

Foreign Migrants in Taiwan and Japan: A Comparative Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Taiwan and Japan share the related problems of an aging population and low fertility rate, both of which have contributed to labor shortages in their nations. Although the two countries have been importing workers from abroad to compensate for labor shortfalls, Japanese descendants from South American countries and mainland Chinese have become the dominant alternative labor force in Japan, while in Taiwan migrant laborers largely come from Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines. Do migration trends into Taiwan and Japan have anything in common given the two countries' differing cultures and sources of migrants? What role do Chinese migrants play in both cases? To answer these questions, this paper examines labor importation in Taiwan and Japan by discussing the immigration policies of the two governments and comparatively analyzing the impact foreign migrants have had on Taiwanese and Japanese society.

INTRODUCTION

The inflow of foreign migrants into Taiwan and Japan since the late 1980s has largely been influenced by two conditions: economic interests and political concerns (Komai, 1999; Lan, 2006). Economically, both countries are deeply integrated into the global economy, and both must address economic concerns caused by a severe shortage of domestic labor due to an aging population and low fertility rate (Yamanaka, 1993). They have both introduced labor-saving machinery into various industries, especially in manufacturing and construction, to meet domestic and global production demands. However, they have had to supplement this automation with migrant workers. As for political concerns, Chinese migrants in Taiwan are prohibited from working in the country due to tensions with the People's Republic of China (PRC). In Japan as well, political anxieties regarding foreign migrants have been pronounced: The assimilation of immigrant populations has proven to be a challenge for the Japanese, and the prospect of increasing migrant numbers is a sensitive social topic.

In both cases, the two nations' domestic concerns are closely tied with their ethnic identities. Many Taiwanese and Japanese harbor beliefs that their nations are ethnically homogenous societies (Fukuoka, 1993; Lan 2006; Oguma 1995). This self-image often amplifies public apprehension towards foreign residents (Fukuoka, 1993; Komai, 1999; Lan, 2006; Oguma, 1995). Even though the Taiwanese and Japanese governments have implemented policies to address immigration issues such as these, the issue of how to recruit sufficient labor supplies from abroad while satisfying local concerns over migrants' ability to adapt to their host nations has yet to be resolved (Douglass & Roberts, 2000; Lan, 2006; Nakamoto, 2001; Yorimitsu et al., 2003).

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The trend of foreign migration into Taiwan and Japan differs from that in Western states, with two streams of migrant flows creating a unique stratification of the labor force: the first level involves highly-skilled professionals, engineers, service specialists and managers from Europe and North America, and the second level consists of low-skilled and manual laborers from other Asian countries. Much public worry in Taiwan and Japan has been expressed over the latter group, including fears that they will become a social and financial burden on their host countries. Such anxieties are especially widespread in Japan (Douglass & Roberts, 2000; Lan, 2006; Nakamoto, 2001; Yorimitsu et al., 2003). This division of labor must also be seen in the context of ethno-national stratifications: Westerners (Caucasians) typically occupy the first level, while non-Westerners (Asians) occupy the second level.

Most Taiwanese and Japanese youth prefer occupations in the first occupational level (business and financial sectors) than in the second level (manufacturing industries). Occupations in the second level are often referred to as "Three D" jobs: dirty, dangerous, and demanding, or "Three K" jobs in the Japanese acronym (*kitanai, kiken, and kitsui*). In both countries the movement of youth up the value chain, in conjunction with the graying of the population, has created an increasing demand for physical laborers (Lan, 2006; Tsuda, 1999; Yorimitsu et al., 2003).¹ The demand in question is often met through the importation of foreign workers, the subject of this study. Analyzing trends in foreign migration into Taiwan and Japan, this paper not only examines migrants' impact on their host nations but also calls for more attention to be devoted to understanding the needs of migrants and educating Taiwanese and Japanese on the importance of foreign workers for their economies and societies.

The situation of foreign migrants in Taiwan is first examined. The Taiwanese government has maintained and regulated the flow of foreigners into the country, mostly accepting workers from member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) such as the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam, but it prohibits Chinese migrants. Some might think that the identities of the Taiwanese and the Chinese are not distinguishable enough for Taiwanese to consider the Chinese as foreigners (Tseng, 2004, p. 33, as cited in Lan, 2006, pp. 38-39).² However, many Taiwanese feel differently, and place great stock in maintaining what they see as their distinct "ethnicity."

Next, the paper will discuss the situation of foreign migrants in Japan.³ It has been argued that Japan's immigration policy is influenced by its homogenous self-image (Fukuoka, 1993; Oguma, 1995; Tsuda, 1998). An increase in temporary workers of Japanese descent from South America since the early 1990s has been driven by government policies based upon Japan's perceived ethnic and cultural ties with them; it was assumed that they would be more suitable than other migrants for Japanese society (Laszlo, 2002; Tsuda, 1999). However, despite the Japanese Brazilians' Japanese characteristics, many native Japanese have felt uncomfortable or confused by them due to their lack of fluent Japanese language skills or knowledge of Japanese social customs (Tsuda, 1998). Aside from Japanese-Brazilians filling positions that require physical labor, Japan's highly established sex industry, *mizushobai*, lures large numbers of foreign women into Japan both legally and illegally. Many migrants coming to Japan to work in these sectors, especially from the Philippines and Thailand, have arrived in Japan lured by the prospect of highly-paid jobs.

Finally, the role of mainland Chinese in Taiwan and Japan will be assessed. Although Taiwan has had a strict immigration policy with regard to mainland Chinese, many have come to Taiwan as spouses.⁴ In the case of Japan, the Chinese population is one of its oldest and largest of non-Japanese ethnic groups. Despite a widespread negative image of the Chinese in Japanese society, one fanned by media sensationalism over immigrant crime, their presence has been increasingly recognized in international business, academe, and the household sphere as spouses (Chen, 2008).

Lastly, a comparative analysis of the impact of foreign migrants on Taiwanese and Japanese society will be made, which will be followed up by a discussion of the role the state plays in shaping immigration trends (Cheng 2003; Satzewich, 1991). As will be discussed, the state functions as a gatekeeper, protecting its national boundaries and weighing potential social costs, such as the possibility of increasing unemployment or crime rates, as foreigners become participants in the host society.

FOREIGN MIGRANTS IN TAIWAN

Taiwan began to show interest in accepting foreign workers during the late 1980s, as its economy by then had been boosted by the presence of many transnational companies and international businesses. In October 1989, the Taiwanese government passed a special measure to allow foreigners to be legally employed in the Fourteen Key Construction Project, a critical national development program. In October 1991, certain private sectors, such as the labor-intensive construction and manufacturing industries, were allowed to hire foreign workers (Cheng, 2003; Lan, 2006). In August 1992, the Taiwanese government legalized the employment of foreign migrants in the domestic service sector (Cheng, 2003; Lan, 2006). According to the National Immigration Agency (NIA), there are 437,441 immigrants in Taiwan as of November 2008 (excluding mainland Chinese). Among them, 75.5 percent or 330,603 individuals are considered blue-collar guest workers, while domestic service providers/maids represent 10 percent of the total, or 44,160 individuals. Students account for 3.9 percent or 17,227 of the total.⁵

The structure of Taiwanese businesses traditionally consisted of family-owned small and medium-sized enterprises that could rely on flexible business strategies to find new niches in the international market (Aspalter, 2001, pp. 12-13).⁶ After experiencing rapid economic growth in the 1970s and mid-1980s, Taiwan faced new challenges as its export-oriented manufacturing companies encountered direct competition from mainland Chinese and Southeast Asian companies producing even cheaper goods. Its economic structure subsequently shifted from one based on manufacturing industries to one based more on management, personal services, technical support, and product design. Taiwan's demography also changed: the proportion of its population in the labor force declined due to the aging of society, and most young educated Taiwanese graduates spurned jobs in blue-collar industries. As a result, there came to be a severe shortage of laborers in labor-intensive industries, with companies in this sector either forced to move to China or Vietnam to keep their products at low prices by employing low-cost locals, or to remain in Taiwan and hire foreign migrants with low salaries.

In the late 1980s, there were over 50,000 undocumented foreign workers from mostly Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia working in blue-collar jobs (Tsay, 1992, as cited in Lan, 2006, p. 39). A change in official labor policy toward foreign migrants in 1992 was aimed at bringing in both high-skilled and low-skilled workers; however, a much greater increase became apparent in regards to low-skilled workers from the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia (later Vietnam joined this group) (Cheng, 2003, p. 173). Worries were expressed by local citizens that Taiwanese society was becoming "tainted" by the flow of migrants into the country: "Public concern centered on the consequences of recruiting 'ethnic others' into a society which never had any experience of living together with a great number of foreigners in our country" (Chao, 1992, p. 144, as cited in Lan, 2006, p. 38). The negative term *wailao* was used to denigrate low-skilled foreigners whose work involved physical labor (Chang, 2003). With foreign workers considered ethnically and culturally alien, their participation in labor-oriented occupations resulted in dual discrimination, since they were seen as deserving only "dirty and demeaning" jobs (Lan, 2006, p. 59).

Public concern may have been anticipated by the Taiwanese government, but the issue of migrants was related to another important official agenda. The state has primarily distributed work permits to applicants from selected ASEAN members as a strategy for maintaining

its diplomatic ties with these states (Lan, 2006, p. 39).⁷ As Lan (2006) argues, the legalization of migrant laborers was not only a response to capitalist demands for low-waged workers; it also derived from the government's urge to strengthen border controls. The inclusion of select ASEAN countries as sources of migrant workers had a rather symbolic meaning, serving as an example of diplomatic and bilateral cooperation, while the exclusion of the PRC presented a nationalistic Taiwanese claim to sovereignty. The Taiwanese government has continued to secure its diplomatic relations with other states by utilizing its capital investment in those select states:

Some migrant workers currently employed in Taiwan previously had working experience in Taiwanese-invested factories in their countries. By being familiar with Taiwanese investment in their hometowns, locals gained direct experience with the wealth of the island. In addition, some Taiwanese business owners who invested in Southeast Asia recruit workers from their foreign branches to their factories in Taiwan. Their social networks in the sending countries also assist them in recruiting domestic workers for their own or their friends' homes. (Lan, 2006, p. 40)⁸

There are 437,441 foreign (non-Chinese) migrants in Taiwan, and the Indonesian population seems to be the largest, numbering 123,905 individuals, followed by 101,592 Vietnamese, 80,484 Thais, and 79,901 Filipinos, according to Japan's National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (NIA) (2009) as of November 2008. Many foreign workers are in labor-intensive manufacturing sectors, while most female migrants work as domestic service providers or maids, numbering 44,160. The gender balance of foreign migrants is 266,172 female migrants to 171,269 male migrants, indicating that female migrants significantly outnumber male migrants. Critics argue that the Taiwanese government may partially be responsible for these gender and national inequalities. The legal entry of foreign migrant workers may seem strictly regulated by the state, but Taiwanese labor brokers are able to recruit certain ethnic groups and nationalities in a biased manner (Loveband, 2002, p. 340). As the labor brokers' rather unfair recruiting scheme continues to operate, ethnic and occupational inequality between Taiwanese and foreign workers have emerged as related problems. Many foreign workers also continue to face issues such as abuse, non-payment of wages, limited legal protection for the rights of employees, poor working conditions and other types of mistreatment (Cheng, 2003; Huang et al., 2009; Ku, 2008; Loveband, 2004; Yiu, 2003, 2005). Moreover, the importation of foreign domestic labor has impacted on Taiwanese households as it releases Taiwanese wives from housekeeping work. By hiring foreign workers to do household tasks, Taiwanese wives are able to return to previous occupations or find new positions as highly-paid office workers or employees in service industries. Cheng (2003) observes that through this transfer of reproductive labor, the conscious and unconscious promotion of ethnic-gender stereotypes in relation to domestic female workers is encouraged, with Taiwanese wives viewing themselves as managers of foreign housemaids in their homes.

In the last two decades, the demographic landscape of Taiwan has changed dramatically. Over 10 percent of the total native population of Taiwan is now above the age of 65, while the portion of the group below the age of 15 has declined, representing only 17.56 percent of the total population (The Republic of China Yearbook, 2008). Taiwanese females are no longer simply seen as housewives but now also function as income providers as well as spouses. With the population of foreigners in Taiwan simultaneously on the rise, larger numbers of foreign migrants serving as domestic workers are increasingly evident in addition to the already sizable population of foreign workers employed as factory laborers. The migrants do not necessarily speak Mandarin or look Taiwanese, but it seems they are slowly becoming irreplaceable in Taiwanese society.

FOREIGN MIGRANTS IN JAPAN

Like Taiwan, Japan has opened its doors to the recruitment of qualified skilled workers from abroad. Unlike Taiwan, however, it continues to restrict the entry of low-skilled

workers. Japan's concern with foreign migrants is similar to Taiwan's, but its preoccupation with its own "ethnicity" has entailed different responses to shortages in its domestic labor force. In many ways, Japan's self-image as an ethnically homogenous society has restrained the importation of foreign migrants even though Japan has been integrated into the world economy for decades. With excessive concerns for its own and other ethnicities embedded in its immigration policies, Japan tends to adopt biased practices and avoid the implementation of effective and appropriate migrant labor policies even though the state has been aware of severe local shortages of labor for quite some time (Laszlo, 2002).

The demographic trends of foreign migrants have changed over the years in terms of gender and nationality. Large numbers of female migrants have come to Japan since the late 1970s, working in various industries including the sex and entertainment industries. Meanwhile, a great number of male migrant workers have arrived in Japan since the 1980s as physical laborers.

Economic pressure has slowly forced Japan to liberalize its immigration policies, but with the Japanese's strong attachment to ethnicity, the country has found it difficult to reach a consensus on the issue of foreign migrants. Responding to public anxiety over the presence of non-Japanese, the government seems to have switched from a focus on solving the nation's labor shortage to identifying undocumented migrants. The government may have successfully reduced the number of undocumented workers, especially in the last four years, but labor shortages remain a problem. The exclusion of low-skilled foreign workers from entry into Japan may, to a certain extent, be the result of a consensus between officials and the public, as they seek to protect the integrity of Japanese culture and ethnicity. However, many argue that Japan's aging society will eventually require more foreign workers (Laszlo, 2002).⁹ Even though the Japanese have struggled with the issue of foreign migrants for the past three decades, official policies are still rather ineffective as far as addressing the nation's economic needs.

Before the revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1990

Foreign migrants to Japan in the 1980s consisted chiefly of females from the Philippines and Thailand working in the sex industries, while male migrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and South Korea worked in the manufacturing industries (Morita, 1994, pp. 334-336). Most female workers from the Philippines came to Japan with entertainment visas, but they typically ended up working in night clubs as bar hostesses and sex workers. There were 8,395 entertainment visa holders from the Philippines in 1983, and in 1988 this number skyrocketed to 41,357, according to the Ministry of Justice and the Immigration Bureau of Japan (Morita, 1994, p. 338). Shortly after the above mentioned wave of female migrants, groups of male migrants entered Japan from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and South Korea with university and pre-college student (*ryugaku* and *shugaku*), trainee (*kenshu*), or tourist visas, often becoming undocumented workers during the mid-1980s (Morita, 1994, p. 334).

As former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone supported the entry of foreign students into Japan in the early 1980s, the number of pre-college students expanded in a short period from 4,140 in 1984 to 30,510 in 1988 (Komai, 1999, p. 58). It was common for these students to take part-time jobs without official permission. Of those pre-college students who entered in 1988, it was estimated that nearly half became undocumented workers (Komai, 1999, p. 58). Despite the government imposing strict work regulations the following year, the number of foreign pre-college students continued to increase, especially those from the PRC (Komai, 1999, p. 58). As the demographic profile of Japanese society had gradually changed, most young Japanese graduates looked for pleasant, clean, and better paying (white-collar) jobs, while positions in blue collar work, such as those in construction and factories, became vacant (Herbort, 1996; Mortia, 1994; Sellek, 2001; Tsuda, 1999). As the domestic labor shortage in Japan worsened, the number of undocumented workers

increased: there were over 100,000 undocumented workers estimated before 1990 (Morita, 1994, p. 336).

After the revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1990

Since Japan liberalized its labor policy to attract foreign migrants in the 1990s, Japanese have displayed mixed reactions to the two major waves of migrant workers venturing to Japan: one consisting of females from the Philippines, Thailand, and South Korea before 1990, and a following influx of Chinese from the PRC and Japanese descendants from Brazil and Peru. This latter entry of *Nikkeijin* was linked to the issuing of long-term visas, with the *Nikkeijin's* historical ties with Japan facilitating the expansion of their population (Tsuda, 1999). Labor brokers in Japan and Brazil made the recruitment of Brazilians fast and effective, while the cultural connection somewhat eased tensions between Japanese and Brazilian migrants (Tsuda, 1999). The result has been that *Nikkeijin* have become an important part of the Japanese labor force. In addition, a large number of foreigners have come to Japan as students, and they also have become a source of foreign labor, at least to some extent: most of them are allowed to work a limited number of hours per day while they attend language schools (Komai, 1999). According to the Immigration Bureau of Japan, as of the end of 2007, 170,590 foreign students came to Japan: 132,460 for university and 38,130 as pre-college students (The Immigration Bureau of Japan, 2008a). There were also 88,086 foreign trainees who came to Japan in 2007 (The Immigration Bureau of Japan, 2008b). Most of them have been evaluated by the Japan Industrial Training Organization (JITCO) and allocated to different sectors. They can stay for a maximum of two years and must leave after the end of their contracts. This trainee visa system was not originally intended for the importation of low-skilled workers, but it seems to have become one in practice (Kuwabara, 1998, p. 379).

There are over 2.15 million registered foreigners living in Japan as of December 2007: the largest group, the Chinese (including the mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan and *Zainichi* Chinese), number 606,889 and make up 28.2 percent of the total population of registered foreigners. They are followed by North and South Koreans, including *Zainichi*, numbering 598,489 and 27.6 percent; Brazilians at 316,967, representing 14.7 percent; Filipinos at 202,592, representing 9.4 percent; and Peruvians at 59,696, representing 2.8 percent of the total population of registered foreigners (Immigration Bureau of Japan, 2008a).¹⁰ The Korean population, which was until recently the largest non-Japanese ethnic group, has been surpassed by the Chinese. This was made possible by an aging Korean population and low birth rate, while the Chinese population has increased ten-fold within two decades. The larger Chinese population is the product of Japan's growing economic ties with China (Chen, 2008). The Brazilian and Peruvian returnees also represent two large population groups.¹¹ They continue to migrate to Japan as low-skilled laborers in the manufacturing and construction industries, while as long-term visa holders they bring their spouses and children from their homelands. Migrant workers from the Philippines continue to enter Japan, despite the decline of entertainment visas issued by the Japanese government, representing a significant minority population. It is suggested that the presence of a large Filipino population is due to longstanding migrant relations with Japan from the late 1970s, when female entertainers in the sex industries migrated in large numbers and a large number of Filipino men came to Japan as manual laborers.¹²

The expanding foreign population in Japan has had two social implications: first, it has created linguistic and cultural boundaries between the Japanese and ethnic others, and second, the settlement of *Nikkeijin* migrants has alerted most Japanese to the prospect of a crisis in Japan's ethnicity (Brody, 2002, p. 101). The total number of female migrants is greater than that of males: 1,150,936 to 1,002,037. It has been argued that their unequal numbers in the immigrant population are the result of Japan's asymmetrical relations with foreigners in terms of gender and nationality. Predominately, female migrants have come from South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand. It is argued that this trend has been due

to Japan's established sex-service and entertainment industries. Many female migrants are lured into those industries, working as bar hostesses or sex workers at massage parlors and night clubs (Komai, 2001, p. 28). A large number of male migrants from Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia work as manual laborers in the manufacturing and construction industries (Komai, 2001, p. 28).¹³ Since no visa exists for manual laborers, most enter Japan with visiting or student visas to disguise their purpose.

Japan has been an aging society for some time. Like Taiwan, those 65 years and over represent 20.8 percent of the total population, while the portion of the age group of 0-14 year olds is only 13.6 percent, as of the end of 2006 (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, 2009). With Japan's high life expectancy rate, the proportion of those in the 65-year-and-over age group will increase, while the portion of the 0-14 year old age group will decline due to Japan's low fertility rate. Japan's traditional alternative labor force, female part-time workers and retirees, may have been a solution in the past, but it cannot be assumed that there will be more female workers in the future since female workers have already taken key roles in Japan's economic growth since the 1960s (Tsuda, 1999, pp. 12, 27). The mechanization and rationalization of production as labor-saving strategies may continue to progress, but it does not benefit all companies, since some cannot afford to buy the necessary machinery (Tsuda, 1999, p. 6). With the limitation of mechanization in Japanese industries, and its highly educated workers who do not wish to work in manufacturing industries, labor shortages in certain sectors will remain a major problem.

THE ROLE OF PRC CHINESE IN TAIWAN AND JAPAN

Chinese migrants have played a limited role in Taiwan's economy due to Taiwan's political and ideological differences with the PRC, while Chinese migrants have made a great impact on Japanese society, becoming the largest non-Japanese resident population. After half a century of separation and political animosities between the PRC and Taiwan, the entry of mainland Chinese into Taiwan has often aggravated social tensions. Despite Taiwan's newfound cultural diversity associated with its importation of highly-skilled migrant workers and foreign spouses, the nation's immigration policies and regulations only allow mainland Chinese women to enter Taiwan as foreign brides. Unlike other foreign brides who experience difficulties being assimilated into Taiwanese society due to language barriers, mainland Chinese brides tend to suffer from political and social stigma (Gluck, 2004; Her, 2003). Despite Taiwan's strict regulations and social biases, as of the end of 2007, 399,038 mainland Chinese have arrived as foreign spouses, representing the largest group or 65.76 percent of the total number of foreign spouses in Taiwan (The Republic of China Yearbook, 2008). The benefits for Taiwan of Chinese migration remain unrealized but a distinct possibility. The PRC might be a better source of foreign laborers than Southeast Asia for cultural and linguistic reasons, but owing to Taiwan's sensitive political and international position a decision in this direction is being made with extreme caution (Lan, 2006, p. 38). The Chinese population may still be small in Taiwan, but public concern about the group has increased due to the rising presence of the PRC in the international community over the last four decades.

While the Chinese population in Taiwan is too small to exert much influence, Chinese migrants in Japan have had a strong impact on Japanese society. Since Japan has had long political, social, and cultural relations with China, the Chinese population has existed in Japan for many years (Chen, 2008). However, over the last three decades the increase in Chinese migrants has been unprecedented. In fact, Chinese immigrants have become the largest foreign population in Japan, numbering 606,889 or as much as 28.2 percent of the total population of registered foreigners as of 2007.¹⁴ Chinese residents in Japan can largely be divided into two groups: those who came to Japan during the Second World War and through Japan's early post-war economic boom (1965-1975), and newcomers who arrived in Japan during and after its bubble economic boom (1986-1990). A large

number of ethnic Chinese now live in Japan with pre-college student, university student and trainee visas.¹⁵ For example, there were 10,479 university students, 9,093 pre-college students, and 68,221 trainee visas issued for people in the PRC and Hong Kong in 2007 alone (Immigration Bureau of Japan, 2008b). Many young Chinese students work as part-time employees while attending Japanese language schools, colleges and universities. University graduates often choose to stay in Japan, working in different professions with international companies, at universities, and in other places (Chen, 2008, pp. 45-47). Those Chinese in professional and managerial jobs have become an important part of the Japanese domestic labor force (Chen, 2008; Komai, 1999). Despite the frequent eruption of political disputes between the PRC and Japan, both nations have maintained strong economic ties with each other, and Japan, hosting a large Chinese population that acts as a labor reserve when needed, has benefitted from this situation.

COMPARING THE SITUATION OF FOREIGN MIGRANTS IN TAIWAN AND JAPAN

Global labor migrations are regulated by the process of capital accumulation as groups of laborers move abroad according to supply and demand for their services while immigration policy oversees the dynamics of labor situations in host states (Herbert, 1996; Satzewich, 1991). Here, it is important to pay attention to the role the state often plays as a gatekeeper, allowing select groups of foreign workers to enter national borders while denying others (Burawoy, 1976, as cited in Satzewich, 1991, p. 52). As Satzewich (1991) argues, the state often uses a combination of economic, political, and ideological assessments as criteria to filtrate migrations. The state may look for sources of non-local labor, but the laborers in question are strictly regulated.

The concerns and interests of bureaucrats, politicians, and the public all play a role in the development of immigration policy. Despite the complexity of policy formulation, two concerns and two interests are of utmost importance. The first of these is political interest. Here, the state's domestic sovereignty and the presence of potential rivals in the form of neighboring states needs to be considered. Its own political position in the international community also needs to be weighed, as an emerging immigration policy should not upset existing international human rights norms. Second, the state needs to consider the social impact and financial costs of immigration. This concern includes increases in overall unemployment and crime rates, a decline in social welfare, costs for language training in municipal departments and other areas, changes to the education system, and many other matters. Importantly, the government needs to convince locals, who may not necessarily accept foreigners as new residents, to become more open. Third, economic interests must be considered carefully. In addition to considering supply and demand factors for labor, the government must accurately estimate the overall outcome of an immigration policy that involves the reproduction of capital accumulation (Satzewich, 1991). Finally, the ideology of the state, as dictated by its history and traditions, must be factored into the equation. Naturally, the government needs to incorporate ideas surrounding the preservation of traditions, the nation's cultural heritage, ethnicity, social customs, and related matters.

Taiwan and Japan's labor markets offer two levels of job opportunities: high-paying (white-collar) jobs in the office/business and service industries, and low-paying (blue-collar) jobs that may involve physically demanding work. As the former level attracts increasingly educated domestic labor, the latter becomes vacant since most locals tend to avoid jobs that involve manual labor. In the latter instance, blue-collar positions appear attractive to foreigners from lower-income nations, who are willing to migrate from overseas. The push-pull model is often used to describe the situation of foreign migrants in Taiwan and Japan.¹⁶ The pull factors include a combination of economic, demographic and social factors in host countries, but mainly relate to higher paying and more available jobs than in the migrant's country of origin.¹⁷ The push factors are located in migrant sending states and encompass problems such as overpopulation, poverty, and high unemployment levels.

Having had this push-pull social and economic situation in Taiwan and Japan develop before the 1990s, both states sought an appropriate solution beyond the use of labor-saving technologies. In this regard, it could be said that Taiwan has partially opened its door to low-skilled foreign migrants while Japan has opened its "side-door." Both the Taiwanese and Japanese have expressed concern over foreigners entering their countries to live with them. At the same time, they have generally failed to recognize that foreign migrants form an essential part of the domestic labor force. Instead, migrants are portrayed as potentially disruptive to the social order (Anderson, 1983; Fukuoka, 1993; Lan, 2006; Oguma, 1995; Tsuda, 1999). In consideration of their unique political and economic situations, however, the Taiwanese and Japanese governments adopt different rationales in formulating their respective immigration policies.

Rationales for policies concerning foreign migrants in Taiwan and Japan

The Taiwanese government emphasizes its political interests in formulating its immigration policy, recruiting foreign migrants from selected countries throughout ASEAN. Accepting foreign workers has been seen by many Taiwanese as a social disadvantage, but importing selected groups of foreign workers from ASEAN countries is thought to provide greater leverage in terms of Taiwan's regional diplomatic relations. ASEAN states that continue to receive foreign direct investments from Taiwan have developed an economic dependency on Taiwan, while the Taiwanese government secures "diplomatic" relations with them. This approach has been heavily influenced by the PRC's rising economic and political status in the international community. In addition, the Taiwanese government prefers migrant workers from Southeast Asia to those from the PRC because they are physically and culturally different from Taiwanese. It is assumed that Southeast Asian migrants will not usually mix socially with Taiwanese locals. This strategy not only serves to control domestic sovereignty in Taiwan but also to distinguish Taiwan from the PRC. Tseng, in explaining the situation of foreign migrants in Taiwan, states:

In most societies, the 'problem' is unsuccessful acculturation among immigrants, but in Taiwan, the attitude toward [mainland] Chinese workers is quite the opposite. We are worried that it would happen too soon, that it would be too easy from them to become 'us', unlike foreigners who just come and leave. (2004, p. 33, as cited in Lan, 2006, pp. 38-39)

In terms of the roles foreign workers are expected to play, workers in the domestic service sector, one in which middle-aged females are typically employed, are a major source of migrants. Taiwan's decision to import female migrants is controversial, but it has provided more opportunities for Taiwanese women to work outside the home. Oishi (2005) explains the strategy of the Taiwanese government: "The state responded promptly to labor market needs and opened their immigration gate for foreign domestic workers as a means to push local women into the labor force (as cited in Lan, 2006, p. 36). In other words, accepting migrant women was clearly a part of the state's industrialization plan. Thus, educated Taiwanese women can enter any business sector, and as the statistics show, 62 percent of Taiwanese women with college or university degrees were employed in 2004 (National Statistics: Republic of China, as cited in Lan, 2006, p. 261). From this perspective, recruiting female workers from Southeast Asia as domestic laborers serves not only to create another working class but also to strengthen the structure of Taiwan's society and establish a Taiwanese labor reserve.

In the case of foreign migrants in Japan, the Japanese emphasize the nationality and ethnicity of foreign migrants so as to control the presence of undocumented workers and residents. However, Japan has failed to grasp the seriousness of its shortage of domestic labor (Kuwahara, 1998). The ethnocentric rationale of both the public and officialdom seems to be a driving force for controlling foreigners, but its ambiguous stance means the labor problem remains largely unresolved. Japanese policymakers initially displayed a strong interest in Japanese descendants as an alternative labor force because they assumed

that Japanese Brazilians would fit more easily into Japanese society (Bartram, 2000; Tsuda, 1999).¹⁸ A Liberal Democratic Party lawmaker in the 1980s, Toshihiko Nojima, was particularly interested in the Japanese heritage of Japanese Brazilians, stating in 1989 that

People opposed to the idea of introducing foreign laborers into Japan say that such a move will cause the ethnic structure of our nearly racially homogenous society to deteriorate. However, they will probably agree to the idea of bringing in foreign nationals who, owing to their Japanese ancestry, are thoroughly acquainted with Japanese customs. (Laszlo, 2002, p. 12)

Despite understanding the public's concern with foreigners coming into Japan, Nojima only considered minimizing the social acceptance costs of foreign migrants. Hence, *Nikkeijin* migration into Japan appeared to be the best solution at that time. It was assumed that the *Nikkeijin* group was going to assimilate into Japanese society and would also lessen the desire of Japanese employers to hire undocumented foreigners (Tsuda, 1999, p. 11). In response to the declining Brazilian economy in the 1980s, Japanese Brazilians were willing to return to Japan as migrants. Since many still had relatives and friends in Japan, their transnational migration was somewhat successful. As the migration of *Nikkeijin* was motivated by the needs of both Japanese Brazilians and Japanese, a special long term visa was introduced in 1990.

Despite allowing certain categories of migrants to enter Japan, foreign migration is not an option the Japanese government generally prefers. During Japan's first post-war economic boom (1965-1970), Japan's labor needs were supplied by young graduates, seasonal foreign workers (*dekasegi*), and female/elderly part-timers. In the 1970s and 80s, high-technology automation systems were introduced to improve individual productivity (Bartram, 2000; Tsuda, 1999; Yorimitsu, 2003).¹⁹ According to the International Robotics Association, numerous labor-saving machines were employed in various industries across Japan: 324,895 industrial robots were installed in Japan as of 1991, compared to 44,000 in the United States and 34,140 in Germany (Kuwahara, 1997, p. 374). While the government has maintained a no low-skilled labor policy, most Japanese workers have to work overtime to meet product demand from the international market (Bartram, 2000, p. 20). It has been argued that if Japan's immigration policy had permitted the inflow of a large number of foreign laborers, most Japanese companies in the past would have made greater profits (Bartram, 2000, p. 20). Although current immigration policy, which accepts students and trainees as potential members of the labor force, only delays dealing with the migrant labor issue, Chinese migrants and immigrants seem to have made a great impact on the Japanese labor force. The Chinese people have taken on various roles, serving as waiters and waitresses in Chinatowns, managers in transnational companies, and professors in Japanese universities. This growing Chinese population could be seen a reflection of the PRC's rising economic power and Japan's related growing economic dependency on China.

In brief, both political interest and ideological concerns play equally important roles in the creation of immigration policy in Taiwan and Japan, while local economic need represents pressure from another direction. Taiwan's effort to recruit foreign migrants from Southeast Asia is prompted by a desire for both political and economic stability in Taiwan. While political interests remain an official priority, the government has demonstrated an inclination to recruit female migrants to stabilize the structure of Taiwanese capital accumulation - freeing up Taiwanese housewives to participate as needed in the labor force. In the case of Japan, its economy developed without large numbers of foreign migrants until 1990. Notwithstanding Japan's ethnocentric perspective towards outsiders, Japan has accepted millions of foreigners to function as a labor reserve for the nation. Chinese migrants have come to Japan to find jobs that most Japanese are unwilling to do and in addition to being students continue to supply an important source of labor. Analyzing the characteristics of the existing foreign populations in Taiwanese and Japanese society, the preceding discussion has thus attempted to explain different aspects of the limited and selective use of foreign laborers in both Taiwan and Japan.

CONCLUSION

This paper has highlighted the similarities and differences of the foreign migrant situation in Taiwan and Japan. As was noted, the Taiwanese and Japanese governments have controlled the entry of foreign migrants into their nations according to different agendas. Their concerns and interests toward foreign migrants are reflected in their immigration policies, which have changed in tandem with local demand for laborers. It is apparent that both governments operate with the belief that certain ethnic groups from particular countries are suitable while others may be harmful to their societies. Xenophobic attitudes stemming from nationalism and conservatism are reflected in the process of decision-making in order to "protect" cultural integrity and authenticity (Satzewich, 1991). Despite small foreign populations residing in both Taiwan and Japan, public misapprehensions have been expressed over foreign residents and such concerns have shaped official labor policies toward migrants.

In the case of Taiwan, the government has favored the recruitment of foreign migrants from select ASEAN countries, even though it seems obvious that mainland Chinese would be especially suited to Taiwanese society owing to common linguistic and cultural ties. Taiwan's attitude toward the PRC has very much been shaped by Taiwan's nationalistic tendencies. Taiwanese foreign investments have increased in select ASEAN countries in line with a policy of "chequebook diplomacy" (Lan, 2006, p. 40) aimed at gaining official recognition in the international community. Taiwanese companies have heavily invested in and relocated to Southeast Asia, simultaneously establishing political ties with states in the region. Importing Southeast Asian workers into Taiwanese society has prompted changes in Taiwan's demography while Taiwan officially rejects Chinese migrant workers to maintain its political integrity. Taiwan may be changing into a multi-ethnic society through recognizing aboriginal groups and adding foreign migrants while rejecting mainland Chinese (Chu, 2000). However, foreign migrants who work in Taiwan look different from most Taiwanese. They may not have strong local language skills and knowledge of social customs, and they are often treated as second-class residents. The visibility and marginalization of foreign guest workers as such has led to much controversy over immigration policy.

Besides the fact that most foreign workers can be distinguished from Taiwanese through their physical appearance, many of them are female. The high proportion of female migrants has been directly influenced by Taiwanese government efforts to help Taiwanese females find employment outside the home. This gender-based policy has been criticized for contributing to ethnic gender inequality, as most female workers who come to Taiwan work in the domestic service sectors as housemaids and caregivers. In addition to the government, Taiwanese immigration brokers regulate the entry of foreign migrants into Taiwan. Female foreign migrants continue to be chosen by them to work as domestic helpers and maids in Taiwan. As maids, they are often isolated within the homes of their employers, resulting in their being unable to establish normal social networks. They must work diligently to prove that they can fulfil "motherhood" duties, while many of them have left their children behind in their home state to improve the financial welfare of their family members (Cheng, 2003; Lan, 2006). These ethnic and gender boundaries between foreigners and locals seem to have remained because they are maintained by the state, private brokers, and employers. Despite criticisms regarding the determination with which the Taiwanese government has pursued this policy, Taiwan is thereby able to produce Taiwanese workers for the labor market rapidly and efficiently.

Japan has struggled with the issue of foreign migrants in a different fashion, selecting Japanese descendants from South America as an alternative labor force. Despite the government's assumption that the *Nikkeijin* group would more easily assimilate into Japanese society, the cultural and social boundaries between them and locals remain apparent. The Japanese-Brazilian community has been socially shifted away from the in-group to the out-group, joining Japan's ethnic others which include Korean and Chinese

descendants, the indigenous Ainu, and other newcomers. Fukuoka (1993) argues that Japan's self-image has created an ethnic filter that prevents certain ethnic groups from entering Japan, while allowing others to live throughout the country. However, looking at the history of post-war international migration to Japan, female migrants represent the most accepted minority group in terms of their assimilation into Japanese society yet also one of the most marginalized. As Japan's established sex and entertainment industries remain in place, female migrants in these sectors continue to increase. Since the assimilation of Japanese-Brazilian migrants does not seem to have been successful, their entry into Japan may be restricted in the future. Chinese migrants, on the other hand, seem to have been the most successful, and there may be an even greater influx of Chinese in the future due to Japan's closer ties with the PRC. The contrast between the Chinese and other migrants is seen in their rising population and diversity of occupations. Many Chinese have come to Japan as university students, business people, professors, trainees, and spouses, and subsequently have become integrated into Japanese society. The large Chinese population may eventually become the pillar of a multi-ethnic society in Japan.

Seeing how the Taiwanese and Japanese governments impose inflexible laws and regulations, this brings to the fore another social issue: human rights violations, social stress, and excessive working hours. Both locals and foreign workers are now likely to become victims of the structure of Japanese society. Local workers often end up working overtime to accommodate huge production demands from overseas markets, while foreign workers continue to work at minimum wage or as clandestine workers, often under unsafe conditions. In aging societies such as Taiwan and Japan, foreigners may be the only group that will undertake jobs that most locals do not want to do. Understanding that the issue of foreign workers is complex and controversial, the governments in both nations should take a responsible role in educating foreigners and locals alike in recognizing the necessity of hosting foreign migrant workers in their respective societies.

NOTES

- ¹ It is argued that Japan's unemployment figures are not a realistic reflection of the unemployment situation; the people who are unemployed are often people who cannot or do not want to take Three K jobs (Laszlo 2002, pp. 13-14). There is often a demand for nurses and caregivers in hospitals and seniors centers during periods of high unemployment, but those positions often remain vacant.
- ² Despite Taiwan's efforts to distinguish between Taiwanese and Chinese, there are large numbers of Taiwanese marrying Chinese. Their status is somewhat controversial in Taiwan. The author does not discuss resident Koreans and Chinese who have assimilated into the domestic workforce in this paper.
- ³ As permanent-resident foreigners, they seem to have a rather different role in Japanese society, and the author feels that it is not appropriate to discuss them with foreign migrants who have come to Japan since the 1990s.
- ⁴ The place-of-origin for Chinese spouses is The People's Republic of China, including Hong Kong and Macau, according to The Republic of China Yearbook 2008.
- ⁵ The total population of Taiwan is approximately 22.9 million. The majority group consists of Han people who came to the island in the seventeenth century from mainland China. The Han group is comprised of *Holo* (the largest group) and *Hakka*. When the Taiwanese government was established in 1949, 1.3 million came to the island from mainland China. Fourteen indigenous minority groups such as Amis, *Atayal*, *Bunun*, *Kavalan*, *Paiwan*, *Pinuyumayan* and so on, have been officially recognized by the Taiwanese government.
- ⁶ Taiwan's overseas trade was originally developed with Japan and the United States as Taiwan imported essential parts from Japan and assembled them for the US market (Hughes, 1997, pp. 110-112). Maintaining this trade configuration, Taiwan continues to import essential components from Japan and now exports to the mainland market via Hong Kong and to the United States.

- ⁷ This regulation does not apply to foreign migrants from the West, Japan, and other developed states.
- ⁸ Former president Lee Teng-hui announced that "this [the Going South] policy was not only a solution for relocating labor-intensive industries but also a means to develop political ties with four ASEAN countries" (Lan 2006, p. 40). Tsai and Tsay (2001, as cited in Lan 2006, p. 40) argue that "to a great extent, the connection between capital outflow [from Taiwan] and labor inflow [to Taiwan] explains how these four ASEAN countries were chosen by the [Taiwanese] government as sources of migrant labor."
- ⁹ Laszlo (2002) discusses Japan's shrinking population as well as its labor force, arguing that some Japanese politicians did not take this issue seriously. Laszlo points out former Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi denying the existence of Japan's soaring unemployment, making remarks that Japan's population issue was in the past, and saying that new college graduates would eventually take minimum wage jobs in 2001 (2002, p. 13). However, Jens Wilkinson argued against Koizumi's view, saying that "To some extent, the unemployment figures reflect a mismatch. The people who are unemployed are often people who cannot or do not want to work at positions for which there is a labor shortage" (2002, pp. 13-14).
- ¹⁰ Japan has its own minority group consisting of Koreans and Chinese who came to Japan as colonial subjects during the war. The term *Zainichi* applies to them and their descendants living in Japan. They hold *tokubetsu eijyusha kyokasho* (special long-term resident visas).
- ¹¹ Many Japanese descendants had returned to Japan before the revision of the Immigration policy, but a greater number of *Nikkeijin* have arrived in Japan after 1990.
- ¹² It is important to note that the numbers of entertainment visas issued in Japan have declined due to concerns between the Philippines and Japan regarding human rights abuses. Nevertheless, the Filipino population has continued to increase.
- ¹³ In the case of Bangladeshis and Pakistanis, the Ministry of Justice in Japan has changed its regulations toward them. Since 1990, the numbers of undocumented Bangladeshis and Pakistanis have declined (Morita, 1994, p. 334).
- ¹⁴ Nevertheless, the Chinese population in Japan is relatively small compared to that in the United States, Australia, Canada and other nations (Chen, 2008, pp. 41-34).
- ¹⁵ As they hold a trainee visa to come to Japan for gaining new skills, they are typically treated as low-skilled workers, being assigned work in the manufacturing industries (Chen, 2008).
- ¹⁶ The push-pull model is the dominant theory in Japan regarding the understanding of the situation of low-skilled/illegal workers in Japan (Herbert, 1996, p. 7).
- ¹⁷ Herbert (1996) discusses theories of the undocumented Asian worker in "Foreign workers and law enforcement in Japan," and his argument seems relevant for understanding the situation of low-skilled foreign workers. Japan's immigration policy still does not include low-skilled workers in most circumstances, even though they are a dominant group in the foreign population of Japan.
- ¹⁸ There are many studies on *Nikkeijin* in Japan. *Nikkeijin* were chosen to come to Japan because of an underlying assumption that culture and ethnicity coexist within a race (Tsuda, 1999, p. 11). However, Tsuda (1998) argues that Japanese Brazilian return migrants are rather socially marginalized: despite some Japanese saying that *Nikkeijin* are not completely foreigners, Japanese are often confused and disappointed by their lack of Japanese heritage.
- ¹⁹ The term *dekasegi* has been used since the Tokugawa period (1600-1867) in Japan, originally to describe Japanese workers temporarily leaving their native place to work elsewhere who then return back home (Carvalho, 2003, p. 87). The *dekasegi* were typically uneducated and occupied a low social position. Japanese Brazilian returnees are often called *dekasegi* by some Japanese who assume that they come to Japan to work temporarily and will eventually return to their home countries (Carvalho, 2003, p. 87).

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