0.215 *	0.091	-0.209 *	0.085
Non-regular	-0.153	0.091	-0.183 *	0.085	-0.091	0.060	-0.075	0.057
Other	1.437	0.816	1.035	0.759	-0.277	0.475	-0.264	0.445
Unemployed	-0.152	0.195	-0.266	0.183	-0.223 *	0.101	-0.217 *	0.095
Student	-0.218	0.176	-0.291	0.165	0.010	0.180	-0.014	0.171
Occupational Status (Ref: Lower Non-manual + Unemployed)								
Upper Non-manual	-0.061	0.062	-0.097	0.058	0.019	0.050	-0.034	0.047
Manual	-0.121 *	0.058	-0.084	0.054	0.001	0.054	0.019	0.051
Personal Income (Ref: 250-350 million yen per annum)								
No income	0.144	0.222	0.316	0.207	0.227	0.120	0.198	0.113
Less than 150 million yen	0.241	0.123	0.278 *	0.115	0.161 *	0.081	0.117	0.076
150-250 million yen	0.167	0.101	0.155	0.095	0.045	0.078	0.030	0.073
350-450 million yen	-0.058	0.089	-0.067	0.083	0.140	0.098	0.121	0.092
450-600 million yen	-0.011	0.083	-0.057	0.079	0.022	0.103	0.069	0.097
600-850 million yen	0.237 *	0.092	0.165	0.089	0.329	0.172	0.239	0.162
850 million yen or more	0.069	0.123	0.004	0.119	0.215	0.340	0.036	0.319
Do not know	0.446 *	0.220	0.393	0.206	0.227	0.160	0.310 *	0.151
Marital Status (Ref: Married)								
Never married	-0.103	0.089	-0.080	0.083	0.021	0.067	0.015	0.064
Widowed	-0.011	0.642	0.177	0.597	-0.160	0.269	0.012	0.253
Divorced	0.197	0.147	0.075	0.137	-0.004	0.085	0.034	0.081
Youngest Child's Age (Ref: Less than 15 years old)								
No child	-0.020	0.082	0.003	0.076	0.030	0.062	0.057	0.058
15 years or older	0.035	0.143	0.053	0.133	-0.183 *	0.083	-0.121	0.078
Single Household (Yes)	0.024	0.086	0.018	0.080	0.042	0.080	0.050	0.075
Occupy Owned House (Yes)	-0.100	0.054	-0.068	0.051	-0.030	0.044	-0.039	0.042
Generally Trusting Others (Ref: Depends on the circumstances)								
Yes			0.177 **	0.056			0.031	0.045
No			-0.108	0.082			-0.204 **	0.075
Hope for Japanese Society			0.149 ***	0.025			0.184 ***	0.023
Hope for One's Future Job and Life			0.015	0.032			0.028	0.028
Perspective on One's Living Standards			0.053 *	0.025			0.047 *	0.022
Subjective Social Class			0.002	0.016			-0.020	0.014
Strength of Political Interest			0.079 **	0.025			0.073 **	0.021
Favorable Feelings toward Japan			-0.006 ***	0.001			-0.004 ***	0.001
Favorable Feelings toward the U.S.			0.002	0.001			0.003 *	0.001
Favorable Feelings toward China			0.014 ***	0.001			0.010 ***	0.001
Waves (Ref: W2)								
W4	-0.110	0.123	-0.170	0.115	0.200 *	0.099	0.108	0.094
W6	0.131	0.102	0.233 *	0.095	0.215 *	0.086	0.204 *	0.081
W8	0.092	0.126	0.244 *	0.119	0.476 ***	0.093	0.478 ***	0.088
W11	0.019	0.134	0.149	0.126	0.095	0.102	0.209 *	0.097
Residential Area (Ref: Cities of 200 thousand people or more)								
Metropolitan Area	0.011	0.066	-0.027	0.061	0.007	0.052	-0.014	0.049
Other Cities	0.028	0.058	-0.022	0.054	0.028	0.045	0.042	0.042
Town or Village	0.083	0.094	-0.001	0.087	0.039	0.071	0.036	0.067
Education (Ref: Senior high school)								
Junior high school	-0.125	0.152	-0.036	0.142	-0.040	0.162	-0.071	0.153
Technical or Junior college	0.025	0.058	0.059	0.055	0.070	0.041	0.041	0.039
Undergraduate or Graduate degree	0.168 **	0.057	0.089	0.053	0.116 *	0.048	0.057	0.047
Intercept	2.527 ***	0.144	1.516 ***	0.180	2.498 ***	0.127	1.544 ***	0.160
$R^2_{within}$	0.004		0.023		0.003		0.031	
$R^2_{between}$	0.069		0.202		0.053		0.174	
$R^2_{overall}$	0.042		0.133		0.021		0.111	
No. of Observations	6,823		6,823		8,005		8,005	
No. of Individuals	2,172		2,172		2,465		2,465	

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$  (Two-tailed test)

Note: The prefectures where respondents live are controlled in all models.

## 5. Conclusion

These empirical findings from nationally representative panel data suggest that the fixed effect model is useful to investigate the impacts of life course events on the formation of attitudes toward immigrants. In the fixed effect approach, the difference

between the results in Tables 2 and 3 comes from unobserved heterogeneity, which affects both independent and dependent variables. It is, thus, misleading to rely only on the cross-sectional approach, since this unobserved heterogeneity generates a substantial part of the relationship between the independent variables and attitude toward immigrant inflow. Methodologically, the fixed effect approach will contribute to obtaining more adequate findings.

This paper adopted the life course perspective to investigate how attitudes toward immigrants form in Japan. Neither family nor household-related events have previously been examined in Japan (Ohtsuki 2007; Nagayoshi 2008; Hamada 2008). We found that life events such as marriage, having children under 6 years old, and home ownership are negatively associated with pro-immigration sentiment among women. Japanese women are expected to take responsibility for housework and childcare (Yu and Janet 2018). In playing family roles as wives and mothers, they need to be conscious about their living circumstances. By contrast, husbands are likely to entrust domestic matters to wives, so household events do not directly influence the formation of their social attitudes. In future studies in Japan, immigrants should be considered not only as labor market competitors but also neighbors.

Inconsistent with the group threat hypothesis, the effects of labor market life events were insignificant in the fixed effect model for males and females. These results imply that negative labor market events do not tend to cause negative feelings toward immigrants among Japanese citizens, presumably because there is little direct competition between the two groups for labor market opportunities. Immigrants in Japan are institutionally segregated from Japanese workers by their resident statuses (Kamibayashi 2015); this segregation makes immigrants invisible to many local people and prevents competition between ethnicities in the Japanese labor market. This poses a dilemma regarding the future social integration of immigrants in Japan's emerging immigration society, as Japanese workers may come to feel they are competing with immigrants for jobs.

In addition to these life events, changes in other social attitudes are also found to influence attitude toward immigrant inflow. Though not our paper's primary focus, hope for Japanese society is associated with a positive attitude toward immigrants. By contrast, hope for one's future job and life shows no significant association with this attitude in either the fixed effect or between effect model. One possible interpretation is that Japanese citizens see immigrant inflow as not a personal matter but a social matter, and that interpretation is consistent with no effect of changes in socio-economic statuses in the fixed effect models. Hope for Japanese society concerns expectations of society's

ability to cope with the challenges accompanying social changes, and raising expectation is important for welcoming immigrants and constructing a good relationship between immigrants and Japanese people. Social science research can provide empirical findings that help us to think what we should and can do. To better understand this topic, further studies in societies with a variety of social contexts are necessary.

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## 東京大学社会科学研究所パネル調査プロジェクトについて

労働市場の構造変動、急激な少子高齢化、グローバル化の進展などにもない、日本社会における就業、結婚、家族、教育、意識、ライフスタイルのあり方は大きく変化を遂げようとしている。これからの日本社会がどのような方向に進むのかを考える上で、現在生じている変化がどのような原因によるものなのか、あるいはどこが変化してどこが変化していないのかを明確にすることはきわめて重要である。

本プロジェクトは、こうした問題をパネル調査の手法を用いることによって、実証的に解明することを研究課題とするものである。このため社会科学研究所では、若年パネル調査、壮年パネル調査、高卒パネル調査、中学生親子パネル調査の4つのパネル調査を実施している。

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## 東京大学社会科学研究所パネル調査プロジェクト ディスカッションペーパーシリーズについて

東京大学社会科学研究所パネル調査プロジェクトディスカッションペーパーシリーズは、東京大学社会科学研究所におけるパネル調査プロジェクト関連の研究成果を、速報性を重視し暫定的にまとめたものである。



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