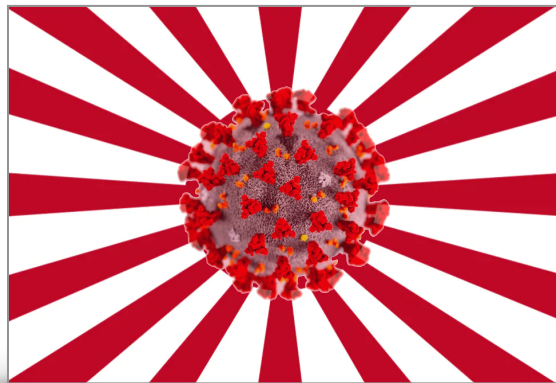


# **‘Pandemic Othering’ during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Japan:**

日本における新型コロナウイルスのパンデミックでの「他人化」

**How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the Japanese public’s perceptions of foreigners, and what role has the discourse from the Government of Japan and the Japanese mass media played?**



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21 June 2021

Master in Advanced European and International Studies:  
European Integration and Global Studies (2020 - 2021)

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## ***Acknowledgements***

*I would like to express my great appreciation to my research advisor, Professor Dagmar Röttsches-Dubois, for accepting me as an advisee despite being relatively late in the process, helping me to develop my research ideas, recommending me sources to inspire my line of thinking further, and for supporting my vision for the topic as well.*

*Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to CIFE as an institution for allowing me to pursue new fields of interests, and its professors for their hard work during the pandemic and doing their best to provide me with the best course possible given the circumstances. The support of the professors at CIFE, as well as the administrative staff, has ensured my academic and professional development.*

*Finally, I wish to thank my wife and family for their incredible constant encouragement and support throughout the course and the writing of this thesis.*

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## List of Abbreviations, Definitions, and Translations\*

<b>BLM</b>	<i>Black Lives Matter</i>
<b>COVID-19</b>	<i>coronavirus disease 2019</i>
<b><i>Dōbunron</i></b>	<i>theory of having a common, shared culture</i> (同文論)
<b><i>Dōsoron</i></b>	<i>theory of having a common, shared ancestry</i> (同祖論)
<b><i>Gaikokujin</i></b>	<i>foreigner(s)</i> (外国人)
<b><i>Gairaigo</i></b>	<i>foreign loanword(s)</i> (外来語)
<b><i>Hiragana</i></b>	<i>Japanese written script primarily for Japanese concepts</i> (ひらがな)
<b><i>Jinshu</i></b>	<i>race as one's physically defining features</i> (人種)
<b><i>Kanji</i></b>	<i>Japanese written logographs primarily for Japanese concepts</i> (漢字)
<b><i>Katakana</i></b>	<i>Japanese written script primarily for foreign concepts</i> (カタカナ)
<b><i>Kisha Club</i></b>	<i>exclusive club of journalists dominating Japan's national media with access to LDP press releases</i> (記者クラブ)
<b>LDP</b>	<i>Liberal Democratic Party</i> (自由民主党)
<b>MERS</b>	<i>Middle East Respiratory Syndrome</i>
<b><i>Minzoku</i></b>	<i>race as one's ethnic community and nation</i> (民族)
<b><i>Nihonjinron</i></b>	<i>theory of 'Japaneseness'</i> (日本人論)
<b><i>Nippon Kaigi</i></b>	<i>Japan Conference</i> (日本会議)
<b>SARS</b>	<i>Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome</i>
<b>TBS</b>	<i>Tokyo Broadcasting System Television, Inc.</i>
<b><i>Wajin</i></b>	<i>ethnic Japanese</i> (和人)
<b>WHO</b>	<i>World Health Organization</i>
<b>Yamato race</b>	<i>Wajin race; ethnic Japanese race</i> (大和人種 / 大和民族)
<b><i>Zaibatsu</i></b>	<i>The pre-war Japanese business conglomerate oligarchy</i> (財閥)
<b><i>Zainichi</i></b>	<i>long-term residents in Japan of Korean or Taiwanese background</i> (在日)
<b><i>Zaitokukai</i></b> ( <i>Zainichi Tokken o Yurusanai Shimin no Kai</i> )	<i>Association of Citizens against the Special Privileges of the Zainichi</i> (在特会；在日特権を許さない市民の会)

\* Note that any translations from sources in Japanese within this work have been translated by the author of this work, Jonathan Foster.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

A single microbe's global influence in an increasingly connected world can prove significant if ineffectively dealt with by health authorities and governments. Approximately one century after the previous pandemic of comparable scale, another has seriously impacted society – COVID-19. Therewith, 2020 witnessed another widespread disease's intensification that, after centuries, persists globally without remedy – racism. With the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement sweeping rapidly across nations worldwide since May 2020 and increased discrimination towards marginalised groups<sup>1</sup>, especially sinophobia induced by COVID-19<sup>2</sup>, scholars face an invaluable opportunity to analyse and reflect upon government responses to COVID-19, racial discrimination, and public opinion changes<sup>3</sup>.

Many sociologists and political scientists focused their 2020 research on the BLM movement, anti-Asian sentiments, and Western leaders' COVID-19 discourse<sup>4</sup>, including former US President Trump branding it the “Chinese Virus”<sup>5</sup>. However, scholars should not neglect similar trends in East Asia<sup>6,7,8</sup>.

After Tokyo's 1964 “Recovery Olympics” rebranded Japan's international image from aggressive wartime foe to peaceful friend<sup>9,10</sup>, eyes worldwide returned to Japan for the 2020 Olympic Games, again dubbed “Recovery Olympics” by Japan's former Prime Minister Abe. According to Abe, the 2020 Olympics were to exhibit Japan's 2011 Triple

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<sup>1</sup> Dionne & Turkmen (2020). 'The Politics of Pandemic Othering: Putting COVID-19 in Global and Historical Context'. *International Organization*. Cambridge University Press. p.1.

<sup>2</sup> Cheng & Conca-Cheng (2020). 'The Pandemics of Racism and COVID-19: Danger and Opportunity'. *Pediatrics*, 146(5). American Academy of Pediatrics.

<sup>3</sup> Généreux, *et al.* (2020). 'Communication strategies and media discourses in the age of COVID-19: an urgent need for action'. *Health Promotion International*, 1(8).

<sup>4</sup> Dionne & Turkmen (2020). p.7.

<sup>5</sup> Zheng, *et al.* (2020). 'The effects of misleading media reports about COVID-19 on Chinese tourists' mental health: a perspective article'. *Anatolia*, 31(2). Taylor & Francis. p.337.

<sup>6</sup> Pfanner, E. (2020). 'Fear in the Age of Coronavirus: Chinese No Longer Welcome'. *Bloomberg*. 30 January.

<sup>7</sup> Gostanian, *et al.* (2020). 'Asians worldwide share examples of coronavirus-related xenophobia on social media'. *NBC News*. 11 February.

<sup>8</sup> Rich, M. (2020). 'As Coronavirus Spreads, So Does Anti-Chinese Sentiment'. *The New York Times*. 30 January.

<sup>9</sup> Droubie, P. (2011). 'Phoenix arisen: Japan as peaceful internationalist at the 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics'. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 28(16). Taylor & Francis. pp.2309-2322.

<sup>10</sup> Wilson, S. (2012). 'Exhibiting a new Japan: the Tokyo Olympics of 1964 and Expo '70 in Osaka'. *Historical Research*, 85(227). Oxford University Press. pp.159-178.

Disaster† recovery, honour all countries that provided Japan aid following the disaster<sup>11,12</sup>, and impress the world. The five Olympic Rings, representing the five continents and the colours of all national flags, are a striking symbol of unity representing Japan's potential to help the world recover from societal damages caused by COVID-19<sup>13</sup> and reunite a divided world.

Since 2018, the Japanese public has become increasingly aware that Japan needs more foreigners<sup>14</sup>. A public survey about foreigners in Japan conducted mere weeks before the 2020 Olympics' postponement and Japanese citizens' ensuing mass sense of vulnerability to COVID-19<sup>15,16,17</sup> revealed that 70% of respondents supported increased foreign labour<sup>18</sup>. However, given the Olympics' postponement and the international spotlight's shift to the pandemic, nationalism and xenophobia have found stronger footholds in Japan, as observed within political elites' discourse<sup>19</sup>, and consequently, the media<sup>20,21</sup> and public<sup>22,23</sup>. Increased jingoism could incur severe consequences for Japan's international image if the postponed Olympics do eventually take place, especially regarding foreigners' social integration capacities now that Japan's

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† 2011 Triple Disaster: Tōhoku earthquake, tsunami, and resulting nuclear meltdown

<sup>11</sup> Abe, S. (2020a). '第二百一回国会における安倍内閣総理大臣施政方針演説' [Policy Speech at the 201<sup>st</sup> Diet Session]. *Prime Minister's Office of Japan*. 20 January.

<sup>12</sup> McDonald, K. (2020). 'Olympic Recoveries'. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 79(3). Cambridge University Press. p.600.

<sup>13</sup> Constandt & Willem (2020). 'Hosting the Olympics in Times of a Pandemic: Historical Insights from Antwerp 1920'. *Leisure Sciences*. p.5.

<sup>14</sup> Jozuka, E. (2018). 'Japan needs immigrants, but do immigrants need Japan?' *CNN*. 8 December.

<sup>15</sup> Scoccimarro, R. (2020). 'Les échelles de la pandémie de la COVID-19 au Japon: une gestion de crise inclassable, mais efficace?' *Outre-Terre*, 57(2). pp.177-200.

<sup>16</sup> Hirakawa, D. (2020). '報告：新型コロナウイルス感染症と演劇' [Report: Novel Coronavirus and Drama]. 演劇学論集 日本演劇学会紀要 [*Bulletin of the Japanese Society for Drama Research*], 71. p.52.

<sup>17</sup> Yotsumoto, J. (2020). 'Death of beloved comedian sounds coronavirus warning to Japan'. *NHK*. 31 March.

<sup>18</sup> Okada, M. (2020). '外国人増加への期待と不安' [Hopes and Anxieties Concerning the Increase in International Residents]. *NHK*. 1 August.

<sup>19</sup> Fujiwara, S. (2020). 'The Church is Permanently Underway: Reflections on the COVID-19 Pandemic from Tokyo'. *The Ecumenical Review*, 72(4). p.641.

<sup>20</sup> Osumi, M. (2020b). 'Japan broadcaster NHK under fire over flawed video on anti-racism movement'. *The Japan Times*. 10 June.

<sup>21</sup> Michel, P.S. (2020). "'This is a pen': Taking a preposterous COVID-19 hypothesis to another level on social media'. *The Japan Times*. 6 June.

<sup>22</sup> *Kyodo News* (2020c). 'Foreigners in Japan becoming target of discrimination due to virus'. 12 September.

<sup>23</sup> *Fukuoka Now* (2020). 'Results for Fukuoka Foreign Residents Survey on COVID-19'. 9 May.

population is ageing and its workforce rapidly diminishing<sup>24,25,26</sup>. Considering that politicians' and media's discourse can hugely shape public opinion towards discrimination<sup>27,28,29,30,31</sup>, and given pandemics' nature of strengthening authoritarianism, nationalism, and xenophobia<sup>32,33</sup>, understanding public perception and responses to COVID-19 and foreigners and the role of discourse in presenting health information to the public is essential<sup>34</sup>.

News media in democratic states like Japan should inform and promote public debate, allowing public opinion to influence government policy<sup>35</sup>. However, since 1890, the Meiji Government maintained a tight grip over domestic news media through its 'Kisha Club' system – an exclusive group of journalists that the government influences, dominated by Japan's three prominent national newspapers (*Yomiuri*, *Asahi*, and *Mainichi*), monopolising the news media and distributing largely homogenous reports<sup>36</sup>. Consequently, external actors over the past decade have repeatedly criticised traditional Japanese media for lacking diversity in reporting, self-censorship, and

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<sup>24</sup> Milly, D.J. (2020). 'Japan's Labor Migration Reforms: Breaking with the Past' *Migration Policy Institute*. 20 February.

<sup>25</sup> Maly, E. (2020). 'Locating the Risk on Foreign Shores: The Making of "Covid-Safe" Japan'. *Teach311+ COVID-19*. 9 July.

<sup>26</sup> McElhinney, D. (2020). 'Foreign Residents Still Stranded Abroad by Japan's Coronavirus Entry Ban'. *Tokyo Weekender*. 30 June.

<sup>27</sup> Kuppaswamy, S (2017). 'A Study On The Print Media Coverage Of Disasters'. *Global Media Journal – Indian Edition*, 8(2). pp.1-22.

<sup>28</sup> Honda, H. (2020). 'It's not you versus us, it's us versus the virus'. *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*, 1(2).

<sup>29</sup> Kuypers, J.A. (1997). *Presidential Crisis Rhetoric and the Press in the Post-Cold War World*. Westport, Connecticut, USA: Praeger. Cited in: Baum & Potter (2008). 'The Relationships Between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis'. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 11(1). p.40.

<sup>30</sup> Graber, D.A. (2002). *Mass Media and American Politics*. Washington DC, USA: CQ Press. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Cited in: Baum & Potter (2008). p.40.

<sup>31</sup> Paletz, D.L. (2002). *The Media in American Politics*. New York, USA: Longman. Cited in: Baum & Potter (2008). p.40.

<sup>32</sup> Hartman, et al. (2021). 'The authoritarian dynamic during the COVID-19 pandemic: effects on nationalism and anti-immigrant sentiment'. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*. pp.1-12.

<sup>33</sup> Green, et al. (2010). 'Keeping the vermin out: perceived disease threat and ideological orientations as predictors of exclusionary immigration attitudes'. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 20. pp.299-316.

<sup>34</sup> Génereux, et al. (2020). p.4.

<sup>35</sup> Robinson, P. (2016). 'Chapter 10: The role of media and public opinion'. In: Smith, et al. (eds.) (2016). *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*. Oxford University Press. pp.187, 190.

<sup>36</sup> Au & Kawai (2012). 'Media Capture and Information Monopolization in Japan'. *The Japanese Economic Review*, 63(1).



uniformity with government rhetoric<sup>37,38,39,40,41,42,43</sup>. The Japanese news media corroborates the elite model of media and public opinion; political elites hold power and dominate the media and, therewith, public opinion<sup>44</sup>, implying early realist views that states recognise and advocate moral principles like press freedom, but may merely employ them to disguise their realist natures<sup>45</sup>.

Despite *othering* and subsequent xenophobia occurring in Japan during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century due to SARS, Swine Flu, and MERS<sup>46,47,48,49,50</sup>, Japan was relatively unscathed from these epidemics compared to the COVID-19 outbreak<sup>51</sup>. Previous epidemics' strict entry bans targeting foreigners diminished the scope for othering viruses as 'foreign', given Japan's then minimal foreign population. As viruses continued spreading domestically, othering among domestic groups increased, leading the Japanese government to underplay those outbreaks' gravity<sup>52</sup>.

Through an exploratory approach, this paper examines the incumbent Japanese government's and media's othering of COVID-19, investigating potential effects on public perceptions of foreigners and COVID-19 through online surveys collecting primarily quantitative data to provide insights into how Japanese citizens view othered

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<sup>37</sup> Au & Kawai (2012)

<sup>38</sup> *The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* (2016). 'Japan: UN rights expert warns of serious threats to the independence of the press'. 19 April.

<sup>39</sup> Fackler, M. (2016). 'The Silencing of Japan's Free Press'. *Foreign Policy*. 27 May.

<sup>40</sup> Nakata, H. (2017). 'Japan stays 72<sup>nd</sup> on press freedom list but falls to last in G-7'. *The Japan Times*. 27 April.

<sup>41</sup> Kingston, J. (2018). 'Watchdog Journalism in Japan Rebounds but Still Compromised'. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 77(4). Cambridge University Press. pp.882-883.

<sup>42</sup> Surak, K. (2019). 'Shinzo Abe and the rise of Japanese nationalism'. *New Statesman*. 15 May.

<sup>43</sup> Valjakka, M. (2021). 'Introduction: shifting undergrounds in East and Southeast Asia'. *Cultural Studies*, 35(1). p.14.

<sup>44</sup> Robinson, P. (2016). p.187

<sup>45</sup> Dunne & Hanson (2009). 'Chapter 4: Human rights in international relations'. In: Goodhart, M.E. (2009). *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*. Oxford University Press. p.63.

<sup>46</sup> Hsin & Macer (2004). 'Heroes of SARS: professional roles and ethics of health care workers'. *The Journal of Infection*, 49(3). p.213.

<sup>47</sup> Arudou, D. (2009). 'Unlike humans, swine flu is indiscriminate'. *The Japan Times*. 4 August.

<sup>48</sup> Kato, M. (2009). 'Wit, humor help longtime columnist come to grips with life in Japan'. *The Japan Times*. 14 July.

<sup>49</sup> Zheng, *et al.* (2005). 'Exploratory Study on Psychosocial Impact of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) Outbreak on Chinese Students Living in Japan'. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Health*, 17(2). p.127.

<sup>50</sup> Fung, *et al.* (2018). 'Twitter and Middle East respiratory syndrome, South Korea, 2015: A multi-lingual study'. *Infection, Disease & Health*, 23(1). p.13.

<sup>51</sup> Saitō, K. (2020). '人類の天敵「ウイルス」(3) : 感染症の恐ろしさを忘れた日本人' [Forgotten Lessons of Past Diseases Lead to Fresh Threats]. *nippon.com*. 10 April.

<sup>52</sup> Arudou, D. (2009)

groups ahead of the postponed Olympic Games and whether these stances have changed following government and media rhetoric.

Initially, the paper explores the concepts of *othering* and *pandemic othering* before examining Japan's pre-pandemic political and socioeconomic situation in the lead up to the 2020 Olympic Games. Chapter 1, therefore, contextualises the study topic before Chapter 2 delineates the research design, elucidating critical questions that this paper seeks to answer and methods used to research them.

Detailing theories behind pandemic othering, Chapter 3 investigates Japan's government approval ratings during the COVID-19 pandemic to understand the political elites' potential to influence public opinion. Moreover, the chapter considers additional reasons why the Japanese public may other foreigners during pandemics and the consequences for foreigners.

Chapter 4 provides a historical context and reasoning for modern-day Japan's othering of foreigners, describing the emergence of the Japanese nation-state and the simultaneous birth of racial ideologies upon which Imperial Japan based its nationalism. Subsequently, the chapter describes how othering and Imperial Japanese nationalism endured following Japan's World War II surrender before portraying the 21<sup>st</sup> Century reemergence of Japanese nationalism that resembles Imperial Japan and jeopardises democracy, invalidating the oversimplification of Japan being a liberal democracy<sup>53</sup>.

Further investigating pandemic othering, Chapter 5 analyses historical and COVID-19 pandemic othering worldwide before focusing specifically on the Japanese government and media's pandemic othering during the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter then discusses pandemic othering's consequences from a public health perspective.

Chapter 6 explores Japanese citizens' perceptions of the Japanese government, media, and foreigners in recent years, allowing for comparisons with the survey conducted for this paper. Chapters 7 and 8 discuss the methodology, results, and analysis of the survey's findings, before Chapter 10 provides a conclusion to the work.

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<sup>53</sup> Ooi, S.M. (2021). 'Love-Hate Relationships: The Divergent US Perceptions of Japan and China'. *The Diplomat*. 20 January.

## 1.1 Othering and Pandemic Othering

Beginning with Hegel's "Master-Slave Dialectic" in 1807, suggesting that intelligent creatures differentiate themselves as 'lord' and 'bondsman'<sup>54,55</sup>, the notion of the 'other' developed further in frames of sex and ethnicity<sup>56,57,58,59</sup> in feminist and post-colonial reasoning<sup>60,61</sup>, producing *othering* as a concept. One century after Hegel explored the self and the other, Georg Simmel examined these notions in a migration context through his influential work, 'The Stranger', whom he described as 'the person who comes today and stays tomorrow'<sup>62</sup>. Simmel proposed that societies base their relationships with 'strangers' or 'others' on generalisations, disregarding individuality. Ingroups consider strangers from the same nation as close, given their shared nationality, but distant in that this commonality is not exclusive to that ingroup and the stranger, but common to a larger group also, therefore, allowing room for individuality. However, strangers from a different country do not share the ingroup's nationality, becoming itself a commonality between *all* foreigners, causing ingroups to perceive foreigners not individually, but rather as a generalised 'other'<sup>63</sup>.

Scholars today understand othering as other identities' objectification without considering individuality's complexity<sup>64</sup>, highly associating it with stereotyping<sup>65</sup>. However, othering does not merely concern the perception of others but also acts as

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<sup>54</sup> Hegel, G.W.F. (1807). *Phenomenology of Mind*. Translated from German by J.B. Baillie. London, UK: Harper & Row.

<sup>55</sup> Şekerci, M. (2017). 'Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic and The Relationship between God and Believer'. *Bilgi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 19(1). Istanbul, Turkey. pp.148-160.

<sup>56</sup> de Beauvoir, S. (1949). *The Second Sex*. Translated from French by H.M. Parsley (1972). London, UK: Penguin.

<sup>57</sup> Clifford & Marcus (1986). *Writing Culture: The Poetics of Politics and Ethnography*. Berkeley, USA: University of California Press. pp.19-21.

<sup>58</sup> Kitzinger & Wilkinson (1996). 'Theorizing representing the Other'. In: Wilkinson, S., Kitzinger, C. (eds.) (1996). *Representing the Other: A Feminism and Psychology Reader*. London, UK: Sage. p.1.

<sup>59</sup> Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. London, UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul. p.48.

<sup>60</sup> Johnson, et al. (2004). 'Othering and Being Othered in the Context of Health Care Services'. *Health Communication*, 16(2). p.254

<sup>61</sup> Brons, L.L. (2015). 'Othering, an analysis'. *Transcience, a Journal of Global Studies*, 6(1). p.70.

<sup>62</sup> Simmel, G. (1908). 'The Stranger'. Translated by K.H. Wolff in: Wolff, K.H. (1950). *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. Glencoe, USA: The Free Press. p.402.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* pp.406-407.

<sup>64</sup> Skoczylis, J. (2017). 'Counterterrorism and Society: The Contradiction of the Surveillance State – Understanding the Relationship Among Communities, State Authorities, and Society'. In: Romaniuk, S.N., Grice, F., Irrera, D., Webb, S. (2017). *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Counterterrorism Policy*. London, UK: Macmillan Publishers. p.121.

<sup>65</sup> Dervin, F. (2012). 'Cultural Identity, Representation and Othering'. In: Jackson, J. (ed.) (2012). *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication*. New York, USA: Routledge. p.187.

confirmation of one's self-identity in contrast to the others'<sup>66,67</sup>. Othering creates unequal relationships between identity groups<sup>68</sup> by recognising appealing traits in one's own group (the ingroup) lacking in other groups (outgroups) and outgroups' disadvantageous attributes absent in the ingroup, creating an implicit relationship between the 'superior self' and 'inferior other'<sup>69,70</sup>. Since sovereign powers can no longer execute outgroups as they please to protect the state (the ingroup), they have had to adopt othering strategies to protect the state, propagating to the public that outgroups are undesirable<sup>71</sup>. Therefore, othering suggests an asymmetrical power from heads of state that causes systemic inequalities and oppression<sup>72</sup>.

### **Pandemic Othering**

Although othering is a quotidian practice, it has historically spiked during pandemics in both developed and developing societies<sup>73,74,75,76</sup>. *Pandemic othering* refers to the exclusion and distancing of outgroups from ingroups by blaming outgroups for virus outbreaks and implying outgroups are sick and unhealthy, unlike the ingroup<sup>77</sup>.

Pandemics can inflame underlying xenophobia<sup>78</sup>, as observed in 2020 with vast increases in hate speech<sup>79,80,81</sup>, causing concerns, including from UN Secretary-General Guterres, regarding escalating racism caused by COVID-19<sup>82</sup>, which may continue even

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<sup>66</sup> Dervin, F. (2012). p.187.

<sup>67</sup> Johnson, *et al.* (2004). p.254.

<sup>68</sup> Crang, M. (1998). *Cultural Geography*. London, UK: Routledge. p.61.

<sup>69</sup> Brons (2015). p.70.

<sup>70</sup> Johnson, *et al.* (2004). p.254.

<sup>71</sup> Liz, J. (2020). 'State Racism, Social Justice, and the COVID-19 Pandemic'. *Public Philosophy Journal*, 3(1).

<sup>72</sup> Southcott & Theodore (2020). 'Othering'. *Journal of Architectural Education*, 72(2). p.162.

<sup>73</sup> Monteiro & Renugaa (2020). 'Othering in the time of Pandemic'. *Ceasefire*.

<sup>74</sup> Dionne & Turkmen (2020). p.2.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* p.3.

<sup>76</sup> Chemin, A. (2020). 'La traque du bouc émissaire, une réponse aux épidémies inexplicables'. *Le Monde*. 18 April.

<sup>77</sup> Dionne & Seay (2016). '8. American Perceptions of Africa during an Ebola Outbreak'. In: Evans, N.G., Smith, T.C., Majumder, M.S. (eds.) (2016). *Ebola's Message: Public Health and Medicine in the Twenty-First Century*. p.104.

<sup>78</sup> Oldstone, M.B.A. (1998). *Viruses, Plagues, and History*. New York, USA: Oxford University Press. Cited in: Demirtaş-Madran (2020). p.2.

<sup>79</sup> Budhwani & Sun (2020). 'Creating COVID-19 Stigma by Referencing the Novel Coronavirus as the "Chinese virus" on Twitter: Quantitative Analysis of Social Media Data'. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 22(5).

<sup>80</sup> Croucher, *et al.* (2020). 'Prejudice toward Asian Americans in the COVID-19 pandemic: the effects of social media use in the United States'. *Frontiers in Communication*, 5(39).

<sup>81</sup> Stechemesser, *et al.* (2020). 'Corona crisis fuels racially profiled hate in social media networks'. *EClinicalMedicine*, 23.

<sup>82</sup> Guterres, A. (2020b). 'Hate speech, stigma, and xenophobia continue to rise as a result of #COVID-19'. *Twitter*. 13 May.

after the pandemic<sup>83</sup>. During pandemics, political leaders often label minorities as virus carriers to create illusions of control over the uncontrollable unknown<sup>84,85,86,87</sup> – a coping mechanism for pandemics’ political and socioeconomic repercussions<sup>88,89</sup>. Scapegoating already marginalised groups<sup>90</sup> rather than scientifically responding to emerging outbreaks<sup>91</sup> allows dominant ingroups to minimise feelings of vulnerability<sup>92</sup>. For example, despite their male counterparts’ equal responsibility, women worldwide were frequently held responsible for spreading AIDS<sup>93</sup>, shaping societies’ perceptions of the marginalised group (women) as a threat and reducing men’s feelings of vulnerability. Furthermore, othering is a political tool ubiquitous in authoritarian societies<sup>94</sup>, whose numbers have similarly increased during the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>95</sup>, and political elites may use pandemic othering to strengthen national identity, consequently promoting xenophobia<sup>96,97,98</sup>. Accordingly, dominant groups, typically led by political elites, blame outgroups via the media using pre-existing outgroup representations<sup>99,100</sup>, thereby influencing public opinion<sup>101</sup>. The media frequently employs “ingroup favouritism” when comparing infection and mortality rates between

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<sup>83</sup> Barrett & Brown (2008). ‘Stigma in the time of influenza: social and institutional responses to pandemic emergencies’. *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 197.

<sup>84</sup> Dionne & Turkmen (2020). p.1.

<sup>85</sup> Nelkin & Gilman (1988). Placing Blame for Devastating Disease. *Social Research*, 55(3). pp.361-378.

<sup>86</sup> Monteiro & Renugaa (2020)

<sup>87</sup> Weiner, *et al.* (1988). 'An attributional analysis of reactions to stigmas'. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 55(5). pp.738-748.

<sup>88</sup> Person, *et al.* (2004). ‘Fear and Stigma: The Epidemic Within the SARS Outbreak’. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 10(2). pp.358-363.

<sup>89</sup> Crawford, R. (1994). 'The Boundaries of the Self and the Unhealthy Other: Reflections on Health, Culture and AIDS'. *Social Science & Medicine*, 38(10). pp.1347-1365.

<sup>90</sup> Dionne & Turkmen (2020). p.10.

<sup>91</sup> Drabeck & Quarantelli (1967). ‘Scapegoats, Villains, and Disasters’. In: Boin, A. (ed.) (2008). *Crisis Management, Volume III*. London, UK: SAGE. p.146.

<sup>92</sup> Monteiro & Renugaa (2020)

<sup>93</sup> Türmen, T. (2003). ‘Gender and HIV / AIDS’. *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics*, 82(3). p.416.

<sup>94</sup> Demirtaş-Madran (2020). p.9.

<sup>95</sup> Hartman, *et al.* (2021). pp.1-12.

<sup>96</sup> Monteiro & Renugaa (2020)

<sup>97</sup> Brown, R. (2000). 'Social identity theory: past achievements, current problems and future challenges'. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 30. p.748.

<sup>98</sup> Kite & Whitley (2016). *Psychology of prejudice and discrimination*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge. pp.310-311.

<sup>99</sup> Jetten, *et al.* (2020). *Together apart: The psychology of COVID-19*. London, UK: Sage. p.16.

<sup>100</sup> Dionne & Seay (2016). p.104.

<sup>101</sup> Dionne & Turkmen (2020). p.1.

social groups<sup>102,103</sup>, immediately creating identity representations<sup>104</sup> that increase xenophobia<sup>105,106,107,108</sup>. Targeting othered minorities ranges from passive exclusion<sup>109</sup> to active vocal and physical abuse<sup>110</sup>, affecting foreigners *and* domestic sub-groups like health workers<sup>111,112,113</sup>.

Due to heightened feelings of helplessness during public health emergencies' early stages<sup>114</sup>, this period observes significant societal shifts away from integration and towards outgroup discrimination<sup>115</sup>. Despite states' and intergovernmental organisations' moral and legal obligations to eradicate racism<sup>116</sup>, racial hierarchies prevail locally, nationally, and globally<sup>117</sup> due to long histories of social construction processes<sup>118</sup> like in Japan<sup>119</sup>. Pandemic othering is no recent phenomenon, but one prevailing worldwide despite increased globalisation and international integration, highlighting the need for better education on race and ethnicity and their historical construction<sup>120</sup>.

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<sup>102</sup> Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020). p.9.

<sup>103</sup> Jetten, *et al.* (2020). p.16.

<sup>104</sup> Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020). p.11.

<sup>105</sup> Green, *et al.* (2010). 'Keeping the vermin out: perceived disease threat and ideological orientations as predictors of exclusionary immigration attitudes'. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 20(4). pp.299-316.

<sup>106</sup> Joffe, *et al.* (2011). 'Public engagement with emerging infectious disease: the case of MRSA in Britain'. *Psychology & Health*, 26(6). pp.667-683.

<sup>107</sup> Van Assche, *et al.* (2020). 'To punish or to assist? Divergent reactions to ingroup and outgroup members disobeying social distancing'. *British Journal of Social Psychology*. 59. pp.594-606.

<sup>108</sup> Mayor, *et al.* (2013). 'Dynamic social representations of the 2009 H1N1 pandemic: shifting patterns of sense-making and blame'. *Public Understanding of Science*, 22(8). pp.1011-1024.

<sup>109</sup> Serhan & McLaughlin (2020). 'The Other Problematic Outbreak'. *The Atlantic*. 13 March.

<sup>110</sup> Dionne & Turkmen (2020). p.1.

<sup>111</sup> Taylor, *et al.* (2020). 'Fear and avoidance of healthcare workers: an important, under-recognized form of stigmatization during the COVID-19 pandemic'. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 75.

<sup>112</sup> World Health Organization (2020). 'WHO calls for healthy, safe and decent working conditions for all health workers, amidst COVID-19 pandemic'. 28 April.

<sup>113</sup> Bai, *et al.* (2004). 'Survey of stress reactions among health care workers involved with the SARS outbreak'. *Psychiatric Services*, 55(9). pp.1055-1057.

<sup>114</sup> Person, *et al.* (2004). pp.358-363.

<sup>115</sup> Dionne & Turkmen (2020). p.2.

<sup>116</sup> United Nations (1965). *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*. New York, USA. 10 June, 1958, United Nations Treaty Series 660. p.3.

<sup>117</sup> Dionne & Turkmen (2020). p.3.

<sup>118</sup> Finnemore & Sikkink (2001). 'Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics'. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4(1). pp.391-416.

<sup>119</sup> See Chapter 4 (p.34)

<sup>120</sup> O'Neill, C. (2020). 'The "Othering" of Disease: Xenophobia During Past Pandemics'. *Wiley*. 3 September.

## 1.2 Japan's Pre-COVID-19 Situation

Two years after the 2011 Triple Disaster, Japan was selected to host the 2020 Olympic Games. Since the 1930s, Japan continuously lobbied to host the Olympics, investing heavily in campaigns to host the Games twelve times<sup>121</sup>. During Japan's campaign to host the 2020 Games, Abe expressed fond memories of Japan's 1964 Summer Olympics, which rebranded Japan as a cooperative ally for the international community<sup>122,123,124</sup>, catalysing Japan's rapid development and international reintegration<sup>125</sup>. Abe affirmed that Tokyo 2020 would inspire a global outlook in Japan, investing in people and providing equality to all<sup>126</sup>. Such a global, open, and multicultural image for Japan grew out of economic and geopolitical circumstances, pushing to vastly increase foreign workers and advocate free-market capitalism to counterbalance China and reduce risks of the international community overlooking Japan and investing in its Asian neighbours<sup>127</sup>. Within the context of Japan's economic stagnation since the 1990s and the 2011 Triple Disaster's destruction, Tokyo 2020 found itself in a similar situation to Japan's 1964 post-war Recovery Olympics, with opportunities to demonstrate Japan's "rise from the ashes like a phoenix" since 2011 and its strength and economic success<sup>128</sup>. Any citizens not maintaining the political elites' rhetoric of Japan's complete recovery from the 2011 disaster are branded traitors and anti-Japanese<sup>129,130,131</sup>. As Japan's current political elites were young adults during the 1964 Recovery Olympics, observing, and now having romantic memories of, Japan's subsequent rapid development, path dependency will have likely inspired the government's bid for the 2020 Olympics despite Japan's actual poor economic

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<sup>121</sup> Kietlinski, R. (2016). 'Japan in the Olympics, the Olympics in Japan'. *Education About Asia*, 21(2). p.35.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.* p.39.

<sup>123</sup> Droubie, P. (2011). pp.2309-2322.

<sup>124</sup> Wilson, S. (2012). pp.159-178

<sup>125</sup> Kietlinski, R. (2016). p.38.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.* p.39.

<sup>127</sup> McNeill, D. (2020). 'Spinning the Rings: The Media and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics'. *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 18(5). pp.3-4.

<sup>128</sup> Kietlinski, R. (2016). p.38.

<sup>129</sup> Dudden, A. (2020a). 'An Opportunity for Japan to Change People's Perception'. *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 18(5). p.2.

<sup>130</sup> McNeill, D. (2020). p.2.

<sup>131</sup> Koide, H. (2019). 'The Fukushima Nuclear Disaster and the Tokyo Olympics'. *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 17(5). p.9.

situation<sup>132</sup>. Abe's focus on "Abenomics", a strong push for economic reforms to revitalise the Japanese economy since his second term as Prime Minister started in 2012<sup>133</sup>, further validates this conjecture. Considering that the 2020 Olympics' postponement increased costs by 22%, adding to Japan's huge fiscal deficit and public debt, Abe had a greater dilemma than most world leaders upon the COVID-19 pandemic's onset – economic or public health prioritisation. Either could have dire consequences for the incumbent Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in the 2021 general elections<sup>134</sup>, but the LDP eventually favoured Abe's economic legacy<sup>135</sup>.

Furthermore, Japan's economic situation has been in dire straits due to a potential economic crisis. Japan is the world's fastest ageing country and a super-aged society due to extremely high life expectancy and a low birth rate, with a steadily declining population since 2011 projected to decline by 30% by 2065<sup>136,137,138</sup> and the labour force-total population ratio declining to 44% by 2060<sup>139</sup>. Consequently, more people will require support than there are people to support them. Abe, desiring to maintain Japan's illusory ethnic homogeneity<sup>140</sup>, was reluctant to increase migrant workers despite Japan's demography<sup>141</sup>, focusing on increasing births and keeping elderly people working "before accepting immigrants"<sup>142</sup>. Notwithstanding government efforts, Japan's workforce still lacked numbers, prompting a revised immigration policy effective from April 2019 to increase foreign workers in Japan. Besides already permitted high-skilled workers, the legislation also allows low-skilled migrants to work in Japan<sup>143</sup>. However,

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<sup>132</sup> Kietlinski, R. (2016). pp.38-40.

<sup>133</sup> Surak, K. (2019)

<sup>134</sup> Mark, C. (2021). 'Why are Japan's leaders clinging to their Olympic hopes? Their political fortunes depend on it'. *The Conversation*. 22 January.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> *Digima* (2020). '世界の高齢化率ランキング | 「高齢化大国」中国の未来と「シニア先進国」日本発の高齢者ビジネス' ['World Ageing Rate Ranking: 'Ageing Superpower' China's Future and 'Senior Developed Country' Japan's Elderly Business']. 25 March.

<sup>137</sup> Statistics Bureau, Government of Japan (2020). 統計トピックス No.126: 統計からみた我が国の高齢者 [*Elderly people in Japan from a statistical viewpoint*]. p.2.

<sup>138</sup> Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (2020). 国土交通政策研究所報 第76号 ~2020年春季~ [*PR Review: Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Policy Research Institute Bulletin No. 76 – Spring 2020*]. p.2.

<sup>139</sup> Japan External Trade Organization (2021). *Japan's Super-Aging Society at a Glance*. p.2.

<sup>140</sup> Ryall, J. (2019b). 'Japan: now open to foreign workers, but still just as racist?' *South China Morning Post*. 11 May.

<sup>141</sup> Yamawaki, K. (2020). 'Japan's move toward a diverse and inclusive nation?' *The Japan Times*. 12 January.

<sup>142</sup> Hofmann, R. (2018). 'Why Steve Bannon Admires Japan'. *The Diplomat*. 22 June.

<sup>143</sup> Ryall, J. (2019a). 'Japan's new visa regulation opens door to foreign labor'. *Deutsche Welle*. 10 April.



the LDP and media avoid categorising it as “immigration”<sup>144</sup>, referring to the legislation as the “Foreign Human Resources Bill”<sup>145</sup>, maintaining that low-skilled foreigners are “guest workers” unable to stay in Japan longer than five years and unable to bring family members with them to Japan<sup>146</sup>. Although government estimates predicted an increase of 345,000 foreign workers within five years of the revised legislation’s implementation, the first year only achieved 1.3% of that quota<sup>147</sup>, suggesting that foreign workers face extensive obstacles in migrating to Japan and have too few motivations to migrate, with 74% of Japanese citizens agreeing that the government needs to do more to create a more accommodating environment for foreigners in Japan<sup>148</sup>. Moreover, Japanese companies are hesitant to employ foreigners due to integration concerns<sup>149</sup>. Therefore, the 2020 Olympics are a platform for Japan to showcase itself as an attractive work destination with respectable infrastructures to support foreigners in Japanese society, as implied by Abe in his Olympics bidding campaign<sup>150</sup>, thereby encouraging foreign labour to come to Japan.

The 1964 Recovery Olympics enabled Japanese political elites to rebuild Japanese nationalism following World War II<sup>151</sup>, and the LDP under Abe has observed path dependency leading up to Tokyo 2020. The LDP’s main agenda since 2012 has been to broadly revise Japan’s 1947 Constitution, written largely by Japan’s US occupiers<sup>152</sup>. Proposed revisions would establish a Japanese army, diminish individual rights, buttress public order, and emphasise the preeminence of Japan’s Emperor<sup>153</sup>. These revisions would create a more nationalist and authoritarian governance system akin to pre-war

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<sup>144</sup> Surak, K. (2019)

<sup>145</sup> Torigoe, C. (2019). ‘「外国人」「移民」「外国人労働者」：日本における移民ディスコースが構築する人種の階層」 [Racialized labels for foreigners, immigrants, and foreign workers in Japan: Construction of racial "Others" in Japanese immigration discourses]. 西南学院英語英文学論集 [Seinan Gakuin English Literature Collection], 59(3). pp.155-179

<sup>146</sup> Ryall, J. (2019b)

<sup>147</sup> *Nikkei* (2020). 特定技能で1621人が在留 昨年12月末時点、入管庁 [1621 residents with specific skills at end of December last year – the Immigration Bureau]. 7 February.

<sup>148</sup> Takahashi, R. (2020a). ‘Around 75% of Japanese see need to make nation more hospitable for foreign residents, government survey shows’. *The Japan Times*. 18 January.

<sup>149</sup> Kajimoto, T. (2019). 'Japanese firms resist hiring foreign workers under new immigration law - poll'. *Reuters*. 23 May.

<sup>150</sup> Kietlinski, R. (2016). p.38.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> Surak, K. (2019)

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

Japan, as envisioned by *Nippon Kaigi*, a hugely politically influential right-wing group comprising Abe himself and the majority of his cabinet<sup>154</sup> with ultranationalist, neo-imperial, and revisionist attitudes towards Japan's future<sup>155</sup>. In 2012, Abe proposed an “emergency powers” clause based on the Weimar Constitution that ultimately allowed Hitler control over Germany, which would give the LDP total control, allowing the suspension of human rights and freedoms, as in Imperial Japan where such powers were abused<sup>156,157</sup>.

As the pandemic began, rather than developing public health measures, Abe's government began pushing harder for emergency powers to grant the government complete control over citizens and the ability to suspend human rights during the pandemic<sup>158,159,160</sup>, which various publications widely criticised, including *Mainichi Shimbun* surprisingly<sup>161</sup>. Although Japan's current *Reiwa* era (2019-), named by the Abe administration, is officially translated as “beautiful harmony”, echoing Abe's comments of creating a “beautiful Japan”, the initial character *Rei* is very telling considering its primary definition is ‘command’ or ‘order’<sup>162 ‡</sup>.

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<sup>154</sup> Ooi, S.M. (2021)

<sup>155</sup> Surak, K. (2019)

<sup>156</sup> Adelstein & Yamamoto (2020). ‘Japan Shows Coronavirus May Be a Gift - for Would-Be Dictators’. *The Daily Beast*. 24 February.

<sup>157</sup> Takahashi, S. (2020). ‘Normalizing the state of exception: Japan's response to COVID-19’. *Open Global Rights*. 24 June.

<sup>158</sup> Adelstein & Yamamoto (2020)

<sup>159</sup> Takahashi, S. (2020)

<sup>160</sup> Berlucchi, A.B. (2020). ‘The Japanese Response To The Coronavirus Outbreak. A Challenge To Japan's Democratic Institutions?’ *Executives, Presidents and Cabinet Politics*. 16 April.

<sup>161</sup> Adelstein & Yamamoto (2020)

<sup>162</sup> Surak, K. (2019)

‡ *Reiwa* (令和): *Rei* (令)- ‘order’, ‘law’, ‘command’, ‘decree’, ‘good’; *Wa* (和)- ‘harmony’, ‘Japan’, ‘peace’

## Chapter 2: Research Design

This work's inspiration was a desire to understand how Japan – a supposed liberal international order member promoting individual liberty, multilateralism, and international connectivity, with a rapidly ageing population and diminishing workforce relying ever more on imported labour – views foreigners in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The incumbent government has repeatedly evinced its nationalist, xenophobic, and authoritarian attitudes before and during the pandemic<sup>1,2,3</sup>, despite touting the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as a means to show gratitude for the international community's aid following Japan's 2011 Triple Disaster. Consequently, it is of great interest to understand how Japanese public opinion on foreigners may have changed over one year into the COVID-19 pandemic in light of these two contrasting narratives from the political elites, as it may indicate the future for Japan's foreign community regarding societal integration.

Therefore, this study explores Japanese public opinion on foreigners and examines any relationships between public opinion and the LDP and Japanese media's pandemic othering during the COVID-19 crisis. This paper analyses these topics by reviewing Japan's pandemic othering and pre-COVID-19 xenophobia and nationalism to contextualise data collected in an online survey. From the aforementioned general research objectives, three specific research questions materialised:

- (Q1) Does the Japanese public have positive, neutral, or negative opinions of foreigners following the COVID-19 pandemic, and do these opinions change significantly for foreigners from certain countries or regions?*
- (Q2) Does the Japanese public agree with xenophobic pandemic othering stances adopted and publicised by Japanese political elites and mass media?*
- (Q3) Is there a relationship between news sources accessed during the pandemic and the Japanese public's views on foreigners?*

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<sup>1</sup> Kitayama, Y. (2018). 'The rise of the far right in Japan, and challenges posed for education'. *London Review of Education*, 16(2).

<sup>2</sup> McNeill, D. (2014). 'Japan's cabinet rocked by new claims of links to neo-Nazis who target the ethnic Korean population'. *The Independent*. 26 September.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 4 (p.34), Chapter 5.2 (p.49), Fig. 6 (pp.66-67)

These questions provide insight into the effects of pandemic othering by the political elites and mass media on public opinion. Consequently, this study's independent variable is exposure to government and mass media othering rhetoric during the COVID-19 pandemic, measured in the survey by probing into news sources regularly utilised by participants, the regularity of exposure, and whether respondents actively further investigated the pandemic independently. The dependent variable is the level of anti-foreigner attitudes as measured through participants' agreement with pandemic-relevant xenophobic statements in a Likert scale question format.

Secondary questions addressed in this paper regard respondents' demographics to discern whether demographic factors affect participants' attitudes towards foreigners:

*(SQ1) Does public opinion on foreigners correlate with the number of reported COVID-19 cases in respondents' prefectures of residence?*

*(SQ2) Does public opinion on foreigners correlate with the number of foreigners residing in respondents' prefectures of residence?*

*(SQ3) Does public opinion on foreigners correlate with respondents' regularity of interaction with foreigners?*

*(SQ4) Does public opinion on foreigners correlate with respondents' age, education level, employment status, or income levels?*

*(SQ5) Is the public aware of individual changes in attitudes towards foreigners?*

Adopting a primarily quantitative approach, a survey using a Likert scale gathered public opinion data online through Google Forms to obtain a large sample size with participants from all over Japan, increasing the credibility of respondents' answers and data quantifiability, and validating data extrapolation to the general Japanese public<sup>4</sup>. The survey did allow for qualitative data by requesting respondents' self-reflection on any potential opinion changes regarding foreigners due to the pandemic.

Given the subject matter's sensitive nature, reducing social desirability bias, interviewer effects, and demand characteristics is significant as sensitive topics are particularly susceptible to such biases. The survey ensured anonymity, which was

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<sup>4</sup> Nardi, P.M. (2018). *Doing Survey Research: A Guide to Quantitative Methods*. New York, USA: Routledge. p.16.

explained to respondents before starting the survey, thus reducing social desirability bias risks and boosting data accuracy. Moreover, being online without interviewer presence minimised potential interviewer effects and demand characteristics that may otherwise have caused participants to answer differently, which would have decreased accuracy, especially when interviewed by a foreigner.

Since the study sought to investigate Japanese public opinion, its target group was Japanese citizens over 18 years old residing in Japan. Despite expecting approximately 60 responses, the survey received 304 responses. The Japanese public comprises primarily ethnic Japanese (*Wajin*), with the two main Japanese ethnic minorities, the indigenous Ainu and Ryūkyūan peoples, forming only 0.01% of Japan's population<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, the survey asked participants' ethnicity to investigate any differences between *Wajin* and Japanese ethnic minority responses. The survey, distributed online through social media postings on *Twitter*, *Instagram*, and *Facebook*, allowed easy sharing with the target population, maximising the sample size and yielding more statistically accurate data<sup>6</sup>. There was a risk of volunteer bias since participants would likely primarily be Japanese netizens, not necessarily representing the target population. Notwithstanding, research shows that 82% of Japanese citizens are netizens<sup>7</sup>, and advertising the survey on various social media platforms expanded its reach to more age groups<sup>8</sup>. Online posts encouraged sharing the survey with friends and family via the instant messaging application, *Line*, which is Japan's most used social media platform, to maximise the survey's outreach. However, a degree of bias may remain since respondents will have been people willing to discuss foreigners and COVID-19 and may answer surveys differently to less willing citizens<sup>9</sup>.

Besides not all Japanese citizens necessarily having internet access, data collection was further limited since respondents must be literate to be aware of the survey's existence and participate<sup>10</sup>. Thus, the sample may not be entirely representative of the

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<sup>5</sup> Refworld (2018). 'World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Japan'. *The UN Refugee Agency*.

<sup>6</sup> Andrade, C. (2020). 'The Limitations of Online Surveys'. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, 42(6). p.575.

<sup>7</sup> See Fig. 1 (p.21)

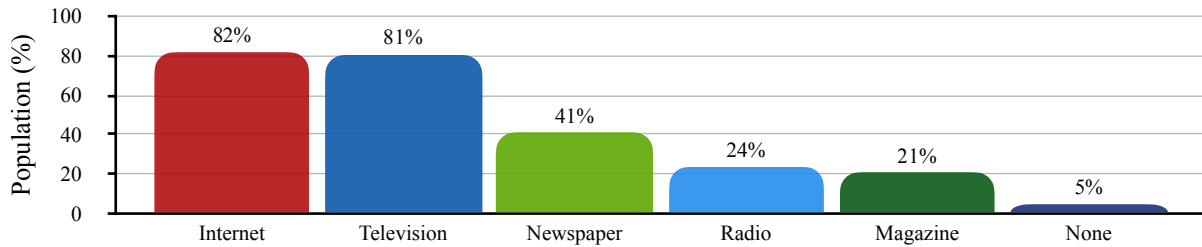
<sup>8</sup> See Fig. 2 (p.21)

<sup>9</sup> Andrade, C. (2020). p.576.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

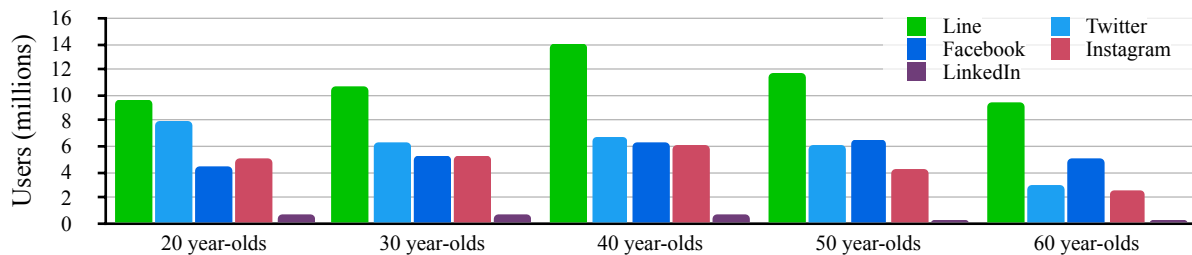
target population. Moreover, as the survey includes 44 questions, survey fatigue may have caused flaws in survey responses, whilst the anonymity and lack of interviewer presence may have reduced accountability, increasing the risk of respondents clicking answers randomly, reducing accuracy. Additionally, the lack of an interviewer to clarify uncertainties regarding questions may have reduced response reliability.

**Fig 1: Regular use of different media types in Japan in 2019**



**Source:** UN Women (2019). *Public attitudes towards migrant workers in Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand*. p.57.

**Fig 2: Social media users in Japan in 2019 by age group**



**Source:** *Edamame Japan* (2020). 'Top Japanese Social Media Apps: Demographics of 7 Major Apps in 2020'.

Regarding ethics of informed consent, the survey's opening page provided details about the study and requested confirmation of participation consent, as Mahon recommends<sup>11</sup>. Given the topic's sensitive nature, the informed consent page also explained that participation is anonymous and voluntary and that respondents can withdraw at any time without justification. The opening page provided the researcher's contact details, enabling participants to request withdrawal following response submission. Given the survey's anonymity, responses to withdraw would be unidentifiable. Hence, the opening page delineated that respondents wishing to withdraw must provide the response date and time and that further demographic

<sup>11</sup> Mahon, P.Y. (2014). 'Internet research and ethics: transformative issues in nursing education research'. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 30(2). p.126.

information may be requested to identify the response correctly. The explanation clarified that any correspondence with the researcher regarding withdrawal would likewise be strictly confidential. See Appendix 1 for survey information and questions.

The survey began with demographic questions to contextualise responses. Research shows that asking demographic questions at the start of a survey rather than at the end may lead to higher survey completion<sup>12</sup>. Subsequently, the survey investigated participants' personal COVID-19 infection experiences before introducing various statements about foreigners and COVID-19 for participants to respond using a Likert scale. These questions sought to establish whether Japanese citizens have adopted xenophobic attitudes towards foreigners in line with othering committed by Japanese political elites and mass media. Whilst most questions investigated opinions about foreigners in general, several questions asked specifically about attitudes towards two of Japan's former colonies with which Japan has a historically low affinity, China and South Korea. The survey similarly inquired into opinions on Europe and America since Japan has a relatively high affinity with these two regions<sup>13</sup>, providing an extra dimension for comparison, and because these regions were significantly impacted by COVID-19 at the start of the pandemic when pandemic othering is most influential<sup>14</sup>. Some xenophobic statements listed may be considered unequivocal and direct and, therefore, liable to social desirability bias. However, the survey's anonymous online nature should have counterbalanced that bias. Additionally, research demonstrates that such blunt questioning regarding sensitive topics like xenophobia often provides more accurate responses than more reserved questioning<sup>15</sup>. The survey's final questions aimed to understand participants' news media exposures regarding COVID-19 to investigate exposure to xenophobic rhetoric and whether respondents actively sought further information from other sources that may have influenced their opinions on foreigners in the pandemic context.

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<sup>12</sup> Teclaw, *et al.* (2012). 'Demographic Question Placement: Effect on Item Response Rates and Means of a Veterans Health Administration Survey'. *Journal of Business Psychology*, 27. pp.281-290.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 6.3 (p.78)

<sup>14</sup> See Chapter 3.1 (p.24)

<sup>15</sup> Axt, J.R. (2018). 'The Best Way to Measure Explicit Racial Attitudes Is to Ask About Them'. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 9(8). pp.896-906.

## Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Sociologists have observed that xenophobic othering often arises from political discourse and misinformation spread through the media, emphasising the threat of foreigners<sup>1,2</sup>. Moreover, research demonstrates that policies affecting foreigners during pandemics affect public opinion on foreigners<sup>3</sup>. However, this is reversible if misinformation is recognised and consequently rectified<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, Japanese citizens may have reflected LDP attitudes towards foreigners even before the COVID-19 pandemic, and LDP rhetoric during the pandemic may have heightened xenophobic convictions in Japanese society. However, scholars like Klocker developed more complex models suggesting political rhetoric and foreigners' media portrayals originate from societies' preexisting xenophobic attitudes. The public's anti-foreigner sentiments shape government policies and media discourse, legitimising and reinforcing public beliefs, thus creating a vicious xenophobia cycle<sup>5</sup>. Additionally, research demonstrated that citizens already holding bigoted beliefs about foreigners are more susceptible to believing xenophobic media reports and political discourse<sup>6</sup>. Considering Japanese citizens' indoctrination by political elites since imperial times<sup>7</sup>, with recent education reforms bolstering nationalism and xenophobia, and the nation's consequent continuous othering of non-*Wajin* and discrimination in government policies and citizens' private lives<sup>8</sup>, one can assume Japan may be evidence of Klocker's proposed vicious xenophobia cycle.

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<sup>1</sup> Peterie & Neil (2019). 'Xenophobia towards asylum seekers: A survey of social theories'. *Journal of Sociology*. p.2.

<sup>2</sup> Pedersen & Hartley (2017). 'False Beliefs About Asylum Seekers to Australia: The Role of Confidence in Such Beliefs, Prejudice, and the Third Person Effect'. *Journal of Pacific Rim Psychology*, 11(5). p.2.

<sup>3</sup> Mainwaring & Silverman (2017). 'Detention-as-Spectacle'. *International Political Sociology*, 11(1). p.13.

<sup>4</sup> Pedersen, *et al.* (2006) 'The Role of False Beliefs in the Community's and the Federal Government's Attitudes towards Australian Asylum Seekers'. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 41(1). p.105.

<sup>5</sup> Klocker, M. (2004). 'Community Antagonism Towards Asylum Seekers in Port Augusta, South Australia'. *Australian Geographical Studies*, 42(1). p.14.

<sup>6</sup> Pedersen & Hartley (2015). 'Can We Make a Difference? Prejudice Towards Asylum Seekers in Australia and the Effectiveness of Antiprejudice Interventions'. *Journal of Pacific Rim Psychology*, 9(1). p.8.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 4 (p.34)

<sup>8</sup> Arudou, D. (2015). *Embedded Racism: Japan's Visible Minorities and Racial Discrimination*. London, UK: Lexington Books.

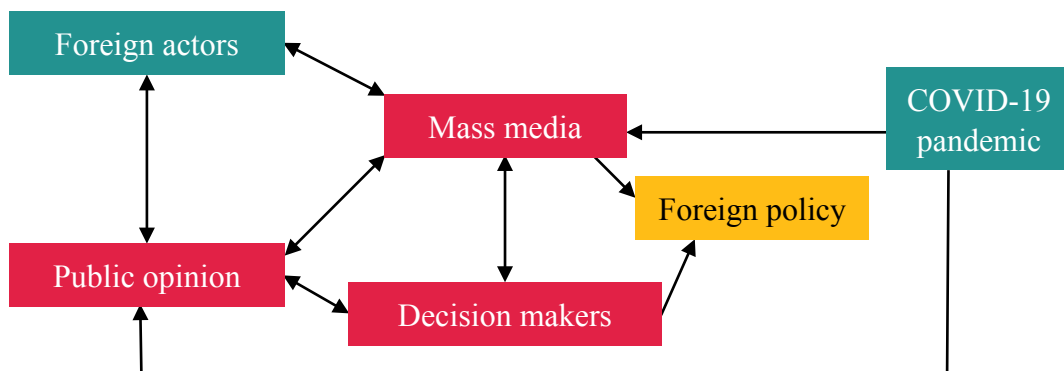


### 3.1 Political Elites and the Media

Political elites have previously insinuated that the media moulds public opinion by suggesting that the media does not necessarily reflect their attitudes effectively, causing misalignment with public opinion. Notwithstanding, political scientists describe media as “conveyor belts” passively responding to political elites’ needs by transporting their views to the public and, consequently, heavily influencing public opinion<sup>9</sup>. Although this argument treats media as a unitary actor, the media comprises various actors with potentially differing motives. However, considering the Japanese political elites’ firm grip on national mainstream media and its history of limiting government criticism through soft power, Japanese mainstream media could be considered a unitary actor.

Figure 3 summarises the literature regarding media influence on public opinion and foreign policy, demonstrating how political elites influence public opinion via the mass media. Japanese mass media during the pandemic heavily focused on political landscapes abroad, especially former US President Trump’s rhetoric and actions<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, foreign actors also shape Japanese public opinion via the mass media.

**Fig. 3: Causality in relationship(s) between the mass media, public opinion, and foreign policy during the COVID-19 pandemic in Japan**



Adapted from: Baum & Potter (2008). p.41.

The relationships portrayed in this model are not static; the volume of information shared through each actor can vary throughout a pandemic. Information, including

<sup>9</sup> Baum & Potter (2008). ‘The Relationships Between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis’. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 11(1). p.40.

<sup>10</sup> Deguchi, H. (2021). ‘Japan must embrace international cooperation in the age of COVID-19’. *The Japan Times*. 15 January.

disinformation, is a valuable tool in the political elites' arsenal to further their political goals. Generally, citizens are indifferent to foreign policy and ergo disinterested in foreign policy information, but interest surges in crises like pandemics<sup>11</sup>. When COVID-19 broke out in China, the LDP will have had more access to information than the Japanese public. Regardless of that information's accuracy, the LDP will have enjoyed a substantial information gap that it could use advantageously<sup>12</sup>. The government could limit the quantity of information shared through the media, carefully selecting (mis- and dis-)information to communicate to the now inquisitive public. In time, various actors, including field experts, foreign actors, online sources, and the government and mass media themselves, illuminate the truth, thereby diminishing information gaps and the elasticity of the government and media's framed 'reality'. Nonetheless, governments maintain significant power over public knowledge and beliefs in crises' initial stages when citizens cannot independently assess government claims<sup>13</sup>, making this an immensely influential period for the LDP to increase nationalism by spreading xenophobia and othering COVID-19. Governments frequently use information gaps to manipulate public opinion and distract from domestic problems<sup>14</sup> – a convenient strategy for the LDP as the international community began scrutinising East Asia early in the pandemic, especially Japan with the upcoming 2020 Olympics. Considering public aversion to fatalities and that governments rapidly lose support at the start of crises if the nation suffers even just a few casualties<sup>15</sup>, the LDP attempted to other COVID-19, claiming it to be a foreign problem affecting foreigners<sup>16</sup>. As the public was uninformed on the pandemic, it could not utilise factual information and relied on political elites' discourse, thus potentially adopting xenophobic stances and increasing government support<sup>17</sup> that induces a '*rally 'round the flag*' effect. Nevertheless, public opinion is not inherently unitary, and some individuals may not uncritically accept government rhetoric fed to them<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Baum & Potter (2008). pp.43-44.

<sup>12</sup> See Fig. 4 (p.26)

<sup>13</sup> Baum & Potter (2008). p.44.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p.48.

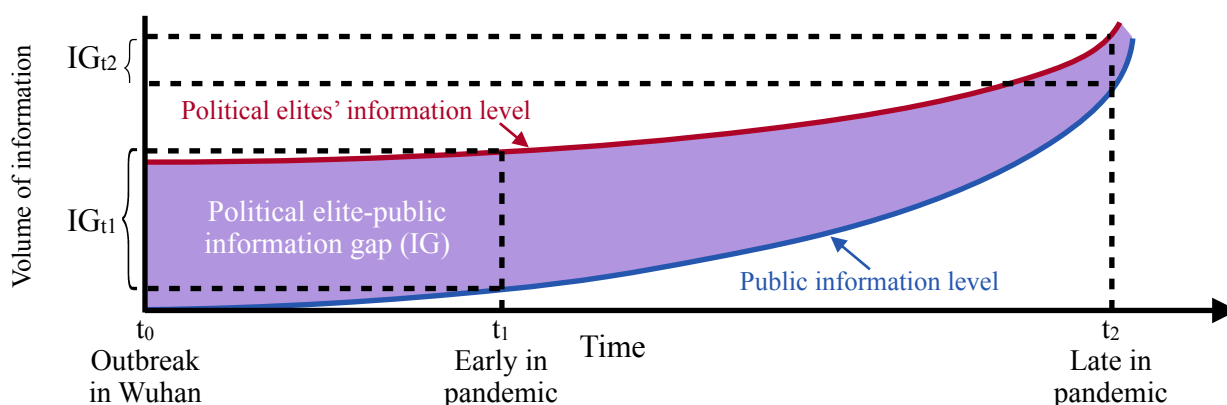
<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p.46.

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 5.2 (p.49)

<sup>17</sup> Baum & Potter (2008). p.46.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p.47.

**Fig. 4: The political elite-public information gap during the COVID-19 pandemic**



Adapted from: Baum & Potter (2008). p.42.

Media plays a critical role in framing and distributing information – a commodity highly valued by political elites. Although scholars view media as information highways from elites to the public rather than independent actors, the digital age proves this to be an oversimplification since new media, including social media, can offer distorted versions of leaders' prepackaged rhetoric<sup>19</sup> and significantly shape public perceptions of pandemics<sup>20</sup>. However, new media do not necessarily reduce or attempt to reduce information gaps but can exacerbate them, becoming an important communication tool for political elites to spread their rhetoric at any time during crises<sup>21</sup>, taking over traditional media's information monopoly<sup>22</sup>.

Research demonstrates media propensities to abide by government information frames early in crises to maintain good relations with the information keepers since the public is still inclined to consume it<sup>23</sup>. Media are even more inclined to maintain government rhetoric if it is based on cultural understandings already adopted by citizens<sup>24</sup>, such as Japan's alleged uniqueness, superiority, and historical antagonism towards China<sup>25</sup>. Consequently, Japanese media early in the pandemic, including non-*Kisha Club* members, will likely have othered the COVID-19 pandemic willingly, in line with LDP narratives.

<sup>19</sup> Baum & Potter (2008). p.50.

<sup>20</sup> Wen, *et al.* (2020). 'Effects of misleading media coverage on public health crisis: a case of the 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak in China'. *Anatolia*, 31(2). p.332.

<sup>21</sup> Omoya & Kaigo (2020). 'Suspicion Begets Idle Fears– an Analysis of COVID-19 Related Topics in Japanese Media and Twitter'. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*. pp.3-4.

<sup>22</sup> Génèreux, *et al.* (2020). p.3.

<sup>23</sup> Baum & Potter (2008). pp.50-51.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* p.51.

<sup>25</sup> See Chapter 4 (p.26)

### **The rally ‘round the flag effect**

The rally ‘round the flag effect refers to the sudden increased public approval of governments at the start of crises like wars and epidemics, particularly when external threats are perceived as triggering the crises<sup>26</sup> – perceptions primarily influenced by political elites through the media<sup>27</sup>. Rallies are an emotional response; a wave of group anger due to threats to the ingroup subsequently amplifies support for incumbent leaders’ retaliation<sup>28</sup>. For example, President Bush Jr experienced a dramatic approval increase from 55% to 90% immediately after the 9/11 attacks<sup>29</sup>. Since emotional responses quickly subside, increased government approval is usually brief too. Therefore, governments exploit rallies to distract from their actions and minimise policy criticism during crises’ onset<sup>30</sup>. Given COVID-19’s immense scale, scholars expected governments worldwide to experience rallies as domestic infections escalated<sup>31</sup>.

Research by Yam, *et al.* validated this expectation by analysing eleven world leaders’ daily approval ratings as domestic infections increased. As domestic COVID-19 cases increased dramatically, rallies occurred<sup>32</sup>, regardless of leaders’ pre-pandemic performances and handling of the pandemic<sup>33</sup>. During the pandemic’s initial stages, the public knew relatively little about COVID-19. Consequently, people trusted in their leaders to reduce uncertainty and diminish the perceived national threat<sup>34</sup>. Although merely a correlation, it is a significant observation. However, two world leaders, including former Japanese Prime Minister Abe, observed the opposite effect, despite Japan’s super-aged population being one of the most vulnerable to COVID-19 and the LDP’s COVID-19 policies having little effect on Japanese citizens’ daily lives<sup>35,36</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Kobayashi & Katagiri (2018). ‘The “Rally ‘Round the Flag” Effect in Territorial Disputes: Experimental Evidence from Japan-China Relations’. *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 18. p.301.

<sup>27</sup> Baum & Potter (2008). p.45.

<sup>28</sup> Kobayashi & Katagiri (2018). p.302.

<sup>29</sup> Schubert, *et al.* (2002). ‘A Defining Presidential Moment: 9/11 and the Rally Effect’. *Political Psychology*, 23(3). p.559.

<sup>30</sup> Goldstein & Pevehouse (2014). *International Relations: Tenth Edition*. New York, USA: Pearson. p.144.

<sup>31</sup> Yam, *et al.* (2020). ‘The rise of COVID-19 cases is associated with support for world leaders’. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 117(41). pp.25429-25433.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p.25431.

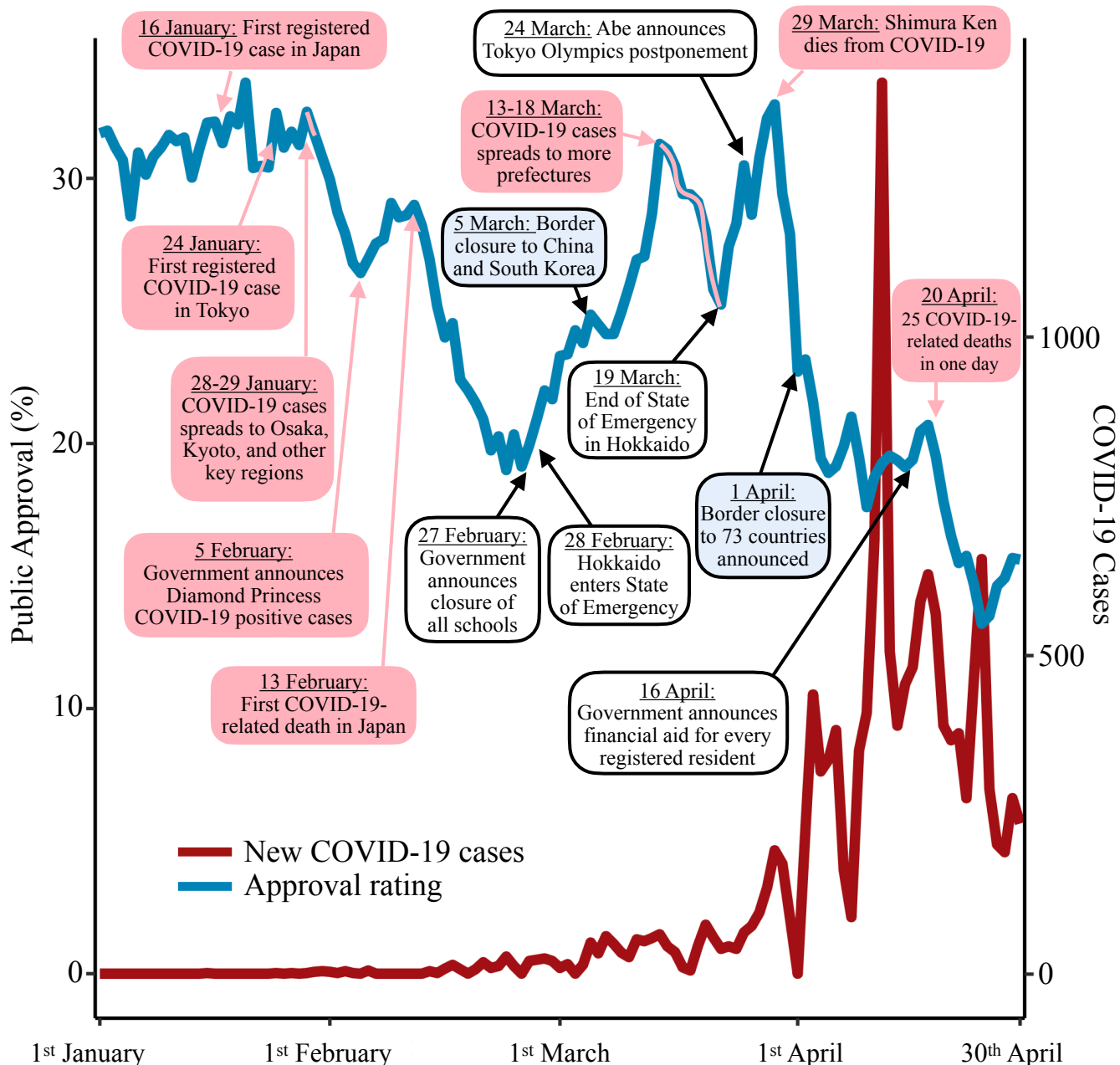
<sup>33</sup> Abiru, T. (2020). ‘Rally ‘round the leader? COVID-19’s impact on approval ratings’. *Fox School of Business*. 29 October.

<sup>34</sup> Lau, J. (2020). Cited in: Abiru, T. (2020)

<sup>35</sup> *The Economist* (2020). ‘Rallying round the flag: Covid-19 has given most world leaders a temporary rise in popularity’. 9 May.

<sup>36</sup> Kato & Yoshimoto (2020). ‘Why did Abe’s popularity fall during the pandemic?’ *East Asia Forum Quarterly*, 12(3). p.27.

**Fig. 5: Approval and new COVID-19 cases in Japan**



Adapted from: Yam, *et al.* (2020). p.25431

The Japanese case is interesting given approval rating fluctuations even before significant rises in COVID-19 cases. Following an over 10% decline in approval throughout February, the period between late February and late March saw an uptick. Subsequently, approval declined again with the sudden increase in COVID-19 cases. Throughout January and February, the LPD continued othering and downplaying the

outbreak<sup>37</sup>, despite an overwhelming majority of Japanese citizens expressing concern about the epidemic in an independent nationwide poll, and 30.4% finding the LDP's COVID-19 containment measures insufficient<sup>38,39</sup>. The LDP's othering appears to have stabilised approval ratings in January, but approval rapidly decreased as cases began appearing nationwide, blemishing the LDP's 'COVID-safe' Japan narrative. In early February, the LDP appeared to be handling the outbreak on the Diamond Princess cruise ship off the coast of Yokohama, but this positive image was brief. Viral videos in mid-February from an infectious diseases expert whom the LDP had invited to observe the onboard situation decried the ship's quarantine management, claiming the ship had become a "coronavirus production machine"<sup>40</sup>, thus damaging Abe's approval ratings.

After new measures to curb COVID-19 infections were implemented in late February, including school closures, following calls for company employees to work from home if possible and for the cancellation of large public events<sup>41</sup>, Abe's approval increased again. Despite the LDP's relatively late response to the impending pandemic, action in late February and border restrictions targeting foreigners in early March<sup>42</sup> sufficed to reinstate the lost support. Nevertheless, Japanese citizens remained fearful of Japan's COVID-19 situation due to the LDP's decision to conduct minimal virus testing against World Health Organization (WHO) advice<sup>43</sup>, keeping the nation in the dark and speculative of a more severe domestic situation<sup>44</sup>. Although case numbers remained relatively low, perhaps due to minimal testing, the public became increasingly aware of the potential severity of Japan's situation. More and more regions reported cases in mid-

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<sup>37</sup> Kato & Yoshimoto (2020). p.29.

<sup>38</sup> *Kyodo News* (2020a). '共同通信世論調査の結果' [Kyodo News Poll Results]. 17 February.

<sup>39</sup> *Nishinippon Shimbun* (2020). '内閣支持急落41% 世論調査 新型肺炎、影響懸念82%' [Cabinet public support drops to 41%, public survey on novel pneumonia causes 82% to worry]. 17 February.

<sup>40</sup> Adelstein & Yamamoto (2020)

<sup>41</sup> Harding & Inagaki (2020). 'Japan shuts all schools to combat coronavirus'. *Financial Times*. 27 February.

<sup>42</sup> Parvin, *et al.* (2020). 'Media Discourse about the Pandemic Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in East Asia: The Case of China and Japan'. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*. p.15.

<sup>43</sup> Wingfield-Hayes, R. (2020). 'Coronavirus: Japan's mysteriously low virus death rate'. *BBC News*. 3 July.

<sup>44</sup> Dooley, B. (2020). 'Shinzo Abe, Japan's Political Houdini, Can't Escape Coronavirus Backlash'. *The New York Times*. 10 March.

March<sup>45,46,47,48,49</sup>, likely causing the temporary decrease in approval at that time, before it rose back to pre-pandemic levels upon Prime Minister Abe's announcement postponing the 2020 Olympics on 24<sup>th</sup> March. Nevertheless, the critical point causing great distress to the Japanese public and rapidly reducing Abe's approval ratings was the death of Shimura Ken, a treasured and idolised Japanese comedian, on 29<sup>th</sup> March due to COVID-19<sup>50,51,52</sup>. LDP approval remained low for the remainder of Abe's tenure whilst disapproval ratings increased<sup>53</sup>, despite the blanket asymmetric travel restrictions and border closures discriminating against foreigners announced on 1<sup>st</sup> and enforced on 3<sup>rd</sup> April<sup>54,55</sup>. LDP approval boosts were primarily following domestic action, not discriminatory border restrictions. In fact, the initial border closure to Japan's former colonies, China and South Korea, with whom Japan has historically poor relations saw a slight dip in approval in an otherwise upward trend, suggesting that the public was already significantly concerned with domestic circumstances and not receptive to LDP attempts to associate the virus with the outside world.

Yam, *et al.* suggested the cause for Japan's diminished approval in contrast to most world leaders' rallies may be that Japanese citizens expected more proactive handling of the pandemic from the LDP. Contrarily, most countries observed rallies because citizens felt that their leaders were performing well and exceeding their expected duties as domestic infections greatly increased<sup>56,57</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> Saga Prefectural Government (2020a). 第1回佐賀県新型コロナウイルス対策本部会議 [1<sup>st</sup> Saga Prefectural Coronavirus Countermeasures Headquarters Meeting]. *Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare*. 13 March.

<sup>46</sup> Saga Prefectural Government (2020b). 新型コロナウイルス感染症患者の発生について (1例目) [Regarding the outbreak of novel coronavirus infections (1<sup>st</sup> case)]. *Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare*. 14 March.

<sup>47</sup> Ibaraki Prefectural Government (2020). 新型コロナウイルス感染症患者の発生について" [Regarding the outbreak of novel coronavirus infections]. *Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare*. 17 March.

<sup>48</sup> Kagawa Prefectural Government (2020). 新型コロナウイルスに関連した患者の発生について [Regarding the outbreak of novel coronavirus infections]. *Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare*. 17 March.

<sup>49</sup> Fukui Prefectural Government (2020). 新型コロナウイルス感染症の患者の発生について [Regarding the outbreak of novel coronavirus infections]. *Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare*. 18 March.

<sup>50</sup> Hirakawa, D. (2020). p.52.

<sup>51</sup> Yotsumoto, J. (2020)

<sup>52</sup> Omoya & Kaigo (2020). p.7.

<sup>53</sup> See Fig. 9 (p.73)

<sup>54</sup> Kato, M. (2020). 'Japan bans entry from US in expanded travel restrictions'. *Nikkei Asia*. 1 April.

<sup>55</sup> Kopp, R. (2020). 'The pandemic border policy that will leave a scar on Japan's foreign community'. *The Japan Times*. 7 December.

<sup>56</sup> Abiru, T. (2020).

<sup>57</sup> Cunningham, K. (2020). 'The rally-round-the-flag effect and Covid-19'. *UK in a Changing Europe*. 28 May.

## 3.2 Other Factors behind the Japanese Public's Othering of Foreigners

Despite the significant role of political elites and media in shaping public opinion, other factors may similarly determine public opinion. Government and media influence on the public may also depend on psychological factors that facilitate the public's adoption of xenophobic attitudes during a pandemic.

Evolutionary psychology suggests that othering is a practice deeply embedded in the human subconscious, given the survival value of 'antisocial' behavioural traits for early humans<sup>58</sup>. Living in small and close groups where everyone knows one another, competition with other unknown tribes impacted the survival of one's own group, and ergo oneself<sup>59</sup>. Therefore, xenophobia during pandemics may be a natural response to protect one's group and ensure reproduction since diseases are more likely to enter one's group from an outgroup<sup>60,61</sup>. Furthermore, observing sickness generates feelings of disgust – an emotional evolutionary response warning humans to stay away. Research demonstrates that higher disgust levels correlate positively with political conservatism and negatively with openness<sup>62,63</sup>, suggesting that outgroups perceived as sick will experience discrimination.

Moreover, psychoanalytic theory suggests that ingroups other outgroups in times of exasperation, such as during pandemics, to displace one's aggression and inflate one's self-esteem<sup>64</sup>. Based on an unconscious defence mechanism from early childhood separating good from bad, this behaviour projects the good to oneself and the bad to others and reemerges in times of frustration like pandemics<sup>65</sup>. Consequently, ingroups will discriminate against outgroups during pandemics to reduce stress and feel better

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<sup>58</sup> Peterie & Neil (2019). p.6.

<sup>59</sup> Haidt, J. (2013). 'Moral Psychology for the Twenty-first Century'. *Journal of Moral Education* 42(3). p.293.

<sup>60</sup> Kite & Whitley (2016). Cited in: Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020). p.4.

<sup>61</sup> Taylor, K. (2007). Disgust is a factor in extreme prejudice. *British Journal of Social Psychology*. Cited in: Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020). p.4.

<sup>62</sup> Inbar, et al. (2012). 'Disgust sensitivity, political conservatism, and voting'. *Social Psychological and Personal Science*. Cited in: Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020) p.4.

<sup>63</sup> Druschel & Sherman (1999). 'Disgust sensitivity as a function of the big five and gender'. *Personality and Individual Differences*. Cited in: Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020). p.4.

<sup>64</sup> Whitley & Kite (2009). *The psychology of prejudice and discrimination*. Cited in: Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020) p.4.

<sup>65</sup> Joffe, H. (1999). *Risk and 'the other'*. Cited in: Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020). p.4.



about themselves. Similarly, attribution theory propagates that ingroups attribute adverse outcomes like infections to bad luck and take responsibility for their successes, whilst attributing outgroups' failures to poor practice and successes to good luck whilst terror management theory proposes that strong cultural or religious identities create feelings of control over existential threats like pandemics<sup>66</sup>. Such feelings, in turn, create a sense of superiority, motivating ingroups to defend their cultural values against outgroups; heightened nationalism distances ingroups from the reality of mortality and promotes othering outgroups perceived as more at risk<sup>67</sup>.

Scapegoating theories propose that it is human nature to blame outgroups based on perceived weakness and racial differences whilst promoting a favourable self-identity for the ingroup<sup>68</sup>. Social representations theory suggests that ingroups internalise and share beliefs about other identity groups mainly due to media portrayals of those groups' values and practices<sup>69</sup>. Ingroups dissociate themselves from pandemics while othering unknown viruses to outgroups, causing ingroups to internalise dehumanising beliefs about outgroups' behaviours spread through the media, severely affecting outgroups' long-term image; when the media reports on new viruses, the audience's immediate response is to build social representations for the outbreak and find groups to blame, distancing the audience's ingroup from the threat<sup>70</sup>. These two theories suggest that Japanese citizens othering COVID-19 would criticise foreigners, especially the Chinese; Japan has historically perceived the Chinese as inferior<sup>71</sup> and would have perceived them as weak in early 2020 due to COVID-19's enormous impact in China compared with Japan's relatively small outbreaks. Other foreigners, including Europeans and Americans, would likely have been similarly perceived as the virus spread worldwide. Sherif proposes that outgroups are othered and discriminated against due to perceived competition for resources<sup>72</sup>. Japan's vast mask shortages in early 2020

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<sup>66</sup> Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020). p.5.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* p.6.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* p.7.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* p.11

<sup>71</sup> Suzuki, S. (2014). 'The rise of the Chinese 'Other' in Japan's construction of identity: Is China a focal point of Japanese nationalism?'. *The Pacific Review*, 28(1). pp. 95-116.

<sup>72</sup> Sherif, M. (1966). *In common predicament: Social psychology of intergroup conflict and cooperation*. Cited in: Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020). p.6.

due to a heavy reliance on Chinese manufacturers may have amplified xenophobia amongst Japanese citizens<sup>73</sup>.

Individual levels of authoritarianism are a significant factor determining xenophobic stances. Research discovered that people with high authoritarianism levels and right-wing supporters adopt authority figures' statements unquestionably, including racist and discriminatory attitudes, whilst left-wing advocates oppose them<sup>74,75</sup>. Despite possible individual differences regarding xenophobia<sup>76</sup>, Japan's society has an unwritten rule not to stand out and follow the rest of society; *'the nail that sticks out gets hammered down'*<sup>77</sup>. If Japan's increasingly nationalist society adopts anti-foreigner attitudes expressed by the LDP, individuals must comply due to social domination.

Considering the above theories, it is apparent that feelings of national identity become more pronounced during pandemics and propensities to other viruses escalate. Such discrimination engenders a sense of situation controllability, explaining infections by linking them only with outgroups since "bad things happen to bad people" and poor behavioural standards and cultural norms deserve sickness<sup>78</sup>. Media plays a significant role in furthering these psychological responses to pandemics, especially by comparing virus infection and mortality rates of the ingroup with worse-off groups<sup>79</sup>, as done by the LDP and Japanese media in listing 'foreigner' and 'Japanese' COVID-19 cases<sup>80</sup>, demonstrating ingroup favouritism that encourages xenophobia and portrays ingroup superiority<sup>81</sup>. Accordingly, foreigners and other outgroups are blamed and held responsible for disease spreading, with ingroups considering virus countermeasures more applicable for foreigners than for the ingroup<sup>82</sup>.

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<sup>73</sup> Obayashi, H. (2020). 'Mask shortage in Japan to linger despite Abe's production push'. *Nikkei Asia*. 4 March.

<sup>74</sup> Kite & Whitley (2016). Cited in: Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020) p.5.

<sup>75</sup> Duckitt & Sibley (2010). 'Personality, ideology, prejudice, and politics: a dual-process motivational model'. *Journal of Personality*. Cited in: Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020) p.5.

<sup>76</sup> Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020). p.5.

<sup>77</sup> Jecker & Takahashi (2021). 'Shaming and Stigmatizing Healthcare Workers in Japan During the COVID-19 Pandemic'. *Public Health Ethics*. p.3.

<sup>78</sup> Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020). p.9.

<sup>79</sup> Jetten, *et al.* (2020). *Together apart: The psychology of COVID-19*. London, UK: Sage. p.16.

<sup>80</sup> Takahashi, F. (2020). '新型コロナの感染者「3割が外国人」は事実誤認。厚労省「国籍は集計してない」' [The claim that '30%' of people infected with the novel coronavirus 'are foreigners' is a mistake. The Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare says "nationality is not counted"]. *HuffPost Japan*. 1 April.

<sup>81</sup> Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020). p.10.

<sup>82</sup> Assche, *et al.* (2020). 'To punish or to assist? Divergent reactions to ingroup and outgroup members disobeying social distancing'. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 59. pp.594-606.

## Chapter 4: Xenophobia and Discrimination in Japan

*Racism*, an unnatural social construct, organises the world into a hierarchy of superior and inferior races<sup>1</sup>. To overcome this form of discrimination, education about bias and xenophobia is essential<sup>2</sup>, with a crucial step of acknowledging the past of one's own society regarding the unjust treatment of racial and ethnic minorities<sup>3</sup>. Racism in Japan has been prominent throughout history and continues today<sup>4</sup>, defying the prohibition of discrimination of "race, creed, sex, social status, or family origin" stated in the 1947 Constitution of Japan<sup>5</sup>. Understanding the historical context of Japan's racialised nation-building and imperialism from which these trends have developed is necessary to understand current xenophobia trends and COVID-19 pandemic othering<sup>6</sup>.

### 4.1 Pre-1945 Nationalism in Japan

Following the establishment of the Western concept of 'nation' and 'race' in Japan in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>7</sup>, the Japanese political elites aimed to build a nation-state based upon race<sup>8,9</sup>, founding Japanese nationalism on the divinity and 3000-year unbroken rule of Japan's imperial family and the Sun Goddess' direct descendent, the Emperor<sup>10</sup>. The Emperor, considered the father of Japan and the Japanese people, shared the same blood as a deity, fabricating a Japanese racial homogeneity and supremacy that excluded minority groups, such as the Ainu, Burakumin, and Ryūkyūans<sup>11,12,13</sup>. Two terms shaped race in Japan – *minzoku* and *jinshu*. *Minzoku* referred to race as one's ethnic community

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<sup>1</sup> Grosfoguel, R. (2016). 'What is racism?' *Journal of World-Systems Research*, 22(1). p.10.

<sup>2</sup> Cheng & Conca-Cheng (2020). p.2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Fukurai & Yang (2018). 'The History of Japanese Racism, Japanese American Redress, and the Dangers Associated with Government Regulation of Hate Speech'. *Hastings Constitutional Law Quarterly*, 45(3). p.533.

<sup>5</sup> The Constitution of Japan (1947), article 14.

<sup>6</sup> Fukurai & Yang (2018). p.536.

<sup>7</sup> Yamashiro, J.H. (2013). 'The Social Construction of Race and Minorities in Japan'. *Sociology Compass*, 7(2). p.148.

<sup>8</sup> Kawai, Y. (2015a). 'Deracialised Race, Obscured Racism: Japaneseness, Western and Japanese Concepts of Race, and Modalities of Racism'. *Japanese Studies*, 35(1). pp.8-9.

<sup>9</sup> Fukurai & Yang (2018). p.534.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* pp.538-539.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p.534.

<sup>12</sup> Kawai, Y. (2015a). p.6.

<sup>13</sup> Yamashiro, J.H. (2013). p.148.

and nation, similar to the German ‘Volk’ concept, whereas *jinshu* described the Western idea of race focusing on physical features<sup>14</sup>. Both terms were essential in creating a nationality built on racial ideologies separating Japan from Asia *and* the West<sup>15</sup>.

The nation-building project, along with the implementation of a robust central government<sup>16</sup>, inspired Imperial Japan’s beginnings and the oppression of the indigenous Ainu and Ryūkyūan peoples via the annexations of Ezo (present-day Hokkaido) in 1868 and the Ryūkyū Kingdom (present-day Okinawa) in 1879<sup>17</sup>. The *Wajin* (ethnic Japanese) forced these indigenous peoples to assimilate into a ‘homogenous’ *Wajin*-dominated Japanese society while the central government professed Japan’s single and pure ‘Yamato race’<sup>18,19</sup>. The resulting internalisation of *Wajin* racial superiority and the central government’s nationalist agendas driven by the danger of Western powers’ growing influence in Asia vindicated the Japanese Empire’s continued territorial expansion through the invasions of Taiwan (1895), South Sakhalin (1905), Korea (1910), and Manchuria (1931), whilst also gaining control of North Pacific islands after World War I<sup>20</sup>. Ironically, the political elites described Japan’s territorial expansion as the liberalisation of the nation’s Asian “brothers” from Western imperialism<sup>21</sup>. During this expansionist period, the government promoted Japanese heterogeneity through *dōsorōn* and *dōbunron* (the theories that Japan shares a common ancestry and culture with its neighbouring countries), allowing it to propagate the idea of Japan protecting its neighbours from an alien race and legitimise Japan’s actions, whilst simultaneously asserting superiority by illustrating Japan as a melting pot of Asia that, therefore, should be Asia’s leader<sup>22</sup>. Most Japanese imperial ideologues initially

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<sup>14</sup> Kawai, Y. (2015b). ‘Japanese as Both a “Race” and a “Non-Race”’: The Politics of *Jinshu* and *Minzoku* and the Depoliticization of Japanese-ness’. In: Kowner, R., Demel, W. (eds.) (2015). *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia: Interactions, Nationalism, Gender and Lineage*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill. p.368.

<sup>15</sup> Yamamuro, S. (2000). 思想課題としてのアジア [*Problems of Ideology in Asia*]. Tokyo, Japan: Iwanami Shoten. Cited in: Kawai, Y. (2015b). p.368.

<sup>16</sup> Miura, K. (2017). ‘The Edo Era in the History of Japanese Nationalism’. *Shirasagi Hōgaku*, 24(2). p.58.

<sup>17</sup> Yonezawa, M. (2005). ‘Memories of Japanese Identity and Racial Hierarchy’. In: Spickard, P. (2005). *Race and Nation: Ethnic Systems in the Modern World*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge. pp.119-121.

<sup>18</sup> Maruyama, M. (2003). ‘The Ainu: A Discourse on being Japanese’. In: Kramer, E.M. (2003). *The Emerging Monoculture: Assimilation and the “Model Minority”*. Westport, Connecticut, USA: Praeger. pp.97-98.

<sup>19</sup> Okano, K.H. (2011). ‘Long-existing minorities and education’. In: Tsuneyoshi, R., Okano, K.H., Boocock, S.S. (eds.). (2011). *Minorities and Education in Multicultural Japan*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge. p.35.

<sup>20</sup> Etō, S. (1980). ‘Asianism and the Duality of Japanese Colonialism, 1879–1945’. *Itinerario*, 4. pp.114-126.

<sup>21</sup> Shiiyama, C. (2014). *Nationalism and supranational regional solidarity: the case of modern Japanese nationalism and its perception of Asia, 1868-2001*. Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA: ProQuest LLC. p.116.

<sup>22</sup> Fukurai & Yang (2018). p.540.

favoured the brotherhood rationalisation of the Japanese Empire until Chinese and Korean resistance caused a shift towards promoting Japanese racial superiority, which further increased with the outbreak of war with China in 1937 and the US in 1941<sup>23</sup>.

State propaganda was crucial in vindicating Japan's aggressive imperial expansion. The government established an agency to police the public's compliance with state and foreign propaganda and detain and torture nonconformists<sup>24,25</sup>. As with the elites' preference for 'brotherhood' and Japanese heterogeneity over 'pure-blood superiority', state propaganda initially asserted Japan's ethnic similarities with its neighbouring countries to advocate Japanese imperialism, but changed following increasing resistance to Japanese invasion<sup>26</sup> and Japan's rising economic, industrial, and military might that stimulated Japanese chauvinism and a firm belief in a homogenous Japan with Yamato race pure-blood supremacy<sup>27</sup>. Moreover, domestic propaganda agencies further rationalised Japan's jingoistic colonialism and the oppression of ethnic Asians that the Japanese brought to Japan as Japanese subjects and those abroad. For example, rumours that Korean insurrection caused the massive 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake were circulated, leading police officers in the Kantō region to encourage Japanese citizens to kill ethnic Koreans in their neighbourhoods, causing the slaughter of over 6000 Koreans by Japanese militias in Tokyo alone<sup>28</sup>. Consequent to the rampant racism inflamed by propaganda and existing sexism within Japanese society, over 200,000 women were forced into sexual enslavement throughout Japanese-occupied Asia between 1932 and 1945<sup>29</sup>, with mass rape and genocide taking place in Nanking in 1937<sup>30</sup>.

Additionally, non-*Wajin* Asians, mainly Chinese and Koreans, were "sacrificed" for biochemical experiments throughout the 1930s<sup>31</sup> and brought to Japan and Japanese

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<sup>23</sup> Fukurai & Yang (2018). pp.540-541.

<sup>24</sup> Kushner, B. (2007). *The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda*. Honolulu, Hawaii, USA: University of Hawai'i Press. pp.51-53.

<sup>25</sup> Fukurai & Yang (2018). pp.542-543.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p.543.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* p.544

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Totsuka, E. (1999). 'Commentary on a Victory for "Comfort Women": Japan's Judicial Recognition of Military Sexual Slavery'. *Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal*, 8(1). p.48.

<sup>30</sup> Hu, LL. (2020). 'Justification and Opposition of Mass Killing: Black Sun—The Nanking Massacre'. *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law*.

<sup>31</sup> Harris, S.H. (2003). 'Japanese Biomedical Experimentation during the World-War-II Era'. In: Lounsbury, D.E., Bellamy, R.F. (eds.). (2003). *Military Medical Ethics, Volume 2*. p.467.

territories as slaves<sup>32</sup>. However, unlike Germany and the US who acknowledged racial discrimination as driving the atrocities that they committed, the Japanese government continues to deny war crimes and racism's existence in Japan, thus normalising racism in Japanese society<sup>33</sup>. In the early 1990s, Prime Minister Murayama and future Deputy Prime Minister Kōno apologised for war crimes but dismissed racism's active role<sup>34</sup>.

The invasion of China in 1937 saw the Japanese government force “all Japanese nationals” to enlist in the Imperial Army, including ethnic Koreans and Taiwanese that had been forced into becoming Japanese subjects with Japanese citizenship<sup>35</sup>. Their inclusion and a subsequent initiative to change their names to Japanese names reinforced their adopted Japanese identity<sup>36</sup>. However, upon enlisting in the army, ethnic Koreans and Taiwanese were discriminated against since they were ineligible for any benefits, unlike enlisted *Wajin*<sup>37</sup>. Nevertheless, non-*Wajin* coerced into serving in the Japanese army were still tried for war crimes, the same as *Wajin*<sup>38</sup>.

In essence, Western powers' increasing involvement in Asia pressed Japan into manufacturing a divine, pure-blood race based upon the Japanese nation, differentiating *Wajin* from the rest of East Asia and separating itself from Western races. To increase Japanese territory and counter threats of Western imperialism, Japan propagated claims of Japan's heterogeneity to encourage neighbouring countries to accept Japanese rule. However, pushback caused the Japanese government to profess *Wajin* racial supremacy and the idea of a homogenous Japan in which non-*Wajin* Asians would be forced to assimilate into Japanese society, despite ineligibility for *Wajin* rights. Accordingly, Japan had constructed and internalised a clear racial hierarchy of Asia by 1945 with the Japanese race at the pinnacle and Japan's former colonies at the bottom<sup>39</sup>, remaining internalised even today<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Fukurai & Yang (2018). pp.534-535.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* pp.535-536.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* p.574-575.

<sup>35</sup> Ts'ai, H.Y.C. (2009). *Taiwan in Japan's Empire-Building: An Institutional Approach to Colonial Engineering*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge. p.161.

<sup>36</sup> Hsu, C.J. (2014). *The Construction of National Identity in Taiwan's Media, 1896-2012*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill. p.8.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Park, J.M. (2020). 'Last Korean war criminal in Japan still pushing for compensation'. *The Japan Times*. 4 August.

<sup>39</sup> Fukurai & Yang (2018). p.544.

<sup>40</sup> Russell, J.G. (2020). "Mindō" and the Matter of Black Lives in Japan'. *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 18(17). p.7.

## 4.2 Post-1945 Nationalism in Japan

Following Japan's surrender at the end of World War II, and in substitution for Japan's pre-war nationalist identity<sup>41</sup>, discussions of *Nihonjinron* ('Japaneseness') arose, which strengthened the myth of a homogenous national identity based on the Yamato race's pure blood, excluding minority populations like the Ainu and Okinawans<sup>42</sup>. Although there is no objective 'Japanese race', Japan continued developing the notion of being a distinct race based on pure blood in a boom of post-war introspection<sup>43</sup>. This constructed post-war 'Japanese race' emphasised uniquely unique *Wajin* characteristics including introversion and anti-imperialism<sup>44,45</sup> with Imperial Japan overlooked as a minor deviation from the *Wajin* race's norm of peacefulness – a unique trait purportedly evincing Yamato race supremacy<sup>46</sup>. Although post-war Japan renounced its aggressive and militaristic attitude towards its racial convictions, favouring a more reserved sense of supremacy, the nationalism based upon a fabricated race persevered.

This rebranded Japanese identity's proselytisation promoted a homogenous nation-state image, disconnecting Japan and the *Wajin* from their former colonies and subjects forced into emigration to Japan and altogether abandoning the pre-war Japanese imperialist concept of being deliberately multi-ethnic<sup>47</sup>, essentially denying the existence of indigenous and migrant populations. Japanese authorities do not collect any ethnicity data in censuses, bolstering the perception of a homogeneous nation<sup>48,49</sup>, whilst foreigners register on an alien registration system. After Japan's surrender, non-*Wajin* citizens, such as Koreans and Taiwanese brought to Japan as Japanese subjects (now referred to as *Zainichi*), were stripped of their Japanese citizenship, often leaving them

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<sup>41</sup> Befu, H. (1992). 'Symbols of nationalism and *Nihonjinron*'. In: Goodman & Refsing (1992). *Ideology and practice in modern Japan*. London, UK: Routledge. p.42.

<sup>42</sup> Liddicoat, A.J. (2007) 'Internationalising Japan: *Nihonjinron* and the Intercultural in Japanese Language-in-education Policy'. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 2(1). p.34.

<sup>43</sup> Yoshino, K. (1992). *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan: A sociological enquiry*. London, UK: Routledge. p.18.

<sup>44</sup> Liddicoat, A.J. (2007). p.34.

<sup>45</sup> Fukurai & Yang (2018). p.541.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>47</sup> Kitayama, Y. (2018). p.251.

<sup>48</sup> Arudou, D. (2013). "'Embedded Racism' in Japanese Law: Towards a Japanese Critical Race Theory'. *Pacific Asia Inquiry*, 4(1). p.162.

<sup>49</sup> Kitayama, Y. (2018). p.251.

stateless<sup>50</sup>. Since 1991, *Zainichi* have resided in Japan as ‘special permanent residents’ with *de facto* citizenship and the right to use Korean or Taiwanese names rather than Japanese names, unlike before<sup>51</sup>. However, Imperial Japan’s colonial discrimination towards the *Zainichi* continued since they remained without the same rights as *Wajin*, including suffrage<sup>52</sup>. Most *Zainichi* residents are registered as foreign residents<sup>53</sup>, making up 10.7% of all long-term foreign residents in Japan<sup>54</sup>. Moreover, the Japanese Nationality Law relies on *jus sanguinis*. Therefore, eligibility for full *Wajin* rights, privileges, and immunities requires being born to a *Wajin*. Before 1947, it was possible to acquire Japanese citizenship through *jus matrimonii* (i.e. marrying a *Wajin*), but post-war Japan abolished this option<sup>55</sup>, leading Japan to declare in a human rights report to the United Nations in 1999 that ‘ethnic purity’ is required to be considered a Japanese citizen, thus rationalising mistreatment and discrimination of non-*Wajin* in Japan<sup>56</sup>.

The only way to *receive* Japanese citizenship is through the racialised naturalisation process, involving investigations into applicants’ ‘Japaneseness’ (i.e. *Wajin*-ness) – a process including intrusive questions about how applicants sleep, inspections of applicants’ refrigerators to assess the Japaneseness of the food that applicants consume, and interviews with *Wajin* neighbours to scrutinise applicants’ Japaneseness further, thus allowing for personal and racialised discretion in the naturalisation screening process<sup>57</sup>. The aforementioned Nationality Law, which encompasses the naturalisation process, further establishes racism in Japanese society by legally enforcing it and endorsing othering against non-*Wajin*, which reinforces a racialised mentality that *Wajin* are one homogenous group with specific common characteristics and anybody not fitting this frame cannot be Japanese. Although the Nationality Law affects foreigners (i.e. non-*Wajin*) legally, the message it promotes to

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<sup>50</sup> Kitayama, Y. (2018). p.252.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Chung, E.A. (2006). ‘The Korean citizen in Japanese civil society’. In: Lee, S.I., Murphy-Shigematsu, S., Befu, H. (eds.). (2006). *Japan’s Diversity Dilemmas: Ethnicity, Citizenship, and Education*. New York, USA: iUniverse. p.128.

<sup>53</sup> Kitayama, Y. (2018). p.252.

<sup>54</sup> Immigration Services Agency of Japan (2020). *2020 Immigration Control and Residency Management*. p.27.

<sup>55</sup> Jones, C.P. (2019). ‘The Robot Koseki: A Japanese Law Model for Regulating Autonomous Machines’. *Journal of Business & Technology Law*, 14(2). p.432.

<sup>56</sup> Arudou, D. (2013). p.161.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* p.159.



Japanese citizens is that it is acceptable to discriminate against foreigners both legally *and* normatively<sup>58</sup>.

Furthermore, distinctions between *Wajin*, *Zainichi*, and foreigners, in general, has been contentious in human rights debates. The Supreme Court of Japan declared that Japanese nationality (i.e. being *Wajin*) is required to guarantee the respect of one's human rights in Japan<sup>59</sup>. Moreover, the Japanese central and municipal governments conduct biased surveys leading respondents to doubt whether non-*Wajin* deserve the same human rights as *Wajin* by implying human rights' optionality for non-*Wajin* and, therefore, dehumanising non-*Wajin*<sup>60</sup>. Even in 2017, one such survey found that fewer than 50% of respondents believed that non-*Wajin* deserve the same human rights as *Wajin*<sup>61</sup>, and a chief prosecutor in 2011 revealed that the Japanese have always been taught that non-*Wajin* "have no human rights"<sup>62</sup>. Nevertheless, despite professing a homogenous Japan, the 1980s and growing globalisation did provide Japan opportunities to demonstrate diversity. The LDP released guidelines for the education system to emphasise Japan's 'internationalisation' and demonstrate its role in the global economy. However, rather than promoting diversity, ethnocentricity and essentialism reinforced racial stereotypes highlighting differences between *Wajin* and the rest of the world, thus buttressing the concept of a homogenous nation-state<sup>63,64</sup>.

Experts argue that the role of the United States – Japan's post-war occupier in charge of its reformation – contributed significantly to the continuation of *Wajin* racial supremacy beliefs in Japan. Despite the opportunity to democratise Japan by toppling the *Zaibatsu* oligarchy (a business conglomerate) and indict totalitarian war criminals, the US opted for stability by conserving the administration and facilitating its rule, which enabled the continued manifestation of the *Wajin* racial superiority ideology<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> Arudou, D. (2013). pp.161-162.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* p.161

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Kaminokawa Town (2018). 上三川町 人権に関する町民意識調査報告書 [Kaminokawa Town Citizens' Awareness Survey Report on Human Rights]. p.52.

<sup>62</sup> Arudou, D. (2013). p.161.

<sup>63</sup> Kitayama, Y. (2018). p.252-253.

<sup>64</sup> Sherlock, Z. (2016). 'Japan's textbook inequality: How cultural bias affects foreign language acquisition'. *Power and Education*, 8(1). p.74.

<sup>65</sup> Cumings, B. (1993). 'Japan's Position in the World System'. In: Gordon, A. (ed.). (1993). *Postwar Japan as History*. London, UK: University of California Press. p.40.

However, Japan's 1947 Constitution enforced by the US did later democratise the nation, allowing the LDP's creation in 1955 in retaliation to Japan's growing left wing and its largely uninterrupted one-party dominance in Japanese politics ever since, ensuring that Japan's racialised nationalism presided<sup>66</sup>. Consequently, tough protectionism legitimised by racially discriminatory propaganda exploited the rest of Asia, facilitating Japan's economic and industrial development<sup>67</sup>. The resulting Japanese economic miracle would then further confirm *Wajin* supremacy beliefs<sup>68</sup>.

Additionally, the Cold War saw the US pit Japan against its former colonies, including Communist China after 1949, North Korea during the Korean War, and North Vietnam during the Vietnam War. The Japanese government backed aggressive US military activity in Vietnam, Indonesia, Laos, and Cambodia that claimed to liberate these regions, evoking memories of Imperial Japan's justification for its expansion<sup>69</sup> and conserving Japan's sociopolitical dominance in East Asia. Consequently, Japan's post-war ideologies preserved nationalism and authoritarianism whilst also supposedly being pro-USA and anti-Communism<sup>70</sup>.

### 4.3 Resurgence of Nationalism in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Japan

Although Japan saw relatively subdued ethno-nationalist views in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century compared to pre-war times, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century brought about a renewed right-wing nationalist agenda with a prominent xenophobic element<sup>71</sup> through the incumbent party, the Liberal Democratic Party<sup>72,73</sup>. The explicit return of right-wing mentalities was apparent early in the millennium when the LDP in 2001 denied the existence of races other than the *Wajin* race in Japan, and, therefore, claimed it

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<sup>66</sup> Umeda, M. (2019). 'The Liberal Democratic Party: Its adaptability and predominance in Japanese politics for 60 years'. *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, 4(1). pp.8-22.

<sup>67</sup> Fukurai & Yang (2018). p.546.

<sup>68</sup> Bukh, A. (2009). *Japan's National Identity and Foreign Policy*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge. p.42.

<sup>69</sup> Fukurai & Yang (2018). pp.545-546.

<sup>70</sup> Kitayama, Y. (2018). p.253.

<sup>71</sup> Higuchi & Matsutani (2016) 'Support for the radical right in Japan: Converging to the European politics?' *Social Theory and Dynamics*, 1. p.59.

<sup>72</sup> Fukurai & Yang (2018). p.573.

<sup>73</sup> Nakano, K. (2016) 'New right transformation in Japan'. In: Mullins, M.R., Nakano, K. (eds.) *Disasters and Social Crisis in Contemporary Japan: Political, religious, and sociocultural responses*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. pp.23-41.

impossible for Japan to be racist<sup>74</sup>, a theory commonly reaffirmed by the public<sup>75</sup>. Subsequently, the right-wing from the international community has praised the LDP for its discriminatory policies. Steve Bannon, a former advisor to US President Trump, even branded Prime Minister Abe as “Trump before Trump”, whilst Simone di Stefano of Italy’s neofascist Casa Pound and the xenophobic Alternative for Germany’s Jan Moldenhauer have supported and commended LDP policies, especially its immigration policy<sup>76</sup>. Japan’s reinvigorated nationalism can be considered a response to Japanese officials’ public apologies in the 1990s for wartime suffering that Japan caused its neighbouring countries, which outraged right-wing politicians and provoked the foundation of grassroots right-wing nationalist groups, such as *Nippon Kaigi*, wishing to rebuild Japan on nationalist foundations similar to those of Imperial Japan<sup>77,78</sup>. *Nippon Kaigi*, receiving heavy media coverage, was able to spread revisionist propaganda to the masses<sup>79</sup>. Additionally, nationalist politicians, including Tokyo’s former governor, aired xenophobic attitudes towards Japan’s former colonies<sup>80</sup>. Other factors advancing the adoption of nationalist and xenophobic attitudes since the 1990s were Japan’s prolonged economic recession<sup>81</sup>, territory disputes, the abduction of Japanese citizens by North Korea, international sporting competitions, including the 2002 Football World Cup hosted in Japan and South Korea, anti-Japan demonstrations, and the internet’s rise<sup>82</sup>.

Since Abe’s second term as Prime Minister of Japan began in 2012, the LDP has pushed for a more authoritarian governance model by gradually implementing a national-populist agenda that enforces an ‘us versus them’ ideology, promoting Japanese mono-ethnicity and a common self-image, and allowing room for xenophobia to grow within a democratic society<sup>83</sup>. Although similar shifts occurred in the West in recent years, Japanese right-wing national-populism is not anti-establishment, as it is in the

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<sup>74</sup> Arudou, D. (2013). p.162.

<sup>75</sup> Arudou, D. (2020). ‘2020 was a watershed year for Japan’s foreign residents’. *The Japan Times*. 31 December.

<sup>76</sup> Hofmann, R. (2018)

<sup>77</sup> Kitayama, Y. (2018). p.254.

<sup>78</sup> Hofmann, R. (2018)

<sup>79</sup> Kitayama, Y. (2018). p.254.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Ito, K. (2014). ‘Anti-Korean Sentiment and Hate Speech in the Current Japan: A Report from the Street’. *Procedia Environmental Sciences*, 20. p.436.

<sup>82</sup> Higuchi, N. (2017). 排外主義とヘイトスピーチ [*Xenophobia and Hate Speech*]. Cited in: Kitayama, Y. (2018). p.255.

<sup>83</sup> Kitayama, Y. (2018). p.250.

West, but *is* the establishment<sup>84</sup> – unsurprising considering that Abe was *Nippon Kaigi*'s special advisor and most of his cabinet were members<sup>85</sup>. *Nippon Kaigi* has significantly influenced the Japanese population by advising on education policies. The group helped reform the education system in 2006 from 'serving students' to 'serving the state' by emphasising a patriotic education, introducing revisionist textbooks that refute any Japanese wrongdoing or atrocities in Japan's history, and making 'moral studies' a subject promoting Japanese homogeneity and incontrovertible obedience to authority whilst impeding freedom of thought and being assessed on patriotic content<sup>86,87</sup>. Additionally, *Nippon Kaigi* was behind the 1999 National Flag and Anthem Act – a mandate to use the national flag and sing the national anthem at school events to increase nationalism, punishing non-compliance<sup>88,89</sup>. Recent education policies pushed by *Nippon Kaigi* led the Japan Teachers Union, established in 1947 under the slogan "do not send our students to war again", to oppose the LDP and Ministry of Education for evoking memories of children's wartime indoctrination to serve Japan uncritically<sup>90</sup>.

Furthermore, LDP members in recent years have advocated Nazism. Party policy chief, Inada Tomomi, and internal affairs minister, Takaichi Sanae, posed for photos with neo-nazi leaders and promoted a book about Hitler's governance strategies<sup>91</sup>. Former education reform advisor and head of the National Public Safety Commission, Yamatani Eriko, has a long-lasting association with *Zaitokukai* – a group established during Abe's first term as Prime Minister that became increasingly aggressive since Abe's second term<sup>92</sup>, openly endorsing the genocide of Japan's ethnic Korean population<sup>93</sup>. Deputy Prime Minister Asō has repeatedly commended Hitler's motives and the Nazi regime's rise to power<sup>94</sup>. Numerous LDP officials praising Hitler's rise to power and having links to

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<sup>84</sup> Vickers, E. (2017). 'All Quiet on the Eastern Front?: Populism, Nationalism, and Democracy in East Asia'. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 18(2). pp.59-68.

<sup>85</sup> Tawara, Y. (2017). 'What is the Aim of Nippon Kaigi, the Ultra-Right Organization that Supports Japan's Abe Administration?' *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 15(21). p.9.

<sup>86</sup> Kitayama, Y. (2018). pp.257-258.

<sup>87</sup> Tawara, Y. (2017). p.2.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* p.13.

<sup>89</sup> Kitayama, Y. (2018). p.257.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> McNeill, D. (2014)

<sup>92</sup> Johnston, E. (2013). 'Politicians silent on curbing hate speech'. *The Japan Times*. 10 July.

<sup>93</sup> McNeill, D. (2014)

<sup>94</sup> Kaneko, K. (2017). 'Japan's Deputy PM forced to apologise after saying Adolf Hitler had 'right motives''. *The Independent*. 30 August.

extreme right-wing groups is highly significant considering the LDP's objective to reform the Japanese constitution drafted under US supervision and in effect since 1947.

Hate speech violates human rights and influences mass opinion on outsiders<sup>95</sup>. The UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, ratified by Japan, requires governments to condemn and prevent propaganda suggesting the superiority of a single race or ethnic group or promoting racial hatred<sup>96</sup>, which is also enshrined in the Constitution of Japan<sup>97</sup>. However, despite evident rises in xenophobia, especially towards former colonies, and 'hate speech' reaching Japan's top 10 national buzzwords in 2013, indicating nationalism's resurgence in Japan<sup>98</sup>, the LDP and its hostility towards the current constitution has been averse to introducing hate speech legislation, stating that it violates freedom of speech<sup>99</sup>, preferring to "leave this matter to the good conscience of the average Japanese"<sup>100</sup>. The international community, including the United Nations in 2014<sup>101</sup>, has repeatedly called for Japan to criminalise hate speech, particularly towards Japan's ethnic minorities. Following increased public awareness of hate speech and continued pushes from minorities and their supporters, the LDP introduced an anti-hate speech law in May 2016<sup>102</sup>, although it lacks any substance as it neither bans nor punishes hate speech<sup>103</sup> and does not cover undocumented foreign nationals<sup>104</sup>, leaving formally recognised hate speech incidents unpunished in 2019<sup>105</sup>. However, the national legislation has spurred bylaws in some Japanese cities like Osaka, but neither enforced penalties for hate speech until Kawasaki's bylaw in 2020<sup>106</sup>.

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<sup>95</sup> McGonagle, T. (2013) *The Council of Europe against online hate speech: Conundrums and challenges*. [Expert paper, MCM 2013(005)]. pp.4-5.

<sup>96</sup> United Nations (1965). *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*. New York, USA. 10 June, 1958, United Nations Treaty Series 660. p.3.

<sup>97</sup> The Constitution of Japan (1947), article 14.

<sup>98</sup> Kitayama, Y. (2018). p.255.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Johnston, E. (2013)

<sup>101</sup> Murai, S. (2016). 'U.N. rapporteur urges Japan to consider law banning hate speech'. *The Japan Times*. 8 February.

<sup>102</sup> Kitayama, Y. (2018). p.255.

<sup>103</sup> Osaki, T. (2016). 'Diet passes Japan's first law to curb hate speech'. *The Japan Times*. 24 May.

<sup>104</sup> Gomez & Takahashi (2020). 'Inaction risks hate speech normalization in Japan'. *The Jakarta Post*. 26 August.

<sup>105</sup> Arudou, D. (2020)

<sup>106</sup> Mochida, J. (2020). 'ヘイトスピーチは止まったか：川崎市が全国初の罰則付き条例' [Has hate speech stopped? – Kawasaki City introduces the first bylaw with penalties in Japan]. *nippon.com*. 12 November.

Additionally, the LDP has attempted to control Japan's mass media more than before to further push its national-populist agenda, such as by passing State Secrecy Laws in 2013 that restrict the media's ability to gather news and stifle any possibility of government criticism<sup>107</sup>. A close friend of Abe and former head of *NHK*, Japan's largest broadcasting company, Momii Katsuto, supported the LDP's vision for the mass media, stating that *NHK* "should not deviate from the government's position in its reporting", nor criticise the government in any way, promoting nationalist revisionism and denying that war crimes committed by Japan ever occurred<sup>108,109</sup>.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Japan has maintained an environment that promotes conformity and Japanese authoritarianism based on culturalist essentialism from a young age. With its grip on the traditional media and the ability through social media to influence the public at any given time, the LDP's push for nationalism can continue unchecked. Racism and xenophobia in Japan, while rarely violent and often without malice, are based upon the culturalist nationalism and exceptionalism that the Japanese government can promote to a greater scale during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>110</sup>, especially when information gaps between political elites and the public are greatest. When Abe stepped down from his position as Prime Minister in September 2020, his successor, Suga Yoshihide, promised policy continuity, thus suggesting a continuation of his predecessor's authoritarian right-wing agenda and the propagation of Japanese cultural exceptionalism<sup>111</sup>. Suga has since been nicknamed 'Sugalin', reflecting his Stalin-like authoritarian methods since taking over as Prime Minister<sup>112</sup>. Continuation of the LDP's pronounced nationalism does not bode well for foreigners as it corresponds to continued othering, even after the COVID-19 pandemic.

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<sup>107</sup> McCurry, J. (2014). 'Abe defends Japan's secrets law that could jail whistleblowers for 10 years'. *The Guardian*. 10 December.

<sup>108</sup> Hofmann, R. (2018)

<sup>109</sup> Fackler, M. (2014). 'Japan's Public Broadcaster Faces Accusations of Shift to the Right'. *The New York Times*. 31 January.

<sup>110</sup> Lezott, C. (2020). 'Myths and facts about racism in Japan'. *Zenbird*. 10 May.

<sup>111</sup> Ooi, S.M. (2021)

<sup>112</sup> Bouckaert, E. (2021). 'An Assessment of Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga: Which Path is he taking?' *European Institute for Asian Studies*. 25 January.

## Chapter 5: Pandemic Othering

### 5.1 Pandemic Othering around the World

Every populated continent has a documented history of pandemic othering; it is not isolated to any political or societal system since all societies, by necessity, try to explain the inexplicable<sup>1</sup>. Pandemic othering during the Black Death in the Middle Ages saw Western European populations massacre Jewish communities, the homeless, and foreigners<sup>2</sup>. In 1876, San Francisco experienced a severe smallpox epidemic for which the white American population and health officials blamed the ‘treacherous’ Chinese, emphasising their alienness and the dangers they bring to white society<sup>3</sup>. However, it was San Francisco’s Irish community that was suffering significantly from the epidemic, not the Chinese<sup>4</sup>. Despite evidence vindicating them, the Chinese continued to experience racial discrimination<sup>5</sup>. Similar racial targeting of the Chinese community occurred in Calgary during a smallpox outbreak two decades later<sup>6</sup>. Comparably, American citizens were othered and attacked in Guangzhou, China, for supposedly importing the bubonic plague in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>7</sup>. The third bubonic plague caused othering in Argentina, Brazil, and South Africa, leading to social engineering of the population by forcing outgroups away from urban areas<sup>8,9</sup>. Moreover, the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic is a clear example of pandemic othering considering its more common name, the ‘Spanish flu’, coined within Europe and America to associate the

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<sup>1</sup> Delumeau, J. (1978). *La Peur en Occident (XIVe-XVIIIe siècles): une cité assiégée*. Paris, France: Fayard. Cited in: Chemin, A. (2020)

<sup>2</sup> Barry & Gualde (2008). ‘La Peste noire dans l’Occident chrétien et musulman, 1347-1353’. *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, 25(2). p.480.

<sup>3</sup> Shah, N. (2001). *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco’s Chinatown*. London, England: University of California Press. p.1.

<sup>4</sup> Klee, L. (1983). ‘The “Regulars” And The Chinese: Ethnicity And Public Health In 1870s San Francisco’. *Urban Anthropology*, 181–207. Cited in: Dionne & Turkmen (2020). p.11.

<sup>5</sup> Dionne & Turkmen (2020). p.4.

<sup>6</sup> Burnett, K. (2012). ‘Race, Disease, and Public Violence: Smallpox and the (Un)Making of Calgary’s Chinatown, 1892’. *Social History of Medicine*, 25(2). pp.366-373.

<sup>7</sup> Cohn, S.K. (2018). *Epidemics: Hate and Compassion from the Plague of Athens to AIDS*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. p.346.

<sup>8</sup> Echenberg, M. (2010). *Plague Ports: The Global Urban Impact of Bubonic Plague, 1894–1901*. New York, USA: NYU Press. Cited in: Dionne & Turkmen (2020). pp.4-5.

<sup>9</sup> White, A.I.R. (2018). ‘Global Risks, Divergent Pandemics: Contrasting Responses to Bubonic Plague and Smallpox in 1901 Cape Town’. *Social Science History*, 42(1). pp.135-58. Cited in: Dionne & Turkmen (2020). pp.4-5.

disease with Spain despite the outbreak not originating there<sup>10</sup>. It was branded ‘Spanish’ due to Spain’s neutrality during World War I and consequent transparency, whereas nations at war tried to suppress reports about their soldiers falling ill<sup>11,12</sup>. Spanish narratives similarly othered the virus, calling it the “French Flu”<sup>13</sup> and discriminating against outsiders<sup>14</sup>.

## COVID-19

Considering the tradition of othering diseases, it is unsurprising that COVID-19 showcased a plethora of pandemic othering given its widespread impact and high mortality rates in developed countries<sup>15</sup>. Alongside heightened Sino-American tensions and the outbreak originating in China, pandemic othering against the Chinese was expected within the United States – especially after the US already exhibited such behaviour in 2016, branding the Zika virus as an “immigrant’s disease”<sup>16</sup>. Following the convention of naming viruses as external threats, the Trump administration referred to COVID-19 as the “China virus” or “Kung Flu”<sup>17</sup>. Given the regularity of the Trump administration’s othering, much focus has been on anti-Asian racial discrimination in the US<sup>18</sup>. However, pandemic othering is not unique to any one place.

Asian communities have similarly experienced violent, vocal, and passive targeting in France<sup>19</sup>, Italy<sup>20</sup>, Germany<sup>21</sup>, the UK<sup>22</sup>, and other European countries<sup>23</sup>. The governor

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<sup>10</sup> Hoppe, T. (2018). “‘Spanish Flu’: When Infectious Disease Names Blur Origins and Stigmatize Those Infected”. *American Journal of Public Health*, 108(11). p.1462.

<sup>11</sup> Martini, *et al.* (2019). ‘The Spanish Influenza Pandemic: a lesson from history 100 years after 1918’. *Journal of Preventive Medicine and Hygiene*, 60(1). p.65.

<sup>12</sup> Kaur, H. (2020). ‘Yes, we long have referred to disease outbreaks by geographic places. Here's why we shouldn't anymore’. *CNN*. 28 March.

<sup>13</sup> Echeverri, B. (1993). ‘La gripe española: la pandemia de 1918–1919’. *Colección Monografías*, 132. Cited in: Trilla, *et al.* (2008). ‘The 1918 “Spanish Flu” in Spain’. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, 47(5). p.669.

<sup>14</sup> Dionne & Turkmen (2020). p.5.

<sup>15</sup> Monteiro & Renugaa (2020)

<sup>16</sup> Klain, R. (2018). ‘Politics and Pandemics’. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 379(23). p.2192.

<sup>17</sup> Dionne & Turkmen (2020). p.7.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Thiessen T. (2020). ‘France In Grips Of Racism Epidemic, As Coronavirus Fans Anti-Asian Hysteria’. *Forbes*. 11 February.

<sup>20</sup> Lowen, M. (2020). ‘Coronavirus: Chinese targeted as Italians panic’. *BBC News*. 4 February.

<sup>21</sup> Van OpDorp, D. (2020). ‘Controversy erupts after restaurant’s ‘racist’ coronavirus reopening post’. *Deutsche Welle*. 14 May.

<sup>22</sup> Woodyat, A. (2020). ‘London police seek four men after ‘racist’ coronavirus attack on East Asian student’. *CNN*. 5 March.

<sup>23</sup> *Human Rights Watch* (2020). ‘Covid-19 Fueling Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia Worldwide’. 12 May.



of Italy's Veneto region othered the Chinese by claiming Italian cultural superiority in contrast to Chinese inferiority<sup>24</sup>. The Brazilian education minister expressed that COVID-19 was China's strategy for world domination<sup>25</sup>. African countries also discriminated against Asians and foreigners in general<sup>26,27</sup>. Malaysia arrested masses of refugees and migrant workers following unfounded suggestions that Rohingya refugees and migrants were spreading coronavirus<sup>28</sup>. COVID-19 caused an intensification of othering rhetoric against foreigners in Kuwait, Bahrain, and other Middle Eastern countries<sup>29</sup>. Furthermore, South Korea and Indonesia similarly experienced surging xenophobia, particularly towards the Chinese<sup>30,31</sup>. Despite its own citizens being othered worldwide, China itself exhibited racial discrimination, targeting African residents in Guangzhou<sup>32</sup>, the city where Americans had previously been othered during the third bubonic plague.

These outbreaks of underlying racism all occurred within the early stages of the pandemic— a symptom of vulnerability and helplessness common in societies worldwide regardless of political and social ideologies, causing xenophobia to manifest<sup>33</sup>. Although Japan may disagree<sup>34</sup>, Japan is no exception to pandemic othering, experiencing 'emergency racism'<sup>35</sup>, including after natural disasters in which foreign residents have

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<sup>24</sup> Laganà, G. (2020). 'Zaia: "I cinesi? Tutti li abbiamo visti mangiare i topi vivi"'. *Il Giornale*. 28 February.

<sup>25</sup> Sullivan, R. (2020). 'Coronavirus: Brazil minister suggests pandemic part of China's 'plan for world domination''. *The Independent*. 7 April.

<sup>26</sup> Solomon, S. (2020). 'Coronavirus Brings 'Sinophobia' to Africa'. *VOA News*. 4 March.

<sup>27</sup> York, G. (2020). 'Coronavirus triggers xenophobia in some African countries'. *The Globe and Mail*. 19 March.

<sup>28</sup> Reuters (2020). 'Malaysia rounds up migrants to contain coronavirus, U.N. warns of detention risks'. 2 May.

<sup>29</sup> *Migrant-Rights.org* (2020). 'The COVID-19 crisis is fueling more racist discourse towards migrant workers in the Gulf'. 5 April.

<sup>30</sup> Suzuki, S. (2020). 'Hate China virus' puts South Korea's Moon under pressure'. *Nikkei Asia*. 10 February.

<sup>31</sup> Llewellyn, A. (2020). 'Coronavirus: anti-Chinese social media 'more scary than Covid-19' in Indonesia'. *South China Morning Post*. 22 March.

<sup>32</sup> Fifield, A. (2020). 'Africans in China allege racism as fear of new virus cases unleashes xenophobia'. *The Washington Post*. 13 April.

<sup>33</sup> Reny & Barreto (2020). 'Xenophobia in the time of pandemic: othering, anti-Asian attitudes, and COVID-19'. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*. Cited in: Dionne & Turkmen (2020). p.10.

<sup>34</sup> Takahashi, T. (2020). 'Racism Denial: The Case of Japan'. *Izanau*. 4 August.

<sup>35</sup> Yasuda, K. (2020). '「命の線引きされた気持ち」 新型コロナ拡大が招く「外国人嫌悪」の危うさ」 [“Feelings drawn by life”: The danger of ‘xenophobia’ caused by the spread of coronavirus]. *Yahoo! News Japan*. 4 April.

been brutally massacred within the past century<sup>36</sup> and subject to vigilantism within the past decade<sup>37,38</sup>, amongst general racial discrimination<sup>39</sup>.

## 5.2 Pandemic Othering in Japan

Japan, like the rest of the world, has a history of pandemic othering, such as branding syphilis a “Chinese disease”<sup>40,41</sup> and a “Portuguese disease” during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries, respectively<sup>42</sup>. A significant cholera outbreak in 1858 in Edo (modern-day Tokyo) coincided with the signing of the five asymmetrically unfavourable Ansei Treaties with foreign countries following over two centuries of minimal foreign relations, heightening xenophobic attitudes<sup>43,44</sup>. Japan continued its customary pandemic othering against foreigners in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, particularly towards the Chinese and Koreans, during the SARS and MERS epidemics despite being relatively minimally affected, if at all<sup>45,46,47,48</sup>. Being one of the first countries outside of China affected by COVID-19, pandemic othering has been even more rampant in Japan’s public and political discourse than in previous epidemics.

As previously discussed, reinforced national identity intensifies xenophobia<sup>49</sup>. When national identity is founded on ethnicity, racial discrimination can be extreme, especially if group narcissism (a belief of cultural and national superiority over all

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<sup>36</sup> Hasegawa, K. (2020). 'The Massacre of Koreans in Yokohama in the Aftermath of the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923'. *Monumenta Nipponica*, 75(1).

<sup>37</sup> *Independent Web Journal* (2014). ‘【広島土砂災害】災害に乗じて広がる流言飛語「朝鮮人洗浄」を煽る「自警団」～反復される関東大震災「朝鮮人虐殺」’ [Hiroshima landslide disaster: "Vigilantism" fueling rumored "Korean washing" spreading in response to the disaster – memories of the Great Kantō Earthquake “Korean massacre”]. 31 August.

<sup>38</sup> Yasuda, K. (2020)

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Ren, *et al.* (2020). ‘Fear can be more harmful than the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 in controlling the corona virus disease 2019 epidemic’. *World Journal of Clinical Cases*, 8(4). p.654.

<sup>41</sup> Kišjuhas, A. (2020). ‘Virus rasizma’. *Danas*. 23 February.

<sup>42</sup> Nelkin & Gilman (1988). ‘Placing Blame for Devastating Disease’. *Social Research*, 55(3). p.365.

<sup>43</sup> Hashino, Y. (2020). “「コロリ」対策も「手洗い」「換気」が重要だった：幕末から明治にかけてのコレラ大流行と予防法’ [Cholera Outbreaks and Public Health in Modernizing Japan]. *nippon.com*. 5 April

<sup>44</sup> Unoki, K. (2016). *International Relations and the Origins of the Pacific War*. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. p.37.

<sup>45</sup> Hsin & Macer (2004). p.213.

<sup>46</sup> Zheng, *et al.* (2005). p.127.

<sup>47</sup> Fung, *et al.* (2018). p.13.

<sup>48</sup> Saitō, K. (2020).

<sup>49</sup> Kite & Whitley (2016). pp.310-311.

others whilst denying any negative features) is also present<sup>50,51</sup>. Consequently, society would discriminate against outgroups by necessity to maintain ingroup “purity”<sup>52,53</sup>. Having repeatedly emphasised its homogeneity<sup>54,55,56,57</sup>, Japan is thus in this situation.

## COVID-19

Japan’s COVID-19 pandemic othering began during the outbreak’s initial stages, especially during the LDP’s incompetent virus management on the Diamond Princess cruise ship in February 2020<sup>58</sup>. Despite global consensus on disembarkation of crew and passengers upon an onboard epidemic being the best virus containment method, as recognised by Japanese experts<sup>59,60</sup>, the LDP decided the ship should stay off the coast of Yokohama (i.e. outside of Japan) and become a ‘floating Petri dish’ to skew infection statistics, othering the virus to give the impression of a ‘COVID-safe’ Japan and avoid negative press coverage before the Olympics<sup>61,62,63</sup>. This policy was evident given that government statistics separated “cruise” and subsequently “airport” cases from the total “Japanese” cases, even after case numbers within Japan had overtaken “charter” cases<sup>64</sup>, thus appearing to attempt to downplay COVID-19 in Japan (a practice where the LDP

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<sup>50</sup> Kite & Whitley (2016). p.311.

<sup>51</sup> Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020). p.10.

<sup>52</sup> Green *et al.* (2010)

<sup>53</sup> Taylor, K. (2007). ‘Disgust is a factor in extreme prejudice’. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 46. p.601.

<sup>54</sup> Iwabuchi, K. (1994). ‘Complicit exoticism: Japan and its other’. *Continuum*, 8(2).

<sup>55</sup> Matthews, J. (2020). “‘Cultural Exceptionalism’ in the Global Exchange of (Mis)Information around Japan’s Responses to Covid-19”. *Media and Communication*, 8(2). p.448.

<sup>56</sup> Russell, J.G. (2020). p.4.

<sup>57</sup> Takeuchi, M. (2015). *A Case Study of “Othering” in Japanese Schools: Rhetoric and Reality*. USA: Lambert Academic Publishing. p.254.

<sup>58</sup> Maly, E. (2020)

<sup>59</sup> Kami, M. (2020). ‘新型コロナウイルス174人の集団感染「クルーズ船3700人隔離は正しかったのか」——医師の見解は？」 [Outbreak of 174 people with coronavirus: Is the isolation of 3,700 cruise ships correct? – What do doctors think?]. *Bunshun*. 13 February.

<sup>60</sup> Adelstein & Yamamoto (2020)

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Kami, M. (2020). Cited in: Sturmer & Asada (2020). ‘Coronavirus could see the Tokyo Olympics cancelled. Is Japan's handling of the outbreak to blame?’ *ABC News*. 3 March.

<sup>63</sup> Maly, E. (2020)

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

has experience<sup>65</sup>) and protect the Tokyo Olympics<sup>66,67,68,69,70,71</sup>. This strategy is unsurprising given the LDP's notoriety in creating a dichotomy of Japanese versus foreigners in government statistics<sup>72</sup> to create a sense of *Wajin* purity and peace on Japanese lands that are being tainted by foreigners<sup>73</sup>, as well as manipulating and falsifying data, causing 79% of Japanese citizens to distrust government statistics<sup>74,75</sup>. Accordingly, the government distributed false data through social media regarding the proportion of coronavirus-infected “foreigners” in Japan, portraying a larger proportion of infections as foreigners than necessarily true. Since case reporting did not require ‘nationality’ to be recorded, all reported cases without a ‘nationality’ were listed as “foreigners”<sup>76</sup>. When questioned, the government admitted the data's incorrectness<sup>77</sup>. Similarly, traditional media narratives focused on tracing domestic cases to foreigners and travel abroad, reinforcing the ‘COVID-safe’ Japan perception<sup>78</sup>, with research demonstrating that Japan's traditional news media heavily focused on the pandemic situation abroad during the first three months of 2020, only really paying attention to the domestic situation following the Olympics' postponement<sup>79</sup>. Correspondingly, the government's decision to name COVID-19 call centres ‘Call Centres for Returnees to Japan and Contacts’ further othered the virus by insinuating the impossibility of virus contraction *within* Japan<sup>80</sup>.

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<sup>65</sup> Funabashi & Kitazawa (2012). ‘Fukushima in review: A complex disaster, a disastrous response’. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 68(2). p.18.

<sup>66</sup> Dudden, A. (2020b). ‘Masks, Science, and Being Foreign: Japan during the Initial Phase of COVID-19’. In: Chaturvedi, V. (2020). *The Pandemic: Perspectives on Asia*. Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA: Association for Asian Studies. p.53.

<sup>67</sup> Kami, M. (2020). Cited in: Sturmer & Asada (2020)

<sup>68</sup> Kingston, J. (2020b). ‘Abe Prioritized Olympics, Slowing Japan's Pandemic Response’. *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 18(7).

<sup>69</sup> Maly, E. (2020)

<sup>70</sup> Takahashi, S. (2020)

<sup>71</sup> Snow, N. (2020). ‘Japan is not ready for an influx of foreign visitors’. *Nikkei Asia*. 22 October

<sup>72</sup> Takeuchi, M. (2015). pp.20-21.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* p.21.

<sup>74</sup> Murofushi, K. (2018). ‘「政府統計」で相次ぐ不祥事、データは本当に信用できるのか? [A series of “government statistics” scandals - can the data really be trusted?]. *Diamond*. 20 December.

<sup>75</sup> *Nikkei* (2019). ‘政府統計「信用できない」79% 本社世論調査’ [Headquarters Public Opinion Poll: 79% say government statistics are ‘untrustworthy’]. 27 January.

<sup>76</sup> Takahashi, F. (2020)

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Maly, E. (2020)

<sup>79</sup> Parvin, *et al.* (2020)

<sup>80</sup> Maly, E. (2020)

Like Veneto's governor, Japanese Prime Minister Abe praised Japan's early COVID-19 containment success as "characteristically Japanese" in May 2020<sup>81,82</sup>, implying Japanese culture as the main reason behind the success. Deputy Prime Minister Asō employed this idea more strongly, attributing Japan's relatively successful COVID-19 containment to Japanese *mindō* ("cultural level", "level of people")<sup>83,84</sup> – an Imperial Japanese term emphasising *Wajin* racial superiority<sup>85,86</sup>. Despite limited scientific evidence to suggest cultural factors reduce virus transmission, this idea was widespread on social media and domestic and international mainstream media<sup>87</sup>. Additionally, Asō likened the pandemic to a "war" between countries where fatality counts determine the victors and the vanquished<sup>88,89</sup>, further inspiring a nationalist identity. Asō's remarks came at the height of the worldwide Black Lives Matter movement<sup>90</sup>, emphasising ideas of racial supremacy, and were preceded by abhorrently racist depictions of black people by *NHK*, Japan's most viewed television network<sup>91</sup>, three days later on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2020 that incorrectly insisted that BLM was about black people in the US being upset about wealth gaps and losing jobs due to COVID-19<sup>92,93,94</sup>, thus othering the pandemic to black people and the US. Moreover, news outlets reported that Abe purportedly described the pandemic as "World War 3"<sup>95</sup>, although Abe denied

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<sup>81</sup> Abe, S. (2020c). 'Prime Minister Abe Press Conference on Novel Coronavirus Infection'. *Prime Minister's Office of Japan*. 25 May.

<sup>82</sup> O'Shea, P. (2020). 'Commentary: Sweden and Japan are paying the price for thinking they had COVID-19 exceptionalism'. *Channel News Asia*. 19 December.

<sup>83</sup> Dudden, A. (2020b). p.56.

<sup>84</sup> Russell, J.G. (2020). p.1.

<sup>85</sup> Kim, M. (2013). 'The Colonial Public Sphere and the Discursive Mechanism of Mindō'. In: Kim, M., Schoenhals, M., Kim, Y.W. (eds.) (2013). *Mass Dictatorship and Modernity*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. pp.178-202.

<sup>86</sup> Wingfield-Hayes, R. (2020)

<sup>87</sup> Matthews, J. (2020). pp.448-449.

<sup>88</sup> Nakamura, K. (2020). '麻生氏、海外からの質問に「おたくとは民度が違う」⇒相手を絶句させる 新型コロナ死亡率で持論' [Asō answers a question from overseas: 'the level of the people is different to yours' – the theory of the novel coronavirus mortality rate that makes others cry]. *HuffPost Japan*. 6 June.

<sup>89</sup> Yoshikawa, Y. (2020a). 'Japan's conservatives are reveling in their COVID-19 'success''. *The Japan Times*. 24 June.

<sup>90</sup> McElhinney, D. (2020)

<sup>91</sup> Kingston, J. (2020b). p.4.

<sup>92</sup> Osumi, M. (2020b)

<sup>93</sup> Russell, J.G. (2020)

<sup>94</sup> Takeda, O. (2020). 'NHK and "Black Lives Matter": Structural Racism in Japan'. *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 18(18).

<sup>95</sup> Sugawara, S. (2020). '首相、コロナ拡大は「第3次世界大戦」 田原総一朗氏に' [PM says coronavirus escalation is "World War 3", according to Soichiro Tahara]. *Asahi Shimbun*. 16 April.

this 23 days later<sup>96</sup>. Despite protest and warnings from Japanese citizens that have been domestically othered due to associations of sickness and disaster<sup>97,98</sup>, Yamada Hiroshi, another high-ranking LDP politician and *Nippon Kaigi* member, insisted on using “Wuhan pneumonia” to refer to COVID-19, like President Trump, asserting that Japan is “at war” against China as justification<sup>99</sup>. Yamada’s comments were shared on Twitter, receiving huge praise from Japanese netizens<sup>100</sup>. Other LDP members, such as Aoyama Shigeharu, used similar derogatory terms like “Wuhan fever” whilst calling Japan’s virus containment model a “Japan miracle”<sup>101</sup>, whilst other politicians also alluded to the pandemic being a war, praising nationalism and affirming cruelty toward the ‘other’ – foreigners<sup>102</sup>.

Scientific experts in Japan, including Nobel laureate Yamanaka Shinya, observed poor government leadership and failings in distributing science-based information and felt compelled to counterbalance unfounded reports from the government and media, particularly claims of Japanese exceptionalism<sup>103,104,105</sup>. Nevertheless, hoax information spread on social media about experts, such as Nobel laureate Honjo Tasuku claiming that China manufactured COVID-19, parried experts’ efforts<sup>106</sup>. Yoshiki, a hugely celebrated Japanese music legend, made similar efforts via social media to address misinformation and disinformation problems in Japan regarding COVID-19<sup>107</sup>, demonstrating one of the ways that social media, despite spreading Asō’s cultural exceptionalism theories, were also a platform to criticise the LDP’s COVID-19 strategy,

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<sup>96</sup> Egawa, S. (2020). ‘コロナ対策は「戦争」ではなく...’ [Coronavirus measures aren’t “war”...]. *Yahoo! News Japan*. 5 May.

<sup>97</sup> Oskow, N. (2020). ‘Coronavirus Racism: Fukushima’s Governor Speaks Out’. *Unseen Japan*. 25 March.

<sup>98</sup> Hwang, C. (2020). ‘In stigmatized city, calls grow to abolish term ‘Wuhan virus’’. *Asahi Shimbun*. 3 May.

<sup>99</sup> Yamada, H. (2020). ‘第201回国会 参議院 外交防衛委員会 第4号’ [201st Diet Session - House of Councillors: Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee No. 4]. 国会会議録検索システム [*Parliamentary Minutes Search System*]. 18 March.

<sup>100</sup> Everington, K. (2020). ‘Japanese legislator calls for COVID-19 to be called ‘Wuhan pneumonia’’. *Taiwan News*. 4 March.

<sup>101</sup> Yoshikawa, Y. (2020a)

<sup>102</sup> Egawa, S. (2020).

<sup>103</sup> Dudden, A. (2020b). pp.57-58.

<sup>104</sup> Matthews, J. (2020). p.449.

<sup>105</sup> Parvin, *et al.* (2020). p.18.

<sup>106</sup> Guniganti, B. (2020). Cited in: Paital, B. (2020). ‘Nurture to nature via COVID-19, a self-regenerating environmental strategy of environment in global context’. *Science of The Total Environment*, 729. p.4.

<sup>107</sup> Matthews, J. (2020). p.449.

especially since traditional media continued with great political pressures to echo LDP rhetoric<sup>108</sup>.

The Diamond Princess crisis saw further controversy regarding scientific experts. After observing inadequate onboard infection containment measures, infectious disease expert Iwata Kentarō was shocked and, given the scarce official epidemiological data<sup>109</sup>, deemed it necessary to upload two videos to YouTube – one in Japanese and one in English – decrying the onboard chaos and the government’s disregard of expert advice<sup>110,111</sup>. Iwata somewhat controversially removed the videos soon after, causing speculation about the authoritarian LDP pressuring him to do so<sup>112</sup>, although Iwata denies this<sup>113</sup>. Iwata’s comments undermined government efforts to prove its epidemic management capabilities and the aforementioned ‘COVID-safe’ Japan image in contrast to the portrayed unsafe rest of the world. However, LDP-recruited scientific experts helping shape Japan’s COVID-19 response also lacked scientific reasoning in their statements. Dr Oshitani, for example, described COVID-19 as a foreign threat *exclusively* requiring border control measures without any need for domestic measures, despite epidemiological research demonstrating this approach’s relative ineffectiveness<sup>114</sup>. Dr Oshitani also suggested that Japanese culture and history allow coexistence of the virus with *Wajin*, unlike Western cultures that struggle<sup>115</sup>, again implying a cultural exceptionalism narrative in line with LDP nationalism and pandemic othering efforts.

Countries worldwide implemented border restrictions to contain COVID-19, usually accompanied by dehumanising rhetoric towards outgroups from political elites,

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<sup>108</sup> Matthews, J. (2020). p.449.

<sup>109</sup> Normile, D. (2020). ‘Scientist decries ‘completely chaotic’ conditions on cruise ship Japan quarantined after viral outbreak’. *Science*. 19 February.

<sup>110</sup> Yoshida, R. (2020). ‘Expert stirs controversy with video on ‘inadequate’ virus controls on Diamond Princess’. *The Japan Times*. 19 February.

<sup>111</sup> Allen, J. (2020). ‘Disease Specialist Kicked Off of Diamond Princess’. *Unseen Japan*. 18 February.

<sup>112</sup> *Global Times* (2020). ‘Japanese ‘whistleblower’ apologizes and removes video accusing government of not acting amid virus spread’. 20 February.

<sup>113</sup> *Kyodo News* (2020b). ‘Japan disease expert pulls videos blasting situation on virus-hit ship’. 20 February.

<sup>114</sup> Klain, R. (2018). ‘Politics and Pandemics’. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 379(23). p.2192.

<sup>115</sup> Oshitani, H. (2020). ‘Infectious Disease Response — to see the forest, not just the trees: What differentiated Japan from the Western countries?’ *Discuss Japan: Japan Foreign Policy Forum*, 58.

such as Asō's comments, even when the virus was spreading domestically<sup>116,117</sup>, regardless of "nationality, race, or creed"<sup>118</sup>. Given LDP desires to increase nationalism and state power, it was unsurprising that it employed much stricter border restrictions than other advanced industrialised countries<sup>119,120,121</sup>, criticised for treating foreign residents as second-class residents with asymmetric regulations depending on nationality rather than travel history<sup>122,123</sup>.

Initially, Japan restricted entry bans to China and South Korea on 5<sup>th</sup> March<sup>124</sup>, which South Korea rejected as unscientific and based on non-health-related matters, and consequently reciprocated with an entry ban for Japan<sup>125</sup>. Japan's border restrictions soon blanketed people from 129 countries<sup>126</sup> without affecting Japanese nationals abroad, which even *Asahi Shimbun*, a newspaper historically avoiding censuring government activity<sup>127</sup>, criticised as violating human rights<sup>128</sup>. However, public outrage towards *NHK*'s racially insensitive BLM programme the day before *Asahi Shimbun*'s publication may have influenced the newspaper's comments<sup>129</sup>. Under the blanket entry ban, foreigners, including foreign permanent residents, were blocked from entering the country – the only G7 nation doing so<sup>130,131</sup>. However, Japanese passport holders could continue entering, leaving, and re-entering the country without consequence, despite themselves being potential virus carriers<sup>132,133</sup>. Such asymmetric

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<sup>116</sup> Tomes, N. (2000). 'The Making of a Germ Panic, Then and Now'. *American Journal of Public Health*, 90(2). p.195.

<sup>117</sup> Woods, *et al.* (2020). 'COVID-19, nationalism, and the politics of crisis: a scholarly exchange'. *Nations and Nationalism*, 1(19). p.11.

<sup>118</sup> Chung, E.A. (2020). Cited in: Ivić & Petrović (2020). 'The Rhetoric of Othering in a Time of Pandemic: Labeling COVID-19 as a "Foreign Virus" in Public Discourse'. *Kultura Polisa XVII*, 43. p.423.

<sup>119</sup> Brown, R. (2000). 'Social identity theory: past achievements, current problems and future challenges'. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 30. p.748.

<sup>120</sup> Maly, E. (2020)

<sup>121</sup> Woods, *et al.* (2020). p.9.

<sup>122</sup> Dudden, A. (2020b). p.56.

<sup>123</sup> Siripala, T. (2020). 'Japan to Relax Re-entry Restrictions on Foreign Residents Starting in September'. *The Diplomat*. 26 August.

<sup>124</sup> Parvin, *et al.* (2020). p.15.

<sup>125</sup> Sposato, W. (2020a). 'Japan and Korea Won't Let A Pandemic Stop Them Fighting'. *Foreign Policy*. 12 March.

<sup>126</sup> Maly, E. (2020)

<sup>127</sup> Au & Kawai (2012). pp.133-134.

<sup>128</sup> *Asahi Shimbun* (2020). (社説) コロナ水際対策 「外国人」差別の理不尽 [Editorial: Coronavirus border measures: Unreasonable discrimination against 'foreigners']. 8 June.

<sup>129</sup> Russell, J.G. (2020). p.7.

<sup>130</sup> Maly, E. (2020)

<sup>131</sup> Siripala, T. (2020)

<sup>132</sup> Arudou, D. (2020)

<sup>133</sup> Osumi, M. (2020a). 'Foreign residents stranded abroad by Japan's coronavirus controls'. *The Japan Times*. 19 May.



and xenophobic policies alongside extremely lenient domestic COVID-19 countermeasures that were not enforced<sup>134</sup> underpin Dr Oshitani's statement that foreigner bans are an effective strategy, further promoting the notion that foreigners are threats, diminishing Japan's foreign community's trust in the government<sup>135,136</sup>.

Foreigners were similarly othered as second-class residents by LDP members, such as Onoda Kimi, who controversially argued against providing financial aid to foreign residents in Japan despite them making the same tax contributions as Japanese nationals<sup>137</sup>. However, the government eventually ruled against the exclusion of foreign residents from receiving financial aid, although aid applications were not facilitated, with information exclusively available in complex and bureaucratic Japanese language<sup>138</sup>.

LDP activity has often reflected that of the Trump administration, even before the coronavirus pandemic<sup>139,140</sup>, with former Trump advisor Steve Bannon calling Prime Minister Abe "Trump before Trump"<sup>141,142</sup>. Trade weaponisation<sup>143</sup>, virus naming that others foreigners, outsourcing public health measures to the population<sup>144</sup>, pushing for schools and businesses to operate as usual<sup>145</sup>, and exempting its citizens from testing and quarantine upon entry to the country<sup>146</sup> are clear examples of this point. Japanese media avidly reported on the Trump administration's discourse and actions without scrutinisation<sup>147</sup>, causing the Japanese population to have a double dose of nationalist ideas and othering normalisation; one from the LDP's pandemic response and the other from the Trump administration's xenophobic tendencies via the Japanese media's

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<sup>134</sup> Maly, E. (2020)

<sup>135</sup> Osumi, M. (2020c). 'Japan's entry policies increase alienation and deepen division'. *The Japan Times*. 27 August.

<sup>136</sup> *Asahi Shimbun* (2020)

<sup>137</sup> Yasuda, K. (2020)

<sup>138</sup> Tamaki, T. (2020). 'Virus relief pay can be elusive for foreign residents, homeless people'. *Asahi Shimbun*. 8 June.

<sup>139</sup> Ooi, S.M. (2021)

<sup>140</sup> Dudden, A. (2020b). pp.49-60.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.* p.58.

<sup>142</sup> Hofmann, R. (2018). 'Why Steve Bannon Admires Japan'. *The Diplomat*. 22 June.

<sup>143</sup> Ooi, S.M. (2021)

<sup>144</sup> Dudden, A. (2020b). p.50.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* p.56.

<sup>147</sup> Deguchi, H. (2021)

extensive coverage of the US situation<sup>148</sup> and emphasis on COVID-19 as an external issue, creating feelings of domestic reassurance and safety<sup>149</sup>.

Consequently, the Japanese public has also exhibited proclivities toward othering, particularly against the already marginalised Chinese and Koreans. Sinophobic hashtags trended on Twitter in Japan, such as *#ChineseDontComeToJapan*<sup>150</sup>, with Japanese netizens describing the Chinese as “dirty” “bioterrorists”<sup>151</sup>, causing Chinese-run stores to suffer slander from local Japanese residents<sup>152</sup>. Moreover, rumours of Chinese passengers arriving in Japan and deliberately avoiding quarantine spread on social media<sup>153</sup>, further inciting sinophobia. Japanese restaurateurs and shop owners expelled Chinese nationals from their premises<sup>154,155</sup> with Japanese news media sharing such stories without criticism of the xenophobic actions<sup>156</sup>. However, this practice is not new; many establishments throughout Japan have a “no foreigners” policy<sup>157,158</sup>.

Nevertheless, until late March 2020, xenophobic aggression had been relatively mild compared to thereafter. Having maintained the ‘COVID-safe’ Japan image as long as possible, growing pressures caused Abe to announce the Tokyo Olympics’ postponement on 24<sup>th</sup> March<sup>159</sup>. Following the announcement, a significant increase in reported COVID-19 infections revealed to the public Japan’s vulnerability<sup>160</sup>, further highlighted by the fundamental shift in Abe’s speeches from a ‘Japan is safe’ to a ‘Japan

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<sup>148</sup> Kingston, J. (2020b). pp.1-2.

<sup>149</sup> Maly, E. (2020)

<sup>150</sup> Ng, E. (2020). ‘The Pandemic of Hate is Giving COVID-19 a Helping Hand’. *The American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*, 102(6). p.1158.

<sup>151</sup> Rich, M. (2020)

<sup>152</sup> Hirose, H. (2020). ‘<移民編 インタビュー③>広瀬弘忠さん 感染を外国人のせいにする行政「ヘイト」は問題’ [Interview on Immigrants 3: Hirose Hirotada – The government “hate” blaming foreigners for infection is a problem]. Interviewed by Furuyashiki Naoko. *Mainichi Shimbun*. 1 December.

<sup>153</sup> Shimizu, K. (2020). ‘2019-nCoV, fake news, and racism’. *The Lancet*, 395. p.685.

<sup>154</sup> Pfanner, E. (2020)

<sup>155</sup> Murano, E. (2020). ‘新型コロナウイルスを理由に「中国人は入店禁止」箱根の駄菓子店’ [“No Chinese allowed” due to Novel Pneumonia – Hakone Confectionary Shop]. *Asahi Shimbun*. 21 January.

<sup>156</sup> Murano, E. (2020)

<sup>157</sup> Arudou, D. (2015). pp.37-71.

<sup>158</sup> Lezott, C. (2020)

<sup>159</sup> Abe, S. (2020b). ‘国際オリンピック委員会（IOC）バッハ会長との電話会談についての会見’ [Interview about telephone talks with President Bach of the International Olympic Committee (IOC)]. *Prime Minister’s Office of Japan*. 24 March.

<sup>160</sup> Takahashi, S. (2020)

is in danger' narrative<sup>161,162</sup>. However, the death of beloved Japanese comedian Shimura Ken on 29<sup>th</sup> March due to COVID-19 truly sounded the alarm for the public, causing sinophobia to spike<sup>163,164,165,166,167</sup>. Celebrity deaths heighten feelings of infection vulnerability, leading to increased xenophobia<sup>168</sup>. Shimura's passing coincided with an outbreak of COVID-19 infections at Kyoto Sangyō University on 30<sup>th</sup> March, with newspaper headlines emphasising that the infections came from abroad<sup>169</sup> – a reoccurring focus in Japanese media portrayals of COVID-19 infections<sup>170</sup>, with extensive reporting on “foreign clusters”<sup>171</sup>. To combat the clear spikes in xenophobia, the Japanese Red Cross published a video in April 2020 to raise awareness of discrimination issues caused by the pandemic<sup>172</sup>.

Following travel bans' failings in curbing the domestic spread of COVID-19 in Japan, there was a shift from outright blaming foreigners to blaming the “night city”. The “night city”, a euphemism coined by Koike Yuriko, Governor of Tokyo, referring to bars and nightclubs<sup>173</sup>, is associated with foreigners<sup>174,175</sup> and often grouped with Japan's foreign community during government and Japan Medical Association COVID-19 press conferences<sup>176</sup>, with LPD officials claiming that foreigners are rule-

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<sup>161</sup> Kingston, J. (2020b). p.4.

<sup>162</sup> Sposato, W. (2020b). 'Japan's Mysterious Pandemic Success: Japan's Halfhearted Coronavirus Measures Are Working Anyway'. *Foreign Policy*. 14 May.

<sup>163</sup> Hirakawa, D. (2020). p.52.

<sup>164</sup> Yotsumoto, J. (2020)

<sup>165</sup> Omoya & Kaigo (2020). p.7.

<sup>166</sup> Scoccimarro, R. (2020)

<sup>167</sup> Makichuk, D. (2020). 'Japanese fans slam China after comedian's death'. *Asia Times*. 2 April.

<sup>168</sup> Faulkner, et al. (2004). 'Evolved Disease-Avoidance Mechanisms and Contemporary Xenophobic Attitudes'. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 7(4). pp.333-353.

<sup>169</sup> Miyagawa & Matsumoto (2020). '新型コロナ 京産大クラスター、41人に 学生の活動制限、困難欧州旅行の3人、無症状で懇親会へ' [Novel Coronavirus: Kyoto Sangyō University Cluster, 41 people with limited student activities, difficulties, 3 people on a Europe trip, symptomless at get-together]. *Mainichi Shimbun*. 2 April.

<sup>170</sup> Maly, E. (2020)

<sup>171</sup> Arudou, D. (2020)

<sup>172</sup> Yamawaki & White (2020). 'Pandemics, fear and discrimination: Are Japanese cities ready for life with COVID-19?' *The Japan Times*. 3 July.

<sup>173</sup> Yoshikawa, Y. (2020b). 'COVID-19 and Japan's Mysterious 'Night City' District'. *The Diplomat*. 2 September.

<sup>174</sup> Mo, B. (2012). '外国人観光客もやっぱり夜の街が好き' [Of course, foreign tourists also love the night city]. *Diamond*. 5 April.

<sup>175</sup> Nakata, M. (2020). '見たことのない夜の街 自分にできること' 'A night city you've never seen: what can you do?' *NHK*. 3 June.

<sup>176</sup> Takagawa, T. (2020). '総論 (昨今の新型コロナウイルス感染症の感染状況を踏まえて)' [General remarks (based on the recent novel coronavirus infections)]. *Nichii Online*. 19 November.

breakers<sup>177</sup>. This connection reinforced the LDP narrative that foreigners are dangerous threats to *Wajin*'s peace and harmony, causing “emergency racism” and “government-made hate” towards non-*Wajin* to spread<sup>178,179</sup>.

In the LDP's limited domestic COVID-19 policies, non-*Wajin* were similarly discriminated against. When the government was distributing masks to schools nationwide, Korean schools were controversially excluded – a story widely reported by Japanese news media<sup>180</sup>. Although the local government involved later reversed the exclusion, it never apologised nor recognised any wrongdoing<sup>181</sup>. Following the news story, Japan saw increased hate speech towards Koreans<sup>182</sup>, demonstrating both local and national governments' responsibility not to discriminate and other the virus. However, even when government panels attempted to address the public on how to treat foreign workers during the pandemic, continuous references to cultural differences allowed scope for misunderstandings that the mass media propagated thereafter, mainly that foreign cultures cause the spread of COVID-19<sup>183</sup>. Nevertheless, in November 2020, the LDP began exhibiting awareness of a need for care when describing foreigners during the pandemic. After experts stressed that the government must not promulgate misguided narratives that foreigners are naturally higher risk or more unhygienic than *Wajin*, Economic Policy Minister and head of Japan's COVID-19 response task force, Nishimura Yasutoshi, paused to think when discussing foreigners before explaining that ‘not all foreigners are to blame’ and that discrimination should not be tolerated<sup>184</sup>. However, LDP officials maintained that foreigners do not understand “basic anti-infection measures” due to language barriers and cultural differences, and do not seek medical treatment when sick, thus insinuating that foreigners cause viruses to spread. Such essentialised culturalism masks foreigners' marginalisation in Japan and

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<sup>177</sup> Yasuda, N. (2020). ‘<移民編 インタビュー①>安田菜津紀さんが見た「官製ヘイト」排除生む国籍の線引き’ [Interview on Immigrants 1: Yasuda Natsuki observes “Government-made hate” and exclusion by nationalities]. Interviewed by Furuyashiki Naoko. *Mainichi Shimbun*. 29 November.

<sup>178</sup> Hirose, H. (2020)

<sup>179</sup> Yasuda, N. (2020)

<sup>180</sup> Yasuda, K. (2020)

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> Arudou, D. (2020)

<sup>184</sup> Osaki, T. (2020). ‘Japan faces balancing act over virus clusters among foreign nationals’. *The Japan Times*. 22 November.

financial vulnerabilities preventing them from receiving healthcare<sup>185,186</sup>. Reports showed that exclusion and avoidance of foreigners in Japan significantly increased in 2020, including hospitals turning away foreigners<sup>187,188</sup>, causing foreign residents to call out the government's ignorant comments that foreigners do not understand or adhere to anti-infection measures<sup>189</sup>.

Even in 2021, policies discriminative towards foreigners that promote the othering narrative applied in early 2020 have prevailed. As Japan's third wave of COVID-19 infections took greater hold of the nation in January 2021, the LDP introduced completely disproportionate punitive measures for Japanese citizens and foreign residents breaking quarantine. Whereas Japanese citizens would have their name publicised without further consequence, foreign residents would face deportation and losing their livelihoods<sup>190</sup>. Besides this policy, senior government officials expressed plans to use GPS tracking for foreigners entering the country<sup>191</sup>, suggesting foreigners are more at fault and deserving of punishment than Japanese citizens. Additionally, reports found that former Japanese citizens who had renounced their citizenship to adopt another maintain the right to enter Japan without a visa like standard Japanese citizens, highlighting that rights in Japan depend upon whether an individual is *Wajin*, not citizenship status.<sup>192</sup> Nevertheless, the LDP did later introduce drastic legislation imprisoning Japanese citizens for one year for refusing hospitalisation upon infection, which health experts have criticised as deterring citizens from getting tested in the first place and ineffective given that hospitals are telling those infected to stay at home<sup>193</sup>. Moreover, despite Japan's upcoming Olympic Games, the LDP significantly delayed

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<sup>185</sup> Osaki, T. (2020)

<sup>186</sup> Johnson, *et al.* (2004). pp.255-256.

<sup>187</sup> Yamagata, *et al.* (2020). 'The relationship between infection-avoidance tendency and exclusionary attitudes towards foreigners: a case study of the COVID-19 outbreak in Japan'. *PsyArXiv*.

<sup>188</sup> Nakada, A. (2021). 'Language barrier hinders care for infected foreigners'. *Asahi Shimbun*. 7 January.

<sup>189</sup> Osaki, T. (2020)

<sup>190</sup> Cabinet Secretariat (2021). 水際対策強化に係る新たな措置（6） [*New measures for border strengthening – 6*]. 13 January.

<sup>191</sup> *Japan Today*. (2020). 'Japan developing tracking system for travelers from overseas as anti-virus measure'. 27 December.

<sup>192</sup> Arudou, D. (2021a). 'It's official: Tokyo 2020 is a "Japanese Only" Olympics: Japanese living abroad still allowed to attend, not foreigners. (UPDATED: This probably includes Japanese who have given up their J citizenship.)'. *debto.org*. 23 March.

<sup>193</sup> Adelstein & Yamamoto (2021). 'Japan Wants to Throw COVID-19 Patients in Jail If They Refuse to Go to the Hospital'. *The Daily Beast*. 25 January.

Japan's vaccination rollout to test foreign vaccines on *Wajin* in Japan due to racial differences and to ensure their efficacy<sup>194</sup>. This reinforced beliefs that foreigners are different to *Wajin*, whilst simultaneously demonstrating a lack of trust in foreign vaccines, despite their large-scale testing in which thousands of East Asians participated, causing Japanese inoculation experts to argue that Japan's extra testing is 'scientifically unjustifiable' and unnecessary<sup>195</sup>. Furthermore, the Ministry of Justice introduced new nationalistic terminology to distinguish 'pure' *Wajin* from Japanese citizens with foreign ties, including individuals born from international marriages<sup>196,197</sup>, reminiscent of Japan's post-war "mixed-blood problem"<sup>§</sup>. The new terms, ironically found in a message about eliminating racism, exert considerable nationalistic undertones, referring to individuals' origins in relation to "the homeland". Such differentiation implies that Japanese political elites consider ethnic Asian participants in foreign vaccination tests abroad impure, justifying Japan's extra vaccination testing on a domestic 'pure' *Wajin* sample.

Moreover, as Japan experienced its fourth wave of infections in Spring 2021 and anti-Olympics protests began to escalate<sup>198,199</sup>, othering the virus to foreigners regained traction, with health centres advising Japanese citizens to not eat or speak with foreigners to avoid infection<sup>200</sup>, which was spread by the Japanese mass media, including *NHK*<sup>201</sup>, again attempting to heighten nationalism and scapegoat foreigners as the ones to blame, not the LDP and its policies.

Overall, Japan's traditional media complemented LDP attempts at othering the virus, focusing on China and the necessity to keep the virus out of Japan through

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<sup>194</sup> Harding, R. (2021). 'Japan insists on domestic clinical trials before vaccine rollout'. *Financial Times*. 27 January.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> Ministry of Justice (2021). 国際人種差別撤廃デーに向けた人権擁護局からのメッセージ [Message from the Human Rights Bureau for International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination]. 21 March.

<sup>197</sup> Arudou, D. (2021b). 'Weird new Govt term to firewall naturalized and mudblood Japanese off from "real" Japanese: "Honpougai Shussinsha": racist AND patriotic, ironically found on Justice Ministry's Bureau of Human Rights site'. *debito.org*. 8 April.

§ 混血児問題 (*konketsuji mondai*) – "mixed-blood problem"

<sup>198</sup> Ludvigsen, J.A.L. (2021) 'When 'the show' cannot go on: An investigation into sports mega-events and responses during the pandemic crisis'. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. p.15.

<sup>199</sup> Shimizu, A. (2021). 'Opposition to Tokyo Olympics grows in Japan with just 2 months to go'. *Kyodo News*. 20 May.

<sup>200</sup> *Tokyo Reporter* (2021). 'Ibaraki health center warns 'many coronavirus patients infected by foreigners''. 22 May.

<sup>201</sup> *NHK* (2021). "外国人と食事しないように"感染予防啓発文書に保健所が記載 [ "Don't eat with foreigners" listed in infection prevention awareness documents]. 22 May.

discriminatory entry bans, whilst reiterating political elites' othering rhetoric<sup>202</sup>. Social media further fuelled xenophobic discourse by spreading COVID-19 conspiracy theories and 'fake news' about "dirty" Chinese "bioterrorists" coming on missions to infect Japan<sup>203,204</sup>. However, following the WHO pandemic declaration on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020, social media did start to focus on medical and individual financial concerns rather than othering COVID-19<sup>205</sup>. Nevertheless, research into Japanese media's pandemic portrayals concluded that Japan's media were insufficiently helpful for citizens by propagating suspicions and discriminatory sentiments that other COVID-19<sup>206</sup>.

### Linguistic Othering

The Japanese language has three written scripts. *Katakana* is primarily used for foreign concepts, thus intrinsically othering those words, whereas *hiragana* and *kanji* characterise native Japanese concepts<sup>207</sup>, although *katakana* is also employed for Japanese language uttered by foreigners or aliens, and medical terms if medical *kanji* characters are too complicated<sup>208</sup>¶. Decisions to employ *katakana* are based on user motivations, controlling given concepts' nuance and perception to construct a reality for the text's audience, rather than remaining neutral<sup>209,210,211</sup>. Research shows that Japanese people highly associate *katakana* with foreignness and recognise its effect on text neutrality<sup>212</sup>, which can psychologically create fixed dichotomies of good and evil and clean and dirty<sup>213,214</sup>. Furthermore, all nouns in the Japanese language are grammatically

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<sup>202</sup> Omoya & Kaigo (2020). pp.1-14.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.* p.7.

<sup>204</sup> Shimizu, K. (2020). pp.685-686.

<sup>205</sup> Omoya & Kaigo (2020)

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.* p.14.

<sup>207</sup> See Appendix 5 (p.148)

<sup>208</sup> Cochrane, Y. (2019). 'An investigation into the roles of the Katakana syllabary in Japanese discourse: from the perspective of discourse producers' motivation'. *Contemporary Japan*, 31(2). pp.1-2.

¶For example, 'cancer': *Katakana*: ガン ('gan') *Kanji*: 癌 ('gan')

<sup>209</sup> Konno, S. (2013). 正書法のない日本語 [*Japanese orthography- unestablished rules*]. Cited in: Cochrane, Y. (2019). p.2.

<sup>210</sup> Muranaka & Li Wans (2013). 'The use of Katakana with words of non-foreign origin: A study of Japanese language textbooks for intermediate to advanced'. *Department Bulletin of Intercultural Studies*, 48. Cited in: Cochrane, Y. (2019). p.2.

<sup>211</sup> Karlberg, M. (2011). Discourse theory and peace. *The Encyclopedia of Peace Psychology*. Cited in: Cochrane, Y. (2019). p.2.

<sup>212</sup> Cochrane, Y. (2019). pp.13-17.

<sup>213</sup> Hodge & Kress (1993). *Language as ideology*. Cited in: Cochrane, Y. (2019). p.17.

<sup>214</sup> Meadows, B. (2007). 'Distancing and showing solidarity via metaphor and metonymy in political discourse: A critical study of American statements on Iraq during the years 2004–2005'. *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines*, 1(2). Cited in: Cochrane, Y. (2019). p.17.

similar to mass nouns in English, without articles and plurals<sup>215</sup>; “a foreigner” and “foreigners” would be expressed the same way – *gaikokujin*. Therefore, the Japanese language, according to the mass noun thesis, inherently creates a mindset whereby people are not perceived as individuals but collectively as one<sup>216</sup>, essentialising any traits of one person to the whole collective, whereby othering against outgroups is facilitated since one individual’s actions become generalised to all people in the same group as that individual.

Historically, *katakana* usage surged during Japan’s post-World War II occupation and became a political tool to protect Japan’s national identity<sup>217,218</sup>. Nowadays, newspapers continue to use *katakana* to distance Japan from negative concepts, such as criminal activity and health risks. After the 2011 nuclear disaster, *katakana* was employed to write ‘Fukushima’ when discussing the disaster’s negative aspects, whereas *kanji* was used to refer to Fukushima positively<sup>219</sup>. Similarly, *gairaigo* (loanwords) written in *katakana* are used positively in commercial settings to promote an international image, but Japan, particularly in the media, tends to use *gairaigo* euphemistically for negative concepts from which it wishes to distance itself, such as ‘baiorensu’ (violence) instead of ‘*bōryoku*’<sup>220</sup>, implicitly linking such concepts to non-*Wajin*<sup>221,222</sup> and evoking negative emotional responses towards them<sup>223</sup>. Thus, the LDP’s decision to use *gairaigo* for unfavourable aspects of COVID-19 may be politically motivated, creating a ‘linguistic rebordering’ that perceives COVID-19 as a foreign threat at a linguistic level<sup>224</sup>, especially considering Japanese nationalist politicians have

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<sup>215</sup> Brons, L.L. (2014). ‘Needing the other: the anatomy of the Mass Noun Thesis’. *Argument: Biannual Philosophical Journal*, 4(1). pp.107-109.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> Morrow, P.R. (1987). The users and uses of english in Japan. *World Englishes*, 6(1). Cited in: Cochrane, Y. (2019). p.4.

<sup>218</sup> Donahue, R.T. (1998). *Japanese culture and communication: Critical cultural analysis*. Cited in: Cochrane, Y. (2019). p.4.

<sup>219</sup> Cochrane, Y. (2019). pp.5-6.

<sup>220</sup> Guarné, B. (2014). ‘Writing Otherness: Ambivalence and hybridization in the Japanese katakana’. *Quaderns de l’Institut Català d’Antropologia*, 19(1). p.132.

<sup>221</sup> Hogan, J. (2003). ‘The social significance of English usage in Japan’. *Japanese Studies*, 23 (1). Cited in: Guarné, B. (2014). p.132.

<sup>222</sup> McCreary, D.R. (1990). ‘Loan words in Japanese’. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 1 (1). Cited in: Guarné, B. (2014). p.132.

<sup>223</sup> Piller, *et al.* (2020). ‘Linguistic diversity in a time of crisis: Language challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic’. *Multilingua*, 39(5). p.510.

<sup>224</sup> Nossem, E. (2020). ‘The pandemic of nationalism and the nationalism of pandemics’. *UniGR-Center for Border Studies*, 8. p.5.



historically used *gairaigo* to denote foreignness, even when referring to the left-wing to imply non-Japaneseness<sup>225</sup>, whilst *Nihonjinron* dictates that the Japanese language represents the Japanese race and nationality<sup>226</sup>, suggesting that nationalist politicians would be less inclined to employ *gairaigo*.

Despite national emergency language competences requiring the provision of plain and comprehensible information without language barriers that avoid social discourse, stigmatisation, and discriminatory rhetoric, and that clearly describes the crisis, its developments, and what action needs to be taken<sup>227,228</sup>, LDP COVID-19 discourse was filled with *gairaigo* contributing to their ‘COVID-safe’ Japan narrative by linguistically locating the virus abroad<sup>229</sup>. This caused concerns of misunderstandings and led Japan’s Defence Minister, who criticised othering COVID-19<sup>230</sup>, to insist on using Japanese terminology<sup>231</sup>. Debate on the matter produced two camps, both agreeing that political elites deliberately chose to use *gairaigo*. While one camp suggests that *gairaigo* highlights the pandemic’s exceptional nature and a sense of crisis<sup>232,233</sup>, the other proposes it allows the LDP to downplay the domestic crisis and escape responsibility for virus spread, whilst also being easier to read than complex *kanji*<sup>234,235,236</sup>. Information control and language use are critical in mythmaking, such as linguistically othering viruses to associate sickness with foreigners<sup>237</sup>, even when implicit<sup>238</sup>.

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<sup>225</sup> Mihic, T. (2020). *Re-Imagining Japan after Fukushima*. Canberra, Australia: Australian National University Press. pp.22-23.

<sup>226</sup> Rear, D. (2017). ‘A Critical Analysis of Japanese Identity Discourse: Alternatives to the Hegemony of Nihonjinron’. *Asian Studies: Journal of Critical Perspectives on Asia*, 53(2). p.2.

<sup>227</sup> Li, et al. (2020). ‘Conceptualizing national emergency language competence’. *Multilingua*, 39(5). pp. 619-620.

<sup>228</sup> Suzuki, T. (2020). ‘Disaster Information Provision for International Tourists using an Interpreter Application’. *Sustainable Tourism IX*, 248.

<sup>229</sup> Maly, E. (2020)

<sup>230</sup> Tanabe, Y. (2020). ‘「武漢ウイルス」政府幹部が新型コロナをそう呼ぶが... 河野防衛相は呼称変更を否定’ [Japan minister backs neutral virus names despite use of ‘Wuhan virus’ by gov’t figures]. *Mainichi Shimbun*. 14 March.

<sup>231</sup> Brasor, P. (2020). ‘COVID-19 spurs debate over loan words’. *The Japan Times*. 11 April.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> Maly, E. (2020)

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> Takahashi, R. (2020b). ‘Japanese officials say Tokyo is at risk of an ‘overshoot,’ but what exactly does that mean?’ *The Japan Times*. 4 April.

<sup>236</sup> Kawasaki, D. (2020). 洋楽の誤解史と同じ?! 「クラスター」ほか、カタカナ語連発する日本政府の軽薄さの起源とは? [Same as the history of misunderstandings of Western music?! What is the origin of the Japanese government’s frivolous use of katakana words, such as “cluster”?]. *Yahoo! News Japan*. 23 March.

<sup>237</sup> Cheung, K. (2020). ‘Mythmaking and COVID-19: Asian Alternatives to “Warfare” against Disease’. In: Kenly, D. (2020). *Teaching About Asia in a Time of Pandemic*. Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA: Association for Asian Studies. p.64.

<sup>238</sup> Ivić & Petrović (2020)

Regardless of the reason, the LDP's *gairaigo*, including “cluster” and “overshoot”, were unaligned with their original meanings<sup>239</sup>, causing public misunderstandings<sup>240</sup> and communication experts to denounce the use of incomprehensible terminology during crises where comprehension is vital, adding that native Japanese would be significantly more appropriate<sup>241</sup>. In late March 2020, street interviews found that Japanese citizens misunderstood ‘lockdown’ as a synonym for COVID-19 following exposure to television reports about the pandemic<sup>242</sup>, clearly demonstrating traditional media's adherence to the political elites’ rhetoric, without clarifying their discourse. Consequently, the public became extra susceptible to mis- and disinformation<sup>243</sup>.

Political discourse notably changed alongside Tokyo 2020's postponement. LDP elites began using a culturally-linked Japanese language slogan, ‘*mitsu no mitsu*’<sup>244</sup>, as a *Japanese* COVID-19 containment strategy<sup>245,246,247</sup>, starkly contrasting with continued usage of negatively connoted *gairaigo*. Besides LDP assertions that *Wajin* supremacy enabled Japan's relative COVID-19 success, promoting a slogan as uniquely Japanese whilst not promoting WHO guidelines, which Japanese citizens reportedly opposed due to Japanese media's extensive coverage of President Trump's anti-WHO rhetoric<sup>248</sup>, engenders a nationalism that other the pandemic to foreigners.

Moreover, as in the 2002-2004 SARS epidemic when Japanese scientists spread theories that speaking languages other than Japanese increases virus transmission<sup>249</sup>, Japanese television and social media shared such theories with the ‘this is a pen’ experiment in May 2020, causing *#thisisapenchallenge* to trend on social media<sup>250</sup>. The

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<sup>239</sup> Brasor, P. (2020)

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>241</sup> Takahashi, R. (2020b).

<sup>242</sup> Brasor, P. (2020)

<sup>243</sup> Piller, *et al.* (2020). p.505.

<sup>244</sup> ‘*Mitsu no mitsu*’ (三つの密) is translated as ‘3 Cs’ to avoid: i) closed spaces, ii) crowded areas, iii) close contact

<sup>245</sup> Allgayer & Kanemoto (2021). ‘The <Three Cs> of Japan's Pandemic Response as an Ideograph’. *Frontiers in Communication*, 6.

<sup>246</sup> Koike, Y. (2020). ‘「知事の部屋」／記者会見（令和2年3月23日）’ [*Governor's Room Press Conference - 23rd March 2020*]. *Governor's Office, Tokyo Metropolitan Government*. 23 March.

<sup>247</sup> Lewis, L. (2020). ‘How Japan's ‘mitsu’ was changed by Covid’. *Financial Times*. 27 December.

<sup>248</sup> Deguchi, H. (2021)

<sup>249</sup> Arudou, D. (2009)

<sup>250</sup> Michel, P.S. (2020)

demonstration involved a Japanese non-native English speaker holding a tissue in front of her mouth and saying ‘this is a pen’ in both Japanese and English, vastly exaggerating the English pronunciation and volume to make the tissue move violently and thus ‘prove’ that speaking languages other than Japanese increases virus spread<sup>251</sup>. Therefore, both the LDP and the media were able to linguistically other the virus.

**Fig. 6: Significant events and othering acts perpetrated by Japan’s political elites and media**

Date	Act
<b>3 February 2020</b>	LDP refuses permission to the Diamond Princess to dock in Yokohama, ordering all passengers and crew to remain on the cruise ship despite infections.
	LDP bans all foreign citizens who have travelled to Hubei Province in China.
<b>5 February 2020</b>	LDP announces the establishment of ‘Call Centres for Returnees to Japan and Contacts’.
<b>20 February 2020</b>	Infectious diseases expert, Professor Iwata, removes his two YouTube videos that criticised the LDP and refuted the LDP’s ‘COVID-safe’ Japan narrative, with wide speculation of LDP pressures to remove the videos.
<b>5 March 2020</b>	LDP enforces asymmetric and discriminatory entry bans to China and South Korea.
<b>11 March 2020</b>	Korean schools are excluded from receiving government-provided masks.
<b>18 March 2020</b>	Yamada Hiroshi, LDP politician and member of House of Councillors, insists on using “Wuhan pneumonia” as the name for COVID-19 and claims that Japan is at war with China due to COVID-19, which is then shared on social media.
<b>23 March 2020</b>	Governor of Tokyo introduces a culturally-linked Japanese-language slogan for <i>Japan’s</i> COVID-19 containment strategy, in stark contrast to immoderate <i>gairaigo</i> usage for the pandemic’s negative aspects.
<b>24 March 2020</b>	Prime Minister Abe announces the postponement of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.
<b>29 March 2020</b>	Shimura Ken’s death after contracting COVID-19 heightens feelings of vulnerability and increases public sinophobia.
<b>30 March 2020</b>	COVID-19 outbreak at Kyoto Sangyō University is massively reported by traditional media, emphasising the overseas origin of the outbreak.
	Onoda Kimi, LDP politician and member of House of Councillors, argues that foreign residents in Japan should not receive financial aid.
<b>31 March 2020</b>	LDP shares false infection statistics about foreigners comprising a large proportion of infections.
<b>3 April 2020</b>	LDP enforces asymmetric and discriminatory entry bans to another 73 countries.
<b>10 April 2020</b>	Prime Minister Abe allegedly describes COVID-19 as “World War 3” (denied on 3 May).
<b>25 April 2020</b>	Social media share hoax information about Honjo Tasuku, Nobel laureate and Professor of Medicine at Kyoto University, claiming that COVID-19 is manmade by China.

<sup>251</sup> Michel, P.S. (2020)

<b>26 April 2020</b>	Governor of Osaka claims COVID-19 is a war.
<b>15 May 2020</b>	Aoyama Shigeharu, LDP politician and member of House of Councillors, insists on “Wuhan fever” as the name for COVID-19 and claims Japan’s COVID-19 containment success is a “Japan miracle” during a radio show.
<b>21 May 2020</b>	TBS television channel spreads the theory that speaking languages other than Japanese causes COVID-19 transmission, leading to social media trends.
<b>25 May 2020</b>	Prime Minister Abe claims Japan’s COVID-19 containment success is “characteristically Japanese”.
<b>4 June 2020</b>	Deputy Prime Minister Asō claims Japan’s COVID-19 containment success is due to Japanese <i>mindō</i> (i.e. cultural superiority) and that the COVID-19 pandemic is a war between countries.
<b>5 June 2020</b>	LDP-hired virology expert, Dr Oshitani, claims that Japanese culture and history allow Japanese people to coexist with viruses like COVID-19, unlike Western cultures.
<b>7 June 2020</b>	<i>NHK</i> depicts BLM as a movement only affecting the US in which black people are angry about economic impacts on black people in the US due to COVID-19.
<b>29 June 2020</b>	LDP enforces asymmetric and discriminatory entry bans to a further 18 countries.
<b>2 July 2020</b>	Governor of Tokyo begins to blame the “night city” for Japan’s second COVID-19 wave.
<b>13 January 2021</b>	LDP enforces vastly disproportionate COVID-19 punishments for Japanese and foreign residents.
<b>21 January 2021</b>	Japan begins domestic tests of foreign vaccines on <i>Wajin</i> in Japan, raising doubts about foreign vaccines and increasing nationalism based on the manufactured <i>Wajin</i> race.
<b>21 March 2021</b>	LDP introduces new nationalistic terminology to discredit Japanese citizens with overseas ties, suggesting that they are not ‘true Japanese’.
<b>22 May 2021</b>	Health advice to not talk or eat with foreigners to avoid infection with COVID-19 is shared in Ibaraki Prefecture, and later spread through <i>NHK</i> reports.

### 5.3 Pandemic Othering Consequences

Pandemic othering can play a significant role in determining citizens’ opinions regarding disease prevention and restriction, the use of health services, and the enforcement of epidemiology-based public health policies<sup>252</sup>. Being subject to discrimination during a pandemic, aside from exacerbating mental distress<sup>253,254</sup> and deteriorating physical health<sup>255</sup>, can create a human rights crisis plagued with hate speech, stigma, and xenophobia, as expressed by the United Nations in 2020<sup>256,257</sup>. If governments and the mass media other diseases, especially in the initial stages of an

<sup>252</sup> Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020). p.1.

<sup>253</sup> Liu, *et al.* (2020). ‘Perceived Discrimination and Mental Distress Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence From the Understanding America Study’. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. pp.481-492.

<sup>254</sup> Parvin, *et al.* (2020). p.3.

<sup>255</sup> Jetten, *et al.* (2018). ‘Social identity, stigma, and health’. Cited in: Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020). p.3.

<sup>256</sup> Guterres, A. (2020a). ‘#COVID19 is a public health emergency—that is fast becoming a human rights crisis. People—and their rights—must be front and centre’. *Twitter*. 23 April.

<sup>257</sup> Guterres, A. (2020b)

outbreak when political elites' rhetoric is most influential, two serious interrelated effects that undermine epidemiological efforts to contain the spread of the disease can be expected<sup>258,259</sup>.

The first effect is the ingroup safety fallacy<sup>260</sup>. By associating diseases with outgroups and marginalising them as 'at-risk' groups, the ingroup creates a perceived distance from threats, causing feelings of safety amongst the ingroup whilst shunning outgroups. Consequently, ingroup members will continue interacting with other ingroup members without much consideration for virus containment measures since the ingroup will underestimate the risks and considers measures only applicable for outgroups. COVID-19 survey data shows that ingroups in the US felt lower infection risks and adhered significantly less to public health measures than minority groups<sup>261</sup>. Illusions of protection and immunity based on merely belonging to the ingroup impair epidemiological virus containment measures as ingroup members ignore them and put themselves at risk of contracting the virus and spreading it. Additionally, pandemic othering can lead to policy inaction from decision-makers and inadequate media coverage<sup>262</sup>, as was seen in Japan as the LDP othered the virus to foreigners in early 2020, with late and minimal domestic responses from the government and inadequate information being shared through the Japanese media.

Pandemic othering against China, under the guise of political criticism that linked Chinese citizens, the Chinese Communist Party, and the country as one, propagated xenophobic beliefs whilst distracting from the COVID-19 management incapacities of one's own country<sup>263</sup>. Obsessively comparing liberal and authoritarian disease control deflected from democratic states' failings by arguing that China's successful strategies would be impossible in democracies and distracted from successes in Asian liberal

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<sup>258</sup> Mak, *et al.* (2006). 'Comparative stigma of HIV/AIDS, SARS, and tuberculosis in Hong Kong'. *Social Science & Medicine*, 63. pp.1912-1922.

<sup>259</sup> Mutua & Ong'ong'a. (2020). 'Online News Media Framing of COVID-19 Pandemic: Probing the Initial Phases of the Disease Outbreak in International Media'. *European Journal of Interactive Multimedia and Education*, 1(2).

<sup>260</sup> Busza, J.R. (2001). 'Promoting the positive: responses to stigma and discrimination in Southeast Asia'. *AIDS Care*, 13. Cited in: Demirtaş-Madran, H.A. (2020). p.3.

<sup>261</sup> Dionne & Turkmen (2020). pp.12-13.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.* p.11.

<sup>263</sup> Meinhof, M. (2020). 'Othering the Virus'. *Discover Society*. 21 March.

democracies like South Korea<sup>264</sup>. Ultimately, Western democratic states othered the virus to illiberal non-democratic countries, later criticising those countries' successful COVID-19 containment measures, due to a sense of post-colonial arrogance and prevailing notions of orientalism that disassociated themselves from health disasters<sup>265</sup>. Such post-colonial hubris is also applicable to Japan, considering its colonial history with China and the fact that other 21<sup>st</sup> Century epidemics had little impact in Japan, unlike in China<sup>266</sup>. Feelings of superiority, and its consequent othering attitudes, will have likely played a role in delaying the LDP's COVID-19 response.

The second effect is that, when diseases are othered to outgroups, outgroups attempt to avoid stigmatisation by denying early symptoms and refusing healthcare<sup>267</sup>. For example, in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in the US, Asian-Americans avoided wearing masks to reduce the risk of being attacked<sup>268</sup>. Furthermore, marginalising outgroups may cause them to distrust and refuse to cooperate with health officials. In Japan, upon testing COVID-19 positive, mass media would broadcast reports about patients, including personal information such as workplace, age, job, place of residence, and nationality, with a sense of blame and shame<sup>269</sup>. Fear of public shame leads already marginalised outgroups to avoid seeking healthcare, enabling silent virus spread. Unfortunately, such efforts to minimise stigmatisation may be counterproductive since outgroups will be portrayed as not following good health practices if members eventually get sick and require healthcare, causing further discrimination.

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<sup>264</sup> Meinhof, M. (2020)

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> Saitō, K. (2020)

<sup>267</sup> Dionne & Turkmen (2020). p.12.

<sup>268</sup> Hasunuma, L. (2020). 'We are All Chinese Now: COVID-19 and Anti-Asian Racism in the United States'. *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 18(15). p.3.

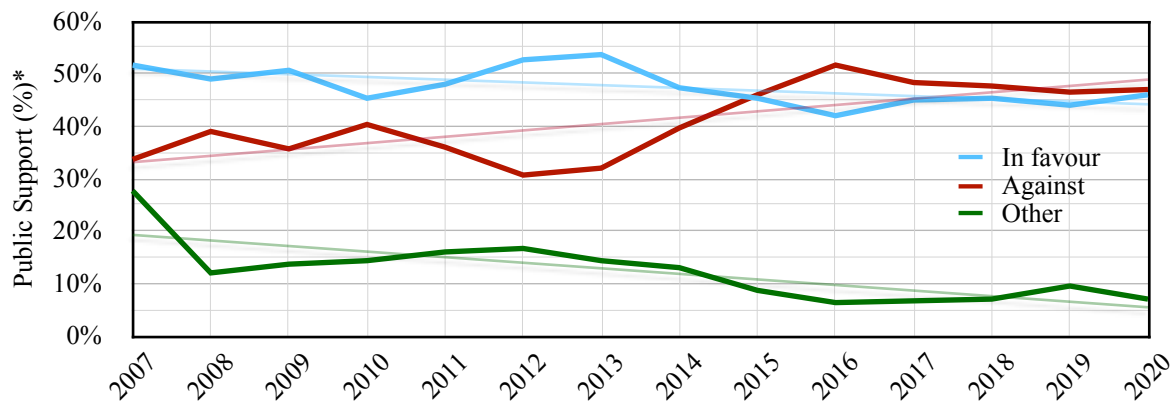
<sup>269</sup> Honda, H. (2020). 'It's not you versus us, it's us versus the virus'. *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*, 1(2). p.1.

## Chapter 6: Public Opinion

### 6.1 The Japanese Government

The LDP's main agenda since 2012 has included constitutional reform granting the government emergency powers that can suspend human rights, as in Imperial Japan, which has also been a focal point in the LDP's discourse and objectives during the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>1,2</sup>. Public support for this objective significantly declined since 2012, with near symmetric polarisation at the pandemic's start; approximately half of the public supports the LDP's nationalist agenda that may considerably impact human rights compliance in Japan, especially for foreigners who are already often exempt from such rights<sup>3,4</sup>.

Fig. 7: Public Support: Revision of Japan's Constitution (2007-2020)



\*Average of poll results from *Asahi Shimbun*, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, and *Nikkei*.

**Data source:** Council on Foreign Relations (2021). 'Constitutional Change in Japan: Public Attitudes on Revision'. *Council on Foreign Relations*.

The Japanese government's health emergency powers currently only allow the LDP to *request* residents stay at home and entertainment businesses close or limit their activity, without the possibility of enforcement<sup>5</sup>. However, an overwhelming majority of citizens expressed that the LDP's COVID-19 priority should be saving lives despite

<sup>1</sup> Adelstein & Yamamoto (2020)

<sup>2</sup> Berlucchi, A.B. (2020)

<sup>3</sup> See pp.37-40

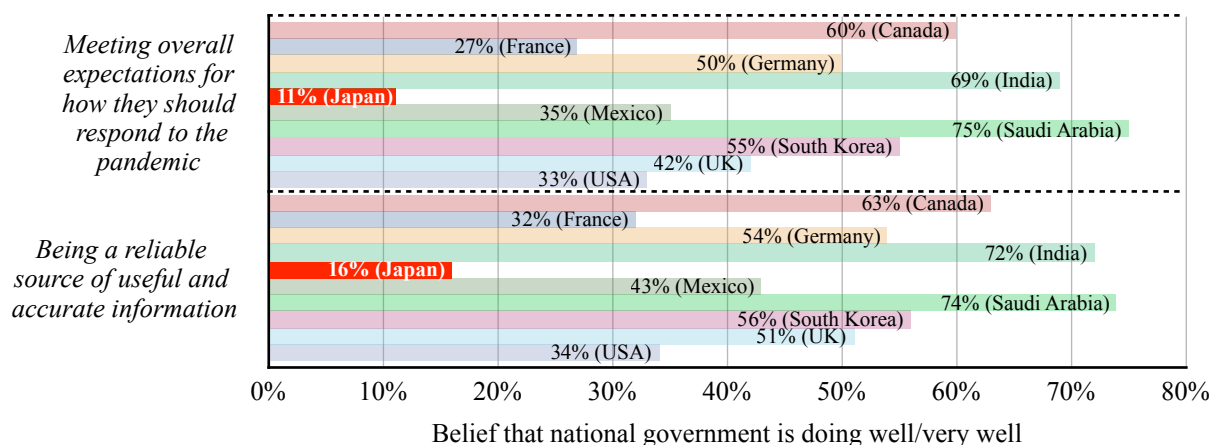
<sup>4</sup> Dooley & Ueno (2021). 'Japan Is Shaken After a Detainee, Wasting Away, Dies Alone in Her Cell'. *The New York Times*. 18 May.

<sup>5</sup> Umeda, S. (2015). 'Japan'. In: The Law Library of Congress (2015). *Legal Responses to Health Emergencies*. p.125.

potential economic hardship<sup>6</sup>, with 82% supporting the suspension of certain human rights, including free movement<sup>7</sup>, thus suggesting greater support for constitutional reform during the pandemic and possibly signalling significant influence on public opinion from the LDP's authoritarian and nationalistic rhetoric during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, only 44% support location tracking<sup>8</sup>, which may be related to the public's mistrust of the LDP. Trust in the LDP in mid-2019 was only 36.4%<sup>9</sup>, with 79% of citizens considering LDP data untrustworthy<sup>10</sup>. In April 2020, trust in the LDP remained below 40%<sup>11</sup>.

Although the argument that public support for the suspension of mobility implies public support for the LDP's asymmetric entry ban against foreigners is tenable, the fact that LDP public approval only markedly increased with domestic developments and measures in early 2020 (the height of LDP othering efforts) and that there is very low public trust in the LDP suggests otherwise. While the Japanese public may support stringent border controls, citizens are unlikely to trust anti-foreigner government rhetoric that others the virus, and thus favour entry bans not exclusively for foreigners, but for Japanese citizens also, which an April 2020 survey by Edelman further evidences.

**Fig. 8: Public Opinion: Government Performance in COVID-19 Pandemic (April 2020)**



<sup>6</sup> Edelman (2020). *Edelman Trust Barometer 2020 – Spring Update: Trust and the Covid-19 Pandemic*. p.36.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p.19.

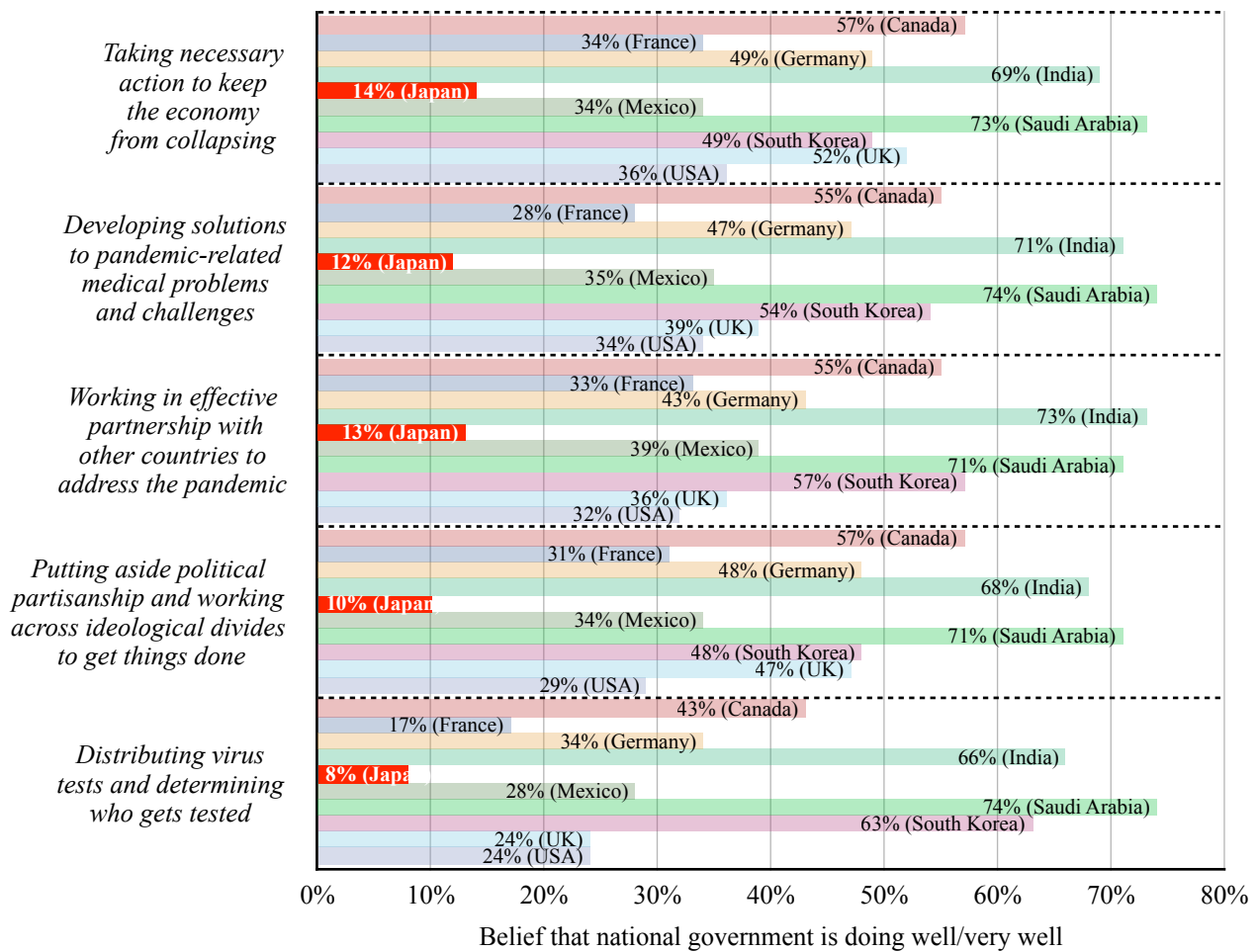
<sup>8</sup> Edelman (2020). p.20.

<sup>9</sup> *Genron* (2019). 日本の政党や国会を信頼できない、と考える国民が6割を超える [Over 60% do not trust Japanese political parties or the National Diet]. 12 July.

<sup>10</sup> *Nikkei* (2019)

<sup>11</sup> Edelman (2020). p.15.





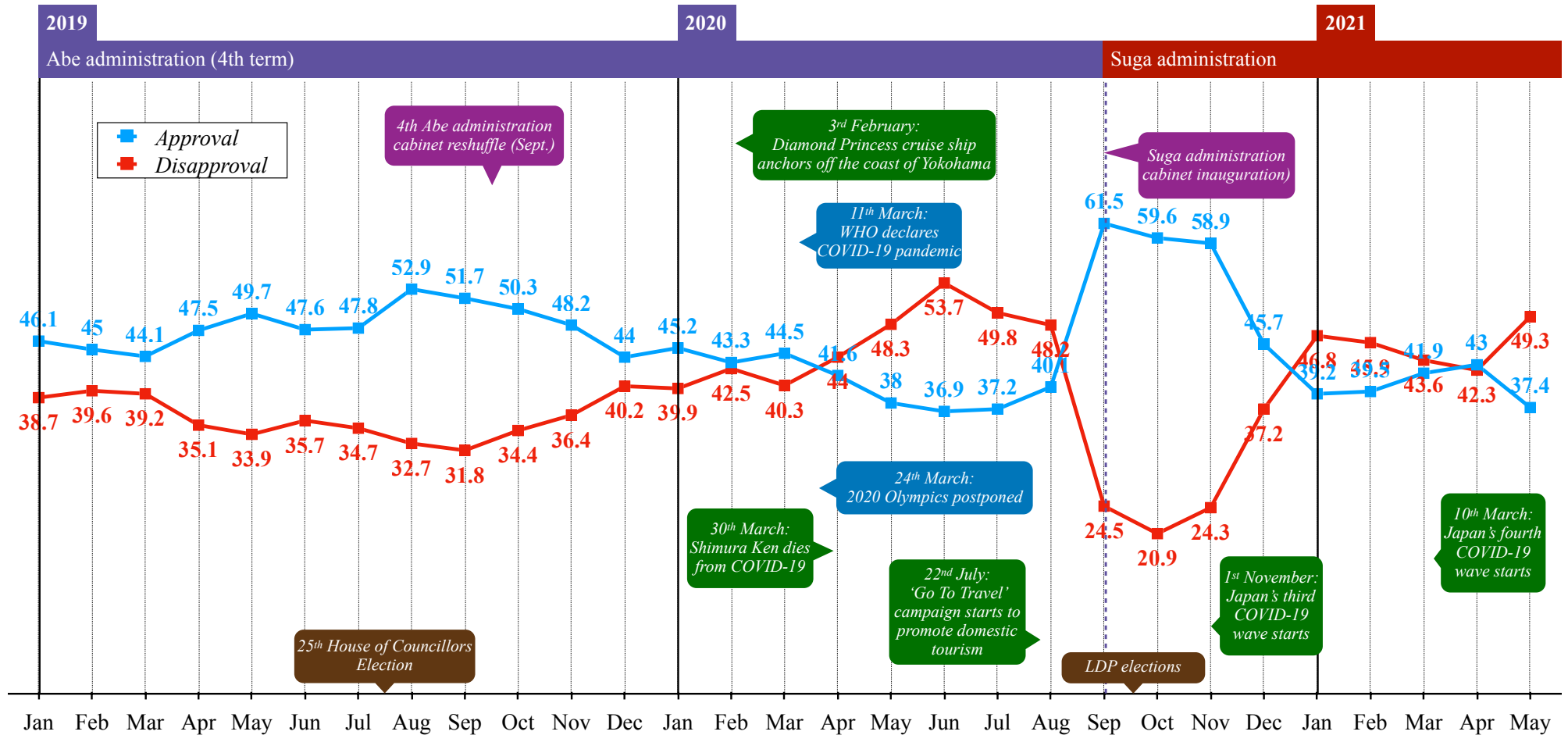
Data source: Edelman (2020). p.45.

Public opinion on the LDP’s pandemic performance is significantly lower than all nine other countries studied in every field. With under 20% of citizens feeling that the LDP was providing accurate and reliable information, working effectively with the international community, and setting aside its political agenda to focus on developing pandemic-related health measures, the public was clearly sceptical about the LDP’s lacklustre policies and othering activities early in the pandemic, supporting Yam, *et al.*’s hypothesis<sup>12</sup>. While opinions may have changed since this survey given Japan’s relatively successful virus containment as seen in increased approval ratings following the Suga administration’s inauguration in September, Japan’s third and fourth infection waves in December 2020 and January 2021 and April and May 2021 saw disapproval surge higher than in April 2020<sup>13</sup>, suggesting that the public may be continuing to reject LDP rhetoric apropos of COVID-19.

<sup>12</sup> See p.30

<sup>13</sup> See Fig. 9 (p.73)

Fig. 9: Japanese government approval ratings before and during the COVID-19 pandemic



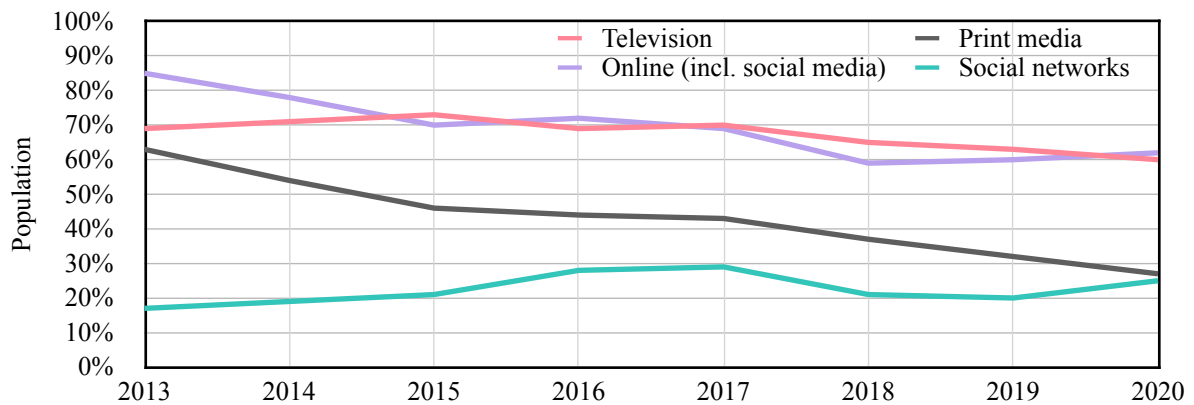
Data source: Real Politics Japan (2021). 'RPJ世論調査' [RPJ Public Opinion Polls] – PML Index\*

\*PML Index uses the average value of cabinet and political party approval ratings of 12 major news organisations in order to eliminate any bias)

## 6.2 Japanese Media

News source usage in Japan over the past decade has seen traditional print media more than halve to 27%, while social networks only provide news for 25% of citizens<sup>14</sup>. However, the use of television and online media, including social media, for news has converged at approximately 60%.

**Fig. 10: News source usage in Japan (2013-2020)**



**Data source:** Reuters Institute (2020). 'Digital News Report 2020'. p.98.

Nevertheless, Japanese citizens greatly distrust news sourced online and have little trust for televised news, trusting newspapers only slightly more, with personal social networks considered most trustworthy<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, citizens consider traditional media to be providing the most relevant news and the least fake news<sup>16</sup>. Although websites are only considered approximately 10% less relevant, citizens perceive online sources as the most prominent fake news spreaders. Therefore, while greatly mistrusting the LDP, the public trusts traditional media more despite their penchant for faithfully regurgitating political elites' narratives<sup>17</sup>; the public may reject discourse directly from the political elites but is likely to accept traditional news media's placebo-processed narratives, demonstrating the tremendous value of traditional media for elites. Considering that televised and online news are the most used news sources in Japan and that, besides personal acquaintances, broadcast media and newspapers, which in the

<sup>14</sup> See Fig. 10

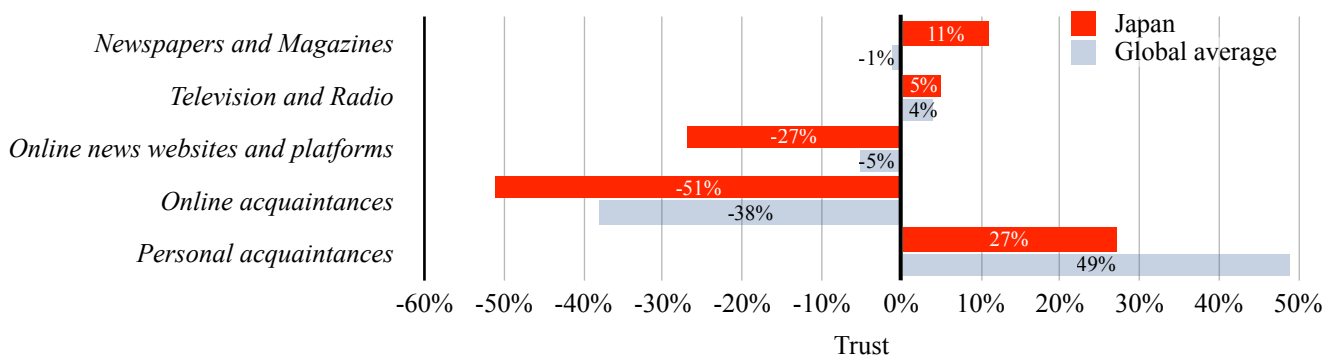
<sup>15</sup> See Fig. 11 (p.75)

<sup>16</sup> See Fig. 12 and Fig. 13 (p.75)

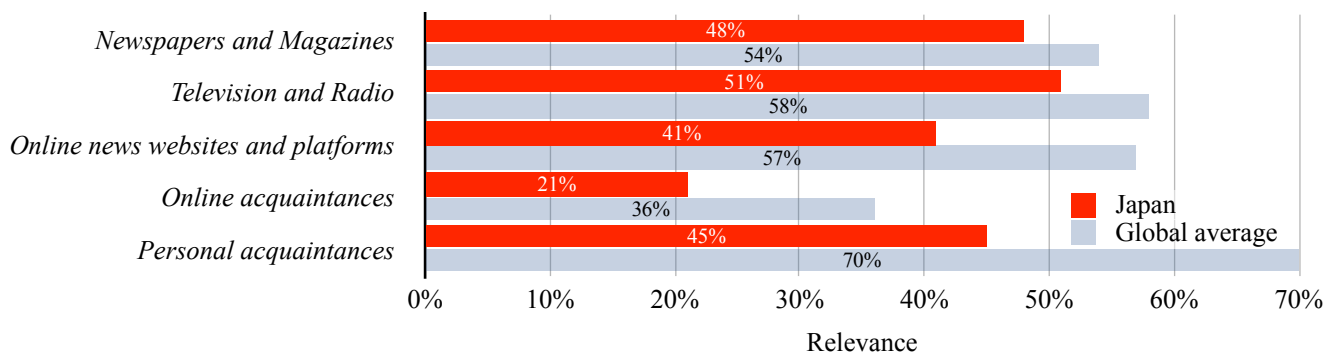
<sup>17</sup> See pp.7-8

digital age have an online presence to compensate for diminishing print sales, are the most trusted and relevant news sources purportedly sharing the least fake news, it can be expected that the Japanese public's news exposure during the pandemic will primarily have been the government-faithful traditional media sources, which the LDP will have been trying to control more due to the upcoming Olympics and general elections in 2021<sup>18</sup>.

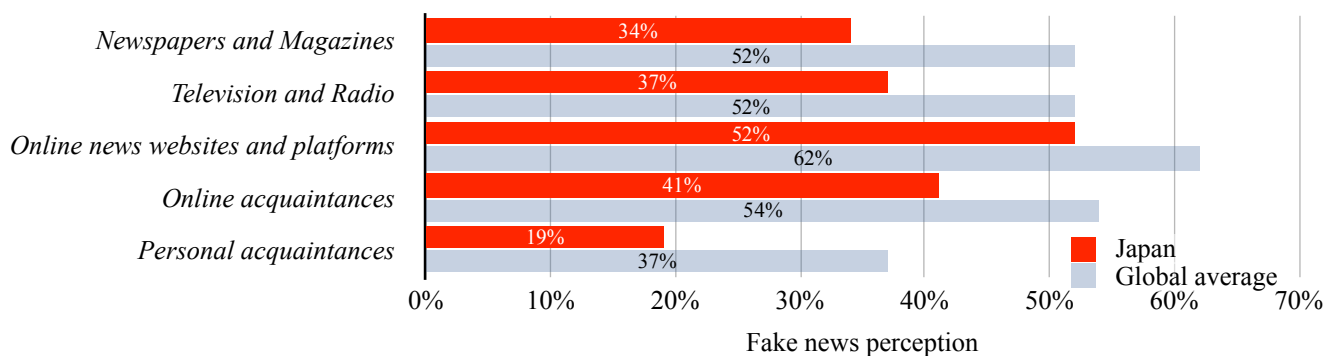
**Fig. 11: Public trust in media sources in Japan (2019)**



**Fig. 12: Public Opinion: News source relevance in Japan (2019)**



**Fig. 13: Perceived fake news prevalence in Japan (2019)**

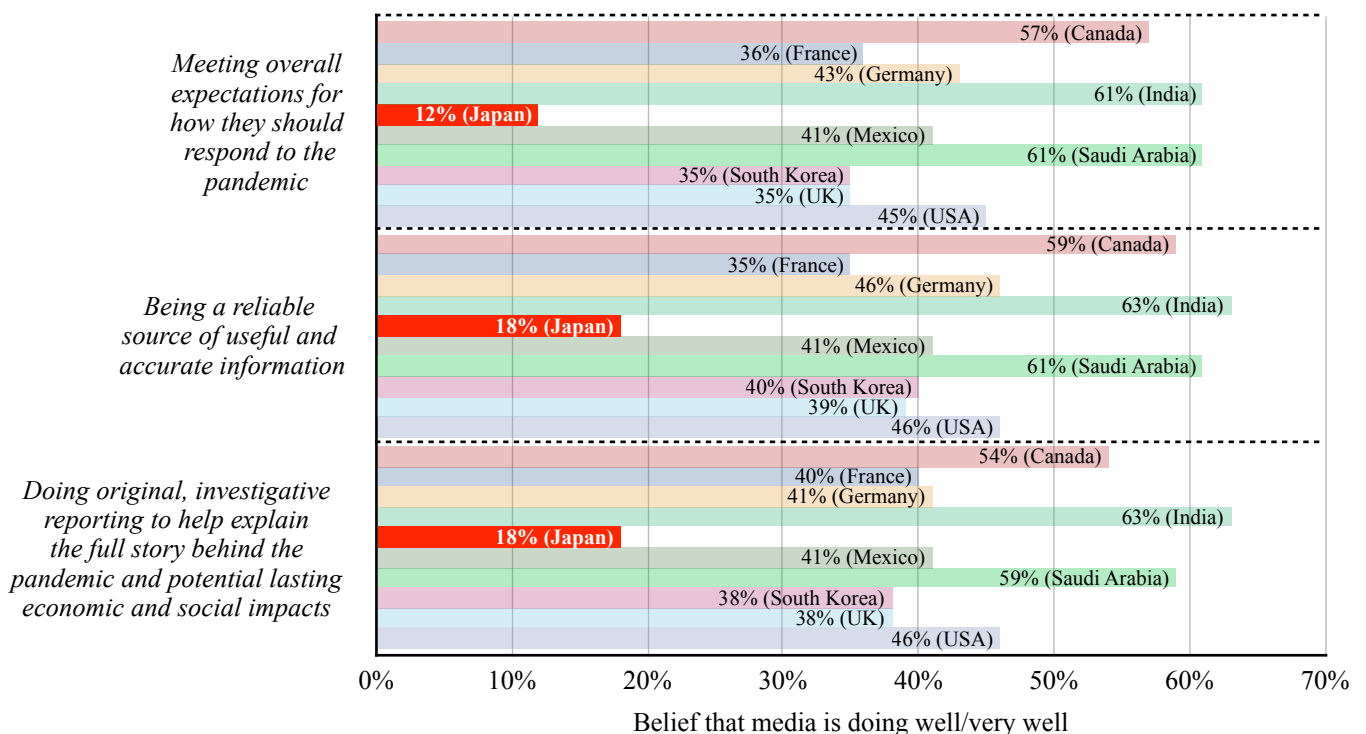


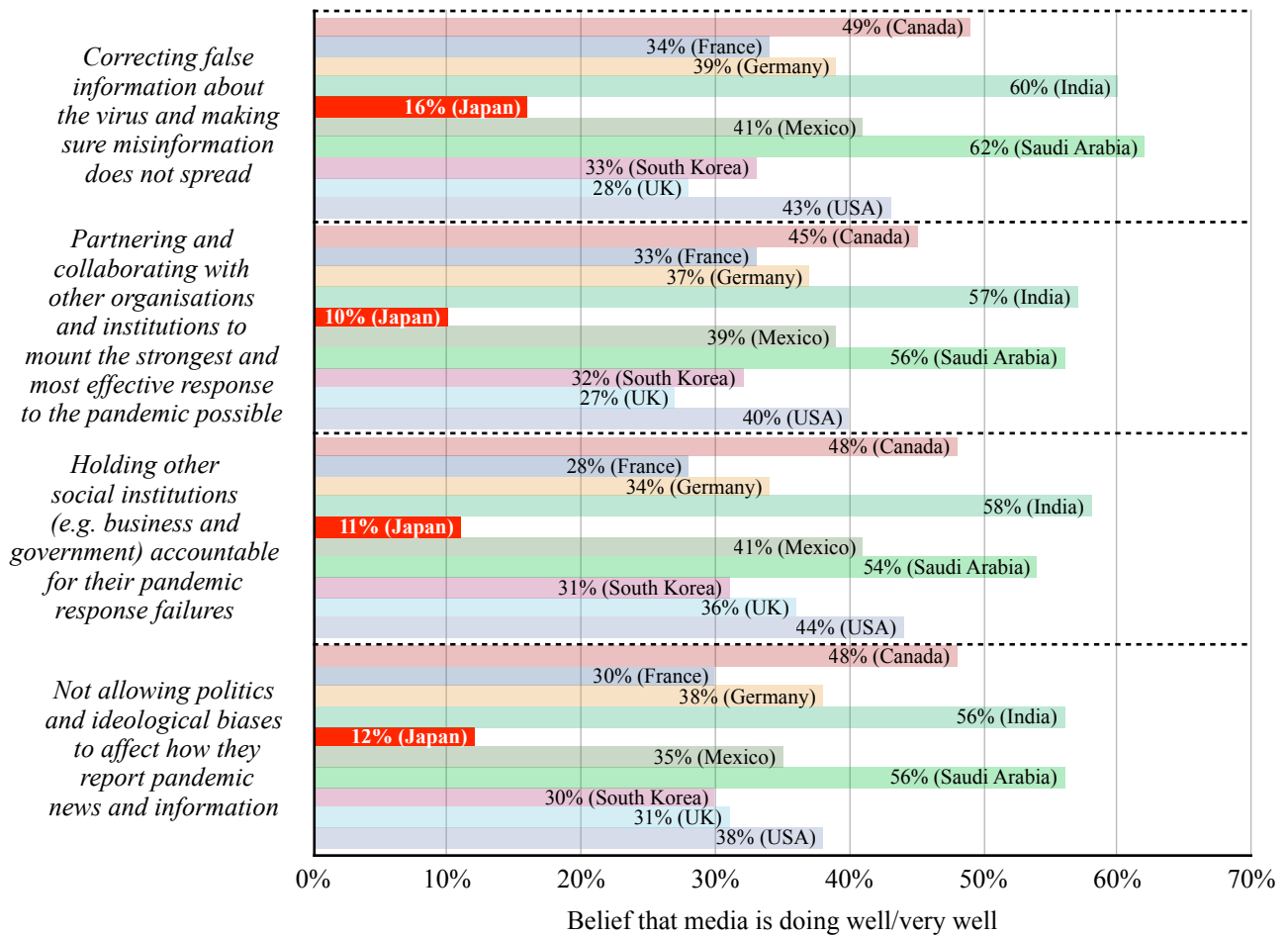
**Data source:** Ipsos (2019). *Global Advisor: Trust in the Media*. pp.9-30.

<sup>18</sup> Au & Kawai (2012). p.140.

Nevertheless, research in April 2020 found highly negative public opinions on media performances regarding COVID-19 in Japan compared to other countries. Fewer than 15% of citizens felt that Japanese media were performing adequately during the pandemic, with only 10% perceiving the media to be working with other institutions to inform the public effectively and 18% to be conducting investigations to help inform about the pandemic, thus suggesting that the public largely regarded the media to be solely reiterating LDP narratives without discussions with experts. Moreover, 89% of citizens did not consider the media to be holding the LDP accountable for failures in its COVID-19 strategy, with 88% considering politics to be impacting pandemic reporting and 84% perceiving the media to be making no effort to correct mis- and disinformation. Consequently, only 18% of Japanese citizens considered Japan’s media as useful, reliable, and truthful early in the pandemic, probably due to their avoidance of discussing the domestic situation regarding COVID-19. This research indicates that, although normally more receptive to LDP rhetoric expressed through the media, the public has more reservations about the information being reported during exceptional circumstances like the COVID-19 pandemic, thus likely causing the public to reject political elites’ othering discourse.

**Fig. 14: Public Opinion: Media Performance in COVID-19 Pandemic (April 2020)**





**Data source:** Edelman (2020). p.48.

Given the Japanese public’s largely reproachful stance towards the LDP and the LDP-backing news media that it regularly consumes, it is unlikely that the public will have adopted views that other COVID-19 to foreigners, such as those promulgated by the LDP. Accordingly, Japanese citizens may have actively sought information about the pandemic from other sources, including expert websites and non-Japanese media.

## 6.3 Foreigners and Immigration

Given Japan's shrinking population and diminishing labour force, the Japanese public has become increasingly aware of a need for foreign workers in Japan in recent years<sup>19</sup>. However, Professor of Public Diplomacy in Kyoto, Nancy Snow, argues that, since Japanese officials portrayed COVID-19 as an external problem, Japanese citizens' perception of foreigners changed from being economic bolsters to virus carriers<sup>20</sup>.

In the past, Japan attempted to fill its labour market with foreigners on student visas with a 'use-it, toss-it mentality' like 'Kleenex'<sup>21</sup>. However, the insufficiency of this approach forced the LDP to reform its immigration policy in 2019 to meet the needs of Japan's small and medium-sized enterprises, although the revision received more backing from opposition supporters than the reluctant LDP's advocates<sup>22</sup>.

A 2018 poll by the government-faithful *Mainichi Shimbun* saw 47% of Japanese citizens favouring increasing foreign workers, of which 40% endorsed their indefinite stay<sup>23</sup>. Additionally, a Pew Research poll in 2018 saw 59% agree that Japan is stronger with immigrants, with a meagre 13% maintaining that Japan has too many immigrants, 33% believing more foreigners would increase terrorism risks, and 31% perceiving foreigners as a burden for taking advantage of Japan's social benefits<sup>24</sup>. However, a government survey conducted in November 2019 that first showed a comparison of Japan's 1990 and 2019 foreign resident numbers, leading the public to perceive 2019's statistics as high, found that 38.3% of the Japanese public felt that there are too many foreign residents in Japan, whereas 29.2% perceived 2019's statistic as appropriate, and 18.6% desired more foreign residents<sup>25</sup>. Nevertheless, a more objective *Nikkei* poll conducted in October and November 2019 contrastingly found that 69% of Japanese

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<sup>19</sup> Asis, E., Carandang, R.R. (2020). 'The plight of migrant care workers in Japan: A qualitative study of their stressors on caregiving'. *Journal of Migration and Health*, 1-2.

<sup>20</sup> Snow, N. (2020)

<sup>21</sup> Jozuka, E. (2018)

<sup>22</sup> Aizawa, N. (2019). 'How immigration will change Japanese politics'. *East Asia Forum Quarterly*, 11(3). p.28.

<sup>23</sup> Hirabayashi, Y. (2018). '外国人労働者の拡大、「賛成」が47%' [47% support more foreign workers in Japan, while 32% opposed: Mainichi poll]. *Mainichi Shimbun*. 7 October.

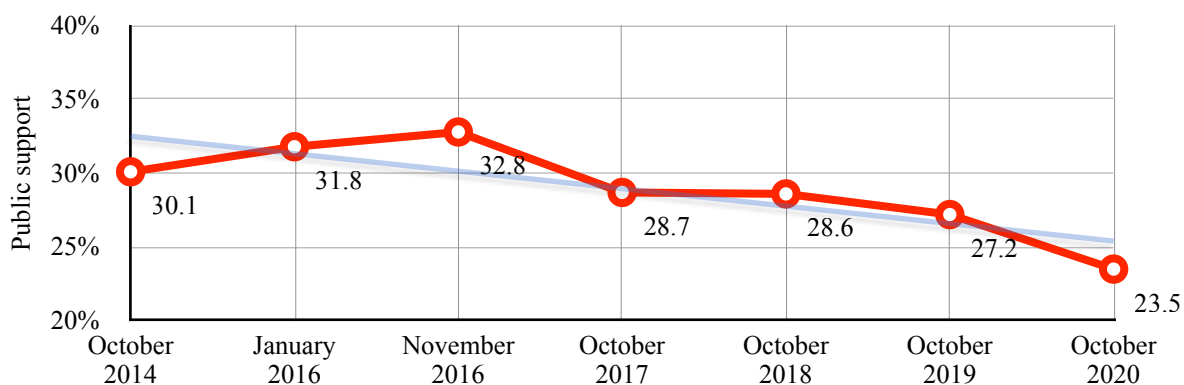
<sup>24</sup> Stokes & Devlin (2018). 'Despite Rising Economic Confidence, Japanese See Best Days Behind Them and Say Children Face a Bleak Future'. *Pew Research Center*.

<sup>25</sup> Pollman, M. (2020). 'Is Japan Ready to Welcome Immigrants?' *The Diplomat*. 22 January.

citizens favour increasing immigrants in Japan, with 31% claiming that Japan should be actively seeking to increase immigrants, and 50% disliking the idea of more foreigners but acknowledging their necessity<sup>26</sup>. Even after Japan's COVID-19 outbreak began, an *NHK* poll in March 2020, roughly one year after the enforcement of Japan's revised immigration policy, discovered that 70% of the Japanese public favoured increasing foreign workers<sup>27</sup>.

Although COVID-19 engendered Japanese citizens' opposition to the 2020 Olympics<sup>28,29,30</sup>, before the pandemic, 82.1% of the public felt positively about Tokyo 2020's ability to improve Japan's image internationally and promote tourism to Japan, with 46.6% desiring to interact more with foreigners<sup>31</sup>. Nevertheless, public endorsement for increasing foreign tourists in Japan has declined in recent years, diminishing from 32.8% (November 2016) to 27.2% in (October 2019)<sup>32,33</sup>, and decreasing significantly to 23.5% during the pandemic<sup>34</sup>.

**Fig. 15: Public Support: Increased Foreign Tourism in Japan (2014-2020)**



**Data source:** Cabinet Office, Government of Japan (2016a, 2017, 2018, 2019a, 2020). 'Public Opinion Survey on Diplomacy'. *The Cabinet Office*.

<sup>26</sup> Kingston, J. (2020a). 'Tokyo's Diversity Olympics Dogged by Controversy'. *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 18(4).

<sup>27</sup> Okada, M. (2020)

<sup>28</sup> Ryall, J. (2020). 'Coronavirus: Will Japan be ready to host delayed Olympics next year?' *Deutsche Welle*. 2 July.

<sup>29</sup> *Kyodo News* (2021). 'About 80% favor canceling, postponing Tokyo Olympics in summer: poll'. 10 January.

<sup>30</sup> O'Shea, P. (2021). 'Should Japan cancel the Tokyo Olympics? It may not be able to'. *The Conversation*. 20 May.

<sup>31</sup> Cabinet Office, Government of Japan (2019b). '2020年東京オリンピック・パラリンピックに関する世論調査' [Public Opinion Survey on the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics]. *The Cabinet Office*.

<sup>32</sup> Cabinet Office, Government of Japan (2016b). 'Overview of the Public Opinion Survey on Diplomacy'. *The Cabinet Office*.

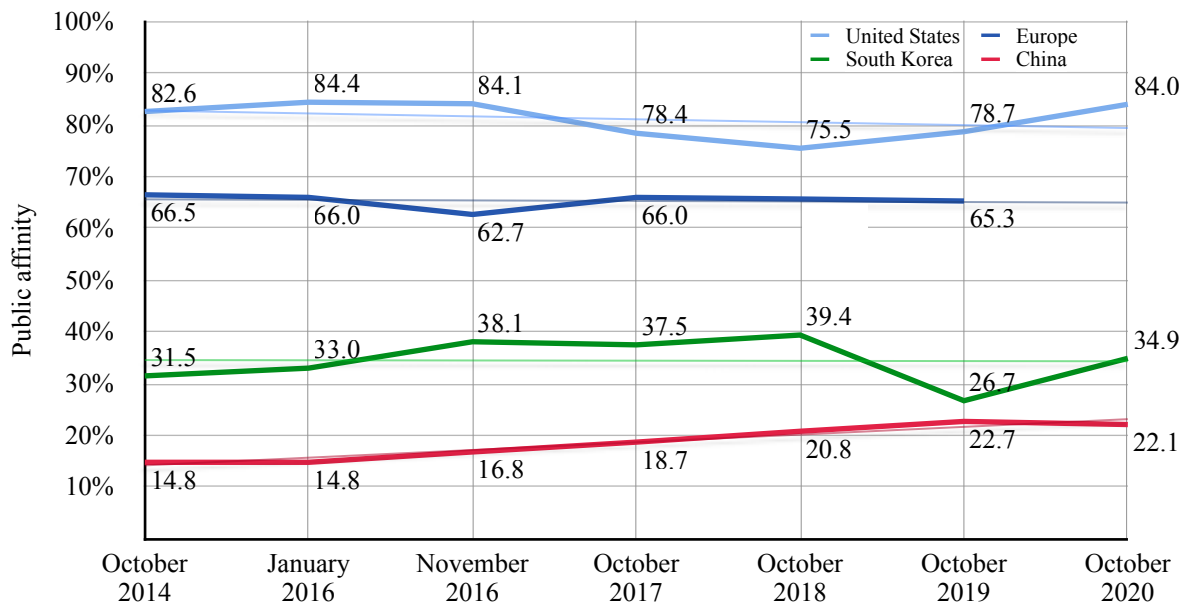
<sup>33</sup> Cabinet Office, Government of Japan (2019a). '外交に関する世論調査' [Public Opinion Survey on Diplomacy]. *The Cabinet Office*.

<sup>34</sup> Cabinet Office, Government of Japan (2020). '外交に関する世論調査' [Public Opinion Survey on Diplomacy]. *The Cabinet Office*.



According to government polls, the Japanese public's affinity with Japan's former colonies, China and South Korea, has been consistently low. While favour for South Korea dipped in 2019, the pandemic in 2020 does not appear to have significantly diminished affinity with these neighbours. Contrastingly, whilst remaining high, President Trump's tenure caused US affinity to diminish before increasing again as Sino-American frictions began to escalate in 2018<sup>35</sup>, returning to pre-Trump levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. Public rapport with Europe has similarly remained relatively high and stable in recent years, but COVID-19's effect is unknown since the 2020 survey excluded Europe from its questions.

**Fig. 16: Public Affinity with the US, Europe, South Korea, and China (2014-2020)**



**Data source:** Cabinet Office, Government of Japan (2016a, 2017, 2018, 2019a, 2020). 'Public Opinion Survey on Diplomacy'. *The Cabinet Office*.

While the pandemic may have augmented public wariness regarding increasing inessential foreigners in Japan, the outbreak of COVID-19 in Japan did not appear to affect Japan's positive public opinion on essential foreign labour. Similarly, general perceptions of foreign countries remained steady despite pandemic othering rhetoric from political elites and the media, further suggesting that citizens have been rejecting LDP and media COVID-19 discourse.

<sup>35</sup> Zhu, et al. (2021). 'Analysis on the economic effect of Sino-US trade friction from the perspective of added value'. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*. p.22.

# Chapter 7: Results

## 7.1 Methodology

The survey conducted asked participants 31 Likert scale questions to determine the Japanese public's perception of foreigners, LDP policies, and media news coverage in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Likert scale used had five response options: 'strongly agree', 'somewhat agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'somewhat disagree', and 'strongly disagree'. Responses were scored on a 5-point scale to produce a 'pandemic othering score', with the most xenophobic responses meriting +2, least xenophobic, -2, and neutral responses, 0. Questions regarding media coverage perception and necessity of foreign tourism and labour were not scored since they are not necessarily related to participants' personal xenophobia levels<sup>1</sup>. Participants' demographic information, economic perception of foreigners, media coverage perception, and media usage information were subsequently used to compare scores and discover trends. Qualitative data, if provided, was similarly analysed to gather insight into the Japanese public's thoughts regarding foreigners.

Furthermore, average scores of participants' prefectures of residence were compared with the total recorded COVID-19 infections per 100,000 population on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2021<sup>2</sup>, when the survey began accepting responses, and the number of foreign residents per 100,000 population in each prefecture, providing another dimension with which to comprehend the pandemic othering scores<sup>3</sup>.

## 7.2 Responses<sup>4</sup>

The survey, running from 24<sup>th</sup> April to 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021, received 304 responses from 43 of 47 prefectures, with over half coming from Tokyo, Okayama, Kanagawa, and Hyogo, whilst 30 prefectures provided fewer than five responses. Although most

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 (p.121) for a list of questions that were scored

<sup>2</sup> *nippon.com* (2021). 'Coronavirus Cases in Japan by Prefecture'. 12 April.

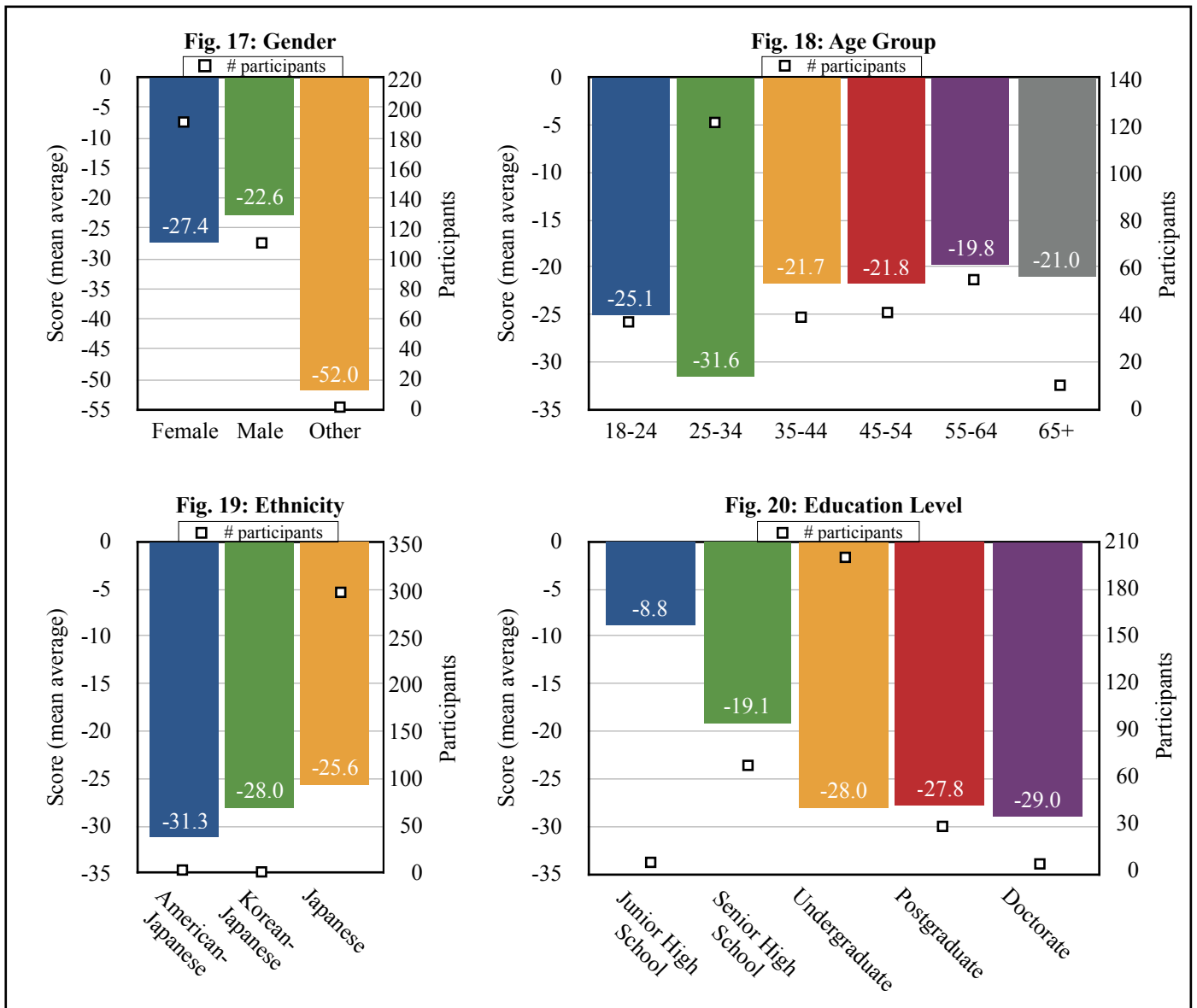
<sup>3</sup> *Statistics Japan* (2019). 'Foreign Residents in Japan'. 28 October.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 2 (p.129)

responses came from women, many men and one non-binary person also participated. Most respondents were young Japanese university-educated adults, but there were also ten participants over 65, four American-Japanese or Korean-Japanese respondents, and seventy-two non-university-educated participants. There was a relatively balanced mix of incomes, and most respondents were full-time workers that never or very seldom interact with foreigners. Moreover, most participants had not personally contracted COVID-19, but over half were acquainted with somebody who has been infected.

### 7.3 Survey Results

#### Pandemic Othering Scores by Participant Information Categories



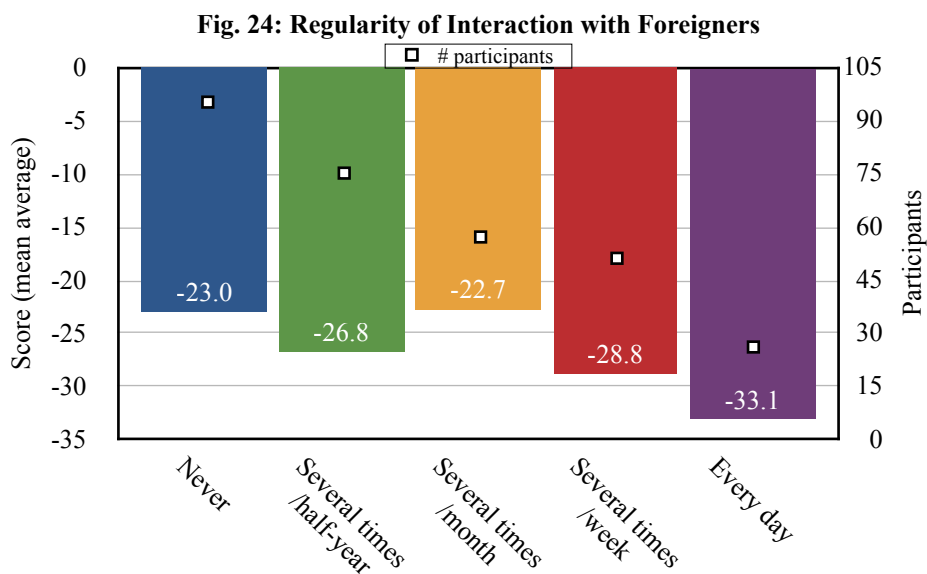
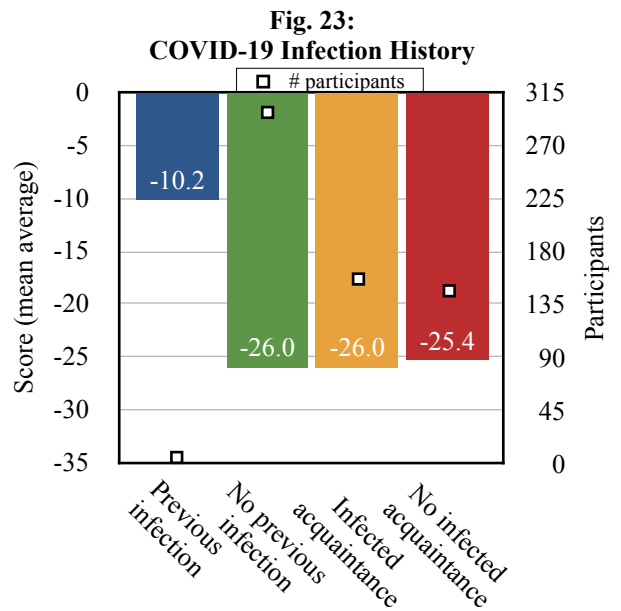
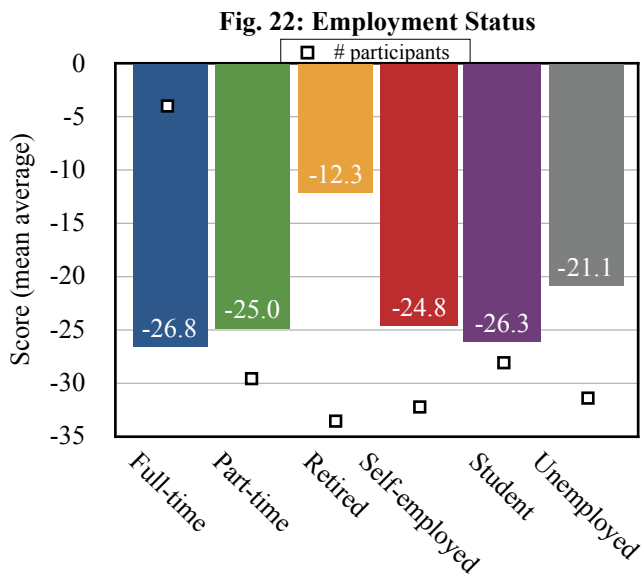
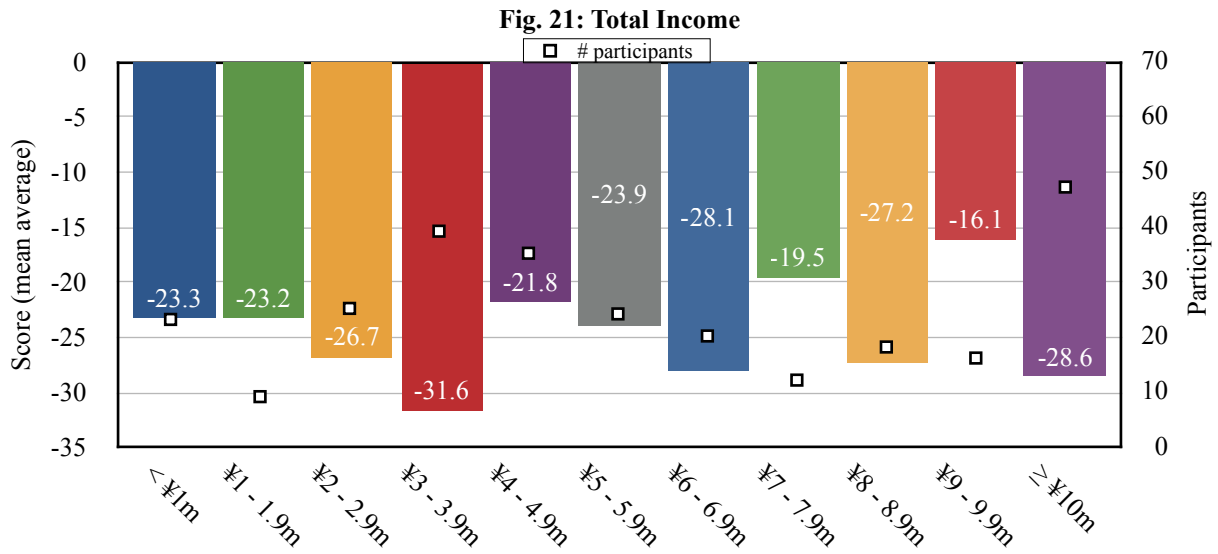


Fig. 25: Pandemic Othering Scores and COVID-19 reported cases by prefecture

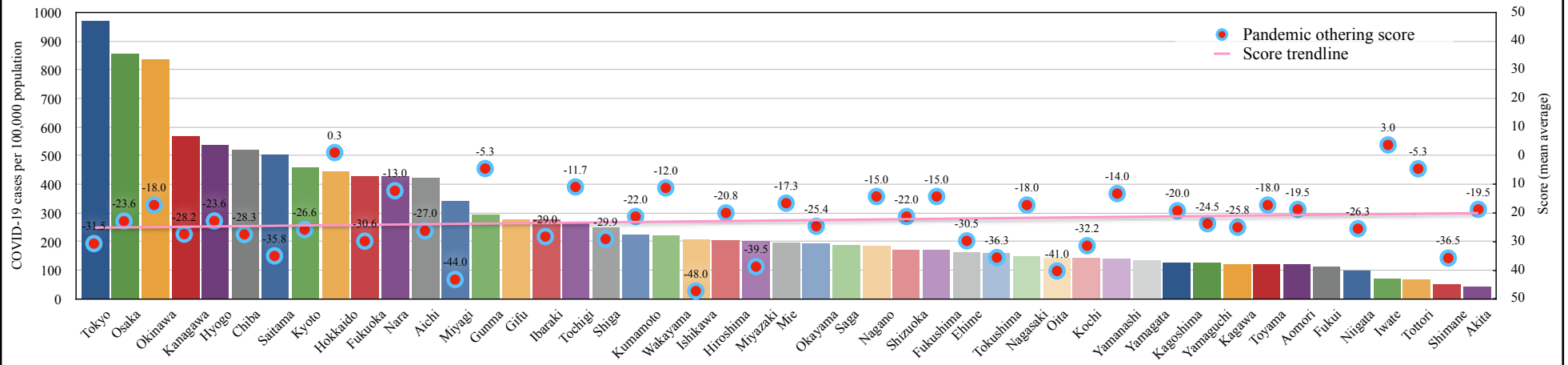
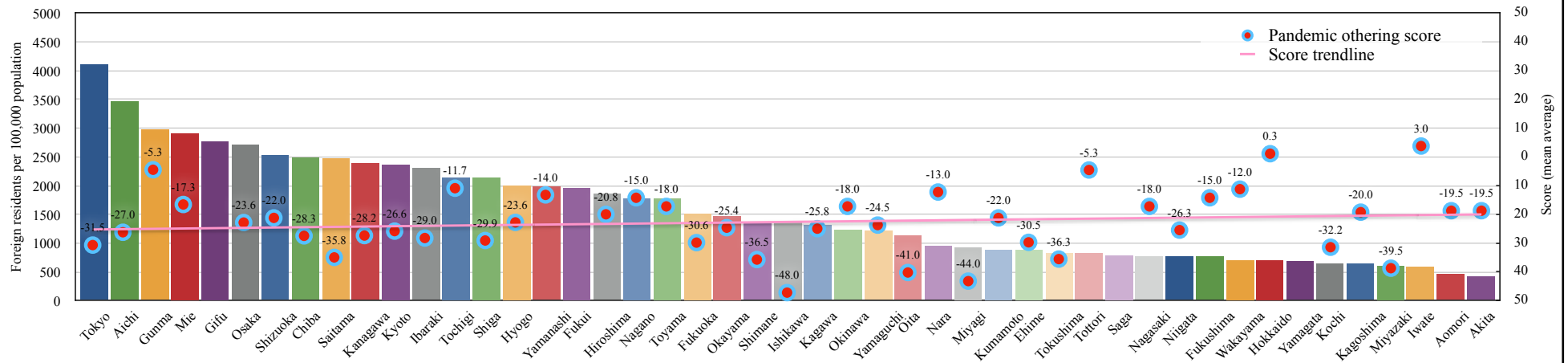
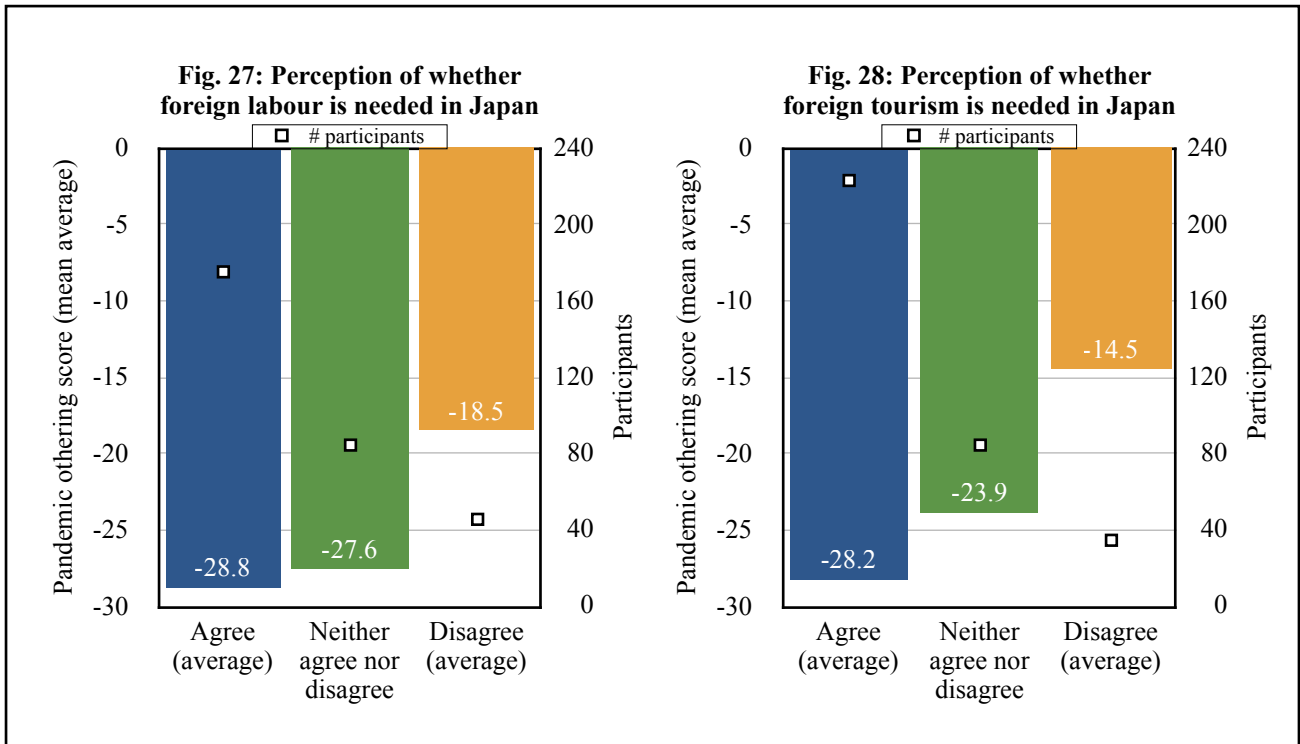


Fig. 26: Pandemic Othering Scores and Foreign Residents by prefecture

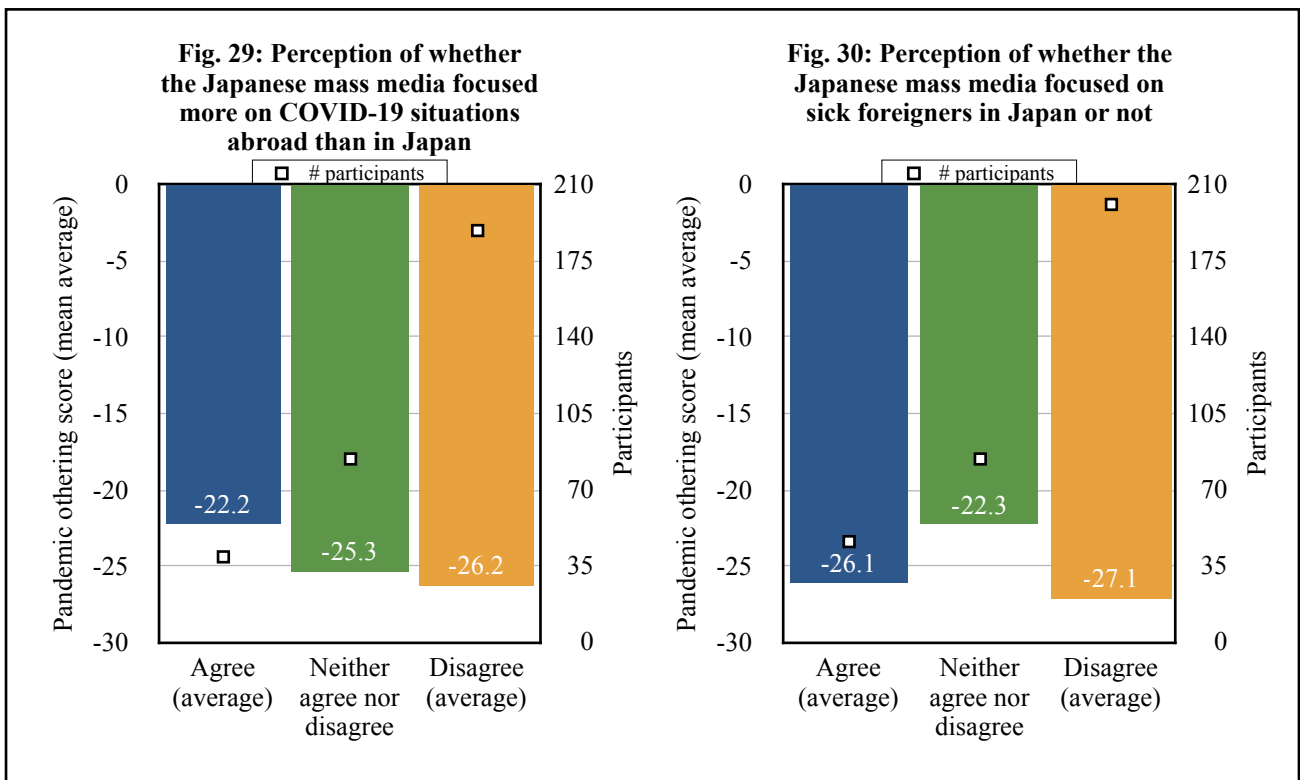


**Number of participants:** Tokyo: 66 Okayama: 42 Kanagawa: 33 Hyogo: 25 Shiga: 15 Chiba: 8 Osaka: 8 Hokkaido: 6 Mie: 6 Fukuoka: 5 Kochi: 5 Kyoto: 5 Toyama: 5 Fukushima: 5 Gunma: 4 Hiroshima: 4 Kagawa: 4 Kagoshima: 4 Niigata: 4 Okinawa: 4 Saitama: 4 Yamaguchi: 4 Tochigi: 3 Tokushima: 3 Tottori: 3 Aichi: 2 Akita: 2 Aomori: 2 Ehime: 2 Iwate: 2 Miyagi: 2 Miyazaki: 2 Nagasaki: 2 Nara: 2 Shimane: 2 Shizuoka: 2 Wakayama: 2 Ibaraki: 1 Ishikawa: 1 Kumamoto: 1 Nagano: 1 Oita: 1 Yamanashi: 1 Fukui: 0 Gifu: 0 Saga: 0 Yamagata: 0

## Pandemic Othering Scores by Economic Perceptions of Foreigners

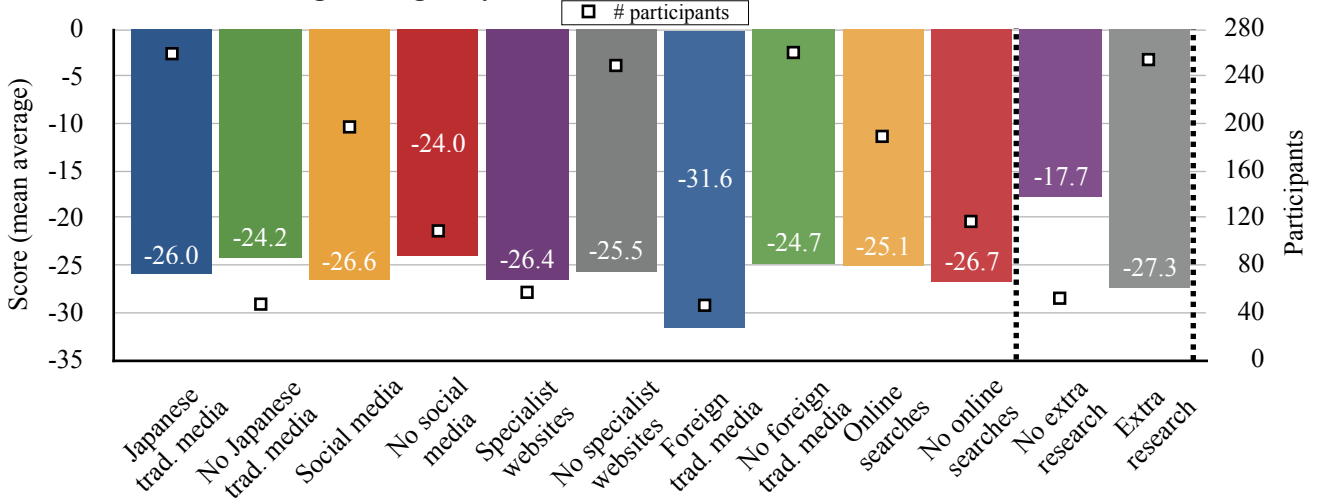


## Pandemic Othering Scores by Media Coverage Perceptions

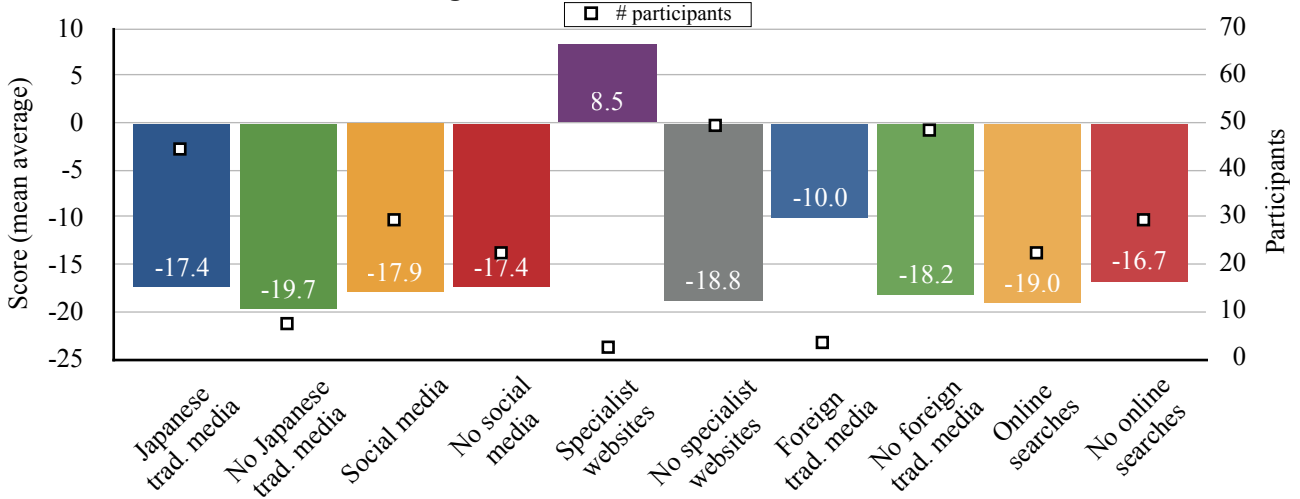


# Pandemic Othering Scores by News Media Usage during the COVID-19 Pandemic

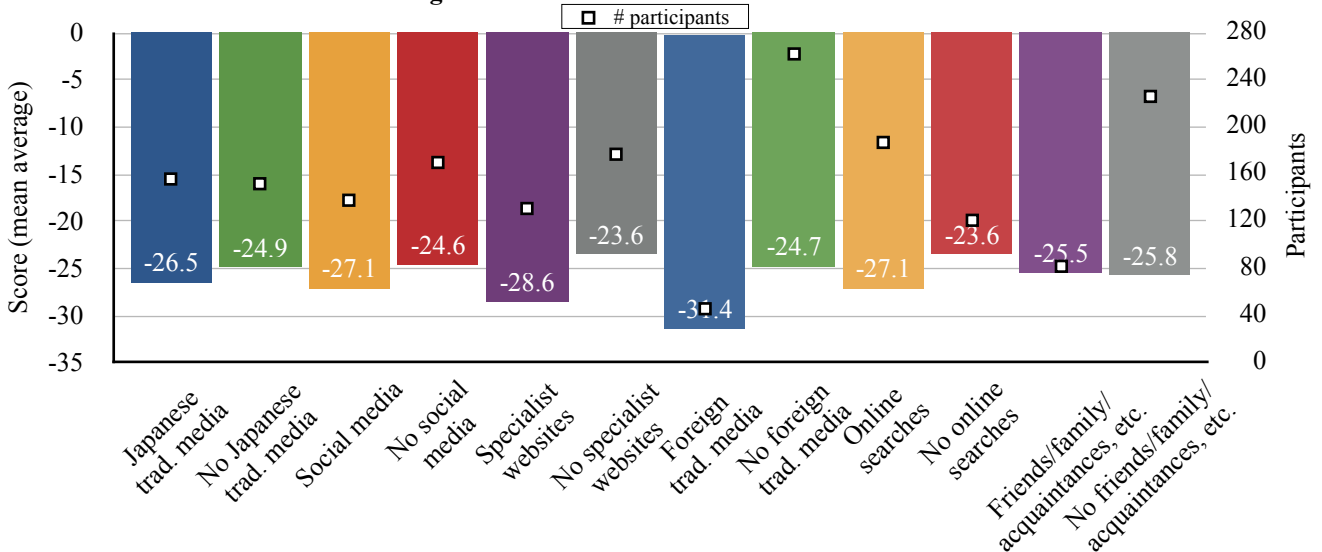
**Fig. 31: Regularly Used News Sources and Active Extra Research**



**Fig. 32: No Extra Research News Sources**

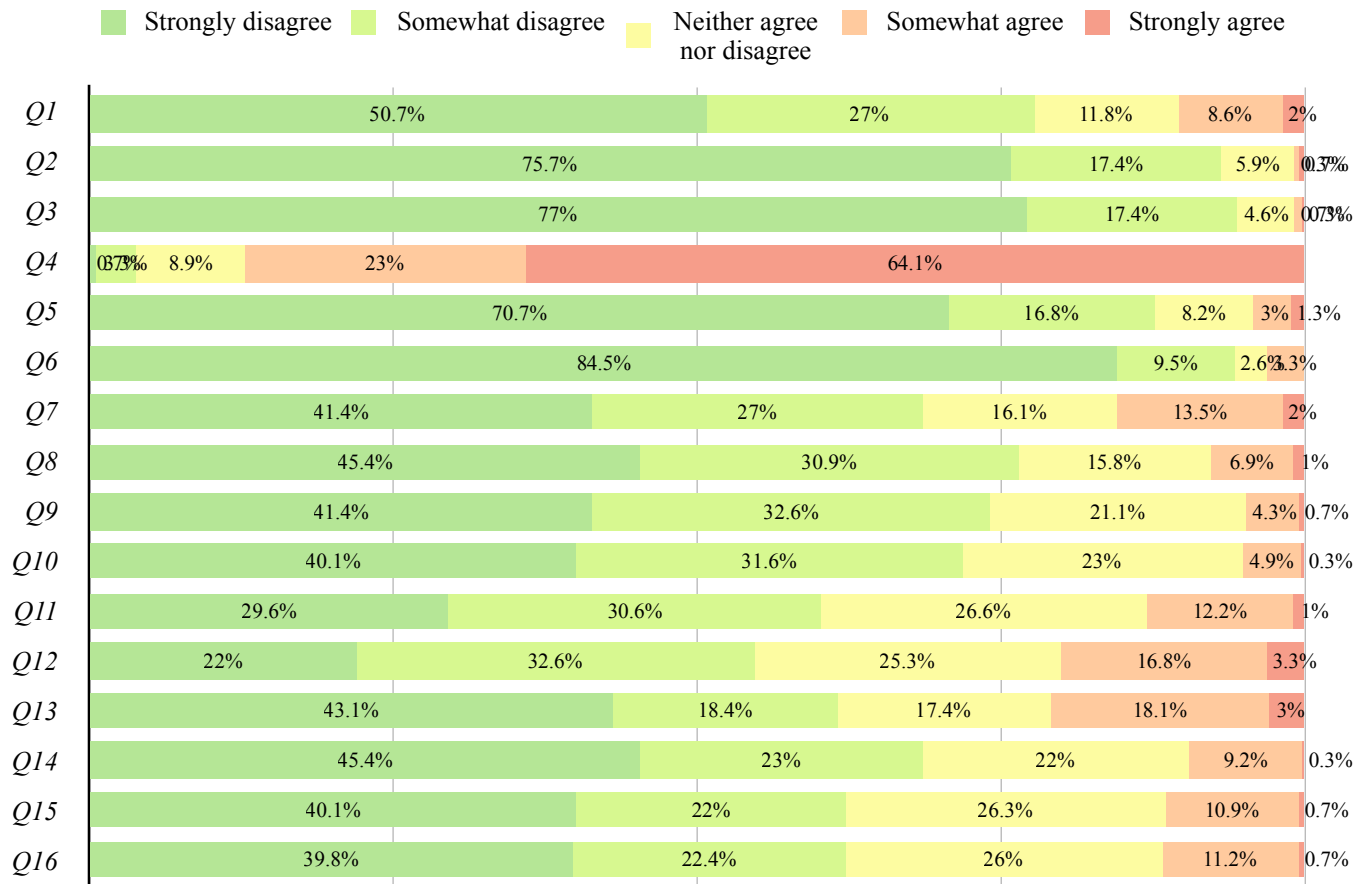


**Fig. 33: Active Extra Research News Sources**



## Main Survey Responses

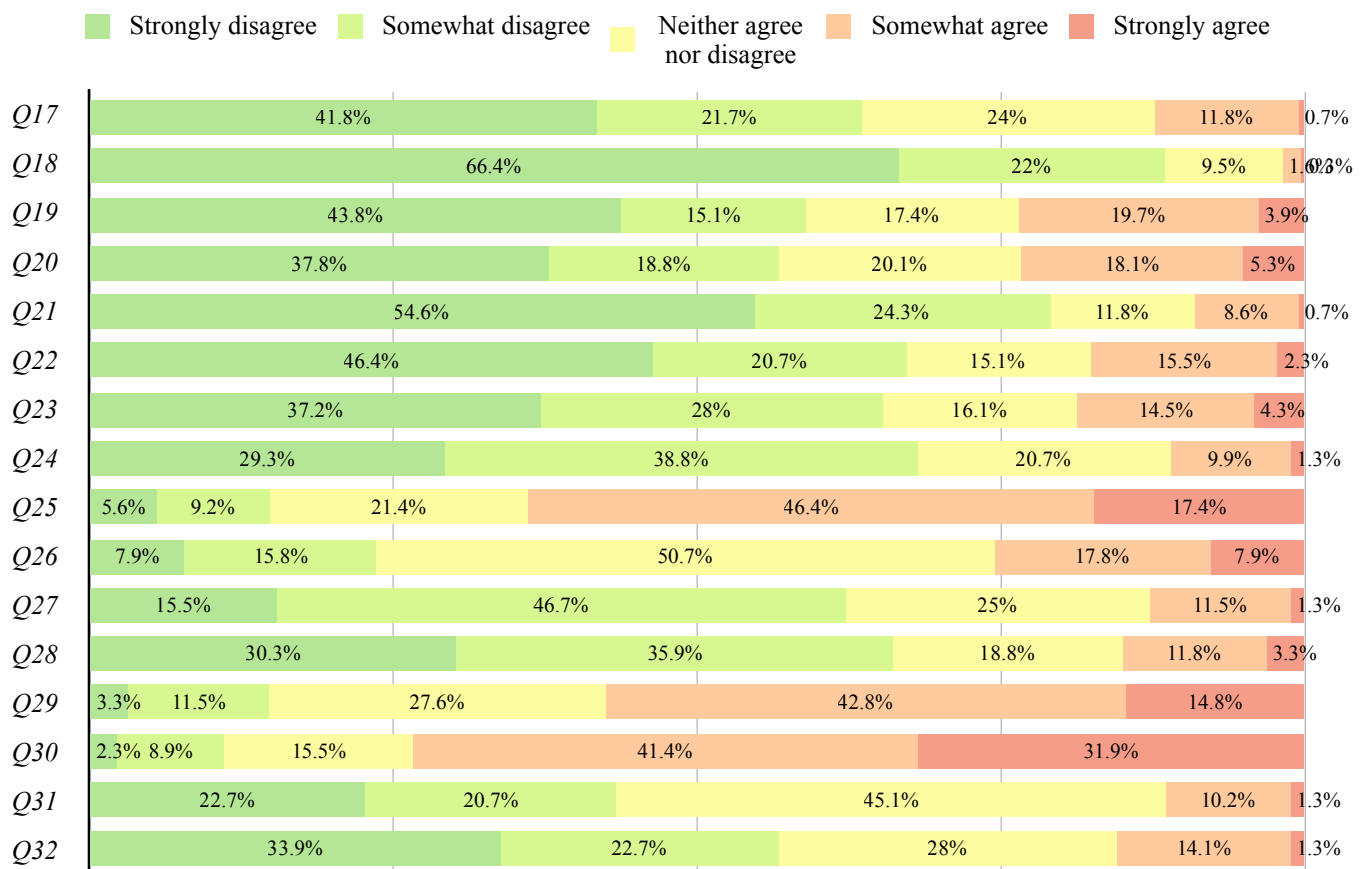
**Fig. 34: Likert Statement Responses**



1. “Japan would not have had a COVID-19 problem if there were no or fewer foreigners in Japan”
2. “Foreigners make up the majority of COVID-19 cases in Japan”
3. “Foreigners cause problems for the Japanese health system because they use up Japanese emergency rooms”
4. “Foreigners in Japan should have the same access to the Japanese health system as Japanese citizens if they contract COVID-19”
5. “*Katakana* words such as ‘cluster’, ‘stay home’ are used because COVID-19 is a virus carried by foreigners”
6. “If someone speaks in a foreign language, that person is more likely to spread COVID-19”
7. “Chinese get sick with COVID-19 because of irresponsible behaviour, but other foreigners are OK”
8. “Koreans get sick with COVID-19 because of irresponsible behaviour, but other foreigners are OK”
9. “Europeans get sick with COVID-19 because of irresponsible behaviour, but other foreigners are OK”
10. “Americans get sick with COVID-19 because of irresponsible behaviour, but other foreigners are OK”
11. “Foreigners in general get sick with COVID-19 because of irresponsible behaviour”
12. “Japanese people get sick with COVID-19 because of irresponsible behaviour”
13. “Chinese are at a higher risk of transmitting COVID-19 than Japanese people”
14. “Koreans are at a higher risk of transmitting COVID-19 than Japanese people”
15. “Europeans are at a higher risk of transmitting COVID-19 than Japanese people”
16. “Americans are at a higher risk of transmitting COVID-19 than Japanese people”



**Fig. 34 [cont.] : Likert Statement Responses**



- 17. “Foreigners in general are at a higher risk of transmitting COVID-19 than Japanese people”
- 18. “Japanese people should fear foreigners”
- 19. “Japanese people should fear foreigners who are sick”
- 20. “Japanese people should fear Japanese citizens who are sick”
- 21. “Interacting with foreigners makes me feel uneasy”
- 22. “I worry that foreigners may spread unusual diseases”
- 23. “With more foreigners in Japan, I fear that the Japanese way of life will change for the worse”
- 24. “The government of Japan has dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic effectively”
- 25. “Entry bans for non-Japanese to come into Japan are an effective measure to counter spread of COVID-19 in Japan”
- 26. “Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of Japan has treated foreigners unfairly compared to Japanese citizens”
- 27. “Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Japanese mass media has focused on the situation outside of Japan more than the situation in Japan”
- 28. “Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Japanese mass media has focused on foreigners in Japan who got sick”
- 29. “Japan needs more foreign workers”
- 30. “Japan needs more foreign tourists”
- 31. “The COVID-19 pandemic has changed my views on foreigners positively”
- 32. “The COVID-19 pandemic has changed my views on foreigners negatively”

## Chapter 8: Data Analysis

### 8.1 Primary Research Questions

On a pandemic othering scale from -56 (lowest xenophobia) to +56 (highest), the survey discovered that all categorical groupings averaged a score below 0, with the average Japanese citizen scoring -25.7, indicating that Japanese citizens are generally not xenophobic or adopting pandemic othering attitudes<sup>1</sup>. Despite notably higher animosity towards Chinese people, with 17% of respondents feeling that Chinese people contract COVID-19 due to irresponsible behaviour and 21.1% that Chinese people are more likely to spread COVID-19 than Japanese people, Koreans (7.9%, 9.5%), Europeans (5.0%, 11.6%), and Americans (5.2%, 11.9%) faced less adversity. Although 12.3% of participants agreed that foreigners in general contract COVID-19 due to reckless behaviour, and 12.5% that foreigners transmit COVID-19 more than Japanese people, reflection on Japanese people themselves saw 20.1% feeling that Japanese people get sick with COVID-19 due to irresponsible behaviour. This statistic is higher than for all foreign groups, including Chinese people, indicating less xenophobia in the Japanese public and higher levels of self-deprecation. The fact that most respondents disagreed with all of the aforementioned statements, regardless of country, indicates that Japanese citizens do not perceive differences between foreigners and *Wajin* regarding the spread of COVID-19.

Furthermore, 77.7% of participants rejected the idea that Japan would have been ‘COVID-safe’ had there been no or fewer foreigners in Japan, as the LDP and media narratives had suggested. Over 90% of participants disagreed that foreigners are behind most of Japan’s COVID-19 infections or burdening Japan’s healthcare system, despite previously raised concerns of foreigners doing so<sup>2</sup>, and over 85% felt that foreigners deserve the same benefits as *Wajin* during the pandemic – a positive development considering antagonism towards foreigners’ human rights in recent years<sup>3</sup>. Additionally,

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 3 (p.131)

<sup>2</sup> Stokes & Devlin (2018)

<sup>3</sup> Kaminokawa Town (2018)

94% rejected the theory shared on TBS and social media that speaking foreign languages increases the spread of COVID-19, with 87.5% also dismissing the notion that *gairaigo* are used in COVID-19 discourse rather than Japanese terminology because the virus is foreign and carried by foreigners. These overwhelming majorities strongly indicate that the Japanese public largely rejects the LDP and media's COVID-19 othering rhetoric. Consequently, 88.4% do not fear foreigners, with only 23.6% fearing sick foreigners, which is comparable to the 23.4% fearing sick Japanese people. Additionally, a mere 17% feel concerned that foreigners may introduce and spread foreign diseases and 9.3% feel a general uneasiness interacting with foreigners, although, admittedly, this may not be completely related to COVID-19. Moreover, only 18.8% consider foreigners threatening to Japanese culture and way of life, which would consequently diminish Japan's allegedly superior *mindō*, evidencing that Japanese citizens do not concur with Deputy Prime Minister Asō's remarks that foreigners are a threat due to having lower *mindō* than *Wajin*. Nevertheless, despite only 11.2% perceiving the LDP's pandemic response as effective, most Japanese citizens (63.8%) understood the discriminatory banning of foreigners from entering Japan to be an effective COVID-19 containment strategy. Only 14.8% rejected the policy, contrasting with the aforementioned 77.7% disputing that Japan would have been safer without or with fewer foreigners. Therefore, this statistic indicates that Japanese citizens do not necessarily view foreigners as virus spreaders within Japan, but rather vessels for the virus to enter the country. However, it is unclear whether Japanese citizens would similarly agree with the policy were it affecting Japanese nationals the same as foreigners.

Whether LDP COVID-19 policies were discriminatory or not was a point of contention; 25.7% perceived them as prejudicial towards foreigners, 23.7% did not, and 50.7% were unsure. Such uncertainty suggests that most citizens had not necessarily considered the implications for foreigners and were more concerned with domestic impacts on *Wajin*, corroborating the increased government approval following the implementation of domestic rather than external measures in early 2020. If the Japanese public is not necessarily perceiving LDP COVID-19 policies as discriminately affecting foreigners during the pandemic, these policies' influence on public opinion about

foreigners will be reduced<sup>4</sup>, in line with the findings that most Japanese citizens are rejecting pandemic othering statements.

Regarding news perception and pandemic othering, most participants (62.2%) did not perceive the Japanese mass media to be focusing on situations abroad nor infected foreigners in Japan (66.2%). This is not to say that the media were not doing so, but rather that participants were not perceiving them to do so, which may have been from only paying attention to the domestic situation, for example. Moreover, this perception may have been different one year ago, when the pandemic was still relatively unknown and information gaps between the public and political elites were greater. The survey did discover, however, that participants perceiving the media to have been focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic abroad rather than in Japan averaged a higher pandemic othering score of -22.2 compared to those who did not perceive it as such (-26.2), implying that public opinion on foreigners may be harmed if the media focuses more on foreign situations than the domestic one. Nevertheless, there was little difference in scores between participants perceiving the media to be focusing reports on sick foreigners in Japan and those who did not, suggesting that citizens reject the media's pandemic othering attitudes towards foreigners in Japan.

Furthermore, although regularly used news media sources did not significantly affect participants' pandemic othering scores, there was a significant decrease in scores amongst citizens regularly using foreign news media, scoring -31.6 on average, compared to -24.7 for citizens not using foreign media. Whether citizens actively sought further pandemic-related information or not saw a significant difference, with those doing further research scoring -27.3 on average compared to -17.7 for those that did not. This divergence suggests that news media are either generally spreading xenophobic convictions, as seen in Chapter 5, or are insufficient in curbing COVID-19 xenophobia in public opinion, requiring personal investigation to understand better the pandemic and significantly reduce xenophobia. Upon deeper analysis, regular use of specialist websites and foreign traditional media (not necessarily specifically regarding COVID-19) without further research into the pandemic surprisingly saw higher pandemic othering scores. However, since there were only two responses for regular use

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<sup>4</sup> Mainwaring & Silverman (2017). p.13.

of specialist websites without further research and three for foreign media, with scores ranging from -23 to +6, these findings are insignificant. All other regular news sources used by participants not further researching COVID-19 saw similar negative average scores between -17.4 and -19, indicating that specific news sources have little effect on public opinion and that the Japanese public is not entirely susceptible to pandemic othering rhetoric spread via the media.

Most participants (83.2%) actively sought extra information about the pandemic, indicating that general news media exposure was providing inadequate information, requiring the public to do its own research. Participants using foreign news sources and specialist websites for further information achieved the lowest scores, -31.4 and -28.6 respectively, suggesting that specialist websites about the pandemic are less xenophobic than other news sources and help limit pandemic othering. Additionally, foreign media may have increased awareness amongst Japanese citizens about discrimination considering their extensive coverage and condemnation of COVID-19 pandemic othering<sup>5</sup> and accurate reporting on the BLM movement, unlike *NHK*'s portrayals. However, citizens accessing foreign media may have already had greater affinity with foreigners that diminishes xenophobic attitudes; foreign media's COVID-19 reports do not necessarily reduce xenophobia. Overall, participants that further investigated the pandemic received significantly lower pandemic othering scores regardless of the media used compared to participants who did not seek further information, again suggesting that using specific news media had little effect on public opinion.

## 8.2 Secondary Research Questions

Analysis of pandemic othering scores by prefecture did not provide any evidence that increased COVID-19 infections in one's prefecture of residence amplifies xenophobic tendencies, with Tokyo's participants achieving an average score of -31.5 despite having the highest number of infections. Nevertheless, the statistics show a slight negative trend, suggesting that the fewer reported infections a prefecture has, the more xenophobic its citizens are. However, since most prefectures lacked participants

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<sup>5</sup> Dionne & Turkmen (2020), p.7.

and given the wide dispersion from -36.5 to +3.0 in the four prefectures with the fewest COVID-19 cases, this trend has little evidential support. Nevertheless, the five prefectures with over ten respondents, with significantly different infection statistics, demonstrated a similar minor negative correlation between infections and COVID-19 xenophobia (Tokyo, -31.5; Kanagawa, -28.2; Hyogo, -23.6; Shiga, -29.9; Okayama, -25.4). Similarly, there was a slight negative trend when analysing pandemic othering scores against the number of foreign residents in prefectures, suggesting that citizens of prefectures with fewer foreign residents have slightly more pandemic othering convictions. Again, since most prefectures lacked participants and given the wide dispersion of scores from -39.5 to +3.0 in the four prefectures with the fewest foreign residents, the trend is unconvincing. Still, the five prefectures with over ten respondents did also exhibit this trend.

There was a notable difference in COVID-19 pandemic othering scores between citizens who had contracted COVID-19 and those who had not. Six participants were previously infected and scored on average -10.2 compared to -26.0 for non-infected citizens. However, having acquaintances that had been infected (-26.0) or not (-25.4) did not affect scores. Therefore, only having personally contracted COVID-19 appears to intensify pandemic othering. The survey corroborated the notion that inexperience with foreigners amplifies xenophobia<sup>6</sup>, finding a negative correlation between the regularity of interaction with foreigners and participants' pandemic othering scores. This trend clearly demonstrates that Japanese citizens who never or seldom interact with foreigners other COVID-19 to foreigners significantly more than citizens regularly interacting with foreigners. Furthermore, the survey found that males (-22.6) other the pandemic to foreigners slightly more than females (-27.4). Reasons for this slight disparity are unclear. Although the one non-binary participant achieved an exceptionally low score (-52.0), this cannot be extrapolated to all Japanese non-binary citizens due to a lack of data. Younger adults displayed less xenophobic attitudes regarding the pandemic, with the 18-24 and 25-34 groups scoring averages of -25.1 and -31.6 respectively. The 35-44 and 45-54 groups scored similarly with -21.7 and -21.8 respectively, and the 55-64 and 65+ groups scored slightly higher with -19.8 and -21.0.

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<sup>6</sup> Lezott, C. (2020)

These scores indicate that Japan's younger generations are less discriminatory towards foreigners than older generations apropos of the pandemic. Although the 65+ group scored -21.0, the survey found that retired citizens, scoring -12.3, are significantly more likely to other the pandemic than all other employment categories. Likewise, unemployed citizens (-21.1) othered the pandemic more than working citizens and students, who had similar scores between -24.8 and -26.8. Therefore, Japanese citizens that are not working appear to be more xenophobic than Japan's current and future labour force. The survey found clear evidence that university-educated citizens are significantly less likely to other the pandemic than citizens without a university degree. Citizens that only graduated from Junior High School had relatively high COVID-19 othering scores (-8.8), while Senior High School graduates scored -19.1. On the other hand, undergraduates, postgraduates, and doctorate holders averaged similar low scores with -28.0, -27.8, and -29.0 respectively, indicating that more educated citizens may think more critically and are consequently less likely to adopt pandemic othering convictions propagated by political elites and the media. However, total income levels saw no pandemic othering score trends with wide disparities between -16.1 and -31.6.

Overall, 11.5% of participants perceived a positive change in their views regarding foreigners in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, whereas 15.4% perceived a negative change, suggesting that, in theory, the pandemic and pandemic othering by Japan's political elites and media have had little influence on public opinion about foreigners since most participants perceived no change in opinion in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although these statistics do refer to self-perceived changes and are subjective, they align with the survey's other findings evincing an overall opposition towards pandemic othering statements, thus giving weight to the self-perceptions.

### **8.3 Further Observations**

Only 20 out of 304 respondents (6.6%) achieved a pandemic othering score above 0, with the highest score at +137. Ten of these participants added written remarks

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 3 (p.131)

regarding their views of foreigners and the pandemic<sup>8</sup>. Upon inspecting these comments, half explicitly targeted Japan's former colonies; five targeted the Chinese and one targeted Koreans. The remainder of the participants' comments discussed foreigners in general.

The participant who commented with the highest score (+13) expressed a perceived difference in cultural values, standards, and norms, evoking comments from Deputy Prime Minister Asō and other officials that expressed that foreigners do not understand or follow anti-infection measures or seek healthcare due to cultural differences. A participant scoring +11 justified his negative views about foreigners by expressing that foreign countries have more COVID-19 infections than Japan, which, while true for many countries, is not the case for China and South Korea<sup>9</sup>, yet this participant felt that both Chinese and Korean people are more likely to spread the novel coronavirus than Japanese people. This participant interestingly appears to solely use specialist websites for news, contradicting the general statistic that users of specialist websites tend to achieve lower othering scores when researching specifically about the pandemic. However, this participant did not actively seek further information about COVID-19 and the specialist websites used may not have addressed the pandemic. Other participants scoring above 0 similarly remarked that they view foreigners more negatively due to the pandemic because foreigners have different customs to Japanese people, stated that the Chinese government spread the virus worldwide in revenge for previous wars, suggesting that the pandemic is a war with China, as expressed by Japanese political elites, and expressed that, within the context of other geopolitical areas of contention with China, COVID-19 has amplified China's negative image. While some participants asserted that only the Chinese and Koreans are bad, others claimed that foreigners, in general, are the pandemic's trigger, exempting Japanese travellers. Others remarked that COVID-19 variants first discovered abroad and that Japan had many foreign infection clusters, as propagated by LDP officials and the media, damaged foreigners' image.

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix 4 (p.132)

<sup>9</sup> Center for Systems Science and Engineering (2021). 'COVID-19 Data Repository'. *Johns Hopkins University*.



In total, 154 participants provided comments apropos of their views on foreigners, positive and negative, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. After discarding comments that provided no justification for participants' responses, 151 relevant comments remained, analysis of which discovered twenty themes<sup>10</sup>. The most prominent theme, found in approximately 65% of comments, expressed that the pandemic has no impact or relation to participants' attitudes regarding foreigners, further indicating that most Japanese citizens do not share pandemic othering attitudes expressed by Japanese political elites and the media. However, the second, third, and fourth most common themes, albeit found in fewer than 20% of remarks, berated foreigners' cultural differences and hygiene standards as causing the spread of COVID-19, explicitly targeting China, the Chinese government, and the Chinese people as being responsible for the pandemic and spreading the virus in Japan, whilst also declaring foreigners, in general, to be the cause of the current pandemic and pandemics throughout history, exempting Japanese people, in line with the pandemic othering of LDP officials and the Japanese media. Nevertheless, admiration for the strong policies in foreign countries in contrast to the LDP's weak domestic COVID-19 measures, improving foreigners' image, was another reoccurring theme.

The remaining themes were not very prevalent, appearing in approximately 5% of comments or fewer. Participants raised the point that foreign countries have more COVID-19 infections than Japan. Others expressed negative views of the US, referring to anti-Asian racism and anti-mask protesters giving foreigners a bad image. Moreover, participants expressed a deterioration of their views on foreigners due to reports on foreign COVID-19 clusters within Japan, describing Japanese media as having highlighted cultural differences and poor hygiene standards of foreigners in reports, attributing virus spread to foreigners' cultural norms. Likewise, comments raised the belief that speaking foreign languages increases the severity of COVID-19 outbreaks, a theory spread on TBS and social media. Although several comments explicitly recognised the occurrence of pandemic othering against foreigners, one participant denied any unfair treatment of foreigners by the Japanese media or any trouble for foreigners due to LDP COVID-19 policies. One comment developed the status of

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 4 (p.132)

Japan's pandemic othering, expressing that, after the LDP banned foreigners from entering the country and domestic virus spread continued, it was less possible to other the virus to foreigners, causing Japanese citizens to scapegoat prefectures with higher infection rates instead, as has happened during previous epidemics in Japan when foreigners were banned from entering the country<sup>11</sup>. While the detection of COVID-19 variants abroad appears to have reestablished the scapegoating of foreigners, participants also described having seen reports of foreigners positively changing their cultural norms and improving their hygiene standards to contain the virus, improving their image in Japan. Other participants' comments mentioned uncertainty about the pandemic's cause and anger towards the government for an excessive focus on the Tokyo 2020 Olympics rather than saving lives.

A theme found in eight comments was the acknowledgement of Japan's economic need for foreigners in light of the pandemic, highlighting impacts on Japanese businesses due to foreign workers' and tourists' inability to enter Japan. These remarks support the survey's findings that 57.6% of participants believe Japan needs more foreign labour and 73.3% that Japan needs more foreign tourists also. Whilst the former statistic is lower than poll results from late 2019 (69%) and early 2020 (70%), suggesting that the pandemic has reduced support for increasing migrant workers in Japan, the latter statistic about tourists starkly contrasts government poll results since 2014, with 2016 seeing a high of 32.8% supporting increased foreign tourism, and 2020 seeing a low of 23.5%. This significant difference is possibly indicative of the substantial economic impacts felt by Japanese businesses from the prolonged lack of foreign tourism, especially during late April and early May 2021, when the survey was conducted, since this is a peak period for foreign visitors<sup>12</sup>. Additionally, the survey revealed a correlation between participants' economic perceptions of foreigners and pandemic othering scores. Participants recognising Japan's need for foreign labour and tourism averaged much lower scores (-28.8, -28.2) than those not acknowledging the need (-18.5, -14.5), indicating that citizens not perceiving foreigners' value to Japan's economy are more likely to accept and adopt pandemic othering statements.

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<sup>11</sup> Arudou, D. (2009)

<sup>12</sup> JTB Tourism Research & Consulting Co. (2021). 'Japan-bound Statistics: Overseas Residents' Visits to Japan'. 10 May.

## Chapter 9: Conclusion

This paper aimed to explore Japanese public opinion on foreigners in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, taking into consideration the pandemic othering committed by Japanese political elites and the Japanese media since the pandemic began in 2020. Understanding public opinion on foreigners over one year into the pandemic will establish whether Japan truly is an internationally friendly nation respecting all peoples, as former Prime Minister Abe desired to exhibit through the 2020 Olympic Games, and shed light on issues for Japan to address regarding (future) foreign workers and residents.

The COVID-19 pandemic saw evident pandemic othering committed by Japan's incumbent government, the LDP, with domestic media and social media further propagating othering narratives, which, in theory, should greatly influence public opinion. Nevertheless, the Japanese public has, by and large, rejected these othering strategies and maintains relatively positive attitudes towards foreigners. Despite Japan's historically weak rapport with its former colonies, China and Korea, that would suggest an expected adoption of othering attitudes towards these nations<sup>1</sup>, Japan's citizens have greatly dismissed the scapegoating of Chinese and Koreans just as they have for the peoples of Europe and the United States, who have historically enjoyed much greater public affinity. Although a minority of citizens harbour more xenophobic views and mostly criticise China and Chinese people, the roles of pandemic othering rhetoric and pre-existing sinophobic sentiments are unclear since these opinions may simply be due to the pandemic having started in China. While specific news sources do not appear to greatly affect the Japanese public's xenophobia levels with general news exposure, actively investigating the pandemic does correlate with diminished othering attitudes, suggesting that standard news reports are not adequately subduing discriminatory discourse regarding the pandemic. Therefore, Japanese news media need to work on providing science-based reports that do not nuance discriminatory othering stances.

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<sup>1</sup> Baum & Potter (2008). p.51.

Moreover, the pronounced difference in othering attitudes between non-university-educated and university-educated citizens highlights a necessity for Japanese schools to raise awareness regarding racism and discrimination and stimulate inclusive and respectful attitudes in pupils to balance against the jingoistic education policies enforced by the LDP under influence from *Nippon Kaigi*. Additionally, the evident contrast between citizens regularly interacting with foreigners and the majority of citizens who seldom do so underlines the large scope for Japanese citizens to misunderstand foreigners and foreign cultures and to adopt othering narratives. Consequently, Japan needs to enhance the societal integration of foreigners in Japanese communities.

It is important to note that this paper's research produced mere correlations, and does not evidence cause and effect relationships. Furthermore, despite receiving over 300 responses, the findings from the survey cannot be generalised to all Japanese citizens in certain demographic categories; many young adults participated, but older adults, who make up the majority of the Japanese population<sup>2</sup>, were much fewer. Additionally, most responses were concentrated in only four prefectures, limiting the ability to comprehend differences between prefectures with more or fewer COVID-19 infections and foreign residents.

Whilst this work's research provides a snapshot into the Japanese public's stance on foreigners, it cannot compare with pandemic othering attitudes potentially adopted by the Japanese public in the first few months of the pandemic, when the public was still largely unaware of the outbreak's nature and the LDP and media were best able to influence public opinion with pandemic othering narratives. Given the rarity of such a widespread and impactful pandemic, there will likely be a long wait before being able to investigate relationships between public opinion and political elites' pandemic othering narratives in the early stages of a pandemic. Nevertheless, there is scope for further research in the near future to observe how public opinion and adoption of pandemic othering attitudes have changed in the long term, such as in the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the years thereafter<sup>3</sup>. Such investigations

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<sup>2</sup> Statistics Bureau, Government of Japan (2021). 人口ピラミッド [*Population pyramid*].

<sup>3</sup> Barrett & Brown (2008)

could verify whether othering attitudes have been internalised by the public, as opposed to a transitory adoption of such opinions for the pandemic's duration. Although this paper specifically investigated attitudes towards Chinese, Koreans, Americans, and Europeans, future research could explore public opinion on other world regions, such as South America and Africa. Moreover, as rich countries like Japan escape the pandemic through vaccination programmes and leave behind unvaccinated poor countries, it would be of interest to observe whether the rejection of pandemic othering observed in this paper extends also to predominantly non-white poor countries. Future research could also explore the other side of the pandemic othering coin, investigating the opinions of foreigners in Japan during the pandemic to gather insight into their experiences of being othered. Moreover, research during future epidemics into a potential path dependency regarding Japanese political elites' othering strategies, considering their historical penchant for creating a dichotomy of *Wajin* compared to foreigners, would be of interest. As the nation's population and labour force shrink further, requiring more foreigners to migrate to Japan, this path dependency may end.

Ultimately, the Japanese public appears to be going in the right direction, rejecting discriminatory statements and acknowledging foreigners and Japanese as the same – human. Nevertheless, whether this paper's results translate to real-life situations is another matter. Under anonymity and without societal pressures, the Japanese public can express their disagreement with discriminatory remarks, but in the real world, in front of peers and without wanting to be the nail that sticks out, Japanese citizens may find themselves reluctantly partaking in racially determined discriminatory actions. One can only hope that as more foreigners visit Japan, whether for work or pleasure, and more Japanese citizens interact with them, Japanese society will see real-world results.

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## Appendix 1: Survey and Question Purpose

### 新型コロナウイルスと外国人のイメージに関するアンケート調査

*Survey on the novel coronavirus and the image of foreigners*

目的：

このアンケート調査は、日本人が新型コロナウイルスの影響を受け、外国人（\*注）に対して、どのように感じているかを調べ、研究することを目的としています。

（\*注：この調査における「外国人」とは日本国籍を保有していない方を指します。）

*Purpose: the purpose of this questionnaire survey is to investigate and study how Japanese people feel toward foreigners\* in light of the novel coronavirus pandemic.*

*(\*"Foreigner" in this survey refer to those who do not have Japanese nationality.)*

注意点：

- 本アンケート調査は、日本に居住する18歳以上の日本人のみご参加いただけます。
- 匿名かつ任意でのご参加をお願いいたします。
- 参加者は、理由を如何にかかわらず、本調査への参加を取り止めることができます。もしも、回答を送信後に回答の無効化を希望する場合は、以下の本研究者宛にメールでお知らせください。その後、参加者の回答を特定するために、研究者よりご返答いたします。なお、研究者とのやり取りは非公開となり、外部に開示することは一切ありません。

*Key information:*

- *Only Japanese people aged 18 and over residing in Japan can participate in this survey.*
- *Participation is anonymous and voluntary.*
- *Participants can withdraw from this survey for any reason. If you would like to withdraw your response after submission, please email the researcher listed below. After that, the researcher will reply to identify the response to withdraw. Any correspondence with the researcher will be strictly confidential.*

研究者名：ジョナサン フォスター

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*Institution: Centre international de formation européenne*

*Researcher contact details: jonathan.foster@student-cife.eu*

ご参加いただける場合は、下記項目に同意の上ご参加いただけますようお願い申し上げます。*If you would like to participate, please agree to the following items before you participate.*

( ) 上記の本調査に関する目的と注意点を読み、理解しました。

*I have read and understood the above objectives and precautions regarding this survey.*

( ) 本調査の参加者による回答が本研究で使用されることに同意します。

*I agree to allow my response to this survey to be used in this study.*

Question	Measures...
<p><b>参加者に関する質問</b></p> <p>参加者に関する次の質問にお答えください。</p> <p><i>About you (the participant)</i></p> <p><i>Please answer the following questions about yourself.</i></p>	
<p>1. 性別：男性・女性・その他</p> <p><i>Gender: Male・Female・Other</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographic group</li> </ul>
<p>2. 年齢：18-24・25-34・35-44・45-54・55-64・65+</p> <p><i>Age: 18-24・25-34・35-44・45-54・55-64・65+</i></p>	
<p>3. 民族性：日本人・他</p> <p><i>Ethnicity: Japanese・Other</i></p>	
<p>4. 最終学歴：正規の学校教育を受けていない・小学校・中学校・高校・学士号・修士号・博士号</p> <p><i>What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?</i></p> <p><i>No formal schooling・Elementary School・Junior High School・Senior High School・Undergraduate degree・Postgraduate degree・Doctorate degree</i></p>	
<p>5. 現在の雇用形態：学生・アルバイト・フルタイム・退職者・無職・その他</p> <p><i>What is your current employment status?</i></p> <p><i>Student・Part-time employment・Full-time employment・Retired・Unemployed・Other</i></p>	
<p>6. 世帯年収：100万円未満・100~199万円・200~299万円・300~399万円・400~499万円・500~599万円・600~699万円・700~799万円・800~899万円・900~999万円・1000万円以上・回答しない</p> <p><i>What is your annual total household income?</i></p> <p><i>Less than ¥1 million・¥1-1.99m・¥2-2.99m・¥3-3.99m・¥4-4.99m・¥5-5.99m・¥6-6.99m・¥7-7.99m・¥8-8.99m・¥9-9.99m・¥10m or more・Prefer not to say)</i></p>	
<p>7. お住まいの道府県</p> <p><i>In which prefecture do you reside?</i></p>	

8. 新型コロナウイルスに感染したことがありますか。 <i>Have you ever been infected with COVID-19?</i>	• Possible motives for increased xenophobia
9. 新型コロナウイルスに感染した人を知っていますか。 <i>Do you know somebody who has been infected with COVID-19?</i>	
10. どれくらいの頻度で外国人と交流しますか。 毎日・週に数回・月に数回・半年に数回・全く交流しない  <i>How often do you interact with foreigners?</i> <i>Every day • Several times per week • Several times per month •</i> <i>Several times per half-year • Never</i>	• Fear of foreigners → xenophobia increases when little contact

## 新型コロナウイルスと外国人に対するイメージについての質問

次の発言についてどう感じるかお答えください。

*About the novel coronavirus and the image of foreigners*

*Please explain how you feel about the following statements.*

### Likert Scale Questions

(Strongly agree / somewhat agree / neither agree nor disagree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree)

● Questions receiving a pandemic othering score.

11. 「日本に外国人がいなければ、あるいは少なければ、日本は新型コロナウイルスの問題を抱えていなかっただろう」 ● <i>“Japan would not have had a COVID-19 problem if there were no or fewer foreigners in Japan”.</i>	• Belief that COVID-19 is foreign problem, not Japanese problem (as suggested by government and media)
12. 「日本で確認される新型コロナウイルス感染者の大半が外国人だろう」 ● <i>“Foreigners make up the majority of COVID-19 cases in Japan”.</i>	
13. 「外国人が病床をひっ迫させ、日本の医療崩壊を引き起こしている」 ● <i>“Foreigners cause problems for the Japanese health system because they use up Japanese emergency rooms”.</i>	• Belief foreigners cause issues for Japanese healthcare (not suggested by government and media)
14. 「新型コロナウイルスに感染した場合、日本にいる外国人も日本人と同様に日本の医療を利用できるようにすべきだ」 ● <i>“Foreigners in Japan should have the same access to the Japanese health system as Japanese citizens if they contract COVID-19”.</i>	• Support for discriminatory government policies

<p>15. 「外国人が新型コロナウイルスの感染を拡大させているため、『クラスター』や『ステイホーム』などのカタカナ用語を使用している」</p> <p><i>“Katakana words such as ‘cluster’, ‘stay home’ are used because COVID-19 is a virus carried by foreigners”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief that COVID-19 is a foreign problem (so use loan words to talk about it)</li> </ul>
<p>16. 「外国語を話すことで新型コロナウイルスを他の人にうつす可能性が高まる」</p> <p><i>“If someone speaks in a foreign language, that person is more likely to spread COVID-19”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief that COVID-19 is foreign problem, not Japanese problem (as suggested by media)</li> </ul>
<p>17. 「中国人は無責任な行動（例：マスクを着用しない、衛生的でない、パーティーに行く、公衆衛生上のアドバイスを守らないなど）をとるため新型コロナウイルスに感染するが、他の外国人は当てはまらない」</p> <p><i>“Chinese get sick with COVID-19 because of irresponsible behaviour (such as not wearing masks, having poor hygiene, going partying, not respecting public health advice, etc.), but other foreigners are OK”.</i></p>	
<p>18. 「韓国人は無責任な行動（例：マスクを着用しない、衛生的でない、パーティーに行く、公衆衛生上のアドバイスを守らないなど）をとるため新型コロナウイルスに感染するが、他の外国人は当てはまらない」</p> <p><i>“Koreans get sick with COVID-19 because of irresponsible behaviour (such as not wearing masks, having poor hygiene, going partying, not respecting public health advice, etc.), but other foreigners are OK”.</i></p>	
<p>19. 「ヨーロッパの人は無責任な行動（例：マスクを着用しない、衛生的でない、パーティーに行く、公衆衛生上のアドバイスを守らないなど）をとるため新型コロナウイルスに感染するが、他の外国人は当てはまらない」</p> <p><i>“Europeans get sick with COVID-19 because of irresponsible behaviour (such as not wearing masks, having poor hygiene, going partying, not respecting public health advice, etc.), but other foreigners are OK”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief that COVID-19 is foreign problem, not Japanese problem (as suggested by government and media)</li> </ul>
<p>20. 「アメリカ人は無責任な行動（例：マスクを着用しない、衛生的でない、パーティーに行く、公衆衛生上のアドバイスを守らないなど）をとるため新型コロナウイルスに感染するが、他の外国人は当てはまらない」</p> <p><i>“Americans get sick with COVID-19 because of irresponsible behaviour (such as not wearing masks, having poor hygiene, going partying, not respecting public health advice, etc.), but other foreigners are OK”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiation between former colonies, other foreigners, and Japanese</li> </ul>

<p>21. 「外国人は一般的に無責任な行動（例：マスクを着用しない、衛生的でない、パーティーに行く、公衆衛生上のアドバイスを守らないなど）をとるため新型コロナウイルスに感染する</p> <p>●</p> <p><i>“Foreigners in general get sick with COVID-19 because of irresponsible behaviour (such as not wearing masks, having poor hygiene, going partying, not respecting public health advice, etc.)”.</i></p>	
<p>22. 「日本人は無責任な行動（例：マスクを着用しない、衛生的でない、パーティーに行く、公衆衛生上のアドバイスを守らないなど）をとるため新型コロナウイルスに感染する」</p> <p>●</p> <p><i>“Japanese people get sick with COVID-19 because of irresponsible behaviour (such as not wearing masks, having poor hygiene, going partying, not respecting public health advice, etc.)”.</i></p>	
<p>23. 「中国人は、日本人よりも新型コロナウイルスを他の人に感染させるリスクが高い」</p> <p>●</p> <p><i>“Chinese are at a higher risk of transmitting COVID-19 than Japanese people”.</i></p>	
<p>24. 「韓国人は、日本人よりも新型コロナウイルスを他の人に感染させるリスクが高い」</p> <p>●</p> <p><i>“Koreans are at a higher risk of transmitting COVID-19 than Japanese people”.</i></p>	
<p>25. 「ヨーロッパの人は、日本人よりも新型コロナウイルスを他の人に感染させるリスクが高い」</p> <p>●</p> <p><i>“Europeans are at a higher risk of transmitting COVID-19 than Japanese people”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief that COVID-19 is foreign problem, not Japanese problem (as suggested by government and media)</li> <li>• Differentiation between former colonies, other foreigners, and Japanese</li> </ul>
<p>26. 「アメリカ人は、日本人よりも新型コロナウイルスを他の人に感染させるリスクが高い」</p> <p>●</p> <p><i>“Americans are at a higher risk of transmitting COVID-19 than Japanese people”.</i></p>	
<p>27. 「外国人は一般的に、日本人よりも新型コロナウイルスを他の人に感染させるリスクが高い」</p> <p>●</p> <p><i>“Foreigners in general are at a higher risk of transmitting COVID-19 than Japanese people”.</i></p>	
<p>28. 「日本人は外国人を恐れるべきだ」</p> <p>●</p> <p><i>“Japanese people should fear foreigners”.</i></p>	
<p>29. 「日本人は病気にかかった外国人を恐れるべきだ」</p> <p>●</p> <p><i>“Japanese people should fear foreigners who are sick”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Xenophobia regardless of whether sick or not</li> </ul>

30. 「日本人は病気にかかった日本人を恐れるべきだ」 ● “Japanese people should fear Japanese citizens who are sick”.	
31. 「外国人と交流することで不安になることがある」 ● “Interacting with foreigners makes me feel uneasy”.	• General xenophobia
32. 「外国人がこれまで日本にはなかった病気を広めるのではないかと心配になることがある」 ● “I worry that foreigners may spread unusual diseases”.	• Xenophobia due to sickness
33. 「日本で外国人が増えるにつれて、日本の古き良き生活習慣が悪化するのではないかと心配になることがある」 ● “With more foreigners in Japan, I fear that the Japanese way of life will change for the worse”.	• Xenophobia due to cultural threat
34. 「日本政府は効果的に新型コロナウイルスの感染防止対策をしてきた」 ● “The government of Japan has dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic effectively”.	
35. 「外国人の日本への入国禁止措置は、日本で新型コロナウイルスの蔓延を防ぐ効果的な手段だ」 ● “Entry bans for non-Japanese to come into Japan are an effective measure to counter spread of COVID-19 in Japan”.	• Support for discriminatory government policies
36. 「コロナ禍において、日本政府は外国人を日本人と同等に扱っていない」 ● “Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of Japan has treated foreigners unfairly compared to Japanese citizens”.	
37. 「新型コロナウイルスの流行に関して、日本のマスメディアは国内の状況よりも国外の状況に焦点を当てて報道をしてきた」 ● “Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Japanese mass media has focused on the situation outside of Japan more than the situation in Japan”.	• Media coverage opinions
38. 「新型コロナウイルスの流行に関して、日本のマスメディアは国内の外国人感染者に焦点を当てて報道をしてきた」 ● “Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Japanese mass media has focused on foreigners in Japan who got sick”.	
39. 「日本はさらに多くの外国人労働者を必要としている」 ● “Japan needs more foreign workers”.	• General openness to foreigners
40. 「日本はさらに多くの外国人観光客を必要としている」 ● “Japan needs more foreign tourists”.	• Economic factor awareness

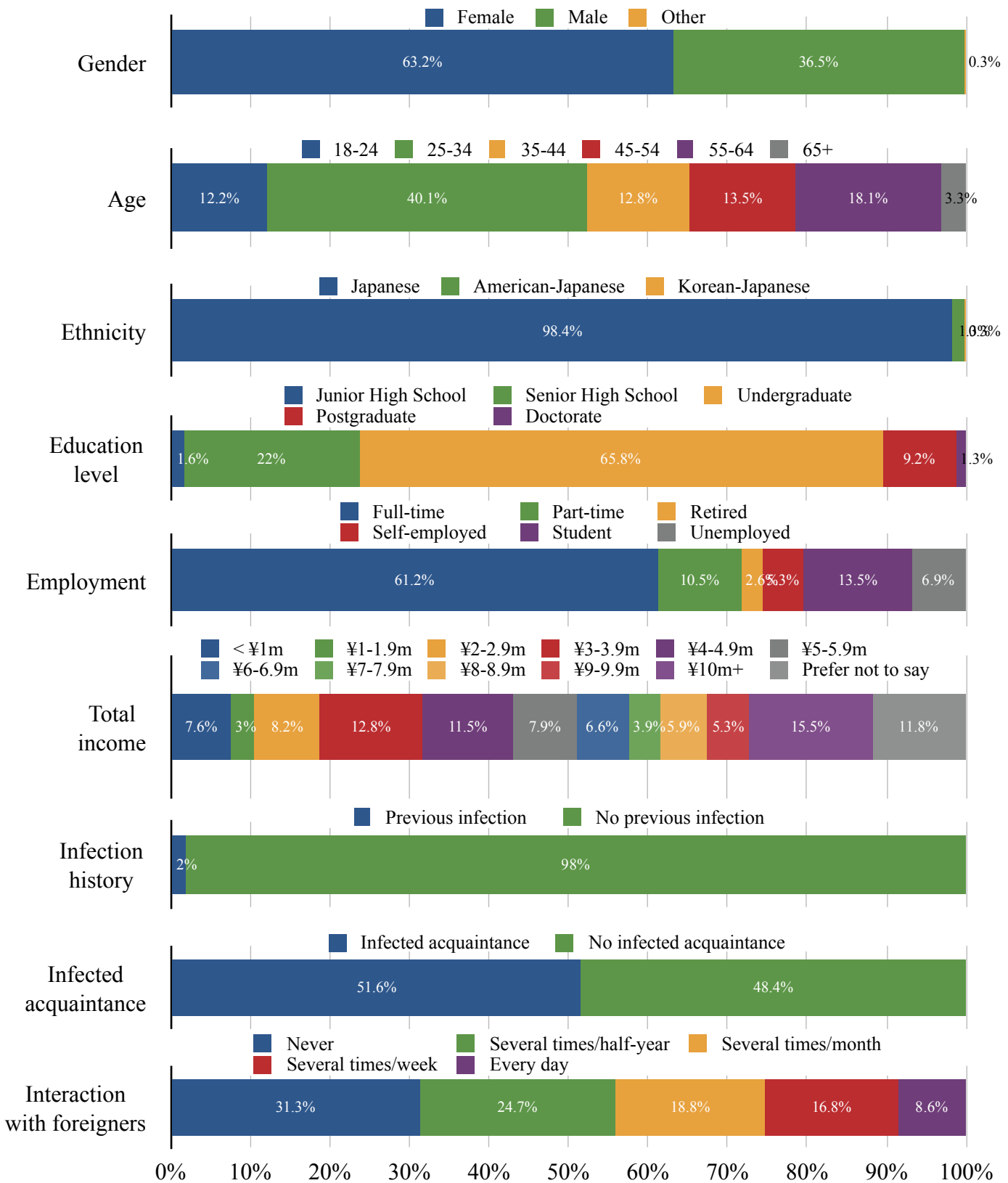


<p>41. 「新型コロナウイルスの流行によって、外国人に対する見方が前向きに変わった」  <input checked="" type="radio"/> “The COVID-19 pandemic has changed my views on foreigners positively”.</p> <p>その理由を自由にお答えください。  <i>Please explain your answer.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-evaluation of xenophobia</li> </ul>
<p>42. 「新型コロナウイルスの流行によって、外国人に対する見方が悪くなった」  <input checked="" type="radio"/> “The COVID-19 pandemic has changed my views on foreigners negatively”.</p> <p>その理由を自由にお答えください。  <i>Please explain your answer.</i></p>	
<h2 style="text-align: center;">利用メディアについて</h2> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>About your media use</i></p>	
<p>43. ニュースや情報を得るために、どのようなメディアを日常的に利用しますか。</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 日本の従来型のメディア（新聞、テレビ、ラジオ）</li> <li>• 外国の従来型のメディア（新聞、テレビ、ラジオ）</li> <li>• ソーシャルメディア（Twitterやインスタグラムなど）</li> <li>• 専門のウェブサイト</li> <li>• オンライン検索（例：Google、Yahoo! など）</li> <li>• その他</li> </ul> <p><i>What media do you regularly use to get news and information?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Domestic traditional media (newspapers/TV news/radio)</i></li> <li>• <i>Foreign traditional media (newspapers/TV news/radio)</i></li> <li>• <i>Social media (Twitter, Instagram, etc.)</i></li> <li>• <i>Professional websites</i></li> <li>• <i>Online searches (e.g. through Google, Yahoo! etc.)</i></li> <li>• <i>Other (please specify)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General media influences</li> </ul>
<p>44. 新型コロナウイルスに関する追加情報を自分自身で調べたことがありますか。</p> <p><i>Have you looked up any extra information regarding the COVID-19 outbreak?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of media influence regarding COVID-19</li> <li>• Level of knowledge about COVID-19</li> </ul>

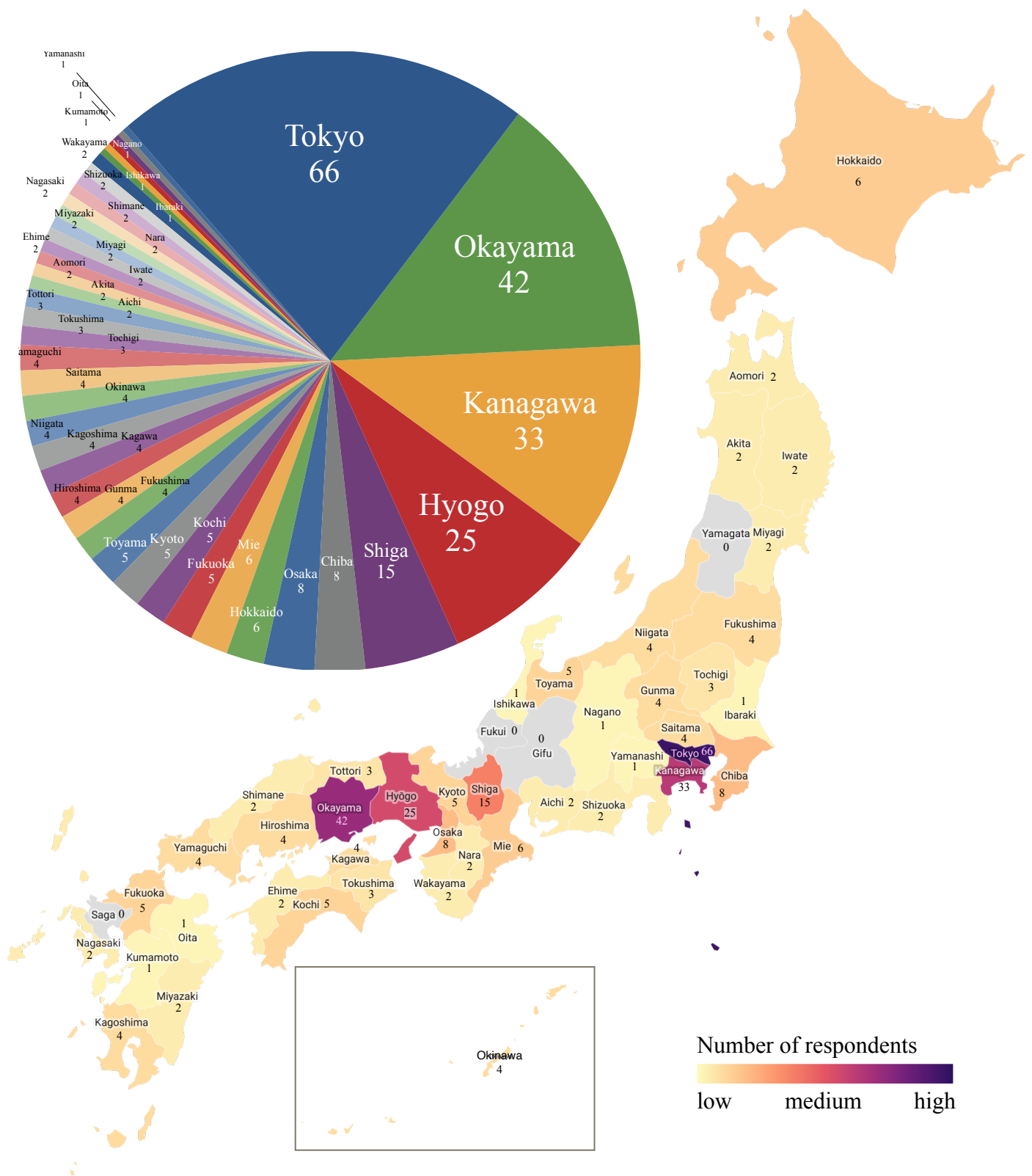


<p>(はいの場合) どのような情報源を使用しましたか。</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 日本の従来型のメディア (新聞、テレビ、ラジオ)</li> <li>• 外国の従来型のメディア (新聞、テレビ、ラジオ)</li> <li>• ソーシャルメディア (Twitterやインスタグラムなど)</li> <li>• 専門のウェブサイト (保健機関、ウイルス研究者/生物学者が投稿したブログなど)</li> <li>• 家族や友人、知人など</li> <li>• オンライン検索 (例: Google、Yahoo! など)</li> <li>• その他</li> </ul> <p><i>(If yes) What sources?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Domestic traditional media (newspapers/TV news/radio)</i></li> <li>• <i>Foreign traditional media (newspapers/TV news/radio)</i></li> <li>• <i>Social media (Twitter, Instagram, etc.)</i></li> <li>• <i>Professional websites (health institutes, blogs posted by virologists/biologists, etc.)</i></li> <li>• <i>Friends/family/acquaintances</i></li> <li>• <i>Online searches (e.g. through Google, Yahoo! etc.)</i></li> <li>• <i>Other (please specify)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of media influence regarding COVID-19</li> </ul>
<p><b>回答内容をご確認ください。</b></p> <p><i>Are you happy with your answers?</i></p>	
<p>回答を送信しますか。 はい・もう一度確認する</p> <p><u><i>Would you like to submit your response?</i></u> <i>Yes</i> • <i>Check one more time</i></p>	
<p><b>回答を受け付けました。ご協力いただき誠にありがとうございました。</b></p> <p><i>We have accepted your answer. Thank you for your cooperation.</i></p>	

## Appendix 2: Response Distribution

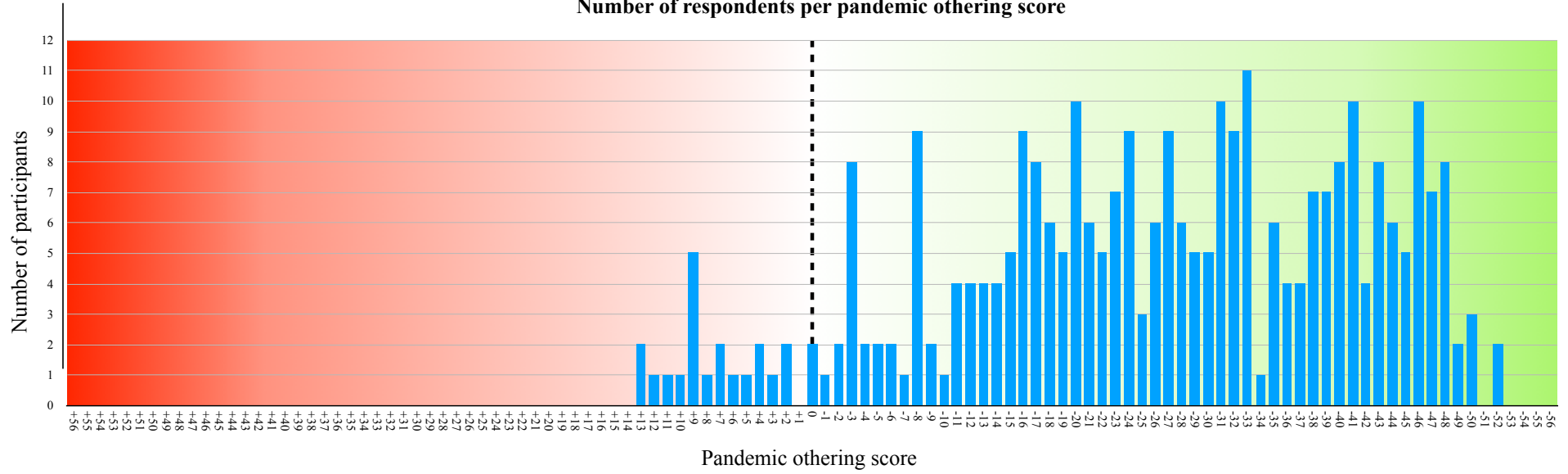


# Number of Respondents by Prefecture

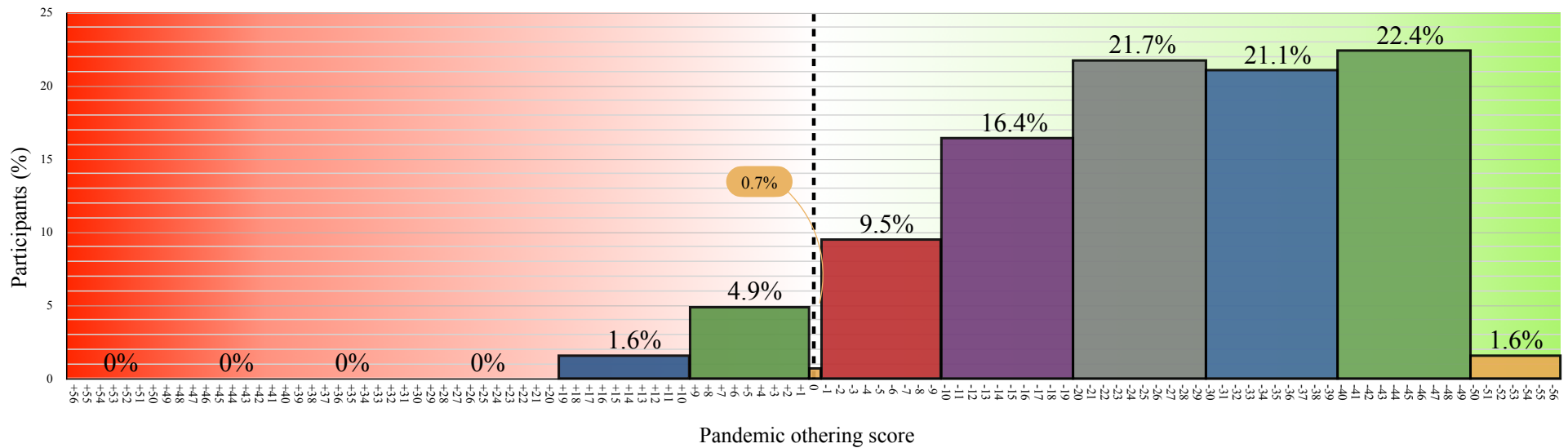


# Appendix 3: COVID-19 Pandemic Othering Total Score Distribution

Number of respondents per pandemic othering score



Percentage of respondents per pandemic othering score grouping



## Appendix 4: Survey Comments

(Translations by the author of this work)

### Themes found in the comments

<i>Total relevant comments: 151</i>		<b>Number of comments</b>	<b>Percentage of comments</b>
1	COVID-19 is unrelated to views on foreigners	98	64.9%
2	Foreigners' cultural differences and poor hygiene	28	18.5%
3	China is responsible for the pandemic	22	14.6%
4	Foreigners caused the pandemic	14	9.3%
5	Strong COVID-19 containment measures abroad	14	9.3%
6	Foreign countries have more COVID-19 cases than Japan	8	5.3%
7	Negative media reports about foreigners	7	4.6%
8	Economic need for foreign labour and tourism	6	4.0%
9	Asian-hate abroad	5	3.3%
10	Foreigners have adopted better hygiene standards and positively changed their culture	5	3.3%
11	Pandemic othering against foreigners has occurred	4	2.6%
12	Infected groups of foreigners in Japan	3	2.0%
13	Negative views of Americans	3	2.0%
14	Negative views of Koreans	2	1.3%
15	Speaking foreign languages increases spread of COVID-19	2	1.3%
16	Domestic othering of COVID-19	1	0.7%
17	Foreigners were not mistreated by the media or government	1	0.7%
18	Anti-Olympics	1	0.7%
19	Unknown cause of COVID-19	1	0.7%
20	Variants	1	0.7%

“The COVID-19 pandemic has changed my views on foreigners...”

“... positively”		“... negatively”		Pandemic Othering Score
Somewhat agree	<i>I think the values regarding infection are different</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>I think the values regarding infection are different</i>	<b>13</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Because I neither agree nor disagree</i>	Strongly agree	<i>There are more coronavirus infections in foreign countries</i>	<b>11</b>
Somewhat disagree	<i>Travel, work, permanent residence, whatever; if foreigners come to Japan, I want them to follow the Japanese system and respect Japanese culture and customs.</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>Especially the Chinese. The Chinese government. A great pathogen is spreading! Despite the doctor's warning, the government suppressed the fact at home and abroad, and as a result, at the subsequent Chinese New Year festival, China made its people travel abroad and made the epidemic worldwide. The Chinese government, the Chinese should feel responsible.</i>	<b>10</b>
Strongly disagree	–	Somewhat agree	<i>There were many foreigner [coronavirus] clusters</i>	<b>9</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	–	Somewhat agree	<i>I think coronavirus is China's revenge for 200 years ago. China suffered from the Opium Wars for nearly 100 years about 200 years ago.</i>	<b>8</b>
Somewhat disagree	<i>Because Chinese and Koreans are outrageous</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>Because Chinese and Koreans are outrageous</i>	<b>6</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>No change.</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>Because they were the trigger [of the pandemic]</i>	<b>5</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Personally didn't change.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>Only China is bad</i>	<b>4</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Fair and just</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Fair and just</i>	<b>4</b>
Somewhat disagree	<i>Variant viruses from overseas are not positive.</i>	Strongly agree	<i>China's dishonesty, the invasion of the sea area that took advantage of this situation, cyber attacks, and other self-centredness seemed strong, amplifying the negative image of China.</i>	<b>2</b>

“... positively”		“... negatively”		Pandemic Othering Score
Somewhat disagree	<i>Regarding situations like "I have no intention of changing my own customs while in Japan", the way of thinking about foreigners is not positive regardless of coronavirus.</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>I presume that the example of a Chinese person who entered the country with an antipyretic from Wuhan last year knew of Japan's generous medical care. Such acts are completely unacceptable.  Since then, I am convinced that the lack of restrictions on the entry of foreigners by the government has been one of the factors that led to the spread of the infection.</i>	-1
Somewhat disagree	<i>Because there was a cluster in the foreign community in my neighbourhood</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>I feel that it is not related to nationality</i>	-2
Strongly disagree	–	Somewhat agree	<i>Foreigners didn't prevent infection so much, and there were many bad lockdowns in foreign countries.</i>	-3
Somewhat agree	<i>Initially, it was said that those who returned to Japan at the Chinese New Year Festival brought in the virus.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Not really any link</i>	-3
Somewhat agree	<i>Because overseas policies are more effective</i>	Somewhat disagree		-3
Strongly disagree	–	Somewhat agree	<i>Coronavirus is China's fault</i>	-3
Strongly disagree	<i>It is whether or not the individual is able to comply with public order and morals rather than saying "...because it is a foreigner". I think it doesn't matter what race you are. Even if you are a foreigner, if you follow the rules and manners, there is no negative factor, and if you do not follow the rules, you are a useless "individual" even if you are Japanese.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>Same as the previous answer. What is worrisome is the behaviour of the individual rather than the race.</i>	-4
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>It hasn't changed.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>It has not worsened.</i>	-6
Somewhat disagree	<i>I think it was the opposite rather than a positive change.</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>Japanese people are also infected from abroad, and I think foreigners have more opportunities to bring the virus to Japan.</i>	-6
Strongly disagree	<i>There is no positive change</i>	Somewhat disagree		-8

“... positively”		“... negatively”		Pandemic Othering Score
Somewhat agree	<i>There was a foreigner who said on TV that human life was prioritised and that the economy could not run unless people were alive, so it turned out to be difficult for the economy, but if the number of people continues to decrease, it will also be difficult for the economy.</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>In truth, I feel that the pandemic arose due to people trying to escape the disease that was prevalent in a country and thus spread it to another country. I was very frustrated; I felt that this made the public security worse, including in my home country.</i>	-8
Strongly disagree	<i>Having meals without using masks can create clusters. This is exactly the case with Vietnamese people in Kurayoshi City, Tottori Prefecture.</i>	Strongly agree	<i>China in February 2020 was so terrible. Everything started in Wuhan.</i>	-8
Somewhat agree	<i>I learned that Japan, which is ageing, relies on the power of foreigners.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I learned that the way of thinking about hygiene is quite different from that of Japan.</i>	-9
Somewhat disagree	<i>My views haven't changed much due to the pandemic, but I see people who don't follow some rules.</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>When a cluster broke out, companies' foreign workers were making a racket outside, with large numbers of people at home, or gathering at convenience stores.</i>	-9
Somewhat disagree	–	Strongly disagree	<i>I think it is unreasonable for Japan, which is still trying to hold the Olympics in this pandemic, to blame the foreigners who came in. Even though I live in this international community, I don't think there is any reason why the virus has spread because there are foreigners now.</i>	-11
Somewhat agree	<i>I felt that the leaders of each country clearly stated their thoughts and were taking measures against coronavirus.</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>It seemed that Trump's supporters were downplaying the coronavirus, without acknowledging coronavirus, and seemingly sympathised with it.</i>	-11
Neither agree nor disagree	–	Somewhat agree	<i>Because Asian-hate happened.</i>	-12
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Because it hasn't changed in particular</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Because it hasn't changed in particular</i>	-12
Neither agree nor disagree	–	Somewhat agree	<i>Many Asian hate crimes have occurred in the United States, and coronavirus is causing an even more unusual situation.</i>	-13
Somewhat disagree	<i>Since it is happening all over the world, there were some events (such as foreign protests) that made the cultural differences noticeable, but there was no change in my views.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>The poor initial response from China made my impression worse, but I didn't feel anything about other countries.</i>	-13



“... positively”		“... negatively”		Pandemic Othering Score
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>There is almost no change in perspective due to coronavirus.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree		-14
Strongly disagree	<i>I don't see them as related.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>I don't see them as related.</i>	-14
Somewhat disagree	<i>The coronavirus pandemic and views on foreigners should not be related</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I don't think the virus epidemic is just a factor for foreigners</i>	-15
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>The epidemic is more a matter of personal hygiene than national character. Knowledgeable people change to a positive view regardless of ethnicity Even Japanese people have a negative view if they have a low awareness of hygiene.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Since there are differences in lifestyle (how to use the toilet, etc.), there are people who are of different cultural levels. On the other hand, many foreigners living in foreign countries are better than Japanese, who are a single ethnic group, and I think that it is impossible to judge by the country of origin.</i>	-15
Strongly disagree	<i>Because my views haven't changed</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>My views haven't worsened</i>	-15
Somewhat disagree	<i>I felt a difference in the way of thinking regarding coronavirus measures, for example.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree		-16
Somewhat agree	<i>Income decreased due to a sharp decrease in tourists. I also relied on the foreign labour force, but we couldn't get them to come to Japan.</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>The image of the Chinese has deteriorated.</i>	-16
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>There was no particular change</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>There was no particular change</i>	-16
Strongly disagree	<i>The question's setting is weird</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>The question's setting is weird</i>	-16
Strongly disagree	<i>My view of foreigners has not particularly changed significantly. However, I found that foreigners had low public health awareness.</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>Although I lived in Europe during the coronavirus disaster, I felt the low public health awareness of foreigners every day.</i>	-16
Somewhat disagree	—	Somewhat agree	<i>It was reported that Chinese people were the first to be infected with the novel coronavirus in Japan, and that Chinese tourists who came to Japan during the Chinese New Year were buying up Japanese masks.</i>	-17

“... positively”		“... negatively”		Pandemic Othering Score
Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat agree	<i>The virus, which was not originally in Japan, came in from a foreign country. In addition, since wearing a mask is important in infection prevention measures, I think that many Japanese people, who originally use masks, think that they are more able to prevent infection than foreigners. Since I see many foreigners wearing masks on TV, I don't think that many people feel that they are not taking preventive measures while the infection continues.</i>	-17
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>No particular change</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Coronavirus is not the fault of foreigners, so there is no change in perspective</i>	-17
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>The same is true for Japanese people, but people who travel extensively have a high risk of infection, and I feel that they have a higher risk of infection than saying just because they are foreigners.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I wonder if I understand the rules for infection prevention in Japan. However, there are some Japanese who do not follow the rules, and it seems to be a problem (different) to distinguish between Japanese and foreigners.</i>	-17
Strongly disagree	<i>There may be more groups without masks and groups seeking freedom than in Japan, but they are still within the scope of their understanding of their national character, so my views remain the same.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Same as above</i>	-18
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>There are various ideas and countermeasures for the novel coronavirus depending on culture and customs of each country. My views and impressions have not changed.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>There are people who follow good manners and people who don't, but I think my view of Chinese people has become relatively bad.</i>	-18
Somewhat disagree	<i>I didn't feel negatively about foreigners to begin with. Coronavirus in particular has not made me think more positively about foreigners.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I don't think it has changed in light of coronavirus.</i>	-19
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I don't know</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>I don't know</i>	-19
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Looking at reports in Japan, I think there are many cases both good and bad.</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>When I compare my own infection prevention with reports about the lax infection prevention in foreign countries, it seems that they are not doing infection prevention.</i>	-20

“... positively”		“... negatively”		Pandemic Othering Score
Somewhat agree	<i>Rather than being a foreigner, I think it is wonderful that the governments of other countries are demonstrating leadership in coronavirus countermeasures compared to the Japanese government, and I feel a sense of crisis toward the Japanese government.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>Rather than grouping foreigners altogether, I have come to feel the horror of interacting with people from countries that have not taken proper measures against infectious diseases.</i>	-20
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I have always tried to see foreigners as the same as us, without prejudice against foreigners</i>	Strongly disagree		-20
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I don't really feel that the coronavirus pandemic has brought out the national character of each country. It is thought that the difference in the severity of the coronavirus pandemic in each country largely depends on two points: (1) government response and (2) the amount of sighing and saliva emitted when speaking one's mother tongue. Therefore, it is considered that the epidemic's severity does not depend on the national character. I recognise that the national character of each country was the way the government responded to the coronavirus response (protests in the United States, etc.), but most of the reactions were predictable considering the history of each country. Therefore, my view on foreigners has not changed.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Same as above.</i>	-20
Somewhat disagree	<i>Because the novel coronavirus pandemic does not change foreigners' allies</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>Because the novel coronavirus pandemic does not change foreigners' allies</i>	-20
Strongly disagree	<i>My views don't change because there is no relation with coronavirus</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Same as above</i>	-20
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I haven't seen or heard much about the novel coronavirus and foreigners in Japan.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>The spread of variants to Japan is not always brought about by foreigners.</i>	-21
Somewhat agree	<i>It was clear that the inbound foreigners had a big influence.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I hear both good and bad stories about coronavirus.</i>	-21
Strongly disagree	<i>I think coronavirus is already widespread in Japan.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I don't think so for most foreigners. If I dare say so, I'm worried that it's a Chinese biological weapon.</i>	-21

“... positively”		“... negatively”		Pandemic Othering Score
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>The fundamental cultures of Japan and foreign countries are different, such as prevention awareness and the lifestyle regarding infectious diseases other than coronavirus, but I think that the coronavirus epidemic has greatly changed the awareness of foreigners. When I saw the news that foreigners were actively using masks and disinfectants that they hadn't previously needed in their daily lives and were being careful with their greetings, I felt that the transformation was wonderful.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>There is no particular change in my view of foreigners due to the coronavirus pandemic. Culture, customs, medical conditions, and travel conditions vary from country to country, so it is not comparable to Japan.</i>	-22
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>[Being a foreigner] does not always lead to direct infection, and some people originally live in Japan, so my views remain the same.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>Because Japan itself, which does not pay attention to actions and has poor countermeasures, is bad.</i>	-22
Strongly disagree	<i>The coronavirus turmoil does not change the way I view foreigners.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>The coronavirus turmoil does not change the way I view foreigners.</i>	-22
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Coronavirus and nationality are not related</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Coronavirus and nationality are not related</i>	-22
Somewhat disagree	<i>In the early days of the epidemic, I thought foreigners were stupid because foreigners were particular about their appearance and did not wear masks and spread the infection.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>In the early days of the epidemic, I thought foreigners were stupid because foreigners were particular about their appearance and did not wear masks and spread the infection.</i>	-23
Somewhat disagree	<i>Coronavirus doesn't change the way I see foreigners</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>I don't think the trend in Japan is due to foreigners</i>	-24
Somewhat disagree	<i>I don't think there is a relation between a view on foreigners and coronavirus</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>Same as the previous answer.</i>	-24
Strongly disagree	<i>I think it's an individual issue, not based on one's country</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>I think it's an individual issue, not based on one's country</i>	-24
Strongly disagree	<i>My views don't change.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>It's not the fault of foreigners</i>	-24
Somewhat agree	<i>Regarding vaccination, it seems that Japanese people are not willing to inoculate because they are concerned about side reactions, etc., or foreigners are actively inoculating, rather than worrying about side reactions, etc., toward the convergence of coronavirus. I feel that I am working positively.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I was a little scared when I saw the news that foreigners were participating in a large-scale protest despite the increase in the number of infected people.</i>	-24
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Same as before</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Anyone can infect the coronavirus, so my views remain the same.</i>	-24

“... positively”		“... negatively”		Pandemic Othering Score
Somewhat disagree	<i>It cannot be said that it is positive because there is no particular information other than the information that foreign tourists will not come and the impact on business will be great.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>The situation of foreigners and the situation of Japanese people are the same.</i>	-24
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I think there is almost no change in my view of foreigners before and after the outbreak of the new coronavirus.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Same as the answer to the previous question.</i>	-25
Somewhat disagree	<i>The media reported on the appearance of foreigners who were not wearing masks, and I saw only places with weak sense of crisis, so I didn't think it was positive.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>Because I already knew that there were situations in foreign countries where people were reported in the media to not wear a mask, and that they did not have a habit of using a mask during the flu season, and that they might be perceived as sick by wearing a mask, my view of foreigners didn't deteriorate.</i>	-25
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I'm grateful that they are revitalising the economy as tourists.</i>	Somewhat disagree		-26
Strongly disagree	<i>The coronavirus was not first confirmed in Japan.</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>I'm not sure if it's grouped as "foreigners", but if you look at the news reports such as the national character without masks and the dislike of overseas media toward China, I think that the impression will naturally go down.</i>	-26
Somewhat disagree	<i>In terms of perspective, the coronavirus has no effect. There are people who adhere to etiquette and people who do not; nationality does not matter.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>Same as above</i>	-26
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Because I didn't originally have a view on foreigners</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Because I didn't originally have a view on foreigners</i>	-26
Strongly agree	<i>I think that the way countries (politics) perceive and tackle unknown viruses has been outstanding in each country.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>I think that the opponent to fight is a virus, and human beings (everyone in the world) should unite and converge.</i>	-27
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I don't think any country is relevant as anyone can get infected. There are many things that I think are amazing due to the measures taken in that country.</i>	Strongly disagree		-27
Somewhat disagree	<i>Coronavirus is more prevalent abroad than domestically, so it does not bring a positive image</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>It is true that infections outside Japan are high, but I think that it does not affect the way people see it.</i>	-28
Strongly disagree	<i>I think foreigners and Japanese are earthlings the same.</i>	Strongly disagree		-28

“... positively”		“... negatively”		Pandemic Othering Score
Strongly disagree	<i>Because the government is stupid ~ The Olympics are the highest priority over human life!</i>	Strongly agree	<i>China and continental Asia were imposing responsibility as if they had spread the coronavirus. Because the government and the media are stupid</i>	<b>-28</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>There is no particular change in perspective</i>	Neither agree nor disagree		<b>-29</b>
Strongly disagree	<i>Japanese and foreigners are the same.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Because people do not change from person to person</i>	<b>-29</b>
Somewhat disagree	<i>I had no negative feelings to begin with</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Some Japanese people can't follow the rules</i>	<b>-29</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>The coronavirus pandemic did not change my impression of foreigners.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Same as above</i>	<b>-29</b>
Somewhat disagree	<i>Because many people think that they bring in coronavirus</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>Same as above</i>	<b>-29</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I am impressed with the initial measures taken by Taiwan and South Korea (performing PCR to a large number of people) and the speed of vaccine spread in the United States. I don't think Japan is perfect, probably because Japan has the Olympics. (Although the number of infected people is smaller than in other countries)</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>Although the image of China, which is the source of infection, has deteriorated, I would like to firmly recognise that the Chinese government, not the Chinese, is bad. Hate crimes for American Asians make me sad to see.</i>	<b>-30</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I don't think it has changed.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>There may be some prejudice against Wuhan where the virus has spread.</i>	<b>-30</b>
Strongly agree	<i>It turned out that there are big differences in coronavirus measures depending on the country. Countries without masks, countries as usual, countries with strict lockdowns with the military, and Japan that can only request. Because of the differences, humanity will not be wiped out! I came to think that there are so many countries! I'm glad there are various countries. I'm glad there are various races.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>How you feel about countries depends on the country. I don't see a reason for a negative change in views.</i>	<b>-30</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Discrimination against Asians was often posted online, and I was a little scared to go abroad.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree		<b>-30</b>

“... positively”		“... negatively”		Pandemic Othering Score
Somewhat disagree	<i>Since it is said to be a disease that originated in China, I thought that it would not be a positive change if it was considered as a virus that came from a foreign country.</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>The first cases were brought in by foreign visitors and returnees, so I think that my views of foreigners deteriorated, but now it is prevalent in Japan despite entry bans on foreign countries. Because it is continuing, it is not a story limited to foreigners. Now, I think, the impressions of other prefectures where infections are increasing is getting worse, such as "People in Osaka have already given up and went drinking and infections are increasing". So now, regardless of foreigners, I think that the views are getting worse between Japanese people.</i>	-31
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I've never been particularly conscious of foreigners</i>	Strongly disagree		-31
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>It hasn't particularly changed from before</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>It hasn't particularly changed from before</i>	-31
Strongly disagree	<i>It is the same as before</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>It is the same as before</i>	-31
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Since the coronavirus problem, I have had absolutely no interactions with foreigners, so I can't answer whether there is any change in the current situation.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Regarding the coronavirus epidemic, I think that anyone can get it anywhere, regardless of country or nationality.</i>	-31
Somewhat agree	<i>Foreigners are being careful by using masks, etc.</i>	Somewhat disagree		-32
Somewhat disagree	<i>There was no such change in particular.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>I didn't feel that way in particular.</i>	-32
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Because of the coronavirus epidemic, my views of foreigners has not changed.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree		-32
Neither agree nor disagree	–	Somewhat disagree	<i>Even if the outbreak occurs in a foreign country, the outbreak is considered to be spontaneous.</i>	-32
Somewhat agree	<i>I realised how incoming foreigners support the Japanese economy. Being isolated makes me feel that exchanges with foreign countries are even more precious.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>Because both Japanese and foreigners are the same in the sense that there are good points and bad points.</i>	-32



“... positively”		“... negatively”		Pandemic Othering Score
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>For example, I think the pandemic was an opportunity for us to understand differences in national character and values, like Americans not being good with masks. I feel that the chances to understand the characteristics and national character of foreigners have increased because of the universal problem of the coronavirus.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>It's not to do with being a foreigner; even Japanese people have different values, so I can't say it unconditionally.</i>	-32
Neither agree nor disagree	–	Somewhat disagree	<i>It's a global issue, so my opinion of foreigners didn't change negatively during the coronavirus pandemic</i>	-33
Somewhat disagree	<i>The virus epidemic has caused many cases in different countries.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I've seen strong reports about foreigners in Japan and abroad.</i>	-33
Somewhat disagree	<i>If a foreigner gets infected, I think there will be more discrimination than Japanese people would get.</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>If a foreigner gets infected, I think there will be more discrimination than Japanese people would get.</i>	-33
Strongly disagree	<i>I don't think it's relevant</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>I don't think it's relevant</i>	-35
Strongly agree	<i>I was impressed by the richness of the ideas when I saw the policies being implemented overseas and how foreigners enjoyed their lives and hobbies during the coronavirus pandemic (such as going inside a balloon and enjoying a live performance).</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>Especially in the United States, discrimination against Asians triggered by the new coronavirus has become more serious, and there are some parts that have become a little worse in that respect.</i>	-35
Strongly disagree	<i>The current coronavirus turmoil is not accompanied by reality, so you don't have to blame the foreigners.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>There is a peaceful part because there are no foreign tourists, but I think that foreign tourists should be accepted economically.</i>	-35
Somewhat disagree	<i>One of the factors was the acceptance of tourists during the Chinese New Year, and the coronavirus became widespread.</i>	Strongly disagree		-36
Strongly disagree	<i>There is no relation between coronavirus and race or nationality</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>I think that, in every country, there are people who follow the measures and people who do not follow the measures</i>	-36
Strongly disagree	<i>I don't see the relationship between coronavirus and foreigners</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>I don't see the relationship between coronavirus and foreigners</i>	-38
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I don't feel any change due to the novel coronavirus.</i>	Strongly disagree		-38



“... positively”		“... negatively”		Pandemic Othering Score
Somewhat disagree	<i>I don't think the epidemic of the new coronavirus has anything to do with views on foreigners</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>I haven't seen it as related to foreigners</i>	<b>-38</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>My views do not change regardless of the coronavirus</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>For the same reason as the previous question</i>	<b>-38</b>
Strongly disagree	<i>It hasn't changed</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>It hasn't changed</i>	<b>-39</b>
Somewhat disagree	<i>I don't think there are any noticeable changes.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>Same as above</i>	<b>-39</b>
Somewhat agree	<i>I felt that [foreign] countries were a few steps ahead of Japan in terms of vaccine development, prompt vaccination, and countries with appropriate initial policies.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Personally, coronavirus has nothing to do with having a bad view [of foreigners]</i>	<b>-39</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>They are not related</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>They are not related</i>	<b>-39</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>The reason why it is not a positive change is that the culture, customs and values of each country became clear, and I often felt that it was less hygienic than the Japanese. For example, don't wash your hands after the toilet, sit on the ground, and so on.</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>Since there are individual differences, I do not take a bad view of all foreigners, but when I see how they go out without wearing a mask even in Japan, their views and strictness regarding coronavirus countermeasures, I feel that foreigners take measures less seriously.</i>	<b>-40</b>
Somewhat disagree	<i>Each country is competing to protect its own interests.</i>	Somewhat agree	<i>China is not fulfilling its responsibilities as the country where coronavirus originated.</i>	<b>-40</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I'm worried when traveling abroad unnecessarily.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Just by looking at foreigners living in Japan, it's a pity if they would think to go on an unnecessary and non-urgent overseas trip.</i>	<b>-41</b>
Strongly disagree	<i>I think it may be better to be isolated when it comes to virus epidemics. In terms of the virus epidemic, I don't have any desire to live a real cultural life and interact with people of various values.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>I don't know the true cause of the coronavirus.</i>	<b>-41</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>It's not that foreigners are bad, so my views don't change.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree		<b>-41</b>
Somewhat agree	<i>It's not really to do with being a foreigner</i>	Somewhat disagree		<b>-41</b>
Somewhat disagree	<i>It has nothing to do with feelings towards foreigners.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Same as above</i>	<b>-41</b>

“... positively”		“... negatively”		Pandemic Othering Score
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>It has always been the case that new viruses develop from overseas and spread worldwide.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Same as above</i>	-41
Somewhat disagree	–	Somewhat disagree	<i>No change, good or bad.</i>	-42
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>It's not a reason to change my perspective.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>It's not a reason to change my perspective.</i>	-42
Somewhat disagree	<i>It is hard to say that the pandemic in Europe and the United States has been publicised well, and many people think that foreigners are spreading COVID-19, so it is hard to say that they have become positive.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>For the same reason, I think some people have a bad view, while others haven't changed.</i>	-43
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>No particular change</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Being Japanese or a foreigner has nothing to do with being infected with the coronavirus.</i>	-43
Strongly disagree	<i>Awareness of foreigners living in Japan has been low, but I don't think there are almost any foreigners facing difficulties in the press and from policies.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>It isn't that views have worsened now; people had bad views of foreigners in the first place.</i>	-43
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Before and after, neither improved nor worsened</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Unchanged</i>	-44
Somewhat disagree	<i>I think catching coronavirus can't be helped. It is difficult to avoid relationships with people in order to carry out economic activities. I don't think there is any particular change in my perception of foreigners alone. Rather, I feel sad for foreigners who have been studying when working in Japan and are unable to return to their homeland.</i>	Strongly disagree		-44
Somewhat agree	<i>There were many things from which we could learn, such as the quick supply of vaccines and the hard lockdowns.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>It's an individual issue regardless of country.</i>	-45
Strongly disagree	<i>I don't think my views have changed</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I feel that the number of people who feel a little negative [towards foreigners] has increased in Japan</i>	-45
Neither agree nor disagree	–	Somewhat agree	<i>Looking at the reports of discrimination against Asians, I don't have a very good impression of some foreigners.</i>	-45
Strongly disagree	<i>My views haven't changed positively nor negatively</i>	Strongly disagree		-45

“... positively”		“... negatively”		Pandemic Othering Score
Neither agree nor disagree	–	Strongly disagree	<i>With coronavirus, I feel that neither Japanese nor foreigners are involved. I still have a hard time. I don't think that only foreigners will scatter it or Japanese people will.</i>	<b>-46</b>
Strongly disagree	<i>My view of foreigners is the same as before coronavirus.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Same as the previous answer.</i>	<b>-46</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>The epidemic of the novel coronavirus has nothing to do with [foreigners]</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>There is no difference [between foreigners and Japanese]</i>	<b>-46</b>
Strongly disagree	<i>Because nationality and race are not particularly relevant</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Although I'm dissatisfied with the response of governments, nationality and race are not particularly relevant</i>	<b>-46</b>
Strongly disagree	<i>The novel coronavirus has nothing to do with my views on foreigners</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>The novel coronavirus has nothing to do with my views on foreigners</i>	<b>-46</b>
Strongly disagree	<i>At this point, I don't think there is a difference in the area of coronavirus infection depending on whether or not you are Japanese (it is not such a problem even if it has developed into a global pandemic), and the nationality, birthplace and current situation of the infected person. I don't think there is a rational connection</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Same as above</i>	<b>-47</b>
Somewhat disagree	<i>My views have not changed due to the novel coronavirus epidemic.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>I don't want to have an abstract, non-specific way of thinking about foreigners.</i>	<b>-47</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>There is no effect due to coronavirus.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Not related to coronavirus.</i>	<b>-47</b>
Somewhat agree	<i>Each country has its own measures, and I was impressed with their strengths.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Illness is not something that humans can choose</i>	<b>-47</b>
Somewhat agree	<i>We have seen and heard of examples of effective infectious disease control in other countries, such as vaccination efforts around the world.</i>	Strongly disagree		<b>-48</b>
Somewhat agree	<i>Many foreigners also wear masks, and it seems that they are willing to prevent the spread of infection.</i>	Somewhat disagree		<b>-48</b>
Somewhat agree	<i>I think Japan should imitate China and Singapore in terms of measures to prevent its spread.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>I think it is wrong to blame foreigners for the current increase in the number of infected people in Japan.</i>	<b>-48</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>My views haven't changed</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>My views haven't changed</i>	<b>-48</b>

“... positively”		“... negatively”		Pandemic Othering Score
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Coronavirus and views on foreigners are completely different.</i>	Somewhat disagree	<i>As mentioned above, these are different issues.</i>	<b>-48</b>
Somewhat agree	<i>Foreigners who don't wear masks have begun to wear masks.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>Whether it's Japanese or foreigners, it depends on coronavirus. Race doesn't matter.</i>	<b>-48</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>I have never considered the coronavirus epidemic and the entry of foreigners.</i>	Strongly disagree		<b>-49</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Unknown because I don't watch the news much.</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>Unknown because I don't watch the news much.</i>	<b>-50</b>
Strongly disagree	<i>It doesn't matter whether you are a foreigner or Japanese, when you get infected. Some people do bad things when they shouldn't, others do good things.</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>I do not blame foreign countries for the new coronavirus epidemic. For basic measures against infectious diseases, I see the good parts of neighbouring countries. The Japanese government, which does not try to learn from observing others, has a certain responsibility.</i>	<b>-50</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	<i>There is no relation</i>	Strongly disagree	<i>There is no relation</i>	<b>-52</b>

## Appendix 5: Japanese Written Scripts

Hiragana • Katakana				
a	i	u	e	o
あ・ア	い・イ	う・ウ	え・エ	お・オ
ka	ki	ku	ke	ko
か・カ	き・キ	く・ク	け・ケ	こ・コ
sa	shi	su	se	so
さ・サ	し・シ	す・ス	せ・セ	そ・ソ
ta	chi	tsu	te	to
た・タ	ち・チ	つ・ツ	て・テ	と・ト
na	ni	nu	ne	no
な・ナ	に・ニ	ぬ・ヌ	ね・ネ	の・ノ
ha	hi	hu/fu	he	ho
は・ハ	ひ・ヒ	ふ・フ	へ・ヘ	ほ
ma	mi	mu	me	mo
ま・マ	み・ミ	む・ム	め・メ	も・モ
ya		yu		yo
や・ヤ		ゆ・ユ		よ・ヨ
ra	ri	ru	re	ro
ら・ラ	り・リ	る・ル	れ・レ	ろ・ロ
wa	(wi*)		(we*)	wo
わ・ワ	(ゐ・ヰ)		(ゑ・ヱ)	を・ヲ
n				(*No longer in use)
ん・ン				

**Kanji:** a written logographic script. Logographs are characters representing whole words or concepts.

Examples: 薬 (*kusuri* – medicine), 日本 (*nihon* – Japan), 寿司 (*sushi* – sushi)