

The Impact of Anti-Assimilationist Beliefs on Attitudes toward Immigration

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I outline different beliefs about assimilation, and show that these beliefs can influence attitudes toward immigration. Using data from a new national sample survey in Japan, I test whether and how beliefs about assimilation influence attitudes toward immigration. The results show two important conclusions. First, there is a large anti-immigrant sentiment in Japan. Second, after controlling for other known determinants of attitudes toward immigration, I find that those who are in favor of immigrant assimilation support higher levels of immigration, more immigrant equal rights, and have more accurate views about immigrant crime in Japan. This suggests that those favoring assimilation are not necessarily xenophobic in all cultures.

How do attitudes toward the assimilation of immigrants into the mainstream culture affect attitudes toward immigration? I outline the different beliefs of immigrant assimilation, and show that these beliefs can influence attitudes toward immigration. Immigration inherently brings difference, and how the host society receives newcomers will be influenced by attitudes toward assimilation, which influence the acceptance of outsiders (Pratto and Lemieux 2001). My data show that a majority of the Japanese are hostile toward immigration, particularly focused around exaggerations of immigrant crime. Japanese history shows that support for assimilation is more common among non-xenophobes (Clammer 2001). I show below that the attitudes of Japan emphasize essentialist difference, and often stress keeping foreigners separate and distinct (Dale 1986). Based on these attitudes, I theorize that immigrants acting like Japanese people—that is, assimilating—will be repulsive to Japanese xenophobes because it violates their belief in Japanese uniqueness. Thus, based on these attitudes, I hypothesize that those supporting immigrant assimilation will be more accepting of immigration in Japan. The assumption of a host-society promoting assimilation is common in immigration research. This research shows that denaturalizing this assumption has profound impacts on how research over immigrant incorporation should proceed in differing cultural contexts.

To examine these relationships, I use data from a new national sample survey in Japan to determine the influence of beliefs about assimilation on attitudes

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toward immigration. In this survey, I also collected data about other known determinants of attitudes toward immigration, such as perception of economic contribution, tolerance, ideology, party identification, media exposure, social networking, and socioeconomic demographics. After controlling for these other determinants, I find that those who encourage assimilation are most likely to support an increase in immigration and equal rights, and to have more correct views about immigrant crime in Japan.

Beliefs toward Immigrant Assimilation

Generally, we can define three beliefs about immigrant assimilation. Belief one: that immigrants should be encouraged to “adapt and adopt” the new culture’s beliefs as quickly as possible, and start living as close as possible to the dominant culture. Belief two: that immigrants should not be pushed to assimilate to the dominant culture; it is up to them to decide whether or not to fit in. And belief three: that immigrants must be forced to remain separate and not mix with the dominant culture.

In everyday political discussion, beliefs one and three are often merged as the “anti-immigrant” view, while two is considered the “pro-immigrant” view. Yet beliefs one and three are incompatible. Belief one requires immigrants to integrate as much as possible, by, for example, attending mixed schools with dominant-culture students. The inter-mixing of students leads to the likely outcome of inter-dating and possibly sexual relations, always a source of hysteria (see Piper 1997). Thus, those who are truly in favor of assimilation must not mind the presence of immigrants, as long as they fit in. On the other hand, belief three demands the strict separation of immigrants from the dominant society. Belief three suggests the possibility of sending immigrants back to their home countries, or denying their admission to begin with, while belief one does not suggest such possibilities. To continue with the student example, belief three requires support for segregation in schools. Thus, the commonplace casual mixing of beliefs one and three is muddled, and probably not a wise analytical decision. Belief two is related to the concept of multiculturalism, where the dominant culture does not encourage assimilation. For convenience, I label belief one as “assimilationism,” belief two as “multiculturalism,” and belief three as “segregationism.”

The multiculturalist approach to immigration studies often equates assimilationism to xenophobia (Kivisto 2004). In fact, in a recent history of academic ideas on assimilationism Brubaker (2001) suggests that this differentialist anti-assimilation paradigm has been hegemonic in the last 30 years in Western academia (see also Morawska 1994). For example, Berry (2001) presents a summary of immigration research, and concludes that assimilation and segregation beliefs are held by those against immigration, while only multiculturalists are pro-immigration. He further says that orientations to immigration are either positive multiculturalism or “negative (assimilation and segregation)” (Berry 2001:625). I show that this assumption does not hold in Japan, and it may not be concrete in other nations.

In Japan, assimilationism may be a positive stance toward immigration because it belies commonly-held beliefs in essentialist difference. We should not start by assuming that assimilationists are xenophobes in all cultures, and it is necessary to test the influence of different cultures empirically. Adequately testing the impact of all three beliefs about assimilation is important for the general study of immigration because it shows that the hegemonic differentialist model may be culturally bound to societies that promote assimilation. Assimilationism may mean different things in a host-society that opposes assimilation.

Assimilation in Japan

The Japanese have a pattern of keeping foreigners distinct, and not allowing them to assimilate. The history of *sakoku* or isolation is often given as a reason for Japan's hostility toward assimilation (Itoh 1998). The Sakoku period was initiated during the Tokugawa Shogunate rule in the Edo period (1603–1867), and was the period when Japan was closed to the outside world, except for a few port cities (Itoh 1998). In these port cities, foreigners were required to remain separate and not associate with the Japanese people. Although no law guarantees complete separation, there is a general assumption that Japan remained distinct in this period, and more importantly that this saved Japan from Western domination (Yoshino 1992).

This historical narrative is used to inflame nationalism and beliefs of Japanese racial superiority (Oguma 2002). This narrative is associated with a general belief that Japan is unique, and that Japanese people are special, called *nihonjinron*, or Japanese people theory (Murphy-Shigematsu 1993). The *nihonjinron* literature promotes the idea that Japanese people are inherently, essentially, and genetically distinct, and not just from historical circumstance (Befu 2001). For example, some suggest that Japanese people have different or superior physiological structures, and horrifying eugenics policies were enacted before the war (Robertson 2002). Even though genetic difference has been disproved, these ideas are still commonly accepted by Japanese people, including politicians and some academics (Dale 1986). I theorize that the combination of the *sakoku* narrative and belief in *nihonjinron* create attitudes against immigrant assimilation. Thus, we need to examine in-depth the influence of anti-assimilationism on attitudes toward immigration.

In studying immigration, we must be careful, therefore, to consider these context-dependent attitudes toward assimilation (Onishi and Murphy-shigematsu 2003). Of course, other standard explanations must also be tested, and I do so by including many other known predictors of attitudes toward immigration, such as economic threat. And while I fully expect these prior explanations to have predictive power, I want to add to the model the omitted variable of attitudes toward assimilation. Thus, the theoretical significance of this research for immigration studies is in establishing the relevance of beliefs over assimilation. This research informs us of the need for greater sensitivity to cultural perspectives in comparative research on attitudes toward immigration.

Immigration in Japan

For the first time in post-war Japanese history, the foreign-born population rose above 1% in 2005.¹ There are proposals to triple that number in the next 5 years to offset the rapidly declining pool of Japanese workers (Prime Minister's Commission 2000). It is crucial to know how the public will react in accepting these new immigrants. The increasing foreign-born population presents a number of challenges for Japanese society (Komai 2001). Famously, Japan is described as homogenous (Maruyama 1961). Increasing heterogeneity may deeply influence beliefs and culture (Burgess 2004). My research shows striking results that foreigners are often viewed negatively, particularly in relation to crime. Yet it also shows a surprising diversity of opinions.

¹ I use foreign-born population to measure immigrants, but counting this number in Japan has a number of difficulties. For example, this number excludes more than 600,000 *zainichi*, or descendants of colonial immigrants, mostly from Korea. Although born in Japan, *zainichi* are counted as foreigners in government statistics. Including *zainichi*, the percentage of foreigners is around 1.6%. For exact totals and countries of origin, see the Ministry of Justice data at <http://www.moj.go.jp/PRESS/050617-1/050617-1.html>.

Immigration potentially offers great advantages for Japan (Hirowatari 1998). Increasing the supply of high- and low-skill workers will benefit the economy, as the birth-rate continually declines (United Nations Population Division 2000). In particular, however, for high-skill immigrants to choose Japan over other countries requires a friendly, accepting environment. Mistaken beliefs may lead to mistaken policies with possibly tragic consequences. Currently, a number of laws have been passed in response to fear of immigration (Burgess 2007). Thus, the increasing immigration is running into objections from the general public. What creates this individual-level objection to immigration is the focal point of this research, but first we must ask what is the dominant discourse about immigration in Japan that may sway individuals.

Currently, the issue of immigration is framed by two chief sources. The first is mass media. It is well established that the media is particularly interested in stories of crime, due to their potential to spark interest and increase ratings or sales (Barrile 1984). Immigrant crime has been sensationalized by the press, with stories of crimes being committed by immigrants far outnumbering the stories on the positive impact from immigrants. Positive stories are less dramatic than stories of crime, and so the media ignores the millions of hard-working immigrants and focuses on the rare example of murder or rape by immigrants. For the average public, this media coverage frames immigration as a crime issue, and is inherently negative for Japan. The second source of information for the public is right-wing politicians who bash immigrants. Attacking weak minorities is a common tool of politicians to get easy name-recognition and create interest in their campaign. Tokyo's governor Shintaro Ishihara is perhaps the best known example, but there are dozens of prominent politicians who have attacked immigrant crime (Burgess 2007). These frames create hostility toward immigration and doubt that it benefits Japan. I control for these factors below by including variables for media usage and partisan identification with anti-immigrant political parties in the models.

It is also crucial to distinguish Japanese attitudes among types of immigrants. There are three types of people that are considered foreign residents in Japan. Naturalization is legal in Japan (Ryang 2000), but there is a category for special permanent resident *zainichi* who are the descendants of Korean and Chinese immigrants (Tai 2004). They are classified as special permanent residents, a unique category just for *zainichi*, but some have naturalized. In addition, there are two other groups which most countries would consider immigrants. The largest group who are not *zainichi* are workers who come to Japan for employment. Despite the government's terminology of "short-term workers," many stay for a long time, and the dominant image of a two-year visa is in fact not the norm (Kim 2006). These workers are expected to increase, and they are expected to live permanently in Japan due to the continuous need for labor. For example, one policy proposal is to extend easy immigration rights to Filipino nurses to care for Japan's aging population (Kim 2006). The second largest population of immigrants who are not *zainichi* come to Japan because of international marriage, and this group is growing very rapidly (Lie 2001). Thus, there is a large and growing group of immigrants who are not returning to their former countries. It is crucial to understand the attitudes toward these immigrants in a country that has rejected assimilation. This research focuses on recent immigrants, so-called newcomers, and does not address the *zainichi* population, as they are a distinct category and need a separate research design. Additionally, ethnic groups inside of Japan—such as Okinawans and the Ainu—are certainly important to study when thinking about assimilation in Japan, but are beyond the scope of this research and these data. I leave the assimilation of *zainichi*, Okinawans, Ainu, Nikkei-jin, and other marginalized groups for other researchers to consider.

Data and Methods

The data are from a nationally representative sample survey, the Japan Election Study 3 (JES3).² Table 1 shows summary statistics. The survey has an $N = 1511$, and a response rate of 71.4, conducted with face-to-face interviews. The sample was chosen by random digit dialing, with a follow-up in-person interview about one week after the 2005 elections.

Dependent Variables

The first dependent variable is common in immigration studies: whether the respondent desires a change in the level of immigration. For simplicity, I coded it so that the anti-immigrant feeling is higher. The variable is coded by whether the respondent thinks the number of immigrants in Japan should increase (0), increase a little (1), stay the same (2), decrease a little (3), or decrease (4). The preferred level of immigrants living in Japan is shown in Figure 1. This variable is skewed toward anti-immigrant feelings (skewness -0.108 kurtosis 2.78), but the modal category reflects no change in current immigration levels. It shows clearly that many Japanese prefer fewer immigrants, even though immigrants comprise 1% of the society. These results are troubling because immigration is greatly increasing, but 88% of respondents said that they do not want an increase, and 39% said they want a decrease in immigration levels. These results suggest that the increasing immigration will likely be troubling to many Japanese people, and that more research is needed on why anti-immigration feelings are so strong in country with so few immigrants.

The second dependent variable measures support for equal rights for immigrants in Japan. The questions are: should immigrants have access to the same welfare and health-care services as Japanese citizens (mean = 2.86), be given the right to vote in local elections (mean = 2.42), and have employment equal rights (mean = 2.34)? Each answer is coded from strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), neither agree nor disagree (2), agree (3), and strongly agree (4). I add each variable, and divide by three, to create an average level of agreement on equal rights (mean = 2.55, Cronbach's alpha = 0.65).

TABLE 1. Summary Statistics

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>N</i>
Assimilationist	0.716	0.451	0	1	1,363
Segregationist	0.023	0.149	0	1	1,363
Multiculturalist	0.261	0.439	0	1	1,363
Increase immigration	3.423	1.043	1	5	1,411
Equal rights	2.549	0.921	0	4	1,386
Immigrant crime	26.601	18.543	1	90	1,129
Immigrant contribution	0	1.169	-2.45	3.464	1,216
Moral tolerance	2.699	1.102	0	4	1,423
Fear of crime	2.428	1.088	1	5	1,496
Media usage	3.481	2.851	0	19	1,511
Conservative ideology	5.459	1.964	0	10	1,443
LDP supporter	0.455	0.498	0	1	1,342
Formal social networks	3.455	3.042	0	21	1,467
Male	0.492	0.5	0	1	1,511
Age	55.368	16.118	21	92	1,510
Education	2.318	0.973	1	4	1,477
Employed	0.587	0.493	0	1	1,504

² Full details on the sampling procedure and response rates are available at <http://ssjda.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/en/index.html>.

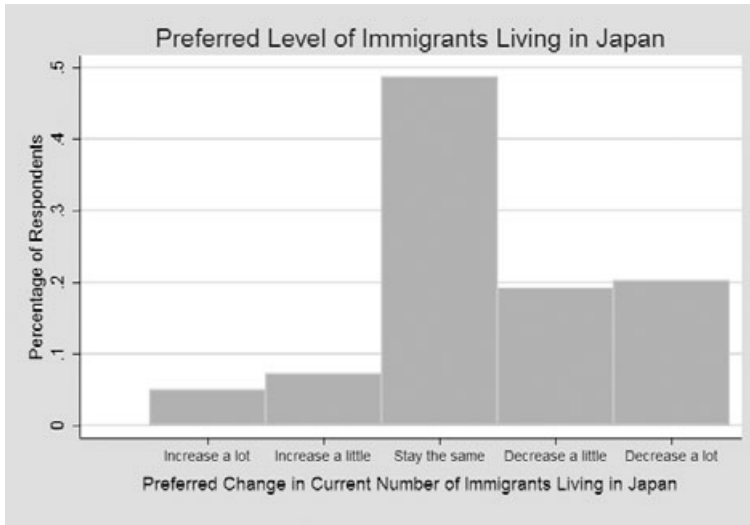


FIG 1. Preferred Level of Immigrants Living in Japan

(Notes. This graph shows support for increasing immigration in Japan.)

The third dependent variable measures beliefs about immigrant crime in Japan. The anecdotal evidence of immigrant crime hysteria in Japan is vast. For example, there was a magazine for sale in convenience stores and bookstores called “Gaijin Hanzai Ura Fairu,” or “Secret Foreigner Crime Files” (Biggs and Matsuyama 2007). Filled with bizarre illustrations of crime-crazed immigrants, this magazine is dedicated to revealing the truth about what they call the “evil foreigner” (Biggs and Matsuyama 2007). There must be a population to support such a prominently-placed, slickly-produced magazine, and similar stories of panic over immigrant crime are commonly heard from immigrants living in Japan (see also French 2003).

To investigate the validity of this common complaint, I asked the respondents about their opinions of the level of crime committed in Japan by immigrants. Figure 2 reveals that the perception of the amount of total crime committed by immigrants is wildly incorrect. The average belief is that 26% of crime is committed by immigrants, but the correct answer is 1%. The median belief is 20%: half the population misperceives immigrant crime levels by 20 times the correct number or more. In addition, 14% of respondents believe that half or more of all the crime in Japan is committed by immigrants. Such a large number of the population with such beliefs suggests that this measure actually tests anti-immigrant feelings rather than a rational calculation of risk.³ My research below tests several possible hypotheses of determinants for why these results show beliefs about immigrant crime are so incorrect. In sum, all dependent variables are skewed against immigration, but all show considerable variance.

Independent Variables

The key independent variable is belief about assimilation. The question is designed to express each belief: assimilationism, multiculturalism, and segregationism. This question measures what the dominant society should do in

³ People commonly overestimate rare events, so perhaps these estimations are simply mistaken random guesses, which do not reveal anti-immigrant bias. If these misconceptions are just errors and not anti-immigrant, then this measure should be random and will not correlate with known anti-immigrant determinants in these models below. That they do correlate below suggests that this is actually another measure of anti-immigrant feelings.

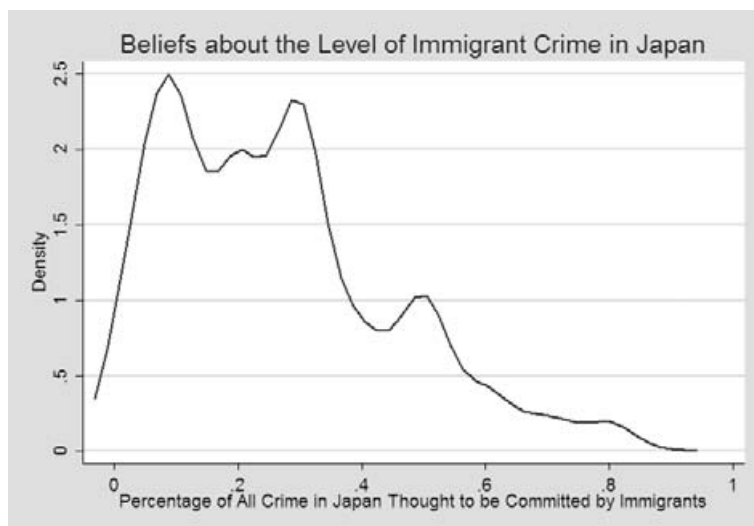


FIG. 2. Beliefs about the Level of Immigrant Crime in Japan

(Notes. This graph shows a kernel density plot of beliefs about the percentage of crime committed in Japan by immigrants.)

response to immigration. It offers choices that align with the three main beliefs about immigrant assimilation. The Japanese language word for assimilation I use is *douka*, and the word for immigration is *imin*. This directly specifies that we are not asking about temporary guest workers, temporary students, or tourists, who would be called *Gaikokujin* or *Gaijin*. Specifically, the scenario is worded as:

Say a foreigner living in Japan is trying to assimilate (learning Japanese, etc.) oneself to Japanese culture, in the hope of becoming a member of Japanese society. What do you think you, or the people around you, should do? Please choose one from below: (1) We must help, and do everything we can in our hands to achieve the goal (71%); (2) Becoming a member of Japanese society is a matter of individual responsibility. We should not have to do anything (26%); and (3) Japanese culture and Japanese language are there exclusively for the Japanese. Foreigners should remain as foreigners, separate from the Japanese (2%).

I pre-tested this question wording, and ran several robustness checks on this question. I find that it correlates highly with theoretically expected categories, such as whether or not the respondent supports inter-racial marriages.⁴ Based on these tests, this question is a valid measure of which belief about assimilation the respondent supports. The responses show that most Japanese prefer assimilation, have modernized, and do not hold the traditional view of Japanese isolationism. It must be remembered, however, that there can be some social desirability in these results, as the government promotes acceptance of others in recent times. I created dummy variables for each category. In the regression models below, assimilation is used as the base category.

Control Variables

It is important to control for other factors that influence attitudes toward immigration. I control for factors that the social psychology and political science

⁴ These results are available upon request.

literature has determined influence attitudes toward immigration. Prior research on immigration attitudes has determined that six main factors influence public opinion toward immigration. These six attributes are (1) conservative ideology (McClosky 1964); (2) perceived economic contribution from immigrants (Burns and Gimpel 2000); (3) demographic attributes such as education (Mayda 2006); (5) tolerance (Altemeyer 1998); (5) partisan identification with anti-immigrant political parties (Weldon 2006); and (6) involvement in voluntary organizations (Cigler and Joslyn 2002). In addition, research into Japanese public opinion shows that more variables specific to the Japanese context are needed to properly study the public's attitudes (for example, Ikeda and Richey 2005), which I do by testing the influence of beliefs about assimilation.

Tolerance toward diversity is an important determinant of attitudes toward immigration. I use moral tolerance, as this is more applicable than political tolerance, which is defined as the extension of political rights to hated groups (Goren 2005). *Moral tolerance* is measured by agreement with the question "we should be more tolerant of people who choose to live according to their own moral standards, even if they are very different from our own," coded from (0) for strongly disagree, (1) for partially disagree, (2) for neither agree or disagree, (3) for partially agree, and (4) for strongly agree. This question was originally asked in the 2000 American National Elections Survey, and I translated it into Japanese.

Immigrant contribution is measured by a principal component analysis of whether the respondent feels immigrants make an economic contribution to four key industries, ranked by whether immigrants are seen to contribute greatly (4), contribute to some extent (3), neither contribute nor hinder (2), do not contribute much (1), and do not contribute at all (0). The four industries are internet and technology, finance, construction, and restaurants. I find one principal component with an Eigenvalue of 2.4. Social networks are also posited to improve feelings between those outside our group, by exposing us to heterogeneous ideas (Putnam 2000:22). Involvement in volunteer organizations produces exposure to diverse others who are also members of the group. Many scholars, such as Putnam (2007), suggest that interaction in these organizations can create bridging social capital. The daily interaction in these volunteer groups forces participants to get along with heterogeneous others. The theory suggests that voluntary organizations create acceptance of difference, and, thus, may increase acceptance of immigrants. In particular, formal social networks, such as volunteer associations, have been found to influence Japanese political behavior, and may influence attitudes about immigration. To determine involvement with *Formal social networks*, I create an index by asking the respondent to select from a list of common Japanese volunteer associations the ones with which he or she affiliates and how often.⁵ I create the *Formal social networks* variable by adding up the number of voluntary associations the respondent joins. Each association is coded according to the degree of involvement. The answer "very actively involved" is coded (3); "somewhat actively involved" is (2); "limited affiliation," (1); and no involvement is (0) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.79).

Ideology influences beliefs about immigration, with those with a *Conservative ideology* being less tolerant (McClosky 1964). Ideology is coded from 1 to 10, with higher numbers representing more conservative beliefs. Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) politicians often denounce immigrant crime, and it is possible that the politicians have influenced their supporters' beliefs about this issue. Thus, I

⁵ This list of common associations was also used on various national sample surveys in Japan, such as the Japan Democracy Study 2000. The types of groups are joining a resident association, alumni association, parent-teacher association, farmers' cooperative, trade association, consumer cooperative, volunteer group, religious group, neighborhood improvement group, or a crime watch.

control for being an *LDP supporter*. The Japanese media is often criticized for showing the negative side of immigration, in particular immigrant crime. I control for *Media exposure*, by counting the number of television news shows watched during the week. In the immigrant crime model, I also include a measure of fear of crime generally, as those who live in high crime areas may be more likely to overestimate the level of immigrant crime, coded from (0) for strongly disagree, (1) for partially disagree, (2) for neither agree nor disagree, (3) for partially agree, and (4) for strongly agree that they fear crime.

Socioeconomic factors may also influence beliefs about immigration (Mayda 2006), and unless controlled, can bias the results. The demographics that I control for are being *Male*, *Age* measured in years, *Education* by degree attainment, and being *Employed* full-time.

Results

Levels of Immigration

To study support for increasing immigration, I construct two ordered logistic regression models, because the dependent variable is ordinal. Table 2 shows that those who are multiculturalists and segregationists have much less support for increasing immigration than assimilationists; both of these coefficients have small standard errors. These results will be replicated in the tests of the other dependent variables below. This is an important finding, because it shows that one cannot assume that assimilationists oppose immigration. To my knowledge, this is the first time that multiculturalism has been shown to be more anti-immigrant than assimilationism, which suggests that this is due to something unique in the Japanese experience. As shown in many previous studies, if one believes immigration provides economic benefits, it leads to a strong increase in support for immigration. Also, greater moral tolerance leads to greater support for increasing immigration. This is an intuitive finding, as tolerance for a variation of moral

TABLE 2. Determinants of Desire for Less Immigrants Living in Japan

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>(SE)</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>(SE)</i>
Segregationist	1.029*	(0.444)	0.851+	(0.465)
Multiculturalist	0.815***	(0.152)	0.777***	(0.153)
Immigrant contribution	-0.332***	(0.060)	-0.299***	(0.061)
Moral tolerance	-0.294***	(0.062)	-0.265***	(0.064)
Conservative ideology	0.035	(0.033)	0.017	(0.034)
LDP supporter	0.005	(0.133)	-0.007	(0.134)
Media usage	-0.021	(0.021)	-0.025	(0.022)
Formal social networks	-0.036+	(0.020)	-0.034+	(0.021)
Male			-0.336*	(0.137)
Age			0.010*	(0.005)
Education			-0.152*	(0.075)
Employed			0.117	(0.146)
_cut1	-3.685	(0.319)	-3.706	(0.475)
_cut2	-2.637	(0.298)	-2.646	(0.461)
_cut3	0.053	(0.283)	0.078	(0.450)
_cut4	1.148	(0.287)	1.187	(0.454)
Number of cases	907		901	
χ^2	143.39***		159.92***	
-2 Log likelihood	-1,132.98		-1,116.06	

(Notes. Cells represent unstandardized coefficients and standard errors of Ordered Logistic regression models for determinants of desire for less immigrants living in Japan. + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.)

beliefs is necessary to accept people from different cultures. In addition, this research finds continuing support for the positive benefits from community involvement in volunteer organizations. Being involved in more formal social networks leads to an increase in support for immigration. Interestingly, ideology, party identification, and media exposure did not affect support for immigration. All three of these control variables have coefficients that match their theoretical predictions, but have large standard errors. In model 2, the main findings are robust to the inclusion of demographic variables, and model 2 has more explanatory power. Demographic categories that impact immigration are as expected. Being female and increasing age lessens support for immigration, while education increases it. Employment has no discernable effect in this model.

The best depiction of the main effect is graphic. Using *Clarify*, I generated from Table 2 (model 2) the predicted levels of support for decreasing immigration for assimilationists, multiculturalists, and segregationists, while holding all control variables constant. In Figure 3, the boxes represent 90% confidence intervals for the predicted level of the influence for each belief of assimilation on support for decreasing immigration levels.⁶ As displayed in Figure 1, there is a statistically significant difference between assimilationists, multiculturalists, and segregationists in support for decreasing immigration. While controlling for the other variables in Table 2 (model 2), assimilationists score 3.18 (standard error 0.039), multiculturalists 3.65 (standard error 0.067), and segregationists 3.66 (standard error 0.237). The change from being an assimilationist to a multiculturalist or a segregationist leads to about one half of a standard deviation change in the dependent variable. Thus, assimilationists are the most supportive of immigration, and beliefs about assimilation do influence levels of support.

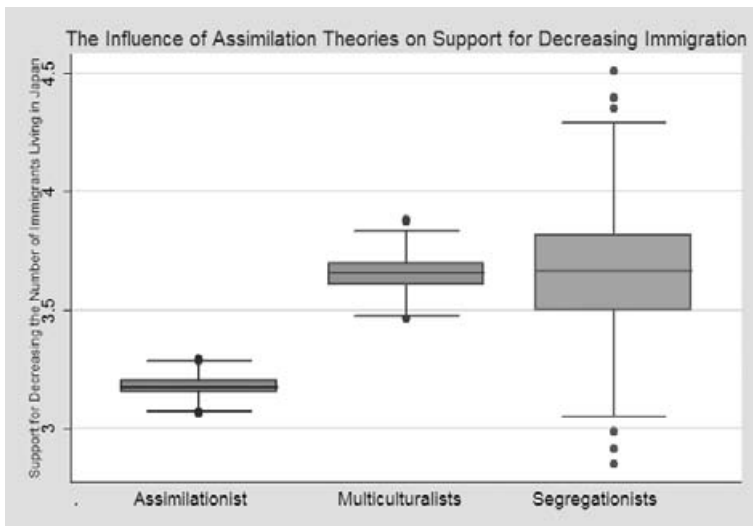


FIG 3. The Influence of Assimilation Theories on Support for Decreasing Immigration

(Notes. This graph shows that beliefs about assimilation influences desire for less immigrants living in Japan. The boxes represent the 90% confidence intervals for the predicted preference of amount of immigrants in Japan for each belief on assimilation, while holding all control variables constant. Created by *Clarify*, and calculated from the model in Table 1 [Model 2].)

⁶ Note that the segregationist variable has a p value below .10, but above .05. This may be due to the relatively small number of segregationists in the sample. Thus, the lines on the graphs for assimilationists and segregationists, which represent the 95% confidence intervals, overlap.

Equal Rights

For the dependent variable equal rights, I use an ordinary least squares (OLS) model because it is a normally distributed additive scale. This model also shows that those who are the most pro-immigrant are pro-assimilation. Both multiculturalists and segregationists are less likely to support equal rights for immigrants than assimilationists. In Table 3 (model 1), immigrant economic contribution and moral tolerance show large significant effects. The other control variables are correctly signed, but have large standard errors. In model 2, multiculturalists and segregationists also have less support for immigrant equal rights. Immigrant contribution and moral tolerance are also robust to this different specification. No demographic variables have a strong impact on support for immigrant equal rights.

Using *Clarify* to hold the independent variables at their mean, Figure 4 shows the results of Table 3 (model 2) graphically. Here we see that the predicted level of support for equal rights for assimilationists is 2.71 (standard error 0.036), multiculturalists 2.48 (standard error 0.064), and segregationists is 1.71 (standard error 0.22). The difference between assimilationists and segregationists is a little over one standard deviation change in the dependent variable. This shows that assimilationists support more equal rights than multiculturalists or segregationists.

Immigrant Crime

Tests reveal that the immigrant crime dependent variable has a skewed distribution, so I create a natural log of the dependent variable (see Gelman and Hill 2007:53). For this natural log of beliefs about the percentage of crime committed by immigrants in Japan, I use an OLS model. Table 4 (model 1) shows that assimilationists have a far more correct view of the true levels of crime being committed in Japan by immigrants than multiculturalists or segregationists. These are large effects, and this shows that beliefs about assimilation also influence how information is processed. This is a factual question, but it reveals how much our understanding of the world is influenced by our political convictions. Immigrant contribution and moral tolerance lead to more accurate views, while

TABLE 3. Determinants of Support for Equal Rights for Immigrants

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>(SE)</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>(SE)</i>
Segregationist	-0.757***	(0.179)	-0.693***	(0.184)
Multiculturalist	-0.260***	(0.062)	-0.259***	(0.063)
Immigrant contribution	0.263***	(0.024)	0.255***	(0.024)
Moral tolerance	0.125***	(0.025)	0.120***	(0.026)
Conservative	-0.022	(0.014)	-0.020	(0.014)
LDP supporter	-0.033	(0.055)	-0.027	(0.055)
Media usage	0.010	(0.009)	0.011	(0.009)
Formal social networks	0.009	(0.008)	0.008	(0.008)
Male			0.061	(0.056)
Age			-0.002	(0.002)
Education			0.021	(0.030)
Employed			0.001	(0.059)
Intercept	2.414***	(0.117)	2.420***	(0.184)
Cases	907		899	
<i>F</i> test	36.72***		24.26***	
Root MSE	0.780		0.779	

(Notes. Cells represent unstandardized coefficients and standard errors of OLS regression models for determinants of support for equal rights for immigrants in Japan. +*p* < .10; **p* < .05; ***p* < .01; ****p* < .001.)

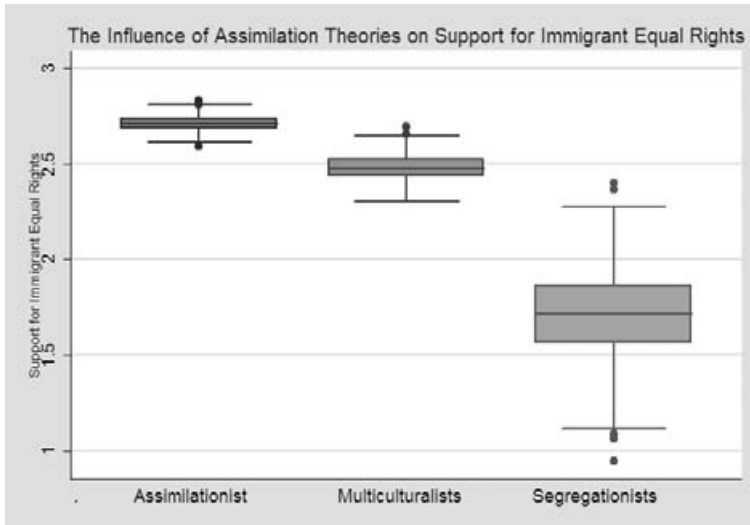


FIG 4. The Influence of Assimilation Theories on Support for Immigrant Equal Rights
(Notes. This graph shows that beliefs about assimilation influences support for equal rights for immigrants in Japan. The boxes represent the 90% confidence intervals for the predicted values of the combined equal rights scale for each belief on assimilation, while holding all control variables constant. Created by *Clarify*, and calculated from the model in Table 2 [Model 2].)

TABLE 4. Determinants of Beliefs about Immigrant Crime

Variable	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)
Segregationist	0.279*	(0.112)	0.189+	(0.113)
Multiculturalist	0.086*	(0.038)	0.068+	(0.038)
Immigrant contribution	-0.041**	(0.014)	-0.027+	(0.014)
Moral tolerance	-0.037*	(0.015)	-0.019	(0.015)
Conservative ideology	0.023**	(0.008)	0.019*	(0.008)
Fear of crime	0.046**	(0.015)	0.046**	(0.015)
LDP supporter	0.038	(0.034)	0.033	(0.033)
Media usage	0.008	(0.005)	0.007	(0.005)
Formal social networks	-0.003	(0.005)	-0.002	(0.005)
Male			-0.088**	(0.034)
Age			0.002+	(0.001)
Education			-0.085***	(0.018)
Employed			0.040	(0.036)
Intercept	3.388***	(0.080)	3.488***	(0.115)
Number of cases	766		759	
F test	7.26***		8.07***	
Root MSE	.440		.430	

(Notes. Cells represent unstandardized coefficients and standard errors of an OLS regression model for determinants of the natural log of the percent of all crime in Japan thought to be committed by immigrants. + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.)

a conservative ideology and fear of crime lead to less accurate views. In Table 4 (model 2), we see that these effects remain significant with the inclusion of demographic variables. Being female and older leads to less accurate beliefs, while education leads to more accurate beliefs. Employment has no impact.

While holding all control variables constant and transforming the natural log of the dependent variable, we see in Figure 5 that assimilationists have a far truer picture of immigrant crime, although still not accurate. Assimilationists are pre-

dicted to be about 9 percentage points more accurate than segregationists. This is about a half of standard deviation change in the dependent variable toward the correct answer. Multiculturalists also have more incorrect beliefs about immigrant crime than assimilationists. In sum, all models on all three dependent variables show that support for immigration is influenced by beliefs about whether immigrants should assimilate.

Conclusion

These results show two important conclusions. First, there is a large anti-immigrant sentiment in Japan. Although scholars may commonly believe that many Japanese hold anti-immigrant feelings, it is important to establish this fact empirically with nationally-representative survey data. This research empirically establishes that immigration is problematic to many Japanese people, at a time when immigration is expected to greatly increase. Second, I find that Japanese people who want immigrant assimilation are more supportive than multiculturalists are of increasing immigration and giving equal rights to immigrants, and have a more accurate perception of the level of crime committed by immigrants. I posited that the Japanese cultural context, with its *sakoku* history and *nihonjinron* theories would create a society where xenophobes are resistant to immigrant assimilation. The results confirmed the hypotheses in every test. Assimilation was associated with pro-immigrant beliefs in Japan, specifically for increasing immigration, equal rights, and beliefs about immigrant crime. The anti-immigrant people follow the cultural beliefs in Japanese uniqueness.

Comparative political research into attitudes toward immigration should be sensitive to contexts that may alter theories derived from circumstances in the West. But, of course, the models also show that other known predictors of attitudes toward immigration also had large effects on the dependent variables. Further, there is a contentious debate over how much culture can explain Japanese

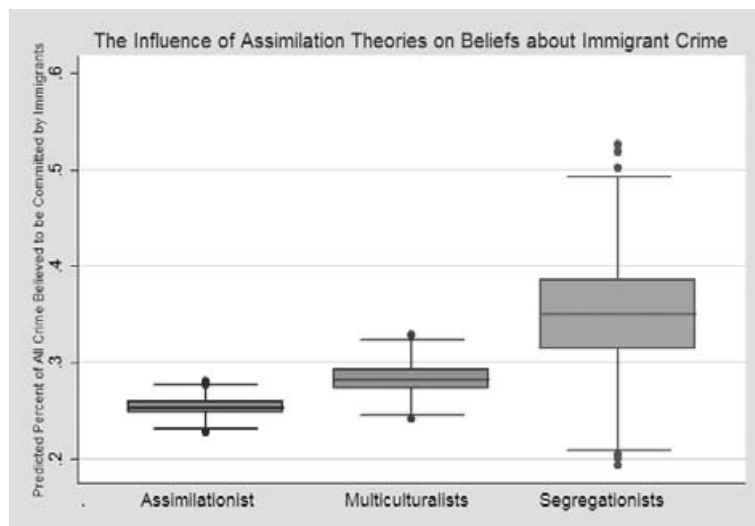


FIG 5. The Influence of Assimilation Theories on Beliefs about Immigrant Crime

(Notes. This graph shows that beliefs about assimilation influence imperceptions about the level of crime committed by foreigners in Japan. The boxes represent the 90% confidence intervals for simulated holders of different assimilation beliefs on beliefs of total crime in Japan committed by foreigners, while holding all control variables constant. Created by *Clarify*, and calculated from the model in Table 3 [Model 2].)

political behavior. For example, this survey came at the end of the lost decade, where Japan suffered an economic down-turn. Perhaps the effects I found are dependent on the economic conditions, and without longitudinal data, we must be cautious with any path-dependent argument. However, the strong effects that I found for assimilation beliefs on three separate dependent variables is a confirmation of the potential importance that beliefs about assimilation have on attitudes toward immigration. Researchers of immigration should pay more attention to the influence of theories of assimilation on attitudes toward immigration.

Appendix

Below is a translation of the survey questions used in this research.

Assimilation: Say a foreigner living in Japan is trying to assimilate (learning Japanese, etc.) oneself to Japanese culture, in the hope of becoming a member of Japanese society. What do you think you, or the people around you, should do? Please choose one from below.

1. We must help, and do everything we can in our hands to achieve the goal.
2. Becoming a member of Japanese society is a matter of individual responsibility. We should not have to do anything.
3. Japanese culture and Japanese language are there exclusively for the Japanese. Foreigners should remain as foreigners, separate from the Japanese.
4. Other.
5. Don't know (DK).
6. NA.

Increase immigration: Do you think the number of foreign immigrants permitted to live in Japan should be increased, decreased, or should stay the same? (1) I think they should increase. (2) I think they should increase a little. (3) I can say neither. (4) I think they should decrease a little. (5) I think they should decrease. (6) DK. (7) NA.

Equal rights: What about the following opinions? Do you agree, or disagree with them? Consider: (1) Foreigners who live in Japan should have access to the same welfare/healthcare. (2) Foreigners who are permanent residents of Japan should be given the right to vote in the elections of self-governing bodies, and moreover, to stand as a candidate in them. (3) Foreign workers (blue collar) should be accepted in specific areas of work where the number of workers are running low. Possible answers to each question: (1) Yes, I agree. (2) I agree to a certain extent. (3) I can neither agree, nor disagree. (4) I do not really think so. (5) I disagree. (6) DK. (7) NA.

Immigrant crime: Of all crimes in Japan, what do you think is the percentage of those committed by immigrants?

Immigrant contribution: Do you think the following immigrant workers contribute to Japanese society? Consider: (1) immigrant workers in construction; (2) immigrant workers in restaurants and bars; (3) immigrant workers in the economic (banking, securities, etc.) sector; (4) immigrant workers in the internet business. (1) Yes, they contribute greatly. (2) They contribute to some extent. (3) They neither contribute, nor are a hindrance to Japanese society. (4) They do not contribute much. (5) They do not contribute at all. (6) DK. (7) NA.

Fear of crime: How worried (on a day-to-day basis) are you, of becoming a crime victim? (1) I hardly ever worry. (2) I worry a little. (3) I worry sometimes. (4) I worry often. (5) I worry all the time. (6) DK. (7) NA.

Media usage: Which kinds of TV programs did you watch often during this election campaign? Are there any not listed below? (1) NHK news programs; (2) Izumi Oguri's "Today's Events" (NTV); (3) Masako Fuefuki Hiroaki Konno's "News Plus 1" (NTV); (4) Tetsuya Chikushi Mitsuyo Kusano's "News 23" (TBS); (5) Takae Mikumo Hiroyuki Ikeda's "Evening 5" (TBS); (6) Masaya Matsumoto Christel Takigawa's "News Japan" (FTV); (7) Taro Kimura Yuko Ando's "FNN Super News" (FTV); (8) Ichiro Furudate's "Houdou (Broadcast) Station" (ATV); (9) Etsuko Komiya's "Super J Channel" (ATV); (10) Maoko Kotani's "World Business Satellite" (TTV); (11) Jiro Shinbo's "Wake Up! PLUS" (NTV); (12) Kazuo Tokumitsu's "The Sunday" (NTV); (13) Hiroshi Sekiguchi's "Sunday Morning" (TBS); (14) Misuzu Tamaru's "News Special" (TBS); (15) Yuji Kuroiwa's "News 2001" (FTV); (16) Souichiro Tahara's "Sunday Project" (ATV); (17) Isao Fukutome Junko Kubo's "Broadcaster" (TBS); (18) Morning and evening variety shows; (19) Other television program(s); (20) Radio program(s); (21) Weekly magazine(s); (22) DK; (23) NA.

Ideology: Here's a popular question. Are you conservative or are you liberal? What do you think is your political position on a scale of 0 to 10? Zero stands for a liberal position and 10 for a conservative position.

Moral tolerance: Please express your thoughts on the following perspectives that I am going to read out to you: "We should be more tolerant of people who choose to live according to their own moral standards, even if they are very different from our own." (1) Yes, I agree. (2) I agree to a certain extent. (3) I can neither agree, nor disagree. (4) I do not really think so. (5) I disagree. (6) DK.

Formal social networks: Now, tell us about various organizations and groups you belong to. How actively do you participate in each of the following groups: Jichi-kai/Residential association; alumni association; parent-teacher association; farmers' cooperative; trade association; consumer cooperative; volunteer group; religious group; neighborhood improvement group; or a crime watch? (1) I am an active member. (2) I am just a member. (3) Not at all.

PartyID: Putting elections aside, which political party in Japan do you usually support? (1) Liberal Democratic Party (LDP); (2) Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ); (3) Clean Government Party (Komeito/CGP); (4) Social Democratic Party (SDP); (5) Japan Communist Party (JCP); (6) PNP (The People's New Party); (7) NPN(New Party Nippon); (8) Other; (9) DK.

Employment: Are you currently employed full-time? (1) Yes. (2) No. (3) DK.

Education: What is your highest level of education? (1) Primary or lower-secondary school (junior high school); (2) High school; (3) Junior college and trade school; (4) University and graduate school; (5) NA.

Gender: (1) Male. (2) Female.

Age: How old are you?

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