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Labyrinth of Highly Skilled Migration in Japan

: Society, Labour and Policy

Daisuke Wakisaka
September 2018

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance
with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, School for Policy Studies

80,416 words

Farewell to me,
who negotiated today

from poem *Farewell*
by Misuzu Kaneko (1920s)

Abstract

Japan is enigmatic for migration scholars. The country will lose a quarter of its population in 40 years with the elderly ratio climbing to nearly 40%, remaining one of the most aging economies. Nevertheless, it still retains the lowest share of migrants in the labour market among OECD members. It seems no grand design for the future generation is shared by policymakers or citizens: how should the country open up a practical prospect under this hard reality?

This research addresses the enigma through the optics of highly skilled migration which has been one of the pivotal agendas of the recent policy development in Japan. In attempting to fuel the economy, the Japanese government has lately devoted themselves to attracting highly skilled migrants (HSMs). One of the implemented policies is a points-based system; however, it has failed to deliver the expectation at the outset. With this policy failure in mind, this study aims to fill the important research gaps on HSMs in Japan: the mechanism of skilled migration and its interplay with policies. In other words, what makes HSMs decide to work in Japan and how the public policies influence their decisions. The study centres on these micro-macro interplays.

For this, the dissertation is structured to explore the labyrinth made up of three mazes—societal, labour and policy dimensions that HSMs in Japan face. Based on the qualitative inquiry, the study will unfold the dynamism of the mazes through the perception of HSMs and migration experts. In so doing, the research offers new insights to academic arguments by producing concepts such as ‘coerced harmonisation’ and ‘no choice democracy’, whose implications are not limited to skilled migration but cover the overall migration agendas. Throughout, the discussion will present how the lessons drawn from Japan can contribute to addressing the pressing migration issues in other countries.

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Doing a PhD is a lonely journey as it requires independent work—this might be shared by many PhD students, whereas I have never felt isolated. It was indeed arduous, but it is really worth the challenge. Throughout the PhD journey, I have enjoyed a myriad of support, which made this dissertation a 'joint' project. In a sense, this is a co-product with those who have generously cooperated.

First and foremost, this dissertation has been shaped by my research participants. Although they remain anonymous, they made tremendous contributions to unravelling the intellectual puzzles posed here.

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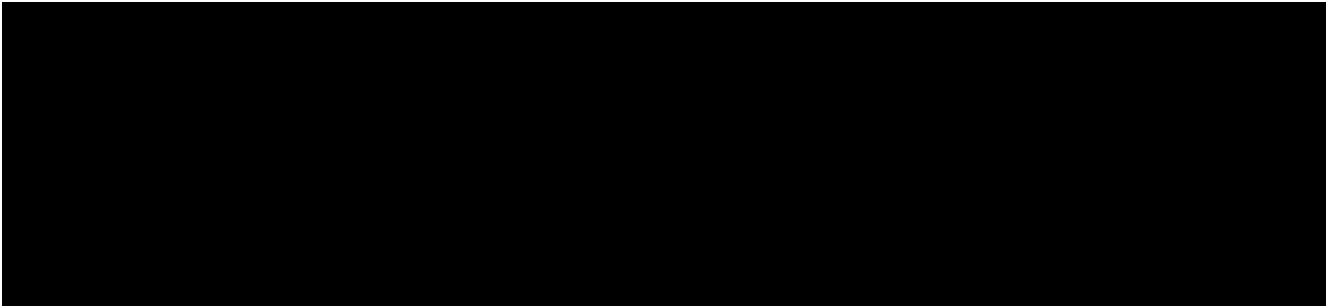
On the academic front, I am grateful to the two supervisors, Ms Ann Singleton and Professor Jonathan Beaverstock. Without their enlightening and thoughtful guidance, this research would not have borne fruit. In Japan, I was genuinely inspired and encouraged by Professor Gracia Liu-Farrer, Professor Glenda Roberts, and Professor Hiroko Mikami, to name only a few.

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Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to the excellent companions of this challenging and enjoyable journey, my family.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other academic award. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.



Contents

Abstract	v
Acknowledgements	vii
Author's Declaration	ix
Contents	xi
List of Figures	xvi
List of Tables	xvii
Glossaries & Abbreviations	xix
Chapter 1 Introduction: Labyrinth	1
1.1 Research aims	2
1.2 Research questions.....	3
1.3 Justification for the intellectual investigation.....	3
1.4 Theoretical framework.....	5
1.5 Definition of important terminologies	7
1.5.1 Migration/Migrants	7
1.5.2 Highly skilled migrants	10
1.5.3 Visa.....	10
1.5.4 Western/Asian	11
1.5.5 Migration policies	12
1.6 Dissertation outline.....	13
Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework	19
2.1 Introduction	19
2.2 Interdisciplinary approach: theoretical underpinning	20
2.3 Definition of highly skilled migrants	21
2.4 Meaning of accepting highly skilled migrants	24
2.4.1 War for talent	24
2.4.2 Economic impacts on the host society.....	25
2.5 Causal mechanism of migration	27
2.5.1 Push pull model	27
2.5.2 Neoclassical theory.....	28
2.5.3 Structural theory	28
2.5.4 Limitation of the dichotomy in neoclassical/structural theories	31
2.6 Transnational elite geographies	31
2.6.1 Knowledge mobility and organisational network	31
2.6.2 Lubrication	32
2.6.3 Migration channels and firms' personnel practices	33
2.6.4 Limitation of transnational elite geographies.....	34

2.7	Middling mobility	35
2.7.1	Everyday practices of the middle class	35
2.7.2	Identities and social bonds	36
2.7.3	Limitation of middling mobility	37
2.7.4	Analytical implications	37
2.7.5	Methodological implications	40
2.8	Japan's case	40
2.8.1	Japanese employment relations.....	40
2.8.2	Societal factors.....	43
2.9	Macro analysis: public policies and migration.....	44
2.9.1	Policy failures in attracting highly skilled migrants.....	44
2.9.2	Migration governance.....	45
2.9.3	Actors in the policy making process	46
2.9.4	Kasumigaseki bureaucrats: the key actors of policy making process....	47
2.10	Conclusion.....	49
Chapter 3	Research Background.....	51
3.1	Introduction.....	51
3.2	Legislation on immigration control of highly skilled migrants in Japan	51
3.2.1	Basic idea underpinning immigration control.....	51
3.2.2	Legislation in Japan	53
3.2.3	Highly skilled migrants and permanent residency	54
3.3	Points-based system (PBS)	55
3.4	Definition of highly skilled migrants in Japan	57
3.5	Statistical data	60
3.6	Attractiveness to work in Japan	68
3.7	Policies on highly skilled migrants in Asia.....	69
3.7.1	Migration trends in Asian immigration economies	69
3.7.2	Policies in Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan	72
3.7.3	Comparison with Japan.....	74
3.8	Conclusion.....	76
Chapter 4	Methodologies and Methods.....	79
4.1	Introduction.....	79
4.2	Methodologies	79
4.2.1	Nature of qualitative research	79
4.2.2	Reasons for using qualitative methods	80
4.2.3	Philosophical underpinnings.....	81
4.2.4	Weakness of qualitative method	83
4.3	Textual context	84
4.4	Method: Interviews.....	85

4.4.1	Data collection strategies.....	85
4.4.2	Sampling framework.....	90
4.4.3	Basic framework of the interviews	92
4.4.4	Analysis	93
4.4.5	Ethics.....	94
4.5	Challenges and limitations	96
4.5.1	Sensitivities.....	96
4.5.2	Sample size	96
4.5.3	Translation.....	98
4.5.4	Positionality	99
4.5.5	What is a good interview?.....	101
4.6	Conclusion	102
Chapter 5 Obstacles in Public Policies and Society (Findings 1).....		105
5.1	Introduction	105
5.2	Trajectories contrasted: Discipline vs Walkabout?	106
5.2.1	Remarkable contrast between the Asian and Western migrants	106
5.2.2	The emerging new trend (pull factors) and unique ‘constraints’ (push factors).....	111
5.2.3	Intracompany transferees	111
5.3	Issues in immigration control.....	114
5.3.1	Application process.....	114
5.3.2	Permanent settlement and parents reunification.....	116
5.3.3	‘Stigmatised’ cohorts.....	117
5.4	Issues in tax and social security	120
5.5	Institutional obstacles	122
5.5.1	Education.....	123
5.5.2	Social norms	124
5.6	Discrimination.....	125
5.6.1	Institutional discrimination.....	126
5.6.2	Racial discrimination: unconscious segregation and prejudice.....	127
5.7	Fostering social networks among compatriots	132
5.8	Discussion.....	136
Chapter 6 Negotiating Professional Careers: Japan’s Endemic Employment Practices (Findings 2)		139
6.1	Introduction	139
6.2	Seeking employment: the recruitment practices can be a listed heritage...	140
6.3	Japanese language: pursuing foreigners who can be ‘Japanized’	143
6.4	Career making: I can’t imagine maybe that scenario	147
6.5	Salary: the salary is higher in Beijing and Shanghai than Tokyo.....	152

6.6	Work-life balance: you see your colleague not doing anything, just sleeping ..	153
6.6.1	Staying in office without working?	153
6.6.2	Emerging reform	154
6.7	Stigmatised image: crazy, pricey, closed	154
6.8	Attraction to work: water and safety are free	157
6.9	Discussion	161

Chapter 7 Wrecked Migration Governance: Absent Captain and Unconcerted Crews (Findings 3) 165

7.1	Introduction	165
7.2	Three policy backgrounds of the research	166
7.2.1	Points-based system	167
7.2.2	Permanent residency	167
7.2.3	Neglected policies on unskilled labour scheme	168
7.2.4	Multi-faceted approach	168
7.3	Migration policy governance structure in Japan	170
7.4	Compartmentalised governance structure	171
7.4.1	Non-existent leadership	171
7.4.2	Risk averse and homogeneous society	174
7.5	Unique bureaucracy in MOJ	175
7.5.1	Segregated career track	176
7.5.2	Passive policy makers in a fragile position	179
7.6	Absence of political will	181
7.7	Cross Ministerial leadership	185
7.8	Discussion	190

Chapter 8 Conclusion: Towards a More Diversified and Accommodating Society. 193

8.1	Labyrinth unfolded?	193
8.2	Academic contribution: questions, findings and uniqueness	193
8.2.1	Research aims and questions	193
8.2.2	Conceptualising highly skilled migration in Japan	194
8.2.3	Regional competition in Asia	197
8.2.4	Academic contributions	198
8.2.5	Synthesising threads of the three findings-chapters	200
8.3	Final discussion: Weaving out the complete tapestry	201
8.3.1	Stigmatisation	201
8.3.2	Diversity	203
8.3.3	Public policies	204
8.3.4	Who are migration policies for?	205
8.4	Future research directions	207

8.4.1	Generalisation.....	208
8.4.2	Longitudinal perspectives	208
8.4.3	The concept of ‘Westerners’	209
8.5	Reflexivity.....	210
8.6	Concluding the journey of the labyrinth	212
Appendix 1 List of Participants.....		215
Appendix 2 Topic Guide		217
Appendix 3 Thematic Map.....		221
Appendix 4 Definition of Asia, Europe, and North America in e-stat (2017).....		225
References		227

List of Figures

Figure 1-1 Classification of migration.....	9
Figure 2-1 Hierarchy of recruiting examination for civil service.....	48
Figure 3-1 The flow chart to obtain lawful status in Japan and the UK	53
Figure 3-2 Highly skilled migrants by status of residence	61
Figure 3-3 The number of highly skilled migrants (2006-2017).....	64
Figure 3-4 The trend of Asian and Western HSMs (2006-2017, indexed)	65
Figure 3-5 Japan's attractiveness rank for talents in the world	68
Figure 5-1 Application process and waiting time.....	115
Figure 5-2 “Japanese Only” sign in a bar.....	127
Figure 6-1 Typical recruit suits.....	142
Figure 7-1 Organization chart of MOJ.....	176
Figure 7-2 Comparison of negotiation structure.....	189
Figure 8-1 Research questions and findings in analytical chapter	200
Figure 8-2 The 'tapestry' of multi threads and scales.....	205

List of Tables

Table 2-1 Some examples of paradigm research in each discipline.....	20
Table 2-2 Perceived self-identities of people in Northern Ireland (%).....	39
Table 2-3 Perceived self-identities: results by religions (%)	39
Table 3-1 Legislative structure of immigration control in Japan and the UK.....	52
Table 3-2 List of expert and technical status of residence.....	59
Table 3-3 Status of residence by gender.....	62
Table 3-4 The number of highly skilled migrants by prefecture	63
Table 3-5 Top 30 origins of HSMs.....	63
Table 3-6 The number of highly skilled migrants by origin (2006-2017)	66
Table 3-7 The fluctuation of highly skilled migrants by country (2006-2017).....	67
Table 3-8 Stock migration in Asian economies/area	70
Table 3-9 Comparison among the four economies.....	75
Table 5-1 Categorised routes by migrants' origins in the interviews.....	106
Table 5-2 The breakdown by the highest degree gained by respondents	108
Table 5-3 The breakdown of academic majors of overseas students in Japan	108
Table 5-4 Tax Band of Personal Income Tax in Japan.....	120
Table 6-1 Contrasted perception on Japan	156
Table 6-2 Comparison between Japanese and Anglo-American firms on skilled labour	161
Table 7-1 The composition of expert members in Advisory Board for Minister of Justice	169
Table 7-2 Main actors in the central government	170
Table 7-3 The two biggest political parties in Japan.....	182

Glossaries & Abbreviations

Doki 同期	Literally “same period”. If they are doki with someone, they entered the company in the same year (usually the first of April). This notion is important for Japanese workers since the timing when they began to work is one of the major factors deciding their position in the hierarchy. It is also deeply related with the seniority salary system.
DP 民主党	Democratic Party (Minshuto). It was one of the largest opposition parties in Japan. It was centre-left mainly backed by labour unions/liberalists and was in-power between 2009 and 2012. It was divided into two different political parties in 2017: Constitutional Democratic Party (Rikken minshuto, 立憲民主党) and Democratic Party (Minshintō, 民進党). The latter became Democratic Party for the People (Kokumin minshuto, 国民民主党) in 2018.
HR	Human resources
HSMs 高度外国人材	Highly skilled migrants. The Japanese government defines 15 visa categories as specialist and technical status of residence. This research refers these categories to HSMs with some exceptions (see Chapter 3 for more details).
Immigration Bureau	The immigration authority in Japan. It is under the Ministry of Justice with 4,614 staff members (as of FY 2017).
Independent migrants	Self-initiated HSMs. Unlike intracompany transferees, they are autonomous migrants and free-movers.
Intracompany transferees	HSMs who migrate based on their employer's decision. It is a form of personnel transfer within the company. In this study, intercompany transferees (personnel movement between the companies) are also referred to as intracompany transferees.
Kasumigaseki 霞が関	The nickname of the central government in Japan, named after the location of their offices in central Tokyo. It usually refers to the civil service, known for its systematic bureaucracy, controlling administration.
Keidanren 経団連	Japan Business Federation. The most powerful employers' organisation in Japan. It is composed of 1,500 members, mostly large enterprises such as Hitachi, Toyota, Sony and Mitsubishi corporation. Its guideline predicates the start of the recruiting process for new graduates (see also Shinsotsusaiyo).
Kikokushijo 帰国子女	Japanese returnees' children. They are also Third Culture Kids.

Kodo jinzai ukeire suishin kaigi 高度人材受入推進 会議	The Council for the Promotion of Acceptance of Highly Skilled Professionals. It was established by the then Chief Cabinet Minister in 2008 to examine how Japan attracts the best and brightest from abroad. Consequently, the Points-based system was proposed.
LDP 自民党	Liberal Democratic Party (Jiminto). The ruling party in Japan. It is centre-right mainly backed by employers/conservatives.
METI	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
MEXT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
MIC	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications
MOJ	Ministry of Justice. It is in charge of immigration control. Immigration Bureau is under the MOJ.
MOL	Ministry of Labour. The formal name is Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare.
Nemawashi 根回し	Prior consultation system. When people make a decision in a meeting, they usually consult informally with the meeting members and discuss the issue prior to the meeting.
Nikkeijin 日系人	Foreigners of Japanese descent like Japanese-Brazilian
PBS	Points-based system. The formal name is Points-based Preferential Immigration Treatment for Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals. It was launched in 2012 to attract highly skilled migrants.
Recruit suit リクルートスーツ	A black suit specifically made for job hunting
RQ	Research questions
Shinsotsusaiyo 新卒採用	Japan's employment practices hiring new graduates at once. Most of the Japanese companies retain Shin (new) sotsu (graduate) saiyo (recruitment) schemes in which new graduates are hired on the 1st of April right after they graduate from universities. Unlike the western countries, people who miss the chance to be on the scheme will face tremendous difficulties in finding a regular job in a renowned company.
Status of residence	A permit given to a migrant from Minister of Justice to lawfully reside in Japan. It is necessary to obtain a status of residence to enter and stay in Japan even if it is a short period. If a migrant does not have a valid status of residence, it makes them irregular migrants. Visa is one of the requirements to obtain a status of residence.

Shutsunyukoku kanri seisaku kondankai 出入国管理政策懇 談会	Advisory board for Minister of Justice for immigration policies. It consists of migration experts from academics, business sectors, trade unions and lawyers.
SNS	Social Network Services
TCKs	Third Culture Kids. Children raised outside the parents' culture.
TNCs	Transnational Corporations
Visa	One of the requirements to obtain a permit to enter and reside in Japan issued by Japanese Embassies. This dissertation uses the word visa interchangeably with status of residence (except for Chapter 3). See also status of residence.

Chapter 1 Introduction: Labyrinth

*“And this also,” said Marlow suddenly,
“has been one of the dark places of the earth.”
Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness¹*

With many advanced industrial countries facing the challenges of demography in this age of economic globalisation, migration policies are among the most important factors in terms of revitalising the economy and stabilising society. Japan cannot be the exceptional case albeit it has traditionally been labelled as a closed country to immigrants: Japan will lose a quarter of its population—30 million people—over the next four decades (2016-2055) with the percentage of the elderly rising from 27.3 to 38.0%, still one of the highest levels in the world (Cabinet Ministry, 2017). OECD (2017: 33) calls for a more admissionist migration policy for “future economic prosperity and the well-being of its people”, especially considering the share of migrants in the Japanese labour market is the lowest (1.6%) among the OECD members.

Above all, attracting highly skilled migrants (HSMs) is key for not only Japan but other economies (Beechler and Woodward, 2009; Cerna and Chou, 2014; International Organisation of Employers, 2014), bringing about severe competition to acquire and retain HSMs (Beaverstock and Hall, 2012; Harvey, 2014). Given this situation, scores of states reform their migration policies to attract the best and the brightest (Skeldon, 2009; OECD, 2013). For example, the United Kingdom (UK) launched the Points-based system (PBS) for HSMs in 2008 and the EU introduced the Blue Card system in 2012, which allows global talent from outside the EU to move within it with fewer restrictions. Turning our eyes to Asia, Singapore established strategic policies to acquire HSMs in the late 1980s. Japan also started the Points-Based Preferential Immigration Treatment for Highly Skilled Foreign Professionals (hereafter PBS) in 2012.

Policies in advanced industrial countries, however, often swing between proactive and negative (Ruhs and Anderson, 2010). A good example of this is contemporary Europe where political parties appealing to decrease the number of immigrants garner a lot of support, reflecting the migration backlash (OECD, 2016). This trend may also emerge in Japan. Arguably, unless migration policies are scrutinised objectively and empirically, policy discussions risk ending up as merely emotional and highly loaded arguments. This is most likely to result in policy failures (Castles, 2004; Spencer, 2011). To avoid

¹ Conrad (1902: 3)

such confusion, it is imperative to critically appraise the migration mechanism and reveal the reasons for policy failures based on evidence: this is what this research pursues.

1.1 Research aims

This research aims to identify how Japan should address the issues confronting HSMs while the country faces the unprecedented challenges of severe global competition and a rapidly ageing and declining population. It particularly fills the important research gaps on HSMs in Japan: the mechanism of skilled migration and its interplay with policies. In other words, what makes HSMs decide to work in Japan and how the public policies influence the decision. The study centres on these micro-macro interplays.

Given the severe global economic competition as well as shrinking population, policy makers and the business community have long insisted that more HSMs are crucially needed to revitalise Japan (Liberal Democratic Party, 2008; Keidanren, 2004, 2008, 2015).

Against this background, the Japanese government has continued policy debates to attract HSMs for the last decade. In 2008 when the UK introduced PBS, the Japanese government set up Kodo jinzai ukeire suishin kaigi (The Council for the Promotion of Acceptance of Highly Skilled Professionals) headed by the then Chief Cabinet Secretary to discuss necessary policies to attract HSMs; its report “Gaikoku kodo jinzai ukeire seisaku no honkakuteki tenkai wo (Call for proactive policies to attract highly skilled migrants)” referred to European policies focusing on HSMs, especially outlining the UK’s PBS, and accentuated the necessity to introduce a similar system in Japan (Kodo jinzai ukeire suishin kaigi, 2009). This proposal brought Japan the PBS introduced in 2012; however, the number of HSMs using the new system was only 434 for the first 11 months (May 2012-April 2013)—it accounted for merely 0.2 % of all the HSMs in Japan (Oishi, 2014), far below the initial expectation of the government (Immigration Bureau, 2015). Consequently, the policy needed reforming (Dai 6ji Shutsunyukoku kanri seisaku kondankai gaikokujin ukeire seido kento bunkakai [Working Group on Policies to Accept Immigrants, the Sixth Council of Immigration Policies], 2013).

This example perspicuously indicates that study on the migratory mechanism of HSMs has been limited—in terms of what induces them to migrate and how the policies can address this. The research gap has led to policy failures in Japanese migration policies. This study thus centres on why Japan has failed to attract HSMs and why its policies

have not functioned well. Ultimately, how should the policies be improved to increase the number of HSMs? This is the labyrinth to be thoroughly explored in this dissertation.

1.2 Research questions

The overarching research question to decipher the labyrinth is “**what are the significant agencies and actors attracting highly skilled migrants in Japan?**” For this interrogation, the study explored the perception of HSMs and the policy making process of migration governance in Japan. The inquiry especially focuses on three dimensions, namely, migrants’ social life, labour issues (micro/meso), and migration governance in Japan (macro) through the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1 (Backgrounds of HSMs in Japan):

What are the motivations for HSMs to work in Japan? Are there any distinctive differences in motivations or trajectories among migrants from different countries/regions?

RQ2 (Policies and social issues):

What factors may prevent HSMs from living in Japan? Specifically, how do public policies or social issues affect the life of HSMs?

RQ3 (Labour Issues):

What kind of problems do HSMs face in their workplace? How do they evaluate the distinctive Japanese employment relations?

RQ4 (Attraction of working in Japan):

Are there any distinctive advantages that attract HSMs?

RQ5 (Migration governance):

How are migration policies designed in Japan? What issues are underlying in the policy making process to update policies?

In answering the above five questions, this research mainly adopted qualitative methods with 45 semi-structured interviews (26 HSMs in Japan and 19 policy experts), supplemented by a reading of policy texts, and relying on an inductive and in-depth approach to unveil the labyrinth. The empirical analysis was also complemented with secondary statistical data and the extant literature on highly skilled migration.

1.3 Justification for the intellectual investigation

There is a host of literature and reports describing the necessity of attracting HSMs and three main reasons are given: economic growth, labour shortages, and the demographic challenges in host countries (Castles et al., 2014; European Commission,

2009; International Organisation of Employers, 2014). This is also a shared understanding of the Japanese government, urging themselves to design policies to attract HSMs (Immigration Bureau, 2015); however, the research conducted on highly skilled migration in Japan has been insufficient (Holbrow, 2017) not to mention the overall migration policies (Sato, 2017). Subsequently, there are four reasons why the topic is worth investigating.

First, a new dimension on highly skilled migration is emerging. Attracting HSMs has recently been one of the pivotal economic strategies for Japan; the Japanese government has centred the strategic policy for HSMs on its nationwide economic growth plan as one of the measures to revive the Japanese economy (Japanese government, 2015). The Japanese business community has also called for policy measures to increase the number of HSMs to promote innovation; in other words, to enhance productivity and international industrial competitiveness so that Japan can move out from the sluggish economy to the new growth stage (Keidanren 2015). In addition, Transnational Corporations (TNCs) such as Toyota and Honda have started to promote non-Japanese executives from their overseas subsidiaries. This novel trend also resonates with early-career HSMs as the new-graduates are increasingly recruited by Japanese corporations (Keidanren, 2018). This is another form of personnel strategy to gather the best and brightest regardless of nationality aiming to enhance their competitiveness in the fierce global competition. These views also suggest that HSMs are conducive to reviving the Japanese economy from accumulating capital and increasing the labour force (Japanese government, 2015; Oishi, 2014). On this account, it is justifiable to say that contributing to this discussion is valuable in considering the new role of highly skilled labour in Japan, where relatively fewer migrants have worked (Hollifield et al., 2014).

Second, and more significantly, this discussion should be first and foremost evidence-based. Despite these economic advantages, there are some views questioning the need for foreign talents. For instance, the Japanese Trade Union Confederation, Rengo, articulates that the government must improve employment environments for Japanese nationals who have difficulties in finding stable jobs such as graduates unemployed, permanent part-timers, elderly and female workers before filling the job vacancies by migrant workers (Rengo, 2004). This view still affects the policy design as can be seen in a report of the government's council taking note of the sceptical opinions against emphasising the significance of HSMs, saying "the policy should be evaluated on the basis of how much innovation and employment were created by HSMs residing in Japan rather than how many HSMs came to Japan" (Dai 6ji

Shutsunyukoku kanri seisaku kondankai gaikokujin ukeire seido kento bunkakai, 2013: 3). It reflects the scarcity of empirical data explaining how HSMs can contribute to Japan not only economically but also socially with the extant literature insufficient to persuade these sceptical views. Bridging the research gap is indispensable to reframe the debate on HSMs.

Third, based on the evidence, it is necessary to address policy failures. Although the Japanese government attempted to create PBS to increase the number of HSMs, the new policy did not function well. This calls for more research into policy failure (Oishi, 2012, 2014). The government takes a position that they accept HSMs proactively but do not rely on unskilled foreign labour (Immigration Bureau, 2015); however, the reality is that Japan has not been successful even in attracting HSMs that the current policies focus on. While there are opinions that Japan needs to consider opening its border to unskilled foreigners for demographic reasons (Chung, 2010), it is far-reaching to examine the causes of the current policy failures and offer the perspective of better migration policies before discussing opening its doors to unskilled labour. In this sense, highly skilled migration can be a crucial milestone for the future migration debates.

Last, the topic of HSMs in Japan has been under-researched (Tsukasaki, 2008) although it could give important implications on research in other countries. The scholarly debate on Japan's migration issues has mainly revolved around ethnicity and diaspora (such as Korean and Brazilian migrants), community level social cohesion and interns/technical training programme (see for example, Tsuda and Cornelius, 2004 or Aiden, 2011); research into highly skilled migration has been very limited (Holbrow and Nagayoshi, 2017) even though it is regarded as one of the principal policies to revitalise society and the economy (Keidanren. 2015).

Japan is the third largest economy in the world with cutting edge technologies and innovative products/services (World Economic Forum, 2017). The country has remained a surprisingly small magnet for HSMs (Oishi, 2012). Addressing this labyrinth will offer another illuminative case or variation of migration, from where we may be able to find lessons and constructive solutions in dealing with pressing migration matters (Hollifield, 1992; Massey et al, 1993;).

1.4 Theoretical framework

As endorsed by a myriad of migration scholars (King, 2012a; Castles et al., 2014; Findlay and Cranston, 2015; Vertovec, 2017), this study has chosen an interdisciplinary approach stretching across geography, sociology, political science,

anthropology and economics. Nevertheless, each discipline still tends to be associated with preferred central questions and methods (Brettel and Hollifield, 2015) with sociologists focusing on migrant identities and geographers on space, place and time. Also with scale levels, the topic of highly skilled migration has distinctive approaches by each discipline; micro-meso driven geography (e.g. Koser and Salt, 1997; Beaverstock, 2002) and sociology (e.g. Leonard, 2008; Ryan, 2015) with the contrast of more macro driven political sciences (e.g. Betts and Cerna, 2011; Cerna and Chou, 2014). For example, human geographers were successful in unpacking socio-economic spatial patterns of HSMs (e.g. Salt, 1988; Findlay et al., 1996; Beaverstock, 2005; Millar and Salt, 2008); however, it was still confined within the classical optics of place-based determinants (van Riemsdijk and Wang, 2017), thus lacking macro implications such as presenting policy recommendations. This study therefore attempts to bridge the micro-macro divide in the skilled migration debate by presenting a bigger picture emanating from policy implications.

The research is specifically framed by three theories, namely, (1) transnational elite geographies, (2) Japanese employment relations, and (3) Kasumigaseki bureaucracy. RQ 1&2 will be drawn on transnational elite geographies (Salt, 1983, 1988; Findlay et al., 1996; Beaverstock, 2002, 2005) framing HSMs' motivations, institutional mechanism and socialisation as the process to produce transnational elites. This theory unravels the mobility patterns especially through the TNCs, whose institutional mechanism have played an important role in shaping the flow of HSMs (Cormode, 1994; Millar and Salt, 2008; Beaverstock et al., 2009). The role of TNCs in mobility is also important for Japan as its capital city, Tokyo, has been one of the business hubs in the world (Sassen, 2001). On the other hand, this research will also discuss the other types of HSMs, who are not intracompany transferees of the TNCs to fill the gaps of transnational elite geographies.

With regard to labour issues relating to RQ 3&4, Japanese employment relations (Tsukasaki, 2008; Oishi, 2012) are also used as a conceptual lens to discover whether there are any Japanese specificities affecting the migratory decision of HSMs and its wider implications to the worldwide migration debate. In addressing migration governance predicated on RQ 5, Kasumigaseki Bureaucracy (Johnson, 1982; Imamura, 2006) frames the research to examine how policy failures were shaped by principal policy agents—bureaucrats and politicians.

1.5 Definition of important terminologies

Terminologies matter. Especially, empirical research should be always predicated on precise terms, giving no room for arbitrary analysis—this is one of the preconditions for epistemology. Nevertheless, researchers and practitioners do not share definitions of technical terms in the migration field as IOM (2011: 5) articulates:

(D)efinitions in this field are often vague, controversial or contradictory. There is an absence of universally accepted definitions...; the result is that the usage of migration terms varies from country to country. Further, even within a country, terms can vary as to the meaning or implication. Definitions...may vary according to a given perspective or approach.

Much of migration scholarship—whether a book or peer-reviewed journal—omits the definitions on which they predicate on; one of the few exceptions is Spencer (2011). Besides, some of the extant literature clearly misunderstands legal terms such as the differences between visa and status of residence (or leave to enter/remain in the UK). This also embodies one of the good examples showing the academic fields of migration are fragmented into sociology, geography, law and so forth albeit it should have an interdisciplinary approach. This section therefore introduces some of the important terminologies explaining their limitations and how this dissertation deals with them. As there is no universal definition of terminologies, much effort to converge the differences has been specifically paid by intergovernmental bodies such as the United Nations (UN), IOM and OECD, whose cross-border missions require communal terms²: the definitions used in this dissertation are also drawn from these works with specific adjustment for Japanese cases.

1.5.1 Migration/Migrants

Migration is termed “(t)he movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes” (IOM, 2011: 62). As this implies, migration covers all sorts of human movement unlike immigration which holds a connotation of longer relocation (Spencer, 2011). The UN

² Nonetheless, these organizations do not necessarily share the definitions precisely as discussed later. More interestingly, the preferred ‘approach’ of terminologies is evidently different; for example, UN (1998) and OECD (2016) tend to use ‘foreigners’ whilst IOM (2011) prefers ‘non-nationals’ instead of foreigners. OECD (2016) foregrounds the term ‘integration’ while IOM (2011) describes ‘inclusion’ more favourably than ‘integration’. The different ‘approach’ may reflect the different goals and functions of the organizations: economic driven OECD and migration driven IOM.

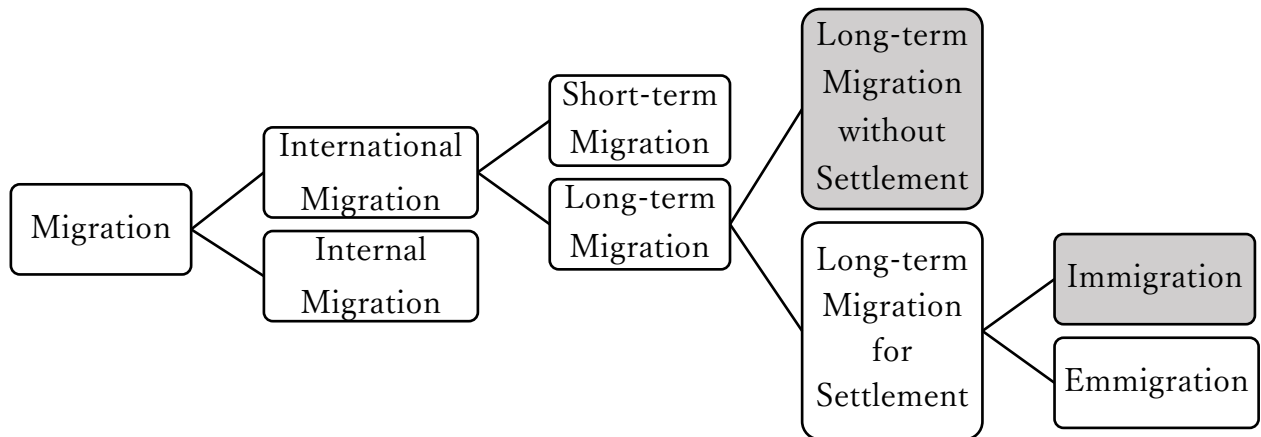
(1998) defines an international migrant as “any person who changes his or her country of usual residence” so it does not include “(t)emporary travel abroad for purposes of recreation, holiday, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage” (UN, 1998: 9). Then, international migration can be broken down into two categories:

- (1) Short-term migration—relocation “for a period of at least 3 months but less than a year (12 months)” (UN, 1998: 10);
- (2) Long-term migration—relocation “for a period of at least a year” (UN, 1998: 10);

Although the UN (1998) abandoned the definition of ‘immigration’ (instead they adopted short-term or long-term migration), IOM (2011: 49) defines immigration as “a process by which non-nationals move into a country for the purpose of settlement”. Thus, immigration can be regarded as a part of long-term migration that the UN (1998) predicates. Accordingly, emigration is “the act of departing or exiting from one State with a view to settling another” (IOM, 2011: 32). Although most scholarship in migration is centred on immigration rather than emigration (Gamlen, 2012), this label makes more sense to academics or Immigration Authority than migrants themselves who have both aspects as immigrants and emigrants. Furthermore, immigration does not necessarily point to settlement. For instance, OECD articulates that the definition of immigrants varies among countries and this is why their data are drawn from the two sets of different definitions: “foreign residents (European countries, Japan and Korea)” and “foreign-born (settlement countries, i.e. Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States)” (OECD, 2016: 363). Moreover, immigrant length of stay depends on the countries of the data source and is not limited to settlement (OECD, 2016).

In fact, in the settlement countries, a migrant is sometimes given a permanent residency at the point of arrival, but the other countries—the clear majority of the nation-states— require the minimum length of residency for settlement: for instance, the UK government requires a 5-year-residency together with a language and citizenship test. It is consequently impossible for migrants to be an ‘immigrant’ at the outset of their migration. Japan generally requires 10-year-residency albeit there are no forms of test. Under the circumstances, it is hard to prove whether the migrants move “into a country for the purpose of settlement”. It is thus natural to consider migration as a process which *may* involve settlement in the future. Figure 1-1 classifies the types of migration and highlights the concept of ‘migration’ this study adopts.

Figure 1-1 Classification of migration



The highlighted boxes refer to the ‘migration’ in this study.

Source: the author

This study adopts ‘long-term migration without settlement’ and ‘immigration’ as a meaning of migration. Subsequently, ‘immigration’ can be used interchangeably with migration. In this sense, highly skilled *migrants* can be put as highly skilled *immigrants* although the former is the more common usage in the literature (e.g. Iredale, 2001; Beaverstock, 2005; Scott, 2006; Oishi, 2012; Findlay and Cranston, 2015) as endorsed in this dissertation. The definition of ‘highly skilled’ will be further discussed and fixed in Chapter 2&3. In the skilled migration literature, ‘long-term migration without settlement’ is deeply associated with transient skilled migration (Appleyard, 1991, Beaverstock and Boardwell, 2000), which suggests the relocation of “a period of more than 1 year abroad” (Findlay, 1988: 402). This relocation can be repeated over the periods across the globe (Beaverstock, 1994).

When it comes to ‘immigration control’ or ‘immigration management’, the word immigration has the wider meaning not limited to settlement but indicating border control. It signifies “States’ regulation of the entry and departure of persons to and from its territory” (IOM, 2011: 15). Immigration Authority (Immigration Bureau in Japan) is the governmental body controlling the overall migration regardless of nationalities or length of stay.

Finally, with regard to the terminology of migrant/immigrant, it should be noted that the Japanese government has a unique parlance and definition, “mid-to-long term resident” (Immigration Act article 19-3) who is given a more-than-three-month residency and

should register their residential address with the local municipality. It will be clearly mentioned when this definition is specifically used in lieu of migrant.

1.5.2 Highly skilled migrants

The definition of highly skilled migrants is as hazy as ‘migrants’ (Koser and Salt, 1997; Scott, 2006). Whilst International Organisations such as the UN, OECD and IOM also admit “there is no internationally agreed definition” (IOM, 2011: 46), it is their general understanding that one of the main criteria is university degree (UN, 2005; Chaloff and Lemaitre, 2009; IOM, 2011). Nonetheless, OECD indicates other elements including occupation types (or qualifications) and wage as other significant factors as these multi-criteria are the standard to evaluate ‘skills’ in OECD economies (Chaloff and Lemaitre, 2009).

OECD claims that one of the issues in only using the tertiary education criterion is overqualification where those with tertiary education take up a job which does not need the level of education (Chaloff and Lemaitre, 2009). As an example, it is known that Japanese-Brazilians tend to engage with an unskilled job (such as simple assembling) in Japan even though they used to work in more intellectually demanding professions (such as teacher) in their home country (Kitagawa and Tanno, 2016). Although a university degree is one of the quasi-requirements for a professional visa, Japan also takes a multi-faceted approach to screen the HSMs (Chapter 2 and 3 will further discuss this point). Apart from the legal definition, this research will also shed light on how the concept of ‘highly skilled’ (and low skilled) is bounded by gender and images, accentuating the necessity to eliminate the stigma: the details will be set out in the findings (Chapter 5).

1.5.3 Visa

Immigration status is not just a crucial factor in determining an individual's relation to the state, its resources and legal system, the labour market and other structures. It is an important catalyst in the formation of social capital and a potential barrier to the formation of cross-cutting socio-economic and ethnic ties. (Vertovec, 2007: 1040)

It is generally understood that ‘visa’ represents ‘immigration status’. Nevertheless, the terminology of visa is not so simple. IOM (2011: 104) defines visa as:

An endorsement...that indicates that the authority, at the time of issuance, believes the holder to fall within a category of non-nationals who can enter, leave or transit the state under the State's law. A visa establishes the criteria of admission into a State.

This is a precise description on visa. Many migration scholars seem to confuse visa with residence or work permit³ but visa is just an 'indication' that the person fulfils the conditions to enter a State "at the time of issuance". Thus, the final decision of admission is given by the Immigration Authority upon arrival. Migrants do not legitimately stay in a State on the basis of visa but the 'permit' given upon arrival; the authentic proof of the migration status is not a visa but the permit⁴. This permit is called 'status of residence' in Japan and 'leave to enter/remain' in the UK—this will be further explained in Chapter 3.

Having said that, the aim of this dissertation is not to offer a detailed account of legal prescriptions; therefore, it is not always necessary to adhere to the formal and technical legal terms. In fact, a myriad of literature (e.g. Oishi 2012) use visa instead of status of residence. An experienced immigration consultant also indicates even legal experts intentionally use the term visa instead of status of residence so as to facilitate the understanding of the clients (Funabiki, 2017). For this reason, this dissertation uses visa in lieu of status of residence even though the meanings are different⁵.

1.5.4 Western/Asian

The concept of Western and Asian is one of the key clues in deciphering the labyrinth in this dissertation since the findings will be predicated on the distinctive perceptions between the Westerner and Asian (c.f. RQ1). However, the definitions are not always crystal clear as a wealth of literature uses the terms without defining them clearly (e.g. Ho, 2007; Findlay et al., 2015; Holbrow, 2017; Harvey and Beaverstock, 2017; Liu-Farrer and Yeoh, 2018).

One of the possible definitions is geographical classifications which define Western as Europe and North America (Turnbull et al., 2010; Liu-Farrer, 2017). This research also

³ For example, Conradson and Latham (2005a) confuse visa with leave to enter/remain.

⁴ For instance, foreign tourist can be waived of visa (e.g. UK tourists travelling to Japan, or vice versa). However, they can never be exempted entry 'permit' given upon the arrival (unless there is a free-movement agreement). This explains how visa and 'permit' are different. However, the exceptional case is Australia. They converged permit with visa, so all the non-nationals should obtain visa to enter Australia. This is why the UK or Japanese citizen, who is normally waived of visa for a short visit to OECD countries, needs to register with Australia's ETAS (Electronic Travel Authority) in visiting there for holiday or business; ETAS is in reality electronic visa.

⁵ Nonetheless, Chapter 3 makes a distinction between the terms since it is devoted to explaining legal frameworks.

encompasses Australia and New Zealand in the Western states although they are geographically situated in the Asia Pacific. This is because their language (English), culture, society, economic and political systems (including business practices) have been vastly influenced and shaped by the Western norms. In addition, from the migration perspectives, Australia and New Zealand are grouped as settlement countries (OECD, 2016) together with the USA and Canada, which are defined as the representative West. Nonetheless, the author admits it is controversial to change or add to definitions according to the convenience of research. This point will be finally evaluated in the Conclusion Chapter.

Asia can also be defined geographically as the UN (2013) does. Asia is, however, quite diversified in terms of economic development, political regime, demography and other social dimensions, which consequently make the generalisation extremely difficult (Asis et al., 2010; Castles, et al., 2014; Liu-Farrer and Yeoh, 2018). Therefore, this research does not attempt to generalise the 'Asian' as a whole; instead, it specifically focuses on the majority of Asian HSMs in Japan (i.e. HSMs from China, Korea, India, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand and so forth: c.f. Chapter 3).

In showing statistical data in Chapter 3, the geographical definitions of Europe, North America and Asia were drawn from the Immigration Bureau; its coverage is listed in Appendix 3 for the sake of reference. Across the dissertation (except for Chapter 3), mainland China (People's Republic of China) is simply referred to as China. Hong Kong can be separately described where it is indicated so. Similarly, South Korea (Republic of Korea) is referred to as Korea.

1.5.5 Migration policies

There are two types of migration policies: (1) border control (i.e. immigration management) and (2) all the relevant policies relating to the life of migrants encompassing labour issues and social cohesion (see also Spencer, 2011). While the former is governed by the Immigration Authority, the latter concept embodies the wider policy coordination across the government based on "whole-of-government approaches" (Castles, 2004: 223). Evidently, the role of states at play in the migration mechanism stretches across multi-ministries such as labour conditions, welfare, housing, education and these factors dynamically interact with others. Therefore, it is necessary to examine all the relevant policies surrounding the life of migrants; this dissertation discusses both immigration control and wider-related policies. That said, the study primarily focuses on the recent immigration management, subsequently

teasing out what problems underlie the Japanese policy making process. Then, the study expands its analysis to broadly-scoped policies.

1.6 Dissertation outline

This dissertation is structured to explore the labyrinth made up of three mazes—societal, labour and policy dimensions that HSMs in Japan face. These mazes are in fact intricately convoluted. The dissertation will unfold the dynamism of the mazes in line with the intellectual puzzles, specific research questions and theoretical lenses. Chapter 2, 3 & 4 provide the basic arguments on extant literature, research problems and methods. Based on the foundation, Chapter 5, 6 and 7 answer the research questions, unfolding the labyrinth. Chapter 8 finally discusses the implication of the findings, manifesting how the study potentially contributes to academic debate. The thrusts of each chapter are as follows.

Chapter 2 (Theoretical Framework) reviews the extant literature across disciplines. It first discusses who HSMs are, subsequently elucidating that the definition is moveable and nuanced, changing with use and context. Then, the causal mechanism of migration is considered with a contrast of two theories: transnational elite geographies and middling mobility. Transnational elite geographies, mainly developed by the UK geographers (Salt, 1983, 1988; Findlay et al., 1996; Beaverstock, 2002, 2005), posit career advancement, improving life and business strategies, as the powerful determinants for transnational elite mobility, whilst middling mobility (Conradson and Latham, 2005a, Scott, 2006; Ryan, 2015) emphasises migrants' lifestyle and non-economic factors. The rest of the chapter focuses on Japanese employment relations (Tsukasaki, 2008; Oishi, 2012) such as lifetime employment and seniority salary, followed by more macro policy issues on migration governance.

Chapter 3 (Research Background) maps out the contextual background of the labyrinth. It specifically poses intellectual puzzles that research questions are predicated on. First, even though the Japanese government launched the PBS to attract HSMs, why did the ground-breaking policy not bring the expected outcome at the outset? Second, the longitudinal statistical portrayals of HSMs in Japan will reveal an intriguing enigma: although the overall number of HSMs has almost doubled for the last decade driven by the drastic increase of Asian HSMs, the number of Western HSMs has been constantly below the level of a decade ago. Notwithstanding that Japan has enjoyed robust economic growth since 2012—leading to the historical labour shortage (OECD, 2017)—, it has failed to raise the number of Western HSMs. How can this 'contradiction' be explained within the framework of migration theory? This will constitute a key

intellectual puzzle to explore the labyrinth. Besides, the chapter benchmarks the Japanese policies on skilled migration with other Asian advanced industrial economies and discusses its implications.

Chapter 4 (Methodologies and Methods) provides methodological examinations to unveil the labyrinth. Empirically, this study adopts qualitative methods due to its inductive and in-depth nature; the chapter formulates the qualitative methods—textual context and semi-structured interviews—and explains how the data were analysed. It especially discusses both strengths and weaknesses of the methods and presents the novelties of data collection to overcome the limitations, followed by challenges in the analytical and writing process. Especially, the author realised how his positionality potentially affect the data in the interviews involving insider-outsider encounters. This made the researcher reflect on the interplays between the own identities and research outcome. Based on the reflexivity, a fundamental question ‘what is a good interview?’ will be eventually addressed.

Then, the dissertation goes on to the core of labyrinth.

Chapter 5 (Findings 1: Society) verifies antithetical trajectories between Asian and Western HSMs, policy issues and societal obstacles that HSMs encounter in Japan. Initially, the background motivation of HSMs will be shown through the two emblematic yet contrastive vignettes to address RQ1. Moving on to RQ2, it will uncover a new issue on immigration control (e.g. unproductive process in renewing the visa and the strict conditions for permanent residency) together with ‘invisible’ HSMs that the existing research has not thrown light on. This will elucidate how the Japanese policies are incompatible with the life-course of HSMs. With societal problems, the educational system is examined to illuminate how the lack of diversity affects HSMs and their children. Last, this chapter will foreground the importance to promote diversity and incorporate **life-course dimensions** into migration policies.

Chapter 6 (Findings 2: Labour) amplifies Findings 1 further to career-making and workplace collegiality to critically tease out the barriers preventing HSMs from working in Japan to address RQ3. The findings first outline the distinctive employment relations in Japan, showing not only lifetime employment and seniority salary which the extant literature (e.g. Tsukasaki, 2008; Oishi, 2012, 2014) suggests but also unique recruiting practices (*Shinsotsusaiyo*) and collegiate relations affecting migrant careers. Consequently, the findings will conceptualise ‘**coerced harmonisation**’, which establishes how people are implicitly required to be Japanized (behave like Japanese)

to perform the expectations of the host society. Nonetheless, the collective voices of HSMs call for a more balanced view on Japanese employment relations, pointing to its distinctive advantages of community-oriented business practices—this relates to RQ4. The chapter ultimately discusses how Japanese employment relations can be improved whilst keeping the distinctive advantages.

After examining micro/meso issues (i.e. societal and labour dimensions), the analytical lens is shifted to macro governance to elucidate the maze of the policy making process.

Chapter 7 (Findings 3: Migration Governance) investigates RQ5 through the two key actors in migration governance, bureaucrats and politicians, subsequently revealing how the two groups of policymakers have dodged the fundamental reforms and built up ‘cut-and-paste’ migration regimes to gloss over the flaws. A more serious problem this chapter unearths is that the voters do not have any valid policy choices since political parties—whether centre-right or centre-left—do not make the effort to establish a uniformed consensus on migration within their party. This leads to the ‘**no choice democracy**’ that this dissertation coins. The chapter eventually examines how the issues underlying migration governance can be addressed by a ‘**vertical negotiation**’ scheme.

Chapter 8 (Conclusion) weaves out the different levels of findings (micro/meso/macro) into a comprehensive picture to overlook the unfolded labyrinth. For this sake, the chapter outlines the three communal themes across the findings chapters, which are substantially at play in attracting HSMs: stigmatisation, diversity and public policies. The newly conceptualised findings such as ‘coerced harmonisation’ and ‘no choice democracy’ will be also situated within the themes. Finally, the chapter aims to provide a constructive answer to a crucial proposition which is not limited to highly skilled migration but related to the overall migration research agenda: who are migration policies for? In this final discussion, the author reminds and reaffirms that the migration policies should also be designed for the future generation, removing the psychological border of ‘self’ and ‘others’.

These are what this dissertation hereafter attempts to evince. Now shall we step in the labyrinth?

A quick note: Dissertation at a glance

Overarching research question: What are the significant agencies and actors attracting highly skilled migrants (HSMs) in Japan?

Specific research questions (RQ):

RQ1 (Backgrounds of HSMs in Japan):

What are motivations for HSMs to work in Japan? Are there any distinctive differences in motivations or trajectories among migrants from different countries/regions?

RQ2 (Policies and social issues):

What factors may prevent HSMs from living in Japan? Specifically, how do public policies or societal issues affect the life of HSMs?

RQ3 (Labour Issues):

What kind of problems do HSMs face in their workplace? How do they evaluate the distinctive Japanese employment relations?

RQ4 (Attraction of working in Japan):

Are there any distinctive advantages that attract HSMs?

RQ5 (Migration governance):

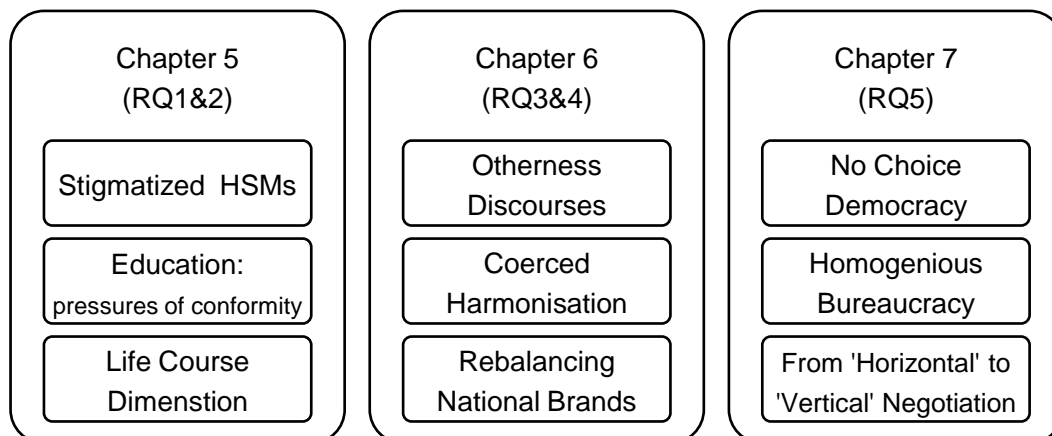
How are migration policies designed in Japan? What issues are underlying the policy making process to update policies?

Theoretical framework:

1. Transnational elite geographies (Salt, 1983, 1988; Findlay et al., 1996; Beaverstock, 2002, 2005)
2. Japanese employment relations (Tsukasaki, 2008; Oishi, 2012)
3. Kasumigaseki bureaucracy (Johnson, 1982; Imamura, 2006)

Methods: Qualitative inquiry based on a reading of policy documents which underpinned semi-structured interviews (45 samples)

Main findings:



Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework

*(U)nderstanding of the migration process...
must be linked to an analysis of the way
policy formation takes place in states.
(Castles, 2004: 223)*

2.1 Introduction

This theoretical framework chapter examines the concepts of highly skilled migration and its policies. On the whole, it is composed of three parts through which the analytical optics are fixed: (1) introductory framework scrutinising the definition, (2) migration mechanism spanning classical migration-generating theories to contemporary developments specific to skilled migration, supplemented by case studies conducted in Japan, and (3) migration governance delineating the role of the states and policy making actors.

The first part of this chapter underpins the interdisciplinary approach of the research inquiry followed by the definition of HSMs. As scholars have not reached a consensus on who HSMs are (Koser and Salt, 1997), this section illuminates the overall arguments on the definition picking up a few representative classifications and its limits. It also describes how the definitions depend on the contexts of research (e.g. business management, social practices or gender) leading to the political and economic meaning of accepting HSMs.

The next part is the backbone of this chapter, encapsulating the causal mechanism of migration which has long been researched and developed cross disciplinarily. The literature suggests there is no one determining cause of migration and there exist different views which have shaped the discussion of the causal mechanism (Brettell and Hollifield, 2015; Castles et al., 2014). In this part, classical and modern models on the migration mechanism are discussed followed by two sets of theories—transnational elite geographies and middling mobility—focusing on HSMs. Then, the Japanese specific case studies are provided.

Finally, it turns to the macro level inquiry pinpointing policy failures and migration governance. It shows the concept of gap hypothesis explaining why migration policies cannot fulfil the expectations. The last section addresses the relations between migration governance and policy making actors, *inter alia*, bureaucrats and politicians.

2.2 Interdisciplinary approach: theoretical underpinning

Although there is a wealth of literature calling for interdisciplinary perspectives of migration research (Urry, 2007; King, 2012a; Lenoel, 2014; Vertovec, 2017), migration basically has long been researched and associated with the preferred central questions and methods of each discipline (Castles, 2007; Favell et al., 2007; Brettel and Hollifield, 2015) as indicated in the following table.

Table 2-1 Some examples of paradigm research in each discipline

Disciplinary	Central theme	Paradigm question
Sociology	Identities	Who are you?
Anthropology	Social practices	How do they (we) behave?
Geography	Space, place, time	Where, how long and why do you move?
Political science	Policy making	What makes policy work?
Economics	Monetary	What is the economic impact?
Law	Jurisdiction	How can law sort out migratory issues?

This is a simplified version. Brettel and Hollifield (2015) raise more cases.

Source: the author

As seen from the table, a social scientist in each discipline generally holds a (slightly) different research theme and questions, hence having conditioned their academic approach. For example, a sociologist tends to observe micro/meso phenomenon in family, community and workplace, especially in Japanese migration research. Meanwhile, Favell et al. (2007) problematise macro sociology; among others, the structural logic of Sassen (2001) and Castells (1989) lacks micro ethnographical observation. In other words, sociologists hold a wide discrepancy in theoretical approaches, where the 'bridge' is non-existent. A political scientist otherwise inclines to create plausible but not surprising policy recommendations with theory-for-theory approach. In skilled migration literature (as shown later), UK geographers reveal mobility patterns and they have also claimed the need for interdisciplinary approaches (e.g. Findlay and Cranston, 2015). Nonetheless, their empirical approaches are still within 'space, place and time' in geography (Hannam et al., 2006) and lack the examination of the policy-making process or economic impact.

The divergences in migration studies are not limited to disciplinary approaches but also bring discrepancy between research and practices. Vertovec (2007: 1047) epitomises the dissociation of migration research and policy discussions saying, "(s)ocial scientists are not very good at translating data and analysing complexities into forms that can

have an impact on policies and public practices”. He implies that the extant research is not well linked with policy formations since the research does not fill the gap between what is happening ‘out here’ (micro) and how policies are shaped ‘out there’ (macro): this micro/macro division should be bridged to make a difference in policy making debates. In short, it might be a good idea to discuss together the micro (e.g. migration mechanism) and macro (e.g. policy making) to present policy proposals.

One of the key contributions this dissertation seeks is to fill the gap through an interdisciplinary theoretical framework. Besides, it is noticeable that the literature on skilled migration has been developed and centred on the Western sphere such as Anglo-American states including the USA and UK (including Hong Kong before the handover). As Walsh (2014) claims, the scholarly debate should be more balanced and widened to share variations and its lessons. With non-Western approaches, this dissertation also attempts to ‘decentre’ the extant debates on highly skilled migration from Anglo-American dominance in theory and empirics.

2.3 Definition of highly skilled migrants

There is no single definition on HSMs (Koser and Salt, 1997; Scott, 2006; Ho, 2007). Its scope covers the breadth and varieties of migrants with skills depending on the contexts of research; for instance, scores of researchers draw attention to the quality of occupations or professional position—e.g. creative workers, entrepreneurs, certificated accountants, executives, intracompany transfers⁶—(Florida, 2002, 2005; Saxenian, 2006; Beaverstock, 1990, 1991; Beaverstock and Broadwell, 2000; Beaverstock et al., 2009) to examine economic impacts or business strategies, while others insist on a more nuanced and intricate approach to define skills—e.g. ‘soft skills’ in human relationships, multi-cultural (and language) competences, good business or personal connections—(Ruhs and Anderson, 2010; Liu-Farrer, 2011a; Kofman, 2013) to shed light on non-external and difficult-to-measure ‘skill’ factors. Some researchers also point to the graduate degree or profound professional careers (Ho, 2007; Iredale, 2001). In sum, the academic argument on the definition is still inconclusive and founded on several approaches.

Among others, literature has tended to cite three academic concepts in defining HSMs: transnational capitalist class; twelve-detailed-occupational-classifications; and, creative class. Transnational capitalist class (Sklaire, 2001) has four categories:

⁶ Rigidly, ‘intercompany’ (between the companies) transfer is different from ‘intracompany’ (inside the company) transfer. However, as the Japanese Immigration Act defines intracompany including the form of intercompany, this dissertation only uses ‘intracompany’ hereafter.

(1) TNC executives and their local affiliates (the corporate fraction); (2) globalising bureaucrats and politicians (the state fraction); (3) globalising professionals (the technical fraction); (4) merchants and media (the consumerist fraction).

These occupational categories can be further broken down into 12 detailed classifications (Salt, 1988, 1997; Koser and Salt, 1997):

(1) corporate transferee; (2) technicians; (3) health, education, and welfare professionals; (4) project specialist; (5) consultant specialists; (6) private career and training movers; (7) clergy and missionaries; (8) entertainers, athletes and artists; (9) investors; (10) academics; (11) military personnel; and (12) the accompanying family members.

While the capitalist class is the by-product of globalisation, prominently the expansion of international business, scholars in the USA have underlined the entrepreneurship and creativity that migrants brought about in progressive cities/regions such as Silicon Valley (Saxenian, 2002, 2006; Florida, 2002, 2005, 2007). Those who introduced the innovation and become the actors of economic growth of the USA are termed the creative class or transnational creative knowledge migrants (Florida, 2002; 2005). The creativity is broad in scope stretching from biotechnologies or consumer products (e.g. iPod) to arts (e.g. music and film), which can be exported and imbue people abroad with American culture and values through 'soft power' (Nye, 2004). 'Soft power' constitutes cultural attractiveness (of the nation) "inspiring the dreams and desires of others" (Nye, 2004: 8) unlike 'hard power' such as military or economic hegemony. Florida (2002, 2005) asserts HSMs in the USA are the sources of 'soft power' and have played significant roles in creating new ideas, technologies, business models, and cultures; consequently, their status as HSMs should not be defined as tertiary degrees but the creativeness of occupations, which relentlessly spur innovation.

Nonetheless, the traditional occupational categories of HSMs are dominantly male-orientated such as IT engineers along with the fact that the vast majority of the accompanying family of HSMs are female and children (Willis and Yeoh, 2002). Kofman (2000) claims the definition of HSMs is largely gender-biased in that it mainly revolves around scientific or higher-salaried jobs, and neglects the occupations requiring soft skills such as care workers. This argument can be broken down into two spheres; namely, the feminisation of labour and the migratory decision of dual-career-household. The former deals with feminised labour, which is usually associated with

low paid and social-status, but requires hard physical work (Kofman, 2000). The latter discusses women's professional careers being usually compromised to accompany their 'highly skilled' male counterparts (Leonard, 2008).

Synonymous with 'skill', the literature also applies the term knowledge or talent (Williams, 2006; Beechler and Woodward, 2009). Shachar (2006) points to the global "race for talents" which drives the advanced industrial nations reforming their migration regimes based on the idea that the talent pool of the country directly shapes the economic competitiveness. While Beechler and Woodward (2009) admit the definition of talent is still inconclusive, they raise a representative definition referring to Chambers et al. (1998) and Michaels et al. (2001):

(T)alent is ... "the sum of a person's abilities... his or her intrinsic gifts, skills, knowledge, experience, intelligence, judgment, attitude, character and drive. It also includes his or her ability to learn and grow" (Michaels et al., 2001: xii). For McKinsey, talent refers to "the best and the brightest" and many organisations adopted the term to refer to their "A Level" employees who rank in the top 10 to 20%. (citation original, Beechler and Woodward, 2009: 274)

As the citation alludes, the 'talent' discourse is closely linked with the human resource (HR) management of TNCs (Collings and Mellahi, 2009). Therefore, talent is not the only attribution of an individual *per se* but can be developed and created by an organisation (i.e. firm) through their personnel strategies including promotion and transfer (Collings and Mellahi, 2009). Nevertheless, Williams (2006) contends this organisational driven view on talent since knowledge creation or transfer is widely observed with non-elite and non-corporate migrants.

In conclusion, the definition of HSMs is still quite contested with the majority of scholarship subscribing to several decisive factors like the quality of occupations (including occupational qualifications), professional positions and educational levels. In reality, the governments of advanced industrial economies mix the criteria, especially educational backgrounds, the types of jobs and positions, and most significantly salary (e.g. Tier 2 in the UK, Blue-card in EU, H-1B visa in the USA, Points-based systems in Australia or Canada). The Japanese government also takes this multi-faceted approach. In this sense, it is reasonable to define the HSM as the holder of a highly skilled visa—the detailed classification system of which is discussed in the next chapter.

There is one more important definition which forms the stance of the Japanese government in discussing policies concerning HSMs. Kodo jinzai ukeire suishin kaigi [The Council for the Promotion of Acceptance of Highly Skilled Professionals] (2009) was commissioned by the then Chief Cabinet Secretary to make proposals to attract HSMs and their report defined HSMs as:

(U)nsubstitutable human resources who have a complementary relationship with domestic capital and labor and the human resources who are expected to bring innovation to the Japanese industries, to promote development of specialized/technical labour markets through friendly competition with Japanese people and to increase efficiency of the Japanese labor markets.
(ibid.: 4)

This definition refers to the government's basic stance (Immigration Bureau, 2017b) and also encapsulates the multi-faceted definitions Japan takes.

2.4 Meaning of accepting highly skilled migrants

2.4.1 War for talent

The severe global competition to attract HSMs is sometimes called the 'war for talent' (Beechler and Woodward, 2009; Chambers et al., 1998; Harvey, 2014). There is a host of literature and reports describing the necessity to capture HSMs; the background why the world faces the 'war' can be explained mainly by three reasons: economic growth, labour shortages and the demographic challenges in advanced industrial countries (Castles et al., 2014; European Commission, 2009; International Organisation of Employers, 2014).

As seen from many policies in advanced industrial countries, they have been almost forced to devise strategies to attract HSMs to boost the economy (Cerna and Chou, 2014). Without doubt, HSMs bring enormous economic effects both directly and indirectly. First, from the supply side, they add values to the economy where they work, and bring innovation which the accepting country had not had (Florida, 2005). As a matter of course, the knowledge-based economy is boosted by HSMs (Williams, 2006). Aldin et al. (2010) pointed out that when the required level of skills is greater in an occupation, the share of migrants working in the occupation becomes higher. Second, they earn a handsome salary and spend money to consume products and services in the host country. This might bring ripple effects to fuel the economy from the demand

side. One thing which should not be missed is that these economic effects not only benefit the host countries but also the globally connected society; their tacit knowledge can circulate globally through their free movement (Devan and Tewari, 2001; Saxenian, 2006).

As the economy grows and becomes more knowledge-oriented, the labour market for HSMs becomes very tight. International Organisation of Employers (2014: 2) claims that “surveys consistently find that chief executives regard having the right talent as the most critical factor for their business growth. Human resource specialists tasked with meeting enterprise requirements recognise that new solutions will be needed to attract, retain, and deploy key talent globally”. Chambers et al. (1998: 1) predicted the era of “war for talent” by describing the fact that “big US companies are finding it difficult to attract and retain good people”.

This labour shortage of HSMs is accelerated by the demographic challenges advanced industrial countries confront. Many OECD countries suffer from a decreasing population and ageing society (OECD, 2014), which bring serious issues: a decreasing workforce and endangered sustainability of society such as social security system. Castles et al. (2014: 319) attribute the current competition for HSMs to the demographic challenges in advanced industrial countries to some extent and expect that these countries will also depend on “low-skilled workers to build their houses, run their services and look after the elderly” by the middle of the 21st century. This means the “war for talent” may expand its scope due to demographic changes.

2.4.2 Economic impacts on the host society

The researchers have sought to prove empirically how much the wages in the domestic labour market will be increased or decreased by accepting immigrants (Nakamura et al., 2009; Clark and Drinkwater, 2013). According to classical economic theory, if a country accepts an additional worker, the wage paid would decrease to some extent, inasmuch as the labour shortage is alleviated.

Borjas (2003) shows that the wage of unskilled native-born USA nationals decreased as a result of accepting immigrant workers. On the other hand, Dustmann et al. (2005) claim that the decrease of wage in the domestic UK labour market is so small that it would not affect the indigenous working population. This contradictory viewpoint would come from the different conditions of the labour market: the USA has fewer restrictions on the dismissal of employees and has a more flexible labour market compared to that of the UK. More interestingly, their empirical analysis indicates that the wages of the

higher salaried group increased due to immigrant labour participation. Dustmann et al. (2013) explain that immigrants are likely to engage with jobs which belong to lower salaried group and they normally do not compete with the higher salaried group; hence, the inflow of immigrants causes a decrease in wages at the lower salaried end and incurs an increase at the higher salaried end of the labour market. In short, it can be explained that lower skilled immigrants complement higher skilled native workers.

In Japan's empirical case, Nakamura et al. (2009) corroborate that the inflow of foreign labour increases the wage and employment of Japanese high school graduates⁷, and has no significant effects on the labour market of Japanese workers with a tertiary degree. This is because the business sectors employing foreign labour tend to belong to the less productive industries requiring manual labour forces (e.g. simple assemblies) and if the foreign labour fulfils the vacancies, their business will gain more profits due to scale-economy. This is why the employers can hire more Japanese workers of high school graduates with higher salaries (i.e. low-skilled workers) with the aides of foreign labour inflow. It signifies the labour market of manual workers is tight⁸ and foreign labour can help alleviate it, thereby creating more business opportunities for Japanese employers and employees.

To sum up, surveys generally show that immigrants make contributions to the labour market in host countries, whereas the impacts vary according to the sectors, skills, educational backgrounds, professional types and so forth. Bach (2011, 283) claims that "the overwhelming majority of studies do not point to the negative effects of immigration on wages and employment in the long run and there remains a high level of consensus amongst government, employers and unions that immigration has been beneficial". However, it is insufficient to look at only wages to discuss the economic impacts of migration, for immigrants also contribute to the local economy by consuming products, and offering new technologies/ideas that would benefit the workplace. This 'dynamism' should be also taken into consideration in examining the impacts of the inflow of HSMs: accordingly, this research will unpack the hidden and intricate aspect through non-numerical qualitative data.

⁷ The monthly salary of high school graduates aged 18 surged by JPY 2,370 in 2006 in the municipal areas more foreign labour inflowed (ibid.: 84).

⁸ It is worth noting that their survey was conducted around 2006 when the Japanese economy grew robust. Yet, after 2008, a worldwide depression caused the lay-offs of migrants in Japan (Kitagawa and Tanno, 2016).

2.5 Causal mechanism of migration

This section briefly overviews the classical theories of the migration mechanism, which are useful in explaining how the skilled migration literature constructed the arguments to identify the mobility patterns. In short, the scholarly works on HSMs are founded and grounded on these classical theories. Especially, this study is framed within transnational elite geographies, which has been developed through the following selected theories. The section finally discusses the implications on skilled migration.

2.5.1 Push pull model

The classical model to explain why both internal and international migration occurs is the **push pull model**, still influencing much of migration scholarship across disciplines. The simple model predicates that migrants examine advantages and disadvantages (including costs such as distance and institutional barriers) at the same time, and if advantages outweigh disadvantages, they decide to migrate. Lee (1966) broke down the determining factors into the two sets of gravity: push and pull. Push factors are, for example, overpopulation, economic disadvantages, human rights infringement, and political instability, which may promote emigration to wealthier countries (King, 2012a). In contrast, pull factors are, in many cases, demand for labour, economic opportunities, and political freedom in the host country, which draw immigrants from less developed countries (Passaris, 1989). In short, push factors are produced in the sending society while pull factors stem from the host society. Lee (1966) claims the factors are not limited to economic determinants but also include personal or family choices. This model is so simple and clear-cut in explaining motivation of migration that much literature incorporates it to identify factors of (labour) demand and supply generated in receiving and sending countries respectively (King, 2012b). This study also employs the model to clarify the motivations of HSMs.

Push pull is, however, not a theory but merely a model describing possible factors as a mere list (de Haas, 2010). It has been criticised that it is obscure on which factors influence more, and is insufficient for clarifying the mechanism of migration in detail, specifically in the era of globalisation which makes migration more complicated and the background of migrants more diversified. For instance, the driving motivation of HSMs may be different from that of asylum seekers protected on humanitarian grounds. Therefore, more detailed analysis examining significant causes and expected outcome has been sought from different perspectives.

2.5.2 Neoclassical theory

In order to specify significant factors of migration, Lewis (1954), Todaro (1969) and Borjas (1990, 2011) developed **neoclassical theory** through economic analysis centring on the labour market. The most determinant factor is wage differences between countries: labour moves from low wage countries to higher wage countries if the costs to migrate are lower than the expected benefit.

In this theory, the complete market and rational decisions of migrants are key. Therefore, no asymmetric information which results in market failure exists; this simply means migrants have enough information on expected earnings and costs including the risk of unemployment. Under this assumption, labour inflow will continue until the gap of wages between countries is minimised to the extent that costs to migrate outweigh the benefit. This is the point of equilibrium where nations of the two countries enjoy almost equal wages.

This theory is mainly supported by neoclassical economists who posit the efficacy of the market mechanism. In reality, there is no guarantee that migrants can have all the necessary information to decide to migrate (Massey et al., 1993; Spencer, 2011). Therefore, it is unclear whether the equilibrium can be reached.

Nonetheless, neoclassical theory has some important implications on the mechanism of HSMs. From the viewpoint of human capital theory, HSMs or potential HSMs seek to enhance their skills and develop their career by having a job abroad (Sjaastad, 1962; Bauer and Zimmermann, 1998). In this sense, migration is one of the means to increase human capital as well as education for prospective migrants. If the lifetime benefit—including benefit by accumulating human capital throughout a lifetime—is more than the cost to move, then they will migrate. Bauer and Zimmermann (1998) point out that this is the reason why HSMs and the younger generation tend to be more mobile than other groups. This human capital can be also called migration capital which embodies the positive side of migration since it is gained through social and cultural capital in the process of mobility (Urry, 2007). On the other hand, the structural theory outlines the negative side of migration.

2.5.3 Structural theory

Neoclassical theory cannot explain some kinds of migration such as forced migration. In addition, it assumes that the equilibrium of the labour market will contribute to reducing the poverty gap across the globe despite the fact that the inequality among

states has been widened (Harvey, 2006). **Structural theory** is in a position to criticise the traditional equilibrium model by foregrounding the structural constraints and market failure. It can be described that neoclassical theory is based on the ideal philosophy that advanced industrial countries are likely to hold; on the contrary, structural theory tends to focus on the perspective from developed countries, *inter alia*, the rural area where capitalism and globalisation eventually create forced or semi-forced migration to the wealthier area. In this context, migrants are not confined to cross-border but include domestic migrants; for instance, many Chinese people migrate from inland to coastal provinces within the country due to regional inequality (Gries et al., 2015). To sum up, capitalism leads to exploitation of migrant labour with the likelihood that global inequality would be further enhanced. There are several interlocking approaches to explain the structural causes.

World system theory (Wallerstein, 1974, 1983, 1984) indicates that technological development in agriculture accelerates concentration of land and capital in rural areas to the detriment of traditional peasants' livelihoods. This drives rural peasants out of farming and results in sending them to the urban labour market where they are exploited as cheap labour. Wallerstein (1984: 80) analysed that the peripheral areas "have always been integrated in a large division of labour", which is colonised by the epicentre of capitalism. Structural theory applies this process of capitalism to transnational migration: deprived 'south' states become labour sources for rich 'north' states.

The 1970s witnessed both the global recession and the surge of foreign direct investment from advanced industrial countries to newly industrialising economies. TNCs dispatch a large number of expatriates to the invested areas to manage the local business. **New international division of labour** (Froebel et al., 1980) shows the corporate restructuring process whereby these firms closed down some factories and relocated them to less developed countries if the following three preconditions are fulfilled in the relocated area: cheap labour, the production process that requires minimal levels of skill, and decent export facilities. Here, the movement of capital and labour is closely tied; foreign direct investment results in the transfer of managerial and professional personnel from advanced industrial countries. The economic and geopolitical changes drive the global relocation of production (Harvey, 1989) and widen the inequality gap among states/regions (Harvey, 1990).

In the 1980s, the tendency of advanced economies shifting from manufacturing into service industries became even clearer. Among others, financial and IT sectors grew

rapidly. The communal feature of the expanding industries was they were further invigorated by and predicated on global networks, thereby networking several significant world cities. The theory of **global city** revealed how the accelerated globalisation created the new form of imperialism by concentrating economic capital in a limited number of global cities such as New York, London and Tokyo (Sassen, 1988, 2001; Castells, 1989). These rich cities hold an enormous population of highly salaried people—they are sometimes HSMs—and this also creates labour demand for low skilled jobs like drivers, domestic servants, and workers in hospitality industries in order to fulfil the demands of the rich people. Native people living in these global cities tend to “resist taking low-paying jobs at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy, creating strong demands for immigrants” (Massey et al., 1993: 447). Similar to this argument, **dual labour market theory** (Piore, 1979) posits that migration is not determined by push factors but pull factors. In this theory, the labour market in receiving countries is divided into two tiers: one is the primary market for the upper class, and the other is the secondary market for the lower class. Migrants are drawn to the secondary labour market to take up jobs the native population would shun. Such a demand for low paid migrant labour is created by employers in receiving countries. Here, TNCs and recruiting agencies often play an important role in mobilising migrants.

It should be noted that migrants make a rational decision to maximise their merits in some of these structural theories but this brings different consequences to the assumption of neoclassical theory. These structural theories were developed into a mechanism explaining intracompany transfer by UK geographers (Salt, 1988; Salt and Findlay, 1989; Beaverstock, 1991), which is discussed next.

Some researchers focused on **collective mechanism** rather than assuming individual rational decisions (Stark, 1991; Taylor and Wyatt, 1996; Taylor, 1999; Nakamuro, 2010; Lenoel, 2014). This regards migration as risk sharing behaviour in the family. In countries where the social security system is not sufficient, some family members will be dispatched as migrants to support the life of other family members so that all the family can sustain or improve the standard of living. In this case, migration functions as social security because remittances can help families maintain their life even if the sending countries experience serious economic downturn. This view takes a different stance compared with other structural theories in that it does not deny the positive side of migration through the mechanism of remittances and social security. In addition, it posits the voluntary decision of migrants and their family. Nonetheless, the discussion sometimes entails issues of brain drain and exploitation of migrants as negative

consequences. Furthermore, the lack of social security in sending countries accounts for emigration.

2.5.4 Limitation of the dichotomy in neoclassical/structural theories

As shown, neoclassical and structural theories take different positions to explain determinants of migration. The former insists that migration is on a voluntary basis and wage differences play the decisive role. Migrants can also benefit from migration capital gained through the mobility (Urry, 2007). On the contrary, the latter claims that migration is driven by structural forces created by capitalism and results in exploitation of migrant labour.

It is unrealistic to assume that all migration is voluntarily based and induced by individual rational decision with expected income, as well as driven by political and economic constraints as a consequence of market failure. The important thing to bear in mind is that migration is so diversified that one theory cannot explain all the phenomena and it can be explained through multiple frameworks depending on conditions of the sending and receiving countries (Castles, 2007; Massey, 1990; Spencer, 2011, Teitelbaum, 2008). Therefore, it is productive to consider which theory fits which cases.

In this sense, neoclassical theories are more likely to show the determinants of HSMs who normally enjoy high remuneration and are prepared to circulate to gain better positions. On the other hand, structural theories have less explanatory power of highly skilled migration, for it cannot explain migrants perusing human capital accumulation by moving among wealthy states. However, it should be noted that the neoclassical model has not sufficiently revealed determinants of HSMs at the micro level except for providing the model of cost-benefit and human capital. For example, various surveys propose new theories such as transnationalism and transitional theories to explain complicated international mobility (Castles, 2007; Spencer, 2011). Further examination focusing on HSMs has been conducted through exploring micro/meso level determinants.

2.6 Transnational elite geographies

2.6.1 Knowledge mobility and organisational network

The meso level mechanism of highly skilled migration has been developed principally by UK geographers as **transnational elite geographies**. They tried to locate the

patterns of mobility especially looking at TNCs which were exposed to rapid and sheer globalisation in the 1980s when the study began. Unlike structural theorists who criticised migration as the mechanism of 'inequality mobility' driven by global capitalism, the UK geographers approved migration as knowledge mobility (Williams, 2008) in the global network. Furthermore, they linked migration with TNCs' management strategies to negotiate international competition. Therefore, the principal focus of the study is transnational elites rather than independent migrants, whereas the optical framework has since the middle-2000s gradually incorporated the wider HSMs (e.g. Harvey, 2008)⁹. The knowledge mobility was observed through two concepts: lubrication and migration channels.

2.6.2 Lubrication

Salt (1983, 1988) pointed out that furtherance of career such as promotion and acquisition of experience/skills is an important motivation for HSMs compared with less skilled workers. Although he admitted that the individual motivation depends on the characteristics of jobs (like engineer or doctor), he showed that (1) transferability of skills gained through migration to the next available job, (2) vacancy of position, (3) migrants' aspiration especially for career advancement, (4) job satisfaction, and (5) general improvement of life would be critical factors.

In particular, when looking at managerial and professional workers, the large organisations (i.e. TNCs) play a significant role in shaping migrants' decision since these organisations offer their expatriates "stick (damage to career prospects by not going)" and "carrot (monetary and/or career advantages accruing)" (Salt, 1983: 648). Employees will decide whether they move to another country or not on their own calculation based on these negative and positive factors, but the large organisations have developed compensation packages such as enough allowance and support by relocation agencies so that their employees are inclined to accept the offer. These packages, which operate as means to induce employees to be transferred, are known as 'lubrication' (Salt and Findlay, 1989). Beaverstock (1990) also indicates career advancement, personal development and financial gains as three core factors of individual decisions along with the importance of lubrication.

This concept closely resonates with talent management (Beechler and Woodward, 2009; Collings and Mellahi, 2009) which attempts to maximise a firm's talent pool via HR management. In short, intracompany transfer constitutes a major measure for

⁹ Middle class and independent migrants will be discussed in a later section as middling mobility.

talent management. It also shares the basic concept of new international division of labour (Froebel et al., 1980) in that the globalisation results in the relocation of firms' activities to developing countries; however, the outcome of the relocation is different from what Froebel et al. (1980) insisted because the relocation brings positive impacts such as social and economic innovation to the host countries (Salt, 1988; Salt and Findlay, 1989).

2.6.3 Migration channels and firms' personnel practices

Migration channels describe systems that guide potential migrants to relocate their base of work (Findlay, 1990; Findlay and Garrick, 1990; Beaverstock, 1990; Findlay and Li, 1998). Migration channels for HSMs occur in several forms including intracompany transfer, international recruitment agencies, institutional exchange (e.g. academic scholar exchange programme), and family/friends networks¹⁰. Through these channels, potential migrants obtain information and resources to find work and facilitate their life in destination countries. Channels taken by migrants depend on the nature of jobs, country of destination, and purposes of migration. For example, Findlay et al. (1996) showed that the intracompany transfer plays an important role for migration for expatriate engineers—mostly western males—coming to Hong Kong and the channel through families and friends is not a significant reason for them. In contrast, one in five engineers born in Hong Kong have found their first employment abroad through kinship ties. Kanjanapan (1995) showed that Asian immigrants working for the health care sector in the US tend to rely on family channels while Asian engineers and computer scientists gained professional visas rather than family reunification.

Apart from individual decisions, firms' business strategies are identified as a significant agency for deciding the pattern of migration (Cormode, 1994; Millar and Salt, 2008; Beaverstock et al., 2009; Salt and Wood, 2011). There are various forms of mobility such as short-term assignment, longer term or permanent assignment, business travel, commuting, using recruitment agencies, secondment to/from business partners, and telecommunication (video conference and telework). Firms' decision on which mobility pattern to take is mediated by the characteristics of markets or clients, financial position (e.g. joint venture or not), labour market conditions, corporate culture (ethnocentric or polycentric), quality of local infrastructure (Cormode, 1994; Millar and Salt, 2008).

¹⁰ Obviously, studying abroad is an important migration channel of (potential) HSMs (Ho, 2007; Oishi, 2012; Ryan, 2015); however, it was not assumed as a major migration channel since the transnational elite geographies focused on elite corporate members, despite the fact that Allan Findlay, the founding scholar of migration channels, was also a leading academic in international student mobility.

Furthermore, elite mobility is expected to convey tacit and codified knowledge to manage the even more complicated and transnational business (Beaverstock and Broadwell, 2000). As world economies become more networked and service-based (as opposed to simple manufacturing assembly), firms' competitive edge is distinguished by the transnational network and tacit knowledge. For this, forging and keeping the network (not only business but also private) becomes an important mission for the dispatched HSMs, thereby they are engaged with socialisation in so-called transnational social spaces like expatriate clubs, children's school, or pubs (Beaverstock, 2002, 2005). Thus, transnational elite geographies are predicated on the corporate strategies and the importance of foreign direct investment which can be agencies of intracompany transfer rather than the individual decision of migrants in order to explain the mechanism and daily practices of HSMs.

Whilst socialisation is a 'must' for transnational elites for their career or business opportunities (Beaverstock, 2002, 2005), Harvey (2008) raises six determinants that make HSMs forge compatriot networks. He posits that HSMs join the networks more eagerly when (1) they are exposed to fewer indigenous local communities, (2) they are more transient, (3) the size of the expatriate population is smaller, (4) the local expatriate community is more homogeneous, (5) cultural differences are wider between the locals and HSMs, and (6) the annual expatriate flow is larger. Especially, cultural differences are deemed an important agency in inducing HSMs to build their compatriot network and stabilise their life abroad (Breton, 1964, Saxenian, 2006; Harvey and Beaverstock, 2017).

2.6.4 Limitation of transnational elite geographies

These views, however, do not cover the overall analysis of HSMs, for they only (or mostly) look at intracompany transfer or secondment (Kofman, 2000). First, the migrants depicted in transnational elite geographies are so homogeneous (male, white, privileged, transient, and heteronomous) that they cannot explain the wider scope of HSMs such as freelancer, female professionals or settlers to name only a few. Second, although it looks at firms' business practices, the coverage of the researched business sectors is so narrow that it mainly revolves around the finance, IT and manufacturing sectors where intracompany transfers are primarily employed as personnel strategies, consequently excluding other sectors such as education, health, government and hospitality sectors (Salt and Wood, 2011). In sum, the theory is only confined within the transient migration of TNC elites and economic practices (Willis and Yeoh, 2002).

Indeed, intracompany transfer makes up a part of highly skilled migration, but it represents only 6 % of all the HSMs working in Japan in 2016 (e-stat, 2017). It signifies the necessity to incorporate independent HSMs—they are also called independent work migrants (Ho, 2007), free-moving professionals (Favell, 2008), free-movers (Scott, 2006), or private career movers (Koser and Salt, 1997). The self-initiated expatriation cannot be explained within the concept, which posits heteronomous and homogeneous elites (Favell et al., 2007). In addition, transnational elite geographies do not locate any barriers in migration policies (e.g. Beaverstock, 2002, 2005); in other words, their focus has not included the role of government which this dissertation aims to argue.

2.7 Middling mobility

2.7.1 Everyday practices of the middle class

Transnational elite geographies focus on ‘external’ (i.e. organisational management and career/remuneration motivations) rather than ‘internal’ agencies (i.e. lifestyle, family, affinity, personal choices, identities). Especially, scholars of gender/family studies (e.g. Kofman, 2000; Bailey and Boyle, 2007), identities (e.g. Walsh, 2014; Ryan, 2015) and cultural geography (e.g. Scott, 2006; Blunt, 2007) call for more research into the soft side of skilled migrants: how migration process affects gender equalities, shapes identities, and interplays with personal networks. They proposed to shift the research focus from “transnationalism from above” to “transnationalism from below” (Willis and Yeoh, 2002: 554) to comprehend the internal and transitional migration mechanism with a human face (Favell et al., 2007). The concept of **middling mobility**¹¹ thus emerged as the counter-argument to the theory focusing on intracompany transfer.

Most of the HSMs are not elite by nature; they have made efforts to develop their expertise through education and professional career before becoming HSMs. In this sense, highly skilled migration entails the upward mobility of the social class. Some researchers claim migration should be deemed as the life development process (Ho, 2007; Ryan, 2015) to become a global talent like human capital theory posits; therefore, the scope of HSMs should be widened to observe the transitional process for deeper understanding of producing HSMs (Conradson and Latham, 2005a; Scott, 2006).

¹¹ The two terms, transnational elite geographies and middling mobility, were coined in this dissertation to outline their different focuses. It should be noted that there are some scholarly works (e.g. Favell, 2008) which cannot be easily categorized. These works often include both intracompany transfers and independent migrants without clearly distinguishing them. This indicates that the dichotomy, intracompany or independent, is only one of the focuses in the skilled migration literature.

Generally speaking, middling mobility is distinctive from transnational elite geographies in that it centres on:

- middle class (as opposed to privileged elite);
- gender, race, ethnicity (as opposed to homogeneous dominant elite);
- independent migrants (as opposed to intracompany transfer; however sometimes their accompanying partner can be researched);
- lived experiences;
- in many cases, emplacement (settlement).

Above all, the analytical lens of middling mobility is everyday practices (Conradson and Latham, 2005b; Blunt, 2007) through which identities and friendship have been observed to reveal the migration mechanism.

2.7.2 Identities and social bonds

Unlike transnational elite geographies which clarified the organisational agencies, the middling mobility attempted to illuminate how migrants negotiate their identities within transnational contexts. Especially, research has been conducted with UK emigrants who have gone through (occasionally painstaking) local embeddedness.

For example, Scott (2006, 2007) focused on UK migrants in Paris showing several variations of skilled migrants (e.g. expatriates, graduate lifestyle migrants, bohemians and so forth) and clarified their distinctive lifestyles: expatriates with family tend to socialise with local UK compatriots in children's schools or British associations while bohemians—culturally attracted non-economic migrants—criticise British inner-circles and prefer cosmopolitan communities to be embedded locally. It has also been indicated that the UK migrants with French partners were more integrated into local society; the vast majority of these migrants were female, who were more ready to “compromise their own social networks and professional and cultural identities than men” (Scott, 2006: 1121). These variations of “lived experiences” (Findlay and Cranston, 2015: 25; van Riemsdijk and Wang, 2017: 6) covering different types of skilled migrants and their dependents (Kofman, 2000, 2004; Hardill, 2002) have illuminated how identities—class, gender, race, ethnicity, professional background—interact with migrants' bonds with compatriots and local populations such as UK migrants in China (Willis and Yeoh, 2002; Yeoh and Willis, 2005), in Hong Kong (Leonard, 2008, 2010) and in Gulf Cooperation Council states (Walsh, 2006, 2014).

Middling mobility also emphasises the friendship-migration nexus. Whilst transnational geographies employ the term ‘network’ which often constitutes business networks for

migrants, middling mobility prefers the usage of 'friendship' which represents more personal and non-economic ties. The independent migrants take greater store on friendship in deciding migration (Conradson and Latham, 2005a) than intracompany transferees whose transfer is mediated by the employers. More importantly, the friendship ties can snowball attracting friends' friends, subsequently forging new circles (Conradson and Latham, 2005a). These migration generating-cum-sustaining networks include not only homophily (Leszczensky, 2013) but also various forms such as occupational solidarity (Ryan, 2015) and ethnicities (Ho, 2007; Yamashiro, 2015). Presenting the agencies of various friendship bonds is one of the distinctive academic contributions middling mobility has made by contrasting transnational elite geographies with elite professional networks.

2.7.3 Limitation of middling mobility

Middling mobility was successful in that it indicated the wide varieties of skilled migrants whose decisions and identities were intricately made through the accumulation of mobility capital—which may lift some of them to HSMs. Nonetheless, it entailed intrinsic limitations.

Because of its nature covering wide ranges of 'skilled migrants', their definitions become quite ambiguous, therefore are not shared among researchers. Middling mobility regards everyday practices of the 'middle class'; however, social class can take any form such as lineage, educational and professional background, knowledge, wealth, housing area/type and in some countries ethnicity, race, gender and religion. For example, some research includes contested 'skilled migrants' such as a British bar tender in Paris (Scott, 2007) and Singaporean graduate student or working holiday maker in London (Ho, 2007). Middling mobility often leaves the definitions of 'skilled migrants' in limbo and constructs the arguments only by distinguishing intracompany transferees. However, even an intracompany transferee can belong to the 'middle class' depending on the definitions and they also hold everyday practices (Beaverstock, 2005) shaping identities and friendship which should not be ignored. Ironically, although middling mobility rejects the one-sided view criticising transnational elite geographies, they were also bounded by their positionality: one more example showing their limitation is the implicit short-sightedness of 'Britishness'.

2.7.4 Analytical implications

This section brings a slightly different aspect to attention compared to the usual theoretical framework. The central argument is the 'critical' approach in terminology.

As already shown in Chapter 1, the author insisted the terminology and its definition should be clear enough and coherent. At the same time, it needs critical examination because the use of terminology that a researcher chooses embodies the limitation of the research. Put simply, a researcher sometimes employs inappropriate term(s) because of their blindness to the connotations. This encouraged the author to carefully examine the terminology through the writing-up process. Also, it tells us how challenging critical research is. One of the good examples is the term 'Britishness' that middling mobility often uses.

Middling mobility has been mainly developed by UK researchers and centred on identities; in other words, they steadily looked upon how 'Britishness' (Yeoh and Willis, 2005; Scott, 2006; Walsh, 2014) is produced and sustained overseas. Britishness is, however, a quite contested term. Even though their analytical lens is broadly-defined with various middlings, their focus has constantly been whiteness (Walsh, 2014). For example, the typical 'Britishness' in the research is associated with drinking alcohol or going to the pub (Willis and Yeoh, 2002; Yeoh and Willis, 2005; Scott, 2006), which the Muslim or some Asian UK nationals do not do due to ethnic and/or religious reasons.

A more contested feature is their unconscious usage of the term 'Britishness' which neglects some minorities. Oxford dictionary (Turnbull et al., 2010: 184) defines:

Britain—The island containing England, Scotland and Wales;
British—Connected with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, or the people who live there.

As is clear from the definition, when it comes to British, it suddenly includes Northern Ireland. This usage is also seen in the UK government official documents (the UK government, 2017) and middling mobility uses 'Britishness' in this definition without critically examining the controversial terminology. It should be noted including Northern Irish in British/Britishness is contested, for 34% of the Northern Irish identify themselves strongly as Irish, with this ratio rising to 77% for Catholics (NILT, 2015)¹².

¹² The NILT (Northern Ireland Life and Times) survey is jointly conducted by Queen's University Belfast and University of Ulster to observe public attitudes in Northern Ireland.

Table 2-2 Perceived self-identities of people in Northern Ireland (%)

Irish not British	25
More Irish than British	9
Equally Irish and British	16
More British than Irish	17
British not Irish	26
Other description - (please specify)	7
Don't know	1

Source: NILT (2015)

Table 2-3 Perceived self-identities: results by religions (%)

	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
Irish not British	59	0	10
More Irish than British	18	1	8
Equally Irish and British	14	17	18
More British than Irish	3	30	21
British not Irish	1	48	28
Other description - (please specify)	6	3	10
Don't know	0	1	4

Source: NILT (2015)

Walsh (2014: 15) rejects transnational elite geographies, saying “everyday discourses of privileged elites are not normal ways of thinking about the world, but contested practices of claiming a particular position in it”, while frequently employing British/Britishness without critically examining the terminology that is only acknowledged by the ‘elite’ majority in Northern Ireland. It is paradoxical considering she cited a narrative “I’m British, but not English” made by ‘British’ Indians feeling uncomfortable in the ‘whiteness British’ community in Dubai (Walsh, 2014: 12). She criticised how the ‘British community’ is conditioned within whiteness; nonetheless, she is blinded with the contested term ‘Britishness’. Through this example, I do not intend to condemn her works or middling mobility but to show an example that the research for ‘minority’ is extremely challenging when the researcher is belonging to the ‘majority¹³’: all the researchers have limitations in their social views conditioning their research—no one has a truly non-biased perspective.

¹³ As identities are multi-faceted, everyone can be both majority and minority. For example, Walsh (2014: 12) claimed she was a minority in her fieldwork “as a young, single, unmarried, low-income woman” but she was a majority as ‘British’ (presumably of non-Northern-Irish).

Therefore, it is important to clarify some contested terms and limitations as outlined in the introduction chapter in this dissertation as well as attempt to use neutral expressions, for instance, UK rather than British, and irregular migrants rather than illegal migrants. Still, I am well aware that I can never be 100% critical; however, it is also significant that the researchers acknowledge it consciously and leave possibilities for another view.

2.7.5 Methodological implications

One more academic underpinning drawn from the middling mobility together with transnational elite geographies is methodologies. Although they researched social networks and friendship through (mostly) qualitative methods, their sampling relies on snowballing (e.g. Beaverstock, 2002, 2005; Scott, 2006, 2007; Ho, 2007; Leonard, 2008; Harvey, 2008; Ryan, 2015) or even no recruiting process (e.g. Yeoh and Willis, 2005; Walsh, 2014). While snowballing should not be denounced in itself, if the research aims to delineate social networks, snowballing is a risky method: it may limit the informants to only like-minded people.

For instance, if a researcher only uses the network of sociable group, the findings may be biased to emphasise the lively community. For the same reason, a gatekeeper should be carefully chosen because if the gatekeeper is from a mutual support society (e.g. a pious religious group or ethnocentric club), their network may be tighter than the other cohorts. This point will be further discussed and challenged in the methodological chapter to bring attention to methodological (especially sampling) considerations as the limits of the current theory.

In conclusion, transnational elite geographies and middling mobility 'critically' inspire this research not only theoretically but also as analytical and methodological benchmarks. In terms of critical research, the terminology is thoroughly examined and chosen so that the research does not overlook the connotations. With regard to methodologies, this research seeks to clarify the recruiting process and avoid snowballing to ensure validity. The research design will be detailed in the next chapter.

2.8 *Japan's case*

2.8.1 Japanese employment relations

Regarding the reasons why Japan has been a small magnet for HSMs, Iguchi (2007) claims that the main reason is a paucity of foreign direct investment (FDI), that also

has been the principal migratory agency for the structural theory and transnational elite geographies. It is true that the level of FDI to Japan is far less than that of other OECD countries with the figure of \$ 3,646 in Japan, \$ 37,187 in the UK, \$ 230,768 in the US (net flow in 2013, million US dollar) (JETRO, 2015). However, it would not be the only reason because FDI usually brings in not independent migrants but intracompany transferees and most employment created by FDI is domestic (i.e. local employment as opposed to migrants). This dissertation pays more attention to Japanese firms and independent migrants to illuminate the factors that intracompany transfers cannot explain. In this sense, it is necessary to consider why the Japanese employers are not successful in recruiting HSMs.

While scholarly works on HSMs in Japan to date are quite limited (Holbrow and Nagayoshi, 2016), the few exceptional surveys indicate the distinctive **Japanese employment relations**—called *Nihontekikoyo* in Japanese—affect the career-making of HSMs (Tsukasaki, 2008; Oishi, 2012). It should be noted that Japanese employment relations are usually applicable to the large firms and their ‘regular’ employees—who are directly employed on a permanent contract and full time—(Hisamoto, 2008). It means they are in the primary labour market posited in structural theory, *inter alia*, dual labour market and global city.

On the other hand, people who work in the secondary market are in a precarious condition—working on a part time or contractual basis—and the majority of them have been female, or the young cohort (Genda, 2001)—collectively called the ‘lost generation’ (Izuhara, 2015) as they entered the labour market in the decades’-long recession from the 1990s to 2000s¹⁴. Japan’s migration scholars have tended to focus on the secondary market as their interests were Japanese-Brazilians or technical trainees employed in the sector (Liu-Farrer, 2017). Therefore, it has not been fully examined how the primary market—in other words, Japanese employment relations—influences the migratory decision of HSMs.

Japanese employment relations can be characterised as (1) lifetime employment, (2) the seniority system, and (3) enterprise unionism¹⁵ (Crump, 2003; Hisamoto, 2008;

¹⁴In fact, from 2004 to 2008, Japan enjoyed the longest economic growth in its post-war history; however, although the macro economy was boosted, the employment conditions in terms of recruiting ‘regular’ employees and pay did not improve proportionally. This is why the period is called the ‘lost two-decades’ and its’ young cohort in 20’s is called the ‘lost generation’.

¹⁵ Each Japanese labour union negotiates with the employer individually without relying on the industrial union. Opposed to industrial (vertical) union, it is called enterprise unionism (Tsuru and Rebitzer, 1995). As this research does not aim to focus on the organisation of labour union, other elements (i.e. lifetime employment and the seniority system) are principally discussed henceforth.

Hashimoto, 2017), of which lifetime employment and the seniority system directly shape HSMs' career-making. Lifetime employment can be framed as a long-term 'alliance' between employer and employees rather than a mere tenure contract (Ono, 2010; Hashimoto, 2017). An employer pledges to protect the employment until the employees reach the retirement age (normally 60-65 year-old). Even if the company's performance is worsened, the employer tries to eschew lay-off and takes various possible measures to keep offering employment opportunities to stabilise the economic conditions of employees such as job rotation, transfer and secondment (Wiltshire, 1995). Whilst the biggest role of the executives of Anglo-American firms is maximising the company's stock value, Japanese employers are prone to believe their role is first and foremost to protect the employment and those who could not achieve it are deemed an incapable businessperson (Hisamoto, 2008). This implicit commitment to the employees is conceptually termed psychological contract (Nitta, 2008).

As it is a 'contract', it also binds the counterpart—employees. Instead of being secure in the job, the employees should compromise on the 'limited freedom' of a professional career. Unlike Anglo-American systems where the job posting is the norm in acquiring a new position, Japanese employees are heteronomous in that they are given job rotation by their employer (Tsuru, 2016). Since the posting is not open or competition-based, there are few job descriptions or external labour markets for career-driven professionals; subsequently, autonomous HSMs find it difficult to enhance their professional career (Tsukasaki, 2008).

The seniority system is intricately interlocked with lifetime employment. Under the scheme, the salary increases proportionally with age or duration of employment. Because the employer expects their employees to work long-term, the salary system is designed so that the employees can benefit more when they stay with the company longer. This makes the young employees' salary relatively low (Tsuru, 2016) and working in Japan unattractive for the younger HSMs (Oishi, 20012).

Tsukasaki (2008) also suggests that Japanese business practices such as '*sujiwotosu*'¹⁶ are so different from Anglo-American that it cannot be applicable to another country. In short, Japan is too unique for transnational elites to hone their

¹⁶ *Sujiwotosu* (筋を通す) originally meant 'to be consistent'. It sometimes refers to being uncompromised to honour the words. In Anglo-American practical culture, when it is necessary, it can be acceptable to be flexible without being consistent. However, people who would like to 'sujiwotosu' maintain their position under attack even if a situation has changed. The concept of psychological contract (sticking to protecting the employment) mentioned earlier can be an example of 'sujiwotosu' because the employer is psychologically obsessed with keeping employment even when their business is stuck.

expertise in terms of business practices and language. She termed it ‘Japanese trap’, which makes HSMs—especially intracompany transferees—Japanese specialists and confined them only within Japanese related business. The Japanese trap partly explains the reasons why the HSMs via intracompany transfer would eschew career building in Japan. Working in Japan, thus, would not enhance the professional career for people who would like to migrate globally pursuing better professions.

In conclusion, the uniqueness of Japanese employment relations impedes HSMs from choosing Japan as their professional base. This is why international students find Japan unattractive for work but an appealing place in which to live (METI, 2016). Career making, however, is only one of the migratory factors. As shown in middling mobility, skilled migrants are also attracted by lifestyle or non-economic factors a world city can offer. Oishi (2012) also supports this view, insisting “the vast majority of the respondents valued quality of life, not remuneration, as a priority in their lives” (Oishi, 2012: 1093): this is a counter argument against neoclassical theories. It is, therefore, necessary to examine both the obstacles and attraction to live/work in Tokyo.

2.8.2 Societal factors

Although some academics and Japan’s official stance deny the homogeneity of Japan (Kim and Oh, 2011; Tsuda and Cornelius, 2004), the past scholarly works indicate that Japan’s policies of social cohesion or multiculturalism have far lagged behind other advanced countries (Iguchi, 2007). Among others, discrimination stemming from homogeneity and insular nature affects the life of HSMs (Hall, 1998; Arudou, 2015). For instance, some quantitative surveys report Asian migrants are more discriminated than the western (Ando, 2004; Holbrow, 2017). This may suggest that the ways in which Japanese society is uneven in welcoming foreigners depend on race, ethnicity and nationality. However, the perception of being discriminated significantly differs even among Asian individuals; the economic conditions and length of stay are negatively correlated with the experience of discrimination (Yamazaki, 1993) and Asian migrants with close Japanese friends are more likely to regard ‘negative incidents’ as mere cultural differences rather than discrimination compared to those who do not have a close Japanese friend (Huang, 2010; Yamazaki et al., 1997). Nonetheless, these surveys do not target HSMs.

For HSMs, Hall (1998) points to ‘cartel of minds’ in Japanese intellectual society and criticises the closed nature in legal circles, journalism, and universities as examples. However, the discussion is anecdotal and lacks an empirical nature. Besides, what is problematic in these debates is limited perspectives bound by Anglo-American (or

reputedly called 'global') standards; if it is not in line with the Anglo-American view, then it is regarded as parochial. For example, the seniority system of Confucian values may not be common in meritocracy and 'liberal' American culture. Then, the distinctiveness of Asian culture compared to Anglo-American may be exaggerated and sometimes developed into the claim of discrimination. In short, these debates likely conclude that Japan should be Americanised¹⁷ as claimed by Hall (1998) and Arudou (2015).

Apart from discrimination, family issues for HSMs such as monolingual education and spousal difficulties in social cohesion can be raised. As this is rather a social than policy issue, Oishi (2012) pointed to the limits of immigration policies to attract HSMs. Indeed, these factors seem to be plausible, but the research does not shed light on public policies. Then one question comes up; do public policies have limitations in attracting HSMs?

It is true that social issues affect the life of HSMs; however, migration policies can equally play an important role in attracting HSMs. As evidence, Japanese business sectors have continued to present policy proposals on migration policies (European Business Council in Japan and European [EU] Chamber of Commerce in Japan, 2014; American Chamber of Commerce in Japan, 2014; Keidanren, 2004, 2008, 2015). Therefore, it would be justifiable to say that there are still research gaps in explaining determinants of HSMs regarding why the current migration policies do not function in Japan and how they could be improved. Addressing this also requires a macro perspective: migration governance.

2.9 Macro analysis: public policies and migration

2.9.1 Policy failures in attracting highly skilled migrants

In the global competition among advanced industrial countries for the best and brightest, the policies implemented to date at national level have had mixed success and there is a research gap in explaining why some policies do not work. Along with micro/meso migratory mechanism, this dissertation also analyses the macro dimension: the migration governance and policy failures.

¹⁷ To be clear, the author is aware that it is risky to discuss whether Japan is westernised or not. It can be argued that Japan may adopt aspects of a foreign culture without losing its own identity. For example, Japanese people use the lunar calendar much less widely than Chinese or Korean ethnics. Hence, Japan does not celebrate the lunar New Year, which is a sign of westernisation. The cultural position of Japan is one of the keys to unravel the intellectual puzzles in this research. Whether Japan is westernised or not will be discussed in detail with original data in Chapter 6.

Doomernik et al. (2009) propose four factors: sluggish economic dynamism, fewer employment opportunities, under-funded universities, and less tolerant society that act as structural barriers in Europe compared with North America. They also manifested that some countries have problems in public relations (i.e. disseminating good images) while “Canada has been remarkably successful in projecting a positive image of its immigration system and practice to the world” (Doomernik et al., 2009: 19). Thus, a national/regional image such as being liberal, progressive and creative plays an important role in attracting HSMs (Nye, 2004; Florida, 2005, 2008; Beaverstock, 2005; Harvey and Groutsis, 2015; Harvey and Beaverstock, 2017).

Cerna and Chou (2014) examine the EU’s Scientific Visa and Blue Card system and discuss the complexities in reaching agreement among EU member states. Through the negotiation process in the EU, the systems introduced strict measures in host-organisations recruiting HSMs, family reunification, the definition of HSMs, wage level, and migrant’s rights: “the Scientific Visa acquired more stringent measures...while the Blue Card was made even more restrictive” (Cerna and Chou, 2014: 89), thus these systems were designed insufficiently. However, these studies are not based on empirical research. As Oishi (2012) suggests, insufficient empirical studies have been conducted to explore the reasons for the policy failures.

2.9.2 Migration governance

The research into migration governance has attempted to unearth how immigration control and its governance ineffectively worked although it mainly focused on irregular or low-skilled migrants, whose inflows are the main targets of immigration control. Especially, there has been a wide gap between immigration policy and the consequences: for example, even if a state takes stringent measures to regulate the number of immigrants, the inflow becomes even greater—known as the gap hypothesis (Castles, 2007; Hollifield et al., 2015).

Literature suggests the following three factors that degrade the efficacy of migration policies, thereby leading to policy failures (Castles, 2004; Cornelius and Tsuda; 2004): (1) the flow of labour supply cannot be controlled easily due to the institutionalised network (e.g. social capital and network theory, migration industry) ;(2) globalisation inevitably perpetuates or even strengthens human mobility regardless of the direction of policies (e.g. world system and global city theory, new international division of labour); (3) there are inherent flaws in the policy making process. Compared to the

other two factors, there is much less study on the policy making process (Massey, 1990; Portes, 1997).

One of the limited works is clientelist policies, according to which political decision is heavily contingent on a handful of vocal lobbies (e.g. agricultural or construction sectors) motivated by their own interests (Freeman, 1995, 2002). While clientelist policies are purely driven by economic interests and strong pull factors, other scholars take a different view incorporating the idea of civil society that confers rights on migrants, subsequently making it increasingly difficult for nation states to regulate their mobility (Hollifield, 2004, 2008; Shipper, 2008). The two models make an important suggestion that the state itself should be an indispensable analytical unit to observe policy failures and its variation will offer useful implications for better migration policies (Hollifield 1992, 2008). It is thus the aim of this paper to clarify Japan's case to contribute to the further analysis of the variations.

2.9.3 Actors in the policy making process

The policy making process in Japan has been widely studied by both Japanese and non-Japanese academics. However, the research principally revolves around economic policies (Johnson, 1982; Calder, 1993; Mabuchi, 1994; Carpenter, 2003) and migration governance has usually been examined from the local governments or its relation to states (see Sellek, 2001; Aiden 2011). Meanwhile, Bartram (2000, 2004, 2005) presents an original analytical approach in comparing Japan's migration governance with that of Israel. He articulates that Japan's bureaucracy which took a leading role in the policy making process around the 1970s functioned effectively and this is the reason Japan could keep the flow of migrants significantly low level, saying "the bureaucrats generally concerned themselves less with the profitability of particular companies and more with the long-term trajectory of the economy" (Bartram, 2000: 24).

While it is true that the decision making is still widely governed by bureaucrats rather than politicians—this is one of the distinctive features of Japan's migration governance (Cornelius and Tsuda, 2008) —, it is questionable whether the bureaucracy works well in the 21st century given the fact that lots of conflicts in migration appear (Mori, 1997, Sellek, 2001). With regard to bureaucratic barriers in migration governance, multi-layered governance and the compartmentalised central government have been condemned (Yamawaki, 2002; Mizukami, 2012); however, it has not been revealed empirically how the policies are made and what kinds of issues there are exactly. Notwithstanding that this is fundamental information to analyse the policy making process in Japan, the past scholarly works on migration have omitted or failed to

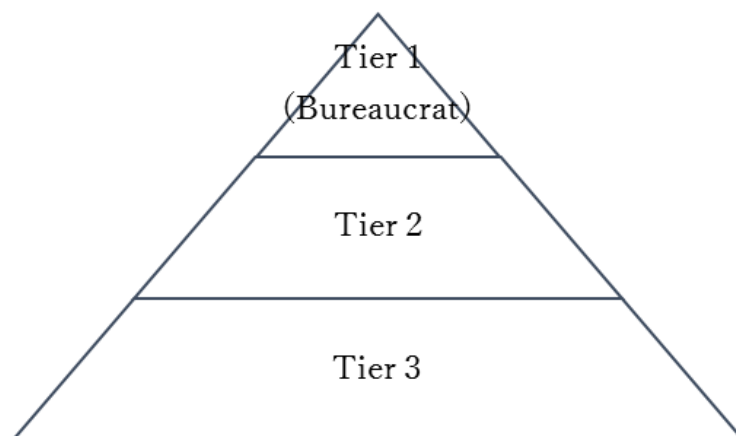
explain these very basic ‘invariables’ or actors with empirical data. One of the possible concepts probing the actors is Japan’s distinctive elite civil services—Kasumigaseki bureaucrats. This research applies the concept to illuminate the policy making process and its barriers.

2.9.4 Kasumigaseki bureaucrats: the key actors of policy making process

According to the concept of Kasumigaseki bureaucracy, key actors in the policy making process of the central government are the lifetime-employed elite civil service, who are metaphorically and collectively called ‘Kasumigaseki’, named after the location of their offices (like No 10 for the British Prime Ministers). For instance, when a politician says ‘Kasumigaseki is hard on that policy’, it suggests the civil service is reluctant to change the policy. They are also often referred to as bureaucrats (*Kanryo*) which originally means “an official working in an organisation or a government department, especially one who follows the rules of the department strictly” (Turnbull et al., 2010: 196).

To explain the Japanese bureaucrat, there are several English terms applied by English-writing researchers. Colignon and Usui (2003: 29) describe them as “high-ranking civil servants” while Koh (1989: 1) calls them “administrative elite”. Although the terms may vary, the definition of a bureaucrat is clear in the existing academic work (Mabuchi, 1994, 2010; Soga, 2016): they are a civil servant who is (1) life-time employed, (2) elite, (3) working for the central government—hence, the local government is not usually within the scope. With regard to the definition of elite, it is due to the specific recruiting process. There are three examinations taken by candidates who would like to be a national civil servant and the bureaucrat normally passes the top tier (Tier 1) of the recruiting examinations while other non-elite civil servants take the less challenging examinations (Tier 2 and 3). As the entrance (i.e. recruiting examination) is segregated by the other cohorts, the career path is differentiated accordingly. The bureaucrat is normally promoted to manager in their late 30’s despite the fact that most of the other cohorts (Tier 2 and 3) remain non-managers even when they retire at the age of 60. Thus, a bureaucrat’s career path is systematically designed to be an elite (Mabuchi, 2010). This Japanese elite bureaucratic system can be juxtaposed with that of France (Colignon and Usui, 2003) as France also has an institutionalised elite nurturing framework of *Ecole National d’Administration* where the young elites who passed strenuous examinations study and will become high ranking officers in the government.

Figure 2-1 Hierarchy of recruiting examination for civil service



Source: the author

Not only is the clout of Kasumigaseki a well-known feature in systematic bureaucracy but also on public policies (Johnson, 1982; Imamura, 2006). Even though they are not elected, they are the main actors in both administration and legislation (Muramatsu, 1994; Nishio, 2001; Soga, 2016). The Japanese Constitution clearly separates the state authorities into three spheres, namely, implementation by the government, legislation by the parliament and judiciary by the court. The bureaucrat is to be engaged with the execution under the Cabinet which governs the administration. Also, they are expected to draft legislation by the House members (politicians) who usually do not have practical skills to write laws. During the regular Parliament session in 2017¹⁸, the number of approved-legislation drafted by the Cabinet—meaning it is written by the bureaucrats in each Ministry and then sent by the Cabinet to the Parliament—represented 65 whilst that by House members stood at 10 (Cabinet Legislation Bureau, 2018). The more notable data is the figure of submitted legislation which did not pass the parliament. While six bills submitted by the Cabinet (written by bureaucrats) did not pass, 176 bills submitted by the House members were not successful (Cabinet Legislation Bureau, 2018)¹⁹. This attests to the dominant power of administrative government—primarily the Cabinet but actually bureaucrats—in law-making.

¹⁸ 20 January-18 June, 2017

¹⁹ It should be noted that Japan adopts Parliamentary Cabinet System which confers great authority including drafting bills to the Cabinet. As the bills can also be submitted by the opposition parties, it is logical that the Cabinet bills supported by the ruling parties enjoy higher success rate. However, the data of legislation offered here still shows the clout by the bureaucrat because it proves the fact that the majority of laws are drafted by them not lawmakers (politicians).

Needless to say, immigration bills should be approved by the Parliament and implemented by the government to make them work. Considering the fact that the bureaucrats influence both legislation and administration, there is a need to clarify the migration governance structure by the bureaucrats to address the political and administrative problems underlying the migration policies. Nonetheless, its policy making process and the role of Kasumigaseki in migration debates have not been investigated empirically in academic research, although migration policy has a potential power to significantly change Japanese society. Hence, to unfold the labyrinth, it is necessary to illuminate this unknown policy making process and locate the inherent barriers and possible solutions based on the data.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the interdisciplinary arguments of migratory mechanism and migration governance. Nonetheless, it also pointed out that its micro/meso level approaches especially on the causal mechanism have been developed mainly by the scholars from sociology/geography while the macro debates such as migration policies have been initiated by political scientists. Although these academic works occasionally interplay—like the case of global city theory and transnational elite geographies—, policy discussions and micro analysis have not converged. This is a significant gap that this dissertation endeavours to bridge and advance the theories, predicated on principally three theoretical foundations: (1) transnational elite geographies, (2) Japanese employment relations, and (3) Kasumigaseki bureaucracy. This concluding section further clarifies how the extant literature helps identify research questions (RQ) and frames the analytical lenses as well as methods.

This research first adopts **transnational elite geographies** which frame the motivations, institutional mechanism, and socialisation of HSMs. Especially, transnational elite geographies suggest it is crucial to identify the motivations and trajectories (RQ1 of this study) to map out the migratory pattern. Nonetheless, transnational elite geographies should be complemented with other theories to overcome its limited scope such as the focus of intracompany transfers. Among others, this research is also inspired by **middling mobility** to analyse the independent HSMs and their everyday life including the barriers they confront in their social life (RQ2 of this study) and workplace.

With regard to labour issues, it will be illuminative to examine how **Japanese employment relations** influence both the career making and everyday-office-encounters of HSMs (RQ3 of this study). This chapter indicated that the extant

literature on skilled migration is mostly confined within the Anglo-American or European employment relations whether it is transnational elite geographies or middling mobility (e.g. Scott, 2006; Millar and Salt, 2008; Harvey, 2008). In this light, RQ3 will subsequently bring a new insight to this debate by showing the distinctive Asian case. This dissertation will also deal with how HSMs perceive the attractiveness of working and living in Japan (RQ4 of this study) given the literature only revolves around the downside (Tsukasaki, 2008; Oishi, 2012). It will be fair to critically appraise both the downside and attractiveness to present the solutions to increase the number of HSMs.

The above theories, however, not only frame this research conceptually but also analytically and methodologically. By analytically, it means the researchers should always attempt to be 'critical', to be more precise, evaluate pros and cons without being one-sided as I explained with the contested terminology 'Britishness'. Regarding, methodology, this research challenges the past scholarly methods capitalising on snowballing in corroborating migrants' social network, which will be detailed in the methodological chapter.

With these in mind, this research is drawn on Kasumigaseki bureaucracy to unpack the policy making process and its problems in attracting HSMs. This chapter located that the role of state has been thoroughly underreported by many scholars of highly skilled migration. The case studies conducted in Japan have also underestimated how public policies affect HSMs (Oishi, 2012); there is a research gap on why public policies do not function well in attracting HSMs. The lack of research indicates the importance to unravel the unknown policy making process. Hollifield (1992, 2008) calls for more research on the role of state in illuminating migration policy failures. This dissertation, thus, examines the main actors in the policy making process, namely, bureaucrats and politicians in order to clarify the inherent underlying issues (RQ5 of this study).

Chapter 3 Research Background

*Change before you have to.*²⁰
Jack Welch
(Former CEO, General Electric)

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this context chapter is three-fold. First, it presents the legal provisions of the Japanese immigration system for work and residence of HSMs in the country. A newly legislated scheme for HSMs, the PBS (Points-based system), will also be discussed to comprehend the policy development on skilled migration. Second, in aiming to grasp the overall picture of HSMs, their statistical portrayal will be drawn. The data will tell us what they do in Japan, where they originally come from, and how the source economies have shifted for the past decade. Contrasting Asian and Western migration patterns poses a key puzzle through which this research investigates the labyrinth of highly skilled migration. Third, Japanese policies will be internationally benchmarked to position Japan within the context of global competition for talents: It will reveal how Japan has lagged behind other industrial Asian economies in terms of attracting HSMs. Drawn from these backgrounds, the conclusion will present core propositions for the empirical analysis.

3.2 Legislation on immigration control of highly skilled migrants in Japan

3.2.1 Basic idea underpinning immigration control

Before sketching out Japan's legislation, this section clarifies how the system of immigration control is structured in Japan. To facilitate the understanding of readers, the majority of whom are assumed to be UK-based researchers²¹, the Japanese system is described in comparison with that of the UK. In fact, both countries share a similar legislation structure and philosophy of immigration control. Japan's immigration policies have not been well understood widely outside Japan because of their complicated structure. Showing the similarity of the legislation structure will help the reader decipher the labyrinth this dissertation explores. With this in mind, by contrasting the legislation between Japan and the UK, this section aims to provide a clear-cut overall picture of Japan's legislation on immigration control.

²⁰ from Guinn (1997: 225)

²¹ This dissertation is written in compliance with the UK university rule, on the premise that the UK-based researchers primarily read it. With the readers in mind, this dissertation was structured and compiled throughout.

Japan and the UK both established the Immigration Act as primary legislation. The formal name of the Act in Japan is Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (hereafter Immigration Act) which dates back to 1966²². The UK law is Immigration Act 1971. In each case, the Act confers on the Minister (or the Secretary of State in the UK) the powers to make orders, rules, and so forth, to prescribe more detailed conditions and procedures.

Table 3-1 Legislative structure of immigration control in Japan and the UK

Types of legislation	Functions (examples)	Japan	The UK
Primary Legislation	Prescribing basic systems	Immigration Act	Immigration Act 1971
Secondary Legislation (Statutory Instruments)	Clarifying definitions	Government Ordinances	Orders (Regulations)
	Clarifying conditions, procedures	Ministerial Ordinances	Rules Codes
Quasi Legislation	Further clarifying details, showing administrative understanding	Notifications	Government Circulars Operational Guidance
Treaty	Equally important with primary legislation but necessary to ratify by domestic laws	International Treaty (Bilateral, Multilateral)	
		e.g. APEC Business Travel Card	e.g. European Union legislation

*APEC: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (regional economic forum in Asia-Pacific)

Source: Immigration Act (Japan), Immigration Act 1971 (UK), Immigration (Leave to Enter and Remain) Order 2000, Immigration Rules: Parts 1 to 14.

Both in Japan and the UK, immigrants must have a visa (its formal name in the UK is ‘entry clearance’) to enter the country. A visa, however, is just one condition to obtain a permit to enter and reside in the country. The Act establishes that an immigrant can reside lawfully only by being given a permit from the Immigration Authority. This permission is called ‘status of residence’ in Japan and ‘leave to enter (remain)’ in the UK. Therefore, having a visa, whether it is valid or not, does not necessarily guarantee the lawful status of immigrants because the legal status is solely based on the status of residence (or leave to enter/remain in the UK). It is important to examine statistical data of the number of immigrants since the statistics of visa do not necessarily represent the whole population of the documented immigrants residing in the countries. In other words, the number of given ‘status of residence’ in Japan or ‘leave to enter

²² This dissertation follows the rule of not labelling the established year with the law when referring to Japanese legislation (Sellek, 2001, Sato, 2017).

(remain)' in the UK can only indicate the number of lawful immigrants. The following chart encapsulates the differences between visa and status of residence (or leave to enter/remain).

Figure 3-1 The flow chart to obtain lawful status in Japan and the UK

	Step 1 Visa	Step 2 Immigration control	Step 3 Lawful status given
Japan	Obtain a visa	Examined by an immigration officer at a port of entry	Given a status of residence
The UK	Obtain an entry clearance (so-called visa)		An entry clearance having effect as leave to enter (remain)

Source: Immigration Act (Japan), Immigration Act 1971 (UK)

3.2.2 Legislation in Japan

In Japan, there are currently 28 classifications²³ of status of residence which give foreign nationals legal grounds to reside for more than three months²⁴. Those who are given a more-than-three-months-residency are called 'mid-to-long term resident'²⁵ (Immigration Act article 19-3) who need to register with the local municipality. The status of residence can be grouped into two types: activities or kinship.

1. Based on 'activities' immigrants do in Japan

It focuses on what immigrants do in Japan. What the immigrants of this group can do for their livelihood is prescribed by the specified activities permitted by the Minister of Justice. For instance, migrants are vetted including who their sponsors (e.g. employers, schools) are when obtaining the status of residence, and once it is permitted, they are only allowed to do the 'activities' (e.g. work, study) under the sponsor. If they would like to do activities other than the authorised one, it is necessary to gain further permission from Minister of Justice (Article 19 (2))—it is called *Shikakugaikatsudo* permission²⁶ (permission to engage in activity other than that permitted under the status of residence previously granted). There

²³ This number includes a new status of residence 'Care Worker' that was enacted from the 1st of September, 2017.

²⁴ There is one more status of residence 'Temporary Visitor' on which foreigners are permitted to stay in Japan up to 90 days maximum. The vast majority is tourist (18,291,996 people in 2016) along with business trip (1,575,970 ditto), family reunification (535,792 ditto) according to Immigration Bureau (2017b).

²⁵ Except for those who have the status of residence 'Diplomat' or 'Official'.

²⁶ Those who have status of residence 'student' are only allowed to study, for the authorized 'activity' of students is studying. However, if they gain the *Shikakugaikatsudo* permission, they can work part-time up to 28 hours per week (they are allowed to work 8 hours per day only during the school vacation in lieu of the weekly limit). If they are engaged in research or teaching assistance under contract with the belonging university, they do not need to gain permission and the limit does not apply either.

are two kinds of activities depending on whether an immigrant intends to work or not.

1-1 Activities with intention to work

- 1-1-1 Foreign official (Diplomat, Official)
- 1-1-2 Highly skilled immigrants (Engineer /Specialist in Humanities/International Services, Intracompany Transferee...)
- 1-1-3 Technical Intern

1-2 Activities without intention to work

- 1-2-1 Activities to learn (Student, Trainee)
- 1-2-2 Others (Dependents, Cultural Activities, asylum seekers...)

2. Based on 'Japanese kinship and permanent residence' of immigrants. Contrasting with the former group (based on 'activities'), this category focuses on what relationship immigrants have with Japan. It does not matter what immigrants do; therefore, they have no restrictions in professions unlike foreigners residing on the status of residence of 'activities'.

2 Japanese kinship and permanent residence

- 2-1 Permanent resident, their spouse or child
- 2-2 Spouse or child of Japanese national
- 2-3 Foreign national of Japanese descent
(2-2 and 2-3 include so-called *Nikkeijin* such as Japanese-Brazilian/Peruvian/Pilipino...)
- 2-4 Refugee

3.2.3 Highly skilled migrants and permanent residency

Generally speaking, HSMs are categorised into 1-1-2 in the above classification although the spectrum of this research is more limited as discussed later. It should be also noted that some migrants residing in Japan based on Japanese kinship and permanent residence can be regarded as HSMs. As the figure is not available from statistics, they are the 'hidden' population of HSMs the statistical portrayal shown later does not capture. For instance, a 'general' case is that when an immigrant on 'activities' has resided over 10 years continuously in Japan, they can apply for permanent residency.

The length of required stay is shortened for the Japanese-kinship-based-residents: it only takes 3 years for the spouse of a Japanese national, 5 years for Nikkeijin and refugees. With regard to HSMs, if “(t)he person has been recognised to have made a contribution to Japan in diplomatic, social, economic, cultural or other fields, and has stayed in Japan for more than 5 years” (Immigration Bureau, 2017a: 2), they can apply for the permanent residency without the 10-years’ consecutive residence. However, this special treatment is quite narrowly implemented considering Immigration Bureau lists a Nobel Prize laureate as an example of “a contribution” (Immigration Bureau, 2017a). Therefore, it is generally understood among HSMs that it takes 10 years to obtain permanent residency.

3.3 Points-based system (PBS)

In 2012, Japan introduced the PBS to attract HSMs. This is the first policy implementation to ‘attract’ HSMs in that the Japanese government proactively developed the strategies aiming to increase the number of HSMs (Kodo jinzai ukeire suishin kaigi, 2009).

Even though it is designed as points-based, it is not a selective system that screens migrants intending to work in Japan. In this regard, the PBS is different from the models introduced in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the UK to ensure the transparency and predictability in the application process. The formal name of the system is ‘Points-based Preferential Immigration Treatment for Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals’. As the name indicates, it provides migrants approved to be ‘Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals’ with preferential treatment not granted to other migrants.

There are three categories of Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals (Immigration Bureau, 2015):

1. Advanced academic research activities: “activities research guidance or education based on a contract entered into with a public or private organisation in Japan”;
2. Advanced specialised/technical activities: “activities of engaging in work requiring specialised knowledge or skills in the field of natural sciences or humanities based on a contract entered into with a public or private organisation in Japan”;
3. Advanced business management activities: “activities of engaging in the operation or management of a business organisation in Japan”.

Points are calculated on the basis of academic background, professional career, annual salary and age. In addition, there are so-called bonus points which are different in each category HSMs apply for. For example, Japanese language proficiency, higher education degree obtained in Japan, research achievement (only for advanced academic research activities or advanced specialised/technical activities), specific management position such as representative director (only for advanced business management activities) are evaluated. If an applicant achieves over 70 points in total, they are given the status of residence 'Highly Skilled Professional (1)' and the following seven advantages are awarded (Immigration Bureau, 2015):

1. Permission for multiple activities;
2. Grant of the 5-year period of stay;
3. Easing of requirements for permanent residence;
4. Preferential processing of entry and residence procedures;
5. Permission for the spouse of the highly skilled foreign professional to work;
6. Permission for bringing a parent(s) to accompany the highly-skilled foreign professional to Japan under certain conditions;
7. Permission for a domestic worker to accompany the highly-skilled professional to Japan under certain conditions.

When the HSMs with the status of residence 'Highly Skilled Professional (1)' work in Japan for more than 3 years, then they can apply for the upgrading status called 'Highly Skilled Professional (2)', which grants an indefinite period of stay together with the above preferential treatments (except for 4. since they have already entered and resided in Japan). As this upgrade status has no expiry date, it has a similar function to permanent residency in terms of the length of stay as long as they engage in a highly skilled job²⁷.

The number of HSMs who became 'Highly Skilled Professional (1)' for the first 11-months of the implementation (7 May 2012 to 6 April 2013) was only 434 (Dai 6ji shuntsunyukoku kanri seisaku kondankai gaikokujin ukeire seido bunkakai, 2013). That was far below the expectations the government had—the MOJ designed the points calculation so that around 10% of the existing HSMs can attain the threshold²⁸ according to an informant (Migration expert 3). Oishi (2014) also suggests it is a policy

²⁷ If the immigrant does not engage in a highly skilled job (prescribed by the points) for over six months, the status will be cancelled. Besides, they need to report to the MOJ where they work. Permanent residents do not have these obligations.

²⁸ There is no clear explanation about how points were allocated (Oishi, 2014). It was decided by MOJ with the consultation of other related Ministries. According to informant (Migration expert 3), MOJ used the unofficial statistical data, mainly HSMs' salary, to define the points allocations.

failure since the initially-approved number of 434 represents only 0.2% of HSMs. As evidence, the government acknowledged the policy failure and necessity to drastically improve the system to increase the number of Highly Skilled Professionals (Japanese government, 2013; Immigration Bureau, 2017b). The advisory board for Minister of Justice also proposed the reforms:

Under the status quo, it is pointed out that there are some groups of people who should be deservedly recognised as a highly skilled professional that are not approved in the system. Against this background, it is necessary to reform the points system urgently.

(Dai 6ji shutsunyukoku kanri seisaku kondankai gaikokujin ukeire seido kento bunkakai, 2013: 5)

As a result, the PBS has been remodelled on several occasions since December 2013. For instance, the minimum salary has been lowered from 6 million Yen to 3 million Yen for people aged over 40 of Advanced specialised/technical activities or Advanced business management activities²⁹. For Advanced academic research activities, the minimum salary was even abolished regardless of age. Along with the points calculation system, the preferential treatment was also improved; for example, Highly Skilled Professional could be only accompanied by a domestic worker if their salary was above 15 million Yen before the reform. Now the salary condition is minimised to 10 million Yen. Thanks to the reforms, the number of Highly Skilled Professionals has remarkably increased from the initial 434 to 8,515 as of June 2017 (Immigration Bureau, 2017b). The statistical data of overall HSMs such as a breakdown of countries of origin and gender will be explained in detail later.

3.4 Definition of highly skilled migrants in Japan

According to the Immigration Act, skilled migrants are usually graduates of tertiary education or people with more than 10-years' relevant professional experience. Nonetheless, there are some exceptions: IT engineers are deemed as skilled migrants if they have specific qualifications, of which the Japanese government has a mutual recognition system (Japan Information Technology Promotion Agency's mutual recognition of IT professionals) with other countries. Intracompany transferees, need not satisfy the above two conditions if they work for their company more than a year and they are engaged in a job deemed as white-collar.

²⁹ Regarding salary, different points and minimum requirement are allocated by age-range.

Other than white-collar workers, occupations listed in the Act and Ministerial Ordinances such as chefs and nurses are only regarded as skilled. Manual workers, including factory workers, are not listed even if they have specific high skills and long-time professional experience, for example precise welding skills in ship building. It is noteworthy that the UK includes social worker and high integrity pipe welder in Tier 2 visa occupations (Home Office, 2018) while Japan does not include these occupations in the admitted 'activities' HSMs can do. Japan does not have a shortage occupation list system because it focuses on the required skills of occupation rather than the labour shortage. This sounds plausible in that the 'skilled' immigrants should be always deemed as skilled; If we take an occupation-shortage approach in defining skills, then the HSMs will be contingent on the labour market conditions—it means a skilled immigrant will be regarded non-skilled in a few years when there is no labour shortage anymore. When they are classified as 'unskilled' immigrants, there will be a problem about whether the government should suspend their status of residence or not. In other words, the occupation-shortage approach sets greater store on external factors (i.e. labour demand) for HSMs than the internal factors (i.e. skills) they can improve by their efforts. On the other hand, the labour-shortage system also has advantages in that it can accommodate the labour demands, subsequently contributing to the socio-economic development as long as the government can appropriately and regularly revise the list. In the UK, the Migration Advisory Board consisting of migration experts plays this role. In sum, the definition of HSMs depends on a country's specific socio-economic condition and stance towards labour-shortage alleviation.

The Japanese government has its own definition on HSMs called 'specialist and technical status of residence' (senmonteki gijutsuteki zairyushikaku) which spans 14 categories (Immigration Bureau, 2016) in addition to 'Designated Activities' (see Column in the next page) and newly legislated category 'Care Worker'.

Table 3-2 List of expert and technical status of residence

Status of residence	Examples
Professor	College professor
Artist	Composer, artist, or writer
Religious Activities	Missionary assigned by a foreign religious organisation
Journalist	Reporter or photographer of foreign press
Highly Skilled Professional	Highly-skilled human resources in accordance with the Points-based system
Business Manager	Manager or administrator of a company, etc.
Legal/Accounting Services	Attorney or certified public accountant
Medical Services	Physician, dentist or registered nurse
Researcher	Researcher at a government-related institution or company
Instructor	Language instructor at a senior high school or junior high school, etc.
Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services	Engineer such as of mechanical engineering, interpreter, designer, language instructor at a private company or marketing specialist.
Intracompany Transferee	Transferee from an office abroad
Entertainer	Actor, singer, dancer, or professional athlete
Skilled Labour	Chef of foreign cuisine, sports instructor, aircraft pilot, or craftsman of precious metals

Source: Immigration Bureau (2016)

Column Mind the Gap! What are Designated Activities?

The status of residence ‘Designated Activities’ is quite elusive, but it is indispensable to understand the intricate definition in order to deal with the statistical data. It is defined as “activities which are specifically designated by the Minister of Justice for individual foreign nationals” (Immigration Act, Appended Table 1 (5), emphasis by the author). Before implementing the status of residence ‘Highly skilled professional’, all the HSMs in PBS were given the status of residence ‘Designated Activities’. Also, some IT specialists and researchers are given Designated Activities. This cohort is relatively small (1,632 people) and the statistical data issued by Immigration Bureau sometimes omit them. The author paid a careful attention to this omission in retrieving the data. When the statistical data does not include them, it is mentioned so hereafter. It should be also mentioned that the status of residence ‘Designated activities’ covers non-HSMs as well since it is in practice applied to immigrants who cannot be classified into the other categories. A good example is working holiday maker. Asylum seekers are also given Designated Activities until the decision is made. In this sense, Designated Activities can be interpreted as ‘other activities’.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the definition of HSMs in this dissertation follows the visa categories that the Japanese government prescribes. However, to make the arguments more precisely focusing on HSMs who are expected to bring innovation or clear added-values to Japan (Kodo jinzai ukeire suishin kaigi, 2009; Immigration Bureau, 2017b; Keidanren, 2018), three categories of status of residence were put aside: “Artist”, “Entertainer” and “Religious Activities”.

It is true that the Japanese government classifies them as HSMs, but it is controversial whether they are highly skilled workers or not. Since these occupations often have great dispersal of ‘skills’, it is sometimes misleading to include them among HSMs on a par with the other types of HSMs. Especially, the status of residence of entertainer has been disputed since it was abused in the prostitution industry (Sellek, 2001; Ballescás, 2003; Sakanaka, 2017) as will be discussed in Chapter 5. With regard to Artist and Religious Activities, their primary role is not normally to add value to the economy but give artistic or spiritual inspiration. Therefore, these three categories are not counted in the dissertation although the author admits their potential to enrich the life of people in Japan.

3.5 Statistical data

This section overviews the landscape of highly skilled migration from the statistical data³⁰ and consequently shows key puzzles through which the labyrinth is explored: rapidly increasing numbers of Asian HSMs and downward trend of Western HSMs.

In total, there are currently 2,471,458 mid-to-long term (foreign) residents regardless of their skills (e-stat, 2017), accounting for 1.9 % of all the population in Japan. This number only includes the immigrants legitimately given a status of residence while it is estimated that there are 65,270 irregular immigrants³¹ as of January 2017 (Immigration Bureau, 2017b). The overall number of HSMs³² stands at 288,542 making up 11.7 % of all the mid-to-long term residents (e-stat, 2017).

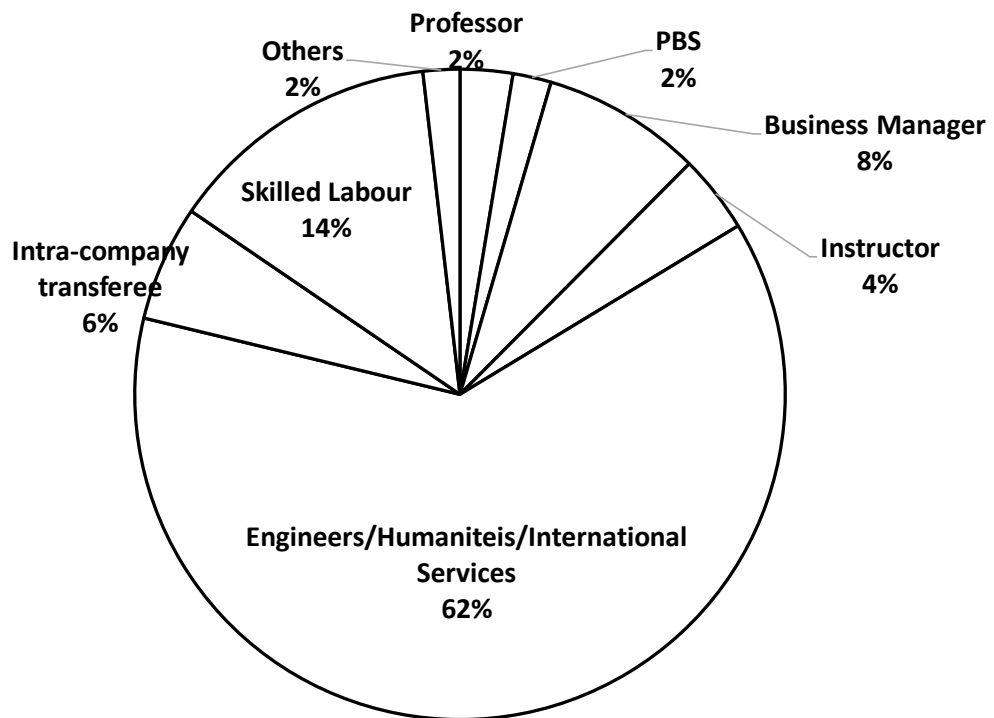
³⁰ The data is as of June 2017 unless specified.

³¹ Immigration Bureau calls them ‘overstayers’, who “illegally stay in Japan beyond the permitted period of stay without obtaining permission for extension or change of status of residence” (Immigration Bureau, 2007: 30). Apart from overstayers, Immigration Bureau also identifies ‘illegal entry’ (people who landed without going through immigration control e.g. stowaway). During 2016, Immigration Bureau deported 599 people of illegal entry (Immigration Bureau, 2017).

³² As defined, this number does not include immigrants who have a status of residence of artist, entertainer or religious activities. It does not cover care worker either as this residential category was not implemented in June 2017.

Looking at the component of the highly skilled status of residence, Engineers/ Specialist in Humanities/ International Services accounts for over 60% of all the HSMs. These people are desk workers in a company whilst the second largest group, Skilled Labour, is engaged in non-desk-work that requires physical techniques such as chefs, aircraft pilots and animal trainers. It is worth noting that intracompany transferees comprise only 6 % of HSMs in Japan. This signifies that most Japanese HSMs are independent migrants.

Figure 3-2 Highly skilled migrants by status of residence



*PBS: Points-based system (Highly Skilled Professional)

Source: e-stat (2017)

The aggregated data of status of residence does not clarify the business sectors HSMs work in. Subsequently, it is useful to consult employment statistics: Situation Notified Foreign National Employment Status is compiled by MOL every year from notifications all the employers are legally required to submit. According to the data, 16.7% of the HSMs work in the Information & Telecommunication sector, followed by Manufacturing (15.7%), Wholesale and Retail Trade (14.1%), Education (11.6%), Hospitality (6.6%), Construction (1.9%) in addition to others (10.3%) as of the end of October 2017 (MOL, 2018).

For gender, 68% of all the HSMs are male and 32% female. Breaking down the status of residence by gender, the gender division is clear with female HSMs in Medical Services remarkably overrepresented (84%) followed by Instructor (46%). This may be attributed to the significant number of female nurses echoing gendered labour migrations, *inter alia* the global chain of care (Raghuram, 2004). As evidence, the female ratio (percentage of female HSMs to the total number) in Intracompany transferee (21%) underrepresents that of the overall HSMs. This gender division among HSMs can be also observed in Europe (Kofman, 2000, 2013).

Table 3-3 Status of residence by gender

	Total	Male	Female	Female ratio (%)
Total	286,910	195,455	91,455	32
Professor	7,551	5,179	2,372	31
Journalist	237	182	55	23
Highly skilled professional	5,494	3,811	1,683	31
Business Manager	22,888	17,218	5,670	25
Legal/Accounting Services	154	136	18	12
Medical Services	1,632	268	1,364	84
Researcher	1,612	1,123	489	30
Instructor	11,183	6,060	5,123	46
Engineers/Humanities/ International Services	180,180	112,191	67,989	38
Intracompany transferee	16,601	13,032	3,569	21
Skilled Labour	39,378	36,255	3,123	8

*The data do not include the number of HSMs of Designated Activities.

Source: e-stat (2017)

Geographical concentration is also notable. Administratively, Japan is composed of 47 prefectures (synonymous with counties in the UK) and 36% of all the HSMs live in Tokyo. When it comes to the greater Tokyo area (adding Kanagawa, Saitama, and Chiba prefectures), it amounts to over 60%. Considering that the greater Tokyo area holds 28% of the whole population in Japan (MIC, 2015), HSMs are quite concentrated around the capital. Shimane prefecture has the fewest HSMs (306 people, 0.0003% of all HSMs) followed by Kochi (308 people, 0.0003%).

Table 3-4 The number of highly skilled migrants by prefecture

	Prefecture	Number of HSMs
1	Tokyo	104,505
2	Kanagawa	30,131
3	Saitama	20,888
4	Osaka	20,513
5	Chiba	18,796
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46	Kochi	308
47	Shimane	306
	All Japan Total	286,910

* Address not known: 323 people.

* The data do not include the number of HSMs of Designated Activities.

Source: e-stat (2017)

Regarding nationalities of HSMs, the top 5 origins are China (consisting of 40% of the total HSMs), South Korea (10%), Vietnam (7%), Nepal (7%) and USA (6%) in decreasing order. The HSMs from these 5 origins comprise over 70% of all the HSMs.

Table 3-5 Top 30 origins of HSMs

	Total	288,542	Number of People					
1	China	115,795	11	Sri Lanka	3,919	21	Russia	1,322
2	South Korea	28,420	12	France	3,828	22	Mongolia	1,178
3	Vietnam	19,933	13	Canada	3,309	23	Italy	1,074
4	Nepal	18,860	14	Australia	3,173	24	New Zealand	979
5	USA	17,058	15	Pakistan	3,106	25	Afghanistan	946
6	India	13,476	16	Indonesia	2,724	26	Singapore	827
7	Taiwan	10,320	17	Myanmar	2,440	27	Spain	776
8	Philippines	8,253	18	Bangladesh	2,095	28	Brazil	625
9	UK	5,823	19	Germany	1,932	29	Jamaica	519
10	Thailand	4,078	20	Malaysia	1,908	30	Turkey	473

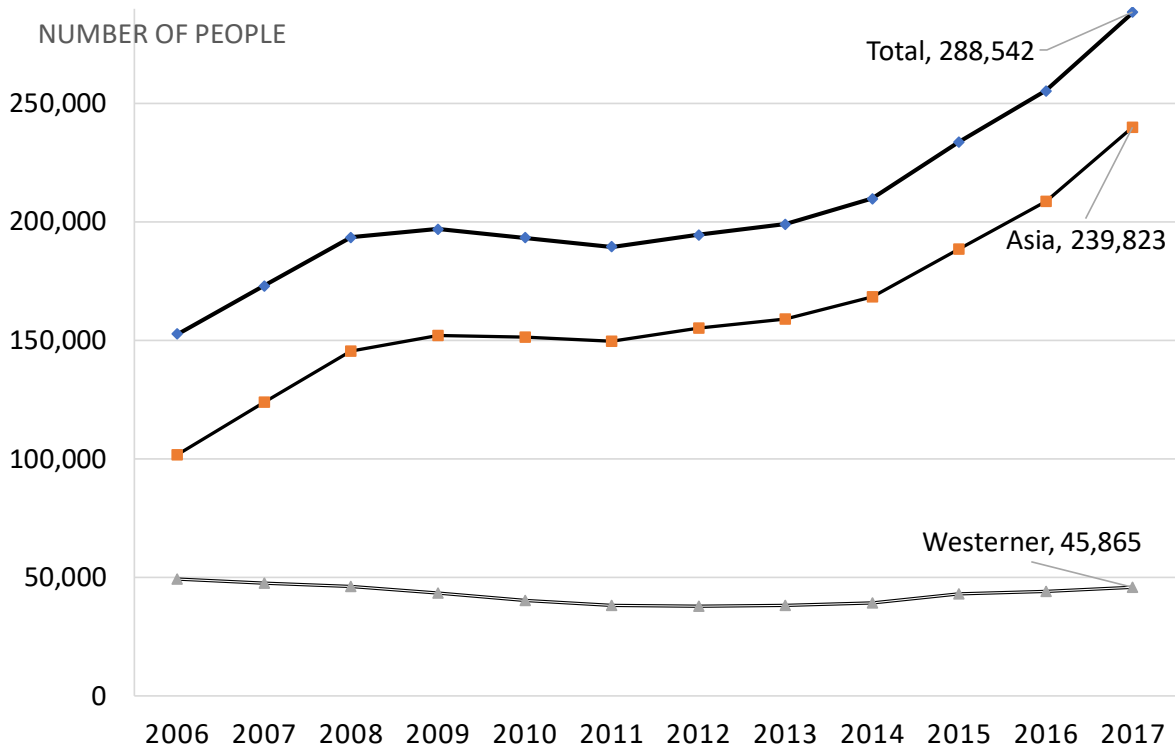
*The Western economies are highlighted. The total number indicates all the HSMs including stateless persons. China includes Hong Kong and Macau.

Source: e-stat (2017)

Immigrants from the top 30 origins listed in the table comprise 97% of all the HSMs, out of which are 10 western states (highlighted in the table) whilst 27 economies comprising over 80% of all the HSMs are Asian. Figure 3-3 traces the number of HSMs

for the past decade. The boosting trend of total HSMs is clearly synonymous with that of Asians albeit the number of western HSMs remains stagnant.

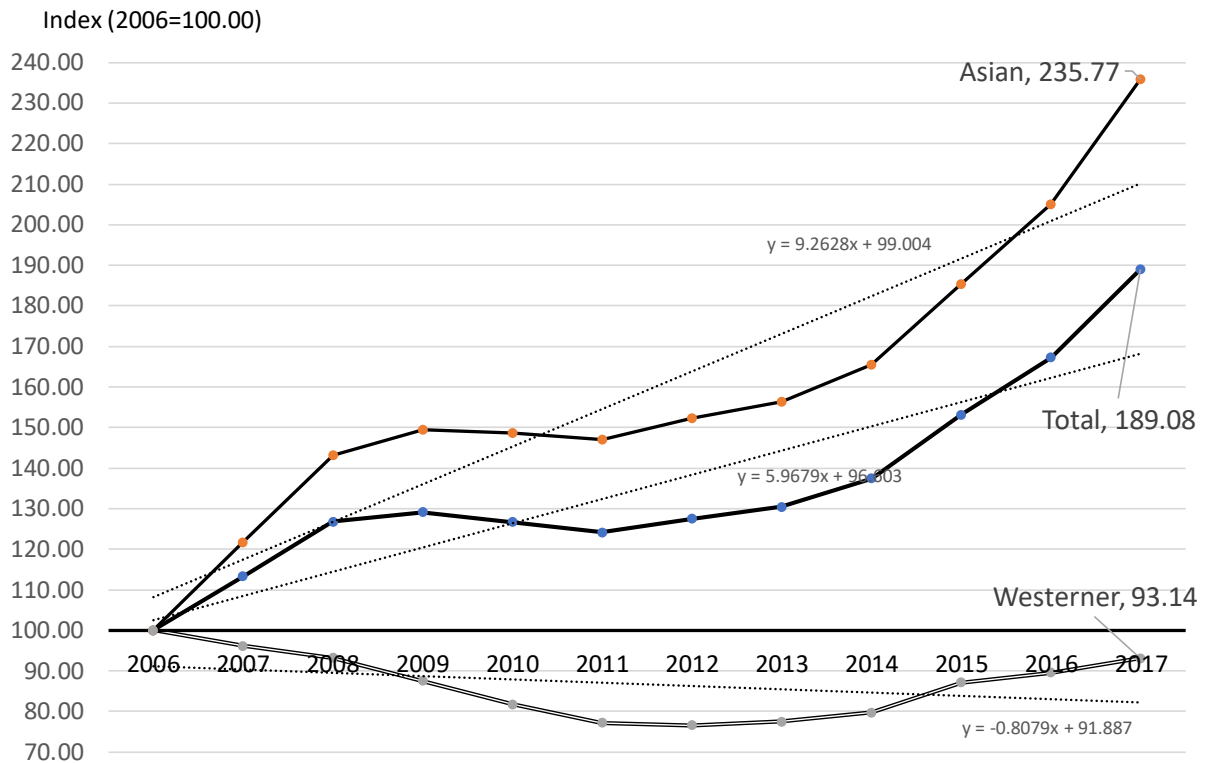
Figure 3-3 The number of highly skilled migrants (2006-2017)



Source: e-stat (2017)

The tendency becomes more evident in the indexed longitudinal data. From 2006 to 2017, the number of HSMs had more than doubled and showing a constant upward trend except for 2010 and 2011 when the worldwide recession and the Great Earthquake hit Japan. Asian HSMs are the driving force of the surge in the figure of overall HSMs. In contrast, the number of Western HSMs has constantly been below the level of 2006. In order to observe the overall trend, regression lines are depicted as small-dotted-lines in Figure 3-4; the lines indicate that the number of Asian HSMs has soared by 9% annually whilst that of Western HSMs has dropped by 0.8%, though the figure hit a low in 2012 when the Japanese economy started to recover.

Figure 3-4 The trend of Asian and Western HSMs (2006-2017, indexed)



Source: e-stat (2017)

The Japanese economy entered a recovery phase in December 2012 (Cabinet Ministry, 2018). It has since been boosted reaching the second longest growth thus far in the post-war period (Cabinet Ministry, 2018). Echoing the robust economy, employment conditions have hugely ameliorated. The unemployment rate had fallen from 4.3% (December 2012) to 3.1% (June 2017) with the surge of new employment at 3.31 million people (MIC, 2017). Tracing back to 2006 when the figure 3-4 data were benchmarked (2006 data=100.00), the total employment has risen by 3.75 million people from 54.51 million (January 2006) to 58.26 million (June 2017) (MIC, 2017). Although the data include all types of employment regardless of skills, it is obvious that the labour market has expanded. The Ratio of Effective Job Offers to Application was 1.51 in June 2017 reaching the highest level since March 1974 (MOL, 2017); it means there are 1.51 vacant posts for one job seeker³³. The mounting trend of the overall number of HSMs has also accelerated from 2013. The Japanese business community expresses concern over the labour shortage (Lewis, 2017; Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2017; Keidanren, 2018) which prompts the enterprises to increase immigrant employment in addition to hiring more females, elderly and

³³ When the ratio exceeds 1.00, the number of vacant posts is equal to that of job seekers. In Japan, it has constantly been above 1.00 since November 2013.

handicapped workers (Keidanren, 2018). Therefore, it is natural that the overall figure of HSMs keeps an upward trend.

Fractioning the western economies into a few areas hints at a more interesting trend. The number of European HSMs has increased by 2,300 from 2006 to 2017 whilst that of North America and Oceania³⁴ (Australia and New Zealand) has decreased by approximately 2,500 and 3,200 respectively. Among others, the figure of Oceanian HSMs has plummeted by almost half for the past 11 years.

Table 3-6 The number of highly skilled migrants by origin (2006-2017)

	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2017	% change
Total	152,603	193,442	193,268	194,520	209,719	255,253	288,542	89
Asia	101,717	145,596	151,240	155,006	168,372	208,640	239,823	136
Westerner	49,243	45,927	40,276	37,727	39,259	44,090	45,865	-7
Breaking down the westerners								
Europe	17,889	17,312	15,336	14,580	15,783	19,452	20,189	13
N.America	24,003	22,787	20,165	19,036	19,579	20,581	21,524	-10
Australia	5,577	4,462	3,636	3,063	2,920	3,102	3,173	-43
New Zealand	1,774	1,366	1,139	1,048	977	955	979	-45

*The data of 2006-2016 are two-year.

Source: e-stat (2017)

The following table presents more detailed fluctuations by countries. It extracts the number of HSMs from the top 7 Asian (excluding Taiwan) and top 10 western economies (the western economies are highlighted) as of 2017.

³⁴ According to the definition in immigration statistics, Oceania includes the pacific islands (e-stat, 2017). However, this dissertation only encompasses Australia and New Zealand in Oceania. Therefore, the table shows the number of immigrants from Australia and New Zealand rather than the whole of 'Oceania'. Other areas (i.e. Asia, Europe, North America) are in line with the definition of the statistical data (c.f. Appendix 3); hence, it is described as areas.

Table 3-7 The fluctuation of highly skilled migrants by country (2006-2017)

	2006	2017	Absolute change	% change
China	58,674	115,795	57,121	97
South Korea	18,832	28,420	9,588	51
Vietnam	1,449	19,933	18,484	1,276
Nepal	1,743	18,860	17,117	982
India	8,082	13,476	5,394	67
Philippines	3,481	8,253	4,772	137
USA	17,637	17,058	-579	-3
UK	8,286	5,823	-2,463	-30
France	2,793	3,828	1,035	37
Canada	6,035	3,309	-2,726	-45
Australia	5,577	3,173	-2,404	-43
Germany	1,723	1,932	209	12
Russia	1,033	1,322	289	28
Italy	583	1,074	491	84
New Zealand	1,774	979	-795	-45
Spain	249	776	527	212

* China includes Taiwan and South Korea includes North Korea in 2006 data.

Source: e-stat (2017)

The number of Asian HSMs has drastically increased with Vietnam experiencing a 1,276% increase. In contrast, the westerners show mixed tendencies. Looking at European countries in detail, the number of UK citizens has remarkably fallen by 30% while that of France (37%), Germany (12%), Italy (84%), and Spain (212%) have increased. Especially, the surge in the figure of South Europe is prominent; it might partly be explained by the deteriorating employment conditions in these states (Rienzo and Vargas-Silva, 2014). However, it should be noted that Germany and the UK also have enjoyed economic growth during the period notwithstanding that the two source countries point to contrastive tendencies (decreasing numbers of UK and increasing German HSMs). It follows that there might be another significant push or pull factor than economic circumstances. Importantly, the declining trend of people from North America, Oceania, and the UK demonstrates the shrinking cohorts of Anglophones (or Anglo-American) although the other cohorts—especially Asians—show a robust increasing trend. It is notable that the number of Canadian, Australian and New Zealanders has almost halved even though Japanese economic growth has recently

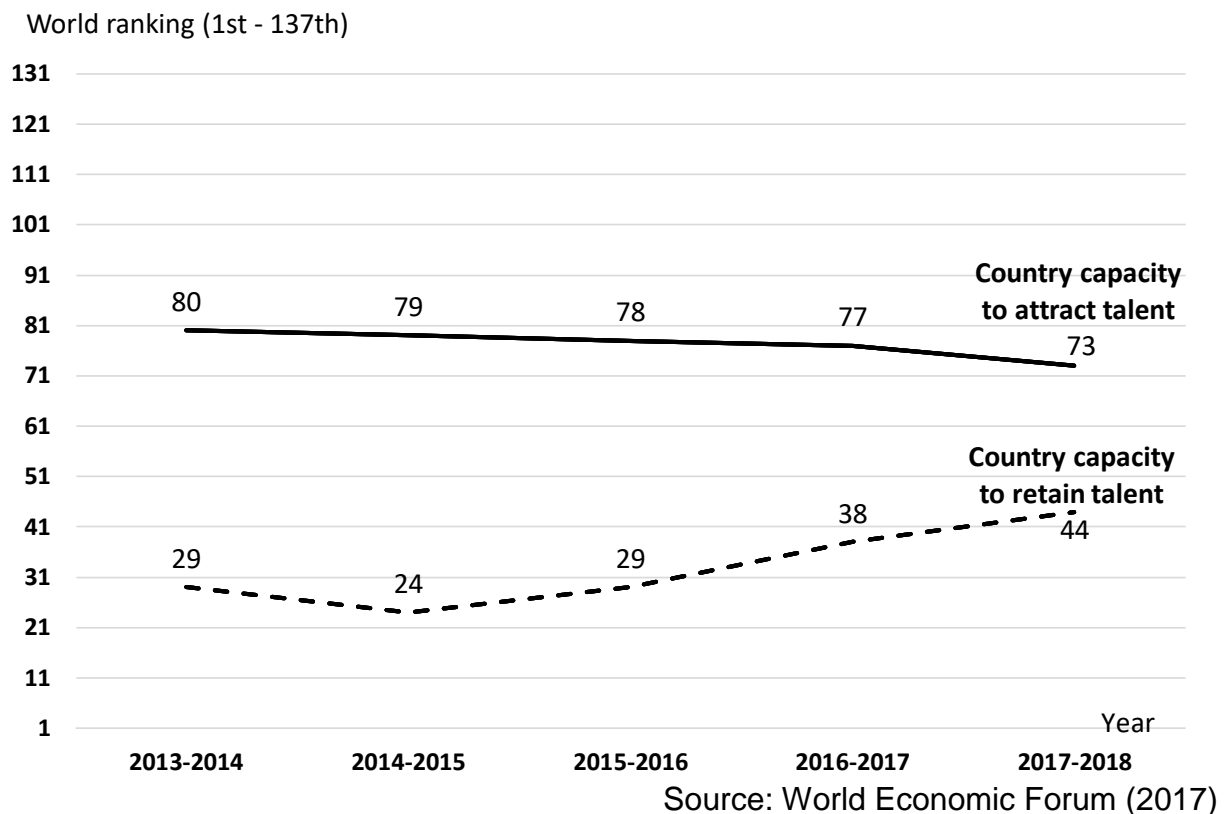
offered more job opportunities to foreign professionals (Immigration Bureau, 2017b; MOL, 2018).

In sum, there are two puzzles which cannot be answered by macro statistical data: (1) Why are the specific cohorts, namely the Western HSMs (*inter alia* Anglo-phone), shrinking in Japan; (2) Why didn't Japan's robust economic growth help increase the specific cohorts? These are the key puzzles through which this research deciphers the labyrinth of HSMs.

3.6 Attractiveness to work in Japan

Another important question in considering the status quo of Japan's highly skilled migration is how attractive working in Japan is. As a part of the annual compilation of world competitiveness index, the World Economic Forum issues the world ranking of attractiveness which enables benchmarking Japan in the global talent competition. Japan has been placed between 70th and 80th out of 137 economies for the past 5 years in terms of the capacity to attract talent from abroad, far behind other advanced industrial economies.

Figure 3-5 Japan's attractiveness rank for talents in the world



The most attractive state in the 2016-2017 survey is Switzerland followed by UAE, the UK, Singapore, and the USA. Even comparing within Asia, Japan is ranked below Hong Kong (9th), China (23rd), South Korea (42nd) and Taiwan (63rd). On the capacity to retain talent (regardless of nationalities), Japan is ranked 44th in 2016-2017 while the ranking has been slightly dropping. Again, the top country is Switzerland followed by UAE, USA, Norway and Singapore (World Economic Forum, 2017).

In sum, the data suggest that Japan is less attractive for HSMs than other advanced industrial states including its Asian counterparts. At the same time, Japan's capacity to retain the talent has also diminished. It is worth exploring the reasons in this study.

3.7 Policies on highly skilled migrants in Asia

3.7.1 Migration trends in Asian immigration economies

This final part of the chapter attempts to position Japanese migration policies within the context of Asia in order to provide a wider landscape in the related policies in similar immigration economies. In not only skilled migration but also other migration agendas such as unskilled migration, there is a clear tendency that the immigration policies of a nation-state internationally converge (Hollifield et al., 2014). On account of the globalisation and transport innovation that accelerate borderless movement, a nation-state faces enormous difficulties in maintaining its own distinctive policies without being influenced by other nations or international institutions. Therefore, it is indispensable to hold the international perspective in examining the policies and its variations (Hollifield, 1992, 2008; Shachar, 2006; Castles et al., 2014). Notwithstanding that the focus of this research is not a multinational comparison but Japan, international benchmarking will help elucidate policy implications. In so doing, this part will highlight the similarities and distinctiveness of Japanese policies in comparison with other Asian immigrant economies³⁵.

Asia is quite diversified among countries in terms of the degree of economic development, political regime, demography, history, culture, religion, and social issues. This is why generalising Asian migration trends is far more difficult than in other world regions (Asis et al. 2010; Castles et al., 2014). However, looking at statistics, the literature identifies predominant immigration destinations, which are Japan, Singapore,

³⁵ Brunei is also an immigration country but it is not described here because of the much smaller number of immigrants (approximately 200,000) compared with the other observed countries and the distinctive industrial structure (oil and gas industry accounting for 60% of GDP).

South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, and emigration countries such as China and India (Hugo, 2005; Massey et al., 1998).

The statistical data on the stock of migration irrespective of visa categories (e.g. skilled, unskilled, family reunification and so forth) in the predominant immigration destinations reveal some interesting features³⁶. First of all, human mobility is dominated by intra-regional migration within Asia. Although there are a few exceptions (such as South Americans in Japan and the US citizens in South Korea), the countries accept most of the immigrants from Asia. Among others, China is remarkably an important contributor for these destinations. It is also noteworthy that South Korea has still more emigrants than immigrants with the gap exceeding double. This means that it is an emigrant country as well as China although the majority of previous surveys on South Korean migration centre on the immigration in the country (Seol, 2013).

Table 3-8 Stock migration in Asian economies/area

	Japan			South Korea			Singapore		
Immigrants in stock	2,437,169			1,232,220			2,323,252		
Emigrants in stock	882,123			2,594,382			303,394		
Top 5 immigrants origins	Country/Area	Number of people	Ratio to all immigrants	Country/Area	Number of people	Ratio to all immigrants	Country/Area	Number of people	Ratio to all immigrants
1	South Korea	699,290	28.7	China	656,846	53.3	Malaysia	1,044,994	45.0
2	China	655,480	26.9	Vietnam	122,449	9.9	China	380,766	16.4
3	Brazil	365,857	15.0	USA	71,817	5.8	Indonesia	152,681	6.6
4	Philippines	226,179	9.3	Philippines	49,173	4.0	India	138,177	5.9
5	Peru	68,642	2.8	Thailand	34,373	2.8	Pakistan	118,765	5.1

	Hong Kong			China (as reference)		
Immigrants in stock	2,804,753			848,511		
Emigrants in stock	788,568			9,344,919		
Top 5 immigrants origins	Country/Area	Number of people	Ratio to all immigrants	Country/Area	Number of people	Ratio to all immigrants
1	China	2,280,210	81.3	South Korea	222,276	26.2
2	Indonesia	132,985	4.7	Philippines	121,320	14.3
3	Philippines	116,505	4.2	Brazil	115,347	13.6
4	Macau	70,454	2.5	Indonesia	58,639	6.9
5	Thailand	18,963	0.7	USA	42,655	5.0

Source: UN (2013)

Second, each destination tends to accept the majority of immigrants from neighbouring economies. The immigrants from the largest sending country stand at the nearly half of the foreign population with China at 53% in South Korea, Malaysia 45% in Singapore,

³⁶ Taiwan is not shown since the data are compiled by the United Nations.

China 81% in Hong Kong. This is due to historical and ethnic reasons. For example, South Korea opens its border to the ethnic Koreans in China. As already discussed, Japan also has a 'blood-based' immigration system for people who have Japanese ancestors (so-called *Nikkeijin*). Most of the Brazilian/Peruvian and some of the Pilipino/Chinese reside in Japan under this category. From the historical perspective, the descendants of Korean and Taiwanese who came to Japan during the colonial period (early 20th century) have Special Permanent Resident status in Japan: 338,950 people in 2016 (Immigration Bureau, 2017b). Singapore tries to keep the ethnic balance among Chinese, Malay, Indian and others in its immigration policy. The history of nations also plays an important role in immigration; Singapore became independent from Malaysia and Hong Kong was returned to China.

Unskilled labour and international marriage are also key factors to examine the influx of immigrants in Asia. South Korea has a bilateral agreement with Asian countries such as Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand to import unskilled labour. Singapore accepts unskilled labour widely from Southeast Asia and China mainly in the sectors of construction, shipping industry and domestic services. A new tendency of human mobility has occurred since the 2000s; international marriage in South Korea and Hong Kong has surged. In South Korea, most of the cases are ethnic Korean brides from China but brides also come from Southeast Asia such as Vietnam and the Philippines in the form of so-called 'mail-order brides' (Lee, 2008). In Hong Kong, the number of marriages with Mainland Chinese women rocketed from 703 to 15,978 between 1986 and 2007 (Ngan and Chan, 2013).

In fact, the literature on Asian migration has concentrated on and been limited to remittances, diaspora, unskilled labour, marriage migration and brain drain (Asis et al., 2010; Ngan and Chan, 2013) but there is little study on highly skilled migration and its policy implications in Asia (see for example Liu-Farrer and Yeoh, 2018). Therefore, in the coming section, policies of highly skilled migration (and unskilled immigration policies when they are relevant to discussing skilled mobility) in three destinations are described: Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan³⁷.

³⁷ Although Hong Kong has its own immigration policies apart from China, it is natural to consider that Hong Kong is still a part of China as Ngan and Chan (2013) insist. The fact that the over 80% of immigrants are internal Chinese origins also support this view. Hence, Hong Kong is not discussed in the next section.

3.7.2 Policies in Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan

Singapore

Singapore is a leading nation in Asia not only in accepting immigration but also implementing policies focusing on HSMs³⁸. The incipient policy targeting HSMs is 'Eminent Entrepreneurs and Professional Scheme' which was introduced in 1988 to attract talent from Hong Kong³⁹ where concerns over the return to Chinese sovereignty prevailed at that time (Iwasaki, 2015). In 1989, when the Tiananmen Incident exacerbated their fear, the Singapore government eased the conditions of employment restrictions and permanent resident to lure in talent from Hong Kong (Yue, 2011). In the 1990s, Singapore launched a few institutions which functioned as a basis of promoting the influx of HSMs such as Contact Singapore and Singapore Talent Recruit Committee. Above all, Contact Singapore directly links Singapore-based employers including foreign affiliates and global talents in addition to overseas Singaporeans, offering websites in Chinese (both simplified and traditional characters), English, Japanese and Koreans and having overseas offices to provide information. This policy functions to not only attract HSMs but also encourage overseas Singaporeans to return to their home country (Ho, 2008), which Japanese migration policies do not aim to do.

There are two types of schemes for HSMs in Singapore: Personalised Employment Pass (PEP) and Employment Pass (EP). PEP is not tied to employers in Singapore, so the holder is free to change jobs. To gain this Pass, the immigrants should earn a monthly salary of at least S\$ 18,000. On the other hand, PEP is issued to immigrants with jobs with the minimum salary of S\$ 3,300 and is tied to the employer. EP is also beneficial for employers exempt from foreign worker levy and quotas unlike unskilled immigrants. In addition, the employer of HSMs can apply for tax deduction for the cost of recruiting foreign talent. The pass holder is usually offered permanent residential status from two to six years depending on other conditions like salary even though the Singapore government does not offer it to unskilled immigrants. The percentage of the two Pass holders—namely HSMs—to all labour immigrants was 13.2 % (176,600 people) in 2014 (Iwasaki, 2015).

South Korea

In contrast with Japan which has 28 types of status of residence for HSMs, there are only eight types of visa for HSMs in South Korea: professor, foreign language instructor,

³⁸ It should be also noted that Singapore has a unique system in immigration to keep the ethnic balance.

³⁹ However, the western nations such as Canada and Australia were more appealing destinations than Singapore for people in Hong Kong. Skeldon (1995) raises historic, cultural, economic and political reasons for this.

researcher, technology guidance (someone who has specific high-tech knowledge and transfers it to Korean companies), special profession (such as lawyers, accountants, doctors), arts and entertainment, specially Designated Activities (other HSMs than listed before). Being similar with Japan, the criteria are prescribed in detail in each category while job offer is indispensable for all the categories. There are no labour market tests or quotas for HSMs unlike unskilled immigrants.

South Korea started strategical policies to attract HSMs from 2000. There are three categories for HSMs: the Gold Card for high-tech specialists; the IT Card for IT specialists; the Science Card for qualified scientists and engineers (the Card holders can enjoy preferential treatment such as shorter time of visa procedure, longer period of stay permitted, special permission to be accompanied by a foreign domestic worker). South Korea also introduced a Points-Based system for HSMs in 2010 to screen immigrants who can apply for permanent residential status in a shorter period. The criteria evaluated on the system are academic background, income, age, ability in Korean language and so forth. If an immigrant scores over 80 from a total 120 points, they can be a permanent resident in three years although it takes 5 years for the other immigrants.

Despite the efforts of offering preferential treatment and other programmes catering for HSMs, the number of HSMs remains relatively low level. The total number of HSMs is 44,264 which is merely 6% of all the labour immigrants; furthermore, foreign language instructor stood at 50.7 % of all the HSMs categories in 2012 (Seol, 2013).

Taiwan

In Taiwan, labour immigrants need a work permit apart from visa which is called a Resident Visa because it only permits residence not employment. In addition, a work permit should be obtained by the employer not employee. The Resident Visa for HSMs is called Class A (white collar) and includes the following work: specialised or technical work, managerial position of foreign affiliate; teacher; sports coach and athlete; and, religious, artistic, show business work.

For these HSMs, the government introduced Employment Pass Card to attract foreign talent in 2011. The card combines the permission of Resident Visa, work permit, alien resident certificate and multi-entry all together—the government named it '4 in 1'. The aim is to simplify the administrative procedure for foreign talent to increase the number. However, since combining visa and work permit has already been the norm in other industrial Asian countries including Japan, Singapore and South Korea, it is an

immigration policy to catch up with other countries rather than implementing a new strategy to win the competition for talent. As a matter of fact, the number of HSMs in Taiwan accounts for 30,623 and it represents only 5% of all the foreign workers as of July 2015 (Ministry of Labor [Taiwan], 2015).

Nonetheless, one of the interesting features in Taiwan's skilled migration trend is return migrants. Taiwan has experienced brain drain for the last four decades; many highly educated Taiwanese emigrated to the USA. Some of them launched IT business in Silicon Valley or were employed by high tech companies or research institutions. These talented Taiwanese tend to return to their homeland contributing to the development of an innovative industry (Saxenian, 2006). A good example is Hsinchu Science-based Industrial Park, where return migrants set up 31.2% of high tech business (Chiu and Hou, 2007).

Another feature is a prominent social cohesion policy. In contrast with the homogeneous nature of the Japanese population, Taiwan holds indigenous ethnic minorities in addition to other minorities coming from mainland China such as 'Hakka' or 'Waisheng ren'; consequently the importance of multiculturalism is more widely recognised than Japan even though it is not provoked by labour migration (Kim and Oh, 2011; Imaizumi, 2012). National Immigration Agency runs a comprehensive website for potential immigrants explaining visa issuance and daily life issues like health care and housing so that they can "adapt to the lifestyle in Taiwan and improve their quality of life" (National Immigration Agency [Taiwan], 2015: About this site). The website offers information in seven languages: Chinese, English, Japanese, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Thai and Cambodian.

3.7.3 Comparison with Japan

Each economy has adopted different schemes for HSMs although some similarities are also found. For instance, HSMs in each destination can apply for permanent residential status if they reside between three to five years except for Singapore where the criteria are multi-faceted. All the governments normally require job offers to admit HSMs to work. The total fertility rate remains low at between 1.0 and 1.4.

Table 3-9 Comparison among the four economies

	Year HSMs policy started	Official scheme for unskilled immigrants	Years to obtain permanent residence for HSMs	Necessity of Job offer for visa	Total Fertility rate*	Ratio of HSMs to foreign labour**
Japan	2012	no	5-10 (depend on contribution)	yes	1.4	18%
Singapore	1989	yes	2-6 (Points-Based)	yes	1.2	13%
S. Korea	2000	yes	3	yes	1.2	6%
Taiwan	2011	yes	5	yes	1.0	5%

*2013 data. Taiwan: National Statistics Republic of China [Taiwan] (2015), others: World Bank (2014)

**Japan (2017 data): MOL (2018), Singapore (2014 data): Iwasaki (2015), South Korea (2012 data): Seoul (2013), Taiwan (2015 data): Ministry of Labor [Taiwan] (2015)

Source: the author

On the other hand, the timing for when the government implemented special policies for HSMs is different. Singapore started the strategic policy for HSMs as early as 1989 ahead of other states, followed by South Korea in 2000 with Japan and Taiwan far behind. Why has Japan, as the most developed economy in Asia and the one with the earliest aging society, been the last to implement a skilled migration strategy? This enigma will be answered from the point of migration governance (Chapter 7).

Another salient difference is the ratio of HSMs in overall immigration. Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan have an official scheme to introduce unskilled foreign labour although Japan does not have one⁴⁰. Interestingly, this affects the percentage of HSMs to foreign workers. In Japan, HSMs make up 18 % of the total foreign labour force exceeding South Korea (6%) and Taiwan (5%) even overwhelming the percentage in Singapore (13%). This is partly because Japan has a policy not to accept unskilled labour officially and the other three economies tend to rely more on unskilled labour from overseas. This fact also indicates that the policies in other Asian governments on HSMs are not quite successful especially in the case of South Korea and Taiwan.

As already described, the Japanese government referred to the UK's PBS rather than Asian policies when designing Japan's own PBS. This may be because it seemed to policy makers that Japan's rival states in Asia failed in attracting HSMs⁴¹. So, Japan needed to look for another good practice: it was the UK that introduced the PBS when

⁴⁰ There are indeed some 'back door' routes to import unskilled labour such as Nikkeijin and Technical Intern Training programme (Tsuda and Cornelius, 2004). However, Japan still keeps its 'official' stance not to accept unskilled labour. This will be detailed in Chapter 7.

⁴¹ This notion of downplay is proved to be distorted later in the findings-chapters.

Japan started official discussions to launch strategies to increase the number of HSMs (Kodo Jinzai Ukeire Suishin Kaigi, 2008). It is said that South Korea and Taiwan replicated the Japanese model of technical training (Chung, 2010; Kim and Oh, 2011); this fact may have also discouraged Japanese policy makers from looking at Asian models.

The comparison with other Asian models also gives some important implications to Japan on the societal dimension. Japanese immigration policies have been criticised for their lack of multiculturalism or social cohesion (Iguchi, 2007; Tsuda and Cornelius, 2004). It is obvious when Japan's policy is compared with South Korea and Taiwan that the significance of multiculturalism is not shared by nationals (Chung, 2010; Kim and Oh, 2011). With regard to the notion of diversity in society and policies, Japan is left behind other Asian nations. This is observed in return migration policies in Japan where the government only focuses on immigration rather than emigration.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter broadly mapped out the legal system of highly skilled migration, statistical overview and international comparison, subsequently showing the puzzles within and the distinctiveness of the Japanese system.

It might be true that the Japanese immigration control is enigmatic for non-Japanese researchers, but it is not so different from the UK system in terms of legal structure and basic idea underpinning immigration control. In both countries, the decision on immigration control is entirely left to the discretion of Ministry (or Secretary) of Justice based on the detailed prescriptions across secondary/quasi legislation. It signifies that the immigration control is formed of a multi-stratification of rules that make comprehending the system difficult. Nonetheless, it is also an important role for academic researchers to explain the complicated system simply enough to inform research problems instead of exploiting academic jargon as Favell (2008) insists.

The chapter also introduced the recent policy development to strategically lure HSMs in: PBS. Unlike other industrial states such as Canada, Australia and the UK, the Japanese system does not function as a screening mechanism but to provide the selected elites with several preferential treatments which other HSMs cannot enjoy. Even though it was deemed as a ground-breaking strategy for the closed immigrant state (Hollifield et al., 2015), the number of grants for the first 11-months comprised only 0.2% of the whole HSMs suggesting a policy failure (Oishi, 2014).

With regard to legal entitlement to reside in Japan, HSMs are given one of the 14 types of status of residence (plus newly added 'Care Worker' status). Albeit this research excludes three of them, namely, Artist, Entertainer, and Religious Activities. Statistically, Engineers/Specialists in Humanities and International Services account for 62% of all the HSMs whilst intracompany transferee represents as low as 6%. This means it is imperative to look at independent migrants in examining the research questions.

Another salient feature is source economies. For the past 11 years, the total HSMs has risen by 89% and the driving force of this expansion is Asians who occupy over 80% of the existing HSMs. Albeit the figure of Asian HSMs dipped in 2010-2011 due to the recession and Great Earthquake, it has drastically recovered and mounted in accordance with labour shortages that Japanese business sectors seriously suffer (Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2017; Keidanren, 2018). In contrast, the number of Western HSMs has been stagnant with the level steadily below the point of 2006 over the decade. It cannot be explained by economic pull factors even though some of the South Europeans may be motivated by economic push factors, namely, deteriorating employment conditions in their home states. This contradiction between Asian and Western immigration patterns poses an intriguing puzzle the academic research so far has not resolved.

Turning to international benchmark, it was shown that Japan has lagged behind other industrial states in terms of attractiveness and strategies to persuade the best and brightest to immigrate and stay. Singapore implemented the master plan to attract HSMs over 20 years before Japan launched the PBS. Japan does not have return migration policies or comprehensive policies for social cohesion. Nonetheless, the percentage of HSMs in the immigrant labour pool stands at the highest among other Asian immigration states because of its unique stance on immigration: Japan does not have an official scheme to accept unskilled immigrants. Although this dissertation deals with skilled migration, the banning of unskilled immigration is in fact closely related to Japanese policy makers' stance and position on highly skilled migration as revealed later.

To conclude, based on the examination of regulatory frameworks of highly skilled migration together with its statistics and benchmarking, this chapter presented three key propositions at play in the labyrinth. First, the Asian and Western HSMs exhibit contrasting immigration patterns. Specifically, it is unclear what theory can explain the stagnant Westerners' mobility instead of economic factors. As already discussed,

professional posts have been drastically expanded and the mounting numbers of Asian HSMs have filled the vacancies. Nonetheless, the number of Western HSMs has been constantly lower than that of a decade ago. What creates this contradiction? How can it be explained within the framework of migration theory? Another proposition is why Japan is not attractive to talent from abroad. Despite the third largest economy in the world boasting cutting edge innovative technologies and plenty of job opportunities, why has it failed to appeal to the global talent? And the other proposition is why the PBS did not function properly.

These key propositions can be answered through the previously fixed research questions, which will unfold the labyrinth of highly skilled migration. In sum, what this background chapter unravelled will form the basis of the empirical analysis in Chapter 5-7. The next chapter discusses academic methods to explore the puzzles.

Chapter 4 Methodologies and Methods

*Not everyone can see all the truth.
Many people only see what they wish to see.⁴²
Julius Caesar*

4.1 Introduction

This chapter⁴³ sets out methodologies and methods chosen to answer the research questions, whose central inquiry (i.e. overarching research question) is to reveal agencies and actors in attracting HSMs to Japan. In unpacking the interplays among the agencies and actors, this study adopted qualitative methods due to its inductive and in-depth nature, which enables unravelling the intricate process of decision-making. This chapter is devoted to explaining why the qualitative methods were taken and how the research was undertaken.

The first part of the chapter deals with the strengths and weaknesses of methods to acquire a suitable research design. Then, the research strategies of qualitative inquiry—textual context and interviews—are shown including its data collection, sampling and analysis together with how ethical issues were dealt with. The final part explores the intrinsic challenges and limitations of the methods. It critically examines sensitivities, sample size, translation and positionality, discussing how the author has overcome these challenges during the fieldwork and analytical process referring to methodological literature. Finally, the chapter reflexively addresses a fundamental question on qualitative methods: what is a good interview?

4.2 Methodologies

4.2.1 Nature of qualitative research

It is widely recognised that there is no clear and universal definition of qualitative research (Mason, 2002). Although Ormston et al. (2014: 23) agree that there are various definitions, they define qualitative research as “an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world”. Denzin and Lincoln (2013: 7) describe how qualitative researchers attempt to “make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. In order to interpret society, qualitative methods

⁴² from Shiono (2004: 5)

⁴³ The chapter is partly drawn from the author’s essay (Wakisaka, 2015) submitted in January 2015 as the assignment for Qualitative Methods Unit (one of the required for the PhD degree), to School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol.

rely on words and images (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2014; Ormston et al., 2014), while quantitative data are always numeric. This is often pointed out as the distinct nature of qualitative research when compared with quantitative research, having an inductive, subjective, and interpretivist approach⁴⁴ (Bryman and Becker, 2012; Denzin and Lincoln, 2013; Flick, 2014; Ormston et al., 2014).

It is noteworthy that there are various qualitative methods available other than interviews. To name a few, observation, focus groups and textual context are among the qualitative methods, and even economists, albeit often regarded as quantitative researchers, employ these approaches (e.g. reading the minutes of the Monetary Policy Meeting of the Central Bank; interviewing experts before building up hypotheses).

Qualitative research is to investigate the characteristics of the research participants, for example, how they are different from others, what promotes them to be so, and how they reach specific decisions. Each person may have their own account for these questions (Creswell, 2013). In contrast, quantitative research is based on the assumption that the characteristics of the population can be generalised in order to transform the data into a homogeneous (i.e. numerical) group rather than describing the differences (Bryman, 2016). Importantly, qualitative research focuses on 'process and reasons' rather than 'results'. This in-depth approach to focusing on multi-dimensionality and process is both the strength and weakness of qualitative research: social scientists should be aware of the different nature and philosophy between qualitative and quantitative research in choosing their research methods.

4.2.2 Reasons for using qualitative methods

The most determinant reason for choosing a qualitative approach for this research is its inductive nature. In the inductive approach, research generates a theory whilst the deductive approach uses research to test a hypothesis inferred from theory (Bryman, 2016). Given there are not enough data to build a hypothesis of this study, the agency and actors in attracting HSMs can be located by exploring peoples' experiences of being a migrant throughout an inductive approach. The previous chapter clarified a puzzle showing the contrasting migration patterns between Asians and Westerners: the former shows a remarkable increase whilst the latter remained quite stagnant notwithstanding the robust job creations in Japan.

⁴⁴ It should be noted that these distinctions are not always appropriate, for quantitative research is sometimes useful for exploring reasons and qualitative research is used to test hypotheses (Bryman, 2016; Ormston et al., 2014).

However, the statistical data do not reveal the reasons why these contradictions have occurred. In addition, a quantitative survey has limitations in explaining contextual backgrounds behind the phenomena although it has more explanatory power of generalising a theory. As Ritchie and Ormston (2014: 32) assert, “because of its facility to examine subjects in depth, qualitative research provides a unique tool for studying what lies behind or underpins, a decision, attitude, behaviour or other phenomena”, this research relies on this inductive nature to verify the factors to which HSMs attach importance when deciding to migrate. Above all, it is helpful to reveal micro-macro interplays among actors and agencies (Izuhara and Forrest, 2013). As this research shed light on three dimensions (namely micro, meso, macro), aiming to bridge these angles to produce dynamic policy implications, qualitative methods are fit for the purpose.

4.2.3 Philosophical underpinnings

Even though there are various points of view and methods in qualitative approaches, qualitative researchers generally share philosophical assumptions that are different from quantitative research.

One is ontology, which represents the nature of reality. Bryman (2016) points out that objectivism regards social phenomena as external factors, while its counter-philosophy, constructionism, takes the position that society is dependent on people; constructionism is predominant in qualitative research. More significantly, whichever stance the researcher takes, there is a common understanding that reality is multifaceted (Creswell, 2013; Ormston et al., 2014). This concept supports the fact that the number of HSMs migrating from some countries to Japan is stagnant, whereas the total number of HSMs is vigorously growing. According to Creswell (2014), ontological assumptions permit reporting various perspectives and nuances as themes develop in the findings. As society becomes more complicated during the process of internationalisation, this assumption, looking at diversity, provides an insight to exploring the actors and agencies at play in the skilled migration mechanism.

The other is the epistemological assumption, which represents how to form “acceptable knowledge” (Bryman, 2016: 24). In other words, it means on which academic grounds the research questions are explored: positivism or interpretivism. From the positivist view, the methods of the natural sciences should be applied to the social sciences, and the subjectivity of the qualitative research, especially interview findings, is unacceptable because it cannot be scientifically measured and proved. On

the contrary, from the interpretist view, social phenomena cannot be measured rigidly and scientifically because there is no natural law to prescribe participants' behaviours. Therefore, an interpretist posits that "a social researcher has to explore and understand the social world through the participants' and their own perspectives" (Ormston et al., 2014: 24). As discussed above, the determinations of migrants are extremely diversified and cannot always be described numerically whilst the findings of qualitative research could bring something hidden from the statistics. Hence, this research takes the position of interpretivism.

Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind that these two sets of philosophical assumptions are not always distinctive and dichotomous (Castles, 2012). For instance, Ormston et al. (2014: 4-5) assert their ontological position as qualitative research is close to objectivism (or what they call 'realism') that posits "external reality which exists independently of people's beliefs about or understanding of it". It signals that qualitative researchers do not necessarily share identical philosophical underpinnings. In fact, mixed methods—combining quantitative and qualitative approach—are academically established and employed widely (Bryman, 2016; Victoria et al., 2008) even though the two combined methods are predicated on different philosophical assumptions. Bryman (2016: 34) justifies this point by claiming:

Quantitative and qualitative research represent different research strategies and that each carries with it striking differences in terms of the role of theory, epistemological issues, and ontological concerns. However, the distinction is not a hard-and-fast one: studies that have the broad characteristics of one research strategy may have a characteristic of the other.

Thus, the philosophical assumptions may well be better understood as interactive than dichotomous. A good example is that an asset manager of an investment bank also employs semi-structured interviews with corporate executives in deciding their investment, mixing with quantitative data such as PER (Price Earnings Ratio), interest rate or the market growth. This means the asset manager also puts a great store on qualitative data from the corporate executive including their business philosophy which cannot be quantified. In sum, it is reasonable to consider which method(s) can help collect more illuminating data for the research. On this point, this research takes an inductive approach which allows the exploration of an individual's process of decision and its meaning shrouded behind the invisible process.

4.2.4 Weakness of qualitative method

This research enjoyed the advantages of an inductive, in-depth, and multi-dimensional approach in the qualitative inquiry. Yet, there are some intrinsic issues in qualitative methods in order to ensure validity, reliability and generalisability. As with the difficulties in sampling strategies, qualitative research has been developed to meet the requirements of epistemology to be regarded as social sciences. In other words, the research design should be in line with the epistemological criteria. Although there is no clear set of criteria, “two basic stances” (Bryman and Becker, 2012: 275) are considered here: the adaptation position (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982) and the replacement position (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

The adaptation position sets out reliability, validity and generalisability as criteria for qualitative research (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). Reliability means that the research can be reproductive. In fact, LeCompte and Goetz (1982) admit it is difficult to reproduce the situation in which the research was conducted. Instead, it is regarded that the research process, specifically, “research strategies used to collect data” (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982: 40), is clarified to the extent that the research ensures the ability to replicate.

Validity addresses the strong linkage between the data and the theory that the researcher is confirming. As qualitative research is inductive, the researcher draws certain theories according to the data cited. Creswell (2014: 252) proposes using a “rich, thick description” (original italics) to report the findings so that the conclusion of the research becomes more realistic and understandable for readers.

Generalisation is concerned with the ability to generalise the theory. This might be the most challenging criterion for this research because it has a relatively small sample size, which is not sufficient to generalise the findings. Nonetheless, as the research aims at explanatory research rather than generalising the theory, it might be reasonable to concentrate on reporting the cases. Creswell (2014: 204) claims that generalisability in qualitative analysis should not be regarded equally with quantitative analysis, since “(p)articularity rather than generalizability (Greene and Caracelli, 1997) is the hallmark of good qualitative research...The generalization occurs when qualitative researchers study additional cases and generalize findings to the new cases. It is the same as the replication logic used in experimental research” (citation in original). Then, the important criteria for generalising qualitative findings are to ensure “good documentation of qualitative procedures” so that the research can be repeated

or developed (ibid., 204). Generalisation is accordingly related to the repetition of ensuring reliability and validity.

The replacement position (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) is another criterion to enhance trustworthiness by using terms such as credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. They propose triangulation, reporting negative cases countering the findings, and member checks, as ways to increase the credibility of the study. In addition, the most unique feature of this criterion is auditing: researchers keep all the materials that they have collected or used to conduct the qualitative research, including records of all the procedures, so that they can be reviewed by auditors. Although “there are very few examples of an audit trail approach” (Bryman and Becker, 2012: 277), many qualitative reports still refer to their criteria (Creswell, 2013).

Since this research forms a PhD study, an audit trail is not applicable. Although the PhD supervisors can play a similar role as auditor—the fieldwork and theorising findings were conducted under their supervision—, their position to give academic guidance to the student is different from that of auditors who should neutrally monitor the research. Subsequently, the author takes the adaptation position while paying attention to the basic idea of the replacement position, which still widely influences qualitative practice. Referring to the extant literature of qualitative research on migration (e.g. Beaverstock, 2004; Leonard, 2008; Favell, 2008; Ho, 2007; Liu-Farrer, 2011a, 2011b; Oishi, 2012) was also helpful when considering validity and reliability. Based on the methodologies, the next section overviews how the research was designed and administered.

4.3 *Textual context*

Three kinds of textual data were collected as reference points throughout the research: the documents from employers’ organisations, the government, and informants.

There are numerous proposals designed to improve migration policies, including visa issuance and welfare systems. For example, employers’ organisations such as the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan and the European Business Council in Japan, regularly make these proposals and lobby to implement the policies. Among Japanese business circles, Keidanren is actively involved with policy formations, constantly issuing reports or proposals to reform the migration regime. Two more nationwide economic organisations, the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Keizai doyukai also compile reports on labour and management from the business perspectives. The former focuses on the economic activities of small and medium

enterprises and the latter tend to propose liberal (as opposed to conservative) economic and social policies comparing to other business lobbying groups. The reports and proposals from various private organisations, regardless of their positions (i.e. domestic or foreign, scales of business, political stances), promoted understanding of the issues that HSMs and their employers face in Japan.

Furthermore, the Japanese government has established official study groups to examine effective migration policies such as Kodo jinzai ukeire suishinkaigi (the Council for the Promotion of Acceptance of Highly Skilled Professionals) and Shutsunyukoku kanri kondankai (the advisory committee on immigration policies for the Minister of Justice) in Japan. These public bodies publish reports and recommendations, making public their meeting minutes or distributed materials to demonstrate in detail how they have reached their conclusions. In addition, the textual context was extended to the documents made or commissioned by METI, MOL, MIC and the Cabinet Ministry to grasp the overall landscape of policy discussions or coordination in the government. Gaikokujin shuju toshi kaigi [Council of Municipalities of Concentrated Foreign Residents] also offered documents to consider social cohesion and local issues. To comprehend the political discourses, the documents from the two major parties in Japan, (Liberal Democratic Party) LDP and (Democratic Party) DP, were referred to as well. Also, informants gave the author some materials, which include unofficial documents. These were meeting minutes, pamphlets, brochures and research reports. Some of them were specified as only a reference by the informants—it means they cannot be cited but referred to in interpreting the data and writing the dissertation.

These documents were used to understand how migration policies for HSMs are discussed and designed, in addition to how employers and HSMs view the current policies. This textual context has also provided the basis or complementary data for the interviews in fixing the topic guide.

4.4 Method: Interviews

4.4.1 Data collection strategies

As is often the case with qualitative inquiry in the PhD dissertation, data collection through interviews occupied the core part of this empirical research. Unlike the official documents, the interview data are not on the internet and should be gleaned from the fieldwork with a careful design. Because of the limited resources for the fieldwork, the

author was required to finish it within two months⁴⁵. As a result, it was imperative to carefully design the data collection strategies so that enough data can be obtained in the most efficient manner. Given the limited resources, the author formulated four distinctive strategies of data collection: (1) no snowballing, (2) triangulation through a gatekeeper and personal network, (3) reaching former policy makers, and (4) multi-stratifications of policy evaluation. These strategies with some novelties in the data collection —dare to say, experiments borne out of necessity—eventually contributed to the migration research methods as shown below.

(1) No snowballing

Generally, migration researchers are prone to using snowballing due to the challenging nature to identify relevant participants (Atkinson and Flint, 2001; Oishi, 2005) although it may undermine the quality of data (Bryman, 2016) by only covering specific groups. This research needed the data of not only migrants themselves but also policy experts, who have especially gone through policy formations in the government. Since it also required critical examination from multi-angle perspectives of actors who have been engaged in policy making in a different position, the sampling was carefully designed not to use snowballing to exclude the possibilities of one-side arguments. Besides, snowballing takes a long time since the researcher should wait to be introduced to new participants. As the fieldwork needed to be completed within two months, this was not realistic.

Oishi (2012) and Tsukasaki (2008), the existing qualitative research in this area, employed snowball sampling which may incur the problems of validity. While these two studies have larger samples [Oishi (2012), 65 samples; Tsukasaki (2008), 68], the 'quality' of my samples (45 samples) compensated for the small sample size. To sum up, this research focused on increasing the quality of data rather than the mere quantity, thereby adopting another methodological challenge from the extant literature to contribute to academic debate.

⁴⁵ The author was given a special study leave from the employer and a scholarship from another institution to conduct the PhD research. Both institutions, namely the employer and scholarship sponsor, required the author to do research activities outside Japan. This means the duration that the author can stay in Japan during the study leave is limited. Therefore, the author reached an agreement with them to do the fieldwork in Japan for a minimum period (that was 1-2 months) to be in line with their expectations.

(2) Triangulation through a gatekeeper and personal network

Participants were reached through the gatekeeper or author's personal network. In the case of migration experts, the author directly contacted some of them by sending an email since we did not know each other.

The gatekeeper of HSMs was the author's employer, Keidanren, the largest employer organisation in Japan. It was established in 1946 as a non-government and non-profit organisation and is still privately funded by around 1,500 member companies and organisations. Their member companies are large enterprises representing Japan internationally. For instance, the top executives of renowned Japanese firms such as Toyota Motor Corporation and Canon have recently taken its chairmanship. Its slogan is 'Policy and Action'; they formulate future oriented policy recommendations—Policy—and work with stakeholders to implement the proposed policies—Action—(Keidanren, 2017). Their counterpart in the UK is the Confederation of British Industries (CBI); they have similar functions and reputation.

As Keidanren represents the Japanese business community in policy making process, it has a list of their member companies actively involved in the migration debate. The gatekeeper in Keidanren introduced me to these companies, whose employees were the interviewees. A detailed sampling framework will be described later in this chapter.

One of the advantages in using this sampling strategy is the availability of wider and more balanced samples than snowballing. Keidanren's member companies stretch across various industries such as financial, electronics, energy, IT (both manufacturing and services), automotive, chemical, food, real estate, conglomerates, all of which were the sectors the informants worked for. In addition, the character of the companies is quite diversified in terms of business orientation (international or domestic) and corporate culture (traditional, venture or foreign affiliated). It is possible to choose samples from these wide choices and take a balance of the samples such as nationalities, age ranges, gender, titles, professional experiences and types, visa categories, and educational backgrounds. The wide and balanced samples together with strict purposive sampling strategies are arguably one of the greatest strengths of this research.

Having said that, it is expected that Keidanren's network has some limitations: it does not cover some cohorts such as the self-employed (e.g. interpreter), academic researchers (e.g. professor in university) or foreign language teachers. These samples

were found through personal networks. This is a triangulation, which helped assess the validity of the data (Moran-Ellis et al., 2006; Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2014). Triangulation is a technique using different data sources (or methods) to unpack the same social issue. It means the social issue is examined from different angles through the comparison of the different sets of data, thereby cross-checking the data to enhance the validity of research (Mason, 2012).

For instance, as Keidanren's members are large-scale and established corporations—one of the requirements to be its member is being listed on the stock exchange or its equivalent—, their employees are also elites enjoying stable and well-paid jobs. If the informants had been only confined within these elite cohorts, the research may have had ended up biased or at least looked at only one dimension—HSMs in a large firm. Thus, personal networks were mainly employed to recruit participants whom Keidanren does not cover due to its organisational nature.

The informants recruited via personal networks include a start-up entrepreneur, the self-employed (interpreter/translator) and HSMs in a non-profit sector (e.g. academics/teachers). As triangulation is particularly useful in revealing the multi-dimensions and diversities of social phenomena (Mason, 2012) in addition to increasing the validity, the data collection from the two different sources have successfully brought illuminative findings such as precarious HSMs whom were only observed through the personal network as shown in the findings chapters (see Chapter 5 for more details). In conclusion, the distinctiveness of this research is the double strategy, namely (1) triangulation of the interviewed HSMs and (2) no snowballing, to ensure the validity with a relatively smaller sample size.

(3) Reaching former policy makers

The research also involved migration experts along with HSMs⁴⁶ and there were three strategies in collecting data from them. First, the recruitment covered ranges of migration experts. They were recruited from the government (bureaucrats) but also included various stakeholders from business sectors, immigration lawyers, researchers and so forth on the condition that all of them have been involved in the migration debate in Japan (e.g. member of advisory board in the government). In so doing, migration policies and process were dynamically sketched out.

⁴⁶ Some of the migration experts were also migrants although they were labelled as experts.

Second, all the interviewed policy makers are (were) high ranked officers across Ministries (higher than Director level) who are often hard to reach. For instance, the headquarters of Immigration Bureau has only 13 Directorate posts although the total number of officials working for the Bureau stands at 4,614 in FY 2017 (Immigration Bureau, 2017b). This accounts for how elite these Directors are.

As the policy making process involves political decision, accessing high level officers involved in the whole process is crucial to understand what happens there. Also, to grasp the specific characteristics of migration policies and its reforming process, interviewees should be well experienced in public governance so that they can compare the process with other policies. Usually, a Director (*Kacho*) in the Ministry is a main actor in shaping policies since s/he leads coordination within the Ministry or negotiations with other Ministries in reaching a consensus to reform policies. They also give a briefing to their Minister or visit politicians to explain the policies. Therefore, they are cognisant of the practical process and issues of policy formations and negotiations through their experiences, making them ideal informants in corroborating migration governance.

Last, former officials were mainly recruited to glean their frank views. The incumbent officers normally repeat their Ministry's basic stance and are not positive to reveal their personal opinions—it is quite natural because they accept the interview in their official role rather than privately. In contrast, the former policy makers are not bound by their former position and are free from these constraints. In addition, looking back the debates can make them reflect on the process impartially on the basis of its outcome, while estimating the current policy may be premature due to lack of data. This research particularly shed light on governmental decisions made in the past to unpack the process and actors. Hence, it was appropriate to interview the policy makers who were involved as high officials.

(4) Multi-stratifications of policy evaluation

One of the aims of this research is to give policy implications and this can be done only by assessing the current policies. For this purpose, policies were evaluated carefully by the wider stakeholders, including migration experts, former policy makers (*ex post facto*), and most importantly, users—HSMs. The Japanese government attempts to attract more HSMs in order to enhance industrial competitiveness and bring innovation (Kodo jinzai ukeire suishin kaigi, 2009; Immigration Bureau, 2017b), hence it is indispensable to check how the 'customers' (i.e. HSMs) perceive their efforts.

This is critically related to RQ 5 (Migration governance) which illuminated the policy making process. Although the majority of data used for the analysis was from migration experts, it took customer satisfaction into consideration to find out to what extent policy makers think it is practical. In other words, the analysis was not just constructed by experts' views but supported by the data from migrants. This is also another form of triangulation puzzling out the dynamism and ramifications of migration governance.

4.4.2 Sampling framework

Highly skilled migrants

This research adopted purposive sampling. As already discussed in Chapter 2 and 3, the definition of HSMs in this research is in line with the visa categories that the government prescribes as specialist and technical visa⁴⁷ (formally, status of residence). Therefore, the participants were chosen from those who have these categories of visa. Nonetheless, there were some exceptions: three people had permanent residency and two people had Japanese-spouse visa instead of the specialist and technical visa. In this case, I checked two points which are the requirements for obtaining the specialist and technical visa: (1) university graduate and (2) white-collar full-time. All of them satisfied these two conditions, subsequently matching the criteria. The other conditions included living in Japan for at least a year. As the research investigated how institutional and social conditions that surround HSMs should be improved to attract more HSMs, the informants were expected to live in Japan for a certain period to account for the questions asked.

Based on the criteria, I asked the gatekeeper (who was working for Economic Policy Bureau in Keidanren) to approach their member companies and have approval of interviewing one of the migrants working for their companies. If the company agreed to join the research, they introduced me to potential interviewee(s). The approached companies were chosen by the gatekeeper alongside balancing business sectors (manufacturing, services, domestic, multinational, foreign affiliated and so forth) on consultation with me.

The recruitment process had started before the author left the UK and some of the appointments were set up before arriving in Tokyo. In the earlier stage of the fieldwork, the choice of migrants was left to the approached companies. Yet, in the latter stage

⁴⁷ Except for Artist, Entertainer and Religious Activities as explained earlier

of the fieldwork, when some of them asked me if there are any preferences in nationalities or occupational types (e.g. engineers or administrative), I referred to some of the attributions which were scarce in the existing sampling such as female or Europeans. This is because the majority of interviewees in the first half of the fieldwork were Asian males and there was a need to balance the second half of the fieldwork although it is natural that the Asian respondents occupy the majority given the population (c.f. Chapter 3).

With personal network, I mainly used my friends' social network. I asked some of my friends and acquaintances to advertise my recruitment via email or social network services. The respondents who saw the advertisement contacted me directly via email. No snowballing was used even though some of them told me they could introduce their friends.

The recruiting process for both gatekeeper and personal network worked better than expected as I expected around 20 samples of HSMs in total before starting the interview. This is partly because there were only two enterprises (telecommunications and securities) which declined to join the research via gatekeeper. They explained they could find no appropriate respondents.

Migration experts

Purposive sampling was also applied to migration experts although the recruiting process is somehow different from that of HSMs. First, conditions to screen the respondents as migration experts were categorised into two groups. The first group was policy experts who were involved in policy discussions such as policy makers (civil servants) or advisory board members of the government. Some employers' organisations or migrant employers can also be categorised into this group since they are active in recruiting migrants or giving policy proposals. The second group is specialists in migration such as researchers, career consultant and immigration lawyers.

As I was involved in the migration debate in the government between 2008 and 2012 as a policy officer in Keidanren, I already knew some of the policy makers and experts interviewed. In such cases, I sent them emails directly to ask for appointments explaining the research aims. All but one agreed to join the research. I also sent emails to former officers or academics to hear their views although I did not know them. Their email address was on the website of their current affiliates such as research institutions.

Besides, I also directly sent emails to institutions including a recruiting agency, university, NPOs and so forth to fix the appointments with the specialists in migration employment or entrepreneurship.

This recruitment also went well except for foreign chambers of commerce. I contacted several foreign chambers of commerce in Tokyo but most of them did not respond to my emails. I made phone calls to solicit them for the interviews but most of them did not respond to the requests either. Some of them said they would talk to the boss but they never replied. I would raise two reasons for their negative reactions. One reason is that they were scarcely staffed. Usually it is run by only a few people and this possibly discouraged them to respond to the requests. The other is that those who were reluctant are not so interested in policy affairs as they perceive their role as business matching and socialisation of the members. As evidence, their stances on migration policies were not on their websites. On the contrary, the foreign employers' organisations interviewed are active in lobbying to bring policy makers' or the general public's attention to their interests.

4.4.3 Basic framework of the interviews

Based on these strategies, 45 semi-structured interviews were conducted from November to December 2015 in the greater Tokyo area, containing 60% of all the HSMs (e-stat, 2017) and Japan's administrative/political centre. Each interview lasted around one hour (in some cases, two hours). All the interviews were previously arranged in emails explaining the purpose of the research. A participant information sheet and informed consent form were sent to them prior to the appointment. The interviews were conducted in either the participant's office or public spaces such as café in line with participants' preferences. Some of the informants (via personal networks) spared time during their off-time although the vast majority participated during office hours.

All the informants are listed in Appendix 1 with their attributions: occupation, citizenship, gender, age, languages used, and recruiting methods for HSMs; former or current affiliates, the types of policy engagement for migration experts.

The respondents of HSMs composed 15 Asians and 11 Westerners (total 26 people) whose ages ranged between 25 and 58 with the number of male participants at 18 and female 8. The ratio of Western informants (42%) is largely overrepresented considering it only stands at 16% of all the HSMs (e-stat, 2017). This can be justified on the grounds that the research involves comparative analysis between the Asian and Western HSMs

to unfold the puzzles discussed earlier. The female ratio of the informants (42%) is slightly larger than that of the population (32%). Fifteen informants were found through the gatekeeper.

Approximately, two-thirds of interviews were conducted in Japanese and the rest were in English. As the author speaks both Japanese and English, no interpreters were employed. All the informants were also fluent in either (or both) language(s). After a few initial interviews, the author decided to first ask an informant which language to use during the interview⁴⁸. This is because one of the informants (Jack, a native English speaker) spoke Japanese no sooner than we met although we contacted each other in English before the appointment, which made the author free of the preconception that an Anglophone wishes to speak in English. An informant (Eric) used both Japanese and English—he chose to be asked questions in Japanese and answer in English. Other informants who mainly used English also sometimes cited a Japanese word or phrase, which occasionally bore illuminative connotations as shown in the findings-chapters; when an English speaker specifically used a Japanese phrase, it means their perception can be best (or only) described in that special Japanese phrase. It is a significant signal indicating their potential idea, which even they are not aware of in their discourses. The languages used were maintained in both transcription and analysis to preserve these specificities although the data in Japanese were translated into English when cited.

4.4.4 Analysis

Analysis is the process of summarising or synthesising the data from the fieldwork. This research used thematic analysis, which is appropriate to inductively extract patterns and meanings of social phenomena (Spencer et al., 2014). Before the thematic analysis, raw data from interviews was transcribed, followed by coding and linking them with the research questions (Bryman, 2016).

Coding is an important analytical process to categorise the data systematically into themes. In coding, text data collected from the interviews are segmented into blocks of phrases or sentences, which are categorised and labelled with themes (Creswell, 2014). The coding and analysis were conducted through Framework, which is a matrix-based format to index and sort the data (Spencer et al., 2014). This is an exploratory research into the significant agencies and actors attracting HSMs to Japan. Therefore, the data were categorised into several central themes related to the research questions

⁴⁸ Except for cases in which an informant appointed English as a working language when fixing the appointment.

such as the reasons why HSMs have chosen a specific country to work and factors relating to migration policies that have influenced their decisions. Then, the central themes were further broken down into sub-themes. In this way, the Framework enables moving back and forth between the data in different levels and subthemes (Spencer et al., 2014; Mason, 2002), subsequently establishing the patterns. In the analytical process, I especially focused on (1) repetitions, (2) metaphors or analogies, and (3) similarities and differences (Bryman, 2016). These are good signals to find significant agencies and actors at play in the informants' decision making.

One of the sensitive factors was translation. As the fieldwork employed the two languages, the data itself were a mix of different languages. Much care was paid to interpretations since the meaning of the words might be different between the languages depending on the contexts. For example, in English, citizenship can be also described as nationality although Japanese has only one word to describe it: '*kokuseki*'. The Japanese government uses 'nationality' as the translation of this word (e.g. Immigration Bureau, 2007; Immigration Act). Nonetheless, precisely speaking, citizenship has a different connotation to nationality in English (Ho, 2007). Hence, the analysis was carefully done in catching all the nuances from the informants, always replicating the interview situations in my mind. The emphasis on nuances was also maintained in reporting the data since Japanese was translated into English in citation. The challenges and issues concerning translation (Larkin et al., 2007) are discussed in the last part.

4.4.5 Ethics

It is of the greatest importance not to harm anyone while conducting the research, and for this purpose, "two basic principles, informed consent and anonymity", were applied (Cook et al., 2012: 334).

Considering that qualitative research aims to reveal "people's social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories" (Ormston et al., 2014: 23) through direct contact with them, interviewees are to be respected and protected. Specifically, the research purpose, means of making it public, requirements and details of the data management including how to protect confidentiality and its limits were clearly explained to the interviewees at the outset and their consent in writing or orally recording was obtained. It should also be mentioned that interviewees have the right to refuse to answer questions or withdraw from the research whenever they decide. The researcher should turn off the recorder at their request albeit this request was never made during the fieldwork.

Practically, this research was approved by the ethical review from the School for Policy Studies Research Ethics Committee and guaranteed to conform to its Guidelines. In line with the Guidelines, the participant information and informed consent sheet explaining the above ethical principles were sent to the participants in advance. At the outset of the interview, I always explained about the aim and principles in brief and reconfirmed their consent. All the interviews were digitally recorded upon their consent except for two cases where the participants preferred not to be recorded.

Apart from the fieldwork, the researcher should always be aware that ethical issues also arise “during several phases of the research process, and they are ever expanding in scope as inquiries become more sensitive to the needs of participants” (Creswell, 2013: 56). Above all, when researching vulnerable people, greater attention should be paid in light of their social and physical vulnerability. According to Liamputtong (2012), migrants are vulnerable and need to be treated more carefully when conducting research. For example, to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, this research made all possible effort to respect their privacy, such as “assign(ing) fictitious names” so that individuals cannot be identified (Creswell, 2013: 59). In addition, where it is necessary, I did not reveal the detailed attributions of the informants in this dissertation. For instance, I erased the visa types from the list of participants because if there is detailed information on the informants, this may help identify them. For the same reasons, I expunged the current affiliates of the interviewed former-policy makers. The risk that the general public can identify them seems to be low. However, as the ‘circle’ of migration experts is small enough to recognise the source, it might be easy for the ‘circle’ members to discern them. In sum, confidentiality of the informants was weighed more than the research product.

Data storage and security are also indispensable to protect confidentiality. The contact details of the participants, the list of participants, consent forms, audio-recorded data are separately stored with password lock whenever available. I carefully kept the computers from cyber-attack such as updating the software regularly and keeping email security high. In addition, I carefully stored the memory media in locked lockers. The hard copy data containing information of participants were also stored in separate locked lockers. In this way, both the soft and hard data were securely managed to protect confidentiality.

4.5 Challenges and limitations

4.5.1 Sensitivities

Vulnerable people such as migrants are likely to be harmed by sensitive questions about themselves. Therefore, no harm to the researched is essential. In addition, it might be possible that the interviewees do not speak the truth or raise significant points because of certain sensitivities. Dickson-Swift et al. (2008: 8) raise the importance of building a relationship of mutual trust when conducting interviews with vulnerable groups, saying “the quality of the data collected may be dependent of the researcher’s ability to develop an intimate and ongoing relationship with the participant”. Although the ethical issues are fully examined, it must be admitted that as the interview is an intervention, it influences the participants to a greater or lesser degree. For this reason, researchers should always think of ways to mitigate the negative intervention. I therefore sought to improve my communication skills like creating a frank environment using plain expressions (e.g. visa rather than status of residence) or keeping eye contact.

In discussing sensitivities, the necessity to research vulnerable groups should be examined as well. Because of its potential difficulties, researching vulnerable groups is often shunned by academics (Liamputtong, 2012). Hence, researchers must also be aware of the significance to bring people’s attention to those who are neglected in society as Liamputtong (2012: 75) articulates “the needs and concerns of vulnerable people are often ignored in the scientific literature. This will make these people even more vulnerable”. As social researchers, it should be also our role to disseminate the views of minority groups and to implement the relevant policies to improve their life circumstances.

4.5.2 Sample size

The sample size of this research was 45 in total. It might be argued that the sample size is comparatively modest to truly unfold the labyrinth of highly skilled migration if not too small. However, “a key characteristic of qualitative samples is that they are relatively small in size. This enables in-depth exploration of the phenomena under investigation” (Ritchies et al., 2014: 112). Ritchie et al. (2014) also claim that sample size does not simply reflect the contribution to knowledge. It is widely known that however many samples, if the samples are confined within the idiosyncratic group, the social research loses its validity. This suggests that if the quality of sample is ensured, the sample size itself can be accordingly small (Sato, 2015). Indeed, sampling

strategies not only include the size of sample but also how to select the samples. Based on this idea, this survey was designed to use triangulation and no snowballing to enhance the quality of the data.

In fact, it has been widely discussed how many interviews is enough, but there is no shared answer yet. What is commonly understood is it depends (Baker and Edwards, 2012). The qualitative sample size hugely relies on the research aims, analytical methods, characteristics of population, and types of research questions (Bryman, 2012). If these conditions are satisfied, even one interview is enough (Denzin, 2012).

Saturation is also considered a signal during the period of fieldwork (Mason, 2002, Baker and Edwards, 2012; Creswell, 2014). However, it is a little risky to use saturation. Reflexively, saturation is very subjective and can be a good excuse to finish the data collection, for it is easy to say that we have reached saturation, but it is hard to verify the 'real' saturation; the data are entirely depending on the interview techniques and sampling. Saturation can solely be attained after repeating numbers of interviews which finally confirm no new data. In other words, even if a researcher cannot find new data from a few interviews in the last stage of the fieldwork, it does not necessarily point to saturation. In addition, there are possibilities that another researcher can draw out new data from the same informants. Personally, I feel saturation can be judged only when a researcher gains enough experience to do scores of high quality studies. Therefore, even though I felt a kind of saturation in my fieldwork, I would not articulate that it was saturated.

Apart from saturation, Bryman (2012) indicates there are expected requirements for sample size. For instance, Warren (2002) suggests the minimum number of interviews is between 20 and 30 despite the fact that it depends on other conditions. Bryman (2012) also supports this view considering Mason (2010) reported that the mean average PhD dissertation in the UK and Ireland was 31 with the median 28. In this light, my sample size of 45 is justifiable for the PhD research.

Seal (2012: 286) indicates another point focusing on the inductive nature of qualitative research which is devoted to discovering what happens; metaphorically speaking, "instead of seeking to describe how many red, or black, or oval pebbles there are on a beach, the qualitative researcher may be researching for the pebbles that stand out from the rest". Further to this feature, Arber (2001: 58–9) insists that the sample strategies are to be designed according to what the researcher attempts to find from the qualitative approach: "Some researchers select samples in order to maximise

theoretical understanding, while others are primarily concerned to obtain a representative sample to make inferences about a whole population". Therefore, it is more important to choose the appropriate sampling strategies to fit the research purpose than merely discussing the size itself. For instance, if the purpose of the research is grounded theory, the sample size should be larger. Nonetheless, as this research aims for an explanatory understanding of the motivation of HSMs, which is not clear from the statistics, the sample size of 45 would not be problematic.

4.5.3 Translation

All the interviews were transcribed in the original languages the informants used. The data in Japanese, however, was translated into English when it is cited. Translation in qualitative analysis has not been the main academic focus (Lendvai and Bainton, 2013). Yet, languages are the crucial element to make up the qualitative findings, and subsequently the appropriateness of translation directly influences validity (Edwards, 1998).

To maintain the validity of qualitative research, Larkin et al. (2007) propose four criteria for translation: cohesion, congruence, clarity, and courtesy. Cohesion means striking a good balance between translators' knowledge of the language and researchers' knowledge of the theme. If this balance is well kept, in-depth understandings on language-sensitive issues will be possible. Congruence describes how to find equivalent word(s) when translating into a foreign language. It is well known that different translators use different words when the target language of translation does not have the same concept. Clarity is important when a word has more than two different meanings that a foreign language does not have. Clarity "enables clear meaning to emerge in much the same way as the detail of woven threadwork reveals something of the mastery of the designer" (Larkin et al. 2007, 472). Courtesy is associated with the extent to which a translator maintains the formality of the language. In some cases, if a translator uses informal language, the data from the interview might change.

Although an interpreter is not employed in this survey, by regarding the author as an interpreter who collaborates in the research, these criteria were applied to increase the validity of the research. However, it was challenging to keep these rules on my own. I sometimes consult bilingual friends or academics on how they translate some of the data. Their translations were different, but it helped identify how to convey the message in the most efficient manner by touching upon various expressions.

In addition to these criteria, Gawlewicz (2016: 31) raises “the linguistic competence of the translator/s; the translator’s knowledge of the culture of the people under study; the autobiography of those involved in the translation and the circumstances in which the translation takes place” as significant factors when conducting research on migration. One of the interesting points that she makes is about autobiography: any auxiliary information on the researched enhances the quality of translation. For example, many of my informants used social media such as Facebook or LinkedIn, which helped understand the contexts of their accounts. It may not be autobiography exactly, but it had a similar function.

In some cases, such as elite interviews, there is a way to aid the translation with existing texts, which could represent interviewees’ views. For example, MOJ compiles reports on migration issues in English so that they can be internationally recognised. Referring to these texts when translating was also helpful in terms of reporting the findings appropriately. In this sense, textual context was useful to cross-check the appropriateness of the translation.

4.5.4 Positionality

In qualitative research involving minorities such as migrant and handicapped persons, researchers need to reflect themselves and explain their social and personal position since their positionality influences the data (Rose, 1997; Sanchez-Ayala, 2012). Typically, positionality is based on various factors, to name a few: nationality, age, language, gender, social class and physical factors (Shinozaki, 2012; Ow Yong, 2018). There are two arguments associated with positionality in this research: one is ‘power’ balance between researcher and participants and the other is ‘insider’/ ‘outsider’.

Using Keidanren’s network and my position as one of its employees might affect the responses of the interviewees in terms of the relationship between the participants and me. Keidanren is the most powerful employers’ organisation in Japan (Vogel, 2006), composed of corporate executives. And their employees were the participants identified through the Keidanren network. As a result, the interviewees might hesitate to talk frankly about their employers and colleagues for fear that their remarks can be identified by their employers.

It is true that they work for one of the member companies of Keidanren; however, Keidanren and I are not allowed to open any information regarding the interviewees according to Japan’s Personal Information Act and the ethics rules. I strictly honoured this rule: Keidanren did not ask me to reveal such personal data either. Instead, I

compiled a brief report describing what kind of policy issues affect the life of HSMS drawn from the initial analysis. The data in the report was aggregated; therefore, the informants were not identified by their employers. This process was explained to the participants thoroughly to ensure their understanding of the confidentiality in this research.

Being an employee of Keidanren might also have influenced the informants of the personal network. In the recruiting process, I clarified my two positions that I was a PhD student and at the same time under the employment of Keidanren. If a participant is cognisant of what Keidanren does, it might give them a kind of impression that I represent the pro-business ideology or conservative side. Whether or not I have such views, the external attributions of the researcher can be a good signal to the informants⁴⁹. Actually, Keidanren is deemed a strong supporter of the Liberal Democratic Party, the ruling party, and perceived to be embody a liberal economy based on market mechanism (Crump, 2003).

In addition, although my position would not have directly influenced the data since it is unlikely that I would report the data to their employers, it might have affected the recruitment: it is possible that pro-business participants more eagerly joined the research than the less pro-business. For example, there were possibilities that some of the participants were more likely to be interested in my position in Keidanren than the PhD project and approached me. On the other hand, someone critical of Neoliberalism might not be interested in the participation. This may have led to research bias towards pro-business theory. Fortunately, I was able to gather the data of precarity of migrant life from the informants who were relatively in less economically advantageous positions than the gatekeeper's respondents. Still, I must admit that my professional position should be taken into consideration in critically reading this dissertation.

Apart from the professional position, I must also acknowledge my social position (male, Japanese) may have affected the data. It was possible that the participants might regard me—a Japanese citizen—as an 'outsider' who does not share their ethnicities and nationalities, their mother languages as a native speaker and social background. Being a member of Japanese-native-society, I studied minority perceptions through their experience; the data collected might have been different from that collected by an

⁴⁹ Imagine if someone attached to the CBI (Confederation of British Industry) is looking for research participants, it is natural to assume they are doing research from business perspectives. Very few people assume they research into charity. Or, if someone on study leave from the European Commission administers research, many people would think it is likely to be pro-EU than Eurosceptic.

'insider' who is, for instance, in a migrant position like the participants. For instance, Liu-Farrer (2011a, 2011b) unpacked various struggles of Chinese migrants in Japan from gender discrimination in small and medium enterprises to underground life of irregular migrants. Being of Chinese origin, she was successful in retrieving sensitive and nuanced realities that migrants cannot tell 'outsiders'. This may be what I did not achieve in this dissertation.

However, it is known that the boundary deciding 'insider'/'outsider' is not so obvious and changing when the interviews are going on since each person has a different background ultimately (Ganga and Scott, 2006; Pechurina, 2013). The important thing is to make a relaxed atmosphere where the participants can talk frankly and to redraw (or clear) the boundary so that they can trust the researcher (Shinozaki, 2012). In this sense, the interview techniques are more influencing factors than whether being 'insider' or 'outsider' (Sanchez-Ayala, 2012). For this purpose, I kept the following ground rules to make participants comfortable in speaking honestly:

- Not to give an impression of being interrogated by offering them opportunities to freely ask questions to me and be willing to answer—being interactive;
- To choose familiar words/phrases to make an informal atmosphere and overcome language barriers. For instance, as described earlier, I used 'visa' instead of 'status of residence' although the definitions are legally different;
- To show sympathy by nodding and never challenging the remarks;
- To weaken the sensitivity of questions and give a concrete image through a question. For example, when I check their social occasions with the native population, I asked "do you sometimes hang out with Japanese friends when you are off?", which is better than "do you have any good Japanese friends?"

In this way, I devised and restructured the order and contents of questions so that the informants could find their potential ideas.

4.5.5 What is a good interview?

The challenges discussed here were all about 'what is a good interview?' which I have repeatedly asked myself through the PhD. It all depends on the types and aims of the qualitative research (e.g. exploratory or grounded theory approach). In this dissertation, one of the aims was to unpack migration patterns and the decision-making process, which are not clear from statistical data. In this regard, I kept reflecting on the interviews conducted every day, always wondering the conditions of a good interview.

I established a way to assess the quality of interview—by quality, I mean how deeply I was able to draw out the informants' perceptions. Some of the informants said that the interviews made them find something they had not realised. When they encountered the 'discovery', the interview time got longer than initially planned because they also posed questions to me. This is indeed a good sign for a high 'quality' interview. I was successful in unravelling their potential perceptions throughout the interview process. On the other hand, if an interview is something mediocre and undiscovering, they would not pose any questions to me: they would like to go back to their office or home as soon as possible.

This throws light on an important aspect of qualitative survey unlike a quantitative one: a good interview should be illuminative for both the researcher and the researched. An interview which is always one way—from the researched to the researcher—is not emancipatory for either. It is important to keep in our minds that an interview is a research method intervening into personal territory making a participant (re)draw or realise the internal boundaries. In a sense, qualitative research is a shared-journey where a researcher is a tour operator and participants are the guests exploring their own life story. Accordingly, we should conduct an emancipatory tour.

4.6 Conclusion

To address the research questions, this research employed qualitative methods that are appropriate for making sense of people's decisions and its contexts (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013). Specifically, the inductive and interpretivist nature of the methods (Bryman and Becker, 2012; Ormston et al., 2014; Mason, 2002) allowed in-depth analysis of the process and reasons for migratory decisions or policy failures.

On the other hand, the weakness of the qualitative methods was also discussed to examine how to overcome these challenges. This chapter first set out philosophical underpinnings predicating the research design, which are different from the quantitative methods. Then, the last part of the chapter provided detailed accounts for potential risks and challenges lying in the fieldwork and analytical process, especially, in the four areas: sensitivities, sample size, translation, and positionality. Above all, some of the distinctive challenges to be overcome were translation and positionality, which have not been the central focus of leading scholarship such as transnational elite geographies (Salt, 1983, 1988; Findlay et al., 1996; Beaverstock, 2002, 2005; Beaverstock and Broadwell, 2000) and middling mobility (Willis and Yeoh, 2002; Conradson and Latham, 2005a; Yeoh and Willis, 2005; Leonard, 2008, 2010). By

shedding light on these epistemological aspects, this research also attempts to present academic contributions.

We are now ready to explore the core of the labyrinth via the following findings-chapters.

Chapter 5 Obstacles in Public Policies and Society (Findings 1)

All the services—whether it is commercial or public— provided in Japan are designed so that Japanese nationals use them. Foreigners are not assumed to use them. Informant (Yang)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to contextualise the background motivation of the HSMs together with social obstacles they encounter in their daily life. It particularly answers RQ1&2 through the theoretical lens of transnational elite geographies. In so doing, the chapter presents three keys to exploring the labyrinth: antithetical trajectories between Asian and Western migrants, hidden barriers in public policies, and the lack of diversity in Japanese society.

As shown previously, the number of Asian and western HSMs in Japan has remarkably demonstrated contrastive patterns—rapidly surging numbers of Asians and constantly stagnant numbers of westerners. Therefore, the first section delineates why and how they migrated to Japan employing two contrasting yet representative vignettes. This also guides us to understand how Japan is perceived or stigmatised by potential HSMs. Then the next part presents several issues in public policies such as immigration control and social security. In the extant literature, Japanese immigration control has been regarded as relatively restriction-free (Oishi, 2012, 2014; Holbrow, 2017); however, the research points to new policy issues affecting the life of HSMs and invisible precarious cohorts whom the skilled-migration researchers have overlooked. This chapter also sheds light on how the lack of diversity brings societal barriers for HSMs; one of the typical examples is the educational system where every child is expected to behave the same. The homogeneous nature of Japanese society distresses HSMs by cramming them into the ‘prescribed boxes’ drawn from insular social norms.

Even though the cultural barriers uniformly confront HSMs, different attitudes toward accumulating social capital have been observed with Asian and Western migrants. The past scholarly works suggest the wider cultural gap between the migrants and locals urges the migrants to forge stronger compatriot networks in the host country (Lee, 1966; Saxenian, 2006; Scott, 2007; Harvey, 2008; Harvey and Beaverstock, 2017). The last part of the chapter examines why this classical model does not apply to

Japan's case, thereby presenting a unique and novel pattern of migrants' network formation alongside its potential risk.

5.2 Trajectories contrasted: Discipline vs Walkabout?

Before going into detailed discussion on barriers confronting HSMs, it should be explained how HSMs came to work in Japan since this background reveals how they perceive Japan as a place to work and live. While the literature foregrounds studying in Japan as the initial stage linking Asian HSMs to Japan (Chiavacci, 2017; Tsukasaki, 2008; Liu-Farrer, 2011a), this section provides more precise explorations breaking down the attributions such as countries of origin and professional background so as to chart the mobility patterns of each migrant type.

5.2.1 Remarkable contrast between the Asian and Western migrants

The fieldwork pointed to five main routes where HSMs gained their first contact with Japan: (1) studied in Japanese university (or secondary school), (2) intracompany transfer, (3) recruited abroad to work in Japan, (4) came to Japan as an English teacher, then changed jobs, (5) marriage. There are stark distinctions between Asian and Western HSMs in the routes and motivation as seen in the table below⁵⁰ describing how the respondents eventually came to Japan.

Table 5-1 Categorised routes by migrants' origins in the interviews

	Asian HSMs	Western HSMs
Study	9	5
Intracompany transfer	3	1
Recruited abroad	2	1
English teacher	1	3
Marriage	0	1
Total	15	11

Source: the fieldwork

This table, however, has inexorable limitations to show the complicated nature of migrants' trajectories. A good example is a respondent⁵¹ who had been educated in

⁵⁰ The table shows the absolute number of the respondents categorised. It should be noted that this table aims to clarify the types of interviewed migrants and has no statistical meaning and representation as the source is not from quantitative but qualitative samplings.

⁵¹ His nationality/age range cannot be shown here to protect his anonymity since his background is so unique that one may identify him based on the data shown here.

Japan until he became 15 years old due to his parent's job. He eventually married a Japanese citizen whom he met in his 'home' country's university and came to Japan to commence his professional career—he obtained a spouse visa but worked for an administrative department in a Japanese manufacturing firm for a few years until he moved to his home country. Over a decade later, he came back to Japan again as an intracompany transferee and has since worked in Japan. In this case, he was categorised into 'marriage' since his initial voluntary decision to move to Japan was family reunification. However, it is possible to declare he also belongs to 'study' or 'intracompany transfer'. This case in fact tells the complexity of migrants' trajectories; however, it is necessary to code the complicated stories into stratifications or classifications to induct theories with the limitations in mind.

The majority of Asian HSMs, except for Indians, came to Japan to study at the initial stage. While some of them (3 out of 9) were exchange students on undergraduate degrees, the rest did master's degrees after completing one to two years in Japanese language schools. This investment in acquiring language skills is one of the notable barriers for the western migrant to migrate to Japan. The comparison between the following tables show an interesting tendency indicating this barrier. For both Asian and western HSMs, study is the most common route to come to Japan in the first instance. Nonetheless, none of the westerners obtained a degree in Japan except for a PhD holder who was in a double degree programme with an overseas university and did the PhD research in English. This is because all the western HSMs of study-route came under the one-year exchange programme. In contrast, nearly half of the Asian HSMs (6 out of 15), who share Chinese characters (Chinese ethnics) or a similar language system (Korean) completed a formal degree programme in Japanese. As there is a language barrier and huge investment to overcome it, the western migrants are prone to relying on exchange programmes rather than accomplishing a degree.

Table 5-2 The breakdown by the highest degree gained by respondents

	University base	Asian migrants	Western migrants
BA/BSc	Japanese Univ.	2	0
	Overseas Univ.	6 (3*)	7 (2*)
MA/MSc	Japanese Univ.	4	0
	Overseas Univ.	3	2
PhD	Japanese Univ.	0	1 **
	Overseas Univ.	0	1
Total		15	11

* A number in brackets indicates Science or Engineering degree.

** A double degree with an overseas university, but the respondent was mostly based in Japan

Source: the fieldwork

Table 5-3 The breakdown of academic majors of overseas students in Japan

	Percentage of the total
Humanities	45.2%
Social Sciences	26.4%
Engineering	11.8%
Other	16.6%
Total	100%

*FY 2015 survey

Source: Japan Student Services Organisation (2016)

All of the study-route respondents majored in Social Sciences or Humanities in Japan with the figure a little over-representing, considering the statistical data of all the overseas students. Especially in the case of Asian migrants who did a degree in Japan, they successfully got a job in Japan or engaged with Japanese related business in their home countries, then came to Japan as an intracompany transferee. The following vignette represents an illustrative story of such an Asian migrant.

Renhao⁵² first came to Japan as an exchange student when he was an undergraduate in Taiwan. His father, grandfathers and even uncles were educated in Japanese; all his relatives are pro-Japan and he “had been encouraged to study Japanese”. So it

⁵² All the informant names are pseudonyms and correspond to the list of participants shown in the Appendix.

was quite natural for him to choose Japanese as a major in his degree. He came to like Japan more than before after spending a year as an exchange student. Having completed the degree and military training, he worked in Malaysia for a lumber trader doing business with Japan for two years. He then decided to return to Japan and was enrolled in a language school. He finally obtained an MBA in Japan and was employed by the branch of a Japanese conglomerate in Taipei—here, Renhao met his Taiwanese wife who “was delighted to learn his transfer to Tokyo” on a three-year contract. This is the third time for him to reside in Japan but this time is somehow different because he now has his own family—the accompanying spouse who speaks Japanese and two little sons. This relocation is also a turning point for him in addition to his family members; he was told by his senior colleagues that “this transfer is a good opportunity for a career”.

Like Renhao, the study-route Asian informants answered that they had wanted to study in Japan longing for Japanese culture or a high standard of living. Some of their parents or close relatives are pro-Japan and highly recommended studying in Japan. A Korean respondent described the influence of the family as well:

Junyoung: My father studied in Japan and that influenced me. He told me to go to Japan for a while. Yes.

Q: Why did he suggest so?

Junyoung: That time, I think, politeness. Well, of course, we keep politeness in Korea, too. But he told me that Japanese people are more polite and I should go there to be made a man of.

This narrative delineates two emblematic elements in explaining the Asian traditional values relating to studying in Japan: “politeness” and “to be made a man of”. Without exception, all the Asian respondents valued politeness as a Japanese virtue comparing to their culture. Also their parents or senior relatives appreciate this traditional virtue so they recommend studying in Japan to be ‘disciplined’ (*to be made a man of*). No western migrants said they were encouraged by their relatives to come to Japan to be disciplined as a polite person; In contrast, these typical points—politeness, discipline and senior family members’ recommendation—are based on Asian (especially Confucian in East Asia) values and subsequently widely seen in the motivation of HSMs from Taiwan and Korea⁵³. In other words, for some Asian migrants, studying in

⁵³ Interestingly, this tendency was not observed with the mainland Chinese where traditional Asian values have partly been changed during the Communist reform as seen in Sechiyama (1996). The narrative of Yeoh and Willis (2005) also shows Asian values and communist reform in mainland China.

Japan is linked with their traditional social values which still bind or constrain their (including family's) decision.

On the other hand, the western HSMs tend to come through intracompany transfer or as an English teacher instead of obtaining a degree in Japan. Especially, for native English speakers, to find a job as an English teacher is quite common to start their career in Japan. The vignette below illustrates such an archetype contrasting Renhao's life path.

John is a foreign-language-enthusiast. After studying French and German throughout his Master's degree in Ireland, he "just felt like coming here (Japan) for a year, just a kind of one year abroad. Just for coming experience". He was originally thinking to go to China but his friends who have been to Japan recommended Japan. They told him "it's very safe and clean. Everyone is very polite and friendly". Then he used a travel agent specialising in gap year/volunteering to arrange his "coming experience" to Japan but some staff told him not to choose Japan because of the unattractive salary and hard job. "Japan is usually the last choice for going abroad to Asia" except for people studying Japanese. "For people coming here from the western countries, it's cultural reasons more than business unless they are expats". As he is not an expat⁵⁴, the only job he could find to obtain a visa was English teacher at a private English school. After a year in Japan—the initial duration of his visa was one year—, John decided to remain to master Japanese. Having worked as an English teacher for four years, he found a post as international officer in a Japanese university. It's a 5-year-limit one year contract—the contract can be renewed annually up to the 5th year. John has recently got engaged and is at a turning point of his career and private life. "I will be 30 next year, thinking about buying a house. But I can't buy houses here cos they (banks) won't give me mortgage if I have a three-year visa". John thinks to go back to Ireland when the 5-year-limit ends in two years and would like to find a civil service post like a diplomat.

John's trajectory embodies some of the typical commonalities the western migrants share. First, they came to Japan, thinking to stay for a few years as experience. It is like a walkabout (King and Shuttleworth, 1995; Scott, 2006), aimless wandering (Yeoh

⁵⁴ The term 'expatriate' is vague and contested as Leonard (2008: 58) described "It is usually used by (white) Westerners who have lived abroad for various lengths of time. In Hong Kong many British people refer to themselves, other white migrants, as expatriates". Leonard (2008) suggests the term is one of the examples of 'otherness' discourses drawing the boundary of self (white) and others (non-white). She includes self-initiated migrants (such as English teacher like John) 'expatriates'. However, John used the term to indicate intracompany transferees. John's remarks can also be understood as otherness discourses distinguishing self (culturally attracted migrants) and others (expatriates).

and Willis, 2005) or postgraduate-gap-year for the early career seeker, and typically observed with the western people for whom migration has traditionally been a rite of passage (Scott, 2006; Urry, 2007). Through the migration process, they acquire the mobility capital. As is often the case with adventure, the western migrants who ended up coming to Japan were attracted to the exotic environment and interested in Asia but not specifically Japan. In other words, Japan is only one of the many portfolios and they happened to choose Japan as a destination rather than from their strong will. Eventually, they came to like the life in Japan and decided to stay more. Except for people from Australia where Asian languages are widely taught in secondary schools, they did not study Japanese before coming and eventually have (had) a Japanese spouse/partner. The research found that these remarkable contrasts to Asian HSMs are associated with their distinctive western perception on working and living in Japan as shown hereafter.

5.2.2 The emerging new trend (pull factors) and unique 'constraints' (push factors)

This research also reveals a new important trend in Japanese companies' HR strategy that emerged from the late 2000s: recruiting HSMs abroad. HSMs are hired when they graduate from universities abroad and given training of Japanese corporate culture (and Japanese language if necessary) in Japan. These companies recruit the young potential professionals worldwide; for instance, a heavy industry manufacturer uses this scheme in China, Korea, Europe (the job interviews are conducted in London but cover all the European students) and the USA. A trading company also stretches its scope to China, Korea, Taiwan, Europe, the USA and Brazil to recruit global talents.

There are mainly two interplaying reasons for this new practice: labour shortage and globalised business. Because of the decreasing population of the young cohort coupled with the retirement of the baby-boom generation (who were born around 1950 just after the Second World War), the Japanese corporations started to face severe labour shortage from the late 2000s. This shortage occurs in not only manual work but also mental jobs, the potential pool of managerial elites. A decreasing population means the scale of the cohort is also shrinking in Japan but as the corporations expand their businesses globally, they are forced to maintain or boost the scale of this group without reducing the quality. Therefore, they choose to recruit the young talent from overseas to keep the quality level of HR portfolios.

As the corporations negotiate severe global competition to expand their business, they also require innovative talent regardless of nationalities (Keidanren, 2015). A good example is Alastair, electric software engineer, who joined an internship in Japan from

the UK and was recruited through it. The internship is highly competitive (only four or five non-Japanese students were able to secure a place out of 200 applications) but offers a three-month career experience in the cutting-edge workplace with enough stipend. At the end of the internship, a job offer was informally given even though it would take one more year until he graduates from the university. The hastiness (a job offer prior to one year of graduation) indicates the strong demand of global talent.

While this recently emerging trend indicates traditional pull factors, HSMs from the two specific countries, Korea and mainland China, raised unique push factors attributing to their socio-economic background. In Korea, due to the shortage of professional posts in contrast to the Japanese labour market, it is so challenging even for prominent new graduates to find a good job that they ultimately emigrate for their careers (KITA, 2017). This phenomenon has also been observed in the EU where highly educated young people from the Old EU (e.g. Spain, Italy, France: pre-2004 member states) emigrate to the UK searching for a better job because of the deteriorating employment situation in home countries (Rienzo and Vargas-Silva, 2014). For Japanese companies, it is easier to recruit the young talent in Korea than in Japan where labour shortage affects their HR strategies.

On the other hand, mainland Chinese informants in their 20's point to nepotism and their conservative culture where they are to be exposed to pressures from their parents and relatives. All of them indicated the intervention by their parents or relatives more or less on their life paths such as professional career and marriage based on the normative life plan (e.g. people should marry by their late 20's). For them, working in Japan can be one of the ways to flee from the family pressures and confirm the ownership of their own life course.

If I had remained in China, I could have easily predicted my future. As a matter of fact, China has a One-Child policy. Therefore, a child is incredibly important for their parents. So the parents decide their child's life including where to work, when to marry and when to give birth. I used to think to follow such a life but now I don't like to. Overall, looking at my former classmates (who are in China), they are like that (in line with their parents' intention).

(Qian)

They are very likely to rely on their families', most notably parents' resources to find a satisfactory job or ask them for financial support to afford housing if they were in China. The mainland China push factors are made up of the three interplaying pieces of social

embeddedness: nepotism, One Child Policy and super-expensive housing. The relative networks in China play more significant roles in their social life such as finding a job or gaining an administrative approval compared to Taiwan, Korea and Japan (Sechiyama, 1996). In addition, One Child Policy enables the parents to invest ample money for their only child and this also entails strong pressure to make him/her marry in their 20's. Ozaki and Yamaya (2008) showed in their comparative survey that more people in Beijing regard marriage as the way to deliver the expectation of family or obtain a social reputation than in Korea and Japan. On this point, marriage may involve a social rather than individual contract in China. Especially in big cities like Beijing and Shanghai, it is normally expected that the parents give financial support for house ownership due to the expensive market. All three factors are firmly embedded in China's unique parents-child relationship affecting the autonomy of young Chinese.

On the contrary, being in Japan makes the Chinese professionals free from those invisible constraints since they can be professionally and financially independent. These are interesting contrasts to migrants from other Chinese economies⁵⁶ like Taiwan where relatives 'recommend' Japan while the pressures of relatives motivate the mainland Chinese to emigrate. Despite different determinants, these factors offer new perspectives into push factors whilst economic or political reasons have traditionally been regarded as the major push factors (King, 2012a; Castles et al., 2013).

5.2.3 Intracompany transferees

As examined in the theoretical framework chapter, intracompany transfers have been the central focus in transnational elite geographies, which principally postulate remuneration, career enhancement and knowledge transfer as determinants of skilled migration (e.g. Beaverstock, 2005). The fieldwork also supports this argument and found no serious barriers confronting intracompany transferees. For example, they receive enough financial rewards including doubled or trebled salaries (taxes/social securities adjusted) compared with their 'home' remuneration apart from children's international school fees.

More notably, all the transferees benefit from rich housing support. Some companies own special houses for transferees near to the office. Meanwhile, Renhao's company settles a renting contract directly with the house owner on behalf of him and covers 90 percent of the rent. The covered rent is included as personal income to calculate tax

⁵⁶ Although the interviewees also include Hong Kong and Singapore migrants, who are ethnic Chinese, the research did not identify the mainland Chinese unique factors with them either.

but the salary is also adjusted to cover the tax. The visa process is also left to the company. A UK informant, who lived in London before coming to Tokyo, agreed that the life as a transferee is totally different from that of a 'normal' employee.

*I would say it's more comfortable living here (than London) but it's not really possible to compare my life in Daikanyama (posh housing area in Tokyo) as an expat with that in the suburb of Wimbledon. Being taken much care of and protected by the company is quite different from given less care. (...) It would be difficult to say so (it's more comfortable living in Tokyo) if I was not an expat.
(Brandon) ⁵⁷*

As his life is “*protected by the company*”, he thinks the life in Tokyo is extraordinarily affluent. All the other transferees support this view and expressed little concern with their life in Tokyo. They are “more than happy to stay in Tokyo and willing to come back as transferees” (Sarvesh). Nonetheless, Brandon’s narrative offers an interesting supposition that he would find his life less easy if he was not an expatriate. To explore this assumption in detail, the following sections mainly argue issues with independent HSMs.

5.3 Issues in immigration control

5.3.1 Application process

For HSMs hired by a large company as well as an intracompany transferee, a visa procedure is not a big obstacle at all. Some of them left the application processes to their HR staff or immigration lawyer whom their companies employ. Even in the case that HSMs visit the immigration office for themselves, the examining process itself is very simplified and expedited. MOJ (2015a) clarifies they process the application of both HSMs and their nuclear family members within 10 days if they are hired by a company listed on the Japanese stock exchange or equivalent⁵⁸. In addition, they are allowed to omit the submission of certain documents HSMs normally require such as degree diploma. This is because these large enterprises comply with the strict listing requirements thereby delivering good corporate governance. Given the well-facilitated

⁵⁷ In this thesis, (...) [three dots within brackets] indicates silence while ... [three dots without brackets] indicates some words (or lines) omitted. This is one of the ways to secure qualitative reliability by reproducing the precise and actual situations that the informants created in the interviews since the non-verbal reaction is equally important in analysing discourses. In so doing, the author also attempted to bring more lively realities to the readers.

⁵⁸ The equivalents include, for example, life insurance companies (normally not listed on the stock exchange markets), the central and local governments and its public corporations. These organizations are considered to practice good governance as well as the listed enterprises.

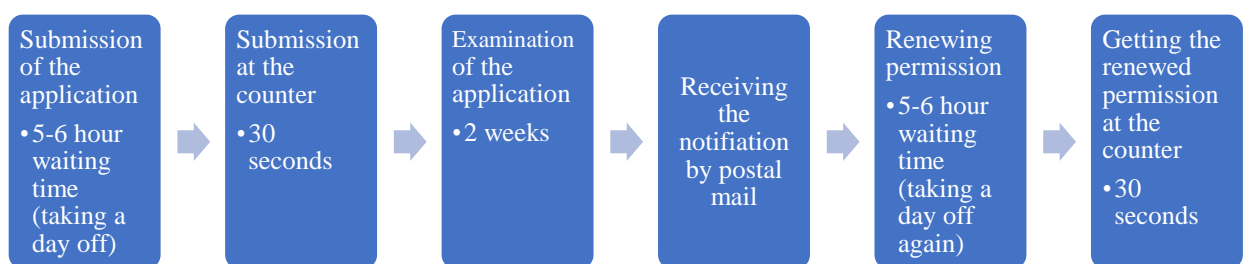
process, many interviewees asserted Japan is one of the easiest countries to obtain a work visa while gaining a visa without using lawyers is almost impossible in countries such as the USA.

However, the study found a new issue the extant literature has not dealt with. All the HSMs, who went through the visa process on their own, articulate that they are made to wait for more than three hours—in many cases four to five hours—in the immigration office just to submit their application. This does not include the process of examination; they only wait to be called to hand out their application. If there are no missing documents, this submission process takes only half a minute.

To renew (visa), I have to take two-days off-work. Because we have to wait in immigration office. You can't post it (the document to renew the visa). You know, you have to go there with the application form so I have to take a vacation to go to immigration and queue for maybe five-six hours then they give us an information form and (I) go home. And then in two weeks, I come back and I wait for five-six hours and I collect it and I go back home. So, the counter time takes 30 seconds but I have to wait for five-six hours.
(John)

The following figure charts the process that John takes to renew his visa.

Figure 5-1 Application process and waiting time



Yang described ironically that waiting for over four hours is now “common sense”. Cyrille arrived at the Immigration Office in Shinagawa (Tokyo’s head office) at 16.00 and waited incredibly long until 23.00 when he finally handed out the documents⁵⁹.

⁵⁹ Their “Office hours” are “9:00 to 12:00, and 13:00 to 16:00 (except for Saturdays, Sundays and national holidays)” (Immigration Bureau, 2018). Cyrille came to the office in the last-minute but he was made wait due to the overflow of applicants.

Obviously, the counter time should be shortened by increasing the number of counter staff⁶⁰ or be transparent by issuing a ticket and showing the estimated waiting time.

5.3.2 Permanent settlement and parents reunification

Relaxing restrictions on permanent settlement and accompanying parents are also important factors to be improved. In Japan, foreigners should reside lawfully in Japan for over 10 years continuously to be eligible for permanent settlement⁶¹. Ten years is longer than the USA, Canada, Australia (some people are given permanent residency at the outset in these settler countries) and Korea, Taiwan, UK (5 years). In addition, ‘continuously’ makes it more difficult for HSMs to have the status. If a HSM was transferred abroad for a while, say for two years, they need to reset the count when they come back to Japan. Especially Chinese HSMs were concerned about this issue because they need a visa even for a short stay and the permanent residency is the only way to freely move in and out of Japan.

HSMs with young children claimed that they sometimes need the support from their parents living abroad to look after their children while they are in work. Specifically in the case of the HSMs couple—dual career migrant households (Hardill, 2002; Kofman, 2004; Raghuram, 2004; Ho, 2007)—, this becomes serious because they do not have anyone to depend on in Japan while Japanese people can ask their parents or relatives to take care of their children. Jiawei needed to bring his Chinese mother to Tokyo and extended a short stay visa for her who looked after his child:

A short stay visa allows my mother to stay for 3 months only. And it can be extended only once. So she stayed for 6 months by extending it. Six months is maximum since the extension is allowed only once. She stayed in Japan twice (both times for 6 months) when my daughter was perhaps, I think, two and four years old because we (he and his wife) were both busy with work. It had been greatly helpful for us if my mother could have stayed in Japan up to when my daughter started going to primary school.
(Jiawei)

⁶⁰ The counter staff in many Immigration Offices is outsourced so it is not directly run by MOJ according to interviewed MOJ officers (current policy maker 1; former policy maker 4).

⁶¹ There are some exemptions regarding the condition. For instance, the spouse of Japanese and their biological children (i.e. no stepchildren) can obtain the permanent settlement for one year of lawful residency when the spouse has been in marital relations with Japanese for over three years; Nikkeijin can gain the permanent settlement with over five years of residency (MOJ, 2017).

Chinese (including Taiwanese) and Korean ethnics tend to raise children in the extended family network compared to the Japanese care system relying on the public services like nursery school (Noda, 2016). The comparative survey conducted in Tokyo, Beijing and Seoul indicates the double income families in Beijing and Seoul depend on grandparents for their child care while that of Tokyo mostly uses nursery school (Nagase, 2008). What's more important, the carer may be extended to relatives such as couples' siblings or uncles/aunts in addition to the couple's parents in Taiwan or South China (Sechiyama, 1996). This suggests the wider concept of 'family' should be considered in care provision (Vullnetari and King, 2008) and immigration system to attract HSMs.

5.3.3 'Stigmatised' cohorts

The extant literature suggests very few obstacles for HSMs in obtaining a visa (Oishi, 2012, 2014; Tsukasaki, 2008; Holbrow, 2017) and the majority of respondents also endorsed this view. Nonetheless, the fieldwork identified specific groups struggling to obtain or renew their visa: people on a fixed-term contract (most of the young English teachers working for private English schools), the self-employed (e.g. translator), entrepreneur (e.g. in the samples, a web designer who has just launched his office), Asian female worker in small business.

The last case was a Filipina teacher in an international nursery where children grew up in a multi-lingual environment. A manager in this nursery has sought teachers who have both international background and a degree in child education. The suitable candidates are usually foreigners since Japanese staff are often domestic-orientated. The manager found the Filipina who taught English in Japan as an appropriate candidate; however, she was once refused to extend her visa to work for the nursery even though she submitted all the necessary legal documents. The immigration office did not explain to her why the application was turned down and they gave her one month to prepare her departure. She was desperate because she could not grasp what was wrong with the process and visited the immigration office the next day with the Japanese manager.

The manager was told by a senior officer⁶³ (instead of the counter staff with whom the Filipina respondent had talked) that her job description includes child care which is deemed an unskilled job and that's the very reason to refuse the application. They explained to the immigration officer about her role as a teacher to create an English-

⁶³ He came from the office far from the counter and seemed to be senior to the respondent.

speaking environment in the international nursery and revised the job description as such. At last, her visa was extended. The Filipina raised a few problems with the immigration process. First, the counter officer did not have enough communication skills in English to explain the reasons for refusal⁶⁴. After all, she needed to be accompanied by her manager to grasp the situation. Second, they did not tell her any possible solutions even though this was due to misunderstandings. Since the visa extension was finally approved, there were a few solutions to break the deadlock. She describes what she felt in the process:

I was shocked and I didn't know what to do because I was hoping, you know, all was good. I was expecting that, I have all the legal documents and I do not do anything wrong in Japan. I hope that they could be more considerate and they could be, you know, they could open to the foreign people to tell us what to do in the case. So those things (...) I felt something (...) umm (...) discriminatory? (...) They may sometimes think that Asians, like Filipinos, are (...) like (...) illegal immigrants.

(Lydia)

For migration experts in Japan, Filipina conjures up an image of irregular migrants. From the 1990s to early 2000s, tens of thousands of Filipinas entered Japan as entertainers who were supposed to work as dancers. At its peak (2004), there were 50,691 Filipina entertainers which made up 78 percent of all the entertainer visas (Japan Immigration Association, 2005). However, many of the Filipina entertainers were exploited in the sex industries (Sellek, 2001; Ballescás, 2003; Sakanaka, 2017). As a result, they were made irregular migrants and this prompted the Japanese government to strictly tighten the immigration control of overseas entertainers (Iguchi, 2006) obviously targeting the Filipinas. This crackdown drastically reduced the number of entertainers from the Philippines by half from 50,691 to 23,643 over 2004-2005 (MOJ, 2007). Although there are authentic HSMs from the Philippines, the incident has eventually left a stigmatised image to Filipinas and aroused (sometimes excessive) caution in the immigration officer.

The case also implies how the concepts of 'highly-skilled' and 'low-skilled' are bounded by gender and unreasonable images, that cause a barrier to social innovation' in Japan. In this context, innovation specifically means the social transition to encompass

⁶⁴ As indicated before, the counter job is almost outsourced. Therefore, it is not possible or allowed for the counter staff—their role is prescribed on the contract—to explain the decisions made by immigration officers. This is why the senior immigration officer discussed with the nursery manager the next day the application was refused and they finally found the solution.

diversified values and promote internationalisation. As discussed earlier, the biggest challenges HSMs found in the Japanese educational system is the lack of diversity and international perspectives. The nursery school improves it by offering quite innovative educational methods employing multi-national teachers (they intentionally hire teachers from various origins such as the USA, Canada, Australia, Korea, China, Singapore and the Philippines) considering the homogeneous nature of Japanese nursery. This innovative concept attracts a lot of parents who wish to educate their children in an international environment; subsequently, only half of the applicants are admitted. The nursery would like to hire more international teachers to accommodate the surging demands but the 'stigmatisation' partly hinders their efforts of recruitment. The manager puts it.

Many parents using this nursery work for foreign affiliates or large enterprises in Tokyo, so they wish to have more chances to educate their children in English in this globalised era...To maintain the quality of education we offer, we carefully screen the teachers, who should fulfil the certain conditions to embody our idea. We will keep this rigid screening process. I think this trend (making a transnational environment in nursery) will continue. Not only us but also other nurseries would like to hire teachers from overseas. But as they do not have know-how (to hire them), they can't. I think if the immigration process becomes more simple and transparent, these nurseries can be more internationalised (by hiring transnational teachers).

(Employer of migrants 1)

This case clearly shows that in the immigration control, some specific kinds of migrants are stigmatised, thereby facing unreasonably formidable challenges in going through an immigration procedure because of nationalities, gender or occupations even though they are well-sought-after HSMs who can potentially transform Japan to more globalised economy. Although care work, carried out mostly by women, is relatively associated with lower skilled work, it should be noted that it can also add tremendous value to the socio-economy.

These negative cases are only observed with the interviewees found through the personal network; in other words, these issues were not applicable to the informants through the gatekeeper (Keidanren), whose member companies are reputable well-known large companies given priority access to the visa screening process. This may suggest the social cleavages of HSMs: the 'establishment'—mainly employed by large

companies or intracompany transferees—and the ‘stigmatised’ group such as Filipina, start-up entrepreneurs and the self-employed. The skilled migration literature regardless of the disciplinaries, time, countries or gender focus, has principally dealt with the former group (e.g. Salt, 1988; Beaverstock and Boardwell, 2000; Yeoh and Wills, 2005; Oishi, 2008) while the latter group has almost been marginalised in the research except for a few cases such as Ho (2007) or Scott (2006)⁶⁵. This is partly why the obstacles in immigration control have not been discussed in the literature⁶⁶. It is on this point that this research advances the traditional theories by showing the innovative skilled migrants may suffer from precarity due to immigration control even in the less restrictive Japanese immigration system.

5.4 Issues in tax and social security

The high taxation on personal income (maximum 55%) sometimes impedes high-income HSMs from residing in Japan. Japan’s tax revenue has hugely relied on direct taxes such as personal income or corporate taxes maintaining the rate of consumption tax (VAT: indirect tax) of 8%⁶⁷. This has caused an unbalanced tax structure between the direct and indirect taxes, subsequently keeping the level of income tax high. As the tax rate accelerates according to the increase in income, the business executives seek to minimise the tax to pay.

Table 5-4 Tax Band of Personal Income Tax in Japan

Income (Million Yen)	national tax rate (%)	regional tax rate (%)	total tax rate (%)
Less than 1.95	5	10	15
1.95 - 3.30	10	10	20
3.30 - 6.95	20	10	30
6.95 - 9	23	10	33
9 - 18	33	10	43
18 - 40	40	10	50
More than 40	45	10	55

* as of FY 2015. There is no plan to update the tax rate at the moment.

Source: National Tax Agency (2016)

⁶⁵ Ho (2007) and Scott (2006) use the ‘middlings’ concept (i.e. their focus is not elite migrant but only confined within the middle class) unlike this research.

⁶⁶ One other major reason why the immigration control has been under-researched in skilled migration is that the research participants tend to enjoy EU’s free movement (e.g. Scott, 2006) or Ancestor Visa (e.g. Conradson and Latham, 2005a) which enable the migrants regardless of precarious positions in the host country to move around with less restriction.

⁶⁷ 5% before 2012

Especially for HSMs in the income range of over 18 million Yen, over half of their income will be deducted as tax. In this case, they are likely to shun away from Japan or they choose to be 'based' in Singapore or Hong Kong but travel to Japan as 'a business trip' for two weeks or every month to avoid paying tax in Japan. They 'work' in Japan and receive the salary, but they have the residential address (therefore residential visa as well) in Singapore or Hong Kong to avoid the tax. An immigration lawyer whose clients include wealthy corporate executives explained:

Japan has lost so many talents because of the high tax. There are lots of foreigners earning 60-70 million Yen. For example, they are working for an investment bank...My customers often seek advice not to become a resident in Japan although they should work in Japan since the company transfers them. So, for example, they want to abandon the visa (to work in Japan). But in reality they need to come and stay in Japan very often to work. Or, they would like their family to remain in Japan (because of the safety and high quality of life) but they themselves would like to have a residential address in Singapore due to the lower tax rate. They were concerned if their family can retain the visa to stay in Japan (after they moved their address to Singapore). I know many cases like this with regard to the high tax rate.

(Migration expert 9)

Japan accords tax treaties with 110 economies including Singapore, China, Hong Kong and Macau (Yoshino, 2017) from which migrants can easily fly to Japan. The tax treaties stipulate the tax payer residing in these economies should not pay any income tax to Japan as long as their total stay in Japan is less than 183 days annually (Miki and Maeda, 2012; Fujii, 2007). This nominally means the migrants can 'work' in Japan for a maximum of 183 days while avoiding income taxes by residing abroad.

The mobility patterns of HSMs can be broken down into eight categories like long-term assignment (over one-year residence), short-term assignment (three to twelve months residence), long distance commuting, rotating, business travel, virtual mobility and so forth (Millar and Salt, 2008). Which portfolio to take is entirely contingent on the firm's business strategies (Millar and Salt, 2008; Beaverstock et al, 2009); in other words, the academic arguments on elite mobility portfolios have been confined only within the corporate mechanism with employees' portfolios opaque. The only exception is long distance commuting due to family reasons often observed with dual career household—for instance, London-Paris commuter in Ho (2007). They commute long

distance because their family is based far from their workplace. The scholars depicted the commuting portfolio as compromise between family formation and career aspiration—usually for female professionals, consequently having been researched as a gender issue (Ho, 2007; Mizuno, 2008).

On the other hand, as opposed to the commuter, the long-distance business traveller of the findings shows two novel dimensions: (1) personal but economic motivations (reducing income tax to pay) and (2) family separation (residing abroad to have a residential address in lower-tax area while deliberately leaving the family in Tokyo). The findings strikingly indicate the employees' circumstances also shape the mobility portfolio. In addition, it presents a new and significant policy implication in that the public policies—particularly the divergence of policies in the globalised world—inextricably affect both the life and migration strategies of HSMs. Thanks to the development of transportation technologies and infrastructures, long-distance business travel has been drastically facilitated and will be more convenient. This may increase or incentivise the policy-affected-migrants (or long-distance business traveller) even though they would not do so if the policies (e.g. tax rate) were converged internationally. Considering the long-distance travel affecting the environment (Hannam, Sheller and Urry, 2006; Beaverstock et al, 2009), policies should be updated to prevent unnecessary mobilities.

Apart from taxation, some HSMs claimed that the social security system in Japan is not easy to follow for them. In many cases, the notification from the government is only written in official Japanese which even native speakers find difficult to comprehend. This gives them some misgivings that the Japanese system is enigmatic even though they are compelled to contribute to the system. Some of the interviewees obviously misunderstand the rules but they did not have any opportunities to check their understandings. Chinese HSMs were concerned about the pension they paid in Japan because Japan does not have a social security treaty with China and that will make some people give up contributions already paid when they leave Japan.

5.5 Institutional obstacles

An institution that has been cultivated and existed long as a custom in society forms people's behaviour. Unlike regulations made by the government (e.g. laws), it does not have an express provision but the member of society is bound by the implicit order, which affects the life of HSMs. There are mainly three obstacles that interplay with the lack of diversity: education, social norms and discrimination.

5.5.1 Education

Education is the top priority for HSMs when they are accompanied by children (Scott, 2006); however, the Japanese educational system has been criticised for the lack of international perspectives (Goodman, 2003) and the insufficient teaching level (Oishi, 2012). The respondents with children were often concerned that their children will be left behind in the globalised world if their children are educated in Japanese. Some of them send their children to international schools to raise them in an international environment despite the necessity to cover the expensive tuition fees on their own while intracompany transferees are given a package covering the fees.

For instance, Eric has spent most of the salary on International School fees. Even though he lives in a company's residence and works as a senior manager in one of the three largest Japanese car manufacturers⁶⁸, he struggles to finance education saying, "I have no money. No money, man. All my money was spent on education". Japan Council of International Schools have 28 member schools all over Japan (Japan Council of International Schools, 2017). In addition to these schools, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) recognises there are 127 International Schools⁶⁹ as of May 2011 (MEXT, 2012). Although the tuition fees cost at least two million yen annually, what motivated Eric to send his children to International School despite the financial hardship? He problematises the lack of diversity as the main issue with Japanese schooling notwithstanding the satisfactory level of education:

They teach so many life skills. But what happens after grade 3 or so, is that they try to make everyone the same. There's a pressure of conformity. Everyone learns the same and everyone writes the same, you know. If you are left handed, they try to teach you to write with your right hand, you know. We thought, OK, in the early school period, Japanese school is wonderful but once they start to socialise, to start to become a social being, it's not good to be in Japanese school so we put them in international school.
(Eric)

"A pressure of conformity" would not create diversities in a classroom and cannot cultivate the strengths of individual pupils. Eric thinks the Japanese educational system

⁶⁸ Toyota, Honda and Nissan are the three largest manufactures.

⁶⁹ They include Brazilian, Korean, French and German schools. However it is not clear from the data whether Indian Schools are included. There are South and North Korean Schools in Japan although the source does not clarify this point.

particularly weighs on improving defects rather than further enhancing strengths. It seems to him that education tries to produce equal-standard-person without marked individuality. Particularly for the Western, it is much more important ‘how different you are from the others’ than ‘how similar you are with the others’ (Florida, 2005). Therefore, HSMs do not approve of the Japanese norm that everyone should be same (*everyone learns the same and everyone writes the same*). In theorising Third Culture Kids (TCKs) which illustrates the challenges and benefits of raising children outside the parents’ culture, Pollock and Van Reken (2009: 56) insist the biggest advantage TCKs can gain is “expanded worldview” that the children can nurture through their multicultural backgrounds and base on in mediating different cultures/experiences. Nonetheless, TCKs raised in the Japanese educational system are not to hold the expanded worldview since they are forced to fit in “the prescribed boxes” (Pollock and Van Reken, 2009; 56) where everyone should be the same.

Not only non-Japanese children but Japan’s returnee children (*Kikokushijo*) also suffer from the homogeneous educational system (e.g. Goodman, 2003). They were raised abroad with expanded worldview and eventually came back to Japan. However, as “the school in Japan is the focal place of instruction and socialisation, where young Japanese learn how to become proper Japanese”, it is not easy for them to square with the school and “they are often bullied for their difference” (Pang, 2000: 313-314). As evidence, Renhao chose international school for their children in line with his Taiwanese colleague’s advice for fear that the children might be bullied. In short, the core problem with the Japanese education is not the level of education but the void of diversified values. The lack of diversity is also reflected in social norms.

5.5.2 Social norms

The lack of diversity in Japanese society or the workplace also puzzles HSMs. It sometimes seems to them that Japanese people are judgemental and the mindset is old fashioned. They perceive that homogeneous Japan has uniquely developed its social norms—rules of behaviour underpinned by social expectations—which eventually excludes the diversified views or backgrounds. For example, if something is different from the norms, they can be regarded as an outlier.

Yang: Recently, I introduced myself to someone who works for a large (Japanese) enterprise. He said to me “You are ambitious”. I think it’s normal

in the USA. (...) In the USA, it doesn't matter if you are gay or doctoral woman or whoever. But in Japan, these are abnormal.

Q: Did he mean you are ambitious because you are Chinese or female?

Yang: I'm not sure. Perhaps, everything. Because I am female, foreigner, and go everywhere.

The comment made to Yang (*You are ambitious*) would be perceived as harassment if it was in the USA where even the UK professionals are careful in telling jokes due to strict equal opportunities rules (Beaverstock, 2005). It is sometimes frustrating for HSMs that Japanese people try to categorise them into Japanese standard which is apparently inconsistent with their diversified life paths. Japanese people are bound by their stereotypical life cycle image including professional career and family formation (Roberts, 2016), for instance, finding a permanent job at 23 years old, marrying at 26, and having a child at 28 and so forth. An Australian respondent also felt a strong sense of incompatibility with the conformity to the social standard.

At first when I came to Japan (as a PhD student) it was very difficult to express myself and quite frustrating in the first year. So for example, they (University staff) kept asking me whether or not I am going to do a Master's although I am a PhD student in Australia. They constantly didn't believe that I was a PhD student...Uh, there is a cultural expectation on what people do at their life stages. So at that time, (I was) 27 or 26 years old. So the 27 or 26 year olds in Japan would probably not have (an academic position like me).

(Tom)

Overall, the life course of HSMs is different from the standard of Japanese people; however, Japanese society is not yet ready to accept the diversity. This would also brew dissension between Japanese and HSMs. When there's something out of the norms, it may result in something which HSMs perceive to be discrimination.

5.6 Discrimination

The research identifies two kinds of discrimination that HSMs face during their stay in Japan: one is institutional discrimination such as explicit restrictions due to nationalities; and, the other is racial discrimination which surrounds them implicitly. Interestingly, most western people reported that they encountered discrimination but fewer Asian migrants insisted so. This is partly because institutional discrimination which is more visible than racial prevails.

5.6.1 Institutional discrimination

At the first stage of their life in Japan, HSMs were confronted with intense difficulties in renting an apartment, obtaining a mortgage, credit card, and in some cases mobile phone in a specific operator as they are a foreigner without permanent residency. All these are private contracts between foreigners and Japanese companies/people so when a Japanese contractor refuses them, they cannot access these services.

Sometimes when we are looking for a house, a lot of houses don't allow gaijin (foreigners). So your selections are already narrowed. And they used to annoy me (laugh) because you know, if you look from the western point of view, it's really racist. They say "No gaijin (foreigners)". And some of the fudosan (letting agencies) that I went to, you know, have (apartments) like petto ka (pets OK) gaijin ka (foreigners OK). I mean, if you do that in Europe, I am pretty sure that you'll be sued for like racism or something but in Japan that's normal...Now I use one (letting agency specially for foreign customers) because it's easier. But before, I used to go to a normal one. I went to just like a normal fudosan (letting agencies), they actually said "Please leave". I was pretty angry about that.

(John)

This case alludes that some Japanese letting agencies or house owners equate foreigners with pets; as evidence, foreigners are listed as equivalent to pets (*foreigners OK, pets OK*). All the western informants—all of them are Caucasian—who have lived in Japan longer than 20 years and speak Japanese, experienced refusal to dine in a restaurant (they think) because they are a foreigner. Although they admit that it is now rare that a restaurant turns them away, Jack offered a photo of the notice "Japanese Only" written in English, Chinese and Korean, that was put on the entrance door of some 'pink' bar he occasionally walks by, putting "Not that I would want to go there in any case, but I'm sure this kind of sign would create a stir and probably even a lawsuit in the US".

Figure 5-2 “Japanese Only” sign in a bar



Source: offered by Jack (respondent)

Another case is mortgage. A Korean migrant complained that she cannot obtain a mortgage even though she has enough means to pay it.

When I bought a house, it was nil that I could have on loan just because I am a freelance foreigner. Even though I earn 10 million Yen, which exceeds my (Japanese) husband's income, I was told that the money I can borrow is nil. Even though I have enough financial means to return the money, I cannot borrow even a pence. So, my house is officially registered in my husband's name, because I could not use the mortgage even though I'm paying it.

(Jihye)

Discriminating against overseas nationals in offering services is a structured and taken-for-granted reality that Japanese people do not even question when they refuse them. Yang described “All the services—whether it is commercial or public— provided in Japan are designed so that Japanese nationals use them. Foreigners are not assumed to use them”. According to the western standard, it is obviously unacceptable to limit services on the basis of nationalities. Besides, it is ‘visible’ discrimination since they clearly turn away HSMs due to their nationalities or residential status. That’s why western migrants claim more discrimination in Japan than Asian migrants.

5.6.2 Racial discrimination: unconscious segregation and prejudice

Unlike visible institutional discrimination, racial discrimination requires careful consideration because of three reasons. First, the definition of discrimination depends

on the person. For example, Luke said that he felt discriminated when he is praised for his fluent Japanese saying, "I studied hard to master Japanese. It was very hard. I feel insulted, or made fun of, when they praise my Japanese". It is arguable whether this is discrimination or not. Obviously, Japanese people appreciating his language skills do not intend to discriminate him but take their hats off. It is, however, also true that they unconsciously segregate him from the normal Japanese and this may irritate him who is trying to speak and behave like Japanese. In this sense, the border of segregation and discrimination is ambiguous.

Second, the cultural differences occasionally lead to discrimination for some people. For instance, many Japanese people perceive tattoos as the symbol of an outlaw (Yamamoto, 2017). From the 18th century the body or face of some convicted criminals was tattooed⁷⁰. In more recent years, tattoos have been associated with mafia: when people become a member of the mafia, they are forced to tattoo the skin to show their irreversible commitment not to return to regular society. On the contrary, in western countries, it is a kind of art/fashion or ethnic expression. Some foreigners were refused to use a public bath or swimming pool because of tattoos they have. Local authorities legislate not to offer services to antisocial groups (e.g. Tokyo Metropolitan Office, 2011) and one of the ways to identify them is tattoo. The issue of tattoo sometimes affects HSMS' life in their private relations.

Tom: I've got a lot of tattoos, uh, which, you know, come from like ,uh, the earlier part of my life, I actually love my tattoos and I would like to get more and I already have lots so it doesn't matter. Uh but, for example, when E (his wife) and I started dating, her supervisor, a professor in T (University), actually told her she shouldn't date me because I was a bad person.

Q: Is she a Japanese professor?

Tom: Yes. She is Japanese. She said that I have lots of tattoos so I am obviously a mafia.

The Japanese culture associating tattoos with mafia can exclude someone innocent and be excessive. However, it should be also noted that the culture, on one hand, may have a reasonable aspect rooted in its history. Perhaps this kind of cultural issues will be addressed gradually as Japanese society becomes more diversified and internationalised because it is inevitable to honour a visiting foreigner's culture as well. As evidence, the Chief Cabinet Minister called for understanding of foreign cultures to

⁷⁰ This punishment system was imported from China where it was called *Jing Xing*, whose Chinese characters were pronounced as *Geikei* in Japanese. Therefore, associating tattoos with outlaw is not Japanese unique culture.

welcome more foreigners referring a case that a Maori was refused a public bath due to her ethnic tattoos (Sankei, 2013). Japan Tourism Agency (2016) also called for flexible solutions based on the guidelines so that the tattooed foreigners can use the public bathing services.

Third, the perception to be discriminated or not is quite subjective when it comes to racial discrimination. After all, it depends on the person whether they take it personally. Many informants reported that an incident which makes them uncomfortable might not be discrimination but quite often from misunderstanding and miscommunication.

Well, any discrimination? ...If, if I didn't speak Japanese, I would sometimes feel so...but since I do not have any difficulties in communicating, I do not find any discrimination in my case, perhaps.

(Qian)

Like Qian, a lot of informants think that when their communication skills in Japanese improve or they adapt themselves to Japanese customs, they face less uncomfortable incidents—some may call it discrimination. Also the research found that especially in Japan, the issue is not crystal clear due to Japanese discreet culture. For example, some informants point out that since Japanese people are so 'polite' their remarks and actions are not straightforward. In other words, the discrimination is so invisible (even though it exists) that even the discriminated realises it very little.

This ambiguousness is observed regardless of races or nationalities. However, the research clarified two kinds of racial discrimination to specific groups. One is 'unconscious segregation' to Korean and Chinese people, and the other is more obvious prejudice to the mainland Chinese. Unconscious segregation occurs when Japanese people have a stereotypic view on a specific group and assume arrogantly—although they are not aware of their arrogance—that they are different from Japanese without intention of discrimination. Since it is not intention—in other words, it's unconscious—, it mainly appears in casual remarks as a Korean informant reported:

Japanese people do not talk straight. Korean people also look down on people from developing countries and there are sometimes riots against discrimination in Korea. I sometimes touch upon discriminatory remarks made by Koreans when I join dinner as an interpreter. On the other hand, Japanese people do not make such remarks even if they hold that kind of view. They normally try not to show their honest feeling (on these kinds of

sensitive issues). But when I was talking to fellow mothers, I occasionally sense discrimination to the Korean in our conversation. For example, when we dine together in a group, they inadvertently mention “the Korean is emotional. I can tell so watching a Korean soap”, “they are stubborn to make Japan apologise about the wars⁷¹”. I know that they make such casual remarks since they do not think that I am Korean. So I don't mind.

(Jihye)

She speaks Japanese like a native and her child has a Japanese name since his father is Japanese. Therefore, her fellow mothers may not be conscious that she is Korean and their remarks hurt her. She claims that these are not specific in Japan as these kinds of stereotyping exist everywhere even in the western countries or Korea. However, it is also true that Japan and Korea still have sensitive historical and political issues; they may affect personal relations between the nationals.

Apart from the sensitive Japan-Korea case, prejudices against the Mainland Chinese seem to be more serious. Here, it should be noted that Chinese people other than mainland (e.g. ethnic Chinese from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore) are not included. Interestingly, the discrimination is mainly reported by non-(Mainland) Chinese.

I trained in S (famous Japanese martial art institution) and I made lots, lots of friends who studied overseas like America and Australia but when I mentioned that I was studying Chinese people in Japan, they really turned cold. Researching China is problematic in Japan.

(Tom)

As mentioned before, Japanese people whom HSMs encounter in their daily life are usually polite and unemotional. These people seem to be very gentle to the HSMs therefore they are surprised to find some of them become hostile to mainland Chinese. Similarly, another case was reported by a Taiwanese informant:

There are cases where Japanese people get more cautious or change their attitudes depending on the nationalities. For instance, in my Certificate of Alien Registration⁷², it was written Nationality: China, Place of Birth: Taiwan.

⁷¹ Korea was a Japanese colony from 1910 to 1945. Korean public discourse has constantly called for Japan to apologise for the colonisation and wars that Korea was inevitably involved in due to Japanese militarism (c.f. Morris-Suzuki et al, 2013).

⁷² Former ID card issued to foreigner residing in Japan. The legislation is that foreigners should always carry it with them

When a police officer stopped me on a street to make an enquiry, I showed it to them and they said “Oh, you are from Taiwan. Then no problem. It’s OK unless you are (Mainland) Chinese” and the enquiry finished. The Police officer became less cautious realising that I am Taiwanese.

(Guanlin)

This case may be explained that mainland Chinese rank as the top foreign nationality (32.7%) of those who are filed in criminal cases in Japan (Research and Training Institute of the Ministry of Justice, 2017)⁷³ so the police become more cautious about this. If this is purely coming from the reason to reduce the number of foreign criminals, it will not be discrimination although it may still conjure up a sense of prejudice against the specific nationality as is demonstrated in the immigration procedure.

Nonetheless, the actual case of discrimination was not prominently observed from the interviews with mainland Chinese HSMs. Most of the Chinese informants did not report serious discriminatory cases and they even said that the Japanese people are very tolerant. At the end, all of them said that it is not nationality but the individual that forms the relations. A Chinese informant already holding permanent residency cited his experience:

I have been told that “I don’t like Chinese people, but you are an exception”. I am currently engaged with a project in H (Japanese countryside) and at the outset, people there were a bit cautious of me. I could list many things like discrimination, but I don’t mind. I can make them open minded. It’s personality rather than nationality that counts finally. The governor now calls me “Mr Y (his Chinese family name), Mr Y” intimately.

(Jiawei)

Jiawei’s remarks “*It’s personality rather than nationality that counts finally*” is what the extant literature on racism of migration has constantly overlooked. Indeed, Hall (1998) and Arudou (2015) discuss Japan’s embedded racism revolving only around this institutional discrimination (i.e. limiting services to foreigners) but they do not really discuss racism on a personality basis. Jiawei’s account reveals the significance of examining personality-based discrimination in addition to the ways in which HSMs negotiate it.

⁷³ Followed by Vietnamese (20.6%), South Korean (9.5%). The figure excludes the arrests based on Road Traffic Control Law and Immigration Act (ibid.).

5.7 Fostering social networks among compatriots

Another distinction between the western and Asian migrants can also be found in the way of building social networks. In general, the western migrants tend not to be so eager to widen their compatriot network but socialise with other nationalities. They are neutral in choosing the networks rather than hesitating to make compatriot friends in Japan. That is to say, they just drift with the tide: it's not bad to make compatriot friends in Japan but not indispensable. So, they do not make much effort to meet new compatriot friends. A testimony made by Alastair coming from Scotland represents this view:

Q: Do you have any Scottish networks in Tokyo?

Alastair: I go to, like, a Scottish bar in Shinjuku (shopping and night life area in Tokyo). I go there not very often. But to be honest I've never checked if there is a Scottish society in Japan.

Q: But you sometimes go to the bar?

Alastair: Yeah, sometimes I want to have like, yeah Shinjuku, like erm, or you know, I like to take Scottish food or something like that but I never, I've never reached a Scottish society in Japan. I don't think there's one, I've never checked.

Q: But you can meet new people in the Scottish bar.

Alastair: It's even, I don't even go there to meet people. It's just to feel home or something.

Q: Because you can eat haggis (typical Scottish food)?

Alastair: Yeah, like eat haggis, yeah. Well, haggis is hard to buy in Japan.

There is a Scottish society in Tokyo and Yokohama offering Scottish events such as Burns Supper and it is easy to find them on the internet⁷⁴. Like this data, many of the western migrants go to a western style bar or pub but they do not necessarily go there to widen their networks. Jack also indicated several opportunities to socialise with American people in Japan like Tokyo American Club (established 1928), but it's too expensive to join and he thinks it is only for the establishment, in other words, it is a 'closed' society for specific elite migrants. However, the circumstances surrounding the Asian migrants are completely different.

⁷⁴ St. Andrews Society (Yokohama and Tokyo) runs annual events such as the St. Andrew Ball and informal ceilidhs along with Burns Supper. There is another organization called Japan Scotland Association (established 2012) in Tokyo offering an English website on their events although they have more content in Japanese.

The vast majority of them reported they benefitted from the firm compatriot communities widely spread from university Alumni to social network services (SNS):

Q: Do you have any challenges living in Japan?

Qian: So far no...well, since there are a lot of Chinese in Japan. Considering the number of Chinese friends, my life in Tokyo is not so different from that in Beijing since I have so many Chinese friends here.

Q: Are they your colleagues?

Qian: Various. Such as alumni members of my university and so on. And there are communities based on the business sectors. For instance, there are Chinese communities for people working for, like, trading companies or financial sector and so forth. When I make a friend belonging to the community, my network will develop further from there.

Q: Aha, like they invite you to their dinner since you are working for the same business sector. Is it something like that?

Qian: Yes, it is. So, how can I explain...now it's so easy to create a community through social network services. So, it's easy to make friends.

Thus, they enjoy close-knit compatriot communities where friendship snowballs (Conradson and Latham, 2005a). Especially in the age of digitalisation, SNS plays an important role in developing their community and facilitating their life in Japan as another Chinese informant describes:

Chinese embassy in Japan hold a few events for local Chinese every year. Since there are a lot of Chinese, it is easy to get together. We have a party inviting Chinese friends. In Japan, we have a Chinese SNS where we organise many kinds of activities and I enjoy hiking there. There are indeed many sorts of activities like making dumplings and exchanging second-hand home appliances. We can do most things on the SNS so it's fairly easy to make friends...the name of the SNS is KOHARU, written as small (Ko) spring (haru) in Chinese characters. A Chinese living in Japan created it. There are Tokyo and Kansai (Osaka area) versions. If you have questions on visa and so forth, you can post it on the SNS and get advice.

(Ting)

It is almost the de-rigueur for Asian migrants to utilise the SNS to settle well in Japan. This can be applicable to not only Chinese but also other Asian migrants such as from India. What's more interesting, the above testimony also shows a significant difference

from the western migrants: 'intervention' of their home governments. She said that the Chinese embassy holds a few events for Chinese people to widen migrants' networks. This research also located the different levels of intervention made by foreign institutions (e.g. embassy) and this influenced the way in which HSMs settle. While the western embassies in Japan, in general, are mainly for the establishment society, the Asian embassies are prone to invite a variety of compatriots regardless of their social positions to their annual events. A Singaporean, who is in a similar career stage with Alastair is occasionally invited to the Singaporean Embassy in Japan unlike the UK migrant.

Singaporean Embassy in Japan stages several events annually. They can be a party like bonenkai (end-of-year party), Singapore national holiday and so on. On these occasions, everyone gets together and enjoys Singaporean dishes. This is a good opportunity to widen my Singaporean network. It's mainly for Singaporeans but if you have a Singaporean spouse, you can join it as well.

(Junjie)

Enjoying national dishes and developing networks in the Embassy is a remarkable contrast with Alastair who pops up in the Scottish bar to eat haggis on his own although they belong to a similar social class in Japan. It is clear that the Asian embassies are keener to offer chances for their compatriots to get together using their institutions than the western embassies that are deemed an unfriendly establishment by their nationals. The literature has suggested the level of support made by migrants' home governments also has great impacts on the life of HSMs (Harvey, 2008; Harvey and Beaverstock, 2017); however, it has not been clear why there are different levels of support by governments.

There are two possible reasons to explain the contrasted approaches toward the compatriot migrants among the countries: national strategies of return migration and international relations. The fieldwork identified Singapore and China as major countries keen to offer socialising occasions for their nationals in Japan. These two countries have national strategies to induce their emigrants to come back (Ho, 2008). For instance, the Singapore government has an official website to widely advertise job opportunities for their emigrants so that they can easily return to Singapore. Keeping close contacts with Singaporean emigrants is one of the important missions for the Singaporean Embassy in Japan; therefore, they often provide social occasions for fellow Singaporeans in Tokyo.

As for China, it can be more about sensitive Japan-China relations. As the two countries' relations are politically sensitive, the Chinese government may try to protect their nationals by linking them with the Embassy (or their public institutions) in Tokyo. It also plays as an agency to improve the sensitive Sino-Japanese relations as Yang said she is often invited by the Chinese institutions in Tokyo to a short trip (one or two days) where she socialises with not only fellow Chinese but also Japanese who are interested in China and discuss international issues.

Apart from these macro issues such as governmental strategies, micro (i.e. individual level) factors also play out in determining compatriot socialisation. As shown in the theoretical framework, the cultural differences are the significant factor for HSMs having a firm compatriot community in a host country (Beaverstock, 2002; Saxenian, 2006; Harvey and Beaverstock, 2017). If this theory could be also applied to HSMs in Japan, the western migrants would be more likely to mingle with their compatriots than the Asians who are supposed to share similar culture with the host Japanese.

One of the possible explanations that this was not the case is that most of the western informants have Japanese partners. Since they are already embedded in a Japanese community, they do not necessarily socialise with their compatriots. In other words, the social capital originating from compatriot groups constitutes a private 'insurance' which will help them when they face challenges (e.g. visa process as Ting suggested so they can ask for advice on their Chinese SNS). Therefore, if they already have the reliable network in a local community through marriage, they do not require the insurance any more. Here, the compatriot community is not craved for.

This, however, poses another issue to, this time, the Asian migrants. Ironically, the fact that the Asian migrants rely on their compatriot network means they need the 'insurance' to stabilise their life because they have less contact with the Japanese community unlike the western migrants. As evidence, the Asian informants who show stronger compatriot networks are less likely to socialise with Japanese like Ting benefitting from the KOHARU SNS struggles:

I had a Japanese pen pal before coming to Japan. At that time, I thought it's easy to make Japanese friends. But now I feel a friendship gap with Japanese. It's challenging to have a friendship from the bottom of the heart...I often drink with my Japanese doki (see glossaries) colleagues but I still feel a gap...though it's hard to explain. Like in China, if we are

befriended, we are always together. In Japan(...) well, it's depending on the culture(...).

(Ting)

She speaks Japanese fluently and is well-versed with Japanese culture but still struggles in making Japanese friends like she expected in China. This suggests language capability is not a sufficient condition (JAPI, 2010). Then, what are crucial factor(s) to socialise with the host nations? As Ting suggested, many of the Asian migrants think that the ways in which Japanese people develop friendship is rather different from their culture although none of the western migrants indicated so. For Asian migrants, Japanese people are not so deeply involved in friends' lives and not so dedicated compared to their home friends but respect the individual decision made by them—some of them think it's western style. This means Asian migrants have distinctive values from Japanese regarding forging friendships. As a result, they are to rely on their migrant community.

5.8 Discussion

Stretching out from migrants' motivations to their network strategies, this chapter presented key factors to comprehend policy and societal obstacles they should negotiate. Among others, this research gives three important policy and academic implications: the distinctive Asian and Western mobility patterns, invisible obstacles together with marginalised groups in immigration control, and network building.

First, the stark contrast of motivations contextualising distinctive migration strategies predicating the ways to accumulate migration capital. East-Asian migrants are still influenced by their traditional Asian values like Confucianism, whereas the western migrants follow the nomadic traditions (Conradson and Latham, 2005a) invoking their walkabout. Among others, the findings foregrounded a unique push factor of Chinese young migrants who crave ownership of their life course disentangling from the social pressures. Although the traditional push factors mainly posit poverty, political or household strategies outlining the agency of remittances or democratic motivations (King, 2012a; Findlay and Cranston, 2015), this research illuminated more individualistic and socio-cultural push factors which brings migrants' determinants to bear on self-autonomy. It suggests not only economic or democratic gaps but also implicit social pressures defining their migratory decision. This will lead to significant policy implications for both sending and receiving countries when the educational and skill level of potential migrants becomes higher since it enables them to be more mobile and longing for freedom (Florida, 2005; Ho, 2011). In the context of war for talent

(Chambers et al., 1998; Beechler and Woodward, 2009), a country that offers better 'freedom options' succeeds in acquiring more HSMs (Favell, 2008).

Nonetheless, the findings showed Japan's policies were incongruent with the implication. The data, for instance, problematised the stringent conditions for permanent residency as Chinese migrants worried it would take a long time to be eligible especially when they engage in international business requiring them to move out of Japan intermittently. It also affects the migration strategies of the western HSMs who came through walkabout. As John described, young migrants reflect on their career and life plan when they reach their 30's; this is coherent with the western culture where people tend to be highly mobile in their 20's and start to immobilise in their 30's (Findlay et al., 2015; Scott, 2013). They happened to remain in Japan, but later considered their life at their turning point. However, as it takes 10 years to gain a permanent residency, they are left in limbo for some years after becoming 30. In addition, it is difficult to obtain a mortgage unless a foreigner has a stable residential status albeit the stable housing is key for the long-term life plan (Izuhara, 2015). As a result, the strict condition of the permanent residency may drive out HSMs like John. These issues offer intriguing empirical evidence that Japan's policies are not well designed to encompass the life course of HSMs which are different from Japanese conventions. This resonates with Findlay et al. (2015) calling for a life-course approach, whereas the plethora of migration scholarship has centred on the cross-sectional dimension (Findlay et al., 2015). My findings corroborate that the policies should be updated in line with the life-course dynamism of not Japanese but HSMs.

Another policy implication is inductive from the stigmatised cohorts exemplified by the Filipina nursery teacher. The case represents immigration control can exclude HSMs who can contribute to the socio-economic development of Japan due to preconceptions. It also attested to the significance to accept diversified HSMs to innovate Japanese society. As already shown, the transnational elite geographies have mainly focused on intracompany transferees as HSMs (Beaverstock and Broadwell, 2000; Salt and Wood, 2011); however, the findings call for the wider concept of HSMs to examine its policies and impacts by shedding light on the overlooked cohorts. Approving diversity also plays a far-reaching role in addressing societal barriers such as education. Unlike the scholarly works on the level of education or Japanese language (Oishi, 2012), the research identified the fundamental obstacle for Third Culture Kids (Pollock and Van Reken, 2009) as the lack of diversity inhibiting them from becoming a cosmopolitan citizen who holds a wide and tolerant view.

Finally, the research also unearthed new dimensions in network building. The traditional theory positing the forging of compatriot networks is an indispensable strategy for not only elite migrants (Beaverstock, 2002; Saxenian, 2006; Harvey and Beaverstock, 2017) but also the middlings (Scott, 2007; Ryan, 2015). Harvey (2008) raised some explanatory variables determining the degree of compatriot networks such as cultural gaps. However, the research witnessed that the western migrants socialise less with their compatriots comparing to Asian HSMs. It alludes that the western HSMs were more embedded in the Japanese community than the Asian HSMs who were prone to rely on 'virtual' networking through SNS. Indeed, SNS brought by rapid technological development has become an important agency for mobile citizens (Hannam et al., 2006), but this research also suggests it also carries the risk that migrants can be far more disembodied from the local host community by offering an easy but intangible social plaza. More research is needed to further examine how the SNS promotes or impedes the social cohesion.

As shown in this chapter, the case of Japan's policy and societal barriers surrounding HSMs attest to unique features that the past scholarly works on western countries (Scott, 2006; Harvey, 2008) and intracompany transferees (Salt, 1983; Beaverstock, 2005) have not assumed. Yet, these are only partial dimensions HSMs navigate through. There is another aspect we should explore to unfold the labyrinth of skilled migration in Japan: labour market and employment relations, which also brings into play: what, how, and why are they so distinctive?

Now let me take you into the next maze—workplace issues.

Chapter 6 Negotiating Professional Careers: Japan's Endemic Employment Practices (Findings 2)

Wakisaka-san (author's name), what you are dealing with is not reality or knowledge. It's image. Right?
Informant (Executive of international recruiting agency)

6.1 Introduction

He smiled when he read the company rulebook but stopped smiling when he realised the rules applied to him, too. He was instructed not to walk around with his hands in his pockets, shown how to choose the correct place to sit at a meeting and given the words of the company song for studying after work. He learned the etiquette for offering and receiving business cards, the staff canteen rules (take one portion of vegetables, one portion of rice and finish eating by the time the bell rings) and the regulations for the company dormitories for new recruits (regular room checks, no noise, no females).

Niall Murtagh (2005), Blue-Eyed Salaryman⁷⁵

The word “salaryman” was coined in Japan and regarded as Japanese-English, but now in the Oxford Dictionary is described as “a WHITE-COLLAR worker” (Turnbull et al., 2010: 1351). The above cited autobiography was written by Niall Murtagh, a blue-eyed *salaryman*, who was one of the pioneer HSMs making a career in the Mitsubishi group. The citation underlines the mysterious everyday practices in the *salaryman* life such as rules on politeness and seniority (prohibiting leaving hands in the pocket and choosing a correct seat), loyalty to the company (learning the company song) and welfare (company dormitories). It indeed depicts funny and attention-grabbing anecdotes HSMs are surprised to find; however, it deserves full scrutiny given the fact it has been 30 years since he got his foot on the bottom rung of the career ladder in Japan. Murtagh (2005) also needs epistemological examination on the *salaryman's*⁷⁶ life.

This chapter deals with RQ 3 & 4 aiming to make sense of what working in Japan is like for HSMs through the epistemological approach that Murtagh's (2005) storytelling

⁷⁵ This is the description written on the cover of the book for its advertisement. “He” indicates its author, Niall Murtagh.

⁷⁶ As the gender biased name (*salaryman*) implies, the word has been deeply associated with the male breadwinner model. Even though the gender neutral expressions (e.g. business person) have become common in Japan, the word salaryman still prevails.

lacks. This chapter specifically casts light on recruiting practices, career making and workplace collegiality via the theoretical optics of transnational elite geographies and Japanese employment relations.

Amazon UK introduces Murtagh (2005), saying “With his shiny suit, his attache case and a good dose of humour, Niall Murtagh describes a world that is an utter mystery to most westerners” (Amazon UK, 2017). This chapter also illuminates how the perceptions of ‘mysterious’ Japan have been constructed and affect migrants’ decision.

6.2 Seeking employment: the recruitment practices can be a listed heritage

Unlike other developed countries, Japanese companies still keep unique recruitment practices called “Shinsotsusaiyo” (simultaneous recruitment of new graduates). Unlike the western countries where the recruitment is based on vacancies, there is one fixed date when Japanese firms generally hire new graduates: the 1st of April right after they graduate from universities in March. It is when the news covers an initiation ceremony together with messages from the CEOs (e.g. Nikkei shimbun, 2016). For instance, on the day in 2016, 2,239 newly employed joined the ceremony of Toyota in their headquarters in Aichi (Toyota, 2016). Thus, Shinsotsusaiyo is the system which recruits a large number of new graduates at the same time and this means there is little room to hire people away from this opportunity. In the western countries, the timing of starting a career for a new graduate varies—someone finds a job the next month they graduate but others not. With Japan, the season of job hunting and the start of employment are completely decided.

As Japanese corporations prefer new graduates (Tsuru, 2016), it is unlikely that people who have already graduated can use this Shinsotsusaiyo scheme; therefore, some students intentionally delay their graduation when they fail to find a job before graduation (Oishi, 2012). HSMs who studied in Japan and faced this unique recruitment practice claimed that it confounded them. For example, Jiawei was not eligible to use the Shinsotsusaiyo scheme because of age restriction, so he sought a job in foreign affiliates offering the western style recruitment system⁷⁷. This case indicates that the diversified life paths, such as a postgraduate-gap-year (c.f. walkabout westerners in the previous chapter) or doing a second bachelor, are unlikely to be approved in Japanese firms. For example, Haruno Yoshida, former-President of

⁷⁷ He had already graduated from a Chinese university when he did his second bachelor in Japan. When he graduated from a Japanese university over 10 years ago, the corporations had the age limitation to apply for Shinsotsusaiyo. Even though he was a new graduate, he was ruled out of the process because of his age.

BT Japan, is one of the sufferers although she is now a successful businessperson, chosen among the top 50 World's Greatest Leaders (Fortune Magazine, 2017).

I started my career at Motorola's (Tokyo office), the (then) largest American telecom manufacture. This is because I fell ill just before (university) graduation, which took four years to recover. (After recovering,) I made every effort to find a job but only this American firm gave me an offer. However, the workplace was beyond my expectation. It was something I could have only seen in a film. They provided every employee with an Apple computer regardless of position. I had been so despondent over my lost career before that, but I vividly remember that the job attracted me instantly. (Yoshida, 2017: 28)

Yoshida described missing the Shinsotsusaiyo scheme “as if I was left in a dark alley. I despaired over my future wondering if there was any place I could live” (Yoshida, 2017: 28). Shinsotsusaiyo is the rite of passage that the young Japanese should be on to reach ‘a place in the sun’.

In addition to the inflexible system, the recruiting process itself also bemuses HSMs. As the corporations severely scramble for talented new graduates, they try to start the screening process earlier than their rival companies. Thus, the screening starts one year before their graduation. This timing is declared by Keidanren, the employers' organisation, on the consensus of their member companies to prevent the companies from beginning the process too early which will impinge on students' study (Keidanren, 2017). In 2013, Keidanren announced a delay to the screening process so that the students can have enough time to study rather than job hunting (Keidanren, 2013). Therefore, the screening for FY 2017 employment started on the 1st of June in 2016, two months later than usual.

Despite this change, job hunting starts 10 months before the graduation. If they are in a master's programme which usually lasts for two years, they need to start job hunting at the beginning of their second year. It would be too early for them to decide their professional career. All the informants experiencing Shinsotsusaiyo were also surprised at the unusual atmosphere at the venue of the interviews.

Yang: I realised that it (job hunting in Japan) can be a (UNESCO's) World Heritage. My great surprise was that everyone wears a similar black suit

with a similar black briefcase and even similar facial expression. Everyone is the same, indeed.

Q: Is it different from China?

Yang: Unlike Japan, there's no such thing like a recruit suit (a suit specifically made for job hunting). They wear a suit but there are many variations in colours and forms.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) lists cultural and natural heritages of unique and great value to be protected, which include Machu Picchu (Peru), Serengeti National Park (Tanzania) and Venice (Italy) to name only a few. Yang cynically claims Japan's recruiting practices are so unique that it can also be listed on a par with these invaluable heritages. Her account points to homogeneity of the Japanese recruiting practices such as wearing "a recruit suit".

Figure 6-1 Typical recruit suits



Source: Photo AC (2018)

Toyokeizai, a classic business weekly magazine in Japan, explains how to choose a recruit suit irrespective of gender: it should be dark in colour like black without stripes, saying "please consider which suit can be the best for you to gain a job offer rather than what you would like to wear...the best is neutral appearance" (Tamiya, 2014). Neutral means that a student should not stand out in appearance; therefore, everyone should look the same otherwise s/he may be regarded as too fabulous. That's why stripes are to be ruled out because it seems (to employers) too decorated. This is indeed about appearance but it also alludes social norms of being the same as others. What the traditional Japanese companies don't like is outliers rather than being

characterless. It in fact clearly links with the lack of diversity of Japanese firms as shown later.

6.3 Japanese language: pursuing foreigners who can be 'Japanized'

One of the biggest issues in working in Japan is language. Surprisingly, even in foreign affiliates, the basic infrastructure such as IT systems and employment contract are constructed in Japanese. A representative in an international recruiting agency clarified that 90 % of the human resources they introduce to their clients—mostly foreign affiliates—are eventually Japanese since the jobs require both English and Japanese. This tendency is more evident in traditional Japanese firms whose recruiting staff acknowledged that they only recruit Japanese speakers even when they recruit HSMs abroad. As described earlier, recruiting the talent abroad is a new movement in Japanese large enterprises; however, they mainly target people who studied Japanese. One of the HR staff in a large trading enterprise explains the reasons:

If someone who does not speak Japanese works here, I think they cannot be successful since their initial office and training will be in Japan. They will struggle in Japan (if they don't speak Japanese). So it is defacto that no one who doesn't speak Japanese has been offered a job.
(Employer of migrants 2)

This company is famous for their transnational business, holding global branches and offices in over 100 locations, and as a matter of fact, their employees speak English. They offer rich foreign (not only English) languages training to the employees. Besides, all the young staff—in their 20's—are given an opportunity to be seconded overseas to gain worldwide views. Nonetheless, they still require Japanese skills from their foreign staff working in Japan. This notion is somewhat relevant since most of the informants also reiterate the importance of the Japanese language. When being asked whether they recommend working in Japan to their compatriots, they mostly answered it is recommendable on the condition that they speak Japanese. Apart from the reasons explained earlier, some HSMs raised the necessity of language abilities for socialising.

As is often the case with elite circles, the tacit knowledge and informal communication play the important role in facilitating their work (Millar and Salt, 2008; Beaverstock and Boardwell, 2000; Yamashita, 2008). Language ability is then crucial to access informal networks. Since most of their colleagues or superiors are Japanese, it is extremely difficult for HSMs to be involved in the network when they understand Japanese little:

Speaking Japanese is fundamental. If you don't speak Japanese, you cannot get information (relating to the company). Even if you got the information, you don't understand what it really means. We go out for a drink, but if you don't speak Japanese, you cannot join the community.

(Yu)

The information widely ranges from private gossip to confidential business, rumours to truth. Then, of more significance than gaining the information is to evaluate and screen it to make the most of it. Considering it is challenging even for Japanese employees, HSMs need to have enough communication skill in Japanese to do so. However, this doesn't indicate that HSMs should employ native-level perfect Japanese. To some extent, common sense and experience will help them weigh up the information appropriately.

Nonetheless, the demand for language skills becomes sometimes too high for the non-native. HSMs occasionally feel pressure that they are expected to master Japanese to perfection. For example, although writing Japanese is quite hard for foreigners and it is not easy to attain the native level, their colleagues sometimes indicate their mistakes in writing. This is highly frustrating for HSMs since they think they are not hired to employ perfect Japanese but another skill which their Japanese colleagues do not have such as foreign languages, special skills or networks. Given the expertise to complement Japanese staff, HSMs can make other contributions in the business than Japanese language. They, however, feel their employers set greater store on Japanese skills than the unique expertise they hold. A French interviewee gave an example:

I have a friend who is very fluent in Japanese. And he worked for Japanese medicine maker, and the problem was he was hired as a foreigner to open new markets. But he told me that at a certain point, his colleagues and his hierarchy asked him to be more Japanese. He received many emails saying, "Oh, you are writing, you are making mistakes in your Japanese emails"... At first, they employed him as a foreigner, but little by little, he thought that he has the impression that the whole group is asking him to become more Japanese. But that's not why he was employed. And he got depression and he left the company and left for France.

(Marie)

Her account clearly shows that Japanese corporations would like to hire foreigners who can be 'Japanized (to behave like Japanese)' rather than someone who can offer unique expertise. This Japanization is borne out of peer pressure, which this study terms 'coerced harmonisation'. A 'recruit suit' is also a form of coerced harmonisation as it psychologically compels the students to look the same so that nobody stands out in appearance. It can be more clearly understood within the concept of diversity (Vertovec, 2007, 2012, 2017) which calls for acknowledging the human differences in society: diversity covers a wide range of dimensions including (yet not limited to) age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities, race, and sexual orientation (Wrench, 2015). Therefore, it not only focuses on nationalities but also includes clothing (appearance). In this context, the custom of the 'recruit suit' is a typical example demanding 'sameness' while suppressing diversity. Kandola and Fullerton (1998: 8) use a metaphor of 'mosaics' to describe the necessity to acknowledge the differences and bring more diversity into the workplace:

Differences come together to create a whole organisation in much the same way that single pieces of a mosaic come together to create a pattern. Each piece is acknowledged, accepted and has a place in the whole structure.

Mosaic is enriched by the different colours and shapes of the parts. However, Coerced harmonisation will dim the brilliance. The Japanese workplace prefers the characterless to the uniqueness in selecting and maintaining its members: Coerced harmonisation is the mechanism to exclude the organisational outcasts. This is, in fact, not only the issue of language fluency nor clothing but ultimately cultural assimilation:

They (employers) want foreigners who understand the Japanese culture and who understand that. I don't know, when they go inside, they have to take the shoes off, use the chopsticks, you know, it's ok for them Japanese food, understand the hierarchy in Japan, the way things get done. They also want someone who can comfortably fit in, and that's not very easy. The only way you learn how to fit in as a foreigner is having been here for a period of time. So that's the really big, natural barrier that exists.

(Executive of international recruiting agency)

Language skills and familiarising with Japanese culture are requisites for HSMs working in Japan. As shown earlier, non-Japanese firms also demand the Japanese language skills since the customers and colleagues are predominantly Japanese. On the other hand, the research identified some areas which don't necessarily require the

language skills: engineers and scientific researchers. Especially in the technological area such as chemistry or IT, the lingua franca is English. Therefore, it is natural to use English in their office or laboratories and HSMs working for the areas do not find any language barriers. Also, some informants point to the change in another field. For example, an accounting firm tends to hire an accountant⁷⁸ who can speak Japanese since their clients have been operating their business in Japanese even if they are foreign affiliates. However, as more and more foreigners acquire an important managerial position, a change seems to be emerging:

As Japanese companies get more globalised, we see the increase in foreign managers who have a position with 'C' such as CEO, CFO and CIO. They do not necessarily speak Japanese...so far we thought that the staff in an accounting firm in Japan should speak Japanese, but recently, it has been changing. Even if they do not speak Japanese, as long as they have specific skills, they can, for example, develop sales networks to non-Japanese-speaking clients.

(Brandon)

Engineers, scientific researchers and accountant/consultant do not need excellence in Japanese since their working language and field have already become internationalised. This suggests if the number of foreigners in Japanese companies' clients and employees surge, their working environment might be more internationalised; consequently, the Japanese language might be a smaller barrier for HSMs. Bringing diversity in the workplace will be a practical solution for the language barrier as a Chinese informant said:

If the number of foreign employees increases in my company, the required level of Japanese writing skills will be less demanding although it was demanding before. This also makes the office more open and friendly. For example, my friend works for a foreign affiliate. Her boss is from the UK and her colleagues come from various countries, but her office is in Tokyo. The ambience in the office is different from the one which has 80% Japanese

⁷⁸ They are more consultant than accountant since their business is to give advice to Japanese companies on overseas business (particularly regarding country risks, financial regulations and M&A process). Given the different financial rules, the qualification of accountant is not mutually recognized between Japan and the UK (or USA either). Therefore, the overseas-qualified accountant is not expected to do accounting.

and 20% foreigners like mine. If there are more foreigners doing strange things (in my office), the office will be warmer or more frank, I suppose.
(Qian)

If there are “*more foreigners doing strange things*”—*strange things* can be interpreted as a non-Japanese behaviour—, Japanese colleagues or hierarchy will be more open minded because there are a lot of people who do not stick to Japaneseness. This simply means the Japanese office has not been diversified; therefore, they are strict to ‘outliers’ and one of the good examples is demanding perfect Japanese and to be Japanized. Again, coerced harmonisation is the process to debar the outliers. Yet, in a truly diversified office, few people employ Japanese perfectly and no one is required to be Japanized anymore; then, the office becomes more friendly and accepting. In short, the language issue is deeply linked with the diversity and openness in the workplace.

6.4 Career making: I can’t imagine maybe that scenario

There are remarkable distinctions in the perception of Japanese employment practices between Asian and Western HSMs. Asian HSMs tend to take a lifetime employment system and seniority salary positively and praise Japan’s unique corporate culture such as industriousness of their colleagues as an Indian informant articulated “I would like Indian young people to learn Japanese spirit such as politeness, industriousness and punctuality” (Raj). Thus, Asian HSMs are prone to think that they can enhance their professional career in Japan. They especially applaud rich training systems in Japan that an informant describes as “second university”:

I was surprised that I can keep my business diary during the office hour. I was just surprised because during office hours, I thought that I need to present the outcome, but it was said that I can reflect on my day writing the diary...Japanese company basically has the stance to train their staff from scratch offering rich and practical training. Japanese company is like a second university for the newly recruited. Training costs a lot. We do not have such a system in China.
(Qian)

All the informants, both Asian and Western, admire the rich training systems—whether it’s OJT (on-the-job-training) or Off-JT— offered by their employers. However, the Western HSMs confront communal challenges in building their professional career. As seen in the theoretical framework chapter, the traditional theory posits HSMs are

motivated by career enhancement and remuneration when they migrate (Salt, 1983, 1988; Salt and Findlay, 1989; Beaverstock 1990, 1991). However, this theory is not necessarily applicable to the western HSMs in Japan; they think working in Japan would not be the best option for their professional career and financial rewards due to three reasons: career specialisation, endemic office customs such as slow decision making and risk averse behaviour, and the seniority system in promotion and salary.

First, the personnel strategies in Japanese corporations are different from the western ones. They prefer a generalist to a specialist when they foster their employees who will eventually be in a managerial position (Whiltshire, 1995; Kumano, 2017). This is why Japanese companies prefer Shinsotsusaiyo where they can train new graduates from scratch to imbue them with their corporate philosophy and generalist career (Tsuru, 2016); in fact, the rich training system is designed for this purpose. The relatively small mid-career labour market (Oishi, 2012) also indicates this pro-generalist stance since the mid-career market is usually for specialists. Being trained to be a generalist means the employees do not know their ongoing career or choose their career path⁷⁹. Looking back to his initial corporate training, Alastair expressed his surprise to find his fellow new-recruits not knowing to which division they would be attached.

The differences (between Japan and the UK) are that when we apply for a job, we apply for the specific position (in the UK). Whereas something I know, cos I went for (new recruits') training, and I was incredibly surprised to know that people don't know where they are going to work. Even they don't know which division they are working on. Like, I can't imagine maybe that scenario... You have to specialise in something in the UK or America (to make a professional career).

(Alastair)

Alastair himself was employed as an IT specialist and assigned the appropriate post before coming to Japan; however, it is normal that Japanese new-recruits do not know where to work at the initial stage of their training. Becoming a generalist means HSMs cannot develop their specific skills and this keeps them from driving up their value in the international labour market. It is also frustrating for them that their companies do not have specific personnel strategies for their foreign employees. Most of the HSMs except for intracompany transferees claim that they are equally treated as Japanese

⁷⁹ Generalist career path itself is not only unique in Japan. For example, the UK civil servants also follow a generalist career (Rhodes, 2011) like Japanese bureaucrats, who will be discussed in Chapter 7. However, the uniqueness of Japanese system is that the professionals even in the private sectors are also required to be a generalist.

employees, meaning the career path is also similar with their Japanese colleagues. However, many HSMs think that the HR strategies (eventually their career path) should be differentiated from Japanese employees since their background is different. That is to say, they demand more specialisation of talents rather than being a generalist. Besides, they attribute the void of specialisation to Japan's loss of competitive edge over their international competitors. To some HSMs, fostering a generalist does not seem to be a well-devised personnel strategy but just a convenient excuse to gloss over the unorganised vision of HR management.

Second, HSMs are often confounded by the endemic business customs in Japan. A good example is Nemawashi (prior consultation): when people make a decision in a meeting, they usually consult the meeting members informally and discuss the issue prior to the meeting. In other words, they hold a meeting but the decision has been already made. HSMs claim that the meeting should be basically held for fruitful discussions to produce better ideas, but in fact, it's just a ceremony. This kind of unfamiliar business custom seems to be unnecessarily time consuming to HSMs. Endlessly having meetings and consulting one another, an informant criticises, makes the decision making excessively slow.

We have incredibly many meetings (in Japanese office). When I was working in Hong Kong, I could do anything after getting an approval from my manager if there's something I would like to challenge. However, in Japan, I need to get approval from various managers in addition to consulting with other related divisions. It takes lots of time...Moreover, they are too conservative. We don't know whether a new project can be successful or not without giving it a try, but they are too cautious to decide anything. After all, the decision takes too long.

(Yu)

Since Japanese decision making requires consensus rather than leadership, HSMs undergo an enormously (and unnecessarily) stressful process in their workplace. Besides, the risk averse behaviour attracts criticism as well. Many HSMs complain there is no dynamism: "Japan is the last country where the revolution occurs" as Jake cynically expressed. Normally, highly motivated HSMs are willing to tackle challenges that always entail risks which Japanese corporations, especially large enterprises, try to avoid as much as possible. So when HSMs would like to try something new, it needs thorough scrutiny which is stressful for them.

Another custom that HSMs cannot get familiar with is sensitive hierarchy. As is widely known, Japan is a highly hierarchical society and business practices reflect the tradition. For example, Eric feels uncomfortable when he should change his language depending on the person he speaks to—Japanese grammar is honorific—and even his behaviour in line with seniority he encounters in the business. He is still bemused with this although he has now been in Japan longer than in his home country:

We always have a sense of hierarchy though it's changing. Why do you give meishi (business card) ? The first reason to give meishi is to know whether you are above us or very above us? Or same level? Without meishi, we might make a mistake. So we have to give a meishi. This sense of hierarchy, in Canada, we don't have. Canada is more the sense that all the people are equal. So for the westerner, that's one hard thing in Japan. It's always TPO. You have to figure out the part of TPO and you have to figure out if the people with you are equal or less, or above? Or do you have to change your language or behaviour? In Canada, or North America, we think that there's something wrong if you change your behaviour. The good person always, you know, basically should be the same. That's the good person...So the sense of TPO is very unique to Japan, I guess.

(Eric)

Exchanging a business card is an indispensable rite in an initial business meeting whether it is formal or not. A new-recruit is educated to carry their business cards always so that they can introduce themselves anytime as there is a Japanese saying 'your business card is your face', implying the business card represents all of you. This is why Murtagh (2005) learned the etiquette of the business card.

Hierarchy is also an important matter among colleagues. As a Japanese company is highly hierarchical, they always need to be aware of the ranking of their colleagues. Then, how do they rank their colleagues? Professional titles can be a measure but there is another implicit but simple signal. An intracompany transferee was surprised at a strange custom in Japan even though he worked for its Taiwanese affiliate:

Everyone knows who enters the company like "when that person started working and he is bra bra bra". Everyone knows it completely. It's surprising...In my job in Taiwan, I tend not to realise hierarchy since my business is something to do with the USA. I roughly know who started working in my company and who is senior or junior to me in terms of

professional career in my office. But if they are capable, it's not rare that they are promoted higher than their seniors. However, I was surprised that here in Japan's headquarters, everyone is well informed who gets employed when.

(Renhao)

Japanese workers often use a term indicating the fellow employees who started working in the same year: doki (literally 'same period'). As already elucidated, new graduates simultaneously join a company on the first of April each year. This labels them as the cohort starting their career in a specific year. It is thereby common to hear something like "he is a doki with her (joining the company) in 2005". It's a similar expression to 'Class 2005' in English although it means the timing of graduation.

The reason why the notion of doki is so prevalent is it is profoundly associated with the seniority system: when someone becomes older, they are promoted at a similar pace with their doki. Japan's promotion system is based on seniority, namely, the age or length of professional career. A typical promotional path for the white-collar in a large enterprise is starting the career at 22 years old and being promoted to manager by middle or late 30's (Koike, 1991). This means it is very unlikely that someone becomes a manager in their 20's even though they have enough capability to manage and lead a project. Since Japanese corporations have a lifetime employment system, where the employed keep working for the same company until they reach the retirement age, people can easily make a tally when someone becomes manager based on the year of their entry to the company (e.g. the doki members starting working in 2005 will become a manager around 2020).

This seniority system is based on how long people are in the office rather than achievement. Obviously, this is hard to understand for HSMs who take meritocracy for granted for career assessment. Interestingly, when it comes to the seniority system, the overall expression made by the Chinese informants in their 20's was a well-known joke among Chinese migrants:

Japanese companies are more socialistic than China.

Everyone is promoted quasi-equally and the salary is increased according to the length of career regardless of their achievement. This is Japan's seniority salary and promotion system, which socialistic countries even do (can) not have. However, age doesn't guarantee wisdom as an IT engineer complained:

I would want the company to evaluate my ability properly and reflect it on my salary. For example, when people get older, they understand IT less. But young people like us have grown up using the technology and employ it like our second language. So I have a kind of feeling like why the older employees can get more salary than us even though they understand the technology much less than us.

(Luke)

Apart from meritocracy, the seniority system has another serious issue that affects the life course of HSMs: it takes a long time to be promoted as Jake ironically said “it’s like waiting for someone to die. It’s too long (to acquire an appropriate position)”. Eric alternatively described it as if staying on an escalator: all of the doki stay on a slow escalator which brings them up at a certain pace. There, it doesn’t matter how competent they are. Most of them arrive at the same stage regardless of achievement. For talented people, it’s nothing but a waste of time and hardly acceptable. Therefore, it’s likely to drive out the capable HSMs.

6.5 Salary: the salary is higher in Beijing and Shanghai than Tokyo

The seniority system implies the lower salary for younger professionals since the pay structure is designed to be accelerated according to the length of career with their employers. In this respect, Japanese companies are less attractive especially for young HSMs.

In comparing the remuneration, the exchange rate and living standard should also be considered; therefore, it is not easy to make a justifiable comparison. However, the majority of western respondents pointed out that they would be better off if they returned to their home country. For example, Luke earned double the salary when he was a part-time service staff in the business class lounge of a local airport in Australia than as a full-time IT engineer in Japan.

In fact, the unattractive remuneration is not the only issue for the western people; Chinese respondents also indicated that the pay is not necessarily higher in Japan than in China.

6.6 Work-life balance: you see your colleague not doing anything, just sleeping

6.6.1 Staying in office without working?

Last, overtime work should be reconsidered even though it is not a universal issue depending on the companies HSMs work for. The argument was also mainly posed by the western HSMs, claiming that their Japanese colleagues feel the need to do overtime to show their commitment. In fact, they are unnecessarily staying in the office until late at night but it seems they are not productive or give a good performance by doing overtime. A British manager carefully chose the words.

Business practices which I think if we are truly trying to be an international force, we need to reconsider. A general point would be(...)if I consider(...)the length of hours people work(...)Here in Japan, people work long time. Or, I should say that they are staying at the office a long time, but I'm not sure whether they are working. This culture also spills over. When you finish your work at one o'clock in the morning, I cannot see any efficient and clear mind to work the next day. From the morning to one o'clock, but this is the culture...I think somebody needs to think about that. Because when I come in next morning, you see your colleague not doing anything, just sleeping. It's not a complaint, it's just an observation.

(Scott)

Japanese colleagues like to 'stay' at the office. They, however, are 'not working' but just showing their commitment to the company. In fact, this is closely related to the pay structure without meritocracy: the evaluation is not based on achievement but the length of time being in the office so the way they can show their dedication is being in the office until late at night. However, in the western countries where meritocracy and work life balance are the norms, staying in the office every night means they are not capable of doing the assigned work within the given timeframe. Or, the amount of assigned work is unrealistic so the employer might face a lawsuit for giving them excess burden. In either case, it is not a healthy working environment.

Interestingly, the kind of obsession to be in the office late can be seen in foreign affiliates as well. Jack who once worked in a branch of an American bank, claimed his former Japanese boss suggested that he should be in the office longer. This means the employees are under peer pressure to stay in the office. Also, some HSMs were surprised to see their colleagues sleep at their desk at lunch time. This shows how

their colleagues are tired in the office. If they went back home earlier and had enough time to sleep, they would not need to sleep at lunch time.

6.6.2 Emerging reform

Nonetheless, there is evidence pointing to the reform of inefficient work practices. For instance, some of the respondents are not allowed to be in the office after a certain time. In the case of an electronics company where Sarvesh works—a traditional large firm employing over 25,000 people—If they remain in the office after 18.00, their boss will receive a caution by email the following day and is required to explain the reasons together with counter-measures to the HR division. As shown earlier, one of the reasons that Japanese staff remain in the office is peer pressure from their colleagues or boss. However, if the boss is required to send their staff home early, this pressure does not exist anymore. This company initially started this system to reduce the cost of overtime in the 2008 worldwide recession, but it eventually improved work-life balance.

Regarding long working hours, the perception of Chinese HSMs is noticeable. They initially came to Japan to study and then finally found a job in Japan; therefore, they are better informed of and prepared for Japan's corporate system including long working custom. However, especially the younger generation found it is not so bad compared to what they thought:

I would say it (long working hours) is a preconception. People (in China) often ask me if it's hard to work in Japan because of long working hours. But I think it's not as hard and long as they imagine. I go back home when I feel like, even though my boss is still in the office.
(Qian)

Working long is a stereotypical image in working in Japan for foreigners but in fact, it's changing gradually. This is a good example of Japan suffering from the stigmatised image, which ultimately keeps HSMs away from Japan.

6.7 Stigmatised image: crazy, pricey, closed

As a matter of fact, the general impression of a nation plays a pivotal role when HSMs choose a place to work (Harvey and Beaverstock, 2017). In this sense, Japan is in a very weak position to attract specifically western people. All of the western respondents suggested that their perception of Japan before residing was aged, fantastic and

unbalanced. In sum, the three stereotypes that represent Japan for the westerner are crazy, pricey and closed as Jake put it:

Most people think it (Japan)'s exotic and even though it's getting cheaper, they still think Japan is expensive. The perception of Japan is very old and, perhaps 20 years outdated(...)the general impression of Japan is very closed, like, police do not stop the hate speech.

(Jake)

Cool Japan became a slogan promoting the cool image of Japan from the early 2000s (McLelland, 2017); however, Cyrille said “they (Japan) advertise Cool Japan but French people only knows Kyary Pamyu Pamyu, that kind of crazy thing”. Kyary Pamyu Pamyu is a Japanese gothic pop star singing techno-sounding songs with amusing dance. Likewise, the vast majority of HSMs raised that the western people have the kind of geeky image originating from manga (Japanese cartoon), computer games, or cosplay (dressing in a costume like a manga character). These outdated and crazy images are attributed to the unbalanced propaganda of the western media like picking up a bizarre thing and exaggerating it. There are lots of things about Japan misreported in western society but also there are more things unreported there. The image is not limited to craziness; Japan is not a place for the westerners to live peacefully. A western migration expert explained:

Informant: The image is still aged. They think it's very expensive. Right? You know, they have all sorts of strange images. Like pollution, which is not right.

Q: Do some people have the image of pollution in Japan?

Informant: Well, I think, Wakisaka-san (author's name), what you are dealing with is not reality or knowledge. It's image. Right? Again, if you are talking to(...)Americans(...)they couldn't really tell the differences among Beijing, Tokyo and Hong Kong. It's all in the same part of the world and it's all crowded and all polluted (to them), right? I still heard people saying to me about Tokyo being a dangerous place because of the nuclear disaster in 2011. Right? People still think it's a dangerous place, radiation. There are a lot of very strange perceptions out there.

(Executive of international recruiting agency)

Asian HSMs also have a stereotypical image of Japan, however, they regard Japan as innovative, high quality, and polite. Strikingly, the image of Japan has stark contrasts

between the western and the Asian migrants. The former thinks it is crazy but the latter takes it as innovative; similarly, pricey versus high quality; closed versus polite.

Table 6-1 Contrasted perception on Japan

	For Western migrants	For Asian migrants
Japanese culture is...	crazy	innovative
The life in Japan is ...	pricey	high quality
Japanese people are...	closed	polite

Source: the fieldwork

Although these images seem to be contradictory, they just take out one aspect from the same phenomena. In other words, the western takes it negative or strange but the Asian considers it constructively. More interestingly, the western migrants normalise their stereotypical images about Japan as they adapt to Japan but the Asians tend to retain the image. For example, a Singaporean migrant put it: “My image on Japan has not changed greatly. Before coming here, I thought Japan is a country where people are polite and industrious. I still have the same impression” (Junjie). On the contrary, a UK migrant said:

Many British people do not realise the attraction of Japan cos a lot of people have never been to Japan. I told a lot of friends that I am coming to live in Japan, their image of Japan is Akihabara. So you know, like anime. But you know, if we travel like one hour away from Tokyo, there is a lot of like(...)rural culture of Japan and very respectful of their past also. So when you are able to show more history of Japan, not just a crazy side, there is a lot more to Japan. I think it's great.
(Alastair)

Akihabara is the area filled with electronics and geeky shops which range from Japan’s animation to costume play. There are myriads of guidebooks catering for non-Japanese and without exception, they emphasise the ‘craziness’ of Akihabara (e.g. Zatko, 2014; JMS Books, 2015; Rowthorn et al, 2015; Milner and Richmond, 2015) which, as Alastair noted, represents Japan. As an exemplar, Lonely Planet Tokyo, an influential book for the western nomads (Bowen and Clarke, 2009), describes Akihabara:

Experiencing blazing neon, the maid cafés, the latest electronic gadgets and otaku (geek) vibe...Akihabara is today more synonymous with otaku and

their love of anime, manga and J-pop culture...you are sure to encounter cosplay (costume play) maids enticing customers into maid cafes. Electric town is across the street, and holds a dense concentration of electronics shops, comic and DVD retailers and figurine sellers. (Milner and Richmond, 2015:147-178)

More precisely, “otaku” signifies “addicts of video games, manga, and anime” (JMB Books, 2014: 64). This citation on Akihabara clearly defines the westerners’ image of crazy Japan that the western media like to play out as Cyrille also pointed out. However, as Alastair alluded, they gradually normalise their unbalanced image after residing in Japan. In sum, the western and Asian migrants have different images at the initial point when they enter Japan but they eventually appreciate the positive side of Japanese culture.

6.8 Attraction to work: water and safety are free

This dissertation has thus far attempted to illuminate the ills HSMs suffer in Japan; however, it should also examine which points HSMs are attracted to when they decide to keep residing in Japan since enhancing the attraction is equally important to remove the barriers in critically examining how Japan can attract more HSMs. As this research includes informants having stayed in Japan relatively longer—half have lived in Japan more than 5 years in total, which is the condition of obtaining a permanent residency in many developed countries as shown already—, they had enough experiences in explaining the advantages of working in Japan as well as the disadvantages. In addition, considering that they chose to spend a good length of time in Japan, it is reasonably expected that they find more attraction than dissatisfaction; exploring these reasons also offer valuable insights.

Among others, they all admire the highest standard of public safety in the world. Without doubt, public safety takes the greatest priority for HSMs especially with family. The experienced visa lawyer, who unveiled the income-tax-avoiders, recalled interesting cases he found: some of the migrants who shunned away from Japan voluntarily returned to Tokyo, reconsidering the merits to live there at the expense of heavier income taxes.

I asked them why they returned to Tokyo. Their answer was safety. For example, one of the clients moving back from Hong Kong told me that the safety issue made him decide. But I wondered that Hong Kong is not too bad in terms of safety. The crime rate is not much higher than Japan. When

I asked him so, he asserted that it is only Tokyo where he can leave his children alone to commute by train. There's no capital city other than Tokyo where he can let his children by themselves go for any lessons (e.g. piano or swimming). It's unimaginable in Hong Kong. He needs to hire a maid or driver who takes his children to the lessons or school. Otherwise, it will be regarded as child abuse (to leave children). In the US, for instance, it will be child abuse if you make your kid go alone to school miles away, right? However, in Japan, it's normal that small kids alone ride on the train to go to school. Japan is such a safe country, he insisted.

(Migration Expert 9)

This high-salary migrant realised that the safety surrounding his family is more important than money. If he spent money to rent a luxury apartment like a fortified castle boasting cutting edge security measures to monitor the building 24 hours and hire people to accompany his children, he could secure their safety. However, it is nothing but confining his children in the 'fort'. He finally chose not to segregate his children from the outside world and he thinks only Tokyo can offer the environment. An Australian migrant also marvelled at the fact that there was no riot or violence when Japan was hit by the Great Earthquake in 2011, saying

I like Japan because it's always stable even in the event of emergency. People behave well and steadily even in the chains of great earthquakes. At that time, they queued to get water in order. There's no country like Japan where people keep order and society stable in such a tremendously hard time. They are really reliable.

(Luke)

There is a well-cited Japanese proverb to describe what it offers: Water and safety are free. In fact, Japan enjoys abundant clear water and public security; however, they are not free in reality—people pay bills for water and taxes for security—. Still this proverb shows the fact that people benefit from what they take for granted while in other countries regardless of developed or not, these are not equally available. HSMs also realise that the saying hits the point. However, it is not only water and safety that are offered at low cost.

HSMs, whether they are western or Asian, also appreciate the high standard of life for the price. For example, although Chinese migrants indicated that the salary level is

now quite similar to mainland China, they think it is much cheaper to lead a high standard of life in Japan.

In fact, I could get more salary if I worked in Beijing or Shanghai, but it's more expensive to live there. So in this sense, it's more value for money to work in Japan. Not only housing but also food or other things I would like to buy are cheaper in Japan. So, ah, I think it's Japan where I can get things I want in my daily life, by that I mean... the quality of life. I can get them from my own effort (without my parents' support) as long as I work in Japan.
(Yang)

As she put, a lot of HSMs indicated instead of earning less salary they gain a fairly affordable high quality of life in Japan. Foods are great. They can always pop in a convenience store scattered around and open 24 hours. There are well organised public transportations which are always reliable so they do not need to keep a car. A western executive asserted that Tokyo offers incredibly affordable housing for the location.

You can have a great lifestyle. Right? You can't walk to work (in any other capital abroad). Right? There are a whole bunch of people living in Ebisu (posh area like Chelsea in London) or you know, erm, Shibuya (commercial area like Oxford Circus in London) or whatever. These days in cities like Sydney or London or New York, walking to work? No way! You can't afford to rent the apartment. If your office is in Times Square, how do you afford the apartment anywhere near that? Right? Likewise, if your office is in Covent Garden, only the rich can afford the apartment near there. Right? Whereas in Tokyo, I know a lot of people who live near the office. They are not top ranking managers in a company. They are a regular, you know, and consultant.
(Executive of international recruiting agency)

Due to deflation and shrinking demography, the housing price in Japan has not seen a drastic surge for the last two decades (Izuhara, 2015) unlike in other large global cities⁸⁰. Ironically, HSMs had a preconception that it is very expensive to live in Japan before migrating, but they soon recognise it is incredibly affordable to enjoy the high standard of living. Interestingly, many of the informants, even those who spoke English

⁸⁰ There are no restrictions on foreigners' house/land ownership.

during the interview, depicted this in a Japanese phrase: 住みやすい sumiyasui (it's easy to live).

Another reason why Japan can offer an easy-to-live lifestyle is its unique traditions deeply rooted in community. As already discussed, Asian people think Japanese friendship is rather more western style—business like—than theirs. This means Japanese culture is somewhere between Asia and the western countries (Rowthorn et al, 2015). For the western migrants especially, Japanese society strikes the best balance between the two. For example, Japan still keeps a closely knit community—Asian character—while it boasts a modern lifestyle based on the cutting-edge technologies—western character. Scott raised an example talking about Japan's traditions in school: Undokai (sports day). Every school has a sports-day once every year holding various sports competitions for both children and their families. It takes a whole day and they have a picnic style lunch break in the field at the school. That is an event when family confirms the strong tie with community.

I like the sports day. Because everybody gets involved and sits there, and eating together, and watching the kids. We don't get that so much in Europe. It's again trying to bring the family and social things together. As a modern country with a lot to offer, er, it(Japan)'s just a fantastic place. I'm constantly enthusing to people about why (Japan) is good...And you have a lovely balance between old and new. You know, in America, all, or something is maybe 80 years old. Or 100 years old. In Germany, you know, very old things. In Japan, all the temples, castles, you have a great balance between the two.

(Scott)

Like this account represents, Japan is a unique country where foreigners can find the best mix of new and old things —not only physical things such as castles and buildings but also people's behaviour in keeping a strong community. Eric describes the well-balanced philosophy focusing on the business practices.

I believe with all my heart that Japan is leading the world in terms of a kind of wisdom, a type of life vision, that probably the whole world can learn from. And so that's what I would say to someone coming to live in Japan because this kind of not equal-centric, this kind of more thinking about others, thinking about the environment and thinking about the community. Japan is a good place in that way and I think that's why people come and live in

Japan for that reason...there are so many business practices that probably we have to update in Japan. On the other hand, we have some great strengths. Ah, for example, we don't just focus on stock holders, we also focus on the wide varieties of stakeholders. You know, we think about customers, of course we do that in north America but also think about our business partners, we think about our employees and we think about people in the community. And we are always balancing the needs of stakeholders. And we're also taking long term, which is very powerful for business. That's Japan's great strength, I think.

(Eric)

In the western countries, making profits is an important mission for private companies. However, Japanese companies are more balanced between profits and public interests. This is because Japan still keeps a tradition of “thinking about others” and “thinking about community”. This balanced view still attracts some of the HSMs even though there are many business practices to update.

6.9 Discussion

This chapter has highlighted Japan's unique labour market and employment relations from the antithetic perspectives of Asian and Western migrants. Tokyo is arguably one of the largest global cities in the world (Sassen, 2001; Florida, 2008); however, this research revealed the workplace there, even the transnational large enterprises or foreign-affiliated firms, is far from cosmopolitan. Drawing on the analysis, Table 6-2 compares how the informants perceive employment and business practices between Japanese and Anglo-American firms.

Table 6-2 Comparison between Japanese and Anglo-American firms on skilled labour

	Japanese	Anglo-American
Career path	controlled by employers generalist career	autonomous specialist career
Employment relations	Shinsotsusaiyo-recruiting lifetime rich training	vacancy-based-recruiting contractual / job hopping expertise as prerequisite
Business practices	long-term profit pursued wider stakeholder	short-term profit pursued shareholder-centric

Source: the fieldwork

Reflecting the contrasted employment systems, it might be intriguing to conclude Japan should take the Anglo-American approach to attract more HSMs as the literature has suggested (Oishi, 2012; Tsukasaki, 2008). Admitting it is one of the options, my findings call for more scrupulous discussion about the implications. Of significance is each component in employment and business practices is firmly and organically interlocking each other. It is this dynamism that should not be neglected. It follows that merely adopting the Anglo-American model may not always bring the best solution for both employees and companies, and even for local communities.

For instance, lifetime employment requires a generalist career since if an employee has only a specific skill, they have no option to be transferred when the company gives up the related business. US companies exploit lay-off in this case, but a Japanese company tries to keep the employment by transferring employees to another business area all due to lifetime employment and for the sake of wider stakeholders like the local community (Wiltshire, 1992). This generalist career making requires a lot more investment than employing a specialist—who is available on the market—such as rich training system which all the informants admired and Qian called “second university”. She was surprised to be encouraged to keep a diary during office hours even though it does not create any direct profit for the company. This shows Japanese firms’ HR management training the employees long-term (Kumano, 2017) without short-term tangible profit. If the Japanese employment systems lack only one of the elements, lifetime employment or long-term management practices cannot be maintained; for instance, when an employee is autonomous in career making and only specialised in what they want, how can the company protect the employment when the business segment has no further concern? Fluidity, in other words generalist career, plays the crucial role in securing lifetime employment and long-term vision.

Nonetheless, some may contest the necessity of lifetime employment and long-term vision which do not serve the investors’ interests. Considering even more expanding cross-border business and the war for talent (Chambers et al., 1998; Beechler and Woodward, 2009), Japanese firms may pave the ‘third’ path of employment practices so as to cater for ‘global’ talent. As evidence, the findings indicated the few emerging trends such as international internship for IT specialists—Alastair’s case. Pursuing work-life balance and hiring non-Japanese-speaking-staff also connotes the incipient shift. In this sense, even though Japan still keeps numerous endemic employment relations, some of the corporations including traditional ones are seeking to reform the practices little by little. More research is needed to confirm whether this embryo turns to global convergence of employment relations (Jacoby, 2005; Yamauchi, 2013).

Rather than the distinctive employment relations, what is more striking in this research is the lack of diversity which constitutes more fundamental and formidable obstacles for HSMs. It is true that the Shinsotsusaiyo scheme is attached to a core element of lifetime employment and generalist career; however, it should not be an excuse to keep the notion 'everyone should be the same' like wearing a uniform-like-recruit-suit or excluding characterful personalities. The characterless recruit-suit is a proxy for 'coerced harmonisation' in the workforce, aiming to debar the organisational outcasts. This is also represented in implicit peer-pressure from Japanese colleagues to HSMs to be Japanized like demanding Japanese skills to perfection. Japanese firms should appreciate the diversified values and behaviours, which eventually innovate the workplace.

Another implication is invisible but influential powers of images/imagination tying to 'otherness' discourses. The findings manifested that Westerners held unbalanced images of Japan, which sometimes become radicalised (e.g. geeky Japan and pollution) widely spread over, thereby keeping potential HSMs from Japan. This provides detailed evidence of the concept of otherness where 'self' is always superior to 'others' in ethnic encounters (Said, 1978, 1993; Eagleton, 2000; Sakai, 2000; Mouer and Sugimoto, 2002; Urry and Larsen, 2011). Said (1978) claimed the 'West' has relentlessly devised the stigmatised images of the 'East' to construct the advanced Western self-image⁸¹. However, this research has also revealed it is not only the Westerners but also some Asians who held the otherness imagery of Japan—like the case of Qian whose Chinese friends assume long working hours.

In the study of 'otherness' discourses of Singaporean and British HSMs in China, Yeoh and Willis (2005: 282) indicated "the uneven nature of the power relations" between the HSMs and their local counterparts invoked by "the transnational (migrant) elites who, by dint of superior economic resources as well as geographical mobility, are in a strong position to construct spatial, temporal and psychological 'limits' ". Disentangling their argument from the 'physical' territories where migrants have existed, my findings suggest "the uneven nature of power relations" are also at play between the 'potential' skilled migrants and the host economy. Here, 'potential' means the HSMs who would work in Japan if the stereotypical imagery did not limit their decisions. It is reasonably expected there are certain 'potential' cohorts as many informants felt incongruence with the initial images of Japan when they gradually accustomed locally. They even

⁸¹ Said's concept of 'East' principally referred to Arabia, however, it has later developed to encompass Asia.

enjoy positive surprise when they discover a new aspect of Japan rebalancing their 'self' and 'others' images.

This in turn may hint at a question continually posed by transnationalism researchers (Sakai, 2000; Yeoh and Willis, 2005): how can we create a multi-identified workplace where 'self' and 'others' can merge and even heighten each other? As the respondents voiced, one of the Japanese virtues is the well-balanced idea of traditional/cutting-edge or shareholders/stakeholders. Striking a critical balance will eventually mediate the point(s) where 'self' and 'others' become 'us' peacefully like these informants negotiated through their professional careers.

Chapter 7 Wrecked Migration Governance: Absent Captain and Unconcerted Crews (Findings 3)

*It's the reality that we have made up for
a weakness (of the policy) using a makeshift.
(former policy maker 3)*

Imagine, you are on a big ship.

One morning, when you wake up, the ship is wrecked. The crews are unconcerted and the passengers are confused. People onshore seem to be indifferent to the ship. What is worse, no one can 'identify' the captain albeit there are several people who claim to steer the ship. In a wrecked ship, the captain generally takes the primary responsibility to save the passengers by mobilising concerted crews. Nevertheless, we need to start to identify who the captain is.

—This is an analogy created by the author to describe the core problems of migration governance in Japan: the crews are bureaucrats; passengers are migrants; and people onshore are Japanese citizens. Then, who is the captain?

7.1 Introduction

In the context of the world's fastest ageing and declining population, together with severe global economic competition, the need to accept large numbers of migrants has been pointed out in Japan (e.g. Liberal Democratic Party, 2008; Keidanren, 2015). Nonetheless, migration policies have not been drastically reformed and such a discussion has yet to emerge. The Prime Minister declared in the Parliament that Japan will never become an immigration state⁸² (Abe, 2015). The lack of urgency in the government to such an urgent social change has remained a mystery.

This chapter therefore examines how migration policies are designed and implemented in Japan and clarifies the issues underlying migration governance, via the conceptual framework of the Kasumigaseki bureaucracy not studied in migration literature. This dissertation has so far cast light on migrants' individual trajectories and decisions through their perceptions (i.e. it draws on micro/meso analysis). However, to unfold the labyrinth, we should also possess a wider point of view to comprehensively look at the

⁸² In the context of his speech, immigration state refers to 'settlers' state' (c.f. Okamura, 2018), meaning Japan would not become a settlers' state such as USA, Canada and Australia.

overall picture, especially, through the macro perspective foregrounding the governmental and political behaviour affecting the life of migrants.

First, this chapter illustrates three policy backgrounds outlined in this chapter to describe policy failures and its causes brought by bureaucrats and politicians. Then it indicates the compartmentalised governance structure and the main actors in the policy making process: Ministry of Justice (MOJ); Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MOL); and, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industries (METI). Labour migration policies are designed through the egalitarian consultation process joined by several Ministries; however, as no Ministries display leadership in a negotiation process, there is no driving force to conclude the negotiation. In addition, the bureaucrats tend to eschew the controversial policy areas which are tremendously arduous in reforming although they are well aware of the necessity to amend them. This research illustrates why the administrative elites deliberately choose the band-aid solutions in lieu of fundamental policy reform.

Another main topic in this chapter is unique bureaucracy in MOJ where the immigration bureaucrats face different career tracks from the mainstream, thereby driving them to be passive and domestic-oriented. Yet, the policy failures are not only attributed to the bureaucrats: the next section describes why politicians do not exert their leadership in reforming the policies and shows how formidable it is to arrive at conclusive political decisions. Finally, to counter these issues, the way in which a cross-ministerial leadership works is examined based on the empirical data. The author ultimately accentuates the necessity to introduce a new negotiation scheme instead of the current system to expedite the policy debates in the decision-making process.

7.2 *Three policy backgrounds of the research*

As is written in the method chapter, the findings here are drawn from the three qualitative data sets: (1) the textual context from various documents such as the minutes of government meetings and newspapers, (2) the interviews with migration experts, and (3) interviews with HSMs. The reason why the multi-faceted data were employed is primarily to assess the migration policies, from which barriers in migration governance are analysed. Evaluating policies is somehow difficult because it depends on the (personal) normative measures. For example, some people may think multi-lingual policies in a local community are good but some insist only the nationally prevailing language—Japanese in Japan—should be spoken. Deciding which policy to take is due to local voters' values on whether they appreciate diversity or homogeneity. Politicians—whether in Japan or the UK—usually exploit a rhetoric to discuss

controversial policies that the decision is entirely left to voters' choice and they are loyal to the decision. This voters' choice itself is formed from normative values which are hard to observe concisely. Another issue with policy evaluation is it is often premature to judge a policy outcome when researching the latest policy changes. The researchers do not always have enough data to make a judgement on whether the shift of policies is in line with the purpose and national interests.

To overcome these hurdles, the scope of the data collection was narrowed to obvious policy failures. It thus focused particularly on the three policy-related areas to assess the migration policies. One is the Points-based System (PBS). Another is the policies on permanent residency and the other is 'neglected policies' on unskilled labour scheme. These three policy areas are clear policy failures through which this research points to the unique migration policy making process.

7.2.1 Points-based system

As detailed in Chapter 3, Japan launched the PBS in 2012 to attract HSMs. The number of HSMs who benefitted from the scheme for the first 11 months was merely 434, far fewer than the government expected. The figure remained extraordinary low, only 0.2 % of all the HSMs (Oishi, 2014). This is why the initial programme⁸³ is deemed a policy failure as MOJ (2015b) admits. Subsequently, the qualitative research revolved around this policy failure in examining the policy making process.

7.2.2 Permanent residency

PBS was a proactive reform by the government; however, policy failures do not occur only when the government changes something. They can also occur when the government fails to change the policies. On this point, the research also followed the discussions on permanent residency to attract and retain HSMs, which had been one of the main focuses in the government's economic policies (Japanese Government, 2015). As is revealed in the previous Chapter, some of the HSMs wish to access permanent residency to stabilise their life in Japan long-term. The requisite conditions for permanent residency, however, have remained stricter than other industrialised countries. This is also an apparent policy failure. Although the government clearly seeks to retain HSMs, they have failed to implement the policy HSMs call for, and subsequently, some of the HSMs consider leaving the country due to the stringent conditions. Therefore, the interviewed policy makers were asked about policies on

⁸³ Given the policy failure, the programme has been amended several times since the second year. Accordingly, the number of PBS users increased to 8,515 as of June 2017 (Immigration Bureau, 2017b).

permanent residency to check how far they understand the situations HSMs face during the interviews.

7.2.3 Neglected policies on unskilled labour scheme

The research also casts light on another neglected policy, a 'golden rule' which has been unchanged for decades. This rule is the principle of migration policy underpinning the idea 'accepting HSMs but not unskilled workers'. This fundamental principle was first agreed in 1988 in the Cabinet decision and it has since been firmly unchanged with this principle found almost everywhere in the government's basic documents on foreign labour (e.g. Japanese Government, 1999; MOJ, 2015b; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004).

Having said that, it is an open secret that part of this invariable rule has been a dead letter since there exist many 'back doors' to bringing in unskilled migrants such as technical trainees and Nikkeijin (Tsuda and Cornelius, 2004; Oishi, 1995; Liu-Farrer, 2011a). It has been fiercely criticised that the policy (not accepting unskilled labour migrants) and the reality (creating several back doors to accept unskilled migrants) are inconsistent and the policy should be updated to accommodate the reality (Sellek, 2001). Nonetheless, the fundamental solution to clear up the contradiction has not been shown by the policy makers yet. This is why this dissertation calls it neglected policy. Through the interviews, policy makers were asked a question on whether or not this golden rule can be changed in the near future.

7.2.4 Multi-faceted approach

To carve out these policy failures, the interviews with various interest group were conducted. Among others, the HSMs, the important stakeholder in migration policies, were interviewed to evaluate the policies as already mentioned. In short, the policies are assessed by the users (HSMs) to find out to what extent the sellers (policy makers) understand HSMs' practical needs and how efficient their marketing strategies (the relative attractiveness of policies) are. This 'marketing' orientated idea is not really common amongst Japanese policy makers⁸⁴; however, it should be reiterated that attracting HSMs is one of the top priorities in the national economic strategy initiated by Prime Minister Abe (Japanese Government, 2015) and the 'marketing' is a fundamental tool to attract customers (HSMs). In other words, the analysis here is

⁸⁴ In the UK visa process, an applicant is asked to answer questionnaires on whether they are satisfied with the process or not and the aggregated data is made public. However, this kind of customer feed-back does not exist in the Japanese immigration process. This shows how the Japanese government makes light of the administration valorising customer-satisfaction.

supported by the data from HSMs who witnessed the Japanese government's ill-designed marketing.

It is also significant to clarify who 'policy makers' are. In this research, they are defined as either Kasumigaseki bureaucrats or politicians in the national Parliament which is the sole legislative institution in Japan. Although the municipalities have been playing the central role in supporting migrants especially in the policy area of social cohesion (Yamawaki, 2002; Aiden 2011), they are ruled out in this study. This is simply because they are not given authority to control immigration; this paper attempts to reveal the migration policy making process in the central government which is exclusively conferred the power to decide who can work in Japan.

Nonetheless, it is also important to recognise that the policy makers *may* include some migration experts if they are in a position to influence the policy discourse. Concretely speaking, each Ministry has a consultation meeting with experts (usually called *Shingikai* in Japanese) where the bureaucrats or Ministers listen to experts' views in deciding the direction of policies. A good example is *Shutsunyukoku kanri seisaku kondankai* (*Advisory board for Minister of Justice on migration policies*) organised by the Minister. When a Minister tries to change a policy, s/he usually consults expert members of the meeting and the members compile a report on possible reforms. As this proposal becomes the basis of policy debate in the government and Parliament, the migration experts who join this meeting could be a quasi-policy-maker or indirect-policy-maker. They are chosen from academics, business sectors, municipalities, labour unions and lawyers⁸⁵. In this research, they are referred to as migration experts as distinct from the 'professional' policy makers.

Table 7-1 The composition of expert members in Advisory Board for Minister of Justice

Background	Number of Members (The 7 th Board: 2017 onward)	Number of Members (The 6th Board: 2014-2016)
Academics	11	11 (10)*
Business Sectors	2	3
Municipalities	2	2
Labour Unions	1	1
Lawyers	1	1

* One member died during the term.

As of April 1st, 2017

Source: compiled from MOJ (2017)

⁸⁵ In this sense, municipalities can be an indirect policy maker, however, their representation in the Board is much lower than academics as seen from the composition of the Board.

7.3 Migration policy governance structure in Japan

Labour migration policies in Japan are controlled by multi-actors in the central government. Especially, this research identified the following three Ministries as main actors: MOJ governing immigration control/residential permits; MOL in charge of migration labour policies, social welfare, securities and healthcare; and, METI in charge of industrial competitiveness.

These three Ministries have different missions, consequently sometimes holding different stances on the direction of migration policies. MOJ positions itself as ‘neutral’ in terms of labour migration while MOL is restrictionist and METI is eager to accept foreign labour as the industries require them.

Table 7-2 Main actors in the central government

Ministry	Mission	Features
Ministry of Justice (MOJ)	Immigration Control, in charge of the Immigration Act	Neutral, calling themselves ‘moderator’
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MOL)	Labour Policies, Social Welfare, Social Security, Healthcare	Restrictionist, backed by labour union and local communities
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industries (METI)	Microeconomic Policies, Industrial Competitiveness	Admissionist, backed by industries

Source: the fieldwork

This chapter will focus on the agency of the above three principal actors since they have primarily played main roles in recent labour migration policies for the last decade when Japan reformed its policies including launching the PBS. There are, however, some more policy actors including the Cabinet Ministry/Secretariat⁸⁶ dealing with policy coordination for Nikkeijin; the MIC in charge of policies of local communities and resident registration; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in charge of visa issuance and international treaties; the MEXT in charge of education and Japanese language training; the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism in charge of technical interns in construction industries; the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in charge of technical interns in the primary industry. Thus, it is a remarkable fact that many Ministries are involved in labour migration policies in Japan.

⁸⁶ Although Cabinet Ministry and Cabinet Secretariat are two different governmental bodies, they are interwoven since the staff normally hold two posts in both bodies concurrently.

7.4 Compartmentalised governance structure

7.4.1 Non-existent leadership

According to the Immigration Act, the primary authority in charge of labour immigration control is MOJ. However, the Act prescribes a consultation process among the Ministries. This means that the main players equally or horizontally join the decision-making process and even if one of the players rejects a policy change, the policy cannot be implemented. This is stipulated in the Immigration Act Article 7 (3), declaring “The Minister of Justice shall consult with the heads of the relevant administrative organs in prescribing the Ordinance of the Ministry of Justice”. Actually, this briefly encapsulates the intricacy of the labour migration governance structure: the main actors (*the heads of the relevant administrative organs*) should reach a consensus to change policies (*the Ordinance of the Ministry of Justice*).

One of the biggest issues here is that there is no driving force or leadership in the consultation process. Therefore, it requires long debates to reach a consensus. For instance, the PBS was firstly proposed in 2009 by the governmental council and finally launched in 2012. To make matters worse, the bureaucrats take it for granted that it *must* take time to negotiate and conclude the decision. In a sense, it is de-rigueur that they hold full discussions at the expense of time and costs. The data from a former policy maker showed they are addicted to time-consuming negotiations.

There are necessary discussions, indeed. So it is unfair to give it up just to save time. METI considers policies from business perspectives and MOL does from workers' perspectives. MOJ reflects on their opinions as a moderator. I can't say that's good or bad. But it is significant to find a point of compromise through consultation even if it takes time and is inefficient.
(former policy maker 1)

Indeed, labour migration policies can influence all the areas where people live and work. Therefore, the central government needs to consider a policy from every aspect such as society, industry, labour market, social securities and welfare. As MOJ only covers immigration control, the above mentioned influenced areas are beyond their mandate. In this regard, it is plausible and necessary to examine a policy from various aspects with other Ministries. Perhaps, the consultations across authorities are not rare in other industrialised countries; Nonetheless, in Japan's case, it takes too long to reach a consensus as the respondent admitted (*it is significant to find a point of compromise through consultation even if it takes time and is inefficient*).

Would this situation make policy makers properly respond to the challenges when the country faces severe international competition and rapid social changes in demography? When asked this question, all the policy makers pointed to the necessity of expediting the consultation process but still there was no concrete solutions shown. This is because there is no one taking up leadership in the consultation process due to equally distributed vetoes as is clarified in the Immigration Act Article 7 (3) conferring authorities to all the relevant Ministries.

Another identified issue arising from the absence of leadership among Ministries is the deficiency of strategies. Both business and public sectors have long called for national strategies across Ministries to attract skilled labour migrants (Keidanren, 2004, 2008; Kodo jinzai ukeire suishin kaigi. 2009), for designing migration policies requires a long-term broad perspective which is based on cross ministerial policies to address various issues such as visa screening and social cohesion. Former policy maker 2 said it should be something beyond the immigration control because the strategies should involve the whole packages that the government and business sectors can provide them with such as special treatments of tax, labour condition, or child education for their family and so forth⁸⁷. Obviously, the strategies will bring fundamental reform to the current policies if such special treatments are given to HSMs. In general, no Ministries will pose strong objections to these strategies, but it is also true that no Ministries will initiate the debate inviting all the relevant Ministries simply because this leadership itself is beyond their role: administrative laws endow each Ministry with detailed authority except for cross ministerial leadership.

The fact that the driving force to coordinate the direction of policies is non-existent demonstrates challenging reforms have always been left untouched for decades. A good example is the 'golden rule' which was earlier described as neglected policy. The principle is quite unique even in Asia since other industrialised economies like South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong have a formal programme to accept unskilled workers (c.f. Chapter 3). It has been the root cause of numerous contradictions leading to 'back doors' through which unskilled migrants enter the country. With regard to the possibility to abolish this controversial golden rule, the preponderance of policy makers suggests it is unlikely. Take, for example, the case of a former policy maker.

⁸⁷ This argument supports what has been discussed on tax and education in the earlier chapter.

Changing it (the golden rule) takes lots of energy, in my view. So I think we can take another measure without changing it. We have actually taken a lot of measures. For example, (unskilled foreign) people work in the construction industry. It is not well-deserved to discuss the principle even though it takes lots more energy than tackling individual policy issues because there are various opinions. For instance, in the Liberal Democratic Party (the ruling party), there are politicians who are cautious (in accepting unskilled migrants) while some politicians insist we cannot manage without foreign workers in the declining population. It is difficult to coordinate these views into one. It's the reality that we have made up for a weakness (of the policy) using a makeshift.
(former policy maker 3)

This testimony comprehensively couches their difficult position and consequent (but easy) counter-measures that the interviewed policy makers share. On the whole, there are two main reasons not to change the golden rule. First, it is possible to keep the status quo without amending this golden rule. As a matter of fact, Japan recently launched a new policy to accept foreign builders who are categorised as unskilled workers so as to alleviate the tight labour market for the Tokyo Olympics in 2020 reconstruction from the 2011 Great Earthquake in the construction industries. The government did not need to change the golden rule to launch this programme accepting unskilled workers since it is deemed as exceptional in that the foreign builders are not allowed to reside beyond 2020. This indicates they are not settlers but guest workers who are to leave Japan within the limited period. The thrust of what the policy makers insist is it is an emergent measure—the informant calls it makeshift—in an exceptional case such as the Tokyo Olympics and the Great Earthquake, therefore, the golden rule is not applicable.

However, this is just an excuse to put off the reform of the golden rule. Creating exceptional cases has aggregated the 'back doors' and finally made the golden rule a dead letter; many exceptional cases have already abolished the principle in reality—they still stick to the mock principle. Moreover, it should be reiterated that the makeshift(s) will never bring a fundamental solution. What is particularly striking is that they believe amending the golden rule is not indispensable but necessary (an informant agreed that they have done a makeshift to manage a policy deficiency). In other words, they realise that the golden rule should be changed but think it is not

indispensable. As evidence, there is no policy makers who think the status quo is adequate. They just think changing the rule is not realistic.

This contradictory behaviour shows the situation they are facing and relates to the second reason why the rule is unlikely to be changed in the near future. The informant used the expression 'energy' twice—for instance, *changing it (the golden rule) takes lots of energy*. This means reforming the rule is incredibly arduous. The rule prescribes a nation-wide consensus when Japan decides to accept unskilled immigrants, saying "it is essential to cope with this issue (accepting unskilled labour) thorough deliberation based on a consensus among the Japanese people" (Japanese Government, 1999). The key here is "thorough deliberation based on a consensus". Reaching a consensus is quite difficult even in a government which is compartmentalised. However, this time, it requires a nation-wide consensus which is a lot more challenging considering there are various views from positive to negative even in the ruling party⁸⁸. On this point, changing the golden rule demands effort (*energy* as described in the quotation) for the bureaucrats while creating a back door looks far easier.

The policy makers also boast that it is the fastest and most flexible solution to respond to the needs. In sum, creating and maintaining back doors is a practical solution they finally found. Their main concept is to repair it little by little in line with the necessity (*we have made up for a weakness using a makeshift*). They hold the golden rule while the faults are covered temporarily when necessary. Therefore, the overall picture of the migration policy is distorted and filled with contradictions (e.g. Nikkeijin and technical interns). However, the policy makers still believe that it is the best (but temporary) solution. Although it is nothing but a makeshift, they are proud of incrementalism. That's why the reform of immigration policies is so incremental.

7.4.2 Risk averse and homogeneous society

The unique culture of the bureaucrats can be also spotted in their perfectionism and homogeneity. The government always seeks a no-fail system; in other words, a perfect policy rendering everyone happy, which is unfortunately an account of a dream. A migration expert who served as a member of the Advisory Board for the Minister of Justice looked back to their debate stating that there is no such thing as a perfect system.

⁸⁸ It is actually the same in the UK. Within the conservative party, the view on immigration control (e.g. EU's free movement) is widely divided.

People (in the government) are always asking me “OK, if we have a free change of immigration system, what about the risk?” They say there are gonna be risks involved. Anything is gonna have risks, and migration will never be 100 % successful whether it’s US or Europe, or wherever you are looking at. I don’t know any cases always successful and everybody has a happy time and nobody has any problems.
(migration expert 1)

While the risk averse behaviour is a typical characteristic of the Japanese bureaucrats, it is also worth looking at the unbalanced composition of their closed society. No foreigners can be bureaucrats working in the policy making process and only 3 % of management positions were filled by females in 2013 although the rate is gradually increasing (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Ministry, 2013). This fact indicates Kasumigaseki is quite domestic and male-dominated. What is worse is that it is based on the life-time employment system within each Ministry so less labour mobility which leads to an unbalanced structure of human resources. In more mobile economies such as Anglo-American, it is not rare that the high officials in civil service have gained professional experience in the private sector like political appointees in the USA. On the contrary, the Japanese elite bureaucracy nurtures their human resources exclusively. As evidence, there are few political appointees or mid-career recruitments: the vast majority of the bureaucrats were recruited through the Tier 1 recruiting examination which is considered one of the three most strenuous national examinations. In addition, they are occupied by graduates from a handful of top tertiary institutions like Tokyo University (Colignon and Usui, 2003). As a consequence, they share a special sense of belonging-to-elite (Koh, 1989). In this way, the elite circle in Kasumigaseki village is not open widely due to its HR practices making a super homogeneous environment where the innovative idea stemming from diversity is almost absent. It is thus no wonder that the drastic reform of migration does not emerge in such a monoculture.

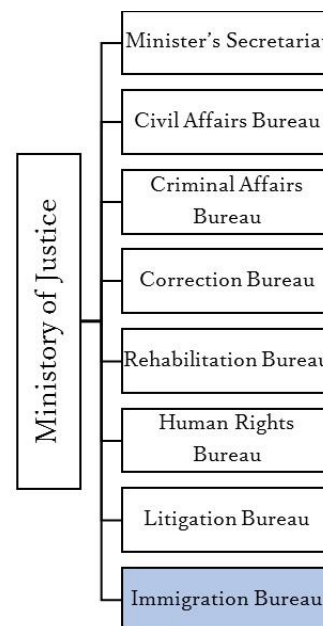
7.5 Unique bureaucracy in MOJ

Considering the whole bureaucratic system in Japan, the data pointed to the more unique features in MOJ, which could account for other inherent issues in the migration policy making process.

7.5.1 Segregated career track

First, even within the Ministry, the MOJ is multi-divided. It is compartmentalised into eight Bureaus, one of which is Immigration Bureau. Normally, a Japanese elite bureaucrat is employed by each Ministry and works for various Bureaus in the Ministry by being transferred; this system nurtures generalists rather than specialists (Mabuchi, 2010; Nishio 2001) so they possess wider perspectives (Soga, 2016) and prevent corruption at the same time. The HR strategies are also designed to give them opportunities to study abroad and be a diplomat. Nonetheless, MOJ is one of the exceptions of this general personnel system.

Figure 7-1 Organization chart of MOJ



MOJ is quite a unique organisation in that it is not dominated by bureaucrats who passed Tier 1 examination but public prosecutors who passed the Bar Examination (Johnson, 2002)⁸⁹. As a good example, the Vice-Minister of Justice, the supreme MOJ administrative official, is always a civil servant chosen from experienced prosecutors. In addition, all the Directorate posts in the eight Bureaus are generally occupied by prosecutors. The bureaucrats working for Immigration Bureau—henceforth, immigration bureaucrats—, however, are not prosecutors but *general* civil servants passing Tier 1 examination. This means they cannot be a Director-General in any Bureau. In other words, the career path of the immigration bureaucrats is segregated within MOJ from the mainstream. Furthermore, the immigration bureaucrats do not have wider choices in their career tracks because the prosecutors occupy significant official positions in the hegemony. The only choice left for the immigration bureaucrat is to work for immigration control for life. Although Tier 1 examination is designed to produce a handful of elites in Kasumigaseki by nurturing generalists, the immigration bureaucrat is ironically limited to work for immigration control even though they are nominally employed as a generalist. This specific feature of their segregated career path eventually affects their behaviour.

They have a special sense of ownership of 'immigration' policies which are confined to the authority given to the Immigration Bureau. This means that they are not interested

⁸⁹ In Japan, people who pass the Bar examination have three choices: attorney-at-law; judge; and, public prosecutor. The prosecutors' office is under the Ministry of Justice while judges are belonging to the Supreme Court and attorney-at-law is in the private sector.

in other issues which are not dealt with in the Immigration Bureau, for instance, citizenship. MOJ also manages citizenship policy deciding which immigrant can be naturalised. However, citizenship is controlled by another Bureau, the Civil Affairs Bureau, which rules on civil legislation. Therefore, it is a kind of taboo for the immigration bureaucrats to go into citizenship even though it is closely related to immigration policies. When it comes to naturalisation in the interviews, all of the informants from MOJ suggested that it is a matter for Civil Affairs Bureau. For example, an incumbent manager in the Immigration Bureau articulated: “it is Civil Affairs Bureau that is in charge of citizenship” (current policy maker 1). This statement can be interpreted: “it’s beyond our mandate”. Encountering this reaction was quite strange because they are first and foremost a member of MOJ that is the very authority on citizenship policy, but they deem it beyond their issue. This signifies MOJ is fiercely compartmentalised.

The unique personnel system is also linked with their parochial attitude. As the immigration bureaucrats cannot transfer their expertise to the other fields in MOJ, the Immigration Bureau becomes the only ‘home’ for them and this strong sense of belongingness to the Immigration Bureau leads to self-preservation. As a matter of course, most of the bureaucrats are defensive when their powers are in peril. However, this tendency is more remarkable in MOJ, for they are trained as a specialist unlike generalists in other Ministries; they can’t lose their sole homeland—the Immigration Bureau. One of the informants who worked with MOJ puts it.

In my Ministry (MOL), there are many Bureaus so we would not be seriously concerned when one was abolished. But they (immigration bureaucrats) have only one Bureau. As their sense of self-preservation is so strong they wouldn't like to bear the brunt of a bashing. As a result, they pull other Ministries in (discussions with politicians) so that they don't look prominent. In order to protect their organisation, I would say, they are even ready to change their own stances. In a sense, they always observe what politicians have more powers to find out up to whom to snuggle. I felt so in my two-year negotiation with them.

(former policy maker 3)

This policy maker observed that immigration bureaucrats changed their stance little by little about the views of vocal politicians (*they always observe what politicians have more powers to find out up to whom to snuggle*). In short, to bureaucrats in other Ministries, Immigration bureaucrats seem to make greater efforts to protect their

organisation rather than to adhere to their convictions. This is because they put greater store on protecting the Immigration Bureau, their sole homeland, than insisting on their stance. Such behaviour is fiercely criticised by bureaucrats in other Ministries, for ‘purpose’ and ‘measure’ are averse. Normally, the government creates a Bureau to realise and implement policies—this is purpose. For this purpose, a governmental organisation exists—this is measure. However, for the immigration bureaucrats, to perpetuate the Immigration Bureau (purpose), they discuss policies (measure).

Ironically, it is said that they venture for fundamental reforms in the Immigration Act when their jurisdiction is threatened. The 1990s amendment in the Immigration Act is arguably a turning point on the migration policy in Japan (Sellek, 2001, Iguchi, 2007) doubling the number of visa types to encourage skilled migrants to enter. It also made the penalties for illegal employment of foreign nationals more severe. Some researchers point out that the drastic reforms are the result of a ‘turf war’ with the MOL (Shimizu, 2008; Okamura, 2018). In 1988, the MOL proposed a new regulation called Employment Licence⁹⁰ to control migration labour properly. As the licence is supposed to be given by MOL to the employers of migrants, the proposed system was likely to evade the jurisdiction of MOJ. It accordingly menaced the MOJ, stirring a furious debate between them (Iguchi, 2007), resulting in drastic reform to the new Immigration Act cracking down on irregular migrant employment.

Through the interviews, it is also clarified that most of the immigration bureaucrats are void of global perspectives. For example, when asked whether there were any rival countries in their mind in designing the PBS, a former high official in Immigration Bureau suggested that “the system was not made consciously referring to any other country” (former policy maker 4). While other informants such as immigration lawyers and HSMs pointed out that Japan needs to update its policies benchmarking other rival countries like Singapore and Hong Kong as the competition for talent becomes more severe, the policy makers were not really aware of it. Another former immigration bureaucrat showed that they have fewer opportunities to be seconded to Japanese Embassies as a diplomat compared to other Ministries:

The Embassies that we can be seconded to are the USA, South Korea, Thailand and so on. There is no one (from Immigration Bureau) based in London (Japanese Embassy in the UK)⁹¹. There aren’t so many (positions in Embassies) for us since the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would like to keep

⁹⁰ MOL proposed that the employer of the foreign nationals should apply for the Employment Licence to decrease the number of irregular labour migrants.

⁹¹ In contrast, the staff members from MOL and METI are seconded to the Embassy in the UK.

significant positions in their hands so would not like to offer many positions to us.

(former policy maker 5)

This ex-bureaucrat underlined they have chances to study abroad instead of being seconded as a diplomat. However, it is still true that they have fewer opportunities to gain international experience than the other bureaucrats, consequently affecting their international perspectives. Considering the circumstances surrounding them—that is lifetime employed, less mobile, only specialised in immigration control and fewer positions to be internationally transferred—it sounds only natural that they have such parochial behaviours.

7.5.2 Passive policy makers in a fragile position

Another issue comes from their ‘neutral’ position. The informants from MOJ whether they are in-office or not, indicated that MOJ is neutral in that it is not backed by any interest parties while METI is supported by industrial sectors and MOL by labour unions. They insist this is why they can coordinate different interests neutrally and the MOJ is given the authority to control immigration. Indeed, it appears plausible, however, this also indicates the deficiency of hands-on knowledge on how migrants work and live in Japan. For instance, the interviewed HSMs called for relaxing the conditions of permanent residency to stabilise their residential status; the MOJ bureaucrats do not understand this point fully. Also, their discourses often showed passiveness—waiting for indications from other Ministries. One MOJ bureaucrat said:

In the PBS, a new programme where the spouse of highly skilled migrants can work without special permits was made as we were told to create it. We wondered if it's necessary, but there are actually some using the programme. So I think it is good [underlined by the author].

(current policy maker 1)

Here, they made the programme not because they thought it was needed but they were suggested to (*as we were told to create it*). Moreover, they were sceptical about the programme, which later has been proved to have some demands (*We wondered if it's necessary*). A similar discourse appeared in the topic on why the number of Asian HSMs is constantly increasing. Their preliminary remarks always began with something like, “it may not be the pure issues of immigration control”. It is interpreted: “it's rather from other reasons than our job”. An informant from MOL explained their formidable position precisely:

They (MOJ) are in a fragile position (among Ministries). Because they do not have any supporters. For example, we (MOL) are backed by local governments who eventually take care of foreigners in their communities. But they do not have that kind of supporter. Policy makers basically should have practical knowledge to carry out policies. But they do not have the hands-on knowledge either since they are not down-to-earth. There are a few politicians backing them but these politicians are significantly low key compared to other policies.

(former policy maker 3)

Usually each ministry has its interested parties whose political power influences the direction of policy making. For example, MOL is backed by labour unions since they are concerned with labour conditions and METI is supported by business sectors that suffer from labour shortage. Both MOL and METI are in close contact with these backbench supporters; consequently, they are well aware of actual issues in the labour market—the informant described it down-to-earth. This means MOL and METI are hands-on since they are offered sufficient information from their supporters; however, MOJ does not have those kinds of supporters with specific interests: remember they position themselves as neutral. This also means they have no interest parties—they do not have any information sources, thereby lacking practical knowledge in labour migration.

In addition, having no one to rely on or supporters indicate they are isolated. As a former member of the Advisory Board for the Minister of Justice pointed out (see the previous quote made by Migration Expert 1), whether they open the doors to foreigners or not there is no single policy approved by everyone. This is also why they can't be proactive in migration policies because they are destined to be criticised whatever they do. Here, the only solution is doing nothing.

In an interview, with regard to reforming the current policy, one of the former high officials in MOJ dared propose a visa without employment contracts like UK's Tier 1 General which was completely abolished in 2015. HSMs in Japan should have an employment contract prior to obtaining a visa, so this would be a drastic reform if it was realised. But he said: "Well, if I was an incumbent officer, I would hesitate to propose it. It wouldn't come true" (former policy maker 4). An officer from an international organisation who worked with MOJ said:

If some incidents happen, like a lot of migrants became unemployed and stayed over in Japan, it is MOJ who will be first criticised that they got them in. They simply don't like that situation. They don't like to be criticised for changing the policy. So they don't change the system or it's slow to reform the system.

(migration expert 2)

As already discussed, the Kasumigaseki bureaucrats tend to be risk-averse partly because they would like to eschew being accused for policy failures. This is also true for immigration. In this research, immigration bureaucrats refuted the criticism that MOJ arbitrarily changed the policies to accept Nikkeijin in 1990 even though it was off track from the questions asked in the interviews. This means although the author did not ask a question about 1990 policy change, the immigration officers interviewed voluntarily raised this topic to explain their 'innocence' over the criticism. Accepting Nikkeijin brought tremendous conflicts in local communities where they were concentrated (e.g. Yamawaki, 2002) and MOJ was strongly blamed for accepting them without any measures for social cohesion. Their behaviour—making excuses for the Nikkeijin policy—suggests the 1990 policy reform still remains a scar on them and may hinder their challenges.

It is true that the immigration bureaucrats show parochial deeds causing the migration policies to be less progressive; however, it might not be justifiable to only attribute policy failures to them. The fact that they are the first target to be blamed signifies the chief responsibility for immigration is borne to them. Notwithstanding this heavy responsibility, they are not allowed a free hand in the policy. Administrative responsibility is ideally inseparable from administrative power. However, the immigration bureaucrats only bear the heavy burden without power. This unbalanced structure of administration burden and power may well have distorted the healthy policy making. Then, how can this conflicting situation be sorted out? One of the possible answers might be a strong political leadership that holds both power and responsibility.

7.6 Absence of political will

This chapter thus far has elucidated the maze of immigration bureaucracy. Nonetheless, there is definitely one perspective lacking: policy makers include not only the bureaucrats but also politicians who should play an important role in deciding policies especially when the administrative organs do not function. Even though the bureaucrats are still the main players in designing and implementing the policies (Johnson, 1982; Bartram, 2000), the fundamental reform cannot be exerted without

political will since it requires legislative process by Parliament. However, when the PBS was initially proposed and designed, the Japanese political situation was in turmoil. Japan experienced a hung Parliament and regime change.

It was 2009 when the PBS was firstly proposed by the government. At this stage, the proposal was given by the Council led by the Chief Cabinet Secretary, not by MOJ. A key official involved in this Council said in the interview that MOJ agreed to the PBS unless it led to amending the legislation. MOJ made such a conditional approval perhaps because the Parliament at that time was hung and it was not easy to pass the law gaining consent from both Houses. This fact shows even if the bureaucracy is functional, when the political situation is not stable, no drastic reforms are possible.

Table 7-3 The two biggest political parties in Japan

Party	Tendency	Manifesto	Policies on PBS
Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) In-power: before 2009 and 2012 onwards	Centre-Right, backed by employers and conservatives	Create an environment where experienced and skilled immigrants can work*1 No massive influx of settlers*1	f PBS in 2009, Amended the Act for PBS in 2015
Democratic Party (DP) In-power: 2009-2012	Centre-Left, backed by labour unions and liberals	Eliminate the discrimination against foreign residents *2	Launched PBS in 2012

*1: Liberal Democratic Party (2014), *2: Democratic Party (1998)

Source: the fieldwork

The PBS was finally launched in 2012 after the political regime changed from Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to Democratic Party (DP)⁹². It was a positive surprise for most bureaucrats and migration experts because DP was backed by labour unions which strongly oppose importing foreign labour, whereas LDP has long been supported by the business sectors calling for accepting more migrants. DP had usually denied what the previous regime (i.e. LDP) did. So it was assumed among people involved in designing PBS that the PBS would be withdrawn. In fact, DP was widely divided into

⁹² DP was divided into two different political parties in 2017: Constitutional Democratic Party (Rikken minshuto) and Democratic Party (Minshintō). This study was administered before the division.

positive and negative sides. The informants suggested there were emotional arguments like the hawkish economist (the positive group) versus the conservative domestic-oriented (the negative group). However, such an intra-party conflict can also be easily spotted in the LDP. A former policy maker witnessed the inconclusive political discourse:

The biggest difficulty (in the migration political debate) is politicians are poles apart in their opinions. It doesn't matter whether they are from LDP or DP. Regardless of a ruling party or opposition party, each politician has totally different views (on migration policies). They have different experiences that form their opinions. That's really puzzling, isn't it? There is no difference between LDP and DP in that the ayes and noes are equally divided. As evidence, the current situation (ruled by LDP) is almost the same as when it was governed by DP.

(former policy maker 3)

As is often the case, the view of migration is shaped by personal experiences rather than political ideology. For example, a politician from a constituency where Nikkeijin live densely is keen for social cohesion while someone familiar with industries pays greater attention to the recourse to migration labour regardless of the political party they belong to; therefore, each politician has a different view and it impedes the united direction for the policy. In sum, Japanese political history signifies migration policies that have not seen a drastic reform even in a regime change. This simply means that the voters do not have any valid choices in migration policies: this leads to what this study terms 'no choice democracy'.

The fact that opinions on migration completely vary depending on personal experiences can be applicable to the general public. The public discourse is also poles apart. In a symposium, Masaharu Nakagawa, a DP politician with a rich political career, revealed the difficulty in debating migration issues (Nakagawa, 2017: 14).

Under the DP regime, I held Ministerial posts such as Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and Minister of State for policies for foreign residents⁹³ ...I tried to move forward the policies like the settlement of Nikkeijin from Brazil, education for children of foreign background and social cohesion. After I proposed to legislate a new Act to accept immigrants in the Ministerial inauguration press conference, there

⁹³ This post only covered Nikkeijin not all the foreign residents in Japan.

was a flood of complaints by telephone or fax to my constituency office and Ministries, thereby paralysing the administrative works. Under the circumstance, I was suggested by my Ministerial staff and so on not to stir the arguments and to be low key. It was not easy to discuss migration policies straightforwardly.

His plan to legislate a new Act miscarried at the start primarily by the flood of complaints by the general public but also suggestions from the Ministerial staff. As he is from the constituency of Mie-prefecture (near Nagoya), where Nikkeijin is densely populated, he had strongly wished to reform the policies. His failed attempt attests to the hard reality to bring about migration debate even for the well-experienced politicians. It is too hard to present choices to the voters.

This might be one of the reasons for the absence of political leadership. There used to be vocal political leaders also in LDP such as Hidenao Nakagawa (former Chief Cabinet Secretary, who proposed letting 10 million migrants in) and Jinei Nagase (former Minister of Justice, who made public his personal proposals on migration policies as a Minister) even though their stances are not in line⁹⁴. However, every bureaucrat interviewed agreed that there are no proactive leaders in this field whether they are positive or negative. All the migration experts pointed to the importance of political leadership for better migration policies, but it seems beyond reality.

We do not know how many politicians there are who shall tackle the issues earnestly. The bureaucrats always observe the politicians and their directions. If there are any politicians taking initiatives in migration policies, it is easier for the bureaucrats to move forward. In reality, the negative party will never propose open policies. So the politicians should ideally exert their own leadership to encourage them but (...).

(former policy maker 2)

As already revealed, in the compartmentalised government structure, someone needs to be at the helm of a negotiation and make a final decision in their leadership to move forward the reform. However, MOJ cannot be a leader. Then, a politician elected democratically should be the leader. This would be a breakthrough if it came true. Nonetheless, the current migration policy is designed without any strong political engagement and this partly results in incremental reform. Then, how can we improve

⁹⁴ Nakagawa was for opening borders by offering permanent residency to migrants. On the contrary, Nagase tried to restrict migrants' settlement by creating a new residential category. Whilst their claim is inconclusive, they were both experienced politicians of the LDP.

the compartmentalised governance and its slow decision-making process? The key is in a cross ministerial leadership.

7.7 Cross Ministerial leadership

As described above, the problems with Japan's migration administrations are inherent in (1) compartmentalised government where different Ministries have different authorities regarding migration policies, (2) each Ministry equally having powers in deciding the direction of future migration schemes—therefore the consultations among Ministries are endless—, and (3) no political or administrative leaders to coordinate the policies or discussions among Ministries.

To counter the issues, a so-called 'Migration Agency' (Gaikokujin-cho in Japanese)⁹⁵ has been proposed by local governments, researchers and business sectors (Gaikokujin shuju toshi kaigi [Council of Municipalities of Concentrated Foreign Residents], 2009; Yamawaki, 2002; Keidanren, 2004). Although there is no universal definition on Migration Agency, it is regarded as a governmental body, like a Ministry "comprehensively planning and governing all the policy areas concerning foreign residents with a strong cross Ministerial leadership" (Gaikokujin shuju toshi kaigi [Council of Municipalities of Concentrated Foreign Residents], 2009: 1).

It seems indeed a good idea to solve the issues but the detailed design for the Agency is not shared by people who propose it. For example, it is not clear whether the migration policies become the remit of the new Agency and the existing Ministries have no further responsibility or not: in the former case, the Agency becomes a very big organisation ruling the various policies from immigration control to education of migrants' children; in the latter case, the Agency is just a policy coordinator and each Ministry retains their authority. The former idea is unrealistic since it will eventually categorise a policy by nationalities and lead to further compartmentalised governance (e.g. the education for Migrants' children is governed by the Migration Agency and that for Japanese citizens is by MEXT). Therefore, the latter idea—Agency as a policy coordinator—is more realistic.

Among the policy makers interviewed, the opinions on creating the Agency were divided markedly; this difference does not come from their ideology but from their stance whether they keep the status quo or not. The group for the Agency suggests

⁹⁵ Translating the Japanese term 'Gaikokujin (foreigner) cho (administrative Agency)' into an English phrase is tricky. Keidanren (2004) translates it into 'Agency for Non-Japanese Residents'. In this paper it is simply called 'Migration Agency'.

that on the condition that Japan will proactively take admissionist migration policies, something like the Agency will be a sine qua non for coordinating and leading the policy reforms. Especially, they approved its advantage of promoting social cohesion whose policies are dispersed across Ministries such as local communities and labour practice. On the contrary, the negative party insists that as long as Japan maintains its current policies (*inter alia*, keeping the golden rule), creating such an agency is not an urgent matter, let alone it being against streamlined administration. A more significant claim they made is that the coordinator is just a coordinator, not a practitioner. As long as the Agency is confined to the central government as a coordinator, they are not able to engage with practice. This claim is plausible because the current MOJ is just a moderator who lags far behind MOL or METI in that they are not practitioners in labour or industrial affairs as already elucidated. Establishing a new agency will create just another MOJ. Such an agency, then, will not have any influential powers to move forward the policies, thereby leading to a similar situation as now.

Unfortunately, this criticism has turned out to be right. The government created an administrative division⁹⁶ coordinating policies for Nikkeijin in 2009 within the Cabinet Ministry. Although its role focuses on only Nikkeijin, it is expected to coordinate policies. Nonetheless, it is far from the organisation taking a leadership role and their activities seem to be stagnant from the fact that the Orientation Guide Book on their website has not been updated leaving the explanation for an outdated system unchanged⁹⁷ (Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, 2012). Considering this fact, even if the Migration Agency is established, it is questionable if they can be a driving force for reforming cross Ministerial policies.

One of the intrinsic issues with Migration Agency is that 'establishing a new organisation' has too much focus. In other words, how the Agency functions should be examined rather than creating it. In fact, the Agency should be given superior authority to direct the reforms to other ministries to lead the discussions: otherwise, the Ministries and Agency would repeat the 'horizontal' consultations. The key is to make the consultation process from horizontal to vertical so that someone can lead and coordinate the negotiations among Ministries.

⁹⁶ Teiju gaikokujin shisaku suishin shitsu (Division promoting policies for foreigners of Japanese descents). It should be noted that this Division only handles policies for Nikkeijin.

⁹⁷ This is a booklet for migrants describing various topics such as visa restriction, administrative procedures in local government and rules for putting out garbage in Japanese, English, Portuguese and Spanish. It was compiled by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations so that migrants can easily follow the local rules in Japan and is linked to the Division's web site.

However, this requires the appropriate direction from politicians because bureaucrats cannot discuss the issues without any appropriate direction. A policy expert who had been involved in the Advisory Board for Minister of Justice stated:

Basically, the problems with the decision-making arise because there's no political direction. Since MOJ consults other Ministries without any direction, it takes time to reach a consensus with all the Ministries. As all the Ministries have equal power to decide the policies, they can't conclude the consultations. So someone with superior power, if any, will make a difference.

(migration expert 3)

Then, who is someone with 'superior power' leading the discussion and giving an appropriate direction? Here, all the informants share the answer: a politician who is given a mandate to direct migration policies hopefully from the Cabinet, the supreme administrative organ.

In this sense, this survey identified that the government strategies to promote tourism can be a best practice to refer to. Until the 2000s Japan had been low key in attracting foreign tourists. However, as the tourism industry was recognised as one of the potential measures to boost the economy, Japan began to work seriously to attract foreign tourists. In 2013, the government launched the Ministerial Council⁹⁸, which is hosted by the Prime Minister, comprising all the Ministers (Japanese Government, 2013), and devising cross ministerial strategies (Kanko rikkoku suishin kakuryo kaigi, 2013) to boost the number of foreign tourists⁹⁹. The strategies stretched from enhancing tourism infrastructures in local communities to relaxing visa conditions carried out by multi actors in the public sector. As a result, the number of foreign tourists has been more than doubled from 8.37 million in 2012 to 19.74 million in 2015 since the Council was established (Japanese Government, 2015).

This gives us a useful lesson in functioning cross Ministerial negotiations. The tourism Ministerial Council suggests it is worth establishing a cross-cutting body for better

⁹⁸ Its formal name is Kanko rikkoku suishin kakuryo kaigi (the Ministerial Council on the Promotion of Japan as a Tourism-Oriented Country).

⁹⁹ Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) estimates the number of foreign visitors (it is equal to foreign tourists according to JNTO) from the statistical data of MOJ; the data shown here is based on JNTO's estimation. They are defined as foreigners entering Japan (usually at an airport or port) fulfilling the following conditions: (1) given a short-stay status of residence (up to 90, 30 or 15 days depending on the person) or (2) foreigners who do not have permanent residency. It should be noted that (2) includes the long-term residents since the statistics include their re-entry (i.e. they only exclude the re-entry of permanent residents). For more details, see JNTO (2018).

migration policies headed by the Prime Minister with all the Ministers involved. In this Council, the necessary directions of migration policies are to be decided and one of the members in the Council is endowed with the authority to enforce the reforms as Minister for Migration. If the Minister needs administrative support such as holding meetings and so forth, a division in the Cabinet Ministry can be established. In sum, there are three significant points: (1) it is led by the Prime Minister. By this, strong political will is shown; (2) all the Ministers are involved so that all the Ministers pledge the direction of the policies; and (3) the Minister for Migration is assigned to clarify who is responsible for realising the directions agreed.

In fact, the fieldwork identified a successful case using a similar scheme. In 2009, Kodo jinzai ukeire suishin kaigi (the Council for the Promotion of Acceptance of Highly Skilled Professionals) proposed the PBS. This council was hosted by the Chief Cabinet Secretary, who is generally in the second most important position after Prime Minister, and was joined by all the relevant Ministries. An informant who was engaged in the Council articulated that this structure made the Council function to negotiate the PBS.

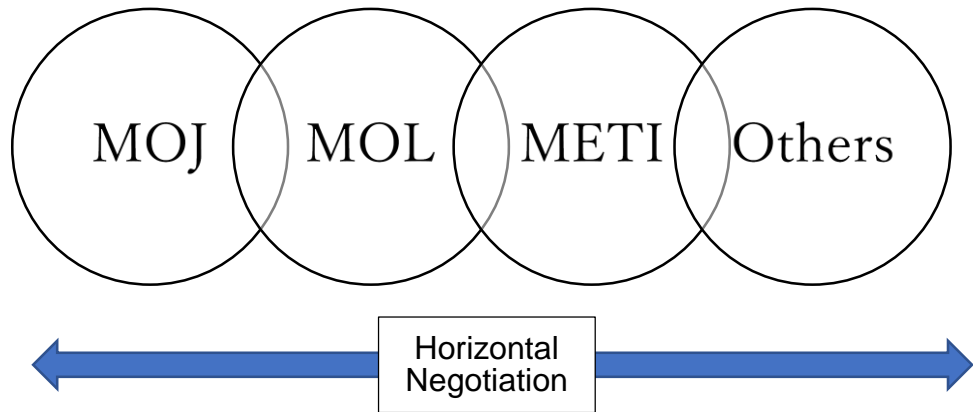
The council was not under the Cabinet Ministry. Precisely speaking, it was designed to be established by the Chief Cabinet Secretary...If it was under the Cabinet Ministry, there may be some ministries which did not join the Council. But the important point is it was hosted by the Chief Cabinet Secretary. Therefore, there was no Ministry which did not participate in the Council. All the Ministries agreed to join it and the high officials such as Deputy Director General of a Bureau from each Ministry came to the meetings.

(former policy maker 2)

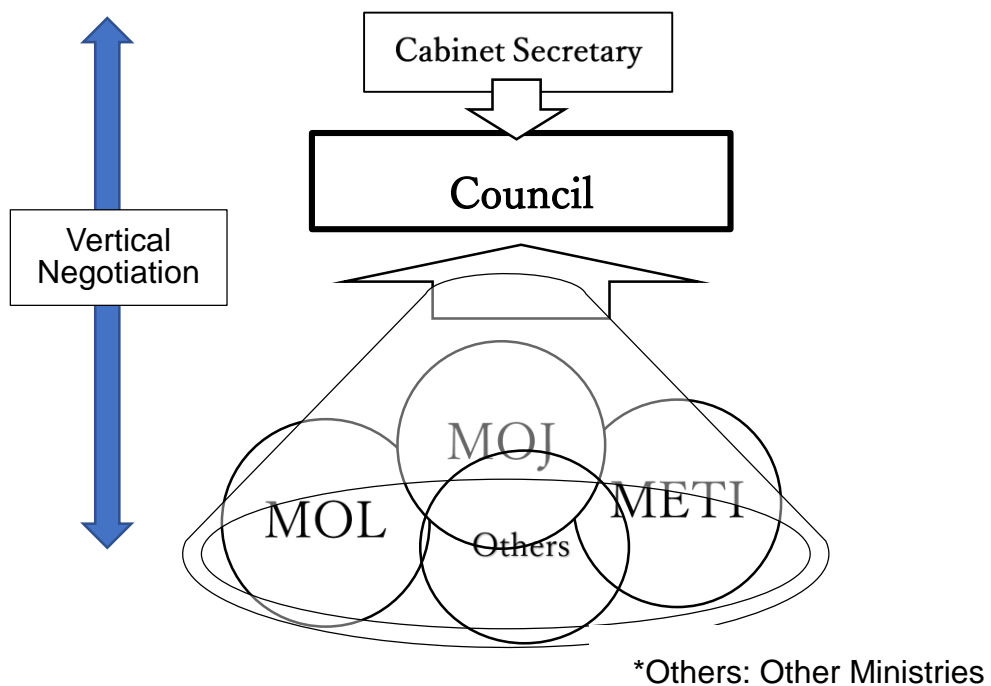
Normally, this kind of meeting is headed by the Cabinet Ministry. However, if it is led by the Cabinet Ministry, other Ministries may interrupt the policy reforms exploiting their vetoes. Therefore, it was agreed that the Chief Cabinet Secretary, who has superior authority compared to other politicians, hosted the Council. Consequently, it achieved a breakthrough.

Figure 7-2 Comparison of negotiation structure

Case1: Usual Consultation Scheme (Horizontal Negotiation)



Case 2: Special Scheme in the Council for the Promotion of Acceptance of Highly Skilled Professionals hosted by the Cabinet Secretary (Vertical Negotiation)



7.8 Discussion

This chapter has identified several intrinsic barriers in migration governance through two policy-making actors, namely, bureaucrats and politicians. As revealed in the previous chapters, HSMs face institutional hurdles (e.g. access to permanent residency) in paving the way for their future life in Japan; however, the fundamental solution has not been offered although the government enthusiastically tries to attract more HSMs. The existing research into HSMs in Japan (Oishi, 2012; Tsukasaki, 2008) has not dealt with the process of policy making and only focused on the micro aspect of HSMs; neither has it shown the way to improve the policy discussions so as to eliminate the institutional barriers. Aiming to fill the research gap, this chapter presented a few significant theoretical contributions by unearthing the unknown policy making process in obscure migration governance, and consequently offered a solution for cross Ministerial leadership.

First, the research clarified the egalitarian slow consultation process among Ministries, all of which are equally given a veto. The veto makes only the minimal reforms possible. In this compartmentalised governance structure, the bureaucrats go through the endless 'horizontal negotiation' without any driving force concluding the discussion. Accelerated by their risk averse nature, no bureaucrats would initiate the discussion since the administrative laws do not endow each Ministry with leadership but compartmentalised authority. This problematic governance structure becomes pronounced in neglected policy. Even though the golden rule was a dead letter with numerous backdoors created, the bureaucrats still stick to the unrealistic principle and would not update it. What is worse, whereas they are well aware of the necessity of reforming the principle, no action will be taken in the near future. This is because the golden rule requires a national consensus to accept unskilled labour, but the bureaucrats have already given up reforming it due to the potential difficulty in creating a national consensus.

Second, the unique male-dominant and domestic-oriented bureaucracy impedes the progressive migration governance. Among others, the immigration bureaucrats are confined within the closed and segregated administrative community and this affects the innovative policies. These issues can be improved by bringing more diversity in the policy making process by assigning a policy maker from non-government sectors. This research offers counter-arguments to the extant literature by evaluating the Japanese systematic bureaucracy (Johnson 1982; Bartram 2000, 2004, 2005) and solid epistemological background to the non-empirical debate made by migration scholars (e.g. Yamawaki, 2002; Cornelius and Tsuda, 2008). This chapter therefore contributes

to further illuminating bureaucratic barriers in detail and advancing evidence-based governance analysis.

Third, the chapter examined the role of politicians and clarified there has recently been less political engagement, which eventually reduces the migration governance. The key here is policy ideologies on migration are poles apart. More seriously, the views of politicians do not represent the political party so each political party consists of mixed groups of pro/anti-migrants. This consequently leads to 'no choice democracy' since the voters do not have any valid choices on migration: there is no difference in policy outcome even though the voters choose another party. The far-reaching suggestion is that migration has become a de-traditionalised debate—in the traditional political debate, the (centre-)right and (centre-)left party may have opposite dichotomic views; however, this has not been observed in the political discourse on labour migration. In sum, migration seems to be a highly political ideology but it is in fact shaped by personal view rather than political ideology and this impedes the united direction of migration policies. It also shows that a national consensus is difficult to reach, keeping migration policies from being updated.

To avoid this situation, the research pointed to the significance of the cross Ministerial leadership as a mechanism to progress with migration policies. Looking at successful cases, the better policy making process involving politicians should be figured out. In this sense, creating the Ministerial Council/Minister for Migration will offer a practical solution to exert a political leadership and promote negotiations across Ministries. However, it must be reiterated if there is no strong political will to update the policies, this new institution ends up as just a meeting. Therefore, political leadership is indispensable to changing the status quo. It is politicians who are ultimately responsible for forming the policies and making bureaucrats work.

Chapter 8 Conclusion: Towards a More Diversified and Accommodating Society

Everyone is different, that makes a difference

—Misuzu Kaneko (1920s)

8.1 Labyrinth unfolded?

This last chapter presents the comprehensive portrayal of highly skilled migration in Japan and ‘beyond’, by offering a bigger picture weaving out the threads in each chapter. The dissertation so far has explored the labyrinth through the three mazes (i.e. society, labour and policies) predicated on specific research questions and analytical lenses. The initial part of this chapter maps out how the findings of each analytical chapter have addressed the research questions, consequently contributing to advancing the academic debate with new concepts such as ‘coerced harmonisation’ and ‘no choice democracy’. Then, these findings will be synthesised to examine overall policy implications which will finally address ‘who migration policies are for’, followed by future research directions to conclude the discussion.

Now, it’s time to see the labyrinth unfold.

8.2 Academic contribution: questions, findings and uniqueness

8.2.1 Research aims and questions

This study aimed to identify how Japan should tackle the issues confronting HSMs while the country faces unprecedented challenges such as severe global competition, rapid ageing, and a declining population. It has uncovered multi-scale issues—micro, meso and macro.

The overarching research question was “**what are the significant agencies and actors in attracting highly skilled migrants in Japan?**” To pursue this topic, the study explored the perception of HSMs and the policy making process of migration governance in Japan: the two arguments being lack of empirical research so far. This qualitative inquiry has especially focused on three dimensions, namely, migrants’ social life, labour issues (micro/meso), and migration governance in Japan (macro) through the following research questions:

RQ1 (Backgrounds of HSMs in Japan):

What are motivations for HSMs to work in Japan? Are there any distinguished differences in motivations or trajectories among migrants from different countries/regions?

RQ2 (Policies and social issues):

What factors may prevent HSMs from living in Japan? Specifically, how do public policies or social issues affect the life of HSMs?

RQ3 (Labour Issues):

What kind of problems do HSMs face in their workplace? How do they evaluate the distinctive Japanese employment relations?

RQ4 (Attraction of working in Japan):

Are there any distinctive advantages that attract HSMs?

RQ5 (Migration governance):

How are migration policies designed in Japan? What issues are underlying the policy making process to update policies?

Based on these five research questions, this dissertation has teased out the findings and discussed their implications in the three chapters (Chapter 5, 6 and 7).

8.2.2 Conceptualising highly skilled migration in Japan

Chapter 5 (findings 1) addressed RQ1&2 predicated on transnational elite geographies (Salt, 1983, 1988; Findlay et al., 1996; Beaverstock, 2002, 2005; Beaverstock and Broadwell, 2000). In particular, it unpacked the contrasting migration patterns between Asian and Western HSMs. The former is still conditioned by Asian traditional values such as senior family recommendations or the unique socio-economic push factors as observed by mainland Chinese whose migratory motivation was driven by the desire for being autonomous in their life—the chapter called it ‘ownership of their life course’. Conversely, the latter happened to end up working in Japan through nomadic adventures. Despite the different backgrounds in reaching Japan, they were affected by the communal obstacles in migration policies such as tough regulations to gain permanent residency, which requires a ‘continuous 10-year’ residence in Japan. This stringent condition does not match with the life course of HSMs—both Asian and western—, thereby giving them an alternative migration choice—leaving Japan. In this way, RQ1&2 have brought a policy implication into the migration debate by liaising life course (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1992; Findlay et al., 2015; Izuhara, 2015) with policy design in attracting HSMs.

Another insight clarified through RQ1&2 is the lack of diversity in Japanese society. Most of all, the fundamental problem in the Japanese educational system is not the level of teaching nor Japanese language that Oishi (2012) suggested but pressures of conformity, which stifles the expanded world views that Third Culture Kids are supposed to enjoy (Pollock and Van Reken, 2009). What is more insightful is the migration regime that implicitly prevents diversity in school by stigmatising some HSMs. The study unearthed the case of Lydia, a Filipina nursery teacher, who was once rejected renewing the visa although her job can potentially alleviate the homogeneous nature of early childhood education. There are a lot of Japanese parents who wish to nurture cosmopolitan views of their children, subsequently the applicants of the school are increasing and highly competitive. The obscurity of immigration control nonetheless precludes the schools' efforts to innovate the educational system. Alongside these insights, the findings of these two research questions have formed the basis of the rest of the research providing the basic information on the life and trajectories of HSMs.

Chapter 6 (findings 2) has answered RQ3&4 shedding light on the issues that HSMs face in their office via the theoretical lenses of transnational elite geographies, and Japanese employment relations (Tsukasaki, 2008; Oishi, 2012) which are strongly associated with lifetime employment and seniority. This chapter offered detailed and lively evidence on how Japanese employment relations affected the career making and work style of HSMs. However, the uniqueness of this study compared to the past scholarly works (e.g. Tsukasaki, 2008; Liu-Farrer, 2011a, 2011b; Oishi, 2012; Holbrow and Nagahoshi, 2016) lies in RQ4 which also identified the advantages of Japanese employment relations such as rich training systems (linked with lifetime employment) and wider-stakeholders-views (stemming from community-orientated management). It was particularly noticeable that the respondents valued the distinctive long-term management philosophy whilst acknowledging many business practices need to be updated such as long hours. This could suggest Japanese corporations had better seek a 'third' path which is not the conventional Japanese or the simple Anglo-American model in attracting HSMs. The analysis may be warning against merely adopting the so-called global model—which is in reality Anglo-American—without evaluating intricate and dynamic relations among employers, employees and even the local community.

Rather than Japanese employment relations, the findings problematised homogeneity in the workplace. HSMs are specifically exposed to peer-pressure to be 'Japanized' (to be like Japanese), which ultimately suppresses their distinctive talents, cultural

backgrounds, and diversified values. Norms embedded in characterless recruit-suits also attest to an obsession with conformity. Conceptualising the implicit peer pressures emanating from the lack of diversity, the study coined '**coerced harmonisation**' that afflicts transnational talent in the insular workplace of global city (Sassen, 2001), Tokyo.

More significantly, RQ3&4 have revealed that the perception of Japan is formed differently between the western and Asian migrants. The western migrants tend to have radical imagery of Japan such as crazy, pricey and closed, that can be conversely but respectively translated into innovative, high quality and polite by Asian migrants. The stigmatised images prevent the potential HSMs from immigrating to Japan, which might partly explain the nucleus of the labyrinth: why the number of western HSMs is constantly stagnant whilst that of Asian is steadily surging. In fact, it is easy to attribute the stigmatised images to their home media's exaggerations; however, my analysis also indicates what Japan—both the government and people—should do to overcome the stigmatisation. The collective voice of western informants pointed to the necessity to reconsider Japan's branding strategies of unbalanced 'cool Japan' (McLelland, 2017) foregrounding geeky anime or *otaku*-culture (Milner and Richmond, 2015). As Alastair described:

If we travel like one hour away from Tokyo, there is a lot of like (...) rural culture of Japan and very respectful of their past also. So, when you are able to show more history of Japan, not just a crazy side, there is a lot more to Japan.

(Alastair, cited in Chapter 6)

Alastair's narrative reminds us that the biggest attraction might be discovered in the daily life of Japanese people, that could be easily overlooked. HSMs reveal their everyday life deeply rooted in Japanese history and culture—one of the examples is the firmly-knitted community as Scott loves sports day—, instead of just emphasising a particular but ostensible 'show'.

Based on the perceptions of HSMs discussed in the above research questions, RQ5 examined in chapter 7 (findings 3) has brought a macro perspective to the debate of HSMs in Japan by examining the role of state (Hollifield et al., 2014; Aiden, 2011), especially, the issues in the policy making process based on interviews with migration policy experts. Revealing how the migration policies are actually formed in Japan and what kind of issues there are to bring about recommendable policies, RQ5 addressed three aspects: compartmentalised government (negotiating process in the central

government); insular bureaucracy in Ministry of Justice (bureaucratic barriers); and, the lack of political will (political barriers).

The findings elicited the egalitarian policy making process among Ministries, whose bureaucrats are risk averse and quite homogeneous creating a male dominated closed society based on life time employment. To bring innovation to the elite guild, it is advisable to adopt more political appointees and mobilise bureaucratic inter-Ministries or municipalities which actually provide migrants with public services. Also, we should change the current 'horizontal negotiation' to 'vertical negotiation' where political leadership can direct migration policies. Yet, vertical negotiation will not function unless there is strong political leadership.

RQ5 also helped illuminate the enigma of the politician, another fundamental actor in the labyrinth of skilled migration. It was notable that the major two parties—LDP and DP— do not have explicit and long-term stances on accepting migrants; instead, the political arguments are shaped by personal experience of each politician regardless of their political positions (i.e. left or right wing). As evidence, even though Japan underwent regime changes in 2009 and 2012, there were no drastic changes in migration policies. Whether the ruling party is (centre-)right or (centre-)left, Japanese voters have no choice in migration policies since political discourse is in limbo. This lack of political concern results in what the study termed '**no choice democracy**'. There is no choice, not even one. Even though Japan is a mature democratic state, no alternative is proposed by politicians. What is left to voters is just accepting the status quo with minimal changes. Japan has to date kept and will henceforth hold the golden rule with the 'back doors' open for unskilled migrants (Oishi, 1995; Sellek, 2001; Tsuda, 2004).

8.2.3 Regional competition in Asia

One question still remaining is which countries are in competition with Japan for HSMs. Answering this question is crucial in contextualising this research within cross-border policy debates and globalisation. Given the severe global competition for brains, the Japanese government has devoted itself to attract HSMs by introducing various measures like the PBS, which did not fulfil the initial expectations. This research so far examined the policy failures from the points of societal, labour and governance barriers. In addition, it is imperative to discuss the issue within the Asian regional competition.

The findings have unpacked the contrasting migration patterns between the Western and Asian HSMs; one of the clear distinctions between them is motivations to reach

Japan. The Westerners did not choose Japan by clear preference but happened to come through 'Walkabout'. This signifies that Japan is not on the top list for the Westerners and the country does not fare well in the global competition for talents. On the other hand, the findings showed that Japan is *generally* appealing for Asian HSMs due to its cutting-edge technologies, economic opportunities, and cultural attractiveness. This echoes in the growing number of Asian HSMs with the stark contrast with the Westerners. Nevertheless, it does not necessarily mean that Japan will remain competitive for attracting Asian talents in the region.

The economic landscape in Asia has drastically changed over the past few years. Japan handed over the position as the second largest economy in the world to China, and now Singapore boasts the highest GDP per capita in Asia; Japanese economy is no longer dominant in Asia in terms of the scale and quality. The data also suggests that HSMs in Japan are likely to move to Singapore, Hong Kong, and Shanghai as is discussed in Chapter 5. In this regard, the research calls for benchmarking these competitors in updating the public policies including taxation, given the geographical proximity that makes migrants easily move.

From the macro perspectives, the role of FDI should not be missed. As shown, the figure of intracompany transferees accounts for only six percent of all the HSMs in Japan. The low level of intracompany transfer implies that TNCs do not share their talent pools with Japan. This is partly because Japan is less attractive as a new investee. As evidence, the level of FDI to Japan remains low compared to Singapore and Hong Kong with the figure of the FDI US\$ 39,323 million (Japan), US\$ 74,253 million (Singapore) and US\$ 133,259 million (Hong Kong)¹⁰⁰ in 2016 (World Bank, 2018). The fieldwork also identified a tendency that the existing foreign TNCs in Japan relocate their Asian headquarters to these global cities. Although the intracompany transfer is not the focus of this research, it will be meaningful to further discuss the ways to improve the business environment for foreign affiliates within the context of Asian regional competition for not only HSMs but also investment.

8.2.4 Academic contributions

To sum up, this dissertation has brought four sets of academic contributions (the bold signifies important contributions). First, it underscored **the role of government**. In transnational elite geographies, the scholarly debate revolves around the career making/organisational management, and the policy issues have been underestimated

¹⁰⁰ Regarding the percentage of GDP, it accounts for 0.8%, 24%, and 41.5% respectively (ibid.).

as the corporate elites generally enjoy the 'privilege' of borderless mobility (Beaverstock, 2002; 2005). Nonetheless, this transient elite is a handful of cases of HSMs. This research, on the other hand, has unearthed HSMs with intention of settlement. For them, gaining the stabilised status (e.g. accessing permanent residency and mortgage) is more important than for the highly-mobile elites. This also suggests the policy design should be in line with **the life-course of migrants** to facilitate their settlement.

Second, within Japanese employment relations, this study has presented '**coerced harmonisation**'. The extant literature has suggested the unique employment practices such as seniority salary and life-time employment can be barriers for HSMs (Tsukasaki, 2008; Oishi, 2012). Although this research also identified these issues, it further advanced the theory by emphasising the peer pressure to be Japanized. This peer pressure is driven by the institutionalised mechanism to exclude the organisational outcasts. This study clarified that not only employment rules but also the implicit mechanism plays an important role in shaping the 'barrier free' office to attract more HSMs.

Third, from the macro perspectives, the research has conceptualised '**no choice democracy**'. Kasumigaseki bureaucracy posits systematic bureaucracy which has long led the policy making in Japan (Johnson, 1982; Imamura, 2006). However, in terms of migration policies, the bureaucrats are not given the leading role to move forward with the reforms, nor politicians. As a result, the voters have no choice in migration policies, thereby just keep the status quo with the drastic reforms untouched.

Fourth, empirically, this study has offered a novel gaze of the skilled migration studies by 'decentring' them from the Anglo-American dominance. As Walsh (2014) claims, the scholarly debate should be more balanced and widened to share variations and its lessons. The empirics therefore should not be limited to Anglo-American perspectives. Sharing variations and policy implications will subsequently prompt policy debates in migration (Vertovec, 2007) and result in better policy making (Massey et al., 1993; Hollifield, 1992) in the world: echoing the calls, this study has brought Asian perspectives to the debates.

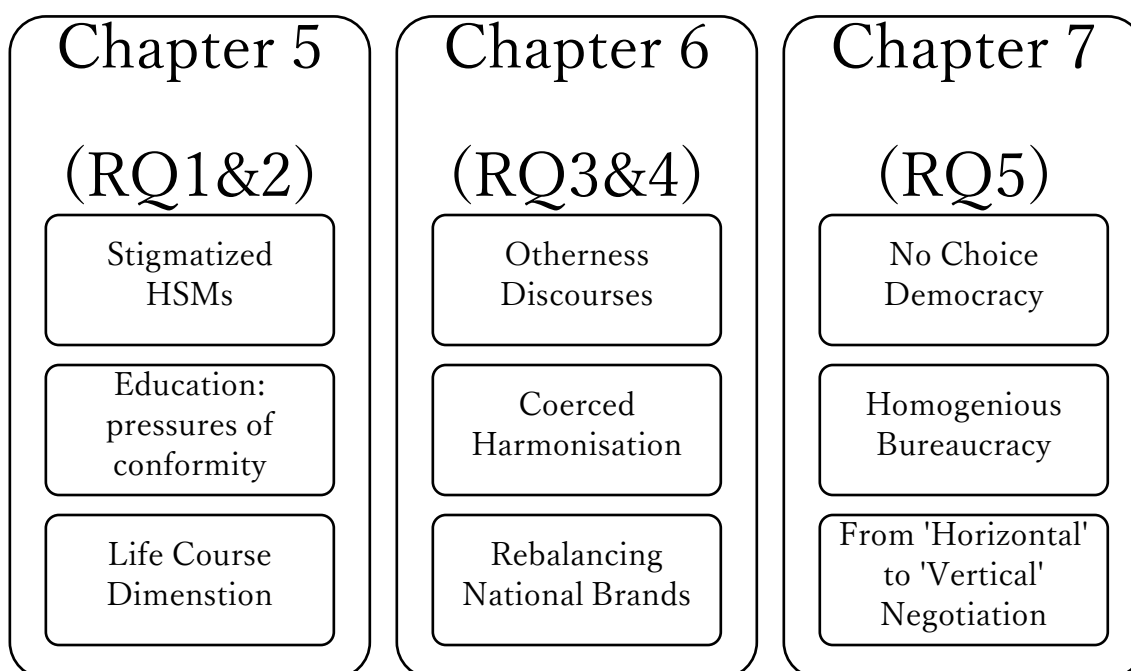
Besides, this dissertation has provided another empirical approach in qualitative research: no snowballing. As the extant literature on HSMs has relied on snowballing (e.g. Beaverstock, 2002, 2005; Scott, 2006, 2007; Ho, 2007; Leonard, 2008; Harvey, 2008; Oishi, 2012; Ryan, 2015), this study distinctively heightened the quality of data

by abandoning snowballing. In so doing, this research was successful in unravelling the hidden cohorts such as precarious HSMs (e.g. the nursery teacher). Also, it opened up a way to assess the migration policy: the research gleaned the data both from the HSMs (i.e. clients) and policy makers (i.e. policy providers) to review the policies; this enabled sketching out more dynamic micro-macro interplays to offer policy proposals.

8.2.5 Synthesising threads of the three findings-chapters

This section has thus far discussed how the research questions and empirical analysis have clarified issues to be addressed in attracting HSMs. Figure 8-1 sums up how the three threads of the findings-chapters were spun out of each research question to present academic contributions. Nevertheless, I would like to carry out one more task to achieve my final aim: bridging multi-scales—micro, meso, and macro—cross-disciplinarily.

Figure 8-1 Research questions and findings in analytical chapter



As argued in the theoretical framework, one of the current limitations of migration literature is that there are few studies bridging disciplines and scales even though the myriads of scholars advocate its necessity (Urry, 2007; King, 2012a; Castles et al. 2014; Brettel and Hollifield, 2015). In fact, the findings of this research are still divided into two distinct parts: (1) micro/meso analysis of HSMs (Chapter 5&6) principally

driven by geographical and sociological theories and (2) macro analysis (Chapter 7) based on political sciences. Therefore, these three findings-chapters may well be converged into one tapestry to bring overall coherence. Also, it would be an important contribution if this research can successfully build up theories remodelling the three threads which focused on distinct aspects and scales.

Now let me address this formidable task: weaving out the threads across chapters into the complete tapestry.

8.3 Final discussion: Weaving out the complete tapestry

To present a more dynamic landscape synthesising the three threads (i.e. three sets of core findings of chapter 5, 6 & 7), this section underlines three cross-cutting themes which are substantially at play in attracting HSMs: (1) stigmatisation, (2) diversity, and (3) public policies.

8.3.1 Stigmatisation

Throughout the dissertation, the study has highlighted stigma attached to migrants, state, and policies. First, as seen in the case of Lydia, stigmatised cohorts face difficulties in obtaining a visa even though they are well sought-after migrants such as teachers of international background and entrepreneurs with new business ideas, all of whom will bring innovation to Japan. Although the Japanese government emphasises the importance of innovation brought by HSMs (Kodo jinzai ukeire suishin kaigi, 2009; Japanese government, 2016), stigmatisation grounded on gender, ethnicity, nationality and occupation may preclude desirable HSMs from Japan.

It is worth noting that stigmatisation is not only limited to immigration control but also afflicts HSMs even in their everyday life. Especially, this research identified two stigmatised groups: Korean and mainland Chinese. Examples include 'unconscious segregation' that Jihye occasionally touched upon when her fellow mothers look down on Korean traits, or hostility specifically directed to the mainland Chinese like non-mainland Chinese (e.g. Tom and Guanlin—Australian and Taiwanese—) reporting radical cases.

The macro analysis also unearthed stigmatised policies: 'golden rule', what this study termed and foregrounded. This is the principle of Japanese migration policy underpinning the idea of letting HSMs in but not unskilled migrants. It is an unrealistic principle and has to date caused numerous backdoors (Sellek, 2001; Tsuda and

Cornelius, 2004). Despite the problematic nature of this disguised rule, no bureaucrats expect the reform of rule primarily because they should go through an arduous process, which they have already dismissed. In other words, it is a taboo for bureaucrats to discuss the golden rule, which is heavily stigmatised as a Pandora's box. This inviolable label is used as an excuse not to change the unrealistic principle and create back doors one after another. It follows that the bureaucrats are also haunted by their own created stigmatisation obstructing policy reform.

Ironically, it is not only migrants who are sacrificed to stigmatisation but also Japan, which potentially loses substantive cohorts of HSMs who might migrate if their image of Japan was normalised. The Western people still hold the image of a crazy, pricey and closed Japan due to unbalanced propaganda the respondents' everyday life cannot shake off. The research framed the process of stigmatisation within otherness discourses (Eagleton, 2000; Sakai, 2000; Mouer and Sugimoto, 2002; Yeoh and Willis, 2005; Urry and Larsen, 2011) particularly developed by Said (1978, 1993) who underlined the problematic Westernised view to the Orient. However, this study has also revealed otherness discourses are not confined within the 'western' culture as it is certainly applicable to Japanese people and its government. It tells us how difficult it is to stave off stigmatisation which has no panacea and can pervade anywhere (King and Mai, 2009; Collyer and King, 2015). Still, of note is how some HSMs skilfully overcome the stigma and successfully redrew the impression as Jiawei revealed:

I have been told that "I don't like Chinese people, but you are an exception". I am currently engaged with a project in H (Japanese countryside) and at the outset, people there were a bit cautious of me. I could list as many things like discrimination, but I don't mind. I can make them open minded. It's personality rather than nationality that counts finally. The governor now calls me "Mr Y (his Chinese family name), Mr Y" intimately.
(Jiawei, cited in Chapter 5)

Jiawei's remarks embody an English proverb 'it's better to light a candle than curse the darkness'. As a matter of course, the stigmatisation that the host society holds should be removed as much as possible. However, as it is unrealistic to eliminate all the stigmas as long as human beings have subjectivity, the migrants themselves can also play important roles in redrawing their new images. Along with Jiawei, some other respondents in the study proactively, tactfully and successfully attend to the stigmas (e.g. Jihye who engineers unconscious segregation of her fellow mothers). This demonstrates a good example for HSMs who wish to accommodate themselves with

new encounters, but also points to the fundamental advantage (as opposed to mere economic effects) in accepting HSMs. The HSMs are a catalyst to 'innovate' Japanese society insomuch as their positive presence can constitute a driving force in updating Japanese people's perceptions insinuating how significant it is to acknowledge differences in the minds of Japanese. In this sense, bringing more diversity into Japanese society is also beneficial for the Japanese native population itself.

8.3.2 Diversity

Diversity is thus another important implication this research highlighted throughout the multi-scale analysis. Diversity is brought by not only migration but also various forms of social attributions including gender, disability and personal philosophy (Vertovec, 2012, 2017). In short, diversity makes differences to everyone whether Japanese or not. Although it is vital to acknowledge the differences which make everyone proud of their distinctiveness, the fundamental barriers for HSMs are prone to emanate from the lack of diversity such as coerced harmonisation in the workplace or pressure to conform in education.

The lack of diversity sometimes turns to be excessive demands for being Japanized. Remember how Qian used the metaphor to describe implicit collegiate pressures to be Japanized: "If there are more foreigners doing strange things (in my office), the office will be warmer or more frank, I suppose" (Qian, cited in Chapter 6). It should be noted that Qian is not doing any "strange things" but her Japanese colleagues or hierarchy require the HSMs to behave like Japanese, which should be "strange things" considering the company advertises themselves as a 'global' firm. Simultaneously, Qian's narrative is quite telling on how the workplace should be so that HSMs can attain their potential. Japanese companies should be more accommodating by acknowledging the differences of views, values and backgrounds until "strange things" can become marked individuality that will ultimately be the strength of the innovative company.

The necessity of diversity can also be said of the policy making process. As indicated, Japanese bureaucracy represents quite a homogeneous closed society: males dominate representing 97% of the managers, no foreigners, based on life time employment with very few political appointees. The study has revealed how this closed guild constitutes risk averse and conservative policy making, stifling the international benchmarking and challenging spirits. It is only natural that the policy makers who have hardly ever worked with foreigners cannot implement efficient policies to attract HSMs. It is the mind of policy makers that crucially requires diversity.

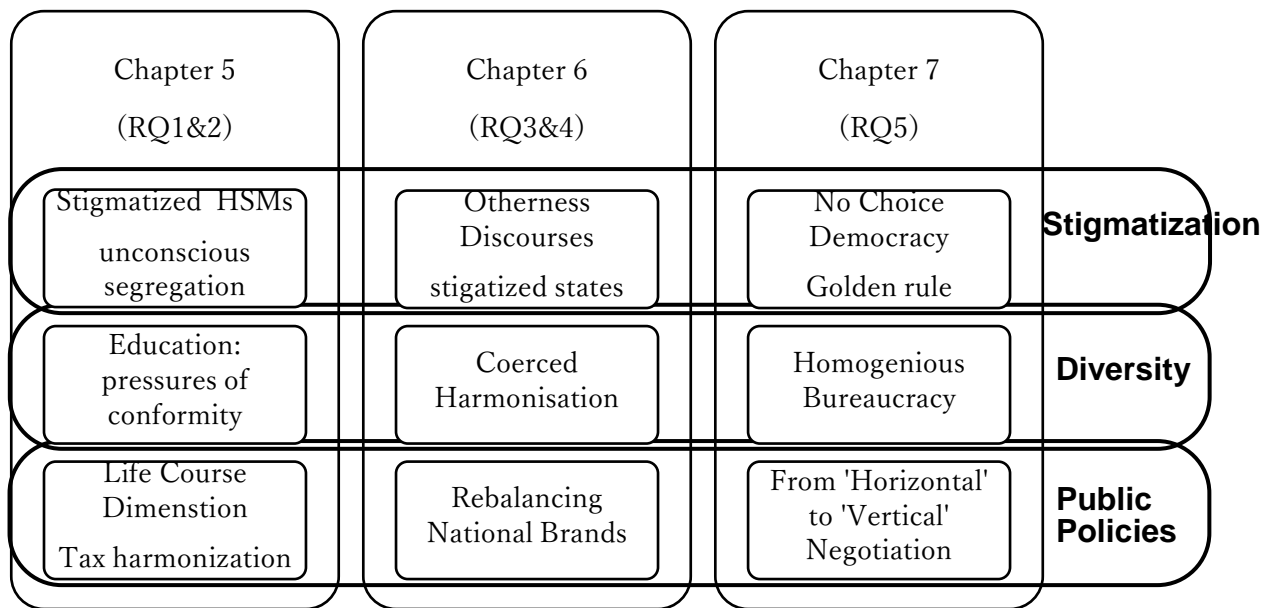
8.3.3 Public policies

The findings have suggested various public policies to be reformed such as the necessity to incorporate life-course dimension into designing permanent residency, for which HSMs are required more stringent conditions compared to other advanced industrial states. On this point, benchmarking the Japanese policies internationally is quite important in not only migration regimes but also other influential policies like income tax. In the even more globalised world, it is easy for high-income HSMs to gain residency in lower-tax economy and 'commute' to Japan from there. As the migration experts in the study reiterated, the Japanese government should recognise with which economies it competes for HSMs and then update the public policies accordingly (or work for international harmonisation if necessary). Social issues for migrants also revealed the significance of public safety, over which Japan still has a competitive edge. The case of migrants who decided to return to Tokyo for the safety and 'freedom' of their children represents the human face (Favell et al., 2007; Beaverstock, 2005) of the privileged elite HSMs.

Policy implications the study indicated are not only confined within individual public policies but how the policy making process itself can be improved. It has been proposed that the vertical negotiation is better than the egalitarian horizontal negotiation to exert the political leadership to move forward with the appropriate policies.

This research has thus drawn together the distinct levels (macro, meso and micro) of threads of the plot mapping out the role of the state on skilled migration. This section especially highlighted the dynamism of how the core findings and its implications are organically interlinked. The following figure is the tapestry woven out of the multi threads and scales.

Figure 8-2 The 'tapestry' of multi threads and scales



8.3.4 Who are migration policies for?

In concluding the final discussion on policy implications, I would like to pose a crucial proposition which is not limited to skilled migration but related to the whole migration research agenda: Who are migration policies for?

Conventionally and narrowly, migration policies, *inter alia* immigration control, are for a state which would like to control the flow of migrants and it is designed to limit the movement of persons (Collyer and King, 2015; Findlay and Cranston, 2015). It is therefore the 'general' understanding of a conventional migration regime that all the decisions on immigration control are solely left to a state (Tuduka, 2005; Tagaya and Takaya, 2015; Sato, 2017). The state usually only accepts foreigners who are (economically) 'beneficial' to the country as embodied in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). The Japanese government, for example, declares in Immigration Act Article 7 (1) (ii) that "the activities (of a foreign national who would like to work in Japan) shall conform to the conditions provided for by Ordinance of the Ministry of Justice which shall be provided for in consideration of factors including but not limited to the effects on Japanese industry and public welfare¹⁰¹" (emphasised by the author). It means that the government keeps restrictions on immigration partly for the reason of "industry and welfare" for their citizens (Shutsunyokokukanri horei kenkyukai, 2016). In sum, migration policies may exist primarily for a state that wishes

¹⁰¹ This provision is not applicable to some foreigners such as on family reunification (including Nikkeijin) and diplomats.

to draw the boundaries on the ground to protect its citizens but not for immigrants. Yet, the overall picture addressed in this section hints at a more constructive answer.

In fact, it may be partly true that the migration policies are something to regulate the flow of migrants—above all, the research indicated the Japanese policy makers were more interested in immigrants than emigrants as is often the case with advanced industrial states (Skeldon, 2009). However, it should be also noted that migration policies can be a useful tool to ‘encourage’ migrants in rather than merely stifling their inflow (Florida, 2005). Unfortunately, the ‘affirmative measure’ has been given less priority than the ‘negative measure’ (i.e. restricting the flow) in the policy spheres as seen in the series of cases revealed by Lydia, Jiawei’s Chinese mother and permanent residency (and the golden rule if we can expand the arguments to unskilled migrants). Especially, the case of Lydia reiterated that the migration policies hindered innovative education, which is tremendously important for the country that aims to lead innovation in the world (Keidanren, 2015). This case represents a good example in that the affirmative measure can benefit the Japanese citizens and will remind the policy makers that the migration policies are for them—Japanese citizens, among others, the next generation who is to fashion out future Japan. In this sense, the policies are not only for people of today but also for their future generation, that do not currently have a voting right.

This point is crucial in debating migration policies but is not shared widely even among policy makers. As evidence, if the policy makers subscribed to this view, they could not keep the ‘golden rule’ and boast the makeshifts that are unable to solve the prevailing problems fundamentally. Constantly producing a makeshift—in sum, exploiting easy band-aid solutions—means fundamental problems are just handed out to the generation with the unsolved issues snowballing. If the politicians really understood who migration policies are for, Japanese people would not face no choice democracy. The issues this research unearthed stem from the void of the taken-for-granted vision that policy makers hold.

This is nonetheless only a partial dimension in considering the ramification of migration dynamism. The study pointed to the importance of diversity so that HSMs can exhibit their faculties to the fullest. Their colleagues, for example, should be more tolerant to unperfect Japanese and place greater store on their unique expertise. At the same time, it may well be acknowledged bringing diversity also benefits their Japanese colleagues through alleviating coerced harmonisation, that also stifles the Japanese co-workers. By way of illustration, the research corroborated the long working tradition

is due to peer pressure to stay at the office until late although it is gradually improving. Diversity will disentangle the mind of Japanese workers from the peer pressure and bring better work-life balance as the HSMs practice. As a result, insular Japanese offices will be more open and innovated, benefitting both Japanese and non-Japanese workers. It is only natural that an 'open' office is comfortable and welcoming not only for foreigners but also for Japanese workers. Coerced harmonisation therefore must be modified for the sake of everyone irrespective of the backgrounds. In so doing, we will witness the dynamic positive reform, which ultimately attracts more HSMs.

This also gives us an important implication that migration should not be discussed one way but interactively. Moreover, the argument can be applicable to the overall migration agenda and the current pressing policy issues. An example includes the so-called refugee crisis¹⁰²: Refugee Convention (the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees) is in fact primarily for refugees who need humanitarian aid, but it is also for the international community including the host country in that peace making will directly or indirectly benefit all the people regardless of where they live, which is unfortunately likely to be neglected in the public and political discourses when migration is discussed one way. Under the circumstances, what has been discussed here could amplify a far-reaching message: migration policies are for everyone, including the host citizens, their future generations and the migrants. This is actually the point where 'self' and 'others' become 'us' as outlined throughout the research.

8.4 Future research directions

Now we are nearly at the exit of the labyrinth. Yet, as is often the case with academic research, this might be another entrance of the labyrinth. Since all the research has limitations, I should admit there are some areas this research could not answer or even generate. Being reflexive, a question resolved in the fieldwork indeed triggered multiple other questions although this process itself has deepened the inquiry. Therefore, it is indispensable to critically examine what was not unfolded. There are mainly three areas left for future research: (1) generalisation, (2) longitude perspective, and (3) the contested concept of 'Westerners'.

¹⁰² Since the early 2010s, the unstable geopolitical conditions around Syria has produced over 5.4 million Syrian refugees in the area. In addition to this number, 996,204 Syrians have applied for asylum in Europe between April 2011 and October 2017 (UNHCR, 2018). The influx of asylum seekers to the EU member states has intensified political and public debate about asylum policies in Europe.

8.4.1 Generalisation

Because of its nature, qualitative research usually entails some intrinsic issues to address validity, reliability and generalisability as set out in Chapter 4. With validity, this study clarified the recruiting process and the attributions of respondents (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982) as much as possible so that the research ensures the ability to replicate. Also, '*rich, thick* description' (Creswell, 2014:252, original italics) was shown to address the strong linkage between the data and the theory to establish certain reliability. However, it is challenging to generalise the findings only by this research.

This study has a limited sample of 45 participants although it is relatively larger than the standard PhD dissertation, which stands at around 30 (Bryman, 2012). The small sample size is due to the constraints in the fieldwork resources, specifically given that the dissertation should be submitted within a restricted time frame. In completing the fieldwork in Japan, I indeed faced a trade-off between the achievements in the fieldwork and limited resources (Bryman, 2014), which a PhD student should negotiate throughout the learning process to be an independent researcher. Therefore, the next step I would like to take after the PhD is to strengthen and test the generalisability of the findings by (1) increasing the qualitative sampling, (2) using the quantitative survey, or (3) employing the mixed-methods approach.

8.4.2 Longitudinal perspectives

Another methodological weakness is the cross sectional approach. Reflexively, I gradually came to realise its weakness during the analysis much more than the sample size that I had already recognised as a challenge before doing the fieldwork. That is to say, time series connote fundamental factors in the research.

Based on the analysis of migratory trajectories, this study brings life-course perspectives to the fore in discussing policy design. Fortunately, the samples included a reasonable number of HSMs who have lived relatively long and I could grasp how their perceptions and life had changed over the course of their long-term residence (7 out of 26 respondents had lived in Japan over 10 years). However, since the fieldwork was cross sectional, it did not fully engage with the longitudinal examination. For instance, John's case partially accentuated the need to reconsider the conditions of permanent residency. In fact, he allegedly left Tokyo after one and a half years of the interview as he predicted, but I could not interview him again to know why he made the decision. This simply means my analysis can only explain the supposition he posed at

the time of interview; however, I cannot corroborate his actual decision. There may be another significant reason that made him leave Tokyo and *this* may contribute more to academic and policy debate.

Migration should not be understood cross sectionally but longitudinally as it is the life history of each migrant (Sakai, 2000). It also signifies that even if the 'mobility' is sedentary, the migration history itself impinges on their entire life decision whether it is directly or indirectly (Yamashiro, 2017). Throughout the analytical process, the respondents implicitly taught me how important it is to listen to and draw out their entire life story without only picking up on the migratory periods. This is why biographical methods (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001) are indispensable for future migration research (Findlay et al., 2015).

8.4.3 The concept of 'Westerners'

Analytically, I must admit the contested feature of the concept of 'westerners'. A uniqueness of the study is the analytical strategy contrasting perceptions between Western and Asian migrants. As a result, it has brought illuminative findings such as antithetical migration trajectories and otherness discourses. Still, we should be critical of how to define the Western and the risks lying in dichotomy.

Chapter 1 defined important terminology and that of 'western' was primarily referred to Europe and North America (Turnbull et al., 2010; Liu-Farrer, 2017). My research additionally included Australian in Western people as their social practice is influenced by Western (or Anglophone) culture¹⁰³. In this sense, 'West' is not merely geographical (i.e. Europe and North America) but a more nuanced and contested indicator in terms of race, ethnicity, culture and so forth. In particular, 'Western' is clearly associated with whiteness (Leonard, 2008; Walsh, 2014). While the myriads of skilled migration research mention the term 'west', most of them do not show a clear definition on who westerners are (e.g. Ho, 2007; Findlay et al., 2015; Holbrow, 2017; Harvey and Beaverstock, 2017). This suggests the definition of 'Western' is not necessarily shared among researchers and it might be conveniently interpreted by researchers depending on the contexts or research outcome the researcher would like to present.

Indeed, it might be true that there are some clear cohorts such as the UK or US nationals (especially Caucasian) who can be easily categorised as Western, but numerous cases are ambiguous. For instance, is Polish western? A novel "*Under*

¹⁰³ In fact, the two Australian informants had UK citizenship as well although they identified themselves as Australian. There were no New Zealand respondents.

Western Eyes” (1911) written by Joseph Conrad (1857-1924)¹⁰⁴, who was originally Polish and later became a renowned novelist in the UK, delineated his struggles in the Western society as a non-Westerner through the optics of the ‘non-western’ protagonist Razumov. However, many people now might include Polish as Westerners considering they are EU citizens. It suggests the concept of ‘Western’ can be redefined with time. Then, is an Albanian a westerner? They are Muslim Caucasian in Europe but non-EU citizens and crave Western culture (King and Mai, 2009).

Fortunately, the respondents in this research did not encompass the contested countries due to the limited sample size. However, it should be also noted that the concept of Asia might be contested as the study has indicated different perspectives the mainland-Chinese and other Chinese ethnics (from Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong) hold. The issue of definition calls for more intricate research focusing on specific nationalities and perhaps occupations as Ryan (2015) narrowly selected Irish teachers living in England as her informants to pinpoint their distinctive identities from that of the English. In essence, the research findings can potentially be further expanded or detailed throughout the refining process of the definitions and informants.

8.5 Reflexivity

To be reflexive, this PhD project has provided me with a valuable chance to reflect on who I am. As discussed in the Methodology, a researcher’s identities play out throughout the whole research process; the findings and conclusion are entirely contingent on how the investigator collect the data and analyse it based on their values and position. Thus, positionality makes the great difference.

My social position (Japanese, male, working for a employers’ organisation) is so different from all the HSMs interviewed, thereby making me an ‘outsider’ who does not share their background. This might have entailed difficulties in retrieving the data from them. On the other hand, I gradually realized the advantages to be an ‘outsider’ through the writing-up stage. This was particularly evident in critically reading the extant literature and linking it with my analysis. The literature was mainly elaborated by an ‘insider’ who has a migrant background in Japan (e.g., Liu-Farrer, 2011b) or belongs to migrants’ side (e.g., Oishi, 2012). They have presented fascinating findings to unpack the unknown life of migrants, however, it is only one dimension cut out from the dynamic migration realities. For instance, it seems to me that the insiders’ views are confined within the insiders’ like-minded perspectives. One of the strengths of the

¹⁰⁴ Edward Said, whose concept of otherness discourses (Said, 1978, 1993) framed this study, was an academic researching into Joseph Conrad.

'outsider' is that it is relatively possible to have a more balanced approach in examining the data thanks to the 'detached' position (Ow Yong, 2018). Outsiders' views are also useful in persuading the policy makers, who are the apparent outsiders.

In addition, an insider-outsider encounter can sometimes benefit both sides unlike the case in which the research is confined within the like-minded community. As a Japanese citizen who understands the culture and legislation, it was easier for me to explain to the migrants how their problems (such as contributions of social security) can be solved as these were often due to their misunderstanding or the lack of multi-lingual administrations. If the qualities/sorts of knowledge are different between the interviewees and investigator, they can complement each other. This is also one of the advantages for the outsider (and the informants as well).

Finally, it should be mentioned that the sheer dichotomy of insider-outsider is risky for knowledge production (Ganga and Scott, 2006). Since the identities are multi-faceted, one can potentially be both insider and outsider. For instance, I was also an insider in the interviews with HSMs since I had a migrant background to be based in the UK during the research. At that time, I was struggling with the unfamiliar environment as a foreign student, which put myself in a minority position. Therefore, in conducting the fieldwork, I was well aware of how challenging it can be to work and live abroad. In this way, a researcher's identities might partly overlap with that of the interviewees. The boundaries of insider/outsider are in fact elusive and movable. In other words, it is the researcher themselves who limits the boundaries. Reflecting on my positionality was quite enlightening on how I understand myself as an independent researcher.

8.6 Concluding the journey of the labyrinth

– *Me, a songbird, and a bell (私と小鳥と鈴と)*–

*Even if I spread my arms, I could never fly
Yet, a songbird can't run across the field as I can*

*Even if I swayed myself, I could never create a charming sound
Yet, a small bell doesn't know as many songs as I do*

*The bell, the songbird, and me
Everyone is different, that makes a difference*

(Misuzu Kaneko)

This research has set out the issues that HSMs in Japan face via multi-scale analysis, subsequently producing academic and policy implications such as coerced harmonisation and no choice democracy. Specifically, the study has identified stigmatisation and diversity as two interlinking agencies which should be fundamentally improved to attract more HSMs. The findings have also demonstrated the distinctive features of Japanese society, employment relations and policy making process affecting the life of HSMs. As a result, it has added new variations to the migration debate, where empirical studies on Japan have been insufficient making Japanese migration policies academically mysterious (Massey et al., 1998; Sato, 2017). This dissertation has also 'decentred' the extant debates on highly skilled migration from Anglo-American dominance in theory and empirics. It is nevertheless inappropriate to conclude that the implications highlighted here are only applicable to Japan and representing the idiosyncrasy of the country.

In fact, some problems revealed throughout the study can be found in other countries. It is indeed the issues 'out here' not 'out there'. See, for instance, Rhodes (2011) for insular bureaucracy and Kofman (2013) for stigmatisation and discrimination in the UK. Perhaps, coerced harmonisation and no choice democracy might be observed outside Japan as well. In sum, what I have discussed should not be regarded as unique extreme-oriental cases but some of the variations in the migration debate (Hollifield, 1992; Massey, et al., 1993), from where we may be able to find lessons and constructive solutions in dealing with pervasive migration matters as seen in the proposition 'who migration policies are for'.

In addressing this proposition, I pointed to the dynamism of migration. The effects of immigrants can spill over to the host society and will gain ripple effects by updating the perceptions of the local people. If society becomes more diversified and open, it is not only migrants but also the hosts who can enjoy a better life. Japanese Third Culture Kids —Kikokushijo (returnees' children)—who are crammed into “the prescribed boxes” (Pollock and Van Reken, 2009: 56) in Japanese schools encapsulate the good example. Needless to say, any workplace or society which is not kind to migrants can never be kind to the host nationals either. More significantly, this is not confined to the migration argument: if it is not easy to work for a female worker, then it is not easy for the male counterpart either; if a public space is not friendly for a disabled person, then it is not friendly for others either. Thus, altruism is not necessarily only geared towards different ‘others’ but ultimately for everyone including ‘us’. In deciphering the labyrinth, this is the most critical clue that our respondents gave us via their everyday accounts: policies should not be discussed one way but interactively (Skeldon, 2009).

A century ago, we could locate a similar message from a young Japanese woman still providing us with altruistic inspiration. The aforementioned poem, which all the children now touch upon in Japanese primary school, was made by a short-lived poet Misuzu Kaneko (1903-1930) in the 1920s. She composed diverse poems that still urge us to contemplate what we have forgotten or neglected in our busy daily life. Among others, she always kept her eyes on the weak and marginalised life until she took her own life at the age of 26. Note that the word order of the title and second last sentence are intentionally transformed from “Me, a songbird, and a bell” to “The bell, the songbird, and me”. Misuzu Kaneko might encourage us to shift our gaze from ‘me, first’ to ‘others, first’, then ‘everyone, first’ in the last sentence, by which ‘self’ and ‘others’ become ‘us’.

In so doing, we acknowledge ‘our’ lively personalities and create a more vibrant society, where

Everyone is different, that makes a difference.

Appendix 1 List of Participants

List of HSMs interviewed

Range Asian: 15, Western:11 (total 26 people)

Age:20's-50's (youngest: 25, oldest: 58)/ gender M:18, F:8

Gatekeeper (Keidanren) introduced 15 informants. Other informants are found through the personal network. No snowballing in either case.

	Name	Occupation	Citizenship	Gender	Age	Language used	Gate keeper
1	Sarvesh	IT engineer	India	M	30's	Eng	*
2	Sing	Research	Thailand	M	30's	Eng	*
3	Minji	HR	Korea	F	20's	Jp	*
4	Junjie	Global strategy	Singapore	M	20's	Jp	*
5	Ting	Global strategy	China	F	20's	Jp	*
6	Renhao	Sales	Taiwan	M	40's	Jp	*
7	Raj	Sales	India	M	50's	Eng	*
8	Eric	External Affairs	Canada	M	50's	Eng+Jp	*
9	Scott	Marketing	UK	M	40's	Eng	*
10	Yang	HR	China	F	20's	Jp	*
11	Qian	Logistics	China	F	20's	Jp	*
12	Yu	Services planning	Hong Kong	F	30's	Jp	*
13	Jiawei	Services planning	China	M	40's	Jp	*
14	Junyoung	Finance	Korea	M	20's	Jp	*
15	Alastair	IT engineer	UK	M	20's	Eng	*
16	John	Administrative staff	Ireland	M	20's	Eng	
17	Tom	Researcher	Australia	M	30's	Eng	
18	Jack	Translator (Self-employed)	USA	M	50's	Jp	
19	Guanlin	Administrative staff	Taiwan	M	30's	Jp	
20	Brandon	Accountant	UK	M	40's	Jp	
21	Lydia	Teacher	Philippines	F	20's	Eng	
22	Jake	Teacher	UK	M	30's	Eng	
23	Jihye	Interpreter (Self-employed)	Korea	F	40's	Jp	
24	Luke	IT engineer	Australia	M	20's	Jp	
25	Marie	External Affairs	France	F	40's	Eng	
26	Cyrille	Entrepreneur (Web design)	France	M	30's	Eng	

Citizenship: some have dual citizenship but only one of them is listed according to their declaration.

List of migration experts interviewed

	Codes	(former) Affiliates, policy engagement	Other information
1	Current policy maker 1	MOJ	Higher than Director level
2	Former policy maker 1	MOL	Higher than Director level
3	Former policy maker 2	Cabinet Ministry	Higher than Director level
4	Former policy maker 3	MOL	Higher than Director level
5	Former policy maker 4	MOJ	Higher than Director level
6	Former policy maker 5	MOJ	Higher than Director level
7	Migration expert 1	Former Advisory board member for the Minister of Justice	
8	Migration expert 2	International Organisation	
9	Migration expert 3	Japanese Employers' organisation	
10	Migration expert 4	European Employers' organisation	
11	Migration expert 5	North American Employers' organisation	
12	Migration expert 6	Non-profit organisation officer (Supporting foreign entrepreneurs)	
13	Migration expert 7	Researcher	
14	Migration expert 8	Researcher	
15	Migration expert 9	Immigration lawyer	
16	Migration expert 10	Career consultant	
17	Executive of international recruiting agency		Running recruiting agency for bilingual professionals
18	Employer of migrants 1		Running International school
19	Employer of migrants 2		HR manager, trading enterprise

Appendix 2 Topic Guide

Topic guide for HSMs (**Bold** is the main questions to ask)

1. Introduction: introducing myself, explaining the research and getting the consent in line with the participant sheet previously sent. Check any questions.
2. Check basic information: age, educational background, professional career, status of residence, family composition, job, working experience (including in other countries), previous experience in Japan, length of stay in Japan
3. Background information: **How have you ended up working in Japan?**

What came to your mind when you first realized your opportunity to work in Japan (happy, eager, excited, puzzled)? What was the reaction of your family?

(if s/he has been eager to work in Japan) since when have you been longing for working in Japan and why?

Would you like to work in Japan longer than expected (intention of settlement)? (whether the initial plan has changed or not)

4. After coming to Japan: **how has your impression of Japan changed since you came to Japan** (both downside and good points)?

Is your standard of life in Japan better than in your previously resided (or home) country?

5. Improving the situation:

- 1) Policy

What would you like the Japanese government to reform in terms of policies affecting your life (immigration control/ visa issues; pension, tax; settlement & naturalization; being accompanied by domestic servant and parents)?

- 2) Social

Do you find any difficulties for your family (spouse, education)?

How about **housing or cultural events which enrich your private life**?

Have you ever had any unpleasant incidents where you have felt excluded (discrimination)?

Do you have any network with your compatriots (social club, embassy event, mutual support system)?

Do you sometimes hang out with your Japanese friends when you are off (network with Japanese people)?

3) Labour

Did you find anything you were surprised with when you started working in Japan?

Do you have any systems or customs you would like to improve in your office or labour contract?

Do you prefer the Japanese traditional employment system such as lifetime employment or seniority salary?

Other issues: work-life-balance, language barrier, cultural differences, personnel evaluation, relations with boss or colleagues

What kinds of support does your company provide, for example, welfare or training, that you find useful? (housing, health support, schooling, networking event, language lessons?) Do you have any other forms of support that you wish your company would provide?

Overall, are you satisfied with your current work in Japan?

4) Others

6. Comparison: **Do you recommend working in Japan to your friends in your country** (relative attractiveness of Japan)?

It is said that advanced countries are competing with each other to attract skilled migrants: **with which countries does Japan compete for talent like you** (in other words, in which countries would you like to work in future)?

In the next decades, which countries will attract more talent than now?

The number of HSMs in Japan is increasing gradually, however, it shows an interesting trend: **the number of HSMs from western countries like Europe/America is constantly decreasing while that from Asia is steadily growing. Do you have any idea to explain this?**

7. Last: **Overall, what is the biggest attraction of working in Japan?** (career, remuneration, culture, standard of life?)

How can we Japanese people further develop it?

Any comments you would like to mention? Any questions to me?

8. Sending thank you email after the interview

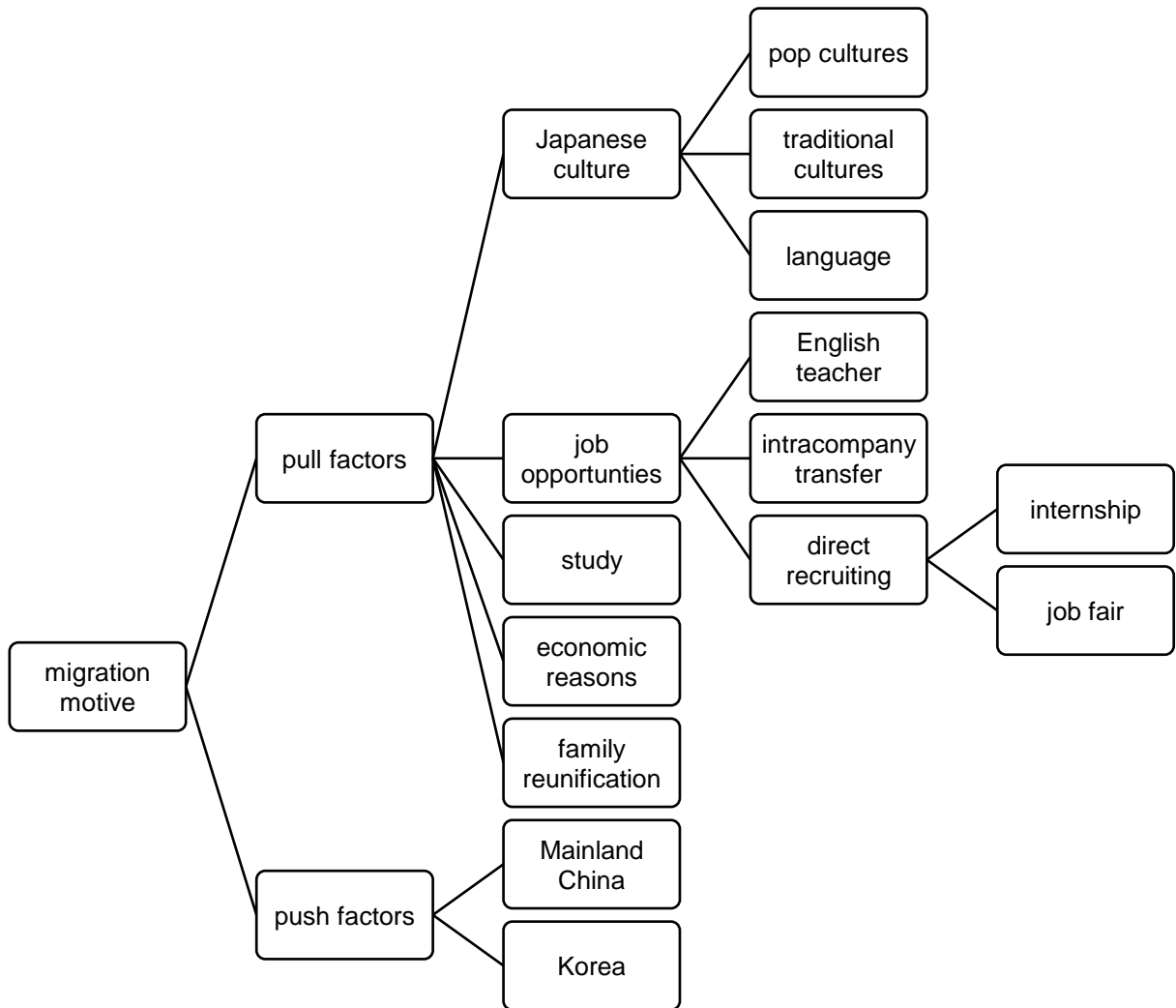
Topic guide for migration experts

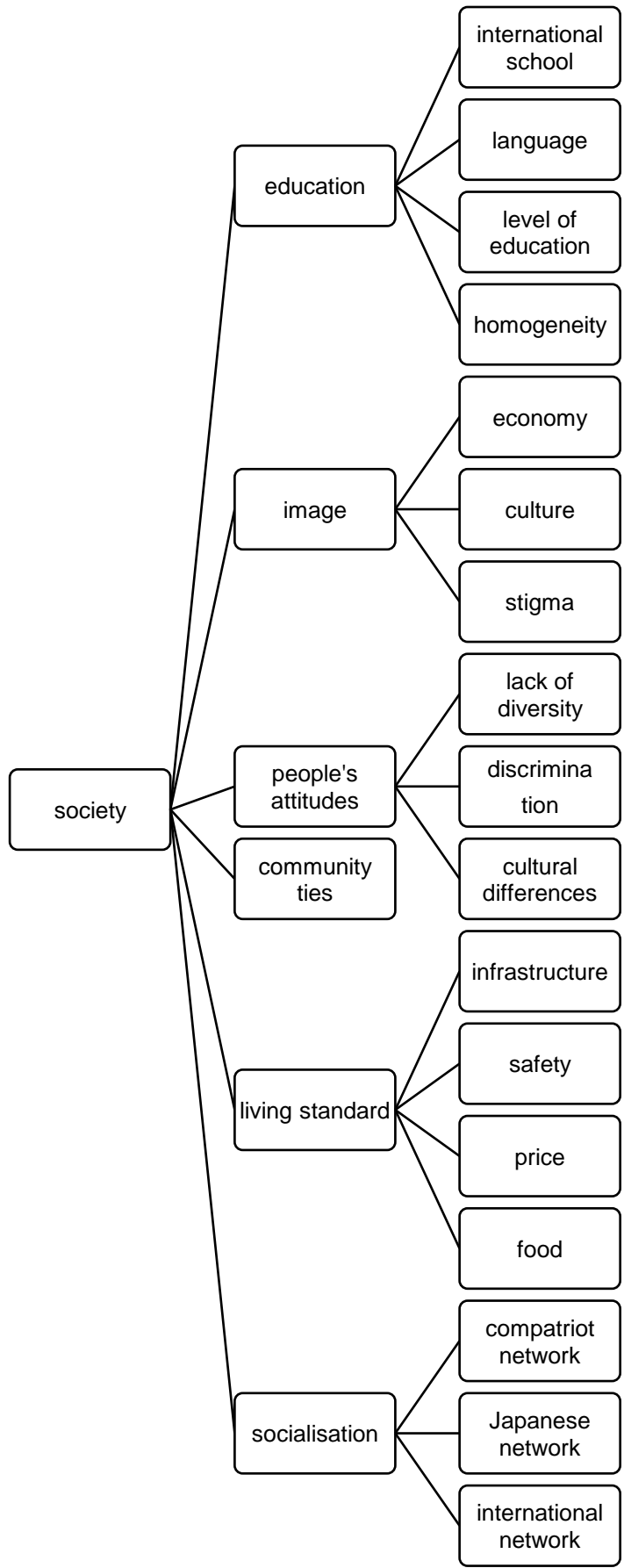
1. Introduction: introducing myself, explaining the research and getting the consent in line with the participant sheet previously sent. Check any questions.
2. The Japanese government has the ground rule to encourage HSMs coming in but not to allow unskilled immigrants. What do you think about this?
3. The government is sometimes criticized for demarcation (sectionalism) and bureaucracy. What do you think about this?
4. What do we need to improve to encourage more HSMs working in Japan?
 - a. Policy: immigration control, naturalisation/settlement, bringing domestic servant/parents, transparency (enough information on government web site in foreign language)
 - b. Social: housing, family, cultural attractiveness, language, exclusiveness
 - c. Labour: traditional employment practice, exclusiveness
 - d. others
5. What do you think about the Point-based system? Is it attractive to HSMs?
6. Are there any strengths (weaknesses) in Japanese immigration policies?
7. It is said that advanced countries are competing with each other to attract skilled migrants: **with which countries does Japan compete for talent?** Do you think this global competition will get more severe in the future?

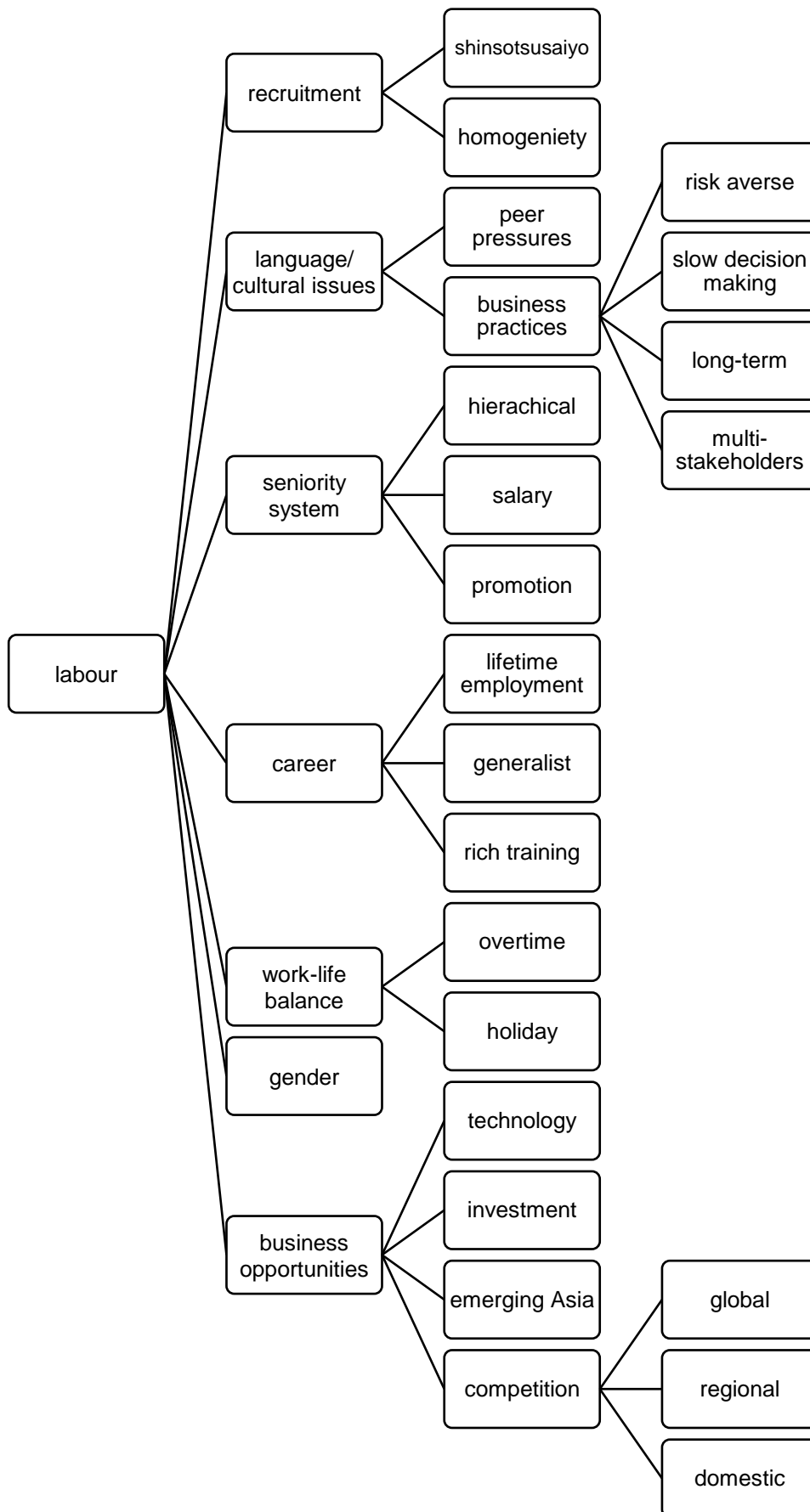
Which countries can be a potential source of HSMs for Japan?
(to migration researcher/policy maker:) which country's policy seems to be the best in attracting HSMs? (it may be different in sectors)
(to migration researcher/ policy maker:) especially regarding HSMs, what do you think about negative views such as brain drain?
8. The number of HSMs in Japan is increasing gradually, however, it shows an interesting trend: **the number of HSMs from western countries like Europe/America is constantly decreasing while that from Asia is steadily growing. Why is this happening?**
9. **What is the biggest attraction of working in Japan for HSMs?**

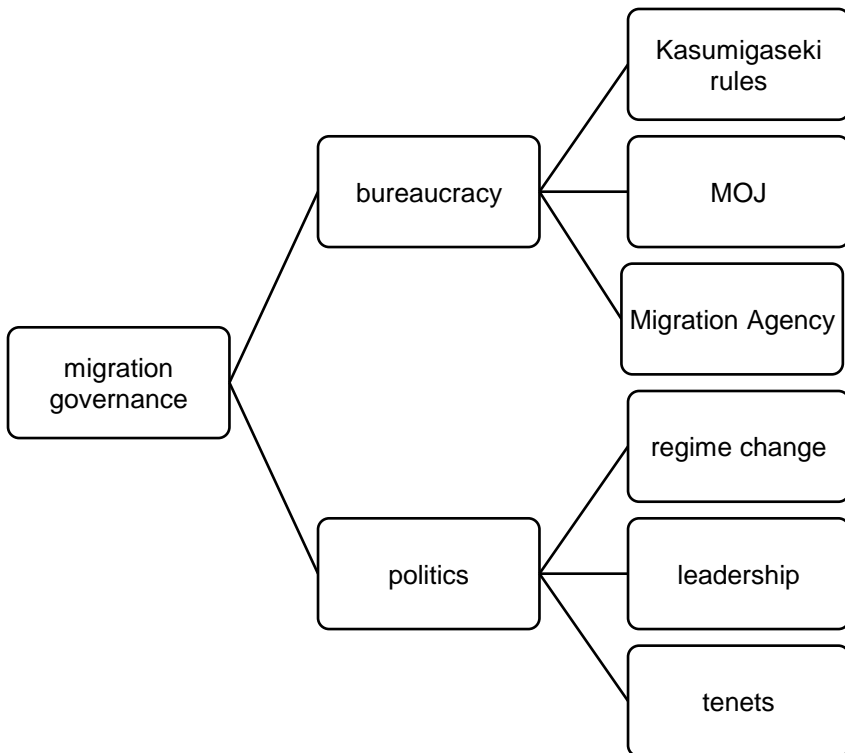
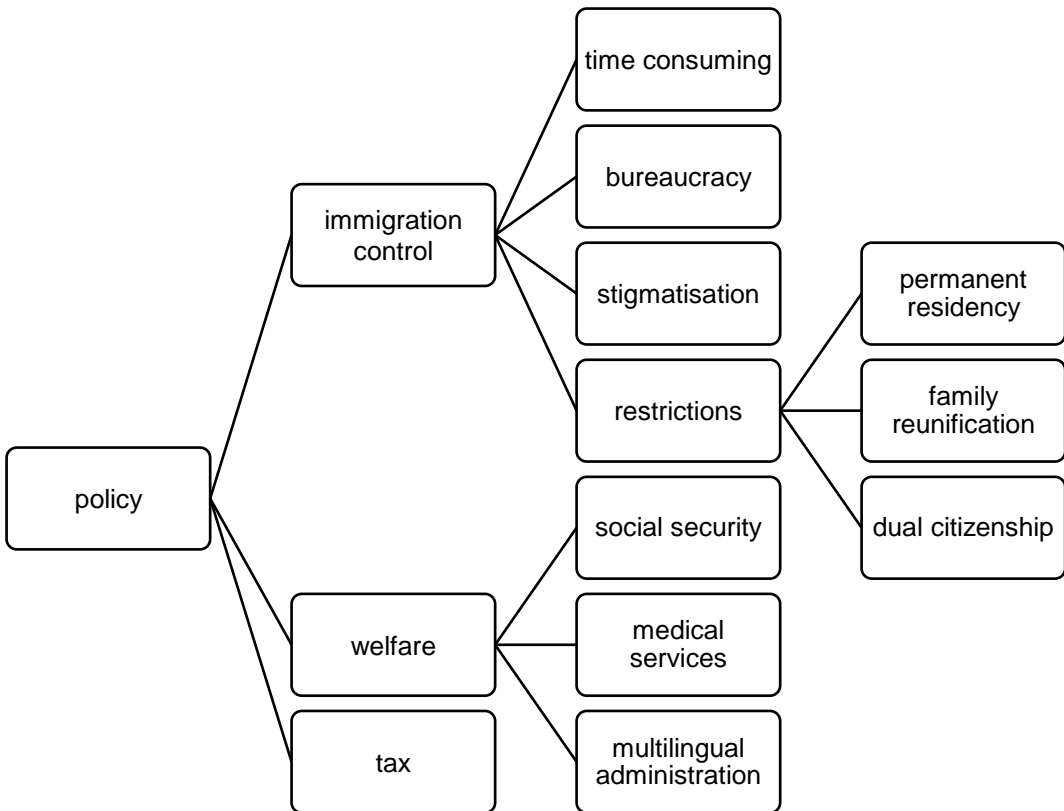
How can we Japanese people further develop it?
Any comments you would like to mention? Any questions to me?
10. Sending thank you email after the interview

Appendix 3 Thematic Map









Appendix 4 Definition of Asia, Europe, and North America in e-stat (2017)

Chapter 3 demonstrated the number of HSMs in Japan. The definition of each area is defined as follows in the statistical data (e-stat, 2017).

Asia

Afghanistan, UAE, Myanmar, Bahrain, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, China, Taiwan, Cyprus, East Timor, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, South Korea, North Korea, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mongolia, Oman, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey, Vietnam, Yemen, Palestine

Europe

Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Belarus, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Monaco, Malta, Moldova, Macedonia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, UK, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Andorra, Georgia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo

North America

Barbados, The Bahamas, Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, St Lucia, St Vincent, St Kitts Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, USA, Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda

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