

Reimagining Japan's Immigration Policies: A Comparative Analysis with Germany and the Role of Advocacy Coalitions

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study examines Japan's immigration policy, highlighting its deep-rooted societal and historical uniqueness. Advocating for a shift, it suggests Japan consider an approach resembling Germany's multicultural model. Utilizing the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), the research delves into the intricate dynamics of Japanese immigration, emphasizing the pivotal role of advocacy coalitions in shaping policy outcomes. The ACF theory indicates that policy changes stem from diverse actors' interactions, each driven by their distinct beliefs. The paper contrasts Japan's conservative stance with Germany's progressive, inclusive policy, underscoring the profound influence of advocacy coalitions in both contexts. The findings offer potential insights for shaping future immigration policies in Japan.



I. Introduction

The investigation into immigration policy resembles a complex web, interlaced with diverse components such as governance, international relations, societal changes, and more. This intricate matrix creates numerous viewpoints and vibrant discussions. For countries like Japan, characterized by its unique social features and historical contexts, the task of devising immigration policies intensifies. This academic exploration endeavors to penetrate the inner mechanics of Japanese immigration policy, influenced by its distinct attributes, cultural nuances, and constantly shifting dynamics. The study leans on theoretical perspectives gathered throughout the course.

This paper argues that Japan should consider adopting an immigration policy similar to Germany's more multicultural approach. By applying the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) to examine Japanese immigration policy, this paper aims to demonstrate how understanding the dynamics of advocacy coalitions can offer valuable insights for crafting a more inclusive and effective immigration policy. The ACF, a theoretical model explored in-depth in the course, offers a valuable mechanism to decipher the intricacies of the policy-making process. It recognizes that policy transformations are not standalone phenomena, but rather products of collaborative interactions between diverse actors, each propelled by their distinct belief systems. The ACF model suggests that a policy subsystem is an interconnected network of actors hailing from a variety of sectors such as governmental entities, research organizations, interest groups, and media outlets. These actors, bound by their collective beliefs about a particular policy issue, actively participate in shaping policy outcomes (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018).

By integrating insights from relevant course content, including the Multiple Streams Framework, Punctuated Equilibrium Theory, and Policy Diffusion, this paper argues that the ACF presents a robust analytical perspective for unraveling the sophisticated mechanisms of policy-making. It illuminates how seemingly chaotic or unrelated policy changes can be connected back to the influences and intricate interplays of various advocacy coalitions.

By applying the ACF to examine Japanese immigration policy, this study aims to delve into the factors influencing policy alterations, the roles of different advocacy coalitions, and the complex interplay of external events and internal shifts in molding immigration policy outcomes. This exploration stands to contribute meaningful insights to the field of immigration policy-making and provide recommendations that could inform future policy decisions in Japan and potentially other regions.



II. Background

Deciphering the nuanced landscape of Japanese immigration policy and its evolution requires an understanding of various policy theories' applications. This section delves into the historical progression of Japanese immigration policy through the perspectives of Punctuated Equilibrium Theory, Policy Diffusion, and the Multiple Streams Framework, illuminating the intricacies and dynamics of policy-making.

In history, Japan, akin to numerous other nations, had fairly unrestricted borders during its feudal era. However, the late 19th and early 20th centuries signaled a critical transition following the substantial societal transformations of the Meiji Restoration and Japan's ensuing globalization. This instigated the formal implementation of immigration policies, initially centered on overseeing the emigration of Japanese citizens to the Americas and Australasia (Akaha and Kashiwazaki, 2020).

Post-World War II saw Japan transform its stance on immigration policy. This shift is interpretable from the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory perspective. In an era of profound nation-building, Japan took a more rigid path, aiming to maintain cultural unity and social stability. For numerous following decades, Japan executed stringent immigration policies, creating a society that is predominantly homogeneous. The government was primarily focused on overseeing the entry of unskilled labor and handling the status of Koreans and other minority groups who had been residing in Japan since the colonial era (Akaha and Kashiwazaki, 2020).

As the 21st century started unfolding, Japan was presented with a demographic puzzle. This was characterized by an aging population and a shrinking birth rate. Along with the forces of globalization, which were on a rapid rise, this situation urged Japan to rethink its long-standing immigration policies. This is where Policy Diffusion and the Multiple Streams Framework theories become important (Berry and Berry, 2018). Drawing lessons from countries like Canada and Australia, who were dealing with similar demographic obstacles, Japan began considering immigration as a potential solution to labor shortages. This shift in policy perspective led to the launch of the Technical Intern Training Program in 1993 as a policy adaptation (Akaha and Kashiwazaki, 2020). Furthermore, the notable amendment to the immigration control law in 2018 signifies Japan's continuous efforts to balance foreign labor demands and a cautious approach towards societal integration and cultural preservation.

Although theories like Punctuated Equilibrium Theory, Policy Diffusion, and the Multiple Streams Framework each offers valuable perspectives into distinct aspects of Japanese immigration policy. This paper aims to emphasize the utilization of the ACF to augment the understanding of the policy's complexities and dynamics. According to this viewpoint, policy changes are neither random nor isolated events. Instead, they are the result of interactions between various critical individuals, each of which is driven by their own sets of beliefs. When we look closely through the lens of the ACF, we can see the formation of a policy subsystem. This subsystem is a huge, interconnected network that spans several industries, from government agencies and academic



institutes to special interest groups and media outlets. Despite their disparate histories, these institutions share common opinions about a particular policy issue and actively contribute to its result (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018).

III. Theoretical Framework and Application: Analyzing Immigration Policy with ACF

Comprehending the complexities of immigration policy-making demands the use of effective analytical instruments to unpack intricate procedures. In this scholarly investigation, we probe the dynamics of Japanese immigration policy, an arena marked by distinctive cultural nuances and shifting policy landscapes. To this end, we employ the ACF, a powerful theoretical perspective extracted from the course material. The ACF provides valuable insights into the interplays between various actors, their common beliefs, and how these elements shape policy outcomes.

A. Overview of the ACF and its Application in Policy Analysis:

The ACF, a concept developed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith in the latter part of the 20th century, shines a light on the intricate dynamics inherent in the procedures of policy-making. It perceives policy modifications not as isolated phenomena, but as outcomes born out of interactions among several actors operating within policy subsystems (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018). To gain a deeper insight into the policy changes noted in Japan, we merge distinctive historical advancements and policy transitions with the fundamental principles of the ACF.

B. Policy Subsystems:

The ACF pivots around the idea of policy subsystems, signifying specific issue areas where policies are crafted and executed (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018). Within the framework of Japanese immigration policy, the policy subsystem consists of various players from government agencies, research entities, interest groups, and media outlets. Recognizing this network of actors actively participating in immigration matters is vital to comprehend the policy-making processes.

C. Stable Parameters from ACF:

Integral to the ACF are the stable parameters, which significantly influence the behavior and actions of actors within advocacy coalitions engaged in shaping Japan's immigration policy. These stable parameters encompass core beliefs, secondary beliefs, and policy core beliefs. Core beliefs are deeply rooted values and worldviews, acting as the fundamental guiding principles for advocacy coalitions. Secondary beliefs represent specific policy preferences derived from core beliefs, influencing the coalition's position on particular policy matters. Policy core beliefs form the connection between specific policy outcomes and the secondary beliefs held by the coalition (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018). Understanding these stable parameters is crucial for understanding the motivations and strategies of advocacy coalitions as they strive to shape Japanese immigration policy.



D. External Subsystem Events:

The ACF acknowledges the importance of external subsystem events, or policy shocks, in driving policy changes within advocacy coalitions. These events can be triggered by factors outside the policy subsystem and disrupt the existing status quo. Policy shocks might encompass demographic changes, economic transitions, or international occurrences impacting the policy issue at hand.

In the context of Japanese immigration policy, external subsystem incidents can trigger shifts in advocacy coalition strategies and policy outcomes (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018). In-depth instances or analyses of such external subsystem incidents can illustrate their role in driving specific policy amendments over a period. For example, the demographic issues of an aging populace and labor deficits in Japan have served as external disruptions, urging policy decision-makers to reassess immigration policies to cater to workforce requirements. Similarly, economic instabilities and international pressures may have provoked policy-based learning within advocacy coalitions, culminating in policy modifications and revisions. Grasping the impact of external subsystem incidents in policy-making provides crucial insights into the adaptive ability of advocacy coalitions and the dynamism of immigration policy responding to shifting conditions. By investigating the influence of external occurrences on coalition behavior and policy results, policymakers can more efficiently anticipate and maneuver through the complexities of Japanese immigration policy.

E. Applying the ACF to Japanese Immigration Policy:

Advocacy coalitions are clusters of actors originating from a variety of organizations, institutions, and advocacy assemblies, united by a common set of normative and causal beliefs, collaborating to achieve a particular policy aim. These coalitions significantly influence policy results by affecting a range of governmental institutions over time through a spectrum of approaches, including litigation, political leverage, research, monitoring, and public participation campaigns (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018). By applying the ACF to the investigation of Japanese immigration policy, we can glean valuable insights into the components contributing to policy changes and directing the course of immigration policies in Japan.

F. Roles of Different Advocacy Coalitions:

The application of the ACF enables the recognition and examination of the unique roles performed by different advocacy coalitions in crafting Japanese immigration policy. The Restrictionist Coalition, identifiable by its ties with conservative political factions and nativist entities, fervently supports cultural homogeneity and rigorous immigration controls. The Restrictionist Coalition has a primary belief that rests on the maintenance of Japan's cultural heritage and national solidarity, and this conviction system profoundly affects their policy leanings and tactics. The Expansionist Coalition, is identifiable by its desires and willingness to support a more open immigration policy. Their central belief is dedicated to identifying the potential benefits of overseas labor to address labor scarcities and stimulate economic advancement. Gaining an understanding of the driving forces, policy preferences, and belief



systems of these unique coalitions grants significant insights into the intricate factors at work within Japanese immigration policy-making. By acknowledging the relationship of these coalitions within the policy subsystem, policymakers can steer through the complexities of immigration policy creation, aiming to harmonize the preservation of culture and openness to accommodate the changing requirements of the nation.

G. Policy-Oriented Learning within Coalitions:

Investigating the learning processes within advocacy groups presents significant insights into how these collectives modify their tactics over time, considering the multifaceted dynamics of immigration policy-making. Learning within coalitions involves an ongoing reevaluation of strategies based on experiences and results within the policy subsystem. Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that the effect of learning is typically confined to specific elements of coalition beliefs, particularly at the secondary tier of their belief systems. While fundamental beliefs, like the safeguarding of cultural diversity or the encouragement of inclusivity, tend to remain quite stable, secondary beliefs indicating specific policy preferences can be open to adjustment.

For instance, as population changes and labor scarcities influence the immigration policy environment in Japan, both the Restrictionist and Expansionist Coalitions might partake in learning procedures. The Restrictionist Coalition, composed of conventional political factions and nativist groups, may reassess their limiting views on immigration in reaction to emerging labor requirements or shifting public views. In a similar vein, the Expansionist Coalition, made up of commercial circles, human rights groups, and internationalist political factions, may adapt their support for a more accepting and comprehensive immigration policy grounded on economic situations and societal necessities.

The development of immigration laws in Japan is influenced by the process of policy-oriented learning, which also defines how flexible they are to changing conditions. However, it is important to understand that the stability of core views and the level of debate around policy fundamental values may limit learning within coalitions. The adaptive behavior of advocacy coalitions and their responsibilities in influencing immigration policy outcomes over time are vitally revealed by this comprehensive knowledge of policy-oriented learning. Policymakers may better understand the complexities of immigration policy-making and develop responsive and context-sensitive policies that are in line with the changing requirements and problems Japan is facing by taking into account the interaction of internal learning dynamics and external influences.

H. Influence of Belief Systems on Coalition Dynamics:

The ACF's focus on belief systems provides a valuable perspective for examining how these systems influence the establishment and evolution of advocacy coalitions concerning Japanese immigration policy (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018). For instance, the core principles guiding the Expansionist and Restrictionist Coalitions significantly shape their policy decisions and approaches. The core motivation behind the Restrictionist Coalition's support for robust immigration controls is linked to concerns about managing national security and ensuring a



cohesive cultural identity within Japan. Conversely, the Expansionist Coalition advocates for an open and liberal immigration system, emphasizing the potential economic advantages associated with foreign labor.

Understanding the relationship of belief systems within these coalitions offers valuable insights into coalition behavior and its impact on policy outcomes. These core beliefs serve as the foundation upon which each coalition builds its policy preferences and strategies. As a result, policy changes and negotiations within the policy subsystem are heavily influenced by the clash of these belief systems. Policy-oriented learning and adaptation within each coalition are filtered through the lens of their core beliefs.

IV. Comparative Analysis

A. Contrasting Approaches to Immigration Policies in Japan and Germany:

A thorough study of Japan's and Germany's immigration laws shows a stark difference between how Japan and Germany address immigration.

Japanese Immigration Policies: Japan has long had conservative and restrictive immigration policies, which are mostly motivated by a strong emphasis on cultural homogeneity. Following the U.S. occupation, the Immigration Control and Refugee Act of 1952 was put into effect with the aim of discouraging foreign laborers from settling permanently in Japan. It led to more strict visa regulations, more immigration enforcement, reliance on temporary foreign workers, and constrained options for obtaining permanent residency. It still mainly exists today and is the basis of contemporary Japanese immigration (Green, 2017).

Germany Immigration Policies: Germany, has taken a more open approach to immigration, accepting immigrants and refugees and emphasizing their assimilation and acceptance into society. They have implemented various policies designed to inform and promote topics related to citizenship, including naturalization requirements, dual citizenship regulations, and the acquisition of citizenship through birth or descent (Hanewinkel and Oltmer, 2022).

B. Contextual Factors, Historical Experiences, and Societal Values:

The opposing immigration policies of Japan and Germany can be explained through a combination of contextual factors, historical experiences, and societal values.

Japan is currently experiencing an aging population, which is a main contributor to a loss of labor in various sectors. To address this challenge, Japan attempted to make changes to its immigration control law in 2019, creating new visa statuses for specified skilled workers. These visas allow foreign workers to be employed in a wider range of occupations, focusing on middle-skilled blue-collar jobs. The criteria for accepting foreign workers in this new category are very strict, including Japanese language fluency in addition to their specific skills. Although the inevitable need for increased immigration due to labor shortages is becoming more apparent, the topic remains unpopular in Japan, and the government has been hesitant to make explicit public



pronouncements supporting increased immigration (Pollmann and Yashiro, 2020). However, economic pressures and worsening labor shortages indicate that larger-scale increases in immigration are likely in the longer term (Green, 2017). The aging population in Germany has demographic concerns as well. They rank third in the world for having the third-highest aging ratio at 21% (“Migration and Demographic Challenges,” 2017). Germany has actively welcomed immigrants into its labor force by introducing immigration changes in response to labor issues brought on by this trend. In contrast to Japan, the nation retains less stringent immigration regulations for those with lesser levels of education. In an effort to solve demographic concerns and the labor shortfall, Germany actively welcomes foreign workers with specific talents (“Migration and Demographic Challenges,” 2017).

B. Role of Advocacy Coalitions in Shaping Policy Outcomes in Each Country:

In spite of its more centrally governed political structure, Japan still sees significant contributions from advocacy coalitions in the construction of its immigration policies. The current Japanese political party in charge, the Liberal Democratic Party, maintains a dominant role in policymaking. However, coalitions for lobbying that include non-governmental organizations, academics, and interest groups support particular immigration laws or reforms. To sway decision-makers, these coalitions may conduct research, policy analysis, public campaigns, and lobbying. While the influence of advocacy coalitions on immigrant policies in Japan may vary depending on the political climate, public opinion, and the government's willingness to consider policy changes, they still contribute to shaping the discourse and policy agenda surrounding immigration in the country.

As Japan faces demographic challenges and labor shortages, these advocacy coalitions serve as key actors in proposing policy recommendations, raising awareness about the benefits of immigration, and advocating for changes in immigration laws and regulations (Shin, 2019).

1. Concrete Example 1: Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) The influence of the Expansionist Coalition is evident in the implementation of the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) in 1993. This program was a response to labor shortages in various sectors and aimed to bring in foreign technical interns to address the demand for skilled workers (“What Is Technical Intern Training Program,” 2023). The Expansionist Coalition's belief in the economic benefits of foreign labor and their advocacy for a more open immigration policy contributed to the establishment of the TITP.
2. Concrete Example 2: 2018 Immigration Control Law Revision In 2018, Japan made a significant revision to its immigration control law to create new visa categories and attract more foreign workers. This policy change reflected a growing recognition among policymakers, influenced by the Expansionist Coalition, that Japan needed to open its doors to foreign talent to address the challenges posed by an aging population and labor shortages (“Technical Intern Training Program,” 2023).



In Germany, policy outcomes are notably influenced by advocacy coalitions, a result of the nation's multiparty system and coalition governance structure. The respective political parties forming the coalition often maintain diverse perspectives on immigration, leading to debates and negotiations. Such advocacy alliances include political parties, interest bodies, and civic organizations, all pushing for specific immigration policies. They utilize tools like lobbying, public campaigns, and policy reviews to sway the decision-making process (Weible and Ingold, 2018). Within the coalition government, differing views on immigration can trigger disagreements and struggles for power (Frymark and Kwiatkowska, 2018). In Germany, advocacy coalitions have the capacity to change immigration policies through influencing public opinion, rallying support, presenting policy alternatives, and influencing political party platforms and government decision-making procedures.

1. **Concrete Example 1: 2015 Refugee Crisis.** Back in 2015, Germany made the significant decision to provide refuge to a multitude of people seeking asylum from Syria. The majority of these refugees found a home in Germany after the government chose to put a temporary hold on enforcing the Dublin Regulation. This move wasn't without opposition, but Chancellor Angela Merkel stood firm. This choice to welcome migrants into Germany was a clear embodiment of the values held by those who champion immigration. This policy reaction was greatly influenced by the coalition's commitment to humanitarian concerns and Germany's prior experiences with post-war labor migration (Ayoub, 2019).
2. **Concrete Example 2: Integration Measures.** The Pro-Immigration Coalition's activism and influence led Germany to undertake a number of integration measures, including language programs and cultural orientation initiatives ("Integration, German Courses," 2023). The coalition's belief in the importance of integration and inclusion has been instrumental in driving these policy measures.

V. Counterarguments

A. Japan's Immigration Policy:

1. **Counterargument: Cultural Preservation and Social Cohesion**

There are voices out there who argue quite vehemently that Japan's strict stance on immigration and its focus on cultural homogeneity are vital for keeping its one-of-a-kind cultural identity and social unity intact. These critics warn of a domino effect, where a surge in immigration could lead to the culture being watered down and society splitting at the seams. They bolster their arguments by pointing to historical cases where other countries grappled with issues of assimilation and social integration after opening their doors to large-scale immigration.

2. **Counterargument: Economic Stability and Labor Market Protection**



The necessity to safeguard economic stability and the domestic labor market is a common argument made by opponents of changing Japan's immigration laws. Critics also highlight that significant immigration might discourage necessary advancements in technology and automation, as businesses could become reliant on cheaper labor from abroad. These opponents reference countries where substantial immigration has allegedly led to such economic and labor market issues (Pullen, 2020).

B. Germany's Immigration Policy:

1. Counterargument: Social Integration and Cultural Challenges

Some critics say that Germany's comparatively open immigration policy, particularly during the 2015 refugee crisis, posed considerable social integration issues. They argue that the massive influx of refugees and immigrants has put a strain on resources and social services, perhaps leading to conflicts between immigrant populations and native Germans. Critics express concern about the necessity for comprehensive integration policies and cultural orientation initiatives in order to achieve good social cohesiveness (Schuster, 2021).

2. Counterargument: Fiscal Stability and Welfare System Preservation

Skeptics of Germany's permissive immigration policy often express apprehension about the economic endurance of the country's welfare state. They propose that extending social benefits to an expanding immigrant populace could exacerbate pressure on public finances, potentially undermining the welfare system's efficacy. Such critics argue for a more controlled immigration policy to ensure that welfare resources predominantly benefit native German citizens (Keller et al., 2015).

VI. Policy Implications

The comparative analysis of Japan's and Germany's immigration policies yields several important policy implications that can inform the choices of other nations facing similar challenges.

A. Potential Benefits and Drawbacks of Each Country's Approach

1. Advantages of Japan's Approach:

- a. **Harmony at Home:** With a culturally homogeneous society, you often see fewer conflicts arising from cultural or ethnic differences. This sense of unity and shared understanding can foster a harmonious social environment.
- b. **Keeping Culture Alive:** By having stringent immigration controls, Japan can preserve its traditional values, customs, and societal norms. This approach may ensure the continuity and vibrancy of its unique cultural heritage.



- c. Streamlined Resource Planning: When population growth is controlled, managing resources, planning infrastructure, and ensuring environmental sustainability becomes less of a juggling act.

2. Disadvantages of Japan's Approach:

- a. Labor Shortage: Japan is grappling with an aging population and low birth rates, resulting in a shrinking workforce. More relaxed immigration policies could introduce young, skilled workers into the country to help support the economy.
- b. Missing Out on Diversity: Immigration often introduces diverse perspectives and fosters innovation, which can be catalysts for economic growth and societal advancement. Restrictive policies may inadvertently dampen these potential benefits.
- c. International Perception: Japan's strict stance on immigration might affect its image on the global stage, creating an impression of being less open to outsiders, which could impact diplomatic relations and tourism.
- d. Demographic Challenge: Japan's strict immigration policies, coupled with an aging population and low birth rates, exacerbate the demographic imbalance, which can strain the social security system and impact economic productivity.

3. Advantages of Germany's Approach:

- a. Population Boost: Germany's open immigration policies can lead to a much-needed increase in the population, counteracting its relatively low birth rate. This can support economic sustainability and growth.
- b. Filling Labor Gaps: Relaxed immigration rules can help to fill labor market shortages, particularly in industries and sectors where there is a significant demand for skilled and unskilled workers.
- c. Cultural Diversity: Open immigration policies can lead to a more multicultural society. This diversity can enrich German society culturally and socially.
- d. Global Image: By being more open to immigrants, Germany projects an image of a welcoming and inclusive society on the international stage. This can foster better international relations and contribute to its reputation as a global leader in humanitarian issues.

4. Disadvantages of Germany's Approach:

- a. Social Tension: The rapid increase in immigrant populations could potentially lead to social tension, particularly if there is perceived competition for resources, jobs, and social services.



- b. **Security Concerns:** Open borders may pose security challenges, as it can be harder to monitor who is entering the country.
- c. **Integration Difficulties:** It can be a considerable challenge to ensure the successful integration of immigrants into society. This includes language barriers, cultural assimilation, and ensuring equal access to opportunities.
- d. **Infrastructure Pressure:** An increase in population due to immigration can put pressure on existing infrastructure, such as housing, healthcare, and education services, requiring substantial planning and investment to cater to the needs of the growing population.

B. Lessons for Other Nations:

1. **Contextual Sensitivity:** The comparative analysis underscores the importance of contextual factors in shaping immigration policies. The importance of adjusting policies to each country's specific circumstances while taking into account economic requirements, societal values, and historical experiences should be recognized by policymakers in other nations confronting comparable demographic issues and labor shortages.
2. **Balancing Cultural Preservation and Economic Imperatives:** Both Japan and Germany offer lessons in balancing cultural preservation and economic imperatives. Maintaining cultural identity while fostering economic progress through the integration of immigrant workers requires policymakers to achieve a difficult balance. This requires creating laws that promote social harmony while utilizing the various abilities and skills of immigrants.
3. **Integration and Social Cohesion:** Germany's experiences highlight the importance of effective integration measures to ensure the successful social cohesion of immigrant communities. To help immigrants integrate smoothly into society, policymakers in other nations should think about funding integration programs, language instruction, and cultural orientation.
4. **Policy-Oriented Learning:** The policy-oriented learning process within advocacy coalitions, as observed in both countries, underscores the need for flexibility in policy-making. Policymakers should be receptive to learning from past policy outcomes and adapt strategies accordingly, recognizing that immigration policies may require continuous adjustments over time.
5. **Building Public Support:** Both Japan and Germany have grappled with public perceptions and support for their immigration policies. Other countries' policymakers should engage with the public, addressing fears and misconceptions about immigration through open communication and policymaking based on evidence.



VII. Recommendations and Future Directions

The analysis conducted through the lens of the ACF has provided an enhanced view which has highlighted some potential suggestions to be given to Japanese policymakers.

A. Actionable Suggestions for Decision-Makers in Japan:

1. **A More Welcoming Policy:** The analysis pointed out numerous advantages that a more friendly immigration policy may have, such as reducing labor shortages and encouraging economic growth. I suggest that Japanese decision-makers consider slow and carefully supervised increases in the intake of immigrants to fulfill the country's workforce needs. This progressive approach will allow the monitoring of policy changes' effects and deal with any issues or public anxieties that might emerge.

2. **Balancing Social Cohesion with Immigrant Advocacy:** If Japan were to embrace a more inclusive immigration policy, there's an imperative to maintain an equilibrium between standing up for immigrant rights and soothing public unease regarding the possible social and cultural impacts of immigration. Transparent and fruitful talks are critical in calming public worries and rallying support for immigration policies that balance national interests and humanitarian concerns.

B. Future Research Directions:

1. **Comprehensive Examination of Advocacy Coalitions' Belief Systems:** Future research endeavors should aim for a deeper exploration of how belief systems form and evolve within Japan's unique cultural and social context. To better understand the dynamic in coalition behavior through time, consider how these belief systems alter in reaction to diverse events and political outcomes.

2. **Role of Individual Actors within Advocacy Coalitions:** While this study primarily focused on coalitions as collective actors, future research should examine the role of individual policy brokers or leaders within these coalitions. Understanding the influence these key individuals wield within their respective coalitions and their personal belief systems and strategies would provide a more nuanced perspective on coalition dynamics. Investigating how individual actors negotiate and collaborate to drive policy change within their coalitions would further illuminate the mechanisms at play in policy-making processes.

3. **Comparative Studies with Other Countries:** Expanding the comparative approach to include other countries facing unique demographic challenges and employing diverse policy responses would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between contextual factors and immigration policies. A deeper comprehension of the dynamics of global immigration policy dynamics would result from the discovery of similar patterns and distinctive policy methods used by countries dealing with immigration difficulties.



VIII. Conclusion

Utilizing the ACF to scrutinize Japanese immigration policy has enabled a wide-ranging and revealing perspective to comprehend the complexities woven into policy-making processes. In mapping out the roles of varied advocacy coalitions, the essence of policy-oriented learning, and the interaction between external happenings and internal transformations, we've uncovered a meaningful understanding of the dynamics driving immigration policies in Japan. This wrap-up intends to reemphasize the relevance of employing the ACF, understand the benefits of Japan adopting immigration policies more aligned with Germany, stress the broader applicability of the research, and end with an appeal for further probing of crucial elements to create more effective and inclusive immigration policies in a globally linked society.

A. The Significance of Using the ACF in Analyzing Immigration Policies:

The ACF is proficient in unwinding the intricacies of policy subsystems and pinpointing the pivotal roles of advocacy coalitions, belief systems, and policy-oriented learning, thus enhancing the understanding of how immigration policies are meticulously formed and sculpted over time. By acknowledging the intricate connection between various actors, each fueled by their unique beliefs, policymakers can cultivate a richer understanding of the forces in motion, paving the way for more context-aware, and data-driven immigration policies.

B. Main Findings and Insights:

Applying the ACF as a framework enabled a thorough exploration of the intricate workings of Japanese immigration policy. It illuminated how the ideologies embraced by distinct advocacy coalitions significantly influence policy results. Additionally, the research extended beyond this, venturing into a comparative analysis. This involved juxtaposing Japan's approach to immigration against the backdrop of Germany's effective immigration strategies.

Germany's policies, deftly harmonizing societal stability, immigrant rights, and cultural diversity, stimulate economic growth and confront demographic challenges. There exists a significant potential for Japan to obtain considerable benefits if it were to incorporate analogous elements into its immigration policies.

In alignment with the initial proposition, these findings offer a convincing argument for Japan to consider a paradigm shift. A shift towards not just an effective immigration policy, but one that is also more inclusive, paralleling the multicultural successes observed in Germany. This research represents an initial stride - a gentle disturbance in the expansive pool of knowledge. With further scholarly engagement in this fascinating subject matter, the anticipation is for substantial and transformative advancements in the years ahead.

C. Broader Relevance and Lessons for Policymakers Worldwide:

While this study focused on Japanese immigration policy, its consequences are far-reaching. This study's findings provide interesting insights that may serve as valuable information for



policymakers across the globe as they attempt to create immigration policies to address their distinct issues. The significance of understanding belief systems, advocating for incremental shifts toward openness, and balancing societal stability with immigrant rights are universal principles that can guide policymakers in crafting effective, responsive, and inclusive immigration policies.

D. A Call for Further Exploration:

As immigration remains an ever-pressing global concern, the necessity to persistently delve into the dynamics of advocacy coalitions, belief systems, and situational factors is undeniable. Profound explorations of belief systems within advocacy alliances, studies focusing on individual actors' roles, and comparative research concerning other nations facing similar issues can significantly boost the grasp of immigration policy-making procedures. By accepting and navigating these complexities, policymakers can create immigration strategies more fitting to an interlinked world's challenges and prospects.

Finally, the choice to utilize the ACF as a lens through which to study Japanese immigration policy has been notably insightful. It's not only produced significant understandings but also expanded the boundaries of immigration policy research. By meticulously dissecting the Japanese immigration policy and comparing it with Germany's methodology, the versatility of the ACF in policy evaluation is demonstrated. This procedure has shed light on the intricate network of policymaking complexities. Policymakers may establish a more harmonious, inclusive, and balanced immigration policy trajectory by continuing to explore and comprehend the intricate relationships between advocacy coalitions, belief systems, and influencing variables.



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ABOUT THE GLOBAL POLICY HORIZONS RESEARCH LAB

Webster University's Global Policy Horizons Lab is a policy-focused research entity where students, Lab researchers, affiliated faculty, as well as members of the policy community from across disciplines, can explore national and global security issues, generate original research, as well as produce peer-reviewed policy papers and commentaries. The Lab pursues innovative research focusing on unconventional threats, identity and security, role of technology in security, economic security, as well environmental and food security. The goal of the Lab is to become a knowledge hub that informs national governments and other members of the global policy community on contemporary and future security challenges.



The current Director of the Lab is **Professor Dani Belo, PhD.**