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Author(s)	Gentry, Hope Dewell; Branton, Regina
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The Impact of Intergroup Contact and Intergroup Conflict on Japanese Immigration Attitudes

Hope Dewell Gentry and Regina Branton*

Abstract

Due to its aging population, Japan has been experiencing the negative effects of a shrinking workforce. Relaxing immigration policies and increasing the number of foreign workers has been suggested to help alleviate the workforce problem. This paper explores the circumstances under which the Japanese public is likely to hold favorable attitudes toward open immigration. Using intergroup contact and group threat theories, we determine that there is a conditional relationship between the frequency of contact with foreigners and the number of foreigners in a region on attitudes toward immigration. As the size of the foreign population increases, frequency of contact with foreign workers no longer has a mediating effect on immigration attitudes, and support for more open immigration policies decreases.

Introduction

Facing an aging population, relaxing immigration policies could be the solution Japan needs to solve their workforce problem. Due to having an older population, there are more people not working than those in the workforce. As a result, fewer people are available to pay taxes and contribute to the welfare system, as well as make contributions to the economy as a whole. Further, because there are more jobs available than there are people to work them, fewer Japanese citizens are willing to take unskilled, labor intensive jobs.¹ However, despite the fact that more open economic immigration policies could help alleviate these problems, Japanese public opinion polls consistently reveal the Japanese general population has an overall negative perception of immigration.²

In order to determine what affects attitudes toward immigration, a common approach in the literature is to apply the theories of intergroup contact and intergroup threat. While previous research on Japanese immigration attitudes has utilized these strategies individually, we argue that the interaction between intergroup threat and contact theories better reveals the factors that explain individual perceptions toward foreign workers.

* Hope Dewell Gentry is a doctoral student in Political Science at the University of North Texas and can be contacted at: hopedewellgentry@my.unt.edu Regina Branton is Professor of Political Science at the University of North Texas and can be contacted at: branton@unt.edu

¹ Emiko Jozuka and Junko Ogura, "Can Japan Survive Without Immigrants?" *CNN*, August 1, 2017. Accessed March 16, 2018: <https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/01/asia/japan-migrants-immigration/index.html>

² David Green and Yoshihiko Kadoya, "Contact and Threat: Factors Affecting Views on Increasing Immigration in Japan," *Politics and Policy* 43:1 (2015): 59–93.

In order to test these theoretical approaches, we use the 2006 Japanese General Social Survey (henceforth the JGSS), which allows for analysis at the prefectural-level.³ We find that the interaction between intergroup contact (number of interactions) and group threat (size of foreign population) better addresses attitudes toward immigration than either theory on their own, as support for increased immigration is conditional on the size of the foreign population. When the size of the foreign-born population is low, having increased contact with foreigners positively affects attitudes toward immigration. However, as the foreign population increases, the impact of contact on positive attitudes diminishes until it eventually becomes insignificant, indicating that the intergroup contact theory only applies so long as the size of the foreign population does not exceed its mean value, thus creating a perception of threat.

Intergroup Contact vs. Group Threat Literature

In the context of the United States, diversity and socioeconomic status have been demonstrated to impact immigration attitudes. Originally applied to relations between white and black Americans, the intergroup contact literature is now often used to show how increased contact with a variety of types of groups, aside from race and ethnicity, can produce a reduction in prejudice, particularly when both the in-group and out-group are of equal status and the contact is voluntary.⁴ From there, the role that diversity and socioeconomic status play in contributing to anti-immigration attitudes has also been explored.⁵ According to the contact literature, the more often individuals interact and form meaningful relationships with members of another race/ethnicity, the more likely the individual is to have positive racial attitudes and reduced prejudices.⁶ Support for intergroup contact theory is also found outside of the United States, with much literature exploring anti-immigration and anti-Muslim attitudes in Europe often finding that contact with the out-group often helps reduce negative attitudes.⁷

³ Our choice to utilize the 2006 JGSS is based on a lack of access to key information in more recent JGSS data, which we address in the data section.

⁴ Thomas F. Pettigrew and Linda R. Tropp, "A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory," *Personality and Social Psychology* 90:5 (2006): 751–783.

⁵ Regina Branton and Bradford Jones, "Reexamining Racial Attitudes: The Conditional Relationship Between Diversity and Socioeconomic Environment," *Midwest Political Science Association* 49:2 (2005): 359–372.

⁶ Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Cambridge: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1954); Mary Jackman and Mary Crane, "'Some of my best friends are black...': Interracial Friendship and Whites' Racial Attitudes," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 50 (1986): 459–486; Lee Sigelman, Timothy Bledsoe, Susan Welch and Michael Combs, "Making Contact? Black-White Social Interaction in an Urban Setting," *American Journal of Sociology* 101:5 (1996): 1306–1332.

⁷ Rico Neumann and Patricia Moy, "You're (Not) Welcome: The Impact of Symbolic Boundaries, Intergroup Contact, and Experiences with Discrimination on Immigration Attitudes," *American Behavioral Scientist* 62:4 (2008): 458–477; Michael Savelkoul, Peer Scheepers, Jochem Tolsma, and Louk Hagendoorn, "Anti-Muslim Attitudes in The Netherlands: Tests of Contradictory Hypotheses Derived from Ethnic Competition Theory and Intergroup Contact Theory," *European Sociological Review* 27:6 (2011): 741–758; Ann E. Wilson-Daily, Markus Kemmelmeier and Joaquin Prats, "Intergroup Contact versus Conflict in Catalan High Schools: A Multilevel Analysis of Adolescent Attitudes toward Immigration and Diversity," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 64 (2018): 12–28; Oriane Sarrasin, Eva G. T. Green, Nicole Fasel, Oliver Christ, Christian Staerkle and

Group threat literature, on the other hand, argues that the interests between groups are incompatible. This is due to the in-group's perception that any attempted resource gains by the out-group creates a competition for resources, thus making the out-group a threat.⁸ As a result, these conflicting interests create negative racial attitudes.⁹ The discussion of socioeconomic status was naturally applied to group threat theory, contending that threat to social or economic opportunities can lead to negative racial attitudes.¹⁰ Also related to group threat is the idea that the size of the minority group matters, as an increase in the minority group's population can also lead to group threat, thus increasing prejudicial attitudes.¹¹

Some studies, however, reflect that it is important to consider certain contextual situations regarding the effects of intergroup contact or group threat. For instance, Della Posta¹² finds that at the city level, citizens are less likely to support the French Front National party (FRN) when the immigrant population is large, yet large immigrant populations at the state level are associated with higher support of the FRN. The context surrounding a country's historical and cultural background may also impact attitudes toward immigrants. For instance, Garcia-Faroldi argues that the size of the foreign population is less relevant than the immigrant group's similarity to the country's majority group or whether the country has recently experienced an economic crisis.¹³ Thus, various studies find the effects of group threat and intergroup contact are not constant.

Immigration in Japan

While the Japanese government has taken a hard line against more open immigration policies, the government has taken advantage of existing loopholes in order to allow more foreign workers in Japan. In fact, the foreign workforce has grown by 40% since 2003.¹⁴ Skilled workers have been offered an accelerated path of immigration using a point-based system. Yet, skilled workers do not seem interested in staying in Japan. Indeed, Japan is the lowest ranking Asian country in appeal for skilled

Alain Clemence, "Opposition to Antiracism Laws Across Swiss Municipalities: A Multilevel Analysis," *Political Psychology* 33:5 (2012): 659–681; Seth K. Jolly and Gerald M. DiGiusto, "Xenophobia and Immigrant Contact: French Public Attitudes toward Immigration," *The Social Science Journal* 51 (2014): 464–473.

⁸ Herbert Blumer, "Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position," *Pacific Sociological Review* 1:1 (1958): 3–7.

⁹ Lawrence Bobo, "Group Conflict, Prejudice, and the Paradox of Contemporary Racial Attitudes," in *Eliminating Racism: Profiles in Controversy*, eds. Phyllis Katz and Dalmas Taylor (New York: Plenum, 1988), 85–114.

¹⁰ Robert Huckfeldt and Carol Weitzel Kohfeld, *Race and the Decline of Class in American Politics* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989); J. Eric Oliver and Tali Mendelberg, "Reconsidering the Environmental Determinants of White Racial Attitudes," *Midwest Political Science Association* 44:3 (2000): 574–589.

¹¹ James Glaser, "Back to the Black Belt: Racial Environment and White Racial Attitudes," *Journal of Politics* 56:1 (1994): 21–41.

¹² Daniel J. Della Posta, "Competitive Threat, Intergroup Contact, or Both? Immigration and the Dynamics of Front National Voting in France," *Social Forces* 92 :1 (2013): 249–273.

¹³ Livia Garcia-Faroldi, "Determinants of Attitudes towards Immigration: Testing the Influence of Interculturalism, Group Threat Theory and National Contexts in Times of Crisis," *International Migration* 55:2 (2017): 10–22.

¹⁴ David Green, "Immigration Perception in Japan: A Multilevel Analysis of Public Opinion," *Asian Survey* 57:2 (2017): 368–394.

foreign workers,¹⁵ which is likely due to the language barrier or taxation norms.¹⁶ For unskilled workers, a work training program is utilized to allow foreign workers into the country legally; however, they are only allowed to stay temporarily.¹⁷

While there are avenues the Japanese government can utilize in order to help ease the burden created by Japan's aging population, the issue of immigration remains complicated. Skilled workers are not interested in moving to Japan, and unskilled workers are not easily allowed to stay. In addition, the Japanese government may be in need of more foreign workers, but they have been reluctant to make official policy changes that will allow for easier immigration due to wanting to keep a certain image of who is allowed to live and work in Japan.¹⁸ While the foreign population has been steadily growing, they still only comprise less than two percent of the total population.

Japanese Attitudes toward Immigration

Following the example of intergroup contact research conducted in the United States and Western Europe, similar approaches have been utilized to explain what impacts Japanese public opinion toward foreigners. The literature on Japanese attitudes toward immigration points to the idea that contact with foreign populations matters. According to the Nagayoshi's paper,¹⁹ it is not the size of the foreign population alone that matters, but the type of foreign worker is important, as well as the speed at which the type of foreign worker population is growing. Manual laborers are more likely to be perceived negatively. Further, the country of origin of the worker also has an effect, as Latin American and Chinese immigrants are more likely to experience anti-immigration attitudes. As Nagayoshi²⁰ and Green²¹ find, the rate of foreign population growth influences immigration attitudes, where the faster the population grows, the stronger the person's opinion on immigration becomes.

Intergroup contact theory traditionally considers increasing the opportunity to build interpersonal relationships with members of an out-group as a method to reduce prejudice.²² However,

¹⁵ "IMD World Talent Ranking," *IMD World Competitiveness Center* (IMD World Talent Ranking 2017): 1–107.

¹⁶ Hiroko Tabuchi, "Japan Pays Foreign Workers to Go Home," *New York Times*, April 22, 2009. Accessed March 16, 2018: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/23/business/global/23immigrant.html>

¹⁷ Noah Smith, "Japan Wants Immigrants. The Feeling Isn't Mutual," *Bloomberg*, November 29, 2017. Accessed March 16, 2018: <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2017-11-30/japan-wants-immigrants-the-feeling-isn-t-mutual>

¹⁸ Tom Batchelor, "Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe Refuses to Relax Immigration Rules Despite Shrinking Population," *Independent*, November 20, 2017. Accessed March 16, 2018: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/japan-immigration-shinzo-abe-refuse-relax-rules-prime-minister-policy-shrinking-population-foreign-a8065281.html>

¹⁹ Kuniko Nagayoshi, "Whose Size Counts? Multilevel Analysis of Japanese Anti-Immigrant Attitudes Based on JGSS-2006," *JGSS Research Series* 6 (2009): 157–174.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ David Green, "As Its Population Ages, Japan Quietly Turns to Immigration," *Migration Policy Institute*, March 28, 2017. Accessed March 16, 2018: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/its-population-ages-japan-quietly-turns-immigration>

²² Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*.

the more conventional way of conceptualizing intergroup contact theory is limiting in the case of Japan.²³ Since the foreign-born population in Japan is so small, the possibility of forming meaningful relationships between in-groups and out-groups is low. As a result, scholars interested in contact theory in Japan tend to use more superficial contact, such as sharing a brief greeting with a foreign neighbor.²⁴ While superficial contact has been found to have similar effects as deeper contact, Green and Kadoya argue another way to conceptualize contact is through proficiency in speaking English.²⁵ They argue because the chance of forming a relationship with someone foreign-born is so low that a Japanese citizen who has taken the time to experience and identify with another culture through learning a language is more likely to be tolerant toward immigrants than someone not proficient in speaking English.

While intergroup contact theory has proven useful for explaining Japanese attitudes toward immigration, whether measured by deep, superficial, or linguistic contact, the notion of group threat has not been as consistently supported in the context of Japan, at least in the sense of economic threat. For instance, Nukaga tests both contact and economic conflict theories by examining the effects of education on attitudes toward foreign born populations.²⁶ While economic conflict would be a logical explanation for how education impacts attitudes toward immigrants due to the idea that education is tied to competition in the labor market, Nukaga finds that education's effects on attitudes act through contact with foreigners.²⁷ Further, Green and Kadoya argue that intergroup contact and group threat theories are not necessarily opposed, as they can work together, explaining that conflict creates prejudice while contact facilitates the alleviation of prejudice.²⁸ However, Green does not find that economic conflict influences prejudicial attitudes, but instead argues that cultural identity threat is what contributes to negative attitudes toward immigrants.²⁹

Fear of Small Numbers

As with the literature that examines immigration attitudes in the United States,³⁰ the research on Japanese attitudes toward foreign workers could also benefit from considering the interaction between intergroup contact and threat theories. As Green and Kadoya point out, the intergroup contact and group threat theories can be complementary.³¹ The issue of population size is especially

²³ Green and Kadoya, *Contact and Threat*.

²⁴ Kuniko Nagayoshi, "Whose Size Counts?" *JGSS Research Series*:6 (2009): 157–174; Misako Nukaga, "Xenophobia and the Effects of Education: Determinants of Japanese Attitudes toward Acceptance of Foreigners," *JGSS Research Series* 2 (2006): 191–202.

²⁵ Green and Kadoya, *Contact and Threat*.

²⁶ Nukaga, "Xenophobia and the Effects of Education."

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Green and Kadoya, *Contact and Threat*.

²⁹ Green, "As Its Population Ages, Japan Quietly Turns to Immigration."

³⁰ Robert Stein, Stephanie Post, and Allison Rinden, "Reconciling Context and Contact Effects on Racial Attitudes," *Political Research Quarterly* 53 (2000): 285–303.

³¹ Green and Kadoya, *Contact and Threat*.

straightforward when considering how the in-group might form their attitudes based on the number of opportunities the in-group has to meet and form relationships with members of the out-groups. Further, the amount of resources the groups are in competition over may influence attitudes regarding immigrants. As the scholars noted above have argued, in the case of Japan, where the foreign population is so low, the impact of population size contributing to a sense of positive or negative attitudes is not sufficient on its own. Instead, we argue that there is a conditional relationship between the size of the foreign population and the amount of interactions between Japanese citizens and foreign workers.

In their research on the attitudes of whites toward Hispanics in Texas, Stein and co-authors argue that the common conclusions within the literature — increased contact with members of the outgroup contributes to positive attitudes toward the outgroup, while increased size of the outgroup leads to negative attitudes toward the outgroup — is too simplistic³². They assert the extant literature does not outline what to expect when intergroup contact and group threat are considered concurrently. Further, they contend it is logical to assume that both aspects of the theories need to be considered together.

They also argue that increased contact with the outgroup mediates the relationship between outgroup threat and attitudes toward the outgroup. Specifically, they propose that frequent contact with the outgroup—i.e., Hispanics—mediates the negative influences of perceptions of conflict created by a larger Hispanic population. The results of their study partially confirm their expectations. Contact significantly mediates the relationship between the size of the Hispanic population and attitudes toward Hispanics, but they find the relationship is curvilinear. As the size of the Hispanic population increases from a small to moderate size, they find contact has a *negative* impact on white attitudes toward Hispanics. Yet, as the size of the Hispanic population increases from moderate to large, they find contact has a *positive* impact on white attitudes toward Hispanics.

Similarly, Charitopoulou and Garcia-Manglano test the joint effect of intergroup contact and group threat on support for Switzerland's populist radical right.³³ As with Stein's analysis,³⁴ Charitopoulou and Garcia-Manglano find that Swiss voters are more likely to experience a "fear of small numbers" due to group threat when there is a noticeable, but still fairly small, increase in the immigrant population.³⁵ In this way, it is the Swiss municipalities with a moderate number of immigrants that are more likely to vote for the populist radical right, while the municipalities with either a small or a large proportion of immigrants tend to not support the populist radical right.

In the context of Japan, we expect that the interaction between the elements of intergroup contact and group threat theory will be important in better understanding Japanese attitudes toward foreigners in Japan. As with Stein's analysis³⁶, we anticipate there is a mediating relationship between

³² Stein, Post, and Rinden, "Reconciling Context and Contact Effects on Racial Attitudes."

³³ Effrosyni Charitopoulou and Javier Garcia-Manglano, "Fear of Small Numbers? Immigrant Population Size and Electoral Support for the Populist Radical Right in Switzerland," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44:5 (2017): 1–21.

³⁴ Stein, Post, and Rinden, "Reconciling Context and Contact Effects on Racial Attitudes."

³⁵ Charitopoulou and Garcia-Manglano, "Fear of Small Numbers?"

³⁶ Stein, Post, and Rinden, "Reconciling Context and Contact Effects on Racial Attitudes."

intergroup contact and group threat. However, we expect the size of the foreign-born population mediates the effect of contact on attitudes toward immigration. To illustrate the distribution of the foreign-born population across prefectures in Japan, consider Figure 1. This choropleth map depicts the prefecture-level percentage of the foreign-born population. The graduated color scheme uses darker colors to reflect a higher percentage of foreign born and lighter colors to reflect a lower percentage of foreign born. Substantively, this figure highlights the variability in JGSS respondents' spatial exposure to prefecture-level foreign born populations. Given that the foreign population accounts for less than two percent of the overall population in Japan, it is possible that there are not enough foreigners in Japan to allow for increased opportunities for frequent contact. As such, we offer the following hypothesis: H1: The negative effect of group threat—the size of the foreign population—mediates the positive effect of intergroup contact on Japanese attitudes toward increased immigration.

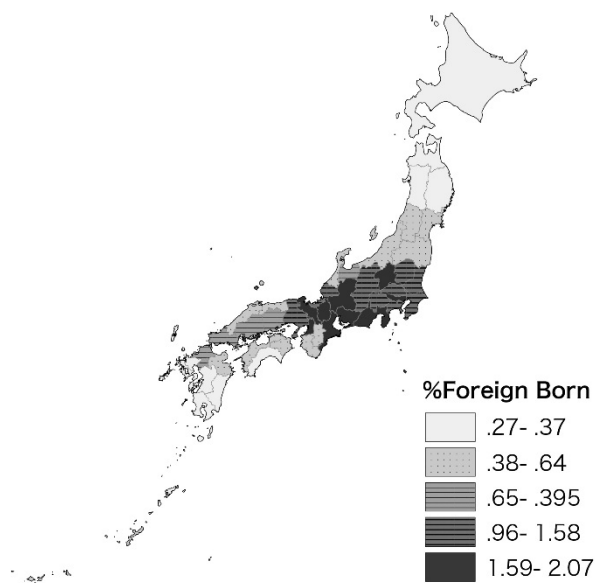


Figure 1: Prefecture-Level Percent Foreign Born

Data and Methods

To evaluate Japanese attitudes toward immigrants, we utilize the 2006 JGSS.^{37 38} As stated in Footnote 3, we use the 2006 JGSS due to a lack of access to key information in more recent JGSS data.

³⁷ As noted, we used the 2006 JGSS due to a lack of access to key information in more recent JGSS data. Unfortunately, all the JGSS data sets after 2006 omit the respondents' prefecture. We contacted the Director of the JGSS requesting access to more recent JGSS data. We were informed due to changes in the Resident Registry System Act in 2015 that JGSS no longer provides access to the respondents' prefecture location due to privacy issues.

³⁸ Ichiro Tanioka, Noriko Iwai, Michio Nitta and Tokio Yasuda, *Japanese General Social Survey (JGSS)* (Ann Arbor: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, 2006) Accessed March 16, 2018: <https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR25181.v1>

Unfortunately, all the JGSS data sets after 2006 omit the respondents' prefecture. Due to changes in the Resident Registry System Act in 2015, the JGSS no longer provides access to the respondents' prefecture location to protect the privacy of the participants. The 2006 JGSS includes 4,254 interviews completed between October 3, 2006, and November 3, 2006. We merged the JGSS data with the prefecture-level Japan Census demographic data from 2005. Together, these data allow us to identify both individual-level factors and aggregate-level contextual factors that influence Japanese attitudes regarding increased immigration.

The dependent variable measures respondent attitudes regarding an increase in the number of immigrants in their community.³⁹ The respondents were asked: "Are you for or against an increase in the number of foreigners in your community?" The response options are coded "0" for "Against" and "1" for "For."⁴⁰ Forty-one percent of the respondents indicated they supported increased numbers of foreigners, 52% indicated they were against increased numbers of foreigners, and 7% offered no response.

The primary individual-level characteristic of interest is contact with foreign born persons. To account for the impact of contact with foreigners, we use the response to the following survey item: "Do you often see foreigners in the area where you live?" The item, "Contact," is scored 1 for "Not at all," 2 for "Rarely," 3 for "Sometimes," and 4 for "Frequently."⁴¹ The key aggregate-level variable represents the percent of the foreign-born population at the prefecture level. Japan is partitioned into 47 prefectures, which are administrative jurisdictions. We culled the data from the Japanese Statistics Bureau, which is housed within the Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (Population of Japan). We use the prefecture as the geographic unit of interest as this is the lowest level geographic indicator included in the JGSS. The prefecture-level percent foreign born ranges from .27 to 2.07, with a mean value of 1.20. To account for the proposed conditioning relationship between the prefecture-level percent foreign born and the individual-level contact with foreign-born persons, the models include an interaction term—(%) Foreign Born x Contact.

The models also include five individual-level control variables: gender, age, partisan affiliation, ideology, social class, education, marital status, English-language proficiency, satisfaction with area, and view of other countries. These control variables are included in the models to account for potential difference across respondents as a function of demographic differences. To account for the respondent's gender, the model includes a variable, Female, which is coded 1. The age of the respondent ranges from 20 to 89 with a mean of 52.6. Partisan affiliation is measured by five binary variables: No Party ID, Democratic Party of Japan, New Komeito Party, Japanese Communist Party and Social

³⁹ Summary statistics for the dependent and independent variables are presented in the Appendix.

⁴⁰ This question was asked to 2,124 respondents as part of a split sample design.

⁴¹ It is worth mentioning, however, that our measure of intergroup contact is superficial. Allport's theory argued for the formation of meaningful relationships in order to combat prejudice, not mere contact with members of the out-group (See, Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*). However, as the literature indicates, because Japan's foreign population is so small, the likelihood of a Japanese citizen being able to form a meaningful relationship with their foreign neighbors is low. Thus, there is a possibility a study that could consider the depth of the relationship, rather than simple interactions, would have different results.

Democratic Party (coded 1 in each case). Liberal Democratic Party serves as the baseline category. Ideology is also measured by 5 category ordinal variable ranging from 1 (conservative) to 5 (progressive).

We incorporate a 5-category variable measuring a respondent's perceived Social Class, which ranges from 1 (Lower) to 5 (Upper). Finally, education is measured using a dichotomous variable, High School Degree, coded 1 if the respondent holds a high school degree or 0 if otherwise. A respondent's marital status is measured using a dichotomous variable coded 1 if the respondent is married or 0 if otherwise. English language proficiency is based on a response to the question: "How well can you speak English?" The variable, Speak English, is a 5-category variable ranging from 1 (I can hardly speak English) to 5 (I can speak sufficiently for daily life or business).

To account for the respondent's satisfaction with the area in which they live, we use a 5-category variable ranging from 1 (Dissatisfied) to 5 (Satisfied). To account for a respondent's view of other countries we created an additive index based on evaluations of Korea, North Korea, China, Mongolia, Taiwan, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, India, Russia and the United States. Respondents were asked: "How do you feel about the following countries and regions?" The response options ranged from 1 (no evaluation) to 7 (most favorable). The additive index itself ranges from 0 to 77 with a mean of 43.7; higher values reflect a greater affinity toward other countries.

The model also includes three aggregate-level control variables: population density, age, and public assistance. These aggregate-level control variables are included to account for population demographic difference across Japan's prefectures. All three prefecture-level variables were culled from Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau (Population of Japan). Population density measures the number of people per square kilometer and ranges from 1.8 to 123.3, with a mean of 38.2. Age is measured by the average of the prefecture population and ranges from 39.1 to 47.1 with a mean of 43.4. Finally, to account for the socio-economic status of an area, we include a measure of the percent of the prefecture population that is on public assistance. This measure ranges from .58 to 4.1 with a mean of 2.

Results

Given that our dependent variable is a binary, we use logistic regression to estimate two models.⁴² The first model (Main) omits the interaction between (%) Foreign Born and Contact, while the second model (Interactive) includes in the interaction between (%) Foreign Born and Contact. We estimated both the main and interactive models to illustrate the importance of accounting for the conditioning relationship between contact and foreign-born threat. The results for both models are presented in Table 1.

⁴² There are multiple approaches available to deal with clustered data (such as those used here). As Steenbergen and Jones note, there are a variety of ways to deal with clustered data. Further, they note that Huber-White Sandwich estimated standard errors is an appropriate option. See, Marco R. Steenbergen and Bradford S. Jones, "Modeling Multilevel Data Structures," *American Journal of Political Science* 46:1 (2002): 218–237.

We begin by discussing the “Main” effect model. Both variables of primary interest—Contact and (%) Foreign Born—are significant. Contact with individuals that are foreign born is positively associated with support for immigration, while as the foreign-born population increases, support for increased immigration decreases.

Table 1: Japanese Attitudes Regarding Increased Immigration

	Main			Interactive		
	Coef.	S.E.	Odds Ratio	Coef.	S.E.	Odds Ratio
% Foreign Born	-0.436***	-0.116	1.136	-0.181	-0.188	1.311
Contact	0.127*	-0.058	0.646	0.271**	-0.103	0.835
% Foreign x Contact				-0.116	-0.064	0.891
Individual-level Control Variables						
Female	-0.266*	-0.114	0.766	-0.267*	-0.115	0.765
Age	-0.022***	-0.004	0.978	-0.022***	-0.004	0.978
No Party ID	0.139	-0.122	1.15	0.144	-0.122	1.155
Dem Party of Japan	0.113	-0.173	1.12	0.109	-0.174	1.115
New Komeito Party	0.924**	-0.335	2.52	0.921**	-0.331	2.511
Japanese Communist Party	-0.296	-0.367	0.744	-0.301	-0.371	0.74
Social Democratic Party	0.794	-0.419	2.212	0.769	-0.419	2.158
Ideology	0.074***	-0.008	1.077	0.073	-0.06	1.076
Social Class	0.137	-0.071	1.147	0.137	-0.071	1.147
High School Degree	0.083	-0.084	1.086	0.076	-0.084	1.079
Married	-0.065	-0.149	0.937	-0.057	-0.149	0.944
Speak English	0.174*	-0.072	1.19	0.172*	-0.072	1.188
Satisfaction with Area	0.02	-0.058	1.02	0.017	-0.058	1.018
View of Foreign Countries	0.071***	-0.008	1.073	0.071***	-0.008	1.073
Prefecture-level Control Variables						
Population Density	0.002	-0.001	1.002	0.002*	-0.037	1.002
Average Age	-0.019	-0.04	0.981	-0.015	-0.041	0.985
% Public Assistance	0.281***	-0.048	1.325	0.283***	-0.047	1.327
Constant	-2.619	-1.871	0.073	-3.087	-1.882	0.046
N	1897			1897		
Wald x^2	362.10***			362.10***		

Standard errors in parentheses *p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. These data are taken from the 2006 Japanese General Social Survey. The wording of the dependent variable is: “Are you for or against an increase in the number of foreigners in your community?” The response options are coded “0” for “Against” and “1” for “For”.

To help highlight the impact of contact with foreign born individuals and prefecture-level foreign born population, the predicted probabilities are presented in Figure 2.⁴³ The left panel presents the probability of supporting immigration as a function of contact and the right panel presents the probability as a function of prefecture-level (%) foreign-born population. The left panel demonstrates that increased interaction with foreign born individuals leads to greater support for increased immigration. The probability of support of increased immigration is .40 for an individual that has rare

⁴³ All predicted probabilities are based on holding all other independent variables at their mean value.

contact, while the probability for an individual with frequent contact is .50 ($\Delta \text{Prob} = .10$). This suggests that greater contact leads to increased support for increasing immigration levels, which reflects the contact hypothesis. The right panel reveals that increases in the prefecture-level foreign born population leads to less support for increased immigration. For instance, the probability of support for increased immigration is .55 among those living in prefectures with minimal percentages of foreigners, while the probability for those living in prefectures with maximal percentages of foreigners is .36 ($\Delta \text{Prob} = -.19$). This finding suggests that as the prefecture-level foreign born population increases support for immigration decreases, which reflects the group threat hypothesis. Together, the main effect model suggests that the effect of contact and (%) foreign born threat work in opposite directions—intergroup contact has a positive effect and group threat, indicated by the size of the foreign born population, has a negative effect on support for increased immigration.

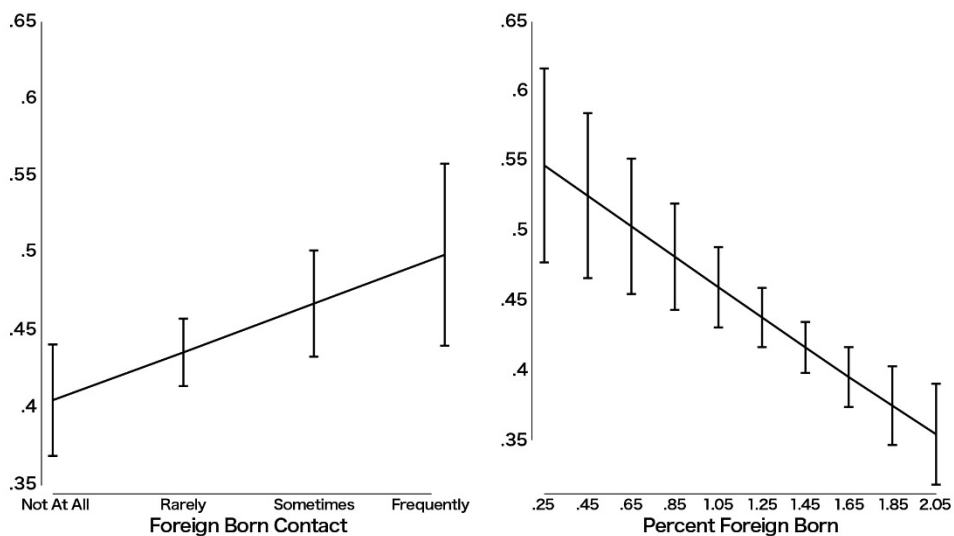


Figure 2: Probability of Support for Increased Immigration (Main Model)

Next, we consider the conditional relationship between intergroup contact and group threat and support for increased immigration. To help facilitate interpretation of the impact contact with foreigners has on support for increased immigration, which is conditioned on percent of the foreign born population at the prefecture-level, we present the relationship graphically in Figure 3. The left panel presents the difference in predicted probability, indicating if one supports increased immigration in their community as the prefecture-level foreign born population increases from the minimum to maximum across the range contact with foreigners. The right panel presents the difference in predicted probability of indicating one supports increased immigration in their community as one's contact with foreigners increases from the minimum to maximum across the range of the percent foreign born measure.

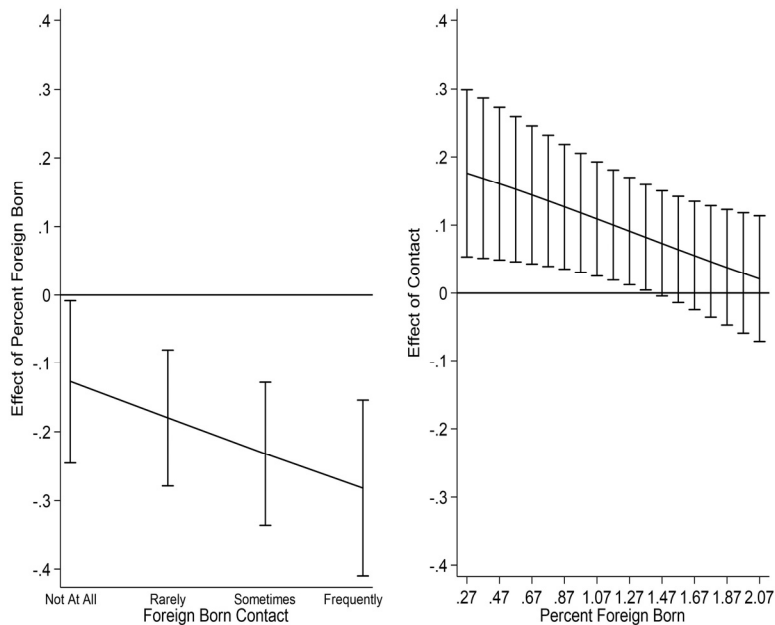


Figure 3: Conditional Support for Increased Immigration (Interactive Model)

The left panel of Figure 3 demonstrating a heightened presence of foreign-born individuals is associated with less support for increased immigration among individuals that rarely come into contact with foreign-born individuals. Further, the level of support for increased immigration further declines as contact with foreign-born individuals increases. For example, when contact with foreigners is rare, the probability of a respondent residing in a prefecture with a minimum foreign born population supporting increases in immigration is .46, while the probability for someone supporting increased immigration residing in a prefecture with a maximum foreign born population is .33 ($\Delta = -.13$). Further, when contact with foreigners is frequent, the probability of a respondent residing in a prefecture with a minimum foreign born population supporting increases immigration is .63, while the probability for someone supporting increased immigration residing in a prefecture with a maximum foreign born population is .35 ($\Delta = -.28$). Taken together, this suggests that foreign born threat has a negative conditioning effect on the relationship between contact and support for increased immigration, meaning that prefectures with higher foreign-born populations are less likely to support increased immigration, even when contact with foreigners is higher.

The right panel of Figure 3 demonstrates that contact with immigrants is associated with greater support for increased immigration in the absence of a sizeable foreign-born population, but this support diminishes as exposure to a growing foreign-born population increases. For example, when the percentage foreign born population is at its minimum value, the probability of a respondent with minimal contact with foreigners supporting increases immigration is .46, while the probability for someone supporting increased immigration with maximal contact with foreigners is .64 ($\Delta = .18$). Yet, as the percentage foreign born approaches its mean value, the probability of a respondent with minimal contact with foreigners supporting increases in immigration is .39, while the probability for one with

maximal contact with foreigners is .49 ($\Delta = .10$). Further, as the percentage foreign population exceeds the mean value of foreign-born population, the difference in predicted probability between those with minimal and maximal contact with foreigners is no longer statistically significant. This suggests that prefecture-level foreign born population has a negative conditioning effect on the relationship between foreign born contact and support for increased immigration.

Taken together, the main and interactive models offer a consistent view of the impact of group threat and opposing views on the impact of intergroup contact. Both models indicate an increasing foreign born population serves to diminish support for increased immigration. Yet, the findings of the main and interactive model diverge on the impact of contact. The main model finds increased contact leads to more support for increased immigration, while the interactive model finds after accounting for the conditioning effect of foreign born threat, increased contact leads to less support for increased immigration.

In addition to the findings of primary interests, the results provide several interesting findings among the control variables.⁴⁴ First, the results indicate that one's view of other countries significantly impacts one's support for immigration. As one's view increases from minimum to maximum value the probability of supporting increased immigration grows from .04 to .89 ($\Delta = .85$). Substantively, this suggests that respondents with a positive evaluation of multiple of countries are more accepting of the idea of greater immigration to Japan.

Second, the results reveal some interesting partisan differences with regard to support for increased immigration. To help illustrate the differences, we plot the predicted probability of support for increased immigration across parties in Figure 4. This figure demonstrates that respondents with no partisan affiliation, supporters of the Liberal Democratic Party, supporters of the Japanese Community

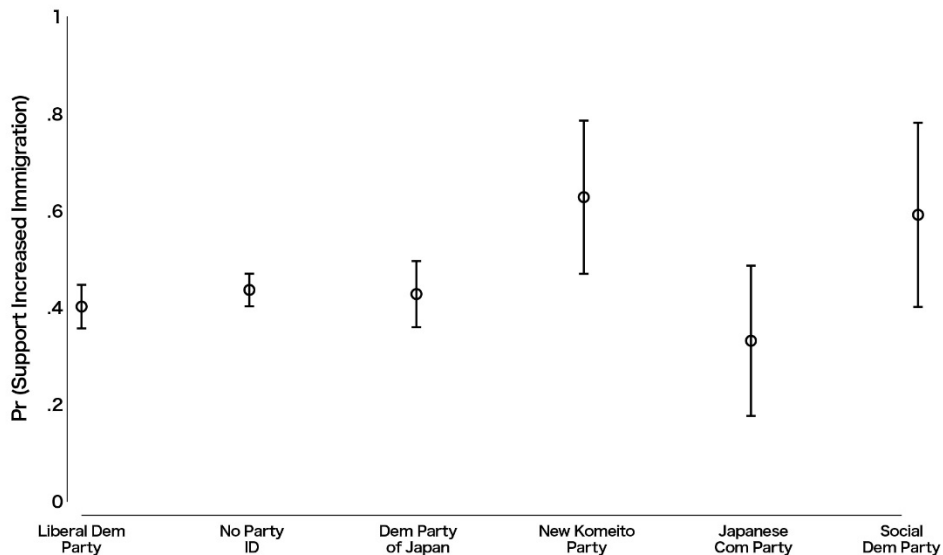


Figure 4: Partisan Differences in Support for Increased Immigration

⁴⁴ The results for the control variables are consistent across the main and interactive models; thus, we focus on the findings of the interactive model.

Party, and supporters of the Democratic Party of Japan are significantly less supportive of increased immigration than compared to supporters of the New Komeito Party. These differences possibly reflect the New Komeito Party's platform emphasizes shaping Japan into a nation of global citizens, rather than focusing on national interests, while parties like the Liberal Democratic Party have taken a hard stance against more open immigration policies.

Finally, consistent with Green and Kadoya (2015)⁴⁵, our findings indicate even after controlling for intergroup contact and group threat, English language proficiency is associated with supporting for increased immigration. The probability of a Japanese with limited English language proficiency support for increased immigration is .40, while the probability for a Japanese with sufficient English language proficiency is .57 ($\Delta = .17$). This suggests English language acquisition leads to more positive perception of the foreign population.

Conclusion

Consistent with the American Politics literature regarding immigration attitudes, intergroup contact and group threat theories have important implications for how we understand attitudes toward foreigners in Japan. It is not that factors associated with group threat theory are not as relevant in Japan, as previous research would suggest, but the relationship between group threat and immigration attitudes is a conditional one. When we see how elements of group threat and intergroup contact theory interact, we better understand what motivates anti-immigrant perceptions in Japanese citizens. When the size of the foreign population increases, the impact of increased contact creating more positive views toward foreign workers diminishes. As the perceived threat of immigrants becomes more viable, contact with immigrants no longer fosters positive attitudes, thus decreasing support for more open immigration policies.

To illustrate this importance of accounting for how group threat and intergroup contact interact, consider the conclusions generated by the main and interactive models. Both models suggest group threat, reflected by size of the foreign-born population, leads to less support for increased immigration. Individuals residing in prefectures with a heightened foreign-born population are on average less supportive of increased immigration than compared to individuals residing in prefectures with a smaller foreign born population even when controlling for the conditioning effect of contact (interactive model). However, the main and interactive models result in opposing conclusions with regard to the impact of contact. The main effect model finds that increased contact with foreign-born individuals leads to greater support for increased immigration. While the interactive model finds the impact of intergroup contact is contingent on foreign born group threat. When the conditioning effect of the foreign-born threat is taken into account increased contact leads to less support for increased immigration. As the foreign population increases, those with frequent contact are less supportive of increased immigration compared to those with rare contact.

⁴⁵ Green and Kadoya, *Contact and Threat*.

The conditioning effect of intergroup contact on attitudes toward outgroups leads to more negative evaluations at lower values of foreign born population size, due to perceived threat.⁴⁶ However, as the size of the outgroup becomes moderate to large, the impact of contact serves to improve evaluations of the outgroup. If this pattern takes root in Japan, the benefits of intergroup contact may translate to more positive attitudes regarding increased immigration. As the immigrant population in Japan continues to increase, it seems plausible to expect for more frequent contact to result in more positive attitudes toward more open immigration policies. Since the size of the foreign population in Japan is so small, the likelihood of Japanese citizens having regular and frequent contact with foreigners is low. Thus, if the size of the foreign population continues to grow, there is hope that Japanese citizens will be more willing to accept more open immigration policies.⁴⁷ Indeed, this would serve to help alleviate the economic problems created by Japan's aging population.

Relatedly, it is important to acknowledge the immigration landscape has changed since 2006—the year observed in this study. There has been a rapid increase in the number of foreign born residents in the past decade. Indeed, as of 2018 there were approximately 2.5 million foreign residents in Japan and they comprise just over 2% of the country's total population. The trend is likely to continue as a result of changes in Japan's immigration policy passed in 2018,⁴⁸ which seeks to attract a larger number of foreign residents to address labor shortages. Given this continued growth of the foreign population in Japan, it is possible that the foreign-born population will grow to a level that would allow for more positive attitudes toward open immigration policies as suggested by Stein et al. In essence, the frequent contact and integration into the Japanese community may help foster positive interactions between Japanese citizens and those who are foreign born.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Stein, Post, and Rinden, "Reconciling Context and Contact Effects on Racial Attitudes."

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Simon Denyer and Akiko Kashiwagi, "Japan Passes Controversial New Immigration Bill to Attract Foreign Workers," *Washington Post*, December 7, 2018. Accessed November 21, 2019: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/japan-passes-controversial-new-immigration-bill-to-attract-foreign-workers/2018/12/07/a76d8420-f9f3-11e8-863a-8972120646e0_story.html

⁴⁹ Rene Rocha and Rodolfo Espino, "Racial Threat, Residential Segregation, and the Policy Attitudes of Anglos," *Political Research Quarterly* 62:2 (2009): 415–426.

Appendix: Summary Statistics

	Mean	Standard Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Support Immigration	0.44	0.5	0	1
Contact	2.25	0.98	1	4
% Foreign Born	1.19	0.62	0.27	2.07
View of Foreign Countries	41.96	10.64	0	77
Ideology	2.91	0.88	1	5
No Party ID	0.52	0.5	0	1
Democratic Party of Japan	0.11	0.32	0	1
New Komeito Party	0.04	0.19	0	1
Japanese Communist Party	0.02	0.13	0	1
Social Democratic Party	0.01	0.12	0	1
Female	0.47	0.5	0	1
Age	52.58	16.67	20	89
Married	0.73	0.44	0	1
Speak English	1.68	0.86	1	5
Satisfaction with Area	3.74	1.04	1	5
Social Class	2.59	0.8	1	5
High School Degree	0.44	0.5	0	1
Population Density	38.12	36.61	1.79	123.29
Average Age	43.43	1.38	39.1	47.1
% Public Assistance	2.03	0.99	0.58	4.08
N	1897			

These data are taken from the 2006 Japanese General Social Survey. The wording of the dependent variable is: "Are you for or against an increase in the number of foreigners in your community?" The response options are coded "0" for "Against" and "1" for "For" .