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Embracing Immigration: Contemporary Japanese College Students Perceptions of Foreign Labor in Japan

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EMBRACING IMMIGRATION:
CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS
OF FOREIGN LABOR IN JAPAN

BY

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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SOUTH ORANGE, NEW JERSEY
2012

**EMBRACING IMMIGRATION: CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE COLLEGE
STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF FOREIGN LABOR IN JAPAN**
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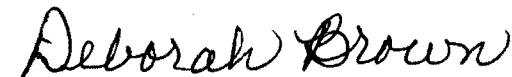
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to determine the attitudes of contemporary Japanese college students toward foreign labor in Japan. This research seeks to ascertain whether present-day Japanese youth are inclined to support a multicultural country in the future, and aims to identify any indicators that suggest that values are gradually changing within Japanese society. The beginning of this thesis discusses the effects of Japan's population decline and their relation to the controversy over increasing foreign labor in Japan. The number of registered foreign nationals in Japan in 1985 and 2008 are compared, and possible reasons are given for the increase in the number of immigrants from various global regions. A comparison between post-World War II and present Japanese immigration policies is discussed also, in order to gauge the Japanese government's policies and views toward foreign laborers in Japan. Although some small changes have been made to existing laws to facilitate immigration and the lives of immigrants in Japan, the Japanese government generally views the presence of foreigners as temporary. Nevertheless, Japanese cannot ignore the reality that immigrants are helping to lessen the crisis of Japan's present shrinking workforce.

The thesis then details Japanese reactions to foreigners. While some Japanese are averse to foreigners due to their fear of potential social disruption, human rights activists and economists are in favor of Japan's relaxing its current stringent immigration laws. This thesis also addresses what the Japanese national government, local governments, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have done to assist foreign laborers in Japan.

Finally, the thesis analyzes 162 original surveys administered in November 2011 among Japanese college-age students from the greater areas of Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Chiba, Hyogo, and Kanagawa prefectures. Through qualitative and quantitative analysis, this sampling shows

respondents believe that foreign labor is needed in Japan to (1) increase the nation's internationalization; (2) help bolster Japan's lackluster economy; (3) acquire more advanced technology; (4) provide opportunity for Japanese to encounter different ways of thinking; and (5) help alleviate the country's social dilemmas related to Japan's aging and shrinking population. Despite a prevailing anxiety over Japan's stagnant economy and troublesome unemployment rate, this thesis concludes that the increased international mobility of Japanese college students, their desire to see Japan become increasingly multicultural through acceptance of foreign labor, and their belief that Japanese should treat migrants as equals under the laws of Japan may signal a smoother assimilation in the future for immigrants in Japan and represent an attitudinal transformation underway in contemporary Japanese society.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the most pressing concerns for Japan in the twenty-first century is its aging and shrinking population, which has serious economic and social implications for later generations. Other nations coping with similar problems include Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy.¹ These countries are confronting population problems parallel to those of Japan, due to declined birth rates following the achievement of high levels of development, industrialization, and economic growth.

Even though each country mentioned above is experiencing a different stage of population decline, by comparing these several nations in their common problem, perhaps they can aid one another to find a multifaceted solution to fit their particular needs. The next steps Japan might take are to consider how to alleviate its population problem by better utilizing its current workforce, possibly altering its economic system, and creating an inviting environment for foreign laborers.

It is expected that Japan's population will decline from the present 128 million to about 100 million by 2050.² Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and United Nations data on aging populations for developed countries estimate that Japan's population aged sixty-five and older will nearly double from 17.1 percent to 26.2 percent between 2000 and 2020.³ This estimate for Japan stands in stark comparison to other

¹ Gerard F. Anderson and Peter Sotir Hussey, "Population Aging: A Comparison among Industrialized Countries," *Health Affairs* 19 (2000): 191.

² Mike Douglass and Glenda Roberts, eds., *Japan and Global Migration: Foreign Workers and the Advent of a Multicultural Society* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), xiii. Japan's current population is about 128 million.

³ United Nations Demographic Indicators, 1950-2050 (data diskette, 1998 revision), medium estimate, as cited by Anderson and Hussey, "Population Aging," 192.

industrialized nations that have experienced only a slight increase in their populations over sixty-five, as in the United Kingdom, France, and Germany.

Table 1. Percentage of Total Population Age Sixty-Five and Older for the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan

	1980	2000	2020
United Kingdom	15.1	16.0	19.8
France	14.0	15.9	20.1
Germany	15.6	16.4	21.6
Japan	9.0	17.1	26.2

Source: Adapted from United Nations Demographic Indicators, 1950-2050 (data diskette, 1998 revision), medium estimate, as cited in Gerard F. Anderson and Peter Sotir Hussey, "Population Aging: A Comparison among Industrialized Countries," *Health Affairs* 19 (2000): 192.

In the United Kingdom in 1980, 15.1 percent of its total population was comprised of people sixty-five or older, in 2000, 16.0 percent, and in 2020, the current estimate is 19.8 percent. In 1980, 14.0 percent of France's total population was aged sixty-five and older, in 2000, 15.9 percent, and in 2020, it probably will be 20.1 percent. In Germany, 15.6 percent of its population in 1980 was sixty-five years or older, in 2000, 16.4 percent, and the projection for 2020 is 21.6 percent. In Japan, 9.0 percent of its population was sixty-five and older in 1980, in 2000, this figure nearly doubled to 17.1 percent, and in 2020, the projected increase is to 26.2 percent of its total populace.⁴

One factor contributing to the shrinking, aging populations of developed nations is decreased fertility rates. Compared to fertility rates in 1950, which were between 2.0 and 3.0 for the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan, by 1995, the rate had declined in Japan to 1.4,

⁴ United Nations Demographic Indicators, 1950-2050 (data diskette, 1998 revision), medium estimate, cited in Gerard F. Anderson and Peter Sotir Hussey, "Population Aging: A Comparison among Industrialized Countries," *Health Affairs* 19 (2000): 192.

well below the 2.1 rate that ensures population stability. In the same years, respectively, the United Kingdom's rate of 2.2 had decreased to 1.7. France's 1950 fertility rate of 2.7 had dropped to 1.7 by 1995, and Germany's 2.2 had decreased to 1.3 over the same time span. However, Japan's fertility rate had dropped from 2.8 to 1.4.⁵ According to the United Nations, these low fertility rates will continue beyond 2020.

For most developed countries, fertility rates are influenced by social values, but in some authoritarian countries, by national laws or policies, such as the One-Child Policy in China. In Japan and other industrialized countries, women are placing more emphasis on their own careers than in the past and less emphasis on the importance of starting families. If they choose to have a family, many couples do so later in life, resulting in fewer children per household. Intensification of individualism and self-actualization as well as increasing life-spans and decreasing fertility rates have created a gap in affluent, well-educated populations between the baby-boom generation of the post-World War II years and young adults in their outlook toward having children. Consequently, a momentous strain has been placed on the society and economy of some developed countries owed to a decline in indigenous workforce and the lack of workers to pay for pensions and old-age care, entitlements, and expected services.

A number of factors either perpetuate the problem of aging, shrinking populations or exacerbate it. The paradigm in East Asia can be compared to the United Nations' Mediterranean patriarchal model.⁶ The Mediterranean patriarchal system is prominent in Latin America, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, and East Asia. In these regions, wives typically are solely responsible for the household and raising children and receive little help from

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "Population Bulletin of the United Nations: Completing the Fertility Transition," *Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division*, nos. 48/49(2002): 86.

husbands.⁷ On a broader scale, the government does not offer assistance in the form of preschools or after-school institutions nor does it provide support for working mothers. While this situation is common under the Mediterranean patriarchal model and is an apt description of Japanese contemporary society, in contrast, the Northern European model provides more of what the Mediterranean system lacks.

In contrast to the Mediterranean model, in the United Nations' Northern European model, found in Northern and Central Europe as well as in the United States, husbands are more helpful and national governments offer women who leave employment due to childbirth more assistance.⁸ In order for Japan to better confront the problem of its aging, shrinking population, consideration of the Northern European model could provide examples of ways to assist this society, which has heavily structured gender roles. Although it is difficult to completely change a society, if the Japanese government offered more assistance to female employees, women would not have to choose between advancing in careers and raising children. Other possibilities include companies offering working mothers child support services such as daycare. Assistance also could be provided to mothers in the form of independent child-care centers, which are not prevalent in Japanese society presently.

Japan's Population Decline and Its Effects

Developed countries that face the dual problem of shrinking and aging populations wonder how their younger generations will care for the growing number of elderly. With fewer people of workforce age, there are the concerns of adequately funding social security and providing competent care for older members of society. In Japan, where many families have no

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

children or have only one child, the problems associated with population decline are very pressing. For example, the cost per capita to care for the elderly far outweighs the per capita cost to care for children.⁹ The dependency ratio is imbalanced.

An additional social problem Japan faces when dealing with population decline is the age of retirement. In 1995, the average retirement age for the Japanese male was 66.5, and for Japanese women, 63.7.¹⁰ However, the upheaval in the social security system and in other benefits programs has led to pressure to change the retirement age to sixty-eight. Japanese employees may have to work well beyond the current average retirement age in order to make ends meet. With fewer successors to replace them in the workforce, middle-aged Japanese feel pressure to continue working. Often this is not felt entirely as a burden by individuals, however, because as longevity increases for both men and women, people welcome continuing purpose in their lives.

Aging populations also experience gender imbalance; by age seventy-five, women tend to outnumber men by 10 to 7.5.¹¹ When women reach eighty and above, the number of women is double the number of men in the same age bracket. Consequently, elderly women are likely to receive more health-care benefits and to require more long-term care than males. Owed to the increased life-spans of Japan's citizens, especially of women, Japanese society must cope with the stress of providing health care for longer periods of time per person.

With a smaller population than previously, there are fewer people in Japan's workforce, resulting in a less productive economy. In 1960, Japan's total labor force comprised 67.4 percent of its total population of people fifteen years of age and older. In 2000, working people made up

⁹ John R. Birmingham, "Immigration: Not a Solution to Problems of Population Decline and Aging," *Population and Environment: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 22 (2011): 358.

¹⁰ Anderson and Hussey, 197.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 194.

61.1 percent of Japan's total population fifteen years of age and older, and in 2006, 60.4 percent¹² If this downward trend in the number of people in the workforce continues, the imbalance between the number of workers and retirees will become increasingly severe and significantly affect Japan's economic strength.

Japan has the option of economic restructuring to ensure commercial growth and production, especially in the midst of recession. Some analysts suggest that Japan should consider adopting an economy based on information technology in order to rectify the setbacks it will incur due to its shrinking, aging population. Instead of being a consumer culture based on mass production, Japan, they say, should implement a knowledge-based system, which relies more on technology than manpower, to fully utilize its workforce. Even though Japan is perceived as one of the world's most technologically advanced countries, two surprising flaws are a lack of both accessibility to information technology and broad-based application of this strength. Japan needs to apply its newest technology in a more extensive and effective manner, since there are still many companies relying on old methods.

In addition, while Japanese companies do not typically practice mid-career hiring, this strategy would help its workers to be more profitable and adaptable to a variety of labor demands and responsibilities. Many Japanese companies prefer to rotate positions among existing employees rather than hire new employees; one outcome of this practice is that employees tend to become generalists rather than specialists, at a time when globalization demands the work of specialists. If more Japanese companies would transcend the customs of the "Old-Japan"

¹² National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, "Population Statistics of Japan," National Institute of Population and Social Security Research of Japan, <http://www.ipss.go.jp/p-info/e/psj2008/PSJ2008.html> (accessed March 3, 2012).

corporate culture, not only would they be more profitable but also they would help Japan's ailing economy.

Some experts believe that replacement migration is an adequate solution to, or will at least mitigate, Japan's labor shortage. If Japan hopes to sustain the workforce levels it has maintained for the past century, the United Nations states that it will have to admit over 600,000 immigrants per year by 2050.¹³ However, other scholars such as Bermingham, President of the Colorado Population Coalition, believe that increased immigration will not change Japan's current demographic trends. Based on a report conducted by the United Nations, Bermingham argues, "The numbers of immigrants needed to hold [the reduced ratio of working age people to elderly people]... are unbelievably huge. Immigration is not even remotely possible as a solution."¹⁴ Despite this assertion, Japan cannot ignore the contributions and needs of the foreign laborers who are currently within its borders or of the migrants who will settle in Japan in the future. Concerns related to international migration have become pressing ever since the increased globalization of the world's economies and societies.

The effects of international migration can be overwhelming, especially the intangible effects on the psyche of a society such as Japan's. If Japanese were to consider emulation of the Northern European model in the forms of child support for families and cooperation between companies and the national government in order to help working mothers raise their families, they might witness an increase in the country's fertility rate and a sustainable workforce replacement rate. Furthermore, Japan would benefit from increasing the employment rate of its female citizens; turning away from "Old-Japan" corporate customs; improving application of and

¹³ Pete Wilson, ed., "Can Japan Come Back?" *Pacific Council on International Policy* (2002): 17.

¹⁴ Bermingham, 359.

access to technology; and studying ways to promote effective social integration of its migrant laborers in order to combat the challenges posed by its declining workforce.

Thesis Objectives

Japan is currently experiencing population decline, a shrinking workforce, increased longevity rates, and a declining fertility rate. Many developed nations have similar problems, which is a growing concern in the international arena. Furthermore, post-industrialized societies must cope with economic restructuring, problems with health care, increasing costs of care for the elderly, and financial and social challenges associated with immigration and foreign labor.

Chapter 1 of this thesis has discussed population decline as well as falling fertility rates in Japan and other developed nations. It has described the United Nation's Northern European model that Japan could adopt, at least in part. In this model, husbands have a more prominent role in households and national governments are more supportive of working mothers than in the case of the Mediterranean model. Now faced with the problems of an aging, shrinking population, Japan's consideration of the Northern European model could provide ways to help to alleviate contemporary problems in this society, which remains constrained by structured gender roles.

With the increase of the percentage of its population from foreign countries, Japan cannot ignore the contributions that are being made by immigrants, helping to off-set the deleterious effects of Japan's presently shrinking workforce. Chapter 2 considers registered foreigners within Japan's borders since the 1980s, who increased in number until 2008. Although the reasons for immigration of specific ethnic groups differ, reviewing the state of immigration in Japan by examining three theories will provide more insight into the causes for international

migration and allow for a more complex understanding of Japan's situation. Wallerstein's World Systems Theory examines international immigration via world markets and argues that capitalist economies enter non-capitalist ones in order to gain raw materials. It posits that, as a result, societies become more mobile. Meanwhile, the Economic Theory of Immigration contends that, not countries or corporations, but families and households make the decision to either migrate internationally or increase income by going abroad and sending remittances home. Lastly, Ravenstein's Push-Pull model gives explanation as to why migrants are attracted to other nations, as they are driven away from their homelands by adverse conditions.

Japan's national policy regarding immigration also is explored in chapter 2. Since the end of World War II, the Japanese national government has done little to encourage assimilation or the immigration of foreigners into Japan. Some alterations have been made to the country's immigration laws, such as creating slight accommodations for skilled professionals and those from South America with Japanese ancestry. Yet, until the present day, foreigners face the impossibility of becoming a Japanese citizen, and Japanese policies show few steps away from remaining restrictive toward migrant labor.

Twenty-first-century Japan is torn between rejecting and accepting immigrants. In either case, an influx of foreign labor is inevitable. Even if the Japanese government were to implement more severe immigration laws, illegal entry would become a significant problem. Since the 1980s, and increasingly in the beginning of the twenty-first century, Japan has become more ethnically diverse to the displeasure of extreme rightists, who believe their country should be strictly Japanese. Chapter 3 discusses the criticisms of Japan's immigration laws and residual attitudes of Japanese nationalism from the pre-war and World War II eras.

Despite the lack of significant immigration reform on the national level, recently, Japanese local governments and some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have taken steps in the direction of creating a more inviting environment for foreign migrants. Some Japanese natives who seek a “multicultural Japan” are becoming increasingly receptive toward foreigners residing in their country. Although in some cases foreigners are met with xenophobia and racism, there are also instances in which Japanese citizens or organizations have supported immigrants. The efforts made by local governments and grass-roots organizations are highlighted in chapter 3. An important consideration is whether their efforts one day will be emulated by the majority of the Japanese populace.

This thesis seeks to determine whether present-day Japanese college students support and are likely to continue to support and promote a multicultural Japan. Chapter 4 provides original limited surveys and analysis that update existing research in the field. This thesis conducts qualitative and quantitative analysis of the responses of 162 participants in a survey administered in November 2011 among Japanese college-age students from the greater areas of Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Chiba, Hyogo, and Kanagawa prefectures. This sampling reveals a belief that foreign labor is needed in Japan in order to increase Japan’s internationalization, help bolster the national economy, acquire more advanced technology, encounter different ways of thinking, and help alleviate Japan’s social problems related to an aging, shrinking population. Despite a prevailing anxiety among survey respondents over Japan’s economy and the unemployment rate in the early 2000s, this thesis concludes that Japanese college students’ increased international mobility, their desire to see Japan become more multicultural through foreign labor, and their belief that Japan should open its doors more widely to migrants may lead to smoother assimilation for immigrants in Japan in the future. Two important goals of this thesis are to discuss indicators that may point

to gradually changing values within Japanese society and to suggest relevant areas for further research.

CHAPTER 2

JAPAN'S IMMIGRATION POLICIES

Theories about International Migration

This section discusses three theories that attempt to explain why international migration occurs. However, each of the following theories—World Systems Theory, Economic Theory of Migration, and Push-Pull Theory—looks at only certain aspects of a society, country, or economy to construct an argument for the cause of immigration. This chapter applies all three theories to Japan's migrants to explain why they come from China, Korea, Brazil, the Philippines, Peru, and the United States.

World Systems Theory

Wallerstein's World Systems Theory argues that international immigration occurs as a result of "economic globalization and market penetration across national boundaries."¹⁵ Instead of focusing solely on one particular country's labor market, this theory looks at the entire world market that has evolved since the sixteenth century. The theory holds that capitalist economies enter non-capitalist countries in search of natural resources, materials, labor, and new markets, and that this influx results in societies whose members are motivated and able to travel across national borders.¹⁶ The theory posits that international migration happens naturally due to disruptions associated with achieving capitalism; after emanating from "Western Europe, North

¹⁵ Douglas S. Massey et. al., "Theories of International Migration," *Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal* 19 (1993): 432.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 444.

America, Oceania, and Japan, ever-larger portions of the globe and growing shares of the human population have been incorporated into the world market economy.”¹⁷

World Systems Theory can be applied to contemporary Japan because its metropolitan areas, along with other global cities, are marked by extensive accumulation of capital, high levels of education, and demand for unskilled labor.¹⁸ While many Japanese refuse to take unskilled jobs, usually found in the agricultural, construction, or domestic service sectors, the demand for immigrants remains high as they are willing to fill such undesirable positions. World Systems Theory asserts that migration is likely between two countries that, in the past, were a colonial power and a colony, because similarities remain between the two cultures or languages.¹⁹ This may be true in some cases, such as Japan, South Korea, and China. Japan, as the capitalist core country in this particular trilateral relationship, has deep cultural ties to both East Asian countries. Korea once was a colony of Japan, and Japan attempted to colonize China. Through advertising and consumer markets, the three nations exchange not only life-style patterns but also migrants. A similar situation occurs in South American countries such as Brazil and Peru, where many migrants are attracted to Japan due to their Japanese ancestry. This, coupled with economic opportunity abroad, leads many South Americans to migrate to Japan.

In the case of some of Japan’s former colonies or quasi-colonies in the region, such as Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, or the Philippines, there is more cultural distance. However, people from these Southeast Asian countries see Japan’s metropolitan areas as brimming with capital. Labor consequently moves internationally, attracted by the development of financial and other infrastructure in Japan’s cities.

¹⁷ Ibid., 445.

¹⁸ Ibid., 447.

¹⁹ Ibid.

World Systems Theory examines the global economy only as a whole and does not take into account individuals or social groups. Therefore, it is important to look at other theories that offer explanation for international migration on a micro-scale.

Economic Theory of Immigration

A second theory that offers explanation for international migration is the Economic Theory of Immigration. We can easily analyze Japan's case through the lens of new migration economics. The theory states that "migration decisions are not made by isolated individual actors, but by larger units of related people." This theory can especially be applied to foreigners from South America who emigrate with their families to Japan.²⁰ Since these migrants move with their entire families or households, they seek to minimize risk while simultaneously maximizing profit.

The theory also holds that in the situation of households, different family members can find employment within the local economy while others go abroad and send home remittances,²¹ thus maximizing household income. This theory could explain why migrants come from not only South America, where economic situations tend to be less favorable when compared to Japan, but also for the people of Southeast Asia where economic stagnation is common. During the 1990s, many Brazilians migrated to Japan not only due to transnational ethnic businesses between the two countries but also because of the technology that Japan had to offer.²² However,

²⁰ Ibid., 436.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Angelo Ishi, "Transnational Strategies by Japanese-Brazilian Migrants in the Age of IT," in *Global Japan: The Experience of Japan's New Immigrant and Overseas Communities*, ed. Roger Goodman et al. (New York: Psychology Press, 2003), 210.

in the 2010s, it seems as if there may be a reversal, as many Japanese-Brazilians return home hoping for more opportunities in Brazil's burgeoning economy than in Japan's sluggish one.²³

Female migration is especially prevalent because, in countries such as the Philippines and Thailand, families traditionally have been matriarchal and thus women frequently are expected to be the breadwinners. Also, daughters are expected to be more compliant in these cultures and, consequently, they go abroad to work mainly as household help in order to send home remittances to their families.²⁴

Since the Economic Theory of Immigration places emphasis only on households or families as entities, it ignores the importance of an individual's reasons for migration. Therefore, it is important to consider not just one or two perspectives but a combination of several to account for the multiple causes of international migration.

“Push-Pull” Theory

The third and final theory discussed in this thesis is migration as a result of “push” and “pull” tensions. According to Ernst Ravenstein, the laws of migration are merely a consequence of “push” factors, including discontent with the current setting, and “pull” factors, or characteristics that make another location much more favorable.²⁵ “Push” factors can be conditions such as high unemployment rates, political conflict, and famine, while “pull” factors can include economic development or social stability. Foreign migrants find Japan appealing, since it is a country of political stability and high levels of development, and perhaps less unemployment compared to a migrant's home country. Compared to their home countries,

²³ Toshi Maeda, “Japanese-Brazilians Go ‘Home’ to Tap Economic Boom,” *Yahoo! News*, April 13, 2012.

²⁴ Yoko Sellek, *Migrant Labour in Japan* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 163.

²⁵ Guido Dorgio and Waldo Tobler, “Push Pull Migration Laws,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 1 (1983): 1.

migrants often find more economic opportunity in Japan, which outweighs the detriment of separating from domestic ties. As noted above, many Brazilians moved to Japan during the 1990s. Even in 2011, Brazil had an estimated unemployment rate of 6 percent compared to Japan's estimated 4.8 percent in the same year.²⁶ Consequently, Brazilians have been "pulled" to Japan by its greater economic development and opportunity for employment.²⁷ Over time, as unemployment rates in Brazil rose, there was an increase in the number of Brazilian immigrants to Japan, although the trend now may be slowing with the rise of Brazil's economic fortunes. Additional reasons for Brazilian immigration to Japan are discussed later in this chapter.

Post-World War II versus Present-Day Immigration Policies in Japan

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, Japanese officials have had to contemplate whether to accept or reject the growing number of foreign laborers coming to their shores. The number has increased significantly since the 1980s, particularly when a relative comparison is made to the decrease in Japan's population over the same timeframe. The following analysis of Japanese immigration laws illustrates that, throughout history, Japan generally has been reluctant to let foreigners through its borders.

The body in charge of immigration control in Japan is the Ministry of Justice, while the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act is the law that governs admittance of foreigners. Article 2-2, Status of Residence and Period of Stay, states, "A foreign national may

²⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: Brazil," Central Intelligence Agency, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2129.html> (accessed April 11, 2012).

²⁷ Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training, "Unemployment Rates (Officially Published National Sources)," Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training, "<http://www.jil.go.jp/english/estatis/databook/2011/04.htm>" (accessed March 10, 2012).

reside in Japan only under a status of residence determined by the permission for landing.”²⁸ Article 2-2 also states, “When the status of residence is one other than that of diplomat, official or permanent resident, the period of stay shall not exceed 3 years.”²⁹ The Ministry of Justice must first identify and then approve the reason for a foreigner’s coming to Japan, and he or she cannot stay for more than three years. Article 26 of the Immigration Control Act states, “The Minister of Justice shall, when granting re-entry permission, decide a valid period for the re-entry permission, which shall not exceed 3 years.”³⁰

Article 3 of the Alien Registration Act of 1952 states, “All aliens in Japan shall apply for registration with the mayor or head of the city, town, or village in which his/her residence is located... within 90 days of the day of landing.”³¹ Japan’s Nationality Law of 1952 is even more stringent. To be eligible for Japanese nationalization, a foreigner must have domiciled in Japan for five or more consecutive years and relinquished any other nationality.³²

Although both the Immigration Control Act and Alien Registration Act have been revised, they are very similar to the original versions that were implemented after World War II. The original 1951 version of the Immigration Control Act allowed for a re-entry permit of up to only one year, but the 1990 amendment extended permission for up to three years.³³ It also allowed for the increase in the number of statuses of residence from eighteen to twenty-seven.³⁴ One of the most significant effects of the revised law was the increase in the number of Brazilians and

²⁸ Ministry of Justice, “Japanese Law Translation: Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act,” Ministry of Justice, <http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail/?id=1934&vm=04&re=01> (accessed March 11, 2012).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ministry of Justice, “Japanese Law Translation: Alien Registration Act,” Ministry of Justice, <http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail/?id=36&vm=04&re=01> (accessed March 11, 2012).

³² Ministry of Justice, “The Nationality Law,” Ministry of Justice, <http://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/information/tml-01.html> (accessed March 11, 2012).

³³ Sellek, 25.

³⁴ Hiromi Mori, *Immigration Policy and Foreign Workers in Japan* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1997), 96.

Peruvians with Japanese heritage who were admitted into Japan. With the added statuses of “Long-Term Resident,” and “Spouse or Child of Permanent Resident,” children born to a permanent resident or special permanent resident of Japan could stay in the country for up to three years.³⁵ These resident statuses do not have restrictions on activities; consequently, many South Americans moving to Japan can technically be employed in unskilled labor sectors. The resident status of “Trainee” also allows many migrants to enter Japan through the “back-door.” Trainees are to “acquire skills at a public or a private organization in Japan.”³⁶ These changes to the Immigration Control Act account for the increase of migrants from South America between 1985 and 2008. The reason for these changes was to benefit Japan’s economy by bolstering the dwindling domestic labor force.

In 1990, a revision called for the Minister of Justice to create a Basic Plan for Immigration Control.³⁷ The mission of the plan was to promote “smooth exchanges of personnel” by cooperating through “smooth acceptance of foreigners [and the] rejection of unfavorable foreigners.”³⁸ The Ministry of Justice report observes,

it would not be realistic to suddenly introduce a large number of foreign labor[ers]. Rather, it is necessary for Japan to aim at maintaining the vitality of the socio-economy and enhancing tangible and intangible affluence of social life by accepting foreigners in a way that would cause little friction with society.³⁹

Despite the optimistic tone of the Ministry of Justice’s Basic Plan for Immigration Control and the changes that have been made to the Immigration Control Act since 1951,

³⁵ Ministry of Justice, “Japanese Law Translation: Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act,” Ministry of Justice, <http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail/?id=1934&vm=04&re=01> (accessed March 11, 2012).

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ The Ministry of Justice, “Introduction – Social Changes and Immigration Control,” Ministry of Justice of Japan, <http://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/information/bpic2nd-01.html> (accessed December 12, 2011).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

entrance into Japan remains strictly controlled, especially regarding the admittance of unskilled foreign labor.⁴⁰

In 1999, the Alien Registration Law was revised; the Japanese government no longer required fingerprinting for permanent foreign residents, a law that had been in effect since 1955.⁴¹ By the turn of the century, the law was deemed discriminatory; however, fingerprints are still required for other migrants entering Japan under other statuses of residence.

In the twentieth-century post-war period, Japan's immigration policies aimed to monitor migrants and force them to conform to Japanese society. This is still the case today. Assimilation into Japanese society is not a peaceful melding for foreigners, but instead, strictly controlled by the government. As previously implied, immigrants are required to apply for Alien Registration Cards when staying in Japan for more than three months. Although the amended Immigration Control Act increased the number of types of resident status and allowed more South Americans with Japanese heritage to enter Japan in order to boost the Japanese economy, official policy remains strict. Japan's leaders have not wanted to encourage or increase immigration to Japan significantly, and instead have sought to keep the arrival of foreigners under control. With a history of stringent laws that have been only slightly revised since the end of World War II, Japan's post-war immigration and nationality laws can be described overall as unwelcoming toward foreigners and migrant labor. Japanese did not want any outsiders to assimilate into their communities following the war until 1970.

Japan's expectations of racial homogeneity were facilitated by the fact that the post-war economy was dominated by agricultural production and in-land manufacturing. Japanese nationalism after the war also fueled resistance to foreigners. Because Japan was able to attain

⁴⁰ Mori, 96.

⁴¹ Sellek, 143.

economic success during not one, but two labor shortages between 1965 – 1970 and 1986 – 1991, the impression was advanced that Japan did not need foreign labor to achieve a strong economy.⁴² The only exception was the accommodation of South Americans with Japanese heritage. This was the only group of migrant labor that received encouragement from the Japanese government. Since these people had Japanese ancestry, the government believed they would be able to assimilated more effectively than other foreigners, understand Japanese culture more readily than foreign counterparts, and provide the country with additional manpower.

Although revisions to Japanese immigration laws illustrate that Japanese have become slightly more accepting of foreign labor since World War II, government policies most likely will continue to be very restrictive, without grass-roots and generational pressure for change. Becoming a citizen in Japan is impossible for foreigners due to the *jus sanguinis*, or “right of blood,” law, which takes precedence over *jus soli*, “right of birth.” Foreigners, at most, can achieve permanent residency in Japan, but will never be deemed citizens of Japan unless current laws, policies, and attitudes are changed. Furthermore, even though slight leniency has been exhibited toward the immigration of foreign professionals, Japanese business culture is difficult to overcome, since many corporations have a system of lifetime employment, which includes promotions based on seniority, a system that heavily favors native Japanese.⁴³

Registered Foreign Nationals in Japan: 1985 and 2008

Japan’s immigration numbers are very low among its industrialized counterparts. According to Japan’s Ministry of Justice, in 2008, officially registered immigrants numbered

⁴² Ibid., 20.

⁴³ Chikako Usui, “Japan’s Demographic Future and Foreign Workers,” in *Local Citizenship in Recent Countries of Immigration: Japan in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Tsuda, Takeyuki, (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 44.

2,217,426, or only 1.74 percent of Japan's entire population.⁴⁴ Compare this figure to 6.57 percent in the United Kingdom, with a population of 61,176,000 and foreigners numbering 4,021,000 in 2008.⁴⁵ In France, 3,674,000 non-nationals comprised 5.67 percent of the total population of 64,753,000 in 2008.⁴⁶ For the same year in Germany, with a total population of 82,218,000 and foreign population of 7,255,000, 8.82 percent were immigrants.⁴⁷

Yet, immigration is not new to Japan. The first wave of immigrants arrived during the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), and following Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910. The colonial period was characterized by impoverished Korean immigrants providing labor in the rural areas of Japan, some voluntarily and others by force. The second wave of immigration occurred prior to World War II, as immigrants arrived from Korea and Taiwan, two countries under Japanese rule. A third wave of immigration occurred in the 1980s, as Japan's bubble economy and burgeoning service and industrial sectors needed more laborers. Gaps in employment were filled by foreigners who were hired for low wages. Typically, these foreigners flocked to urban areas such as Tokyo, or resided in the poorer areas of Japan.

Foreign migrants in Japan may be divided into skilled and unskilled labor. Skilled labor refers to professionals, educators, doctors, information technology specialists, and other migrants with comparable occupations who work legally in Japan. Unskilled labor refers to those who are employed in the agricultural, construction, or similar sectors, typically for low wages. Because the admittance of unskilled labor is technically illegal in Japan, the methods that unskilled laborers use to enter the country include "side-door" or "back-door" strategies, such as visas to

⁴⁴ Ministry of Justice, "平成20年末現在における外国人登録者統計について"[Current statistics of registered foreigners at the end of 2008], Ministry of Justice of Japan, http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/press_090710-1_090710-1.html (accessed November 2, 2011).

⁴⁵ Katya Vasileva, "Population and Social Conditions," *Eurostat: Statistics in Focus* 94 (2009): 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

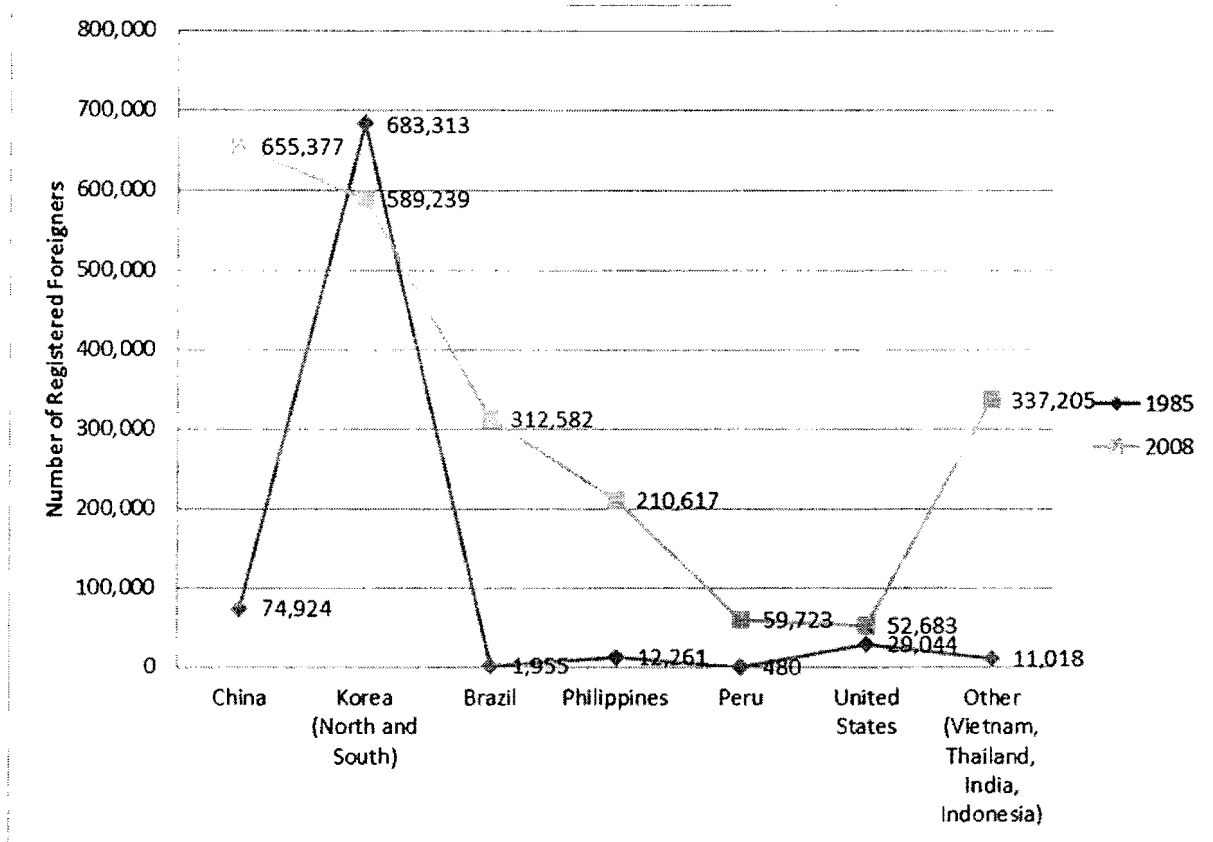
participate in trainee programs for immigrants with Japanese ancestry, pre-college study-abroad programs, and visits to Japan to entertain.

From 1990 to 2000, unemployment rates in Japan increased from 2.1 percent to 4.7 percent.⁴⁸ During this same period, the number of unskilled workers likewise increased from 260,000 in 1990 to 710,000 in 2000.⁴⁹ These figures indicate that, despite the overall general resistance of some native Japanese to foreign labor, the country requires unskilled foreign laborers to take on tasks in which Japanese have little or no interest. These jobs are commonly referred to as the three K's, "*kitanai, kiken, kitsui*," meaning "dirty, dangerous, and difficult." Despite the unfavorable reputation that these unskilled laborers have in Japan, without them, Japan's economy would suffer, since they are an important supporting pillar of the country's economy and an essential part of the labor system. Japan has a need for unskilled laborers—with or without adequate immigration laws to legally protect these migrants.

⁴⁸ Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training, "Unemployment Rates (Officially Published National Sources)," Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training, "<http://www.jil.go.jp/english/estatis/databook/2011/04.htm>" (accessed March 10, 2012).

⁴⁹ Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, "外国人雇用問題研究会報告書" [On the problems associated with employment of foreign workers: A report by the study group appointed by the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare], Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/topics/2002/07/tp0711-1.html> (accessed March 10, 2012).

Figure 1. Number of Foreign Nationals Registered in Japan, 1985 and 2008



Sources: Statistics Bureau, Director-General for Policy Planning & Statistical Research and Training Institute, “Chapter 2 Population and Households,” Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications; Ministry of Justice, “平成 20 年末現在における外国人登録者統計について”[Current statistics of registered foreigners at the end of 2008].

As shown in figure 1, according to Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Justice, the numbers of registered foreign nationals by the end of 2008, from largest to smallest, were from China, North and South Korea, Brazil, the Philippines, Peru, and the United States. The number of foreign nationals from one specific country in relation to the total number of nationals in Japan overall shows that there was an increase in the number of immigrants from 1985 to 2008: 812,995 in 1985 to 2,217,426 in 2008—a 172.75 percent increase.⁵⁰⁵¹ Since the figures represent the

⁵⁰ Statistics Bureau, Director-General for Policy Planning & Statistical Research and Training Institute, “Chapter 2 Population and Households,” Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/nenkan/1431-02.htm> (accessed November 2, 2011).

number of legally admitted foreigners, they indicate the number of skilled workers coming into Japan, as entrance of unskilled labor is illegal.

Japan witnessed an increase of 580,453 registered Chinese immigrants between 1985 and 2008. In 1985, there were 74,924 registered Chinese immigrants, 8.8 percent of Japan's total immigrant population, compared to 655,377 in 2008, or 29.6 percent of the total immigrant population.⁵²⁵³ This increase can be attributed in part to a growing interest in the Japanese language among Chinese students. Beginning primarily in the late 1980s, many college or pre-college Chinese students hoped to achieve long-term residency in Japan upon graduation.⁵⁴ Furthermore, during the early 1990s, Japanese increased their demand for Chinese language and culture specialists in order to conduct business in China and in other East Asian countries. Thus, there was an attraction, or "pull," to Japan for Chinese nationals. With the growing need for Chinese specialists, there was opportunity for education and employment in Japan. Consequently, the number of registered foreign nationals from China has increased since 1985.

However, the future of Chinese immigrants in Japan may change due to the current international economic situation. Japan's manufacturing sector no longer can effectively compete against China's mass manufacturing base. Also, the rising value of the yen makes Japanese products expensive for foreigners. Although the population of Chinese living in Japan is the largest minority group in the country, there is the possibility that numbers will not increase in the future due to China's economic success.

⁵¹ Ministry of Justice, "平成 20 年末現在における外国人登録者統計について," Ministry of Justice of Japan, http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/press_090710-1_090710-1.html (accessed November 2, 2011).

⁵² Statistics Bureau, Director-General for Policy Planning & Statistical Research and Training Institute, "Chapter 2 Population and Households," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

⁵³ Ministry of Justice, "平成 20 年末現在における外国人登録者統計について"[Current statistics of registered foreigners at the end of 2008].

⁵⁴ Sellek, 124.

The number of registered foreign Koreans decreased from 1985 to 2008 by 94,074. In 1985, 683,313 registered Koreans made up 80.3 percent of Japan's registered foreign population, compared to 589,239, or 26.6 percent, in 2008.⁵⁵⁵⁶ The reason for the overwhelming number of registered Koreans in Japan in 1985 stems from Japan's early twentieth-century annexation of Korea. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, many Koreans migrated to Japan either voluntarily in search of better employment opportunity or forcibly by the Japanese colonial government to bolster Japan's labor force. When Japan implemented its economic policies in Korea, which devastated the domestic agricultural sector as a means of living for the Koreans themselves, many Korean farmers fled to Japan to become manual workers, mainly in mining or construction. World Systems Theory can be applied to Korean immigration to Japan, since the Japan-Korea relationship prior to the end of World War II was that of a colonial power to a colony. Not only do similar cultural ties exist, but also Japan, a capitalist economy, invaded Korea in search of more laborers and other resources.

The Koreans, numbering about two million, remained in Japan until the conclusion of World War II.⁵⁷ With the restoration of North Korea's, South Korea's, and Japan's independence, it is believed that about 1.4 million Koreans returned to Korea under a Japanese-organized repatriation program.⁵⁸ Although Japan has not seen a large increase in nationally registered immigrants from Korea, Koreans nevertheless are the second largest minority group of Japan's foreign population as of 2008, as the families of pre-war and war-time migrants have remained in Japan for generations.

⁵⁵ Statistics Bureau, Director-General for Policy Planning & Statistical Research and Training Institute, "Chapter 2 Population and Households," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

⁵⁶ Ministry of Justice, "平成20年末現在における外国人登録者統計について" [Current statistics of registered foreigners at the end of 2008].

⁵⁷ Sellek, 19.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Unlike Koreans, since 1985, more South Americans have relocated to Japan. Due to the bubble economy, there was an increase of 310,627 registered Brazilians in Japan between 1985 and 2008. In 1985, Brazilians in Japan numbered 1,955, while in 2008 they numbered 312,582, an increase from 1.4 percent to 14.1 percent of Japan's total foreign registered population.⁵⁹⁶⁰ Outside Japan, Brazil has the largest number of Japanese in the world, followed by Peru, from where 59,249 immigrants relocated to Japan between 1985 and 2008. In 1985, 480 Peruvians were a mere 0.2 percent of Japan's registered foreign population, while in 2008, 59,723 made up 2.7 percent.⁶¹ Many Peruvian immigrants come to Japan not only for business or employment purposes but also because they are interested in their Japanese heritage. These "pull" factors have led them to bring their families, increasing the number of registered South Americans in Japan in the 1990s. During this time, there were many reasons for Japanese-Brazilians and Japanese-Peruvians to perceive Japan as appealing, when the working environment of Japan was compared to that of South America. Japan may continue to lure migrants with its standard of living and security.⁶² However, since Japan's economy has been stagnant since 1991, and Brazil's has experienced significant growth and attracted investors worldwide during the 2000s, we may actually see fewer South Americans immigrate to Japan in the future. In the past, migration to Japan for work not only had yielded a significant source of income but also had become a "recognized part of the survival strategy" to escape from the poor economics of laborers' home countries.⁶³ During the 1990s, these migrants were "pushed" away from their

⁵⁹ Statistics Bureau, Director-General for Policy Planning & Statistical Research and Training Institute, "Chapter 2 Population and Households," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

⁶⁰ Ministry of Justice, "平成20年末現在における外国人登録者統計について" [Current statistics of registered foreigners at the end of 2008].

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Maria Bartiromo, "Brazil's Hot Economy: What Could Spoil the Party," *Fiscal Times* June 17, 2011, Business and Economy section.

⁶³ Sellek, 128.

original environments by unfavorable factors that add hardships to life. Even though migrants may be “pulled” back to their home countries in South America, Japanese-Brazilians still remain the third largest group of non-Japanese in Japan.

In addition, many third- and fourth-generation Brazilians and Peruvians visited and revisited Japan from 1985 to 2008. Re-entrants, also referred to as “repeaters,” have contributed significantly to the South American population residing in Japan since the mid-1980s.⁶⁴ Furthermore, due to the Revised Immigration Law, even more South Americans of Japanese descent have been enticed to relocate to Japan. It appears that Japanese immigration law gives very favorable treatment to immigrants of Japanese heritage. Since the revision of the law in 1990, immigrants coming from South America to Japan have stayed as long-term residents for up to three years.

The increase in the number of registered Filipinos in Japan between 1985 and 2008 was 198,356, and the increase in the number of Vietnamese, Thai, Indian, and Indonesian immigrants was 326,187. The increase in the percent of registered Filipinos in Japan, from 1.4 percent of Japan’s foreign population in 1985 to 9.5 percent in 2008, can be attributed to an increase in Southeast Asian and South Asian immigrants overall, from 1.3 percent of Japan’s nationally registered immigrants in 1985 to 15.2 percent in 2008.⁶⁵ Many people from these regions come to Japan to work either as nurses or in the entertainment industry. Filipino households are dominated by women, and many migrate to Japan for economic opportunities not available to them at home. Since many Southeast Asian and South Asian countries have developing

⁶⁴ Ibid., 128.

⁶⁵ Statistics Bureau, Director-General for Policy Planning & Statistical Research and Training Institute, “Chapter 2 Population and Households,” Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

⁶⁶ Ministry of Justice, “平成20年末現在における外国人登録者統計について” [Current statistics of registered foreigners at the end of 2008].

economies and are rife with overpopulation, mothers and daughters seek employment abroad in service sectors, including household help, in order to send remittances home to support their families.⁶⁷ Similar to the situation for South Americans, Filipinos are pushed away from their country because of an undesirable economic environment and uncertain politics. Better employment opportunities in Japan are the “pull” that causes them to uproot and start new lives abroad.

The small rise in the number of United States citizens in Japan—29,044 in 1985 to 52,683 in 2008—can be attributed to an overall increase in the number of skilled foreign workers (e.g., specialists in the humanities, intra-company transferees, professors, researchers, and investors) who have been permitted to enter Japan.⁶⁸ Over time, there was an increase in the number of English language instructors, but 2005 marked a slight decline. The number of registered Americans since 1985 remains few, actually dropping from 3.4 percent of Japan’s total immigrant population in 1985 to 2.4 percent in 2008. This could serve as an indicator that Japan may see fewer American laborers in the future, especially with the state of the Japanese economy and less demand for English instructors since the turn of the twenty-first century.

It is important to keep in mind that the above figures signify only officially registered foreigners in Japan. The number of unregistered illegal immigrants in Japan increased from 42,797 in 1987 to 288,421 in 1999.⁶⁹ This indicates that, despite the relaxation of the immigration policy in 1990, foreigners continued to enter Japan illegally. This may signal that even the revised Immigration Control Act is too strict. The other factor influencing the increase

⁶⁷ Sellek, 162.

⁶⁸ Mori, 105.

⁶⁹ Ministry of Justice, “Salient Points Concerning Foreigners’ Entry and Stay: Changes in the Number of Violators of the Immigration Control Act,” Ministry of Justice, <http://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/information/bpic2nd-02.html> (accessed March 10, 2012).

in unregistered illegal immigrants was Japan's bubble economy. There was a demand for labor in the unskilled sectors until the bubble economy burst in 1991, and the economy slipped into deflation and thereafter into, at best, slow growth—some say, an overall prolonged stagnation.

In 1992, 84 percent of illegal entrants into Japan arrived under the status of "Temporary Visitor," disguising themselves as tourists.⁷⁰ These immigrants then found employment, which is not permitted under this status. Since 1992, the number of illegal immigrants under the "Temporary Visitor" status has gradually declined, but the number of entrants under the status of "Entertainer" has increased. Other frequent means of illegal entry include abusing Permission for Landing at Port of Call and Permission for Crew Members, permitting brief layovers in Japan, common in particular industries. Although these authorizations allow foreigners to temporarily stay in the country, many migrants continue to remain in Japan past the stipulated date of departure.

There is no account for many migrants who enter Japan through human smuggling. The Ministry of Justice contends that, in the mid-1980s, the number of stowaways was approximately five hundred people per year, but that in 1998, the number jumped to 7,472.⁷¹ As of 2010, the Ministry of Justice reported that approximately 91,778 foreigners were in Japan illegally.⁷² This indicates that a significant number of migrants dodge Japan's standard immigration system. Although the numbers are still slight in comparison to other countries, such as the United States

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Joshua Williams, "Illegal Immigrants Drop below 100,000 in Japan, 21 Year Low," *Examiner*, March 9, 2010, National section.

with about 11.1 million illegal immigrants in 2009, illegal immigration still affects the Japanese economy and society significantly and is debated among policymakers.⁷³

If the trend of an increase in both legal and illegal immigration between 1985 and 2008 continues, the Japanese government and populace will have no choice but to evaluate Japan's immigration policies, better manage its programs for foreigners, and more effectively address the needs of migrants. The next chapter focuses on the efforts being made by the Japanese national government, local governments, NGOs, and grassroots groups to encourage smoother assimilation for foreigners in Japan.

⁷³ Julia Preston, "Number of Illegal Immigrants in U.S. Fell, Study Says," *New York Times*, September 1, 2010, U.S. section.

CHAPTER 3

JAPANESE REACTIONS TO FOREIGNERS

Reactions to foreign labor in Japan have varied greatly during the 1990s and 2000s. Some Japanese citizens, both in the public and private domains, associate foreigners with an increase in national crime. For example, according to the Police Policy Research Center of the National Policy Academy of Japan, one of the top five priorities is “the controlling of transnational menaces.”⁷⁴

The number of crimes committed by foreigners...has been increasing. Recently more foreigners committed crimes with the cooperation of Japanese gangs.... It is necessary to halve [the number of illegal foreigners in Japan] within five years so that people can live in peace.⁷⁵

In contrast, some public and private organizations view foreign workers as victims who are easily manipulated in Japan. This chapter analyzes what role Japanese nationalism plays in the public perception of foreign labor in Japan, and possible social and political disruptions caused by an increase in the number of foreigners entering Japan. It also considers changes that Japanese local and national governments have made to protect the welfare of migrant workers. Despite the history of animosity toward foreigners, what instances might indicate a possible change in Japanese public attitude toward the immigration of foreigners?

Japanese Nationalism

Japan’s citizens share a rich history, language, and culture that very few outsiders fully comprehend. The country has always taken pride in its “Japaneseness,” even when emulating the technology and advancements of the West during the Meiji Period (1868-1912). Accustomed

⁷⁴ National Police Agency, “Action Plan to Create a Crime-Resistant Society: To Re-establish Japan as ‘The Safest Country in the World,’” Police Policy Research Center, National Police Academy of Japan, http://www.npa.go.jp/english/seisaku8/action_plan.pdf (accessed February 1, 2012).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

to being an isolated country, Japan has not always been the most welcoming society for foreigners. In many cases, nationalism is demonstrated, and in some extreme situations, even xenophobia. The fervent nationalism that developed during the Meiji Period as a result of the aspiration of Japanese to modernize their country, resurged after the defeat of Japan in World War II when, during the occupation, some Japanese began to push for the country's renewed independence. Prior to its defeat and disarmament, Japan had great pride in its military prowess. After 1945, much of its motivation and national energy was depleted. A wave of postwar nationalism soon took over the country, however, and became a coping mechanism for the Japanese, providing a vehicle for renewed social cohesion. As mentioned in chapter 2, this shaped many of Japan's laws regarding immigration.

While pride in one's race or country may not be considered harmful, when taken to an extreme, it has the potential to be dangerous. Japan has exerted feelings of anti-foreignism and xenophobia on both national and local levels. One example is the case of Japan's current immigration policies and naturalization laws, as discussed in chapter 2. In February 2010, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination condemned the "lack of antidiscrimination legislation in Japan and the treatment of Japanese minorities."⁷⁶ On a smaller scale, cases of xenophobia are common on the Japanese Internet, where the identity of users can remain anonymous. Human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Solidarity Network for Migrants, Japan, have condemned a "snitch site" created by the Ministry of Justice's Department of Immigration as cyber xenophobia.⁷⁷ The National Police Agency established a

⁷⁶ "Japan Disputes Racism Allegations at U.N. Panel," *Japan Today*, February 26, 2010, National section. <http://japantoday.com/category/national/view/japan-disputes-racism-allegations-at-un-panel> (accessed November 11, 2010).

⁷⁷ Debito Arudou, "Downloadable Discrimination—The Immigration Bureau's New Snitching Web Site is Both Short-Sighted and Wide Open to All Manner of Abuses," *Zeit Gist*, March 30, 2004, Life in Japan section.

crime database of foreigners on this Web site. However, criteria for offenses are extremely open-ended and not all options even involve illegal acts.

Attitudes toward foreigners, such as that of the National Police Agency, are an indication of Japan's insular culture, which makes assimilation by foreigners very difficult. Japanese nationalism is fostered by a long history of national isolation. Early immigrants to Japan beginning in the fifth century C.E. included a large number from Korea and China. Over an extended period, Japanese willingly adopted many customs, policies, and institutions (including Buddhism and Confucianism) of these cultures. However, in 1587, Hideyoshi began to isolate Japan from the outside world in order to protect it from Christian influences (in 1587, he ordered Christian missionaries to leave Japan, and in 1597, he crucified twenty-six missionaries and converts). By 1639 under the rule of Japan's third Shogun, Iemitsu, only a few Dutch and Chinese were permitted to enter Nagasaki for trade. Japan's doors remained essentially closed to foreigners until the Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854 between Japan and the United States. By then, Japan's rulers no longer could ignore the demands of the United States and other powers that had superior military strength and believed that their requests for protection of shipwrecked seamen, entrance into ports for supplies and other such needs, and especially the establishment of trade were reasonable and in keeping with modernization. However, no large influx of foreigners into Japan has occurred since the eighth century, when the first wave of immigration ended. Thus, Japanese citizens can trace their blood lines back many generations to ancestors who were native to Japan, and, consequently, they share a very strong sense of cultural identity and belonging. It is easy for Japanese to identify with their country because the requirements of being a member of the in-group are very rigid and defined; there is little room for any gray area. Furthermore, the specifics of Japanese culture are not always understood by foreigners. Customs that have been

practiced traditionally in daily life are simply unknown to foreigners, which can make non-Japanese appear ignorant in the eyes of Japanese natives.

Not only does culture influence the way that Japanese view immigrants and foreign labor, but also social class plays a role. “Japanese [regard themselves] as middle class, foreign workers as working or lower class.... [Japanese see themselves] as more advanced, or better, in terms of culture and civilization than foreign workers. Class superiority is...overlaid by cultural superiority.”⁷⁸ As a highly-industrialized nation, Japan’s citizens are very educated and literate. Consequently, there is a tendency among Japanese to avoid manual labor. Such positions are filled by foreign laborers who are more willing than Japanese to take low-paying jobs.

The linguistic barrier is also a hurdle for non-natives. The Japanese language is very difficult for migrants in Japan to master. When comparing Japanese to foreigners, their language skills, fashion sense, and understanding of Japanese culture give Japanese feelings of advantage. The insularity of the country and the sense of “Japaneseness” originates from “history... geographic isolation...[and] racial unity,” to form a strong “national identity.”⁷⁹

The Threat of Social and Political Disruptions from Foreigners

Although many migrants arrive in Japan for economic reasons, many Japanese perceive that these foreigners’ presence may cause social and political disruptions among the ethnically dominant Japanese populace. The most notable conflicts occur in areas that have experienced a large increase in foreigners, yet cannot provide adequate medical services, education, or housing to them. The influx of a large number of foreigners into one particular area could induce strife among local establishments and citizens, as a burden is placed on them in funding services.

⁷⁸ John Lie, “The Discourse of Japaneseness,” in *Multiculturalism in New Japan: Crossing the Boundaries Within*, ed. Mike Douglass et. al (Honolulu: Berghahn Books, 2008), 76.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 86.

Medical care providers are particularly strained when foreign workers come to Japan. One study conducted by the Tokyo Women's Medical University showed that from 1994 to 2000, only 20 percent of foreign patients had fully paid their medical bills at the provider institution.⁸⁰ In 1994, the *Mainichi Shinbun* reported 161 cases in which foreigners left medical bills unpaid, totaling approximately 53 million yen.⁸¹ In the United States, uncompensated health care costs totaled \$2 billion per year in 2002 for illegal immigrants alone, as reported by the Immigration and Naturalization Service.⁸² Although Japan may be better off in this regard, the problem could be a mounting social burden. Data on the situation in Japan are difficult to find; further research is required.

Although Japanese citizenship is not required for medical care, Japanese hospitals must provide interpreters and translated documents for foreign workers, increasing the workload and cost of services extended to them. As noted previously, foreigners residing in Japan must overcome language and cultural barriers. Without proper assistance, migrants in Japan have great difficulty when trying to obtain medical care. Thus, Japanese health care centers are faced with the burden of funding linguistic and cultural specialists for each ethnic group residing in the immediate area.⁸³ This becomes a hardship on slim budgets.

Japan is not the only country that faces problems concerning health care for immigrants; however, despite its current economic situation, Japan offers more affordable health care for

⁸⁰ Motonao Ishikawa et al., "Problems Associated with Providing Medical Service to Foreigners: Unpaid Medical Bills at Tertiary Emergency Medical Institution in Tokyo," *Journal of Tokyo Women's Medical University* 73 (2003), 526.

⁸¹ "大阪府内の病院の未収 5 3 0 0 万円医療費払えぬ外国人増え [Unpaid medical expenses in hospitals in Osaka total 53 million yen in 1994—The number of foreigners unable to pay their medical expenses has increased], *Mainichi Shinbun*, August 8, 1995. Fifty-three million yen is roughly U.S. \$651,666.80.

⁸² Dana Canedy, "Hospitals Feeling Strain from Illegal Immigrants," *New York Times*, August 25, 2002, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/08/25/us/hospitals-feeling-strain-from-illegal-immigrants.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>, (accessed April 15, 2012).

⁸³ Sellek, 144.

foreigners in comparison to the United States. According to the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, immigrants in the United States faced per capita costs of about \$1,904 in 2006.⁸⁴ As of April 2010, Japan required all registered foreigners staying in the country over one year to enroll in a health insurance policy. Health insurance enrollment in either the National Health Insurance plan or Employees' Health Insurance with one's company is compulsory and the cost is based on wages. In the past, even illegal immigrants residing in Japan were covered by Japan's universal health insurance system, but as of 1990, the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare National Health Insurance Division stopped offering publicly-subsidized medical coverage for illegal non-Japanese residents.⁸⁵ The access to and availability of health care in each country differs. However, in both Japan and the United States, immigrants, especially illegal ones, often are challenged by anti-foreign attitudes of native citizens.

Japanese opposed to foreign migrants fear that jobs will be less plentiful for native Japanese and believe that foreigners will never be successful in assimilating into Japanese society.⁸⁶ Although Japan is more ethnically diverse than many perceive it to be, champions of social homogeneity in Japan are concerned with their country's culture and race being weakened or overtaken by foreigners. Another concern is Japan's national identity or "notion of nationhood"—if more waves of migrants continue to arrive on Japan's shores, how will the bonds of social interaction change?⁸⁷ Japanese values always have embraced conformity and harmony for the perceived welfare of the larger group. Japanese who resist foreigners' entrance

⁸⁴ Michelle Andrews, "What Caring for Immigrants Costs," *New York Times*, February 11, 2010, Health section, <http://prescriptions.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/02/11/what-caring-for-illegal-immigrants-costs/#> (accessed April 15, 2012).

⁸⁵ Apichai W. Shipper, *Fighting for Foreigners: Immigration and Its Impact on Japanese Democracy* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008), 52.

⁸⁶ Roger Goodman and Ceri Peach, eds. *Global Japan: The Experience of Japan's New Immigrant and Overseas Communities* (New York: Psychology Press, 2003), 4.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

into Japan are convinced that the culture not only creates barriers to accommodating immigrants who do not fully understand Japanese society, but also fear that Japan's strong cultural values will be weakened, undermining Japanese traditions that are rooted in a long history of shared customs.

Providing Relief and Assistance for Foreign Laborers in Japan

In contrast to such reluctance to welcome foreigners, prominent opponents of Japan's stringent immigration laws include human right advocates and humanitarians. Many foreigner laborers are not granted basic rights since they do not hold Japanese citizenship. In the case of unskilled workers, they have no legal status and therefore are not granted legal rights.⁸⁸ Consequently, frequent exploitation occurs. Many NGOs and non-for-profit organizations have been founded to aid foreigners in Japan.

A growing number of Japanese believe that the Japanese government should enact a more open immigration policy because of Japan's labor shortage.⁸⁹ This is because, even if the entry of unskilled labor remains illegal, immigrants will continue to migrate to Japan as long as there is a demand in the labor market for them. Compared to their home countries, Japan looks much more promising to many immigrants as they believe that it will provide greater opportunities economically.

Small Steps of Japan's National Government toward Helping Legal Immigrants

Chapter 3, article 14 of the Japanese Constitution states, "All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations

⁸⁸ Sellek, 59.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 57.

because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin.”⁹⁰ However, the government’s adherence to the intent of this law is highly debatable. The Japanese national government has done comparatively little regarding the advancement and protection of the human rights of foreign migrants, especially illegal ones, since most of the responsibility falls upon local governments to facilitate assimilation. Although the Japanese government has stringent policies regarding all foreigners, there is a large discrepancy among the ways in which legal and illegal laborers are treated.

Allowing workers of legal status to enter the country boosts internationalism and the national economy, but Japanese associate illegal workers with crime and other acts of misconduct and fear that crime rates will increase if more illegal migrants slip into Japan. Small steps have been made toward guaranteeing rights for legal, registered foreigners in Japan. As discussed in chapter 2, changes have been made to the Immigration Control Act and the Alien Registration Act. Hence, the Japanese national government has not completely turned a blind eye toward immigrants. Still, although it gives preference to all immigrants who abide by the law, the 1990 revision to the Immigration Control Act favors South Americans of Japanese heritage coming to Japan to fill unskilled labor positions.

The Japanese national government also has lent assistance to registered foreigners indirectly by collaborating with NGOs to provide support to legal foreign migrants. One of the initial steps in this direction was the government’s cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC)

⁹⁰ William E. Maton, “The Constitution of Japan,” The Solon Law Archive, <http://www.solon.org/Constitutions/Japan/English/english-Constitution.html> (accessed February 6, 2012).

to provide support for foreign labor.⁹¹ JICA “aims to contribute to the promotion of international cooperation as well as the sound development of [the] Japanese and global economy by supporting the socioeconomic development, recovery or economic stability of developing regions.”⁹² In the 1990s, Japan witnessed a rapid increase in the number of NGOs within its borders; this was also the period when JICA first began to collaborate with the government and other organizations.⁹³ Perhaps this was the first of other initiatives that Japan’s national government will take to offer help for foreign migrants.

Efforts of Assistance Made by Local Japanese Governments

While the national government of Japan is able to maintain some distance from foreign migrants, local governments come into direct contact with immigrants. As a result, there is more pressure on them to ensure smooth assimilation for foreigners. Furthermore, the local governments are responsible for providing the same facilities to Japanese citizens and registered foreigners. Chapter 2, article 10 of Japan’s Revised Local Autonomy Law declares, “Any person who has his/her residence within the area of a city, town or village is its inhabitant. He/She is also an inhabitant of To, Do, Fu or Ken which comprises such city, town or village.”⁹⁴ However, while it is expected that each local government will respect foreigners’ rights, there is room for disparity in policies.

Some local Japanese governments, especially those that have a large number of immigrants living within their jurisdictions, have implemented a number of policies facilitating

⁹¹ Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC), “Japanese International Cooperation NGOs: Facts and Practices,” JANIC, <http://www.janic.org/en/data.html> (accessed February 4, 2012).

⁹² JICA, “About JICA: Organization,” Japan International Cooperation Agency, <http://www.jica.go.jp/english/about/organization/index.html> (accessed February 4, 2012).

⁹³ Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC), “Japanese International Cooperation NGOs: Facts and Practices,” JANIC, <http://www.janic.org/en/data.html> (accessed February 4, 2012).

⁹⁴ The Nippon Foundation Library, “Revised Local Autonomy Law,” The Nippon Foundation <http://nippon.zaidan.info/seikabutsu/1999/00168/contents/012.htm> (accessed February 6, 2012).

their assimilation. Furthermore, a number of local governments have come together to form the Committee for Localities with a Concentrated Foreign Population (CLCFP).⁹⁵ Sixteen cities have cooperated to combat the struggles that immigrants face while living in Japan.⁹⁶ The first initiative of the CLCFP directed toward Japan's national policies was the Hamamatsu Declaration. It was submitted to the central government offices in Kasumigaseki, Tokyo, on November 30, 2001.⁹⁷ The document supports "regional coexistence" and states three main proposals for policy reform:

1. Regarding education: A budget should be established for the study of Japanese at all language levels and for interpreters to help with multiple foreign languages. An official educational system should be established for the children of foreign migrants to provide education in Japanese social customs. Also, an avenue to socialize with local Japanese children should be provided to non-Japanese children.
2. Regarding social security: The medical insurance system should be amended so that short-term residents are included in the Health Insurance Plan and the National Pension Plan. A system that collaborates with medical organizations, NGOs, and other volunteer groups should be created so that non-Japanese residents have access to multilingual health care.
3. Regarding alien registration: In order to reduce the administrative gap between Japanese citizens and non-Japanese residents, there should be less paperwork and it should be available in more languages. Non-Japanese who are exiting the country should be entitled to quicker departure processing procedures. Furthermore, laws regarding the length of stay in Japan should be amended for immigrants, allowing them to stay for long periods of time more easily.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ 外国人集住都市会議 [Committee for Localities with a Concentrated Foreign Population] "外国人集住都市会議の概要" [Committee for Localities with a Concentrated Foreign Population Outline], <http://www.shujutoshi.jp/gaiyou/index.htm> (accessed February 8, 2012).

⁹⁶ Ibid. As of 2004, the sixteen member cities included: Okazaki, Toyohashi, Toyota, Kani, Ogaki, Minokamo, Oita, Ozumi, Suzuka, Ueno, Yokkaichi, Iida, Fuji, Hamamatsu, Iwata, and Kosai. They are located in the prefectures of Aichi, Gifu, Oita, Iwate, Mie, Tokyo, Nagano, and Shizuoka.

⁹⁷ The "Hamamatsu Sengen," October 19, 2001, 「花松宣言」原稿 [Hamamatsu declaration manuscript] "花松宣言" [Hamamatsu declaration], <http://www.debito.org/hamamatsusengen.html> (accessed February 8, 2012).

⁹⁸ Ibid.

The Hamamatsu Declaration is one of the most progressive reforms regarding immigration policies and the treatment of foreign migrants in Japan. It calls for a less severe outlook toward foreigners living in Japan and proposes relaxed laws allowing outsiders into the country. The declaration also considers the welfare of non-Japanese children, which is a significant step in facilitating a peaceful multicultural society. Educating Japanese and foreign children about each other's customs would offer a better chance for a harmonious multiethnic environment in Japan's future.

Hamamatsu City is also one of the leaders of facilitating international cooperation with Japan. It is affiliated with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), which "thorough information exchange and mutual cooperation of its members...aims to strengthen local governments... and [unify] the voices of local governments on an international level."⁹⁹ Together, Hamamatsu and UCLG are working to achieve the city's internationalization through cooperation among people at home and abroad.

Another remarkable locality is Kawasaki, located in Kanagawa Prefecture. The Kawasaki City Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents was created in 1996 to "reflect the views of foreign residents in city administration."¹⁰⁰ The assembly drafted the Kawasaki Multicultural Symbiotic Society Promotion Plan in order to create a "multicultural society of self-reliant residents living together harmoniously."¹⁰¹ Kawasaki City also has made education for non-Japanese children possible by establishing the Kawasaki City Comprehensive Education Center.

⁹⁹ Intercity Cooperation of Hamamatsu City/Hamamatsu City "Affiliation with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)," http://www.city.hamamatsu.shizuoka.jp/foreign/english/intercity_cooperation/index.htm (accessed February 8, 2012).

¹⁰⁰ Kawasaki City—Regional Information—JETRO, "Kawasaki City, Regional Profile, Living Environment for Foreigners," <http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/invest/region/kawasaki-city/> (accessed February 8, 2012).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

The local governments that have taken steps to ease the lives of immigrants are notable, especially when compared to the efforts of Japan's national government. Perhaps if enough local governments continue to provide support for foreign migrants, the national government will be influenced to change its policies to resemble theirs.

Endeavors of Non-Governmental Organizations for Immigrants in Japan: Organizations Established By Japanese

In addition to some support from a few local governments in Japan, there also have been instances in which Japanese citizens or organizations have supported immigrants from the grass-roots level. In the face of xenophobia and discrimination, "civil servants and public educators... reform outreach programs, moderate conflicts, and conduct language and cultural training for immigrants and local citizens."¹⁰² Some people believe that foreign labor is Japan's solution to achieving social internationalization and can help Japanese to fulfill their duties to the global community.¹⁰³ Therefore, encouraging public acceptance of foreign migrants would help benefit not only Japanese society, but also the migrants who contribute their manpower to the national labor force.

According to the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation, a network organization for NGOs, as of 2004, 226 NGOs had been founded in Japan.¹⁰⁴ By 1997, there were 145 NGOs supporting foreign laborers.¹⁰⁵ In the 1990s, there was a surge of established NGOs in Japan due to a rising awareness of human rights concerns, and of Japan's need to participate in globalization and internationalism. JANIC serves as an umbrella organization for

¹⁰² Nelson H. H. Graburn, John Ertl, and R. Kenji Tierney, eds. *Multiculturalism in the New Japan: Crossing the Boundaries Within* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 9.

¹⁰³ Goodman and Peach, 4.

¹⁰⁴ JICA, "NGOs in Japan," NGO-JICA, http://www.jicaindiaoffice.org/japan_ngo_e.htm (accessed February 4, 2012).

¹⁰⁵ Catholic Diocese of Yokohama Solidarity Center for Migrants, *Manual for Migrants Living in Japan: Information for Living in Your Community* (Yokohama: Catholic Diocese of Yokohama, 1997).

NGOs, mostly those that pursue missions of development, environment, human rights, and peace.¹⁰⁶

In Japan's Kansai region, a number of NGOs run by volunteers have offered support for foreigners, usually in one of three ways: counseling, case handling, and help regarding the promotion of policy reform.¹⁰⁷ Some of the most effective NGOs were established in the 1980s, such as Asian People Together, in Kyoto. The organization advocates the fair treatment of foreigners living in the Kyoto area—particularly immigrants from other Asian countries—by promoting a multicultural environment.¹⁰⁸ In pursuit of this mission, Asian People Together offers services such as interpretation and translation, legal advice, and the medical assistance of doctors. It also fights for the rights of marginalized foreign women, especially regarding trafficking and the sex industry in Japan. One of the organization's main objectives is to address the stringency of the immigration laws imposed by the Japanese government.

Another organization in the Kansai area that champions the equal treatment of foreign workers is the Foreign Migrant Worker Support Organization (FMWSO). Established in 1988, it is based in Osaka, with the mission to spread information regarding the human rights conditions of foreigners in Japan.¹⁰⁹ The FMWSO is run by volunteers, who include Japanese natives. Many Filipino and Thai laborers in the Osaka area seek its services, such as counseling,

¹⁰⁶ Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC), "Japanese International Cooperation NGOs: Facts and Practices," JANIC, <http://www.janic.org/en/data.html> (accessed February 4, 2012).

¹⁰⁷ Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center, "Breaking the Barrier: Japanese NGOs Take Up the Challenge," HURIGHTS OSAKA, <http://www.hurights.or.jp/archives/focus/section2/1996/09/breaking-the-barrier-japanese-ngos-take-up-the-challenge.html> (accessed February 4, 2012). The Kansai region is the area of Japan consisting of Mie, Nara, Wakayama, Kyoto, Osaka, Hyogo, and Shiga prefectures.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

emergency procedures, and housing. Every morning, approximately 25,000 daily workers in Japan wait for jobs at the FMWSO site.¹¹⁰

In the Kanto area, there is a multitude of NGOs to aid foreigners in Japan.¹¹¹ One organization offering support for migrants is the Catholic Commission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees, and People on the Move (J-CaRM). Located in Tokyo, J-CaRM is organized by sixteen domestic dioceses under the leadership of the Japan Catholic Bishops' Conference. J-CaRM aims to create "a society that lives together with people of other races, nationalities, and cultures."¹¹² This organization advocates equality and basic human rights for foreigners residing in Japan. J-CaRM discusses changes in immigration policy reforms at the national level, responds to emergencies that affect migrants and refugees, and conducts research to share with government branches. It also collaborates with countries in Asia and South America whose people migrate to Japan.

Another NGO, the Multicultural Center in Tokyo, promotes the respect of other nationalities and provides support for foreigners who are raising their children in Japan.¹¹³ It offers a study support program for non-Japanese children in an environment that accepts them for their cultural background. The Multicultural Center offers counseling and interpretation in different languages. Its mission is to support a multicultural society in Japan. JANIC, Asian People Together, FMWSO, J-CaRM, and Tokyo's Multicultural Center are just a few of the

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Kanto is the area of Japan consisting of the Gunma, Tochigi, Ibaraki, Saitama, Tokyo, Chiba, and Kanagawa prefectures.

¹¹² Catholic Mission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees and People on the Move, "Catholic Commission of Japan for Refugees, Migrants, and People on the Move—What Does it Mean?" Catholic Mission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees and People on the Move, http://www.jcarm.com/eng/eng_jcarm.html (accessed March 14, 2012).

¹¹³ Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan, "Supporting Groups," Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan, <http://www.jca.apc.org/migrant-net/English/English.html> (accessed March 12, 2012).

prominent non-for-profit organizations that have given assistance to migrants who have chosen to live in Japan.

Labor Unions

Migrant labor has received help from not only non-governmental groups, but also from a number of labor unions which foreigners can join in Japan. *Zentoitsu* Foreign Workers' Branch (ZFWB) began in 1992 and by 1998 had 1,449 members.¹¹⁴ Foreign laborers from Bangladesh comprise 50.6 percent of the ZFWB, Pakistanis 23.7 percent, Indians 6.9 percent, and Senegalese and those from other parts of Africa 5.6 percent.¹¹⁵ ZFWB helps foreigners with work-related concerns such as injuries while on the job. As of 1998, 80 percent of the cases taken on by ZFWB had been settled.¹¹⁶ The organization also closely collaborates with a number of occupational safety and health centers. One of the other local labor unions with which it cooperates is the National Union of General Workers Tokyo South District (NUGW). It has five hundred foreigners among its 2,500 members.¹¹⁷ Since 1956, NUGW has negotiated for fair wages and equal work environments for small- and medium-size businesses in Japan. The organization offers counseling and welcomes part-time workers and contract workers to join. NUGW's foreign members are mostly English teachers from the United States, Canada, and Australia.¹¹⁸

Although the national government does not offer nearly as much support for foreigners compared to what is provided by the local governments and NGOs, help does exist for foreigners

¹¹⁴ Glenda S. Roberts, "NGO Support for Migrant Labor," in *Japan and Global Migration: Foreign Workers and the Advent of a Multicultural Society*, ed. Mike Douglass et. al (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press), 278.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan, "Supporting Groups," Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan, <http://www.jca.apc.org/migrant-net/English/English.html> (accessed March 12, 2012).

¹¹⁸ Roberts, 278.

and migrant laborers in Japan. The work of the few organizations and labor unions mentioned above indicates that one ethnicity or group does not receive overwhelmingly more attention than others from local populaces. Migrants from East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, South America, Europe, and North America can find some network of support, particularly if living in Japan's Kanto or Kansai regions. Although they may have small staffs and receive little funding, labor unions and NGOs that are fighting for the rights of foreign laborers are important in raising awareness among Japanese and international societies about the challenges that confront migrants while residing in Japan.

International NGOs have become a prominent voice in attempting to pressure the Japanese government to treat its foreign migrants and laborers on a par with natives. This action was a needed change that had to happen; as the Japanese population continues to decline in number, one anticipates that the Japanese government will more deeply consider the welfare of Japan's foreign immigrant population, not just that of national citizens. The efforts of NGOs and local governments to assist foreigners illustrate a small, yet growing movement in contemporary Japanese society to liberalize Japan both socially and politically. International cooperation within the boundaries of Japan is slowly growing. Many groups are working to promote a peaceful multicultural existence between foreign migrants and native Japanese. These indicators of gradual progress exemplifying changes from the bottom up may spread into mainstream thought among Japanese citizens and even into the national government's policies and practices in the future.

CHAPTER 4

ATTITUDES OF CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE COLLEGE-AGE STUDENTS TOWARD FOREIGN LABOR IN JAPAN

According to Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT), in 2009, 2,845,908 Japanese were enrolled at universities and 624,875 were attending specialized training colleges.¹¹⁹ As of 2011, 90 percent of first-year university students were an average of 18.6 years old.¹²⁰ At the conclusion of a tertiary-type A program (theory-based, university education), the typical age of graduating students was 21-23.¹²¹ For advanced research programs, the typical age at graduation was 26 years old.¹²² Generally, males spend more years as students than females in Japan.¹²³

In order to determine whether the attitudes of contemporary Japanese college-age students toward immigration into Japan reflected the findings of the scholarly literature discussed in chapter 3, I administered a twenty-two question self-authored survey during November 2011. After using a Web site to construct the survey, I distributed it by Internet to various contacts I had made while living in Japan in 2009 and 2011. This survey focused on five main areas: (1) current attitudes of Japanese college-age students toward increasing the number of foreign laborers in Japan; (2) their preferred region of origin from which foreign laborers come; (3) the type of foreign labor (skilled or unskilled) that best benefits Japan; (4) advantages and disadvantages of foreign immigration for Japan; and (5) the students' level of desire to work in

¹¹⁹ Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology of Japan, "Statistics," MEXT, <http://www.mext.go.jp/english/statistics/> (accessed February 1, 2012).

¹²⁰ OECD, "How Many Students Will Enter Tertiary Education?" OECD, http://www.oecd.org/document/2/0,3746,en_2649_39263238_48634114_1_1_1_1,00.html (accessed February 1, 2012).

¹²¹ OECD, "Annex 1: Characteristics of Educational Systems," OECD, http://www.oecd.org/document/2/0,3746,en_2649_39263238_48634114_1_1_1_1,00.html (accessed February 13, 2012).

¹²² Ibid.

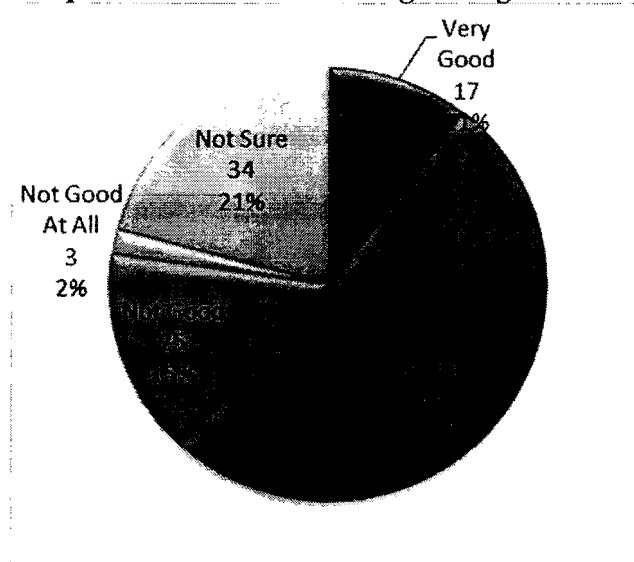
¹²³ OECD, "Transition from School to Work; Where Are the 15-29 Year-Olds?" OECD, http://www.oecd.org/document/2/0,3746,en_2649_39263238_48634114_1_1_1_1,00.html (accessed February 1, 2012).

the future with others from different ethnic backgrounds. The survey also intended to make connections, if any, between the respondents' answers and study-abroad experience, type of permanent hometown, influence of social networking sites, and family economic background. The survey began with a series of qualifying questions. Questions 1 and 2 asked gender and age. Questions 3 and 4 asked how many siblings the informant had (if any) and if any family members currently worked overseas. Questions 5 asked whether the respondent was an undergraduate, graduate, or vocational student, or if he or she was working or otherwise engaged. Question 6 asked which university the participant presently attended or from which he or she had been graduated. Question 7 asked the respondent his or her prefecture and town or city of residence, and Question 8 asked whether his or her permanent hometown was urban/metropolitan, suburban, or rural. Question 9 inquired whether the participant had studied abroad, and if not, whether there was a desire to do so; it also inquired whether he or she ever had gone abroad, and if so, to which country, and, if applicable, to which university. After building rapport with Questions 1 through 9, respondents were asked their opinions concerning foreign labor in Japan, using a five-point Likert scale. Questions 10 through 21 are discussed in this chapter, and the final survey Question 22 is discussed in chapter 5.

The sampling was collected between November 2011 and January 2012; there were 162 responses. Based on the criteria of the OECD, the survey focused primarily on young Japanese within the target age range of eighteen to twenty-six years old. All except sixteen respondents fell into this range. Ninety-five of the respondents were college students attending undergraduate or graduate programs. Fifty-seven participants had graduated, and eleven classified themselves as "other." For statistical purposes, all of the responses were included in the following analysis in order to reduce the potential for error. Most respondents were based in

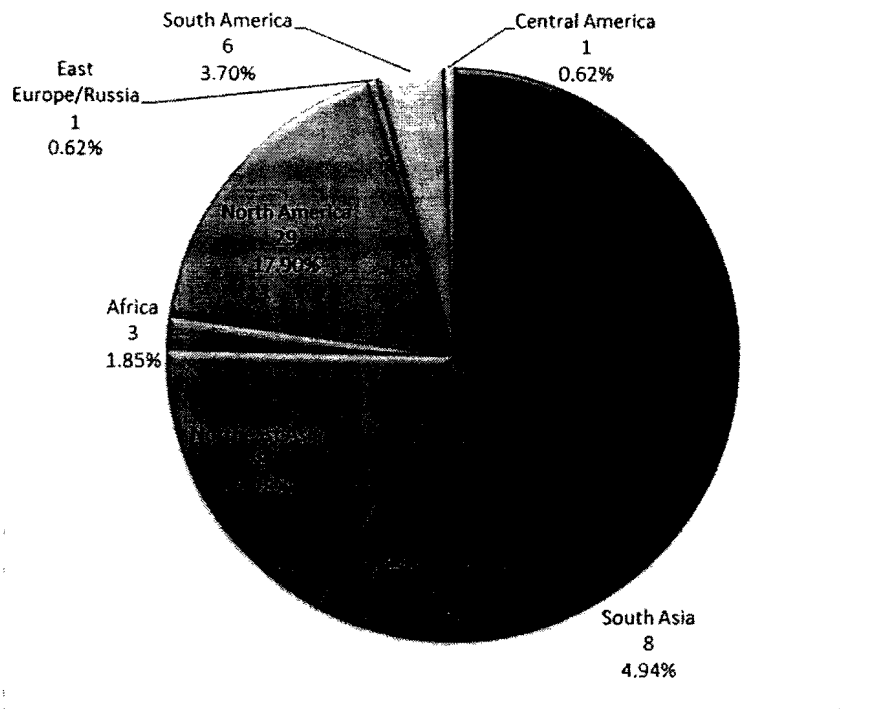
the greater Tokyo or Kyoto metropolitan areas, Osaka, Chiba, Hyogo, and Kanagawa. Since the majority of participants were college students or recent college graduates, responses were not segmented in order to maintain results that were as statistically significant as possible.

Figure 2. Opinion toward Increasing Foreign Labor in Japan



Based on a five-point Likert scale, Question 10, “What is your opinion about the increase of foreign labor in Japan?” yielded the following results. Seventeen respondents answered that the increase of foreign labor is “very good,” eighty-three said “good,” twenty-five said “not good,” three said “not good at all,” and thirty-four answered that they were unsure. The intent of this question was to gauge the overall initial reactions of survey participants to foreign labor in Japan. Not taking into account possible distinctions in attitudes toward unskilled and skilled foreign labor, responses to this question revealed that more than half of the 2011 survey participants (62 percent, or those who answered “very good” and “good” combined) believed that immigrant laborers were beneficial to Japan.

Figure 3. Preferred Region of Origin for Foreign Labor



Question 11, for which respondents were given multiple-choice answers, asked the preferred region of origin from which foreign laborers come to Japan. This question aimed to determine whether Japanese ages eighteen to twenty-six are more willing to accept foreign migrants from one particular region over others. The majority, sixty-three respondents, answered Southeast Asia. Twenty-nine preferred North America, while twenty-eight indicated Northeast Asia. Twenty-three respondents chose Western Europe, eight South Asia, six South America, and three Africa. Only one respondent preferred East Europe/Russia, and one, Central America.

Table 2. Comparison of Preferred Region of Origin between Two Survey Groups

	Llewelyn and Hirano's 2006 Survey Group	2011 Survey Group
Southeast Asia	38.70%	38.89%
South Asia	29.70%	4.94%
Western Europe	16.70%	14.20%
Northeast Asia	13.00%	17.28%
Africa	11.20%	1.85%
North America	11.00%	17.90%
Eastern Europe/Russia	10.70%	0.62%
South America	7.20%	3.70%
Central America	-	0.62%

Source: James Llewelyn and Junichi Hirano, "Importing Human Capital: Contemporary Japanese Attitudes to Immigration," *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies* (2009), <http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/articles/2009/Llewelyn.html> (accessed October 26, 2011). This survey collected data from four hundred undergraduate university students, ages 18-25, in the Kobe, Tokyo, and Osaka areas from September 2006 to April 2007.

When compared to the data collected by Llewelyn and Hirano, who conducted a similar study in 2006, both survey groups preferred foreign labor from Southeast Asia. A similar number of respondents in each survey group also preferred foreign labor from Western Europe, Northeast Asia, and North America over immigrants from other regions.

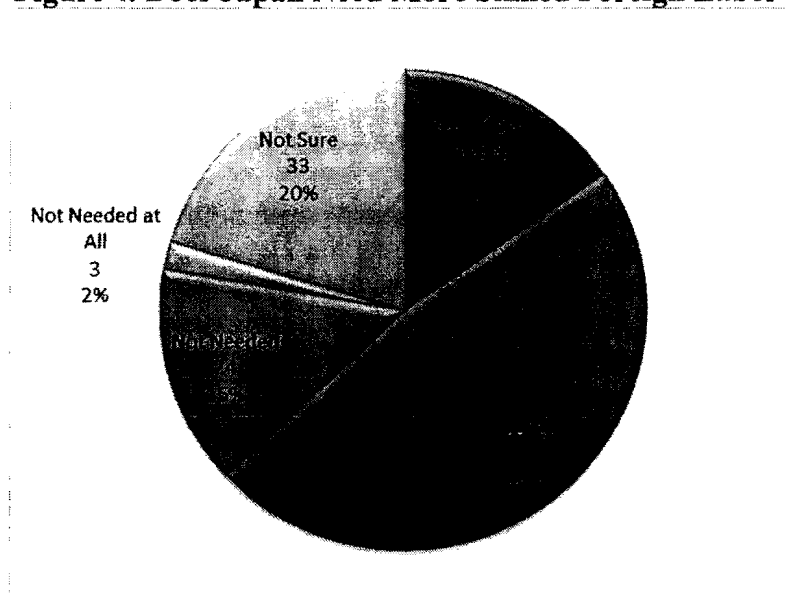
Differences in opinion between both survey groups could be seen in opinions regarding migrants from South Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe/Russia, and South America. Llewelyn and Hirano speculated that their 2006 survey group preferred foreign labor from Southeast Asia and South Asia because,

In a series of informal discussions, the prevailing rationale behind this disparity is that young Japanese people feel that Northeast Asian migrants are already sufficiently represented in Japan and that migrants from South Asia and Southeast Asia are underrepresented.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ James Llewelyn and Junichi Hirano, "Importing Human Capital: Contemporary Japanese Attitudes to Immigration," *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies* (2009), <http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/articles/2009/Llewelyn.html> (accessed October 26, 2011).

Furthermore, when compared to the actual number of registered foreign nationals in Japan in 2008, although the 2011 survey group was mostly in favor of receiving labor from Southeast Asia, the actual number of registered immigrants came from Northeast Asia. The 2011 survey group's second preferred region was Northeast Asia, so their second choice correlated with the actual number of immigrants that Japan had admitted, which was from that area. While Brazil ranked as the third country from where most immigrants came in 2008, the 2011 survey group expressed little preference for the South American region—only 4 percent favored it. Interestingly enough, when the Japanese national government slightly relaxed its immigration laws, it was South Americans of Japanese heritage who greatly benefited from the change.

Figure 4. Does Japan Need More Skilled Foreign Labor?



To determine the attitudes of young Japanese adults toward migrants employed in skilled labor sectors, Question 12 asked whether Japan needs more skilled foreign laborers. Twenty-five participants answered that skilled foreign labor is “very much needed” in Japan, seventy-seven said that it is “needed,” twenty-four believe that skilled foreign labor is “not needed,” three said it is “not needed at all,” and thirty-three replied that they did not know. Within the 2011

survey group, 63 percent (“very much needed” and “needed,” combined) believed that Japan requires more skilled migrants.

Sixty-six respondents gave reasons they believe Japan needs foreign skilled labor in the future, including:

- Japan’s current population is declining and aging, so it needs foreign labor.
- Foreign labor is important for the country’s economy.
- People from the United States would bring over advanced technology that could be applied to areas in which Japan’s technology is deficient.
- Talented workers could bring improved skills and knowledge to Japan.
- Nursing services require a significant amount of labor, and relying only on Japanese is not enough.
- Foreign workers have different experiences and perspectives than Japanese, so we can get better knowledge for our businesses.
- Japan has a narrow view and is not open to the world.
- The declining fertility rate makes foreign labor a requirement.
- Japanese companies need excellent human resources in order to dominate the global market.
- It is important for Japanese businesses to exchange international skills and experiences between foreign and Japanese laborers, while improving the English-language communication skills of Japanese.
- Those coming as care-givers or nurses from the Philippines and Indonesia would be helpful.
- Intercultural exchange can be valuable to make work places more flexible.

Of the sixty-six respondents, twenty gave answers pertaining to Japan’s being able to gain more technical knowledge or other skills through foreign laborers, eight believed Japan’s way of thinking would be broadened, eight believed the country’s economy and labor problems would be alleviated, seven thought it would help Japan’s aging and shrinking population, six gave answers pertaining to Japan’s becoming more internationalized or diverse, three provided reasons related to foreigners working in Japan’s nursing sector, and two believed skilled foreigners help Japan increase cultural exchange.

The reasons provided indicate that members of the 2011 survey group who believed Japan needs additional foreign skilled labor have an open way of thinking about foreigners.

They see the benefits that migrant labors can bring to Japan, such as increased technical information exchange, internationalization, improved productivity, and reduction in population decline. Furthermore, some of the reasons given pertained to health care provided by migrants from Southeast Asia, which may be why so many participants from this survey group preferred foreign labor from that region. More importantly, the reasons given for Japan's needing increased skilled foreign labor contravene the paradigms mentioned in chapter 3. The young Japanese survey participants do not resist the presence of foreigners in Japanese society and believe that their country can benefit in many ways from the contributions and skills of migrants. Their reasoning appears devoid of nationalistic undertones and feelings of Japanese superiority.

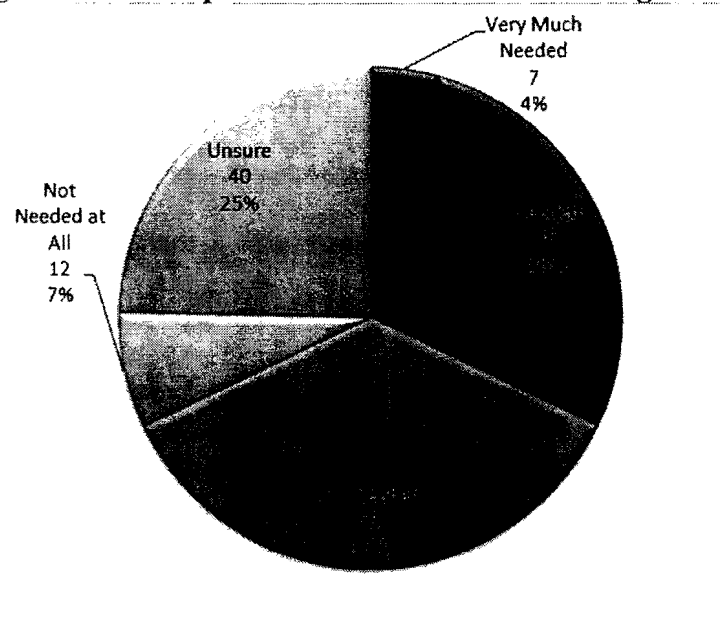
Thirteen respondents gave reasons for Japan's not needing foreign skilled labor or not needing it at all. Among the rationales were:

- There are already many skilled laborers in Japan.
- Japan will lose its national strength and traditions.
- It will be harder for Japanese to find positions.
- It is difficult to educate foreign laborers if they do not speak Japanese.
- Increased foreign labor might be the reason why the unemployment rate for Japanese is increasing.
- Before accepting foreign workers, Japanese should be employed first.
- Japanese are more skilled than foreigners.

Of the thirteen respondents, four gave reasons pertaining to protecting jobs for native Japanese or reducing the unemployment rate for Japanese, three believed Japan already has enough skilled workers, and two wanted to concentrate on keeping Japan-based technology within Japan. It seems that most participants in the subgroup opposed to an increase in foreign migration were concerned with the unemployment rate for Japanese and hindrances to their job searches. This attitude may not represent discrimination against foreigners as much as a natural inclination to protect jobs for native Japanese.

Others in the 2011 survey group who answered that Japan does not need foreign skilled labor revealed some nationalistic feelings, such as, “Japan will lose its national strength and traditions.” Furthermore, the views that Japanese are more skilled than foreigners and that foreigners do not have a command of the Japanese language may be related to the Japanese sense of cultural superiority discussed in chapter 3.

Figure 5. Does Japan Need More Unskilled Foreign Labor?



Question 13 asked whether Japan needs more unskilled foreign laborers, in order to gauge attitudes toward this labor sector. Seven replied that unskilled foreign laborers are “very much needed” in Japan, forty-five believed unskilled foreign labor is “needed,” fifty-eight said it is “not needed,” twelve answered it is “not needed at all,” and forty were unsure. Forty-three percent of this survey group replied that foreign unskilled labor is “not needed” or “not needed at all.” Reasons given by survey participants for Japan’s “not needing” foreign unskilled labor or “not needing it at all” included:

- Japanese unskilled laborers need to be protected.
- Foreign unskilled labor promotes more illegal immigration to Japan.
- Foreign unskilled labor is exacerbating the unemployment rate for Japanese.
- Social costs will increase to support unemployed Japanese.
- It is difficult to educate foreign laborers, and many Japanese laborers can't speak a foreign language.

Some respondents who believed that Japan does “not need” unskilled foreign labor or does “not need it at all” gave specific reasons for their opinions. Twenty-three of the forty-two respondents in this category said Japan’s high unemployment rate is negatively affected by foreign labor, and expressed concern about Japan’s persistent unemployment (4.5 percent in February 2012, down from a record high of 5.60 percent in July 2009, but considerably below the unemployment rate of many developed Western countries). Many young Japanese are concerned about job prospects, and feel uncertainty about the future, especially since China surpassed Japan as the world’s second largest economy. Similar to their attitudes toward skilled migrants, their views about unskilled foreign labor may be protectionist due to the sluggishness of Japan’s economy, and not necessarily owed to a discriminatory attitude. Five respondents believed that Japan simply does not need much unskilled labor, and thought that Japanese could fill whatever demand might arise.

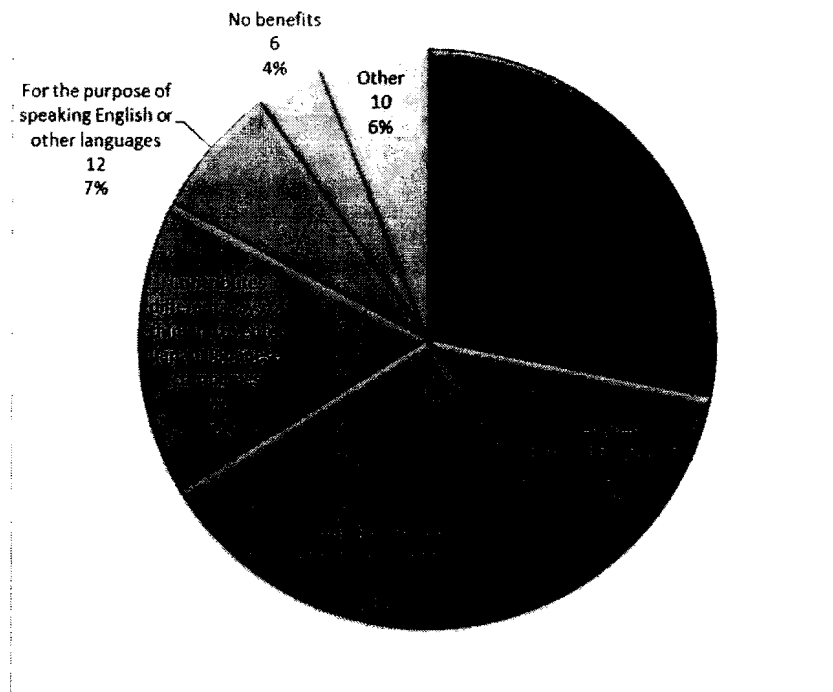
Twenty-five respondents gave reasons for Japan’s “very much needing” or “needing” unskilled foreign labor, including:

- Since many Japanese pay for higher education, there is a tendency for them to avoid manual labor.
- Wages in Japan are generally high and in order for the country to compete with international manufacturers, foreign unskilled labor is needed.
- The opinions and ideas of unskilled laborers compared to those of skilled laborers are different and interesting.
- Regardless of what experts think, accepting unskilled laborers and using their abilities is important.
- The population of unskilled foreign laborers is small and we must compensate for a crumbling foundation.

Of the twenty-five respondents, ten who supported immigration of unskilled laborers gave reasons related to Japan's low birthrate, its aging population, and its labor shortage; five believed employing unskilled foreign migrants reduces labor costs; four said that, since Japanese usually do not seek unskilled jobs, foreign migrants fill these gaps; and three wrote that unskilled foreign laborers contribute different ways of thinking, cultural exchange, and diversity to Japanese businesses. Those who supported unskilled foreign labor in Japan gave reasons contrary to nationalist tendencies, including some of them viewing foreign labor as a means to help alleviate Japan's social problems.

However, the majority of respondents believed that Japan does not need more unskilled foreign laborers. Perhaps one reason the majority felt this way is that, since the admittance of unskilled labor is illegal in Japan, it causes significant problems for Japanese society and the national economy. The unemployment of Japanese seems to greatly concern this survey subgroup, most likely because the participants are young and worried about their personal futures. Question 14 addressed the possible benefits for Japan regarding increased foreign labor. The goal of this question was to determine why Japanese might be amenable to foreigners coming to Japan. Participants could pick from a series of answers or provide their own response. Although there was space to provide their own thoughts, this question was included in the survey in multiple choice format to avoid pigeon-holing given responses.

Figure 6. Benefits to Japan of Foreign Labor



Forty-six respondents believed foreign labor contributes to Japan's becoming more internationalized and multicultural; forty-three believed it strengthens the Japanese economy; twenty-seven thought it promotes different ways of thinking in Japan at-large and in Japanese companies; nineteen believed it helps to reduce population decline; twelve thought it assists Japanese to speak English and other languages; six thought there were no benefits to foreign labor in Japan; and ten had other reasons, such as,

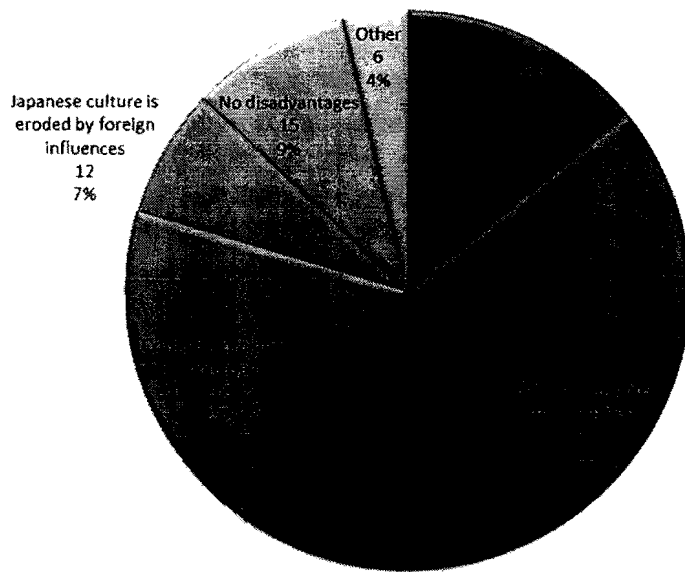
- To solve the labor shortage.
- All of the above.
- I cannot decide.
- Foreign labor is meaningless if the right people are not put in the right places.

The responses to Question 14 counter those to Questions 12 and 13 (Japan's needing skilled and unskilled foreign labor). Although many Japanese are very concerned about Japan's unemployment rate, replies to Question 14 show that 26 percent of the survey group believed that foreign labor strengthens Japan's economy, the second most frequent response to this

question. Although the unemployment rate is a worry among the 2011 survey group, many participants could see that foreign labor might help to resolve Japan's stagnant economic environment. Furthermore, responses to this question suggest that, in the future, Japanese perhaps will be more willing to allow foreigners into their society, since respondents identified Japan's becoming more multicultural as the number one benefit derived from permitting foreign laborers to enter the country.

Question 15 asked whether there are disadvantages of foreign laborers entering Japan. This question aimed to detect why young Japanese might not want foreigners to immigrate into Japan. Respondents again could select from a series of answers or provide their own response.

Figure 7. Disadvantages of Foreign Labor



Sixty-nine respondents believed that foreign labor in Japan leads to a loss of jobs for Japanese; thirty-seven believed that it leads to an increase in crime; twenty-three answered that social costs such as welfare and education would rise; fifteen believed there were no

disadvantages to foreign labor in Japan; and twelve believed that Japanese culture would be eroded by foreign influences. Six respondents provided other reasons, such as:

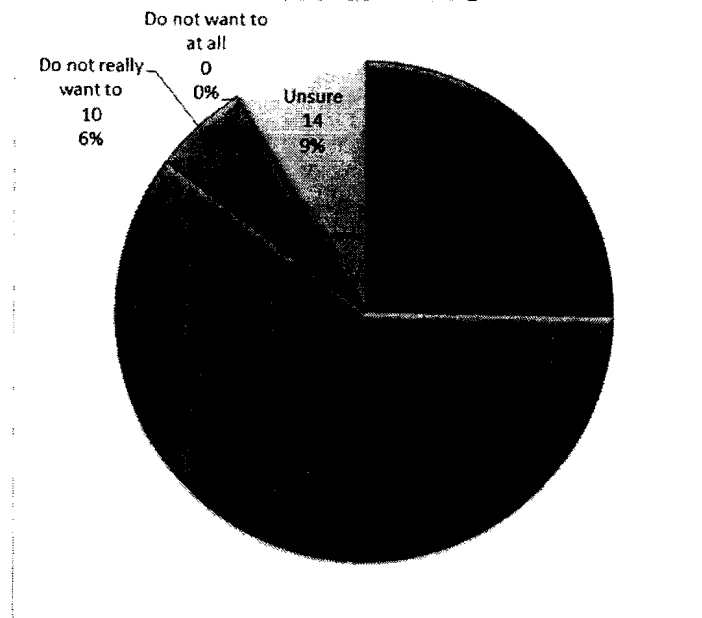
- Since some aspects of Japanese culture excludes foreigners, there is potential for various conflicts.
- If Japanese laws against foreigners are too lenient, Japan as a nation will disappear.
- Foreign labor is not so much a disadvantage, but not admitting laborers from other countries will lead to a rapid diminishment of workers in Japan.

The findings of the 2011 survey indicate that, perhaps in the future, Japanese immigration laws will remain restrictive, depending on the state of the economy, Japan's unemployment rate, and related public pressure on the government. Before the survey was conducted, it was anticipated that most college-age Japanese would be worried about the crime rate associated with foreigners. Survey results show that many young Japanese are more concerned about foreign laborers creating greater unemployment for Japanese. However, that only 7 percent of the survey group believed Japanese culture would be eroded by foreign influences, suggests that, in the future, perhaps Japanese citizens may be more likely to support a multicultural Japan. Llewelyn and Hirano found in 2006 that nearly two-thirds of their four hundred participants viewed increasing crime as a disadvantage to an increase of foreign labor in Japan, and 25 percent viewed social costs as a disadvantage.¹²⁵ Although the 2006 survey did not gauge the participants' thoughts regarding the state of the Japanese economy, both the 2006 and the 2011 groups regarded social costs as a problem, but not as worrisome as others factors associated with immigration.

Question 16 inquired whether participants wanted to work with foreign coworkers in the future. This question assessed whether Japanese college-age Japanese within this survey group would be open to sharing a workplace with people from different countries and of varying backgrounds. Responses could provide an indicator about Japan's future work environment.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

Figure 8. Do You Want to Work with Foreign Coworkers in the Future?



Forty-one participants replied that they “absolutely want to work with foreign coworkers,” ninety-seven replied “want to,” ten said that they “do not really want to,” none answered “do not want to at all,” and fourteen were unsure. Those who answered that they “absolutely want to” or “want to work with foreign coworkers in the future” stated reasons such as:

- To broaden my own perspectives.
- To see various ways of thinking.
- It is interesting to work with people from a different culture.
- To improve English skills and exchange different customs and ideas.
- Working with foreign coworkers is necessary for global marketing.
- It is fun to see the similarities and differences of others’ characters.
- Since all Japanese are “yes-men,” it is better to work with foreigners to facilitate discussion.
- Working with foreigners will give me more opportunities for my career.

Participants who stated that they do not want to work with foreign coworkers in the future provided reasons such as:

- I want to use Japanese to speak with co-workers.
- I do not have an interest in foreigners.

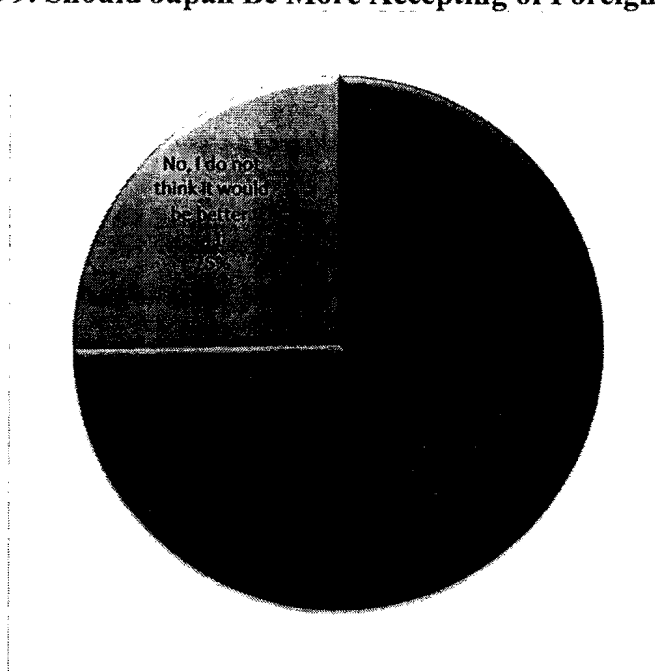
- At my job, differences in language and culture can be catastrophic or fatal, but if one is very knowledgeable about Japanese culture, language, and history, there are no problems working together.

The majority of the 2011 survey group, 85 percent (“want to” and “absolutely want to,” combined), wished to work with foreign coworkers in the future. This indicates that college-age Japanese perhaps have a more open mindset than older generations. They have an interest in learning about other cultures for a number of reasons, such as those discussed above. Many young Japanese see that, in the midst of globalization, Japanese need to understand others from different backgrounds. Perhaps these are the seeds that will lead to a more multicultural, accepting Japanese society in the future, less marked by the previously notable Japanese sense of superiority. Young Japanese within the 2011 survey group who want to work with foreign coworkers have an interest in people from different backgrounds than their own and want to break from Japan’s insular tendencies.

Still, not all Japanese hold favorable opinions about working with foreign co-workers in the future. Those who do not want to work with foreigners still have very “Japanese” mindsets, such as resistance to learning a foreign language. Having no interest in foreigners likely influences one’s attitude toward foreign labor in Japan.

Question 17 asked if the respondents believed that Japan should be more accepting of foreign labor.

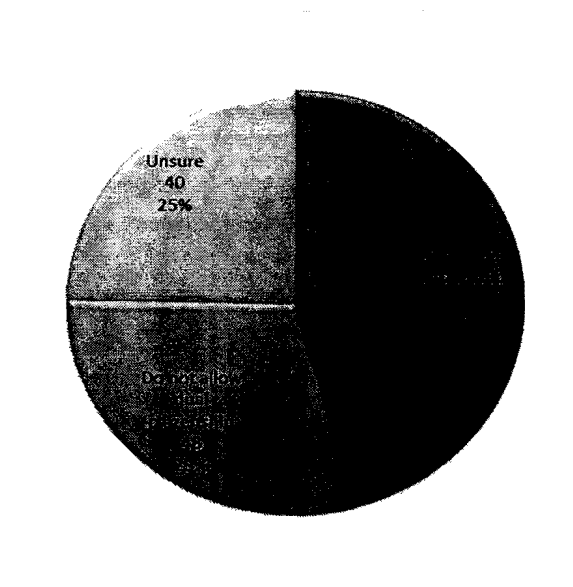
Figure 9. Should Japan Be More Accepting of Foreign Labor?



The majority of the 2011 survey group—one hundred twenty-one participants—answered that it would be better if Japan were more accepting of foreign labor, while forty-one thought that it would not be better.

Question 18 asked whether dual citizenship/nationality should be permitted in Japan.

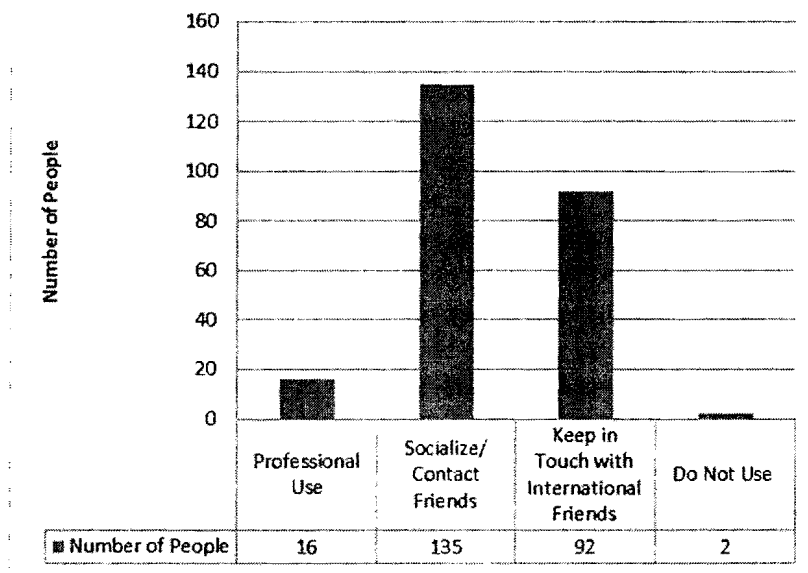
Figure 10. In the Future, Do You Think That Japan Should Permit Dual Citizenship?



Seventy-four responded that it is best to allow dual citizenship, forty-eight said that it is best not to allow dual citizenship, and forty were unsure. With 46 percent of the 2011 survey group responding in favor of dual citizenship, perhaps this will be a possibility in Japan's future.

The final survey questions, numbers 19-21, pertained to social networking services. In the age of globalization and the Internet, the aim of these questions was to gauge how much influence social networking has had on the attitudes of young Japanese toward foreigners. Participants were asked to indicate all of the reasons for their use of social networking sites and services.

Figure 11. Reasons for Using Social Networking Sites/Services

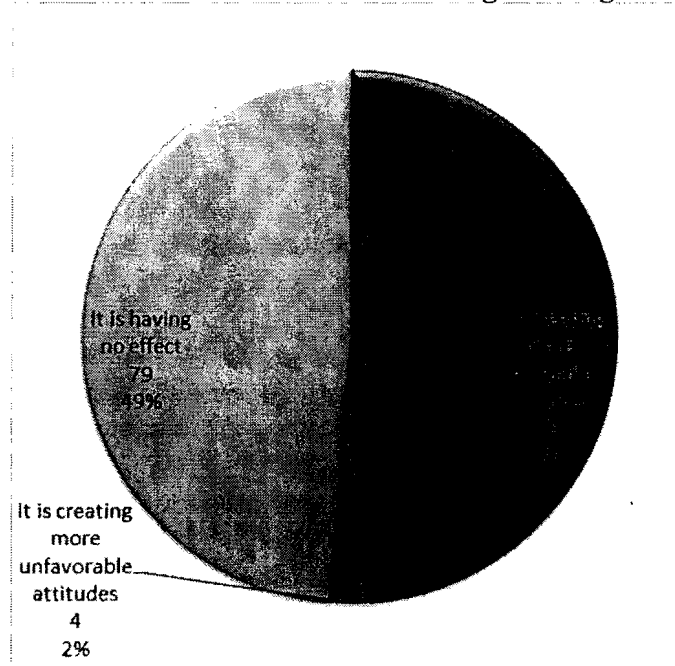


Among the members of the 2011 group, sixteen use social networking sites for professional use, 135 for socializing, and ninety-two to keep in touch with international friends; only two do not use them at all. Although the main purpose of using social networking sites is to communicate with friends and socialize, the second greatest use is to keep in touch with international friends. This may indicate that, by using the Internet and various online social

networks, young Japanese are becoming more internationalized than older generations, through the exchange of information with friends and acquaintances overseas.

However, when respondents were asked whether they believed that social networking sites and services affected attitudes toward foreign immigration, the responses were bifurcated.

Figure 12. Do You Believe That Contact with Counterparts through Social Networking Sites Affects Attitudes toward Foreign Immigration?



Seventy-nine respondents believed that social networking sites have no influence on Japanese attitudes toward immigration, while the same number believed that they create more favorable attitudes. Only 2 percent of the participants believed that electronic social networking creates unfavorable attitudes toward immigration into Japan. These numbers indicate ambiguity about the influence of social networking in influencing the attitudes of young Japanese toward foreigners. More investigation is needed regarding the actual influence of the Internet and online social networking sites on attitudes toward foreign labor. Still, the majority of responses was

neutral/positive regarding the role of social networking sites in shaping perceptions about foreign labor in Japan.

The survey results provide some indication that not all Japanese are open to internationalism or to foreign labor in Japan. Some respondents displayed hints of Japanese nationalism and even cultural superiority. However, the majority of respondents were in favor of admitting more foreign labor into Japan and working with foreign coworkers in the future. Perhaps most importantly, the survey results bring to light the perceived severity of Japan's current unemployment rate among young Japanese with tertiary education. The role of social networking sites in shaping perceptions about migrant labor still requires further investigation.

Although this thesis identifies some factors that may lead to a multicultural Japan in the future, additional research is needed due to the constraints of the 2011 survey group. Particular areas for future research include the use of online social networking Web sites in influencing perceptions about foreign labor in Japan. Additional topics for further study are discussed in chapter 5: the correlations, if any, between opinions concerning the increase of foreign labor in Japan and (1) permanent hometown classification, (2) study abroad experience, and (3) family's yearly income level.

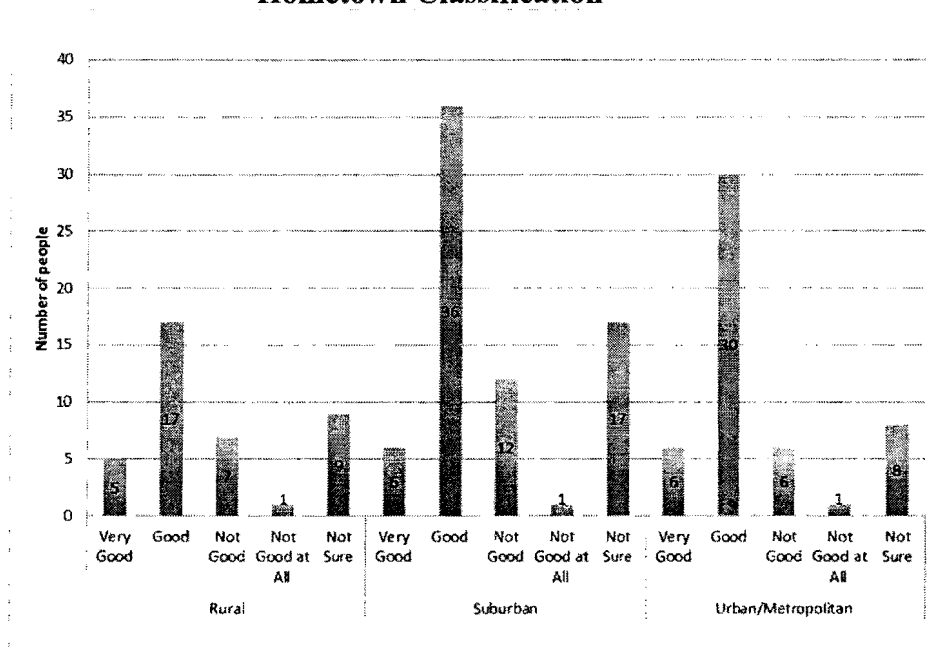
CHAPTER 5

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Since many different factors could have influenced the attitudes expressed in the 2011 survey results, questions were included that could provide explanation as to why some participants had a particular viewpoint. However, the responses are not necessarily indicative of national opinion, so further research on the following topics is highly suggested.

First, this study examined the relationship, if any, between the survey group's permanent hometown classifications and the respondents' opinions about the increase of foreign labor in Japan. When taking the survey, participants identified the prefecture and city in which they currently lived and classified their permanent hometown as rural, suburban, or urban. The following illustrates how permanent hometown classification may have influenced the participants' views about the increase of foreign labor in Japan.

Figure 13. Opinion on the Increase of Foreign Labor in Japan in Relation to Permanent Hometown Classification

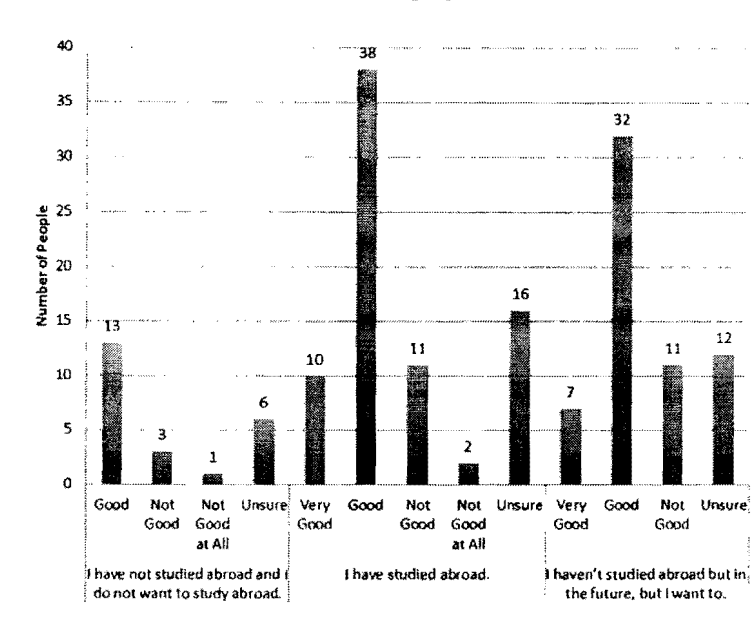


Seventeen participants stated their permanent hometown was a rural area and believed that the increase of foreign labor in Japan over the years is good. The majority of those originating from a suburban area, thirty-six, also believed that the increase in foreign labor that has occurred is “good.” Thirty respondents originally from an urban hometown also believed that the increased is “good.” The number of responses deeming the increase in foreign labor in Japan as “not good” was relatively even between rural and urban areas—seven and six, respectively. Twelve respondents from suburban hometowns believed that the increase is “not good,” but even more, seventeen, were not entirely sure.

However, within the 2011 survey group, there is a slight trend: urban-raised participants were more likely than other respondents to believe that foreign labor is either “good” or “very good.” Still, within each hometown classification category, the number of “good” and “very good” responses was over 50 percent of the responses in each subcategory: rural, 57 percent; suburban, 58 percent; and urban, 70 percent. Although this small sampling illustrates a slight trend, further research is necessary before a conclusion can be made that there is a correlation between hometown classification and opinion concerning the increase in foreign laborers in Japan.

The second consideration in this chapter concerns opinion about the increase of foreign labor that has occurred in Japan in relation to study-abroad experience.

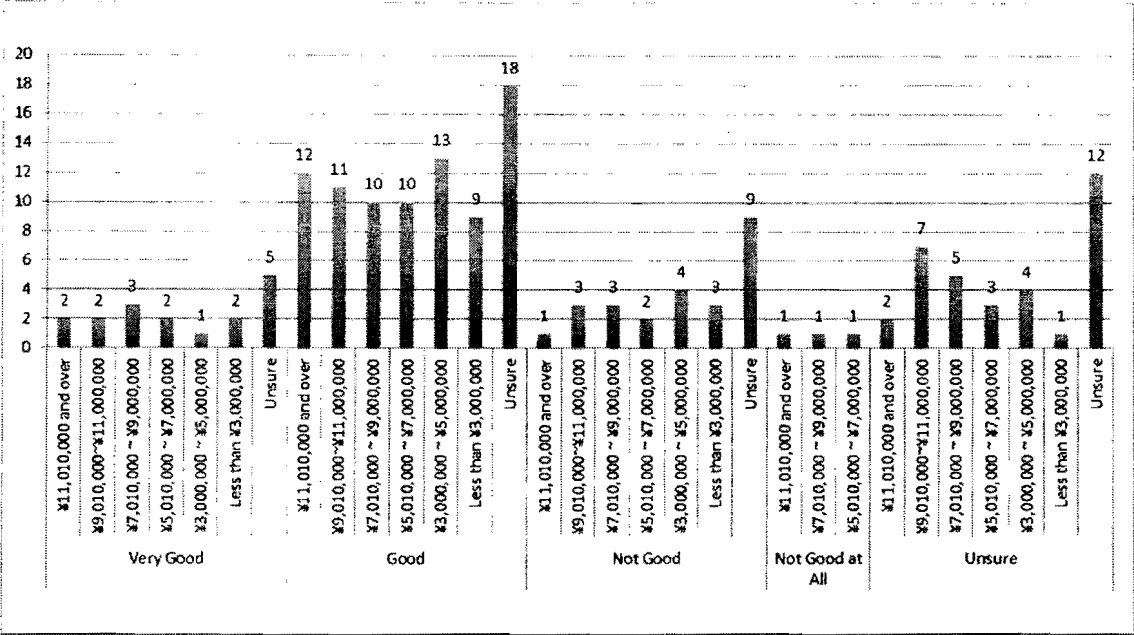
Figure 14. Opinion about the Increase of Foreign Labor in Japan in Relation to Study-Abroad Experience



Most of the respondents in the 2011 survey group had studied abroad and had favorable opinions about the increase of foreign labor that has occurred in Japan. However, those who had not studied abroad and had no desire to do so still believed that foreign labor is beneficial—thirteen deemed it “good,” despite having no interest in traveling to a foreign country. Those who wished to study abroad in the future and those who had studied abroad, thirty-two and thirty-eight respondents, respectively, illustrate another small trend: having an interest in other countries or cultures seems to influence an individual’s perception of foreign labor in their home country. Again, in each category concerning study-abroad experience, the number of “good” and “very good” responses comprised over 50 percent of the answers: those who had not studied abroad and did not want to, 56 percent; those who had studied abroad, 62 percent; and those who had not studied abroad but wanted to, 63 percent. Still, further scholarly investigation is needed to determine whether the rest of Japanese contemporary society holds similar views.

The last two factors examined in this thesis are participants' yearly family income level and respondents' opinions about the increase of foreign labor in Japan.

Figure 15. Opinion about the Increase of Foreign Labor in Japan in Relation to Family Income Level (Yearly)



The data in figure 15 show that attitudes toward foreign labor in Japan, ranging from “very good” to “unsure,” reveal no significant trends in relation to the yearly income level of the respondents’ families. The results were distributed relatively evenly, except for the number of participants who were unwilling to provide information about family income. For those who believed that foreign labor is “good,” eighteen did not disclose family income level; nine who viewed foreign labor as “not good” did not state family income level; and twelve who were “unsure” of their opinion about the increase in foreign labor in Japan did not provide family income level. Additional research with a larger sampling is required before any conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between family monetary background and attitudes toward increased foreign labor in Japan.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The controversy over increasing immigration in the future is a significant one for Japan and even more so for the international community. International migration not only affects receiving countries but also sending ones. Human rights advocates and other nations have concern about the welfare of marginalized migrants in Japanese society, and monitor Japanese immigration policies and the treatment of foreigners who work in Japan. Although the Japanese national government has been able to maintain a certain amount of distance from foreign laborers, local governments regularly come into direct contact with them.

There are specific social conditions in Japan today that make the study of attitudes held by young Japanese adults toward immigrant laborers important. This thesis has discussed the social and economic implications of Japan's population decline, offered comparisons between the East Asian and Northern European models, and considered international migration to Japan in the light of three theories. The numbers of registered foreigners in Japan in 1985 and in 2008 have been compared, and immigration laws from post-World War II to the present day have been reviewed. Despite the overall increase in the number of foreigners in Japan since 1945, the study's analysis of Japanese laws reveals that the country's authorities have viewed the stay of immigrants as temporary.

Even though nationalism and cultural superiority may color some citizens' views of foreigners in Japan, a number of local governments, NGOs, and labor unions have championed the rights of foreign laborers. The Hamamatsu Declaration and the Kawasaki City Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents were outstanding movements in the direction of multiculturalism, initiated by Japanese. Through such initiatives, a number of non-for-profit

organizations, native Japanese, and foreigners have been brought together. Such grass-roots-level changes in Japanese society are a significant step, and suggest an increase in cultural sensitivity in Japan's future.

Through self-authored surveys, this thesis has sought to shed light upon possible indicators or trends within a small group of native Japanese concerning their perceptions of foreign labor in Japan. Overall, survey results show that more than half of the respondents believed that, in general, foreign labor is a benefit to Japan. The survey group expressed preference for migrants from Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, and North America. Respondents had little preference for South Asians, South Americans, Africans, Central Americans, and Eastern Europeans. Although not indicative of Japan as a whole, if these attitudes are widely held, perhaps in the future, Japan's immigration policies will favor these regions more than others.

Since the sampling among 162 respondents was focused mostly in prefectures with cities having high concentrations of foreigners—Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Chiba, Hyogo, and Kanagawa—the results may show that young Japanese living in these areas are becoming more agreeable toward migrant labor due to more frequent contact. This seems to be the case among members of the Committee for Localities with a Concentrated Foreign Population (CLCFP), an organization whose members are in cities located in the Aichi, Gifu, Oita, Iwate, Mie, Tokyo, Nagano, and Shizuoka prefectures. Since the areas represented in this organization differ from those represented in the survey group, this could indicate that more favorable attitudes toward foreign migrants are gradually taking hold in highly urbanized areas. Furthermore, the Kawasaki City Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents, located in the Kanagawa Prefecture, and the NGOs located in the Kanto and Kansai regions of Japan, having the prefectures in which

most of the survey respondents live, strengthen the conclusion that Japanese natives have a more progressive mindset toward foreign migrants' rights in these areas than in non-urban areas of the country.

Through qualitative analysis, the survey results provided indicators that skilled labor is needed in Japan for the following reasons: to provide Japan with more technological knowledge and other skills; to introduce different ways of thinking; to alleviate the country's economy slump and labor problems; to help address the problems created by Japan's aging and shrinking population; and to increase internationalization and the nation's racial and ethnic diversity. If there is a greater need than in the present for technical experts, perhaps Japan's immigration policies will be more favorable toward migrants who work in hi-tech industries. The survey results reveal that the participants had a significant interest in foreigners of different backgrounds and outlooks, indicating that the young Japanese of this sampling have deviated from the traditional nationalistic mindset. This, in itself, is an indicator of a very gradual change within Japanese contemporary society.

The survey group believed that Japan does not need foreign skilled labor because it presently has enough skilled workers and such jobs should be protected for native Japanese. One conclusion is that young Japanese are very concerned about the number of jobs available for native Japanese. Although not blatantly nationalistic or discriminating, these findings may indicate some protectionist undertones, but the degree cannot be accurately determined. Further research is required before valid conclusions can be drawn.

Similarly, qualitative analysis showed that survey respondents believed that Japan does not need foreign unskilled labor due to the country's high unemployment rate. Similar to the

belief that there is no need for skilled labor, this attitude may not be due to overly nationalistic tendencies but to a general concern for Japan's economic conditions.

However, within this sampling, young Japanese gave reasons why unskilled foreign labor is needed in Japan: to help with social problems, such as Japan's low birthrate, aging population, and the labor shortage; to reduce labor costs; and to fill jobs that native Japanese do not want. According to the 2011 survey group, Japan's circumstances still require unskilled labor within its borders. Although more participants within this study believed that unskilled labor in Japan is not needed than needed, the difference was slight (42 percent compared to 32 percent, respectively). Perhaps in the future, Japanese natives will be more willing to allow unskilled labor into the country, especially if there is an economic and social demand for them and if immigration laws are further amended.

Quantitative analysis found that the survey group believed foreign labor overall helps Japan by increasing its level of internationalization and multiculturalism and by strengthening the economy. Respondents' most deep concerns about foreign migrants were centered on Japan's current employment conditions and the availability of jobs for Japanese, followed by increasing crime rates. A paradox was presented within the limited study's findings: although many young Japanese are very concerned about the number of jobs for Japanese, simultaneously, they believe that foreign labor can strengthen Japan's economy. While having a high amount of anxiety about jobs for Japanese, many respondents were able to see the benefits of foreign labor. If the nation's economy improves, it would be interesting to conduct another study regarding opinions about migrant labor in Japan.

The majority of the survey group also expressed interest in working with foreign coworkers in the future and allowing dual citizenship in Japan, which may correspond to their

desire for Japan to become more internationalized and more amenable toward foreign labor. Those who had studied abroad, wished to study abroad, and even those who had not studied abroad and had no desire to, believed that foreign labor is beneficial to their country. If opinions such as these become more widespread in contemporary Japanese society, foreigners may find an easier time entering and assimilating into Japan in the future.

The conclusions in this thesis do not represent attitudes and trends in Japan as a whole, but they do provide possible indicators of a gradually changing Japanese contemporary society and culture. If the progressive mindset expressed in this survey soon prevails among the mainstream Japanese populace, there is a chance that, in the future, foreign migrants will be able to assimilate into Japanese society much more easily than today. Should a different way of thinking about foreign labor occur from the bottom up, perhaps Japanese immigration laws will become more relaxed. If more young Japanese, who are the future of Japan, are supportive of multiculturalism, there is a chance that Japanese society will become more accepting of migrants from different regions. With enough support given to foreign laborers, perhaps one day they will be treated more equally by employers and enjoy more rights, and no longer be marginalized as merely tolerated minorities.

This thesis also discussed other areas ripe for further scholarly investigation, such as the correlations, if any, between opinions about the increase of foreign labor in Japan and (1) permanent hometown classification, (2) study-abroad experience, (3) family yearly income level, and (4) the use of the Internet and online social networking sites. Although in a limited way, this study drew upon these areas that call for more research, and aimed to identify possible indicators that might lead to smoother assimilation for immigrants in Japan in the future.

APPENDIX

日本で働いている外国人（外国人労働者）についての日本の若者の意識調査

Survey of Japanese Young People's Attitudes toward Foreign Labor in Japan

このアンケート調査は日本で働いている外国人（外国人労働者）についての日本の若者の意識調査です。このアンケートの結果は、修士論文の研究に役立てます。この調査は無記名方式です。以下の質問で、理由を述べる空欄があります。理由まで述べていただくと、今後の研究に活かすことができます。日本語か英語で答えて下さい。5分～10分位かかります。ご協力よろしく申し上げます。

This survey is about the attitudes of contemporary Japanese young people toward foreign labor in Japan. This greatly aids the research for my Master's thesis. The survey is anonymous. Below some questions are possible responses. Providing your reasons would help my research significantly. Answers can be in Japanese or English. The survey will take about 5-10 minutes.

Thank you for your participation.

1. 性別は何ですか。

What is your gender?

男 male

女 female

2. 何歳ですか。

How old are you?

3. 兄弟（姉妹）は何人いますか。

How many siblings do you have?

ひとりっ子 I am an only child

一人 One sibling

二人 Two siblings

三人 Three siblings

四人以上 Four or more siblings

4. ご家族（両親とその兄弟まで）の中に、現在海外で働いている方がいますか。
Do any of your family members (parents or siblings) currently work overseas?

はい、います。 Yes.

いいえ、いません。 No.

5. 現在、あなたは学部生ですか。大学院生ですか。専門学生ですか。それとも働いていますか。

Are you an undergraduate student, graduate student, vocational student, or working/other?

大学一年生 First year undergraduate

大学二年生 Second year undergraduate

大学三年生 Third year undergraduate

大学四年生 Fourth year undergraduate

大学院生の一年生 First year graduate student

大学院生の二年生 Second year graduate student

専門学校の学生 Vocational student

卒業しています I have graduated

その他 (指定してください) Working/other:

6. もし大学生の場合は、どの大学で勉強していますか。卒業した方は、どちらの大学（高校）で勉強しましたか。

If you are a college student, which university do you attend? If you have graduated, what college (high school) did you attend?

大学名（学校名） College/High School :

7. 現在どこに住んでいますか。県名と市町村名を記入して下さい。

In which prefecture and city do you live?

県名 Prefecture :

市町村名 City :

8. 出身地は、どんな場所ですか。

What type of area is your permanent hometown?

都会 Urban/metropolitan

郊外 Suburban

田舎 Rural

9. 留学したことがありますか。 Have you studied abroad?

はいの場合、留学した。 I have studied abroad.

いいえの場合、将来、留学したいです。 I haven't studied abroad but in the future, I want to.

いいえの場合、将来、留学したくないです。 I have not studied abroad and I do not want to study abroad.

留学した場合は、どの国に留学しましたか。If you have studied abroad, where did you study?

国名 Country:

期間 Number of semesters:

大学名 University:

10. 日本に外国人労働者が増えることについてどう思いますか。What is your opinion about the increase of foreign labor in Japan?

非常に良い Very good

良い Good

良くない Not good

非常に良くない Not good at all

分からない I don't know

1 1. 日本に来る外国人労働者は、どのような地域からが一番良いと思いますか。下から一つ選んでください。From which region do you prefer foreign labor in Japan to come?

南東アジア（ミャンマー、タイ、カンボジア、ラオス、ベトナム、インドネシア、マレーシア、フィリピンなど） Southeast Asia (Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines)

南アジア（インド、パキスタン、バングラデシュ、スリランカ、アフガニスタン、ブータン、ネパールなど） South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal)

西ヨーロッパ Western Europe

北東アジア Northeast Asia (韓国、中国など)

アフリカ Africa

北アメリカ North America

東ヨーロッパ、ロシア East Europe, Russia

南米 South America (ブラジルなど)

中米 Central America

1 2. 日本には、もっと外国人熟練労働者が必要ですか。Does Japan need more skilled foreign laborers?

非常に必要 Very much needed

必要 Needed

必要ではない Not needed

全く必要ではない Not needed at all

分からない I don't know

どうして Why:

1 3. 日本には、もっと外国人単純労働者が必要ですか。Does Japan need more unskilled foreign laborers?

非常に必要 Very much needed
必要 Needed
必要ではない Not needed
全く必要ではない Not needed at all
分からない I don't know
どうして Why:

14. 日本に来る外国人労働者は、日本にとって、メリットがあると思いますか。下から一つ選んでください。 Are there benefits to Japan of permitting foreign labor entering Japan?

日本がより国際的で多様な文化になる Japan becomes more internationalized and multicultural
少子化対策 Reduces population decline
日本の経済を強化 Strengthens the Japanese economy
日本や日本の会社と違う考え方を入れる Contributes different ways of thinking to enter Japan/Japanese companies.
英語など様々な言語を話すため For the purpose of speaking English or other languages
メリットは無いと思う。 I don't think there are any benefits.
その他 (指定してください) Other, please specify:

15. 日本に来る外国人労働者は、日本にとって、デメリットがあると思いますか。下から一つ選んでください。 Are there disadvantages of foreign labor entering Japan?

社会的費用（福祉とか教育） Social costs (such as welfare and education)
日本人の就職率の低下 Taking away jobs from Japanese
外国人犯罪が増える Crime by foreigners increases
外国の影響のせいで、日本の固有文化が侵食される Japanese culture is eroded by foreign influences
デメリットは無いと思います。 I don't think there are any disadvantages.
その他 (指定してください) Other, please specify:

16. 将来、外国人の同僚と一緒に働きたいですか。 In the future, do you want to work with foreign coworkers?

絶対に働きたい Absolutely want to
働きたい Want to
余り働きたくない Don't really want to
絶対に働きたくない Do not want to at all
分からない I don't know
どうしてそう思いますか。 Why?

17. 高齢化社会の中で、日本はもっと外国人労働者を受け入れた方がいいと思いますか。 Do you think Japan should be more accepting of foreign labor?

はい、受け入れたほうが良い。 I think it would be better if Japan were more accepting.
いいえ、受け入れないほうが良い。 No, I don't think it would be better.
どうしてそう思いますか。 Why?:

18. 日本では、2重国籍は認められていませんが、将来、日本の2重国籍についてどう
思いますか。 In Japan, dual citizenship/nationality is not permitted. However, in the future, do
you think dual citizenship should be permitted?

認めない方が良い。 I think it is best not to allow dual citizenship.

認めても良い。 It is better to allow dual citizenship.

分からない。 I do not know.

19. あなたは海外で働きたいと思いますか。 Do you think you would like to work in a
foreign country?

はい、海外で働きたい。 Yes, I do.

いいえ、海外で働きたくない。 No, I do not.

赴任希望地 Country of preference / 理由 Reason:

20. ソーシャル・ネットワーク・サービスを使う理由はなんですか。(例えば: フェ
イスブックとかミクシィとかツイッターとかリンクトイン)。ソーシャル・ネットワー
ク・サービスを使う場合は、どうして使いますか。当てはまるものすべて選んでくださ
い。 What is your reason for using social networking sites/services? (For example: Facebook,
Mixi, Twitter, Linked In) Check all that apply.

仕事の為 Professional use

友達に連絡する為 Socialize/contact friends

海外の友達に連絡する為 Keep in touch with international friends

使わない I don't use them

21. ソーシャル・ネットワーク・サービスを使用して外国人と連絡をとることは、日
本にいる外国人労働者について、日本人の若者の態度や意見などに影響があると思いま
すか。 Do you believe that contact with counterparts through social networking sites is affecting
Japanese students' attitudes toward foreign immigration?

日本人の学生の態度は、より良くなります。 It is creating more favorable attitudes toward
foreign immigration in Japan.

日本人の学生の態度は、より悪くなります。 It is creating more unfavorable attitudes
toward foreign immigration.

日本人の学生の態度は、変化がありません。 It is having no effect on students' attitudes
toward foreign immigration.

その他(指定してください) Other, please specify:

22. あなたの家庭の年間収入はいくら位ですか。 What is your family's annual income
level?

300万円未満 Less than 3,000,000 yen

3 0 0 万円～5 0 0 万円 3,000,000 ~ 5,000,000 yen
5 0 1 万円～7 0 0 万円 5,010,000 yen ~ 7,000,000 yen
7 0 1 万円～9 0 0 万円 7,010,000 yen ~ 9,000,000 yen
9 0 1 万円～1 1 0 0 万円 9,010,000 yen ~ 11,000,000 yen
1 1 0 1 万円以上 Over 11,010,000 yen
分からない Not sure

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