Evolution of Labor in Japan: A Comparative Study of Labor Exportation to the Dominican Republic in the 1950s and Remigration of Nikkeijin from Latin America in the 1990s

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EVOLUTION OF LABOR IN JAPAN:
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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN THE 1950s AND REMIGRATION OF NIKKEIJIN
FROM LATIN AMERICA IN THE 1990s

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SOUTH ORANGE, NEW JERSEY

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THIS THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ASIAN STUDIES AT SETON HALL UNIVERSITY, SOUTH ORANGE, NEW JERSEY
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ABSTRACT

Since the end of World War II in 1945, Japan has experienced two major migration waves. The first migration movement was a major exportation of Japanese labor to Latin America between 1952 and 1962 due to a surplus of labor and wartime devastation. The Japanese government made special arrangements with Latin American governments and selected elite Japanese people for the purpose of agricultural development in Brazil, Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, Argentina, and Bolivia.

The second migration movement was a major importation of labor from Latin American countries in the early 1990s, as a result of a domestic labor shortage and global economy. This wave of migration is also characterized by a re-migration movement of Japanese from Latin America. The 1990 amendment of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act granted a new entrance category for ethnic Japanese, Nikkeijin, leading to an influx of immigrant workers from Latin America.

This paper presents studies of the migratory process in Japan. Two case studies are demonstrated to understand the causes and consequences of Japanese migration: a Japanese government sponsored emigration policy to the Dominican Republic in the 1950s, and a policy regarding the return migration movement from Latin America in the 1990s. The research presented here attempts to weigh the importance of factors that create migration flows and the role of the governments in the promotion of migration.

International migration is part of a global revolution that is reshaping societies and politics around the world. Yet, many of the political forces that are shaping international migration to Japan have deep historical and cultural roots.
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The English translations of the Japanese and Spanish sources were made by the author. Direct translations of the Japanese and Spanish into English sometimes do not make sense in English. Therefore, the English translations were made in such a way that they best make sense in English. The English translations that are not exact translations of the Japanese are not put into quotation marks.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The effects of a global economy, high-speed global communication, and inexpensive travel during the last two decades have made it easier than ever for people to cross national borders. By the end of the twentieth century there were approximately 261,566 Japanese citizens residing outside of Japan.\(^1\) A total of 114,444 Japanese citizens lived in Latin America, and about 1,442,200 Japanese descendents resided in Latin America.\(^2\) In contrast, about 1,415,100 non-Japanese citizens lived in Japan, and approximately 48,300 Japanese emigrants from Latin America had returned to Japan.\(^3\)

Since the end of World War II in 1945, Japan has experienced two major migration waves. The first migration movement was a major exportation of Japanese labor to Latin America between 1952 and 1962 due to a surplus of labor and wartime devastation. The Japanese government made special arrangements with Latin American governments and selected elite Japanese people for the purpose of agricultural development in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and Paraguay. This first postwar migration was considered permanent not only by the host countries but also by the migrants themselves. The Japanese government had implemented policies, which ensured that migrants would adopt and assimilate to the policy of the host countries.

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2 Ibid.

3 Prema-Chandra Athukorala and Chris Manning, “Japan: A Reluctant Host,” in Structural Change and International Migration in East Asia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 44.
The second migration movement was a major importation of labor from Latin American countries in the 1990s, as a result of a domestic labor shortage and global economy. This wave of migration is also characterized by a re-migration movement of Japanese from Latin America. The 1990 amendment of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (ICRRA) granted a new entrance category for ethnic Japanese, Nikkeijin, leading to an influx of immigrant workers from Latin America.4

This paper presents studies of the migratory process in Japan. Two case studies are demonstrated to understand the causes and consequences of Japanese migration: a Japanese government sponsored emigration policy to the Dominican Republic in the 1950s, and a policy regarding the return migration movement from Latin America in the 1990s. The following questions are analyzed:

1. What political or economic factors compelled people to leave Japan in the 1950s or Latin America in the late 1980s? Was the role of the Japanese government pivotal in promoting both labor exportation and labor importation? What factors provided economic opportunities for Japanese emigrants in the Dominican Republic and Japanese descendents in Latin America?

2. What social structures emerged to regulate migration and settlement? Did transnational networks between Japan and Latin America promote economic migration into Japan during the period of Japan’s economic boom?

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4 Nikkeijin refers to Japanese emigrants and their descendants in Latin America. Most Nikkeijin working in Japan are second- and third-generation descendants of Japanese emigrants who migrated to Latin America after 1899. Between 1899 and 1941, a total number of 244,946 Japanese people migrated to Latin American countries, namely Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, Peru, and Bolivia. This migration was encouraged by the Japanese government, as a result of excessive population growth. Most emigrants worked on sugar and coffee plantations in the host countries, hoping to return to Japan. However, low earning in Latin America and the outbreak of World Wars forced most emigrants to settle down in Latin America. Yoko Sellek, “Nikkeijin: Phenomenon of Return Migration,” in Japan’s Minorities: the Illusion of Homogeneity, ed. Michael Weiner (London: Routledge, 1997), 187.
3. What was the effect of settlement on the social structure, culture, and national identity of Japan? How was the Japanese myth of “one nation, one race” challenged by the influx of foreign workers? What does it mean to be “Japanese”?

In order to address these questions, “push-pull” factors that create migration movements across borders and the role of governments in the regulation of migration must be identified. Furthermore, this paper will examine the effects of the Japanese emigrant policy in the 1950s and the Latin American emigrant movement in the 1990s.

The research presented here attempts to test the following hypotheses by closely examining the factors that contributed to the migration flows of the 1950s and the 1990s.

1. Japanese emigration to the Dominican Republic in the 1950s and ethnic Japanese immigration to Japan in the 1990s were caused by differences in earning levels and employment rates between the countries.

2. Income disparities between Japan and Latin America were not the only conditions to promote labor migration. Social factors, such as population growth and transnational social networks also affected migration decisions.

3. Governments took significant roles in the control of both the migration inflow and outflow.

By considering these hypotheses both in the specific case of Japanese emigration to the Dominican Republic and in the comparative case of Nikkeijin into Japanese society, this study attempts to weigh the importance of factors that create migration flows and the role of the governments in the promotion of migration.
This paper is structured as follows. Chapter Two evaluates three theories of international migration and discusses the application of the three theories to the contexts. Chapters Three and Four present a case study of the Japanese migratory process to the Dominican Republic. Chapter Three explores the diplomatic relationship between Japan and the Dominican Republic, paying particular attention to the attitudes of these countries toward the Japanese emigration plan to the Dominican Republic in the 1950s. This chapter also aims to detail the causes of the Japanese government sponsored migration to the Dominican Republic. Chapter Four is a presentation of the results of the Japanese emigration to the Dominican Republic. The presentation of the results is divided by issue: economic hardships, immigration law regarding the ownership of land in the Dominican Republic, and political instability. Chapters Five and Six are concerned mainly with the later stage of ethnic Japanese migratory process. Chapter Five provides the evolution of Japanese policy toward immigration, paying particular attention to the debate between Sakoku (closed country) advocates and proponents of Japanese internationalization. Chapter Six discusses the ideological significance of immigration in Japanese society. Finally, Chapter Seven offers prospects for Japan’s multinationalism in the 1990s.
CHAPTER II
THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

For the past fifty years, many scholars have developed a theoretical framework to explain the causes of international migration. Migration has been studied from many angles resulting in diverse interpretations of the phenomenon. Various levels of analysis within social science discipline, such as anthropology, demographics, economics, political science, and sociology are utilized for the study of international migration because each migratory movement is to a different extent determined by economic, social, political, and spatial factors. In this chapter, the initiation of the Japanese international migration puzzle is approached from three major theoretical perspectives: the push-pull models, the segmented labor market theory, and the world systems theory.  

1. Push-Pull Models

A classical migration theory of "push and pull factors" suggests that circumstances in the home country repel or push people to new places that exert a positive attraction or pull.\(^5\) Push factors represent the characteristics of labor-exporting countries upon migration, while pull factors demonstrate the influence of immigrant-receiving countries. For instance, push factors might be poverty, widespread unemployment, famine, or war at home. Factors that attract migrants include rapid economic development, political freedom, or political stability in the area to which the migration is moving in. People migrate because they try to escape the negative "push"

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factors of the home country and benefit from the positive "pull" factors of the host country.

The neoclassical migration theory focuses mainly on economic structures that determine the migratory decision. According to Borjas,

neoclassical theory assumes that individuals maximize utility. individuals 'search' for the country of residence that maximizes their well-being........ The search is constrained by the individual's financial resources, by the immigration regulations imposed by competing host countries and by the emigration regulations of the source country. In the immigration market the various pieces of information are exchanged and the various options are compared. In a sense, competing host countries make 'migration offers' from which individuals compare and choose. The information gathered in this marketplace leads many individuals to conclude that it is 'profitable' to remain in their birthplace........ Conversely, other individuals conclude that they are better off in some other country. The immigration market nonrandomly sorts these individuals across host countries.

The neoclassical approach is based on a notion of migrants as rational actors responding to economic disparities between the country of origin and the destination. Thus, people migrate from poorer to richer countries due to differences in wages and economic success.

This type of explanation can be applied to some extent to the cases of the Japanese migration to the Dominican Republic in the 1950s and the Nikkeijin migration to Japan in the 1990s. In the case of Japanese migration to the Dominican Republic, economic hardships brought on by wartime devastation in Japan, combined with economic and political stability in the Dominican Republic during the 1950s, can be seen as push-pull factors that determine the preconditions for migration. More specifically, the push conditions were low living standards and lack of economic opportunities in Japan, while pull attractors were availability of land and favorable immigration laws in

the Dominican Republic. In contrast, the push-pull factors contributing to the phenomena of Nikkeijin migration to Japan in the 1990s are due to the wage difference between Latin America countries and Japan, along with the emergence of a labor shortage in Japan and global economy. Economic crisis in Latin America during the 1990s impelled Nikkeijin to leave Latin America, and the labor shortage in Japan was pulling record numbers of Nikkeijin immigrants to fulfill the low-status and low-paying jobs that Japanese native workers had rejected.

The push-pull models, however, fail to explain the role of states in the recruiting of migration. The state and its policies often act as agents to promote immigration. For instance, the Japanese government encouraged the Japanese people to migrate to Latin America in the 1950s, providing the emigrants’ transportation expenses. In the particular case of Nikkeijin migration in the 1990s, the Japanese government has adopted a new immigration policy of allowing Nikkeijin to immigrate to Japan due to a dearth of labor shortage.

Additionally, this model fails to explain a continued migratory trend once the push and pull factors no longer exist. The “push-pull” models cannot explain why people continue to migrate even though pull factors have ceased. Furthermore, the reasons why migrants remain in the host country after the restriction of immigration cannot be analyzed through the push-pull models.

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7 Maimberg, 29.

8 The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a proposal for a five-year emigration plan in 1953 and a ten-year emigration plan in 1954. According to these proposals, seven new ships in the first year, another five ships in the third year, and another four ships would be built for emigrant transportations. The total budget for these plans was 49.74 billion yen. Hiroshi Nishida, “Caribbean Paradise” <http://www.dominika-imin-shien.net/>.
2. Segmented Labor Market Theory

Although the neoclassical theory focuses exclusively on economic disparities between countries of origin and destination, the segmented labor market theory examines international migration by focusing on the labor market's structure in an advanced industrial society. According to Piore (1979), international migration is caused by pull factors (an unavoidable need for foreign workers) in the host country rather than push factors (low wage) in the sending country. A labor demand for immigrant labor in host country is an important factor for international migration. The neoclassical "push-pull" theory posits that rising wages attract workers, but the segmented labor market theory argues that native workers do not take wage increases in low status jobs due to the problem of "structural inflation."\(^9\)

Wages not only reflect conditions of supply and demand; they also confer status and prestige, social qualities that inhere to the jobs to which the wages are attached. In general, people believe that wages should reflect social status, and they have rather rigid notions about the correlation between occupational status and pay.... A variety of informal social expectations... ensure that wages correspond to the hierarchies of prestige and status that people perceive and expect. If employers seek to attract workers for unskilled jobs at the bottom of an occupational hierarchy, they cannot simply raise wages. Raising wages at the bottom of the hierarchy would upset socially defined relationships between status and remuneration.... Thus, the cost to employers of raising wages, to attract low-level workers is typically more than the cost of these workers' wages alone; wages must be increased proportionately throughout the job hierarchy in order to keep them in line with social exceptions.\(^\text{11}\)

People work not only for income but also social status. The problem is that low status jobs are least desirable for native workers because they are considered to be at the bottom


\(^\text{10}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{11}\) Ibid., 28-9.
of the social hierarchy. The bottom of the job hierarchy, however, cannot be eliminated from the labor market because of social stratification. Jobs at the bottom of the labor market are often difficult to fill with native workers because of the rising job aspirations of new labor-market entrants with high education. As a result of labor shortage at the bottom of the job hierarchy, employers need to recruit foreign workers. Migrant workers do not seek social status in the host country but a higher wage because they often believe that they are temporary workers and are eventually going to return to their home country. Thus, the segmented labor market approach argues immigration is "demand-driven and structural."\textsuperscript{12}

In the late 1980s, sustained economic growth in Japan, combined with slow rates of labor force growth and high job aspirations among the young generation, created a shortage of labor at the unskilled levels. \textit{Nikkeijin} migrants were recruited by Japanese employers to fill the bottom positions in the job hierarchy. \textit{Nikkeijin} willingly had accepted their low status in Japan even thought they were white-collar workers and professionals in their home country.\textsuperscript{13} Their willingness to accept low social status in Japan was motivated by increasing their income and economic success.

The segmented labor market theory focuses on migration, which stems from the intrinsic labor demands of industrial society; however, cannot explain other dimensions of labor migration, including transnational social networks. Migrant networks often have been significant in perpetuating international migration. Once pioneer migrants have

\textsuperscript{12} Massey, 178.

established at the destination, they can supply valuable information and assistance to future migrants in the home country.\textsuperscript{14} Migrant networks greatly reduce the risks related to migration and facilitate additional migration. Thus, not only is there the demand for foreign workers in industrial society but transnational migrant networks to help migratory movements across borders. For instance, drawing on social ties to relatives and friends who had already migrated to Japan, \textit{Nikkeijin} in Latin America gained information about the Japanese job market and accessed networks to get resources.

3. **World Systems Theory**

The world systems theory focuses on the impact of global economic, political, and social structures that determine the migratory decision.\textsuperscript{15} Migratory movements occur due to prior links between sending and host countries based on political influence, trade, or cultural ties. According to the world systems theory of labor migration, migration has to be analyzed in relation to the economic processes of modern capitalism.\textsuperscript{16} The system is composed of core regions and peripheries. Core regions are economically and politically dominant, while peripheries are dependent on the core regions. Semi-peripheries adopt a mixture of social and economic characteristics from both the core and the periphery.\textsuperscript{17} The theory emphasizes that it is difficult to understand the nation-state in isolation because internal economic processes are shaped by its position in the world system.\textsuperscript{18} In this view, labor migration is a consequence of penetration of the economic

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\textsuperscript{14} Malmberg, 179.

\textsuperscript{15} World systems theory is influenced by the ideas of Marx and Lenin.


\textsuperscript{17} Massey, 40-1.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
processes of capitalism into the semi-peripheries and peripheries. Migration decision is not based on an individual rational economic calculation, but international migration is due to “an extension of the world-system of capital.”

The penetration of capitalist economic relations into non-capitalist or precapitalist societies creates a mobile population that is prone to migrate. Driven by a desire for higher profits and greater wealth, owners and managers of capitalist firms in core countries enter poorer nations on the periphery of the world economy in search of land, raw materials, labors, and consumer markets.... Today it is made possible by neocolonial governments and multinational firms that perpetuate the power of national elites who either participate in the world economy as capitalist themselves, or offer their nation's resources to global firms on acceptable terms.

In the world systems theory, labor migration can be analyzed on a transnational level. The core country searches for new national resources and new low-cost labor from the peripheral country. In this perspective, the core capitalist country colonizes overseas areas in order to stimulate the economic exchange between the core country and the peripheral country. In this process, large numbers of people are displaced from the peripheral country to the core country to fulfill the shortage of unskilled labor.

In the case of Nikkijin migration to Japan in the 1990s, Tokyo and Osaka became global cities with a concentration of professional services and a highly educated workforce. At the same time, the services of the unskilled sector were not fulfilled by Japanese workers. This situation created a high demand for immigrants from the peripheral country to fulfill the shortage of unskilled labor, and the Japanese government allowed Nikkeijin workers from Latin America to enter Japan. Japan’s strong economy over Latin America’s weak economy created a global labor migration.

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20 Massey, 36-7.
The world systems theory, however, fails to recognize the importance of transnational ethnic networks in promoting international movement. For instance, labor migration from Latin America to Japan is perpetuated by bureaucrat relations carried out through institutional intermediaries. The Japanese government granted legal rights to *Nikkeijin* in 1990 because of mainly shared ethnicity. Ethnic connection is, thus, an important factor to explain international migration.

A theoretical approach to immigration that is confined to a single social scientific domain does not sufficiently come to term with the complexities of the reality. Theories also change to reflect new political, social, and economic realities. International migration is related to economic, political, and cultural linkages being formed between different countries. Thus, the migratory process must to be understood in its totality as a complex of economic and social interactions with a wide range of institutional structures and informal networks in both home and host countries.
CHAPTER III

JAPANESE EMIGRATION TO LATIN AMERICA IN THE 1950s: A CASE STUDY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

In the mid-1950s, Japan had not completely recovered from wartime devastation and faced a continuous shortage of domestic food and natural resources. An unprecedented influx of Japanese soldiers and foreign settlers from Taiwan and China also aggravated the domestic job shortage and food supply. The Japanese government responded to these problems of unemployment and poverty by sending the Japanese people to Latin American countries, which had a vast expanse of farmland and resources. The first postwar overseas migration of Japanese left for Brazil in 1952, Paraguay in 1954, Argentina in 1955, the Dominican Republic in 1956, and Bolivia in 1957. This chapter particularly focuses on the Japanese government’s emigration policy to the Dominican Republic.

1. Historical Background of Japanese Emigration, 1868-1962

The overseas migration of Japanese began in 1868 when Japan opened its door to the rest of the world.\(^{21}\) As government policies in both the host and home countries shifted from time to time, recruitment patterns of migration varied. The first phase of Japanese emigration, the age of private sponsored programs, lasted from 1868 to 1884.\(^{22}\) Japanese contract labor migration was arranged by private emigration companies and moved to meet relative labor shortages on the plantations of host countries. For instance,

\[^{21}\text{From 1638 to 1868, the Tokugawa government prohibited the Japanese people to go abroad under the “seclusion policy.” During the period of seclusion, Japan kept its national isolation and formed its original culture and value system, which has still influenced on Japan’s ethnic homogeneity. For the history see Maurice R. Davie, World Immigration with Special Reference to the United States (New York: Macmillan Company, 1939): 318-358.}\]

\[^{22}\text{Jon Goss and Bruce Lindquist, “Placing Movers: An Overview of the Asian-Pacific Migration System,” The Contemporary Pacific 12, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 389-90.}\]
Japan's first international migration was organized by an American businessman Euguen M. Van Reed and was sent to Hawaii and Guam for sugar plantations.\textsuperscript{23} Unfortunately, the early emigrants were forced to endure unfair treatment and cruel living conditions. The Meiji government prohibited emigration temporarily due to the slave-like treatment of the first Japanese emigrants.\textsuperscript{24}

The second phase, from 1885 to 1908, was the period of government-sponsored workers to the territory of Hawaii, the United States, and Canada.\textsuperscript{25} In 1885, the Japanese government ratified a labor agreement with Hawaiian sugar plantation owners.\textsuperscript{26} Under the program, approximately 29,000 Japanese people worked on sugar plantations in Hawaii between 1885 and 1904.\textsuperscript{27} During the period of 1885 to 1908, a total of 539,391 Japanese people migrated abroad, with roughly half settling in either the United States or Canada.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{23}<http://www.janm.org/iarp/english/overview.htm>.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{26} In 1893, the Colonization Society was organized by Japanese government officials, politicians, and intellectuals. They argued that, like other Western countries, the Meiji government would need to acquire more territories in order to obtain resources. In 1897, the former Foreign Minister Takeaki Enomoto established agricultural colony in Chiapas, Mexico, but this colony was not successful. However, significantly, this event became a turning point in the Japanese emigration history. The Japanese people began to emigrate to South American countries since 1899. More details see Toshihiko Konno and Yukiharu Takahashi, *Dominica Imin wa Hamin datta* (Desertion of Japanese Emigrants in the Dominican Republic) (Tokyo: Akaishi, 1993), 224-249.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{28} In 1908, anti-Japanese agitation in the United States led Japan to conclude Gentlemen’s Agreement, which promised that Japan would not issue passports for the Japanese labors to the United State. Japan also concluded the Hayashi-Lemieux Agreement with Canada for the same propose. The Exclusionary Immigration Act of 1924 in the United States terminated Japanese entry into the United States, diverting immense movements of Japanese migrants to South America. Davie, 321.
The third period, from 1908 to 1941, can be characterized as the era of Japanese emigration to South American countries, particularly Peru and Brazil.\textsuperscript{29} The Japanese government promoted a state policy of emigration to South America in order to ease excessive population growth and the high rate of unemployment during the economic hardship following World War I (1914-1918) and the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923. The government created a highly rationalized management system, mainly through the creation of an Overseas Development Company, *Kaigai Kogyo Kabushiki Kaisha*, providing the emigrants' transportation expenses as well as public lectures regarding safety and the value of emigration.\textsuperscript{30} Furthermore, the government provided orientation prior to departure and took an active role in the emigrants' lives in the host countries for the purpose of promoting the assimilation and permanent settlement of the emigrants.\textsuperscript{31}

For instance, Japanese officials in Tokyo

adopted a strategy of avoiding friction with the local populace...
authorities in Japan instructed settlers not to create Buddhist or Shinto institutions...to become 'nominal Christian' [and]...to wear Western clothing.\textsuperscript{32}

The Japanese government's involvement in the emigrant movements resulted in an increase in Japanese emigration to South American countries from 1908 to 1941. A total

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\textsuperscript{29} <http://www.janm.org/inrp/english/overview.htm>

\textsuperscript{30} The Japanese government granted 17,500 yen for an annual financial assistance to the Overseas Develop Company and provided the emigrants' transportation expenses as well as 50 yen per emigrant. Total government financial assistance for the emigrants was 16,364,000 yen between 1923 and 1933. I. James Tiger, "Japanese Immigration into Latin America: A Survey," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 23, no.4 (1981): 257-482; quoted in Betsy T. Brody, "Opening the Door?: Immigration, Ethnicity, and Globalization in Japan" (Ph.D. diss., Notre Dame University, 2000), 69.

\textsuperscript{31} Brody, 69.

number of 244,946 Japanese people migrated to Latin America countries between 1899 and 1941.\textsuperscript{33}

Meanwhile the Japanese government began to acquire new territories in Asia. Like Western countries, Japanese government officials strongly believed in the necessity for overseas development of Japanese colonies to obtain larger markets and exploit resources in foreign lands. The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War (1894) and Russo-Japanese War (1904) provided Japan with an opportunity to assert its desire to occupy territories in Asia.\textsuperscript{34} Imperial Japan acquired colonial territories, such as Taiwan in 1905, Korea in 1910, and Manchuria in 1931. As a result of the acquisition of territories in Asia, mass Japanese migration movements into these regions increased from 814,000 in 1929 to 1.6 million in 1937.\textsuperscript{35} In the mid-1930s, the Japanese government began to subsidize the management of overseas migration to Manchuria and the South Seas, particularly to Philippines. Impoverished farm families from Central and Northern Japan were sent to Manchuria by the Japanese government until the end of World War II.\textsuperscript{36}

After World War II, the Allied Powers prohibited Japanese emigration until the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951 that granted Japanese independence. In 1952, the Japanese government made a special arrangement with the Brazilian government to send Japanese people to Brazil for the purpose of agricultural development. The government

\textsuperscript{33} Sellek, 187.

\textsuperscript{34} <http://www.janm.org/inrp/english/overview.htm>.


\textsuperscript{36} <http://www.janm.org/inrp/english/overview.htm>.
also contacted Paraguay in 1954, Argentina in 1955, the Dominican Republic in 1956, and Bolivia in 1957. Emigration of the Japanese was again sponsored by the Japanese government, who assumed an active role in the selection of emigrant candidates and their sponsorship abroad. Between 1952 and 1963, the Japanese government provided the emigrants’ transportation expenses and public lectures encouraging emigration as well as permanent settlement in Latin American countries. By the mid-1960s, due to the growth of the Japanese economy and demand for domestic labor, emigration from Japan declined, and the mass of Japanese emigration into the South continent was eventually over.

2. Starting Points

Dominican president Rafael Trujillo (1930-1961) introduced the initial proposal for the Japanese migration plan to the Dominican Republic in 1954. On October 1954, Trujillo had the first official meeting with Japanese government officials regarding Japanese migration policy to the Dominican Republic. Three months later, the Ministry of Agriculture in the Dominican Republic sent its own proposal for Japanese immigration to the Japanese embassy in Santo Domingo. The Japanese government responded to the request, sending the first official mission to investigate the conditions of farmland as well as economic and political conditions of Dominican Republic. In the following year, other

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37 Konno, 15.

38 The Dominican Republic has a turbulent history, including many years of dictatorship as well as the U.S. marine’s controls. The Dominican Republic is located on Hispaniola Island in the Caribbean Sea. The island is comprised of the Republic of Haiti to the West and the Dominican Republic to the East. Haiti belonged to France until 1804. The Dominican Republic was a part of the Spanish colonies until 1822 and then under Haitian rule from 1822 to 1844. In 1861, the Dominicans established the Dominican Republic as an independent state. Ongoing rebellions, economic difficulties, and the threat of European as well as Haitian intervention led the U.S. marine core occupation from 1916 to 1924. The U.S. exerted fiscal control until 1941. In 1930, an army commander, Rafael Trujillo, established absolute control over politics until his death in 1961. See Robert D. Crassweller, Trujillo: The Life and Times of a Caribbean Dictator (New York: Macmillan company, 1996), 11-130.
agriculture specialists from the Japanese government went to the Dominican Republic to re-examine the conditions of farmland. After this research was completed, the Japanese government submitted a request form to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Dominican Republic, asking for more irrigation facilities and access roads to the farms for the new Japanese migrants. In addition, the Japanese government informed the Dominican Republic that about twenty Japanese farmer’s families would arrive in the Dominican Republic by March 1956. The Dominican Republic, however, did not respond clearly to the Japanese government request.

A Japanese government official from the embassy in Santo Domingo visited the Ministry of Agriculture and urged the Dominican government to accept the Japanese migrants. On February 10, 1956 the Dominican Immigration Propulsion Committee finally concluded to postpone the Japanese emigration plan due to insufficient preparation of irrigation.

The Japanese government, however, did not willingly accept the decision made by the Dominican Immigration Propulsion Committee because the Japanese government had already selected Japanese emigrants. The Japanese government was disappointed with the Dominican Committee’s decision and requested Dominican president Rafael Trujillo to allow the entry of Japanese emigrants. Trujillo, then, ordered the Dominican

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39 Konno, 23.


42 Ibid.

43 Konno, 23.
government to accept the Japanese immigrants on a trial basis. The Dominican
government, however, rejected the Japanese request of making more irrigation facilities
for the new Japanese emigrants. On March 27, 1956, the Japanese ambassador and the
Minister of Agriculture in the Dominican Republic agreed with the Japanese migration
plan without any consensus regarding sufficient conditions for the new Japanese
emigrants. On April 24, 1956, the two countries finally exchanged official documents
regarding the Japanese emigration plan to the Dominican Republic. According to the
verbal note, the following agreements were made:

A. The Dominican government will accept the Japanese emigrants
   and provide the maximum 18 hectares of farmland per family.

B. These emigrants are able to cultivate more land if their skills for
   farming are proved.

C. The Dominican Republic will provide enough facilities such as
   houses and subside to the emigrants until these emigrants are able
   to make their own.

D. Taxation for the farmland of the Japanese emigrants is excluded.
   The Japanese emigrants must follow the rules of the Dominican
   Republic. Furthermore, the new emigrants cultivate crops that the
   Ministry of Agriculture in the Dominican Republic suggests.\footnote{http://www.dominika-imin-shien.net/}.

On July 29, 1956, the first group of twenty-eight families (189 people) arrived in
the Dominican Republic. They were given a warm reception by the Dominican people
and a welcome celebration under the names of Trujillo and Emperor Hirohito.\footnote{“Trasatlantico Japones Llegara a CT,” \textit{La Nacion} (Dominican Republic), July 26, 1956, sec 3.} The
Japanese government’s desire to send Japanese to the Dominican Republic can be
understood from a letter, in which the Ministry of Foreign Affair Mamoru Shigematsu
wrote to Trujillo:
The realization of the Japanese emigration program to the Dominican Republic was a result of the sympathy that Dr. Trujillo demonstrated. He [Shigematsu Mamoru] was glad to send his people to the Dominican Republic and hoped that the relationship between Japan and the Dominican Republic would grow closer through the emigrants who just arrived even though the distance between these two countries was great.\(^\text{46}\)

Between July 1956 and September 1959, the Japanese government sent 249 elite Japanese families (1,319 people) to the Dominican Republic under a Japanese government sponsored program.

3. **Theory and Reality in the Initiation of Japanese Migration to the Dominican Republic**

   **A. Push-Pull Models**

   In broad terms, contemporary migration is primarily motivated by political or economic conditions in one’s home country.\(^\text{47}\) Political, economical, or social instability in the home country forces people to seek a new place. Their destination is usually determined by immigration laws and the current economic and political situation of the host country. The causes of migration can be classified in terms of “push and pull factors.”\(^\text{48}\) During the postwar era of Japanese mass migration, the key push factors were low living standards, overpopulation, a high unemployment rate, and lack of farmland in Japan. These push forces were caused by a combination of Japanese economic and

\(^{46}\) Ibid.


\(^{48}\) A classical migration theory of “push and pull factors” suggests that circumstances in the home country repel people out of their home country to the new places that exert a positive attraction. Push factors represents the characteristics of labor-exporting countries upon migration. On the other hand, pull factors demonstrates the influence of immigrant-receiving countries’ characteristics. Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (New York: Guilford Press, 1993), 19.
political instabilities affected by wartime devastation. On the other hand, the Dominican Republic’s strong economic presence and relative political unity were main pull factors that exerted a positive attraction to the Japanese policy markers of the 1950s emigration plan.

In the neoclassical economic perspective, international migration is caused by economic disparities between countries of origin and destination. People migrate because they expect to obtain a greater net gain income. An immigrant sending nation is often characterized by a limited supply of capital, abundant reserves of labor, and low rates of employment. The imbalance between labor and demand in the home country emerges as a significant factor explaining the reasons of departure for migrants.

In the early 1950s, the conditions of the Japanese economy did not change rapidly enough to stimulate full domestic employment. The low rates of employment reflected the combined effects of several key factors. First, it was very difficult to reconstruct the Japanese economy rapidly because Japan had been completely destroyed by over eighteen years of war. For instances, major cities including Hiroshima and Nagasaki were largely burned out. About forty percent of Japan’s capital stock was destroyed, and Japan’s GDP (Gross Domestic Product) was reduced to one-third of its prewar level. During the occupational period (1945-1952) Japan was eager to reconstruct its economy with the aid of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP). In 1949, the Dodge line program was introduced for the purpose of controlling inflation, instead it

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49 Massey, 8.

50 Athokorala, 29.
plunged Japan into a severe depression.\textsuperscript{51} The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, however, contributed to Japan's economic recovery through supplying military materials to U.S. forces. By the end of 1951 industrial production had recovered to prewar levels, but there was no clear sign of Japan's post-war growth potential until the mid 1950s.\textsuperscript{52}

The second reason for abundant reserves of labor was a massive reverse migration from former colonial territories. Massive population movement to Japan accelerated an already high rate of unemployment. A total of 6,249,000 Japanese soldiers and emigrants returned to Japan by 1950.\textsuperscript{53} From 1945 to 1950 Japan experienced a sharp increase in population. The population grew from 72.1 million in 1945 to 83.2 million in 1950.\textsuperscript{54} This represented a 3 percent annual rate of increase, and half of the total increase was from net migration.\textsuperscript{55} As a result of the unprecedented levels of reverse migration, Japan suddenly began to suffer from overcrowding and overpopulation.

Given [to a] sluggish recovery, the war-devastated urban industry could not absorb the increased labour force. Those who returned either swelled the ranks of the unemployed (or underemployed) in the informal urban economy, or they provisionally settled in rural areas. By the early 1950s, almost half of the labour force was in the primary sector, up from about 35 per cent in the immediate pre-war period. Only about 48 per cent of the total labour forces were employed as wage earners and salaried employees, compared to over 70 per cent in the major European countries at the time. The rate of open unemployment increased from 1.5 per cent to over 2.5 per cent in the mid 1950s.\textsuperscript{56}


\textsuperscript{52} Rhoads Murphey, \textit{East Asia: A New History}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (New York: Longman, 2001), 413.


\textsuperscript{54} Athokorala, 29

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
When a large surplus of population, especially eligible workers, exists without enough work, individual reasons, such as the need to insure a minimum living standard and the desire for a better life, urge people to move from one place to another. Indeed, many Japanese people tried to move from the countryside to the city to seek jobs during the 1950s.

Unlike Japan, the economic situation in the Dominican Republic in the 1950s was relatively well functioning. An army commander, Rafael Trujillo, established absolute political control and promoted economic development through the establishment of state monopolies over major enterprises. While his family and a small number of his close friends gained enormous wealth, Trujillo expanded his authority over all the power structures in the Dominican Republic.

There are several pull factors that exerted a positive attraction on Japanese policy makers of the 1950s Japanese emigration plan. These include the Dominican Republic's strong economic presence and the relative political unity. During the period between 1939 and 1950, the Dominican Republic was able to accumulate economic resources through high export prices as a result of World War II and the postwar economic boom.57 Trujillo established import economic institutions, such as the Central Bank, the Commercial Bank, and Agricultural Credit Bank. Furthermore, a new local currency was introduced in 1947 after the Dominican Republic paid off all foreign debt.58 These

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58 Previously, the U.S. dollar was the official currency until 1947. The new currency, the Dominican peso (SRD), had par value with the U.S. dollar. Trujillo redeemed Customs Offices, which were controlled by the U.S. payment of the external debts. Haze, 30.
economic developments were also complemented by public works projects and large industrial investments in cement, vegetable oil, and fibers. The Gross National Product of the Dominican Republic suggests a great amount of growth followed by high levels of public as well as private investment in import substitution fields (see tables 1 and 2). During its peak growth period, from 1950 to 1958, the economy expanded at a rate of 6 percent a year, one of the highest growth rates in the world at the time.\textsuperscript{59} Trujillo's government invested heavily in the economic infrastructure, and economic improvement was higher than ever in Dominican history during the era of Trujillo.

For more than three decades, Trujillo aimed to direct his personal objectives, which included self-enrichment. He expanded his wealth in the 1950s despite a depressed international market caused by World War II. He pillaged land from peasants and built his personal fiefdom.\textsuperscript{60} By the time of his assassination in 1961, Trujillo and a small group of his friends possessed more than 600,000 hectares of improved land as well as 60 percent of the nation's tobacco, sugar, cement, and shipping assets, including eighty-seven enterprises.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{60} Crassweller, 145-9.

\textsuperscript{61} Haza, 29.
TABLE 1

Gross National Product of the Dominican Republic, 1950-70
Constant Prices (1962)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>G.N.P (Millions RD$)</th>
<th>Per Capita (RD$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>459.4</td>
<td>215.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>526.9</td>
<td>237.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>541.6</td>
<td>235.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>538.7</td>
<td>226.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>583.4</td>
<td>236.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>599.0</td>
<td>234.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>669.9</td>
<td>253.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>738.8</td>
<td>269.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>753.3</td>
<td>265.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>729.7</td>
<td>248.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>780.9</td>
<td>256.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>738.9</td>
<td>234.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>866.0</td>
<td>265.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>928.9</td>
<td>275.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>989.3</td>
<td>282.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>842.1</td>
<td>232.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>953.3</td>
<td>253.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>978.5</td>
<td>251.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1,030.8</td>
<td>255.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>1,093.8</td>
<td>262.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1,155.5</td>
<td>267.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: The Dominican peso ($RD$) had par value with the US dollar.
TABLE 2
Growth Rates of Main Economic Indices in the Dominican Republic, 1950-1970
(Constant Prices of 1962)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Indexes</th>
<th>Periods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross National</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross Internal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Investment</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Investment</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Investment</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Consumption</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The factors responsible for instigating Japanese emigration to the Dominican Republic were economic trends, unemployment, and differentiation in economic development between Japan and the Dominican Republic. In Japan, a high rate of unemployment driven by wartime devastation made it difficult for people to earn a secure livelihood. On the other hand, the economy of the Dominican Republic was relatively stable during the era of Trujillo. The prospect of better economic opportunities in the Dominican Republic motivated many Japanese to move to the Dominican Republic in the 1950s.
Although migration is clearly related to differences in employment between sending and receiving societies, economic disparities alone are not enough to explain international migration. Social factors also are important roles to regulate international migration movement. In Japan, an important movement of emigrants was of those from the countryside due to changes in the landholding system by the SCAP-directed reform of 1945. The United State embraced economic democratization through a land reform program, which allowed tenant farmers to purchase the land they farmed at low prices.\textsuperscript{62} This reform broke up the surviving traces of Tokugawa feudalism (1603-1868). On the other hand, those who lost or did not purchase land in rural areas had to find a new way to survive. In addition, traditional systems of land tenure based on inheritance had influenced some migrants' decision-making process. In the traditional Japanese family system, the first son usually received the land by inheritance, but the other sons or daughters were not entitled to receive the family land. Many farm families depended on wages earned by family workers, but with a low rate of employment combined with excessive population growth threatened a loss of income. Thus, many people in the countryside unwillingly had to leave their hometown to seek better living conditions.

The Dominican Republic became a popular destination for Japanese farmers because the government promised to provide 18 hectares of farmland to each family. The Japanese government posted the following advertisement in newspapers. According to \textit{Nihon Keizai Shinbun} on December 11, 1954:

\begin{quote}
Eighteen hectares of farmland in the Dominican Republic will be yours. The land is suitable for farming. The Dominican Republic is a Caribbean paradise and an island of dreams. The Dominican Republic is willing to accept 4,000 or 5,000 Japanese families. In the future, 20,000 or 25,000
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{62} Murphey, 411.
Japanese emigrants will be able to settle down in the Dominican Republic. These emigrants will have equal rights to the Dominicans. Housing is available. The Dominican Republic is a wealthy country: export is twice as much as import; public roads have been developed; and there will be industrial cities.\textsuperscript{63}

The attraction of free land caused desertion of their home in favor of the Dominican Republic because they did not have their own land to make a living.

Another Japanese newspaper \textit{Mainichi Shinbun} on August 30, 1956 described:

in the Dominican Republic, the Japanese emigrants live in affluence, and women do not need to engage in working at the farm.... Children have gained weight. Stabilization of livelihood...[and] development of rice field...enable the Japanese farmers to work for only eight hours a day.... Livelihood in the Dominican Republic is the best life that the farmers can ever have. We [the Japanese emigrants] do not want to go back to Japan because the Dominican Republic is much better than Japan.\textsuperscript{64}

Japanese emigrants' life in the Dominican Republic was described as an abundant living, which attracted many Japanese people. This result influenced more Japanese farmers' decision to settle down in the Dominican Republic in the late 1950s.

\textbf{B. New Theoretical Perspectives}

Theory must take beyond the analysis of simple economic and social disparities between Japan and the Dominican Republic. The push-pull factors, which account for trends of international migration, are not sufficient to explain Japanese migrant outflows. There is a more important force operating to influence the volume of international migration. The state and its policies are central to explaining international migration.


\textsuperscript{64} Konno, 62.
Japan entered the 1950s with a new government sponsored policy, which Japanese policy-makers specializing in the study of migration policy described as one of the best solutions for the economic difficulties driven by postwar devastation. In 1958, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs proposed the five-year emigration plan, which included the outflow of one hundred thousand Japanese between 1959 and 1963.\textsuperscript{65} Massive population movement from Japan to abroad was encouraged by the Japanese government, in response to the dearth of domestic employment opportunities and excessive population growth. At the same time, the Japanese government advocated emigration as "a safety valve for domestic labour-market pressure."\textsuperscript{66} The Japanese government was eager to send Japanese people to Latin American countries to deal with an overwhelming population problem and high unemployment rate in Japan. Moreover, Japan had lost overseas food supplies and natural resources due to loss of Japanese colonies in Asia. Unlike the Dominican Republic, these factors led Japanese policy makers to jettison Japanese citizens abroad to places where living conditions were much greater. Deep Japanese economic devastation is illustrated as follows:

In 1951, per capita GNP [Gross National Product] in Japan (an artificial measure of living standards following destruction during the war) was estimated to be very low, below that of Brazil, Malaysia, Chile, and other less developed countries. Reconstruction from the devastation of the Second World War, in terms of average output and living standards, was not achieved until the mid-1950s. At the end of the occupation, and for some years to come, both Japanese economist and Western experts were rather gloomy about the future. Even growth rates of around 5 per cent, predicted by the early Japanese development plans, were often considered optimistic by many critics.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 16.

\textsuperscript{66} Athokorala, 35.

\textsuperscript{67} Athukorala, 29.
The Japanese government encouraged overseas settlement for solving the problem of population growth, resulting from the lack of national resources. In fact, "Japan had no 'new World' to absorb its population, no relief from other countries or international organizations. Post-War Japan began with a smaller territory and a swollen population." The government required a significant number of Japanese to leave the country for the purpose of domestic labor-market adjustment. Thus, Japanese government officially promoted overseas migration in the 1950s.

Japanese emigration to Latin America in the 1950s was carefully monitored by the Japanese government. The government took a significant role in finding and screening highly qualified applicants. The recruitment was limited to the countryside from which the successful agricultural farmers came. The intention of limiting the recruiting area was not only to provide the employment opportunities to farmers who did not have land but also to avoid any regional tensions among the work force. Same region and similar livelihoods meant fewer problems with regional conflicts in the Dominican Republic. In addition, the government preferred reliable farm family who were willingly to adopt and assimilate the Dominican society. Single persons were not selected as emigrants, but married couples with children were chosen by the Japanese.

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69 The total budget for the emigration plans to Latin America was $49.74 billion yen. Hiroshi Nishida, “Caribbean Paradise” <http://www.dominika-imin-shien.net/>.

70 Ibid.
government because family was considered a work unit that could help each family member if he or she needed.\textsuperscript{71}

The Japanese government also provided significant support for the Japanese emigrants. The emigrants received basic training programs for Spanish language, the Dominican culture, and agricultural education prior to their departure.\textsuperscript{72} In addition, the Japanese government promised financial benefits of migration. For instance, the government agreed to provide a 6,480-yen monthly per person to Japanese emigrants in the Dominican Republic until they could make their own living.\textsuperscript{73} Average monthly income for a first year teacher in 1955 was approximately 8,000 yen in Japan, while a first year banker earned 5,600 yen per a month. Such financial assistance for Japanese emigrants and the relatively stable economic condition in the Dominican Republic increased Japanese desire to move the Dominican Republic.

The diplomatic agreement with the Dominican Republic in 1956 allowed the Japanese government to send its citizens for the purpose of controlling its excessive population growth. On the Dominican side, it is recognized that the Dominican policy toward the Japanese immigration plan was primarily motivated by Dominican land reform interests.\textsuperscript{74} The Dominican president Trujillo was eager to seek a solution to the deserted area along the border with the Republic of Haiti (see map 1). Trujillo was a prominently anti-Haiti and often massacred illegal Haitian workers in the Dominican

\textsuperscript{71}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{73} The Japanese government promised to provide RD $ 60 cent (U.S. $ 60 cent) per a day to each emigrant. Takatashi, 26.

\textsuperscript{74} Komno, 17.
Republic. The border area often faced the problem of military disputes between the two countries, and many Dominican people were not willing to live next to the border area. In order to develop the area along the border with Haiti, Trujillo introduced the idea of an immigration plan in which immigrants were allowed to cultivate the land in the area. He believed that a presence near the border was vital for the defense of the country. Since the Dominican people did not wish to move to such an area, Trujillo hoped that foreign people, other than Haitians, would move there to cultivate crops. In 1953, Trujillo invited the first emigrants from Spain and provided farmland near the border area; however, the Spanish immigrants proved to be insufficiently submissive to bad working conditions and left the country. When Trujillo looked for another immigrant candidate, American Vice President Nixon's admiration of Japanese immigrants "as hard workers in the South American countries" influenced Trujillo to prepare a Japanese migration plan.

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75 Trujillo ordered slaughtered more than 20,000 illegal Haitians living in the Dominican Republic in retaliation for the exclusion of the Trujillo's most valued covert agents in the Republic Haiti in October 1937. News of this incident was reached to the administration of the United State President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Secretary of State Cordell Hull mediated negotiations for a settlement. Trujillo finally agreed with the negotiations. Even though the image of Trujillo internationally was damaged, it did not lead Trujillo' regime out. See Robert D. Cassweller, Trujillo: The Life and Times of a Caribbean Dictator (New York: Macmillan company, 1996), 149-64


77 These Japanese people migrated to Brazil before the Second World War. Konno, 18.
Map 1. Major Japanese migration in the Dominican Republic, 1956-1959

Trujillo’s attitude toward the Japanese migration plan was also founded on the belief that the white race was superior to the black race. Trujillo wanted to make the Dominican people much whiter because he believed that the white race was intelligent and intellectual. Trujillo was interested in the “substitution of ‘white’ for ‘black’ labor,” including the importation of skilled non-black people. Trujillo saw the Japanese as the “whites of Asia” who were hard-working, docile, highly-skilled, and able to contribute to the prosperity of Dominican farmland. Thus, Trujillo decided to invite Japanese people to the Dominican Republic as a part of the Dominican re-construction of both land and race.

The Japanese emigration program was seen as a solution to develop the desert area. Rafael Trujillo promoted immigration into the country for the purpose of agricultural development, which would contribute to its national prosperity. The Japanese emigrants moved to the Dominican Republic to take advantage of demand for high skilled labor in agricultural sector, while the Dominican Republic also benefited its national development from the Japanese emigration.

From the view of the Japanese emigrants, the government sponsored emigration plan was seen as a secure opportunity because the Japanese government had already conducted field research, which concluded that the land in the Dominican Republic was suitable for Japanese farmers. According to the sociological theory of motivation for studies of migration, “the decision to move may be made after due consideration of all

78 Dr. T. Blanchard of the Dominican Republic, interview by author, February 20, 2001, Santo Domingo, tape recording, Dominican Republic.

79 In 1894, the special immigration envoy Sho Nemoto arrived in Brazil and promoted an idea that Japanese immigrants were the “white of Asia.” Daniel Touro Linger, No One Home: Brazilian Selves Remade in Japan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 20.

80 Ibid.
relevant information, rationally calculated to maximize net advantage, including both material and symbolic rewards.⁸¹ The Japanese people decided to migrate to the Dominican Republic because they tried to maximize their individual quality of life in the Dominican Republic where there was a vast amount of farmland and better political and economic situations. More importantly, future financial support from the Japanese government contributed to the decision-making process. Thus, the institutional network between Japan and the Dominican Republic operated to facilitate the movement of people.

CHAPTER IV


In the early 1960s, the mass migration movement began to decline, and the Japanese government eventually terminated the Japanese emigration program. The decrease of Japanese migration to the Dominican Republic was mainly a reverse situation of Japan’s economic recovery and political stability. Ironically, after the assassination of Trujillo (May 26, 1961) the Japanese emigrants, who were supposed to settle down permanently in the Dominican Republic, had to request re-settlement from the Japanese government in the early 1960s. In September 1961, the Japanese government decided to bring some of the emigrants back to Japan. A total of 133 families returned to Japan with the aid of the Japanese government. About 70 families migrated to other countries in Latin America, and only 50 families decided to stay in the Dominican Republic.82

1. Why Did Some Japanese Emigrants Decide to Leave the Dominican Republic?

4. Economic Hardships in the Dominican Republic

According to the neoclassical economic model, the economic disparity between countries causes workers from a labor-surplus country to move to labor-scarce country.83 In the case of the Japanese emigration program in the 1950s, the Japanese farmers decided to move to the Dominican Republic where they could be more productive given their skills. Before they migrated to the Dominican Republic, however, they had to undertake certain investments that included the cost of traveling, the effort involved in

82 Konno, 89.
83 Massey, 8.
learning a new language (Spanish) and the difficult experiences in adapting to a new society. The governments of both Japan and the Dominican Republic promised to support such investments for the Japanese emigrants economically as well as socially. Thus, the Japanese farm families chose to migrate to the Dominican Republic based on a cost-benefit calculation, which led them to expect a discounted net return from migration.

Reality, however, differed from what the Japanese emigrants had expected. Upon entry to the Dominican Republic, the Japanese emigrants found limited productivity. Their initial earnings were almost nothing for the first year because most of the farmland was not suitable for farming. The emigrants were unable to cultivate crops on the land provided by the Dominican government because the land was very dry and was mostly covered by rocks. Water was very scarce, and there were no roads available in these areas. The Japanese government sent agricultural specialists to research the quality of the land in the Dominican Republic twice before the realization of the Japanese emigration plan. The Japanese agricultural specialists reported that the land was acceptable to produce sufficient crops. In contrast, a Japanese government official who visited the Japanese settlers in the Dominican Republic stated:

If I were working at the Japanese consulate in the Dominican Republic before the realization of the Japanese emigration plan, I would not have approved to send my own people to the wasteland where even monkeys would not willingly live.

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84 Malumberg, 28.


86 Takahashi, 204.

87 Ibid.
The Japanese emigrants settled down in desert land without irrigation. They did not give up trying to make a living; however, it was almost impossible for them to survive there.

Mitsu Sasaki remembers her life in the Dominican Republic those days:

My family received 60 tareas [1 tarea = 0.06 hectare] of farmland, but only 15 of them were suitable for cultivation. Everyday, I removed rocks from my land. The farm equipment and seeds, which I brought from Japan, were useless here. Even thought I tried to remove all rocks from my land, every time it rained the ground was washed, and more rocks would come up.... When I did not have any money, the Dominican store provided free food to us. I sold all my belongings such as a sewing machine and clothes for food.\(^99\)

The crops were very small, and all money that the emigrants brought from Japan was used for food within a short period of time. In order to survive in the wasteland, younger children also had to take jobs rather than attended schools.\(^90\)

The Japanese settlers protested to the Japanese government because the land they received was useless, but official responses were as following:

Japanese farmers were elite. Therefore, the Dominican Republic accepted the Japanese emigrants. If the Dominican farmers were able to develop farmland on their own, the Japanese emigrants would not have been allowed to enter the country. [The Dominican Republic] spent a large amount of money to make housing and irrigation for the Japanese emigrants because [the Dominican Republic] believed that the Japanese elite farmers were able to cultivate crops in desert areas. Therefore, it was a duty for the Japanese emigrants to contribute to the Dominican Republic.\(^91\)

The Japanese emigrants were faced with a dilemma, whether to stay in the Dominican Republic or to return to Japan. After entry, the Japanese emigrants invested in skills, which were specific for the Dominican economy, for instance sugar and coffee.

\(^{99}\) Konno, 80
\(^{90}\) Ibid., 77
\(^{91}\) Ibid., 37
plantations, but their earnings and prospects toward the future Dominican economy were uncertain. Although they were elite farmers, it was difficult for them to make a better living in the Dominican Republic than that in Japan.

The factors that influenced the emigrants’ decision to return to Japan included characteristics of Japan as well. Clearly, one reason for the return migration was the better Japanese economic situation in the 1960s. The Japanese labor outflow to the Dominican Republic ended in 1959 due to economic growth in Japan and the rapid expansion of domestic employment opportunities. Since the late 1950s the Japanese government had aimed to persuade economic reforms to improve the war-devastated economy. In the process of improving the economic situation, the Japanese economy underwent significant changes that contributed to great economic advances. One such development was the Japanese industrial shift from light to chemical and heavy industries in the 1950s.\textsuperscript{92} Heavy industrial and chemical manufacturing had existed before, but the direct cause for this development was not military defense since Japanese constitutions Article Nine prohibited Japan from having any armed forces.

\textbf{Article 9.} Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.\textsuperscript{93}

Such an environment made it possible to invest money in the economic sphere, which eventually would turn to full employment and the growth of labor productivity.\textsuperscript{94} Japan’s

\textsuperscript{92} Murphey, 413.

\textsuperscript{93} Irokawa, 149.

\textsuperscript{94} Irokawa, 52-3.
Gross National Product (GNP) expanded at an average annual rate of 10.8 percent between 1958 and 1972.95 The demands of the domestic labor force increased as a result of the rapid growth of the Japanese economic situation.

The unemployment rate suggests that Japan achieved full employment in the early 1960s. The unemployment rate varied in the narrow range of between 1 and 1.8 per cent between 1960 and 1974 compared to 2 to 2.25 per cent in the 1950.... The average annual growth of real manufacturing wages and employment during 1958-72 was 1.7 per cent and 4.5 per cent respectively.96

Postwar economic expansion in the 1960s largely eliminated unemployment. The returned migration decision taken by the Japanese emigrants was based on a comparison between expected earnings in the Dominican Republic and the future flow of earnings in Japan. The negative net return repelled Japanese emigration from the Dominican Republic, and they decided to return to Japan where a positive net return was expected.

B. Immigration Law Regarding Land Ownership

Another factor that had influence upon the return migration was due to a lack of agreement regarding free provision of farmland in the Dominican Republic. The initial labor migration from Japan to the Dominican Republic was not carefully negotiated between the Japanese government and the Dominican government. The Japanese government promised each household an allotment of 18 hectares of farmland in the Dominican Republic after eight to ten years of cultivation.97 However, the lack of agreement regarding free provision of farmland in the Dominican Republic did not allow for the Japanese emigrants to obtain the 18 hectares of farmland promised by the

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95 Athukorala, 30.
96 Ibid.
Japanese government. According to a Dominican document sent by the Ministry of Agriculture to the Japanese embassy on May 12 1956, the Dominican government was willing to provide state-owned farmland, up to 18 hectares to each family.\(^9\) There was no promise made regarding free land ownership between the Japanese and the Dominican governments. The Japanese government; however, promised to provide free land to the Japanese settlers.

Each emigrant family received 3 to 6 hectares of land that belonged to the state under Colonial law.\(^9^9\) According to Colonial law:

\begin{quote}
Land belongs to the Dominican government. Tenants cannot sell or buy land. If the tenants do not cultivate allocated land within the first two years, they will be removed from the land. Similarly, if they neglect their work for three months, they will lose their rights to stay.\(^10\)
\end{quote}

Officially, the government of the Dominican Republic leased the state-owned land to the Japanese emigrants. The Japanese emigrants were not allowed to obtain landownership because of the state owned land. The Japanese government did not examine matters such as the immigration policy of the Dominican Republic regarding ownership rights but continued to send Japanese emigrants to the Dominican Republic.

Many emigrants cited to obtain 18 hectares of farmland as their main motivation for migrating to the Dominican Republic.\(^10^1\) Many Japanese were initially apprehensive about the prospect of living in the Dominican Republic, but ultimately were drawn by the

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\(^9\)Konno, 99-100

\(^9^9\)“Trasatlantico Japones Llegara a CT,” La Nacion (Dominican Republic), July 26 1956, sec 3.

\(^10\)http://www.dominika-imin-shien.net.\(^10^1\)

\(^10^1\)According to research conducted by Japanese scholars, forty-six out of sixty-four settlers decided to migrate to the Dominican Republic permanently because of free land. Takahashi, 203.
promise of a safe environment and free land by the Japanese government. If the emigrants had known the actual living conditions and the Dominican immigration policy on land rights, they would not have applied for the Japanese government sponsored program. False information regarding the free provision of farmland brought on many hardships for the Japanese emigrants.

C. Political Instability in the Dominican Republic

Unlike the Japanese conditions, the Dominican Republic entered into social chaos in the early 1960s. The political dominance of Trujillo was challenged by international and domestic opponents. The international image of Trujillo had been damaged after he ordered the massacre of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic. In August 1960, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United States imposed diplomatic and economic sanctions against the Dominican Republic due to Trujillo’s mistreatment of basic human rights of citizens. These political and economical external pressures combined with growing internal resistance to Trujillo, finally, ended with the dictator’s assassination by his domestic opponents along with the aid of the CIA on May 26, 1961.

The assassination of Trujillo in 1961 prompted major changes in the emigrants’ life. First, the newly established Dominican government discriminated against the Japanese emigrants. The Dominican government cut financial support for the Japanese

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102 Ibid., 204.

103 Organization of American States (OAS), founded in 1948, is a regional organization of the western hemisphere. The OAS assists other member nations economically, politically, and socially. Dominican Republic became a member of the OAS in 1948.

emigrants, who previously had received 60 cents a day per person. Second, the former landowners demanded the return of their land and asked the Japanese emigrants to move to other places. During Trujillo's era, Trujillo accumulated his wealth through depriving the landowners of their rights and renting such land to the Japanese emigrants for free. Consequently, their allocated land was useless, and it was almost impossible to successfully cultivate crops. The lack of an agreement between the Japanese and the Dominican governments regarding free farmland and the deception created by the Japanese government made the Japanese emigrants' life very hard in the Dominican Republic. In addition, the Japanese emigrants were apprehensive of some further political chaos. These negative factors deprived the emigrants of the possibility to seek better living conditions in the Dominican Republic.

2. Why Did Some Emigrants Decide to Stay in the Dominican Republic?

Compared to other Japanese government sponsored programs in the 1950s, the emigration plan to the Dominican Republic had the best conditions, including 18 hectares of farmland and financial support. Many Japanese emigrants sold their ancestral land and house in Japan to prepare for the emigration to the Dominican Republic. However, small earnings in the Dominican Republic forced the Japanese emigrants to use their savings. Eventually, they did not have anything left. Some Japanese emigrants stayed in the Dominican Republic because they no longer had a strong social and economic tie with Japan. In case of social relationship of Japan, Mitsu Sasaki stated that:

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105 Takahashi, 203

106 Konno, 82-3.

107 Only Japanese emigration program to the Dominican Republic promised to provide 18 hectares of land to the Japanese emigrants. Takahashi, 203.
I did decide to move to the Dominican Republic because I did not have a good relationship with my husband’s family, who lived with us. I often thought to separate with my husband because of his parents who complained about me all the time. Kagoshima prefecture was a region where women were considered as lower; therefore, I was not able to freely express my feelings.... I could not stand to stay with them any more.... My husband thought of committing suicide with our children and me.... I decided to come to the Dominican Republic with my family in order to escape from my husband’s parents.... I did not think to return to Japan because I had bad memories there.\(^{108}\)

The most families sold everything in Japan in order to migrate the Dominican Republic, and there was nothing left to social relation in Japan. The personal economic situation in Japan and weak social tie with relatives had influenced upon the decision making process.

Another possible explanation for staying in the Dominican Republic was that the pride of being elite farmers encouraged some emigrants to make an effort to cultivate suitable crops in the Dominican Republic until their dearth. The Japanese emigrants in the Dominican Republic were selected as elite farmers by the Japanese local governments; therefore, they did not want to go back to Japan as failures.

3. Consequences of the Japanese Emigration Program to the Dominican Republic

Evidence from the case of Japanese emigration in the Dominican Republic and offers an opportunity to interpret the Japanese migration policy. The declassified Japanese diplomatic documents indicate that the Japanese government did not examine the Dominican Republic immigration policy regarding ownership rights and that a field study conducted by the Japanese government in 1955 was superficial research, which concluded that conditions of farmland were sufficient and suitable for the Japanese

\(^{108}\) Ibid., 142-5.
farmers.\textsuperscript{109} As a result, the Japanese emigrants in the Dominican Republic have undergone many hardships that they had not expected before their departure to the Dominican Republic. On July 18, 2000, more than 120 Japanese migrants in the Dominican Republic filed a suit against the Japanese government seeking 2.5 billion yen (U.S.$ 20 million) as compensation for property and psychological damages and for their hardships suffered in the Dominican Republic.\textsuperscript{110} The lawsuit against the Japanese government is based on Article 11 and 13 of the Japanese Constitution.

\begin{quote}
Article 11. The people shall not be prevented from enjoying any of the fundamental human rights. These fundamental human rights guaranteed to the people by the Constitution shall be conferred upon the people of this and future generations as eternal and inviolate rights.

Article 13. All of the people shall be respected as individuals. Their right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness shall, to the extent that it does not interfere with the public welfare, be the supreme consideration in legislation and in other government affairs.\textsuperscript{111}
\end{quote}

The Japanese emigrants moved the Dominican Republic to search a better living condition in the 1950s, but their life style did not improve due to many hardships in the Dominican Republic. For example, some children did not have opportunities to go to school because they had to help their parents at home. The emigrants also did not receive sufficient medical care when they were sick. Some emigrants fled their properties and committed suicides during hard times in the Dominican Republic. Although the Japanese emigrants in the Dominican Republic protested against the Japanese government for forty years, the problems of land ownership rights were not solved. Thus, their basic human

\textsuperscript{109} <http://www.dominika-imin-shien.net>.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{111} Irokawa, 149.
rights under the Japanese Constitution were violated because the government deserted them in the Dominican Republic.
CHAPTER V

JAPANESE IMMIGRATION FROM 1980 TO 1996: A CASE STUDY OF LATIN AMERICAN LABOR TO JAPAN

Among the advanced industrial countries, Japan was a unique country, which managed to achieve economic success without utilizing foreign labor, particularly in the unskilled labor sector, since the end of World War II. This Japan's unique character was often viewed as proof that industrial advanced nations did not need to depend upon foreign labor to ensure a successful economy.\textsuperscript{112} During the last two decades, however, Japan's ethnically homogeneous society has been challenged by recent developments in the Japanese labor market. The increasing integration of economies and the interdependence between states in the globalized political environment have prompted Japan toward internationalization. The Japanese government faced political and social dilemmas: Japan was eager to maintain its national identity based upon the notion of "one race, one nation" while engaging in the multiple processes of international integration, but with the realization of the dearth of domestic labor, demand for foreign labor to fulfill the domestic labor market arose. In addition, international norms, such as the human rights of foreign workers in Japan became part of the problem. This chapter offers a brief historical look at the issue of labor migration from Latin America to Japan and analyzes the 1990 amendment of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (ICRRA), paying close attention to the debate between advocates of the traditional values of the Japanese national identity and advocates of an open door policy.

1. International Labor Migration: the Changing Situation of Foreign Workers in Japan

There were two main different stages to the influx of illegal foreign workers into Japan since the late 1970s. The first stage (late 1970s – 1986) is characterized by the influx of female illegal migrant workers from Southeast Asia and East Asia (see table 3). Most of them entered Japan as singers and entertainers, which were permitted under the category of ‘entertainers’ by Japanese immigration law.

The second stage of the massive inflow of migrants began in 1985 and ended in 1990. During this period, the main migrant workers were illegal male, mainly from Bangladesh, China, Malaysia, Philippines, South Korean, Thailand, and Iran (see table 3). These illegal immigrants worked in the manufacturing and construction sectors, where the shortage of domestic labor was serious. They came as tourists and worked without visas.

In the late 1980s, the influx of illegal foreign workers into Japan became the most widely recognized public concern. The issues of foreign workers were often discussed in newspaper headlines, magazine articles, and a television documentary. A public debate on whether Japan should open or close its door to foreign workers became public interest. Employers in the industrial sector were enthusiastic about relying on foreign workers

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113 Athukorala, 42
114 Ibid.
115 The Japanese government has used visa issuance policy, which requires nationals to obtain an entry visa and substantial financial assets to stop the influx of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and Pakistan since 1989. This policy, in fact, was in effect to control the illegal immigration from these regions. However, Japan was faced with a new illegal immigration movement from Iran and Iraq. The Japanese government imposed new visa requirements on Iranians. Cornelius, 390.
within the unskilled job sector. On the other hand, the Japanese policy makers hesitated to utilize foreign labor to fulfill a domestic shortage of labor. The strong demand for unskilled foreign labor and the growing number of illegal foreign workers promoted a debate over the need for immigrant workers in Japan.

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116 According to the Joint Research Group, a survey of 266 small and medium-sized firms in Tokyo metropolitan area found that about sixty percent of those firms suffered from a serious shortage of labor in 1988. Fifty-seven percent of these employers argued that the use of foreign workers was necessary to fill the domestic labor shortage and that the government should allow the influx of foreign workers to unskilled sectors. Cornelius, 379.
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Notes: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of males included in the total. Dashes indicate that a separate figure for the number of nationals is not available. In such cases, these nationals are included in the figures for the category entitled 'Other'.
2. *Sakoku* (closed country) versus *Kaikoku* (opening of the country)

Japanese politicians and scholars began to debate the foreign worker problem in the early 1980s, as a result of large numbers of foreign illegal workers and the shortage of domestic labor. A main concern of *sakoku* proponents was the nationality issue.\(^{117}\)

Unlike the United States, Japanese nationality is based upon the "blood principle."\(^{118}\) Before 1989, the newborns were not allowed to acquire Japanese nationality if their fathers were not Japanese. Even though mothers of the newborns held Japanese passports, the children would not be considered as Japanese. Thus, Japan was a strongly patriarchal society, and Japanese identity was based on the notion of "racial purity."\(^{119}\) Anti-

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\(^{117}\) *Sakoku* means a secluded nation or a closed country. It has often been said that the nature of the Japanese society can be understood through the *sakoku* mentality. This notion has been expressed most recently by Mayumi Itoh in her book, *Globalization of Japan*. Her argument is as follows: the Japanese way of thinking and behaving, even today, has been influenced by the *sakoku* mentality, which stems from its insularity and the Tokugawa Shogunate's seclusion policy. The *sakoku* mentality can be understood as the process of localizing dynamics, which highlight strong sense of the Japanese national identity and belief systems in order to draw boundaries between the Japanese people and others. This process involves a mental self-defense mechanism. The *sakoku* mentality prevents the Japanese from achieving internationalization at a global level. In other words, this Japanese mentality often becomes an obstacle in the way of progression toward internationalization. Mayumi Itoh, *Globalization of Japan*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 13.

\(^{118}\) Unlike the Unites States, the "birthplace principle" for newborns is not practiced in Japan. Several Japanese nationality issues have arisen, resulting from the increase in the number of the foreign laborers in Japan. One of the nationality problems is "non-nationality." For instance, a Southeast Asian woman in Japan, who engaged in prostitution illegally, bore a boy and left him with an American missionary. In 1995, the Tokyo High Court refused to give a Japanese nationality to the boy because his mother and father (probably a Japanese) were unknown. Therefore, this boy has non-nationality. The other problem related to nationality is the issue of Korean residents in Japan. The strong sense of *sakoku* mentality prevents Korean residents in Japan from acquiring Japanese nationality. According to the Japanese national law, Korean residents cannot obtain Japanese nationality because both their parents are resident aliens. Even though these Koreans, who were born in Japan, speak fluent Japanese and look like Japanese due to their ethnic closeness, they were treated as second-class citizens by the Japanese. One of the reasons of this behavior is because of the history of Japan's annexation in Korea during 1910 to 1945. The *sakoku* mentality of strict distinction between inside and outside still exists among the Japanese people. There is ethnocentric prejudice toward Korean residents in the current nationality law because the nationality law defines the blood principle rather than the birthplace principle. See Mayumi Itoh, *Globalization of Japan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 119.

\(^{119}\) Ibid.
immigration proponents argued that introducing foreign workers would threaten the nation’s homogeneity that was a root of Japanese culture.

The presence of many foreigners would in time lead to an increase in the number of people of mixed race. This would probably be accompanied by the emergence of a sense of crisis in some sections of society, along with the abandonment of traditional values.¹²⁰

In 1986, Prime Minister Yasuhiro Makasone declared that “Japan has one ethnicity (minzoku), one state (kokka), and one language (gengo).”¹²¹ He believed that the multiethnic United States corrupted its cultural strength by stating that “blacks were partly responsible for pulling down the intelligence level of the United States.”¹²² Therefore, sakoku adherents warned that Japan’s strength and the richness of Japanese culture would become weak if Japan’s national border opened.

In addition, the sakoku proponents argued that Japan’s social structure would have labor market segmentation between Japanese and non-Japanese. Their argument was that the Japanese people were not willing to work or live with foreigners. For instance, according to a survey conducted by the Tokyo city government, 64 percent of Tokyo residents did not wish to live next door to non-Japanese while 28 percent residents would welcome foreigners in their neighborhoods.¹²³ Entry of foreign workers would destroy Japan’s harmony and establish “ethnic ghettos” in Japan because there would not be

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immigrant integration. Thus, the foreign workers would be isolated from Japanese society.

_Kaikoku_ proponents, however, argued that the influx of foreign workers might be a good opportunity to break down Japan’s exclusiveness, which delayed Japan’s internationalization. _Kaikoku_ supporters pointed out that Japan violated the human rights of illegal foreign workers. The Japanese government maintained the immigration policy, which banned unskilled foreign labor, while it ignored the presence of illegal foreign labor in the manual labor sectors. Labor brokers and employers treated illegal immigrants unfairly, but these illegal workers were unable to complain.

In particular, they [kaikoku supporters] condemned the government’s failure to ratify the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their families [ICMW]. This treaty, rejected by the Japanese government because of its conflict with the legal restriction on foreign unskilled labor, would have protected foreign workers in Japan from exploitation at the hands of labor brokers and employers and secured the basic human rights of workers and their families. _Kaikoku_ proponents viewed the government’s rejection of the protections of these rights as an irresponsible position, both internationally and domestically.

Open door advocates suggested that Japanese society had been accepting foreign labor illegally to fulfill the domestic labor shortage and that the issue of foreign workers ought to be discussed on the international stage.

_Kaikoku_ supporters pointed out the need for a domestic institution to deal with the new globalized environment. The advent of the globalization of economy and politics

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124 Betsy T. Brody, "Opening the Door?: Immigration, Ethnicity, and Globalization in Japan" (Ph.D. diss., Notre Dame University, 2000), 54.

125 Itoh, 111.

126 Brody, 57.
marked the end of an era of isolated nation-state. The process of interdependence with the rest of the world. From their view, immigration and diversity had already been in Japan. Japan, thus, needed to reform immigration policy in order to adjust to the reality of the influx of foreign workers and to make a smooth transition for the foreigners’ integration into Japanese society.

The debate over sakoku-kaikoku began to increase awareness of Japan’s immigration problems among politicians and scholars in the 1980s. The primary concern of sakoku supporters was based on the premise that Japanese social harmony had been maintained because of its mythical ethnic homogeneity. Therefore, Japan would be disrupted when a large-scale influx of foreigners entered Japan. In contrast, the view of kaikoku followers emphasized that immigration was inevitable in the context of globalization. Thus, Japan’s next step would be to adjust its current immigration policy to handle the integration of foreigners into Japanese society. The two different views over the role of foreign workers eventually led the Japanese policy markers to review immigration policy.

3. Immigration Policy

The Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (ICRPA) that was enacted in 1951 limits the employment of foreign workers to only high skill level categories, such as engineers and other professions. This policy was based on a principle that unskilled people should not enter Japan to take up jobs. Japan had managed to rely on only the domestic workers and had avoided importation of foreign labor by paying high wages for unskilled jobs, putting high social value to manual work, and creating an educational

127 Lie, 17-9.
system that taught obedience to others. These distinguished characteristics maintained a high living standard without reliance on foreign workers to fill unskilled jobs. The myth of Japan being "immigration free" was perpetuated by this policy for almost three decades.

Japan, however, began to be faced with a serious labor shortage for the first time since World War II, resulting from the unprecedented economic growth and success of Japanese industry. The domestic labor shortage problem, particularity in the manufacturing and construction sectors, was much more serious than ever before, and it became impossible for the policy makers to ignore the reliance on foreign labor. On December 15, 1989, a revision of the ICRPA was passed and opened Japan's borders to legal foreign unskilled labor for the first time. That same year, the Ministry of Justice revised the nationality law.

Article 2. A child shall, in any of the following cases, be a Japanese national: (1) When, at the time of its birth, the father or the mother is a Japanese national; and (2) When the father who died prior to the birth of the child was a Japanese national at the time of his death.

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128 Athukorala, 42.

129 Ibid.

130 An amendment to the ICRPA enforced on July 1, 1990.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of Residence</th>
<th>Personal relationship or status on which the residence is authorized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Resident</td>
<td>Those who are permitted permanent residence by the Minister of Justice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse or Child of Japanese National</td>
<td>The spouses of Japanese nationals, the children adopted by Japanese nationals in accordance with the provisions of Article 817-2 of the Civil Code (Law No.89 of 1896) or those born as the children of Japanese nationals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse or Child of Permanent Resident</td>
<td>The spouses of those who stay with the status of residence of &quot;Permanent Resident&quot; or Special Permanent Resident (hereinafter referred to as &quot;permanent resident etc.&quot;), those born as children of a permanent resident etc. in Japan and having been residing in Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Term Resident</td>
<td>The spouses of those who stay with the status of residence of &quot;Permanent Resident&quot; or Special Permanent Resident (hereinafter referred to as &quot;permanent resident etc.&quot;), those born as children of a permanent resident etc. in Japan and having been residing in Japan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 1990 Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, Annexed Table II*[^132]

The revision of ICRRA granted working permission to the *Nikkeijin*, including the first, second, and third generations without stringent restrictions (see table 4). Those *Nikkeijin* entered Japan under the category of “long term resident.” Their initial visa duration was

for three years, but their visa renewal was unlimited. The option to adjust their state to that of "permanent resident" was also granted. 

Since the revision of ICRPA in 1990, Nikkeijin workers had begun to play an important role in the Japanese labor market. Table 5 presents a breakdown of the legally registered foreign population, by nationality from 1920 to 1996. The numbers of Nikkeijin has increased significantly since 1990 (see table 5). The total number of Nikkeijin amounted to about 250,100 in 1996 (about 18 percent of the total number of registered foreigners), almost triple the number recorded six years earlier.

**TABLE 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Korean (North and South)</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Brazilian</th>
<th>Other Latin American</th>
<th>Total***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>40,755</td>
<td>24,130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>78,061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>419,009</td>
<td>44,051</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>478,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1,241,315</td>
<td>45,825</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,304,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>544,903</td>
<td>40,481</td>
<td>169</td>
<td></td>
<td>598,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>531,257</td>
<td>45,535</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>650,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>614,202</td>
<td>51,481</td>
<td>891</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>708,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>664,536</td>
<td>52,896</td>
<td>1,492</td>
<td>1,871</td>
<td>782,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>687,940</td>
<td>150,339</td>
<td>56,429</td>
<td>16,436</td>
<td>1,075,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>693,050</td>
<td>171,071</td>
<td>119,333</td>
<td>35,465</td>
<td>1,218,891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>688,100</td>
<td>195,300</td>
<td>147,800</td>
<td>40,300</td>
<td>1,281,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>682,300</td>
<td>210,100</td>
<td>154,700</td>
<td>42,900</td>
<td>1,320,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>676,800</td>
<td>218,600</td>
<td>159,600</td>
<td>45,200</td>
<td>1,354,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>666,400</td>
<td>223,000</td>
<td>176,400</td>
<td>46,700</td>
<td>1,362,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>657,200</td>
<td>234,300</td>
<td>201,800</td>
<td>48,300</td>
<td>1,415,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***Including registered foreigners from Africa, Europe, North America and Oceania.


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133 Cornelius, 397.
CHAPTER VI
CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE LATIN AMERICAN NIKKEIJIN
LABOR MIGRATION IN THE 1990s

There were only a small number of Latin American Nikkeijin, entering as legally
skilled workers or as illegal unskilled workers before the 1990 ICRRA. The
liberalization of immigration, however, contributed to an increase in Nikkeijin immigrants
to Japan. The combination of several factors caused the conditions necessary for utilizing
Nikkeijin immigrants to the benefit of the Japanese economy.

1. Theory and Reality in the Initiation of Nikkeijin Migration to Japan

   A. Neoclassical Economics

   Widening differences in per capita income between Japan and Latin America
account for the Nikkeijin immigration movement in Japan. After the Plaza Agreement of
1985, the yen appreciated from around 240 yen to the dollar to a little over 102 yen to the
dollar in 1994.\(^{134}\) The appreciation of the Japanese yen combined with a low standard of
living in Latin America encouraged economic migrants from developing countries to
enter Japan (see table 5). In fact, many of these migrants took the risk to come to Japan
to work. GNP per capita in Latin America was one-eleventh of that of Japan in 1992.\(^{135}\)
Latin American countries had been suffering from high inflation and vast national debts,
combined with political instability. "Such gaps widened rapidly in the remainder of the

\(^{134}\) Ibid.


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decade, creating an overwhelming economic 'pull' factor for would-be migrants to Japan.\textsuperscript{136}

One of the largest labor migrations in Latin America was from Brazil (see table 5), which had a 8.0 percent unemployment rate in 1992.\textsuperscript{137} The economic crisis of the 1980s generated a sharp increase in Brazilian emigration to Japan. As predicted by neoclassical theory, many Nikkeijin migrants in Japan were motivated by the prospect of earning higher wages overseas.

\textit{B. Segmented Labor Market Theory}

Segmented labor market theory proposed that Nikkeijin migration was caused by a structural demand for labor in Japan. Japan had experienced a serious labor shortage, especially in unskilled labor sectors since the late 1980s. There were four main reasons for the tightening of Japan’s labor market. First, the labor shortage was led by:

- the country’s extremely low fertility rate [in 1990], which has declined by 27 percent since 1965 to 1.53 children per family—the world’s lowest total fertility rate (and it continues to go down) [.and] the rapid aging of Japan’s population, which is growing old more rapidly than that of any other industrial nation.\textsuperscript{138}

Economic growth had increased total employment; however, there was an imbalance between labor supply and demand because of Japan’s extremely low fertility rate since the early 1970s, combined with a rapidly aging population, which had resulted in a decline in the growth of Japan’s labor force.

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\textsuperscript{136} Brody, 49.

\textsuperscript{137} Bureau of International Labor Affairs <http://www.tradeport.org/ts/cpireturns/brazil/lst.html>.

\textsuperscript{138} Projections by the Population research institute, Nihon University based on 1990 census date. Cornelius, 378.
Secondly, the labor shortage was aggravated by the government’s new policy, which encouraged workers and companies to reduce working hours. In 1985, the annual hours worked by a Japanese worker in manufacturing sectors was 244 hours longer than in the United States, and 357 hours longer than in West Germany.¹³⁹ In 1987, the Labor Standards Law was revised:

Article 32. An employer shall not have a worker work more than 40 hours per week, excluding rest periods. An employer shall not have a worker work more than 8 hours per day for each day of the week, excluding rest periods.¹⁴⁰

The aims of the basic national policy were:

(1) a response to the internationalization of the economy (i.e., achieving a level of working conditions that is worthy of a nation’s economic strength, and responding to criticisms of unfair competition); (2) conversion to an economy of domestic-demand initiatives (e.g., expanding leisure time as a component of increasing domestic demand); (3) dealing with employment problems; (4) the promotion of workers’ welfare; and (5) the maintenance of social vitality.¹⁴¹

A large-scale reduction of working hours (from 48 to 40 hours per week) was encouraged by the Japanese government in order to ease isolation from the world economy and avoid trade friction with the other countries. However, reducing working hours (two days off a week) led to a delay of service, which would normally have been completed through the traditional Japanese practice of working long hours. Therefore, some job categories needed to seek substitute labor to complete the jobs.

Another reason was that basic societal changes were taking place. According to a 1990 survey of the educational background, approximately 95 percent of young Japanese


¹⁴¹ Sugeno, 211.
entered high school, and 38 percent went to university. Higher levels of education changed job preferences in the work force, leading to significant labor market segmentation. The negative attitude that people in Japan had toward low-wage jobs also opened up employment opportunities for foreign workers. New young workers with a high level of education preferred to take professional jobs rather than manual labor (see table 6).

New entrants began to show a reluctance to engage in '3-K jobs' kitanai [dirty], kiken [dangerous], and kitsui [physically arduous]. Equivalent English expressions are '3-D jobs' (dirty, dangerous, and difficult) and 'dead-end' jobs. Examples of 3-D jobs are metal working, welding, automobile repairing, painting, metal moulding, carpentry, and plumbing. Many of these jobs were not low-status occupations: young workers shunned them mainly because of the nature of the work involved. With the drying up of new entrants, these jobs began to be confined to older workers, whose number rapidly diminished with the aging of the population.

The young generation was no longer willing to take the 3-D jobs because unskilled manual jobs did not provide for future career advancement. Moreover, Japanese parents strongly discouraged their children from taking such jobs because they believed that wages reflected social status. Nikkeijin accepted low occupational status in Japan for increased income, despite being highly educated Nikkeijin because their main motivation for migration to Japan was the desire to earn money in a short period of time.

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142 Ibid.
143 Athukorala, 39.
144 Ibid.
145 Cornelius, 380.
TABLE 6
PERCENTAGE OF JOBS AVAILABLE BY INDUSTRY IN JAPAN: 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and retail trade</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery and equipment manufacturing</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing, publishing and related manufacturing</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal products manufacturing</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All manufacturing</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The fourth reason for the shortage of labor was due to the rapid growth of the Japanese economy. The Japanese economy experienced an economic boom during the period from 1986 to 1991. The “bubble economy,” which was based on real estate and financial speculation, created new job markets and vast employment opportunities. 4.4 million new job positions were created during this period.\(^{146}\) Employment expansions in the services and professional job sectors provided Japanese young people with many job opportunities, while positions in medium- and small-sized companies in labor-intensive industries were unable to be filled by Japanese labor. This economic upswing in Japan generated a massive inflow of illegal foreign workers into Japan. The demand for immigrant workers grew out of the structural needs of the economy in Japan. Thus, the international inequality in income and job opportunities between Japan and Latin American countries triggered *Nikkeijin* migration to Japan.

A core hypothesis of segmented labor market theory is that *Nikkeijin* migration was initiated through recruitment mechanisms.\(^{147}\) The Japanese government responded to the dearth of the domestic labor force by revising the amendment of ICRRA that

\(^{146}\) Cornelius, 380-1.

\(^{147}\) Massey, 181.
allowed for the entry *Nikkeijin* into the legal structure of the labor market. *Nikkeijin* labor recruitment became an important economic policy in Japan.

**C. World Systems Theory**

World systems theory argues that *Nikkeijin* migration from Latin America to Japan was produced by the uneven development of capitalism.\(^{148}\) *Nikkeijin* migration was not a rational response to wage differences but as a consequence of the unequal distribution of economic power among nations. As a result of the advent of economic globalization, the world market was not able to promote the interests of Latin America because the productive system in Latin America was often determined in favor of the most developed countries, including Japan. In the absence of better employment opportunities in Latin America, large numbers of highly educated *Nikkeijin* migrated from Latin America to global cities, such as Tokyo and Osaka, where the domestic labor shortage had became serious.

**D. Globalization**

The patterns of international migration can be analyzed not only in terms of individual rational choice and the economic processes of modern capitalism, but also combinations of global economic, political, and social factors that contribute to the movement of labor across national borders.\(^{149}\) Economic openness in the era of

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\(^{148}\) Ibid.

\(^{149}\) Globalization is considered a process rather than a simple linear condition because it involves different domains from political, economic, military, social, and environmental activities. These domains are "sites of power" to lead and shape globalization, and they involve different processes, different time scales, and trajectories. It is not possible to explain and predict the general process of globalization from one domain because some domains have an influence on other sites. Thus, globalization is considered a totality of distinct processes, complex, and contingent. Localization and regionalization are on the opposite of globalization. Localization is characterized with "boundary-strengthening." The process of highlighting boarders is designed for the purpose of controlling and preventing the movement of people, information, culture, and norms from one country to another. Localizing dynamics have become more important for
globalization results in the increased integration of economies and international cooperation. Internationalized markets allow for the flow of trade, investment, goods, and labor across national borders easier than before. As a result, the clear cut nation-state seems to be eroding.

Relationships among state, social class, and production are...complex and malleable. The expansion of capitalism globally has been facilitated by specific political interests, even tradition balance of power intrigues. On the other hand, economic globalization has brought with it the ‘internationalizing of the state,’ the gradual redefinition of national interests to coincide with the requirements of global production and the empowerment of those bureaucratic elements that serve these ends.150

International migration is brought about as a result of economic globalization. The expanding scale of the world economy creates an income gap between rich and poor countries. As a result of the uneven development of capitalism, inflow of labor increases from the poor country to the rich country.

The denationalization of national economies and politics may also threaten the sovereignty of the nation-state due to the growth of new sophisticated legal regimes for global society. For instance, international law and human rights standards have increasingly influenced individual state’s decision-making. Hence, international migration is to be considered a human right in the era of the globalization; however, an international regime regulates only the admission of refugees. International concern with the rights of migrants became public interests; however, international norms for the

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150 Crane, 16.
protection of migrant workers have not been set by global society because protection of migrants means to accept legal rights of illegal immigrants. For instance, Japan rejected the United Nation International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families because the protection of migrants was not public interest. Therefore, immigration is considered an issue of nation-state sovereignty. The issue of immigration policies and decisions regarding entry are in the hands of the individual state.

The Japanese policy makers were in favor of a closed country in terms of immigration. Japan feared that the growth of immigration would threaten the myths of Japanese homogeneity, distinctiveness, and harmony among Japanese. To meet possible future immigration flows, which might threaten the stability and security of Japan, the Japanese government had launched the new comprehensive policy program ICRRA of 1990, including the entry of descendents of Japanese citizens.

Official documents dating from before the 1989-1990 reform [of Japanese immigration law] suggest that maintenance of culture and “racial” homogeneity was a major concern of policy makers and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Such documents often refer to Japan’s possession of “one ethnic group, one language” as a key contributing factor to its power—war economic miracle. The Nikkeijin were acceptable because, as relatives of Japanese, they “would be able to assimilate into Japanese society regardless of nationality.”

According to the ruling Liberal Democratic Party’s monthly magazine,

Admitting Nikkeijin legally will greatly help to ameliorate the present acute labor shortage. People who oppose the admission of the unskilled are afraid of racial discrimination against foreigners. Indeed, if Japan

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admitted many Asians with different cultures and customs than those of Japanese. Japan’s homogeneous ethnic composition could collapse. However, if Nikkeijin were admitted, this would not be a problem.¹⁵²

Unlike other foreign workers, the Japanese-Latin Americans were welcomed into the Japanese society because of their Japanese ancestry. Moreover, the Japanese officials saw the policy of liberal immigration opportunities for Nikkeijin as a politically acceptable compromise to solve the domestic labor shortage, since the country’s mythical ethnic homogeneity would not be destroyed by the influx of Nikkeijin.

Consequently, the Japanese government emphasized the ethic ties between Nikkeijin and Japanese. Nikkeijin are not culturally Japanese but racially Japanese. The transnational ethnic network allows the descendants of Japanese emigrants to immigrate to Japan.

2. Japanese Perceptions of Global Migration

The presence of Nikkeijin provided a unique opportunity to reconsider what it meant to be Japanese. Lineage and race have traditionally been considered the primary determinants of ‘Japanese.’ Thus, the Korean and Chinese minority in Japan has been unable to obtain citizenship in Japan. Although Nikkeijin share the same lineage as the Japanese, they behave culturally as Latin Americans rather than Japanese and have little in the way of language skills. Policy makers consider language and culture a part of ethnicity, but blood is more important:

Racial descent is the primary basis for the definition of Japanese ethnic identify because of an underlying Japanese ethnic assumption that correlates race with culture. In other worlds, those who are racially

Japanese (i.e. of Japanese descent) are assumed to be culturally Japanese as well.\textsuperscript{153}

This ideological argument adopts the notion that shared ethnicity would lead to a smoother integration into Japanese society.

In reality, neither \textit{Nikkeijin} nor native Japanese think of \textit{Nikkeijin} as Japanese. Despite Japanese blood lineage, \textit{Nikkeijin} are regarded as Latinos by native Japanese because of linguistic and cultural differences. \textit{Nikkeijin} also identify themselves as \textit{Latinos} in Japan. According to Eduardo Mori,

\begin{quote}
With time I have to...know exactly where I came from. The [Brazilians] were all telling me, “The first thing you should never hide from anyone is that you are a gaijin (foreigner)... You are a Brazilian.” No one ever told me, “You have to be a Japanese. You have to be like them. You have to behave like them.” Even if they told me I had to be [Japanese] I think I wouldn’t accept it...in Brazil I felt Japanese...In Brazil, [nikkeis always] say, “You’re Japanese.” [There] I tell myself, You’re Japanese. And in Japan now I tell myself that I’m a gaijin.\textsuperscript{154}
\end{quote}

\textit{Nikkeijin} often experienced discrimination in employment. Even though many of these Japanese-Latin American \textit{Nikkeijin} had engaged in skilled and professional labor in their hometown, they were willing to take on unskilled jobs in Japan given the large amount of pay variance.\textsuperscript{155} In other words, the Japanese public widely accepted \textit{Nikkeijin} as workers; however, their job markets were limited to manual work because they were desirable only due to the domestic shortage of labor in manual sector.


\textsuperscript{154} Linger, 110.

\textsuperscript{155} Cornelius, 397.
The entry of *Nikkeijin* was viewed as the primary legal solution to the labor shortage in the unskilled labor sector. The concentration of *Nikkeijin* at the bottom of the job hierarchy, however, created segmentation between the Japanese and *Nikkeijin*, placing *Nikkeijin* as second-class citizens. The smooth integration of *Nikkeijin* into Japanese society was obstructed by labor market segmentation, which *sakoku* proponents had feared. *Nikkeijin* children also suffered from the labor market segmentation because there was little social mobility. One reason for the perpetuation of labor segmentation is due to the rising Japanese school standards. Some young *Nikkeijin* did not have any educational opportunities after junior high school because they did not have sufficient education to pass an entrance examination for high school.\^156 These children were more likely to choose the lower status jobs similar to those of their parents. In addition, many *Nikkeijin* parents paid little attention to the education of their children because their main goal in Japan was to earn money and save so they could return to their home country. Their children were expected to work rather than attend school. Since young *Nikkeijin* did not achieve higher levels of education, their employment opportunities were limited in Japan.

The division in Japanese culture between inside and outside also reflects the limitation of occupational choice for *Nikkeijin*. Ethnic Japanese, *Nikkeijin*, are seen as outside of Japanese society, and Japanese immigration law does not protect them from racial or cultural discrimination. *Nikkeijin* are culturally foreign to Japan, and the position of *Nikkeijin* as outsiders prevents them from seeking better jobs. Many employers do not wish *Nikkeijin* migrants to engage in highly visible jobs because *Nikkeijin* are considered culturally second-class. This negative stereotype of Latin

\^156 Linger, 68.
American *Nikkeijin* contributes to the failure of *Nikkeijin* integration into the Japanese society.

Unlike most developed countries where the female illegal workers engage in domestic service, the Japanese people are less likely to hire *Nikkeijin* as housecleaners. Similarly, unskilled jobs, such as garbage collection and street cleaning, are not performed by foreign migrants. In contrast, these unskilled jobs are the most common occupations for migrants in most industrialized countries. Many Japanese employers do not want the foreigners to be in the public. Instead, they prefer the migrants to be invisible.\(^{157}\) More importantly, the strong sense of distinction between inside (*uchi*) and outside (*soto*) among the Japanese can explain the exclusion of foreigners from domestic service jobs. According to Japanese traditional thinking:

> Everything external to the home (*uchi*) is considered to be ‘impure’...Everything outside the home is regarded as dirty; ‘outside’ (*soto*) is where cultural and biological germs [especially ‘people ‘dirt’] are located. Having a foreigner working in the home could be regarded as a particularly egregious form of impurity.\(^{158}\)

This way of Japanese thinking defines the strong sense of identity distinguishing between “us” and “them.” The Japanese people constantly draw a boundary between pure and impure in their mental map. Consequently, there are limited opportunities for economic migrants to engage in highly visible jobs.

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\(^{157}\) Ibid., 385.

\(^{158}\) Ibid.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Japan has evolved from a country of emigration to one of immigration within the last four decades. The role of the Japanese government in the history of labor migration has been significant: the government often promoted the emigration of its citizens during times of overpopulation, and in times of labor shortage Nikkeijin have been invited to return to Japan. National economic interests have influenced the state policy on labor migration.

In the 1950s, the Japanese government sent elite farm families to the Dominican Republic for agricultural development. The unprecedented influx of Japanese soldiers from Asian countries to Japan and the shortage of domestic food as well as natural resources aggravated the economic crisis in Japan. Coincidently, the Dominican Republic suffered from a shortage of skilled agricultural labor for the desert area along the border to the Republic of Haiti. The coincidence of "push and pull" factors in Japan and the Dominican Republic determined the preconditions for Japanese emigration.

Since the 1980s Japan has been witness to a transformed labor market as a result of the development of new technology and global economic activities. The Japanese government passed ICRRA of 1990, leading to an influx of foreign workers from Latin America to deal with the domestic labor shortage. More importantly, the aim of this revision of immigration law was to maintain the myth of Japanese homogeneity, harmony, and distinctiveness. All of these themes have been cultivated from ancient time and have contributed to the Japanese cultural nationalism, the two hundred year isolation
policy of the Tokugawa era, and the idea of “one nation, one race.” Nikkeijin workers are acceptable by the Japanese policy makers because they have Japanese blood, which is the most important factor to distinguish between Japanese and non-Japanese. Thus, a transnational ethnic network between Japan and Latin American countries initiated the influx of Nikkeijin migration to Japan.

The research presented here suggests several key areas that must be addressed when studying Japanese migration. Based on the analysis of the two case studies, the 1950s emigration policy to the Dominican Republic and the 1990 amendment of ICRRA for Nikkeijin, it is clear that the Japanese government has taken the central role in regulating both labor exportation and labor importation. Each individual motivation and situation was varied, but common to all of the Japanese and ethnic Japanese migration flows was the development of recruitment systems that were promoted and regulated by the Japanese government. Japanese labor migration in the 1950s was an institutional response to domestic economic hardships. On the other hand, ethnic Japanese labor migration in the 1990s was an institutional response to deal with Japan’s labor shortage in the unskilled sector.

Certain economic and social factors have also had a strong influence upon the movement of people across borders. Neoclassical economic theories predict that international migration is at least partly dependent on economic inequalities and development between the home and host counties involved. In the case of Japanese emigration to the Dominican Republic in the 1950s, the wartime devastated economy and overpopulation in Japan were regarded as major preconditions for Japanese migration to the Dominican Republic. Nikkeijin migration to Japan continued to grow throughout the
1990s because of economic pressures in Latin America, along with a demand for unskilled labor in Japan. Yet, economic factors are not enough to explain Japanese migration across borders. Transnational ethnic connection is one of the key elements responsible for the persistence of ethnic Japanese migration inflow to Japan since 1990.

The two case studies highlight the Japanese government’s dilemmas of multinationalism. The dynamics of globalization made it impossible for Japan to close off its national borders. On the other hand, policy makers believed that the ideology of a homogeneous and pure nation had contributed to Japan, being a major global economic player. Was the notion of “one nation, one race” a key of Japan’s economic success? To some extent Japan’s rapid economic growth since the 1960s were due to the outflow of Japanese labor to Latin America. To adjust Japan’s domestic labor market, a large number of the Japanese were encouraged to migrate to Latin America. These Japanese emigrants had to endure miserable living conditions, and the Japanese government violated its responsibility for maintaining a minimum income level sufficient for a standard of living to the Japanese emigrants as guaranteed by the Constitution. During the 1990s, the ethnic Japanese were recruited to take low skilled jobs in Japan. The ethnic Japanese are victims of Japan’s economic and political interests. The Japanese government is expected to protect Nikkeijin from discrimination based on cultural background and to help them integrate smoothly into Japanese society.

Human behavior and thoughts have been linked to the political sphere. People’s identity and their source of livelihood are provided by the territory in which they belong. Their identity, however, may change when their territory is fragmented or integrated. Modern Japanese mentality is rooted in the combination of Japan’s geographic isolation
and the *Tokugawa* Shogunate's policy of seclusion. This unique parochial mentality constitutes Japan's barriers to multiethnic society. Japan's internationalization is difficult to achieve, for it requires dramatic changes in both Japanese systems and the Japanese way of thinking.

International migration is part of a global revolution that is reshaping societies and politics around the world. Yet, many of the political forces that are shaping international migration to Japan have deep historical and cultural roots. Japan is confronted with the task of redefining its national identity to fit its international status. It is inevitable to alter the Japanese traditional concept of *sakoku* for Japan's internationalization. This means that Japan’s mythical ethnic homogeneity should not be a major concern of policy makers as well as the Japanese people. The Japanese government sent its people abroad because of Japan’s economic difficulties in the 1950s. Japan is now expected by the international society to provide more opportunities for foreigners to integrate into Japanese society; otherwise, Japan will continue to be isolated from the rest of the world.
Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nikkeijin.</td>
<td>日系人</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakoku.</td>
<td>鎖国</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaikoku.</td>
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<td>近代日本の海外移民政策</td>
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<tr>
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<td>高橋幸春</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toshihiko Konno</td>
<td>今野敏彦</td>
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Bibliography


