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BRAZILIAN MIGRATION TO JAPAN TRENDS, MODALITIES AND IMPACT*

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* The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.

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A. Introduction

About twenty years have passed since Japan entered the “age of migration” by the influx of Asian and Latin American migrant workers. Though the number of migrants is still much smaller than that of North American and West European countries, all the attention was focused on the ‘foreigners’ problem. Since then, the number of Latin American migrants has steadily increased, while the number of visa overstayers began to decrease in 1994 (Table 1 & 2). Brazilians are now the third largest group next to Koreans and Chinese.[1]

The most salient features of Latin Americans in Japan are as follows:

(1) Most are descendants of Japanese immigrants or their spouses. Though the overwhelming majority left for Brazil, Japanese also emigrated to Peru, Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay by the early 1970s. But now, a considerable proportion of Japanese Latin Americans live in Japan (Table 3). They are granted a privileged status of residence as descendants of Japanese. As a result, the great majority of Latin Americans in Japan are documented. Though the number of Brazilian overstayers has been increasing (Table 1 & 2), their proportion remains negligible.

(2) While Japanese immigrants in Latin America are relatively heterogeneous in terms of their social and economic conditions, Latin Americans in Japan are incorporated into a highly homogeneous segment regardless of their backgrounds. Table 4 shows that approximately seventy percent of Brazilians and Peruvians are working, and represents an employment rate that is much higher than that of other nationality groups. The rate of employees is also high. In addition, most Brazilians are manual workers employed in the car, electronics and food-manufacturing sectors (Table 5).

(3) Most Latin American workers use recruiting agencies for their first trip to Japan. They are usually sent not to manufacturers, but to labor contractors in Japan and dispatched to factories. This indirect employment system made the Latin Americans a flexible workforce that can easily be laid off.

In the following sections, I will examine how these characteristics of Brazilians in Japan have been formed and transformed, focusing on the immigration policy and labor market incorporation.[2]

B. Data and method

The principal source of data for this paper comes from a set of three, mutually related research investigations. A series of studies was conducted from June 1997 to September 2000.[3]

The first set of data comes from 2,054 Brazilian employees (hereafter representing the worker data). The survey required the collaboration of thirty labor contractors and was conducted between January and March 1998. Brazilian employees were distributed questionnaires and their responses were analyzed.

The labor recruiter survey in São Paulo was conducted between January and March 1998, and involved 66 interviews with owners of recruiting agencies. We visited every building in the Liberdade district, known as Japanese Town in central São Paulo, and most owners answered our questions. The labor recruiter survey in Paraná was conducted between July and August 1999, and involved 35 interviews with owners of recruitment agencies. I compiled a list of 35 agencies using advertisements of local newspapers in Curitiba, Londrina and Maringá, the Yellow Pages of Paraná province, and personal acquaintances. I then visited and conducted interviews with all of the 35 agencies (hereafter representing the recruiter data).

Lastly, we conducted a research survey on manufacturers in Toyota city in September 2000 (hereafter representing the Toyota data). We compiled a list of manufacturers from the directory of the Toyota Chamber of Commerce. Out of 1,471 eligible candidates, 740 firms participated in the survey, yielding a response rate of 50.5%. Among the 740 participating firms, 102 companies had employed or were employing Brazilian workers.

C. Trends of brazilian migration to Japan (1980–2005)

The registered population of Brazilians in Japan is shown in Figure I. Since the first and second generations with Japanese nationality are not counted as Brazilians, they are excluded from these statistics. The data shows a sudden increase in 1988, followed by skyrocketing growth from 1989 to 1991. It should also be noted that the number of Brazilians increased even after the collapse of the bubble economy. Furthermore, return migration from Brazil to Japan started before the boom period. Considering these factors, the processes of Brazilian return migration to Japan can be divided into five phases. Each phase reflects structural changes both in Brazil and Japan, as well as the shaping and transformation of a migration system that affected Brazilian migration to Japan.

1. Phase One (1980–84): Invisible return migration of the first generation

First temporary return migration from Brazil to Japan began in the early 1980s. Most returnees in this period were first-generation immigrants, with Japanese nationality, a fluency in Japanese and familiarity with Japanese society. They were almost negligible in number, though many felt ashamed to work in Japan because they regarded their return to Japan as a sign of their failure and lack of success in Brazil. Their migration to Japan tended to be invisible both for Japan and Brazil (Kajita, Tanno and Higuchi, 2005). But early first-generation return migrants played an important role in generating a massive flow of migration.

2. *Phase Two (1985–89): The Shaping of recruiting networks*

Though the Brazilian population in Japan remained stable until 1987, the year 1985 marked a qualitative change in Brazilian migration. During this year, the first advertisement offering job opportunities in Japan appeared in a Japanese newspaper in Brazil (Mori, 1992; p.149). This indicated that Japanese firms had 'discovered' Brazil as a new labor reserve, and labor recruitment from Brazil was thus institutionalized. In fact, the number of employment advertisements in Japanese newspapers exceeded one hundred in 1987. It then increased rapidly in 1988, reaching more than one thousand in the latter half of 1990 (Figure II).[4]

Behind this new period of labor recruitment were influential structural conditions both in Japan and Brazil. In Brazil, the inflation rate exceeded 100% throughout the 1980s. In particular, it reached 682% in 1988 and 1,769% in 1989, which propelled emigration of Brazilians in general, as well as Japanese Brazilians (Goza, 1994). In fact, the Brazilian government acknowledged 1.4 million Brazilians migrated abroad from 1986 to 1990 (Margolis, 1994; pp.3–6).

The economic crisis in Brazil coincided with the economic boom in Japan. After the Plaza agreement in 1985, the exchange rate rapidly favored the Japanese yen. In 1990, the value of the yen compared with the U.S. dollar rose twice as high as its value five years previously, which made working in Japan very attractive for both Japanese Brazilians and Asian migrants to Japan. During this period, the first and foremost reason for the introduction of Brazilian workers into Japanese factories was the acute labor shortage. Indeed, Table 6 shows that research on foreign workers around 1990 revealed that the primary reason for employing foreign workers was the labor shortage (Inagami et al., 1992; Tezuka et al., 1992; Tokyo Institute of Labor, 1991). In general, these are the push and pull factors affecting Brazilian migration to Japan.

However, the massive influx of Brazilians to Japan did not occur without the assistance of recruiting agencies that connected Brazil and Japan (cf. Brettel, 2000; p.108). Most Japanese Brazilians do not migrate until they have secured a concrete job opportunity upon arrival, such as work at the Toyota factory in Toyota city or at the Sony factory in Toyohashi city. In such cases, labor recruiters served as 'translators' of macro conditions into micro job opportunities.

The first labor recruiters were the first-generation return migrants who worked in Japan and were asked to bring other Japanese Brazilians. They went back to Brazil again and then began to hire Japanese. The first recruitment agency office was opened by a return migrant in 1984. Another return migrant opened an office in 1986 as a branch of the Yokohama-based labor contractor in which he used to work. The latter established a recruiting network ranging from the Amazon to Argentina and Paraguay. In this way, a "market-mediated migration system" emerged in the late 1980s (Higuchi and Tanno, 2003).

Networks of recruiting agents soon spread all around the Japanese communities in South America. One indicator is the year recruitment agencies were established.[5] Those opened before 1984 were not established as recruiting agencies, but as travel agencies. When return-migration became popular, they entered into brokering jobs, acknowledging they were highly profitable. Both in São Paulo and Paraná province, the peak period of opening was 1988–90 (Figure III). Moreover, recruiters began to loan necessary expenses to Japan in 1987 (Mori, 1992; p.150). This loan system rapidly became a standard condition for recruitment, which enabled even the poorest Japanese Brazilians to migrate.

It should be emphasized that recruiting networks were already established before the Japanese Diet revised the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (hereafter the immigration law) in 1990. It is true that revision of the immigration law propelled Brazilian migration to Japan, but social infrastructure that facilitates individual migration decision-making was already present in the late 1980s.

3. Phase Three (1990–92): The influence of the revised immigration law

Though the Brazilian population in Japan increased suddenly in 1988 and 1989, the year 1990 should be noted as the year in which the basic concept of current immigration control policy was formulated. Second-generation Brazilians were issued working visas as children of Japanese nationals even before the revision of the law. Since the reformed law set up a new status of residence called "long-term resident", third-generation Brazilians and non-Japanese spouses of second- and third-generation Brazilians were granted renewable stay with unlimited access to labor markets. Therefore, the qualitative impact of the revised immigration law appeared as an influx of third generation and non-Japanese spouses.[6] Quantitatively, this period experienced the largest increase of the Brazilian population. The increasing numbers are 41,901 in 1990, 62,904 in 1991 and 28,470 in 1992. As a result, there was an increase of more than 130,000 Brazilians during this phase.

This period also saw an increasing number of visa overstayers, mostly from Asian countries such as China, Iran, Malaysia, South Korea and the Philippines. However, Brazilians and undocumented workers were largely incorporated into different sectors. While undocumented migrants from East, Southeast, and South Asia found jobs in small factories or construction sites concentrated in the Greater Tokyo region, most Brazilians were brought to bigger factories of the car or electronics industries, taking over the positions of seasonal internal migrants. Brazilians were paid more and found jobs through institutionalized channels, including recruiting agencies, while undocumented workers depended on personal networks. Inagami et al. (1992) called these different incorporations "loosely structured dualism." It should also be noted that labor contractors were already sending internal migrants to Japanese factories before returnees from Brazil were employed. That is why a considerable number of early Brazilian migrants entered the workplace through indirect employment by labor contractors.[7]

4. Phase Four (1993–97): Recession and transformation of the labor market

Long-term recession since 1993 had a significant effect on Brazilian migration to Japan. Not surprisingly, the increasing numbers of Brazilians suddenly dropped, though it may partly reflect the shortage of the labor reserve in Brazil. However, we should not overlook the fact that the size of the Brazilian population had been steadily increasing throughout this period. This can be explained by two factors: (1) new demand for flexible labor, and (2) geographical dispersion of workplaces.

First, the structure of the labor market was transformed after the collapse of the economic bubble. As mentioned previously, Brazilians had been employed as temporary workers, partly replacing Japanese seasonal migrants from peripheral areas such as Tohoku and Kyushu. But their positions in firms had changed. At the time of the economic boom, they were expected to solve the acute labor shortage. In contrast, they were employed during the period of economic stagnation as a highly flexible labor force that can easily be laid off (Kajita, Tanno and Higuchi, 2005). Figure IV shows that the majority of the 102 firms in Toyota city do not think it difficult to recruit Japanese workers. It is rather surprising that less than half of the respondents regard foreign workers as cheap labor. Instead, they employ foreign workers to respond to fluctuations of production or to replace regular members. In this way, Brazilian workers were assigned a role that Piore (1979) attributed to a secondary labor market.

Second, labor contractors responded to the sudden shrinking of the Brazilian labor market by geographical expansion. While Shizuoka and Aichi prefectures have been keeping a considerable share of the Brazilian population (Figure V), the Kanto region (Kanagawa, Gunma Ibaraki and Saitama) was exceeded by the Chubu region in addition to Shizuoka and Aichi (Nagano, Gifu and Mie). The Brazilian population in Kanto has been basically stagnating since 1991. On the other hand, many labor contractors in Aichi and Shizuoka found an exploitable labor market in semi-peripheral areas in the Chubu region.[8] That is why the number of Brazilians has been increasing even during the recession.

5. Phase Five (1998–present): Consequences of generation change

The number of second-generation Brazilians has been stagnating since 1992, while the numbers of third generation and non-Japanese spouses have been increasing (Figure VI). In 1998, those with a long-term resident visa outnumbered those with spouses and children of Japanese. In the 1980s, most migrants from Brazil were first-generation return migrants with Japanese nationality, while the early 1990s saw a skyrocketing increase in the number of the second generation. The majority at present is represented by the third generation and non-Japanese spouses.[9] This demographic change caused two problems in relation to education.

First, the proportion of children among Brazilians in Japan is getting higher (Figure VII). Children under fifteen years of age exceeded 10% in 1996 for the first time. The number of children at present exceeds forty thousand. At first, the enrollment of Brazilian students caused “multilingual” problems in

Japanese schools. As Table 7 shows, Brazilians have been the largest group in need of special assistance concerning the learning of the Japanese language, though the proportion is decreasing with prolonged stay in Japan.

But the focus of the issue has gradually shifted to poor educational attainment and the high rate of refusal to attend school. Though estimates vary, 10 to 30 percent of school-aged children are said to be absent from school. In addition, more than half of the children at the age of fifteen do not proceed to high school level because of poor educational attainment, maladjustment, or the policy of parents. This is much lower than the proportion (95–97%) of Japanese students proceeding to high school level.

Second, our survey of Brazilian factory workers indicated that young and recent arrivals were less educated than earlier arrivals (Table 8). Comparing those who first came to Japan in 1980–89 and 1997–98, the proportion of university dropouts/graduates fell by more than ten percent, while that of lower secondary school dropouts/graduates increased by fourteen percent.

Why was there such a decline in the academic achievements of Brazilian workers? Douglas Massey formulated a relation between the migration process and the social status of migrants (Massey, 1990; Massey et al., 1987). At the initial stage of the migration process, relatively well-off single men tend to leave for receiving countries. As these early migrants establish themselves, they form a social bridge between their place of origin and destination, and thereby lower the costs and risks of migration for others who may wish to follow. Accordingly, opportunities to work at the destinations will be opened to women and those with poor education, making migration widespread in the sending communities. However, in the case of Brazilian migration to Japan, a decline in academic qualifications occurred not as a result of the influx of those in the lower strata, but by the labor market participation of teenagers. For teenagers studying in Brazil, it seems more attractive to work in Japan than to continue studying.

Considering the pride associated with good educational performance among Japanese in Latin America, these results look shocking. Migration to Japan will lead to an overall decline of academic qualifications for Japanese immigrants in Brazil.

D. THE BACKGROUND OF THE REVISED IMMIGRATION LAW: OPENING THE DOOR TO "ETHNIC JAPANESE"

1. Outline of the 1990 revised immigration law

As mentioned earlier, the most influential policy change on immigration is the revision of the immigration law in 1990. When the law passed in 1989, the number of visa overstayers, as well as Japanese Latin Americans, was rapidly increasing. Japanese companies were suffering from an acute labor shortage. There were therefore contentious debates on whether Japan should introduce migrant workers.

Though the revised immigration law was the answer to the situation, it did not allow the formal importation of unskilled labor or legalize visa overstayers. Instead, it established roughly three legal categories concerning opportunities to work in Japan (Table 9). First, it acknowledged the status of residence to introduce more skilled workers.

Second, the "trainee" status was partially amended so that firms can hire manual workers for one year. This is a *de facto* importation of unskilled migrants and the technical internship program was established in 1993 (and partially amended in 1997) to extend their stay for three years (Ministry of Justice, 2000).[10]

Third, the most important in this context was the establishment of the "long-term resident" status of residence. Those with this status are allowed unlimited scope of activities and are able to renew their visa. Although this status is also applied to (mostly Indochinese) refugees and those granted special permission for residence, most are third-generation descendants of Japanese nationals from South America, China, Indonesia and the Philippines.

2. *Legal status of two 'descendents of Japanese nationals'*

So far, establishing the long-term resident status of residence has been understood in the context of the acute labor shortage of the late 1980s. For example, Cornelius comments as follows:

> Numerically the most important of Japan's side-door mechanisms for labor importation has been the policy of allowing the descendants of Japanese emigrants to Latin America (the *Nikkeijin*) to immigrate to Japan…. The policy of highly liberal immigration opportunities for the *Nikkeijin* from Latin America is seen by Japanese officials as a politically low-cost way of helping to solve the labor shortage (Cornelius, 1994; pp.395–6).

However, this interpretation is misleading. A recent study by Kajita (2005) revealed that the privileged status granted for Japanese Latin Americans is not based on the demand for cheap labor but on the principle of nationhood (Kajita, Tanno and Higuchi, 2005). To understand the legal status of such individuals, we first have to look at the history of two 'descendants of Japanese nationals'.

Since Japan's colonization of Korea in 1910, Koreans were granted Japanese nationality. But the Alien Registration Law of 1947 stipulated that the Koreans should be regarded as aliens (Kashiwazaki, 2000; p.21). When the San Francisco Peace Treaty was ratified in 1952, Koreans who migrated to Japan before and during World War II as Japanese nationals lost their Japanese citizenship. In this context, first-generation Koreans who migrated to Japan before August 1945 can be seen as 'ex-Japanese nationals'. Additionally, since the Nationality Law of Japan is based on the *jus sanguinis* principle, their descendants remained Korean nationals.

When the 1965 treaty normalized the relation between South Korea and Japan, Koreans were allowed permanent residence in Japan. The bilateral treaty also stipulated that the status of the third generation be renegotiated by 1991.[11] In fact, the formal negotiation between the two governments started in 1988 and was based on the Agreement on the Legal Status and the Treatment of Nationals of the Republic of Korea Residing in Japan. In the end, a memorandum was signed by the Foreign Ministers of Japan and the Republic of Korea in 1991, which resulted in the promulgation of the Special Law on the Immigration Control of Those Who Have Lost Japanese Nationality and Others on the Basis of the Treaty of Peace with Japan to establish the "special permanent resident" status for resident Koreans and their descendants.

But this is not the whole story. On the one hand, third-generation Koreans can be seen as "sociological Japanese" born and socialized in Japan (Kajita, 1998). The Ministry of Justice took it for granted to guarantee permanent residence to these individuals. On the other hand, the taskforce of the Ministry of Justice regarded descendants of Japanese emigrants as "ethnic Japanese" in need of special treatment. When the taskforce started to review the legal status of third-generation Koreans in 1986, they felt it necessary to create a special status of residence for third-generation emigrants to adjust the balance between the two groups (Kajita, Tanno and Higuchi, 2005).

At that time, the taskforce paid attention to third-generation descendants of Japanese emigrants to northeast China, instead of those to Latin America. Many Japanese migrated to northeast China (Manchuria) along with the invading Japanese army. When the Japanese military forces withdrew from the region at the end of World War II, many children were left behind and grew up in Chinese families. In the 1980s, these individuals began to return to Japan with their children (second generation) and grandchildren (third generation). This is why a long-term resident status of residence was established in 1990 for third-generation descendants of Japanese emigrants. Therefore, the *de facto* introduction of third-generation Latin Americans to the Japanese labor market can be regarded as a by-product of dealing with the negative consequences of Japanese imperialism.

E. Recruiting networks and the just-in-time delivery of Brazilian workers

1. *Recruiting agencies as facilitators of migration*

The use of recruiting agencies for labor migration is widely seen in Asia (Martin, 1996; Massey et al., 1998). Brazilian migration to Japan is not an exception. Recruiting agencies are responsible for driving the rapid increase in the number of Brazilians. Most recruiting agencies operate as travel agencies, since they sell air tickets to Japan. Ideally, there are three types of agencies: pure travel agencies, recruiting agencies, and brokers (Table 10). Pure travel agencies were established before the return migration began. While they do not recruit workers to take to Japan, they sell air tickets to brokers. Recruiting agencies, which occupy the majority of our survey, are officially recognized as travel agencies, but they are engaged

solely in recruiting workers. Brokers are not registered as travel agencies; they help provide employment opportunities in Japan and buy air tickets from other agencies.

This market-mediated migration system has proliferated all around the Japanese community in Brazil. In fact, Table 11 shows that two-thirds of the respondents experienced the first trip to Japan using loans from recruiting agencies. This means that the majority of Japanese Brazilians depended on labor recruiters for places to stay and work after emigrating, instead of family members or kinsmen.

At the same time, Table 11 also suggests those with higher education were less dependent on recruiting agencies, while family migrants tended to rely on the agencies. The more educated may be able to afford the initial cost of migration. In addition, they can look for jobs and housing by themselves through their greater financial resources. Meanwhile, 77% of family migrants used recruiting agencies, while half of the family reunification cases migrated with the help of the agencies. Family migrants seem to avoid the risk of uncertainty and prefer to secure jobs and housing before departure.

But the system of labor brokering does not favor Brazilian workers. Though recruiting agencies finance all of the travel expenses to Japan, these expenses are later deducted from the salaries of Brazilian workers. The total expense depends on how many mediators detailed in Figure VIII are involved in the brokering process.

If a Japanese-Brazilian potential migrant makes contact with a promoter, then he or she will be taken to a broker or travel agency. If the potential migrant does not find a job at the first agency, they may be introduced to another agency to be offered a job.[12] The candidate has to pay commission for each mediator if he or she eventually finds a job in Japan. This is represented as Case 1.

Cases shown below detail variations of travel expenses and mediators involved in the process. Though commission for each mediator depends on the demand and supply of labor, there are three discernible trends: (1) commission for promoters is increasing because it is getting more difficult to employ workers, (2) commission for promoters are higher in São Paulo than in Paraná, because the labor shortage is more serious in the former region, and (3) young women are the most highly valued as shown in Case 3, since Japanese firms are keen to employ young women as a tougher and cheaper labor force.

Case 1: Migrant → Promoter 1 → Promoter 2 → Broker → Travel agency
$500 $200 $600 $1500 (airfare + visa) Total $2800

Case 2: Migrant → Recruiting agency
$2300 (airfare $1400, visa $100, commission $800) Total $2100

Case 3: Young female migrant → Promoter → Broker → Travel agency in SP Total $3750
$1000 $600 $2150 (airfare $1400, visa $150, commission $800)

Figure IX illustrates the distribution of travel expenses in Paraná. Standard minimum prices range between $2000 and $2800 U.S. dollars. In terms of the maximum price, it is clear that $2500 is the standard price.

2. *Just-in-time delivery of Brazilian workers*

Though migrants from Brazil were at first substitutes for seasonal workers from rural Japan, they were incorporated into increasingly different segments of the secondary labor market. Most seasonal workers used to be directly employed by manufacturers, with contracts of three to six months. Such short-term contracts were compatible with fluctuations of production, enabling manufacturers to coordinate a workforce on short notice by using labor contractors. This tendency was strengthened throughout the 1990s, steadily expanding the labor contractor sector (Tanno, 1999).

According to Table 12, most foreign workers are seen in large- or medium-sized firms: 994 (67.9%) of the 1,464 total foreigners are working in a firm with a regular staff of 100 or more. In addition, smaller firms depend more on direct employment. Of the 470 foreigners working in smaller firms, 250 (53.2%) are employed directly by the firm. In contrast, larger companies prefer indirect employment: 797 (80.2%) of the foreign workers in larger companies are hired through labor contractors. Furthermore, 78.4% of workers employed indirectly are concentrated in firms with a regular staff of 100 or more, while 55.9% of workers employed directly are working in firms with a regular staff of fewer than 100 individuals. In general, the share of indirect employment increases in proportion to the size of the company. This is not because larger firms do not have the know-how for direct employment. Ironically, those with the best knowledge concerning the management of foreign workers avoid direct employment. It is clear that the majority of foreign workers are working in larger factories, but they are indirectly employed through labor contractors. Most of them are used as members of a "convenient" workforce who are disposable at any time. Those working in small-sized firms, on the other hand, are expected to solve the chronic labor shortage. The opportunities for labor contractors to send Brazilian workers are therefore much greater in large-sized firms. But they have to deliver and take back workers as soon as their clients make such requests.

The policy of contractors with respect to the fluctuation of labor demand is twofold. Firstly, they try to have as many connections with manufacturers as possible. Of course, the primary purpose of this is to increase the turnover, but at the same time, various sources of clients can also minimize the loss of sudden cutbacks. When workers are cut back, they can be transferred to other factories if they have many connections.[13] Contractors usually combine relatively stable and unstable jobs. The former includes delivering a few workers to small-sized factories and the food industry. These jobs tend to be less profitable, but can be a shock absorber. Typical of the latter are car parts factories, which provide more profitable jobs, but the demand is unpredictable.

Secondly, contractors try to keep a mobile labor pool both in Japan and Brazil. Contractors usually send a set of documents necessary for a visa application (a letter of guarantee, income certificate of

employers, etc.), and recruiting agencies keep them so that they can quickly dispatch workers to the contractors. But as mentioned in the previous section, demands fluctuate, and workers might not be able to get jobs when they arrive in Japan. In such cases, workers have to wait until contractors offer other jobs. In examining this labor supply system, a typical example is an Aichi-based labor contractor firm. A Brazilian personnel manager of this contractor stays in Brazil six months a year and interviews with potential migrant workers through recruiting agencies all over the country. If there are five or more applicants, he even goes to Belém in Amazonas.[14] Workers are then sent to the dormitory of this contractor, but they do not always start working right away because the contractor usually maintains approximately 20 workers who are waiting for jobs. These workers are kept in order for the contractor to respond to demands promptly, which enables the contractor to expand business opportunities.

This is quite similar to the just-in-time parts-delivery system, which is one of the core components of the lean production system. It is intended to minimize stock and thus allow a quick response to fluctuation, enabling first-to-market production. But many have pointed out the problem that such a strategy poses for subcontractors: it is a great burden to keep in time for supplying necessary products. They have to dispatch their product earlier but are prohibited from delivering until just before the proper time.

In the case of Brazilian migration to Japan, workers on the waiting list are "delivered" to workplaces, embodying the system of just-in-time labor delivery. But it is not contractors or recruiting agencies, but the Brazilians themselves who bear the burden of this labor supply system. They have to wait until they are delivered to workplaces, paying for living expenses during the waiting period whilst receiving no pay. Moreover, Brazilians are often dispatched from one factory to another in accordance with the fluctuation in demand. Under such unstable working conditions, it is difficult for workers to stabilize their living conditions.

F. Conclusion: paradoxes of migration of "Ethnic Japanese"

Brazilians were "discovered" as a new source of labor around 1990. They were enthusiastically recruited to Japan and filled the vacancy once occupied by internal migrants. Though they were employed as temporary workers, they were expected to work for a long period at the one workplace. But their position *within* the secondary labor market changed and was polarized into two segments in the late 1990s. As we have seen in the previous section, the Brazilian niche in the Japanese labor market was formed around 1990 and transformed in the late 1990s (Higuchi and Tanno, 2003).

Therefore, it is not a sufficient explanation to refer solely to the expansion of the secondary labor market to account for changes in the workforce. It is true that Japanese manufacturers need a more flexible workforce, but we need to clarify the nature of a flexible workforce. Tsuda and Cornelius (2002) stress the effect of "casualization" of the Japanese labor market on foreign workers (Tsuda and Cornelius, 2002), but their explanation is inadequate. The secondary labor market is not a unitary entity, but is highly stratified and segmented. We use the term *more flexible staffing* in addition to "casualization" because we focus not

only on the expansion of the secondary labor market, but also on the more and more fluctuating demand for workers in the secondary labor market (Figure X).

Paradoxically, the just-in-time delivery of Brazilians was enabled by their privileged status of residence. In 1988, the Ministry of Labor tried to introduce an employment permission system for foreign workers, but failed because it was not supported by the Ministry of Justice. If this system was realized at the time of the revision of the immigration law, the labor market of foreign workers would be similar to that of trainees and technical interns. Since the Japanese government tried to avoid the long-term settlement of foreign workers, it was not possible for migrant workers to change jobs and extend their length of stay. These restrictions were based on nationalism and would make the labor market of foreign workers more rigid and stable.

In contrast, Brazilians (and other Japanese Latin Americans) were allowed relatively free entry and unlimited activities in Japan because they were “ethnic Japanese”. However, this advantaged status was recast as a flexible workforce to be thoroughly exploited by manufacturers and labor contractors. It is the principle of the “free” labor market that produced such unintended consequences of the redefinition of nationhood.

Endnotes

[1] Brazilian migration to Japan has attracted the attention of several American anthropologists, resulting in the publication of several books (Linger, 2001; Roth, 2002; Tsuda, 2003).

[2] Part of this paper is a revised version of Higuchi (2003) and Higuchi and Tanno (2003).

[3] A series of research studies was made possible by financial aids from the Science and Technology Agency, the Japan Securities Scholarship Foundation and Toyota city, whose support is gratefully acknowledged. I also thank KAJITA Takamichi, TANNO Kiyoto and TAKAHASHI Sachie for assisting with the series of research studies in both Japan and Brazil.

[4] There were three Japanese newspapers in Brazil, namely Paulista Shimbun, São Paulo Shimbun and Nippaku Mainichi. Now most advertisements are found in Noticias Japão, a weekly newspaper written in Portuguese, as well as in local newspapers.

[5] Since this data includes agencies in existence in 1998 and 1999, they do not reflect the precise number of established agencies.

[6] "Spouses of Japanese" are second-generation Brazilians and "long-term residents" are third-generation Brazilians or spouses of second-generation Brazilians.

[7] In fact, the pioneers of recruitment agencies worked in Japan through labor contractors.

[8] For example, twenty-four of the thirty labor contractors in Minowa town, Nagano prefecture, are not based on Nagano, but expanded from Aichi and Shizuoka, in which the largest population of Brazilians exists.

[9] Figure VI also shows that the number with a permanent resident visa increased since the year 2000. This reflects the policy change of the Ministry of Justice, which tried to minimize the clerical tasks associated with visa extension by issuing permanent resident status.

[10] Officially, the trainee and technical intern program is claimed for the purpose of transfer of technology from Japan to developing countries.

[11] The article II of the Agreement Between Japan And The Republic Of Korea Concerning The Legal Status And Treatment Of The People Of The Republic Of Korea Residing In Japan, signed on June 22, 1965, declares, "the Government of Japan agrees to enter into consultations, if requested by the Government of the Republic of Korea, within 25 years of the date on which the present Agreement enters into force, with a view to the residence in Japan of a national of the Republic of Korea born in Japan as a lineal descendant of a person who has been permitted to reside permanently in Japan in accordance with the provisions of Article I."

[12] In such a case the broker or travel agency becomes a promoter. This scenario is not unusual, and allows promoters to earn commission whether they send workers to Japan or introduce a future migrant to other agencies.

[13] Basically, this is not for the sake of workers but is intended to generate profits for the contractors. One contractor said it could not pay for its clerical and managerial workers unless it kept a certain number of workers to send to factories.

[14] An interview with the recruiter on March 4, 1998. The author also participated in the recruiter's interviews with applicants in Maringa and Londrina city.

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Table 1 Documented foreign population in Japan

	Argentina	Bolivia	Brazil	Paraguay	Peru	Total
1985	329	128	1,955	110	553	850,612
1990	2,656	496	56,429	672	10,279	1,075,317
1995	2,910	2,765	176,440	1,176	36,269	1,362,371
2000	3,072	3,915	254,394	1,678	46,171	1,686,444
2004	3,739	5,655	286,557	2,152	55,750	1,973,747

Source: Ministry of Justice (1986-2005)

Table 2 The number of visa overstayers in Japan

	Peruvians			Brazilians			Total		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1990.7	242	172	70	664	390	274	106,497	66,851	39,646
1991.5	487	339	148	944	570	374	159,828	106,518	53,310
1992.5	2,783	1,903	879	2,703	1,558	1,145	278,892	190,996	87,896
1993.5	9,038	6,469	2,569	2,210	1,253	957	298,646	192,114	106,532
1994.5	12,918	8,869	4,049	2,603	1,474	1,129	293,800	180,060	113,740
1995.5	15,301	10,066	5,235	3,104	1,726	1,378	286,704	168,532	118,172
1996.5	13,836	9,067	4,769	3,763	2,059	1,704	284,500	160,836	123,664
1997.1	12,942	8,513	4,429	5,026	2,798	2,228	282,986	155,939	127,047
1998.1	11,606	7,721	3,885	4,334	2,465	1,869	276,810	149,828	126,982
1999.1	10,320	6,885	3,435	3,288	1,847	1,441	271,048	145,225	125,823
2000.1	9,158	6,132	3,026	3,266	1,855	1,411	251,697	134,082	117,615
2001.1	8,502	5,723	2,779	3,578	2,080	1,498	232,121	123,825	108,296
2002.1	7,744	5,277	2,467	3,697	2,175	1,522	224,067	118,122	105,945
2003.1	7,322	4,992	2,330	3,865	2,296	1,569	220,552	115,114	105,438
2004.1	7,230	4,699	2,531	4,728	2,836	1,892	219,418	113,066	106,352
2005.1	6,624	4,308	2,316	4,905	2,938	1,967	207,299	106,279	101,020

Source: Ministry of Justice

Table 3 The size of Japanese immigrant community

	Estimated populations of Japanese immigrants	Registered population in Japan (2004)
Argentina	32,000	3,739
Bolivia	6,700	5,655
Brazil	1,300,000	286,557
Paraguay	7,700	2,152
Peru	60,000	55,750

Note: Number of Japanese immigrants is based on the estimation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Table 4 Employment Status of Foreigners in Japan (2000)

Nationality	Registered Population	Respondents	Working Population		Employees		Employers/ Self-Employees	
			Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Korea/North Korea	635,269	529,408	256,127	48.4	157,310	61.4	98,766	38.6
China	335,575	253,096	121,751	48.1	105,850	86.9	15,889	13.1
Thailand	29,289	23,967	9,666	40.3	8,565	88.6	1099	11.4
Philippines	144,871	93,662	42,492	45.4	39,282	92.4	3206	7.6
Peru	46,171	27,220	20,264	**74.4**	19,840	**97.9**	424	2.1
Brazil	254,394	188,355	129,093	**68.5**	126,857	**98.3**	2234	1.7

Source: Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications Japan, 2004

Table 5 Occupation and industry of Brazilian workers

Industry	Population		Occupation	Population	
	No	%		No	%
Agriculture	475	0.4	Professional/technical	2,016	1.6
Forestry	31	0.0	Managerial	147	0.1
Fishery	12	0.0	Clerical	1,735	1.3
Mining	45	0.0	Sales	1,438	1.1
Construction	3,695	2.9	Service	3,303	2.6
Manufacturing	104,394	80.9	Protective service	149	0.1
Utility	7	0.0	Agricultural, forestry and fisheries	470	0.4
Transportation and communication	2,019	1.6	transport and communications	1,011	0.8
Sales	4,208	3.3	Production process laborers	115,305	89.3
Finance and Insurance	123	0.1	Others	3,519	2.7
Real estates	27	0.0			
Service	10,543	8.2			
Public	100	0.1			
Others	3,414	2.6			
Total	129,093	100.0	Total	129,093	100.0

Source: Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications, 2004

Table 6 Reasons to employ foreign workers around 1990

	Inagami et al. (N=172)		Tezuka et al. (N=152)		Tokyo Institute of Labor (N=223)	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Labor shortage	132	76.7	96	63.2	139	62.3
Cheap labor	13	7.6	15	9.9	16	7.2

Table 7 Mother tongue of students in need of teaching Japanese as second language

	1999		2000		2001		2002		2003	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	(%)	No	%
Portuguese	7,739	44.7	7,425	40.3	7,518	39.1	6,770	36.1	6,772	35.6
Chinese	5,674	32.8	5,429	29.4	5,532	28.7	5,178	27.6	4,913	25.8
Spanish	2,003	11.6	2,078	11.3	2,405	12.5	2,560	13.7	2,665	14.0
Others	2,752	15.9	3,500	19.0	3,795	19.7	4,226	22.6	4,692	24.6
Total	17,296	100.0	18,432	100.0	19,250	100.0	18,734	100.0	19,042	100.0

Source: Ministry of Science and Education

Table 8 Education of Brazilian workers

Year of migration	80-89	90-91	92-93	94-96	97-98	**
Education (years)	12.7	12.0	11.8	11.6	11.5	
Age	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 or more	**
Education (years)	9.8	11.9	12.7	11.6	10.6	

Source: Worker data, **=$p<0.01$

Table 9 Status of residence under the revised immigration law

	Status of residence	Note
Not authorized to work	College Student	
	Pre-college Student	New category
	Trainee	Partially amended
	Dependent	
	Temporary Visitor	
	Cultural Activities	New category
Authorized to work	Diplomat	
	Official	
	Professor	
	Artist	Partially amended
	Religious Activities	
	Journalist	
	Investor/Business Manager	
	Legal/Accounting Services	New category
	Medical Services	New category
	Researcher	New category
	Instructor	New category
	Engineer	Partially amended
	Specialist in Humanities/International Services	New category
	Intra-company Transferee	New category
	Entertainer	Partially amended
	Skilled Labor	Partially amended
	Designated Activities	Partially amended
Scope of activities is not limited	Permanent Resident	
	Spouse or Child of Japanese National	
	Spouse or Child of Permanent Resident	New category
	Long Term Resident	New category
	Special Permanent Resident	New category set in 1991

Table 10 Three Types of Agencies

	Brokers	Recruiting agencies	"Pure" travel agencies
Numbers in our survey	21	68	12
Inward business		X	X
Qualification (EMBRATUR/IATA)		X	X
Issuing tickets		X	X
Loans to trip	X	X	
Labor brokering	X	X	

Source: Recruiter data

Table 11 Sources of travel expenses to Japan

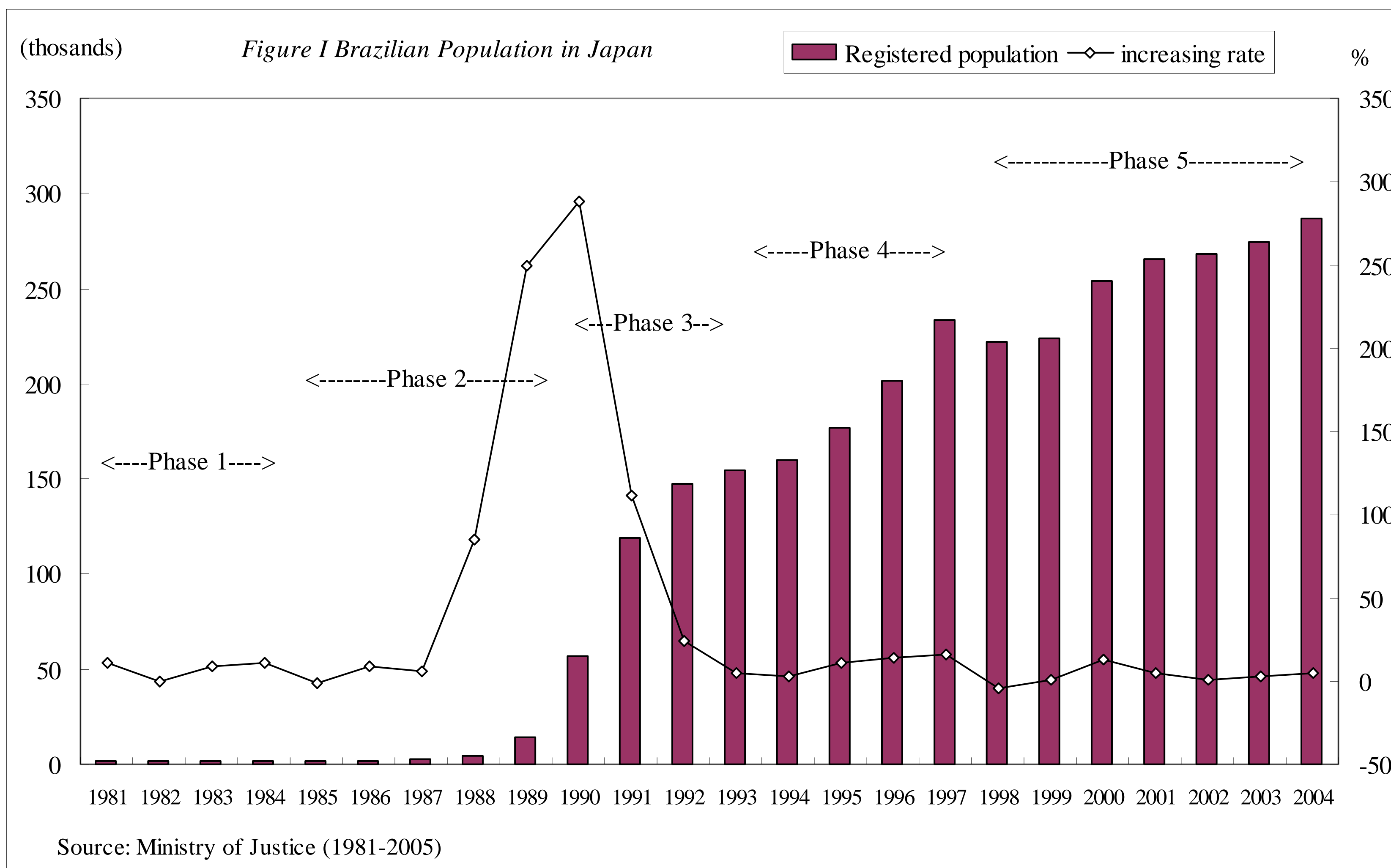
		Loans from recruiting agencies		Personal Savings		Loans from Family		Others		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Education	Lower secondary	414	69.0	111	18.5	35	5.8	40	6.7	600	100.0
	Secondary	499	65.8	162	21.4	39	5.1	58	7.7	758	100.0
	Tertiary	140	61.1	50	21.8	15	6.6	24	10.5	229	100.0
	University Student	83	62.4	35	26.3	9	6.8	6	4.5	133	100.0
	University	142	56.3	74	29.4	13	5.2	23	9.1	252	100.0
											**
Family members in Japan	None	598	64.3	227	24.4	31	3.3	74	8.0	930	100.0
	Family unified	210	68.4	56	18.2	19	6.2	22	7.2	307	100.0
	Migrated together	304	77.0	60	15.2	14	3.5	17	4.3	395	100.0
	Unified to family	194	49.9	101	26.0	51	13.1	43	11.1	389	100.0
											**

Source: Workers data *=p<0.05, **=p<0.01

Table 12 Employment patterns of foreign workers

Number of regular staffs		fewer than 10	10 to 29	30 to 99	100 to 299	300 to 999	1000 or more	Total
Number of foreign workers	Indirect	13	40	167	156	262	379	1017
	Direct	26	20	204	92	60	45	447
	Total	39	60	371	248	322	424	1464
Number of firms with foreign workers	Indirect	4	7	11	6	4	5	37
	Direct	12	6	21	8	4	3	54
Total		481	106	70	21	14	17	709

Source: Toyota data


(thosands)
Figure I Brazilian Population in Japan
Registered population
increasing rate
%
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
-50
<----Phase 1---->
<--------Phase 2-------->
<---Phase 3-->
<-----Phase 4----->
<------------Phase 5------------>
1981
1982
1983
1984
1985
1986
1987
1988
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
Source: Ministry of Justice (1981-2005)

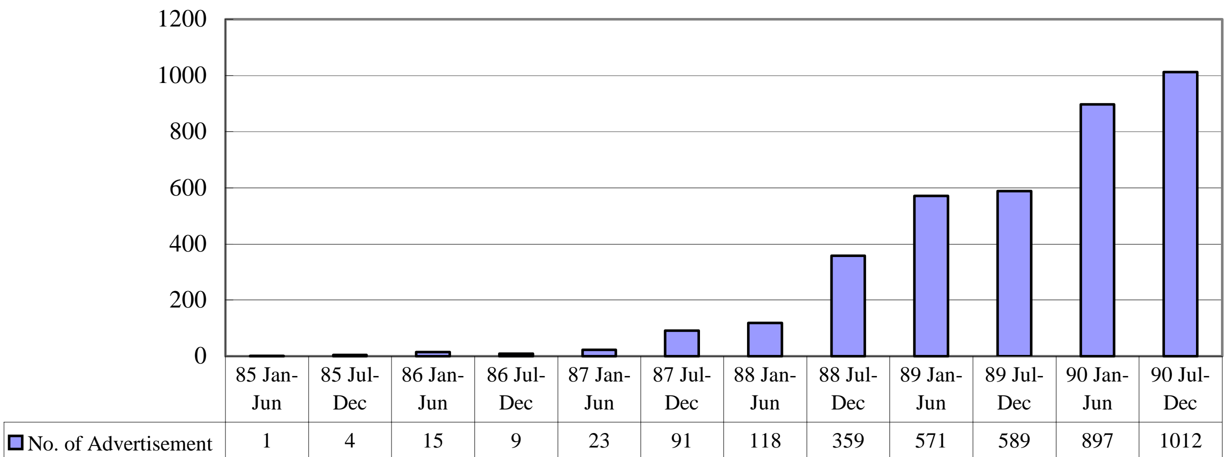


Figure II The Number of Advertisement on Japanese Newspapers in Brazil

	85 Jan-Jun	85 Jul-Dec	86 Jan-Jun	86 Jul-Dec	87 Jan-Jun	87 Jul-Dec	88 Jan-Jun	88 Jul-Dec	89 Jan-Jun	89 Jul-Dec	90 Jan-Jun	90 Jul-Dec
No. of Advertisement	1	4	15	9	23	91	118	359	571	589	897	1012

Source: Mori (1992, 155)

Note: The number counts advertisement on *São Paulo Shimbun* and *Paulista Shimbun*

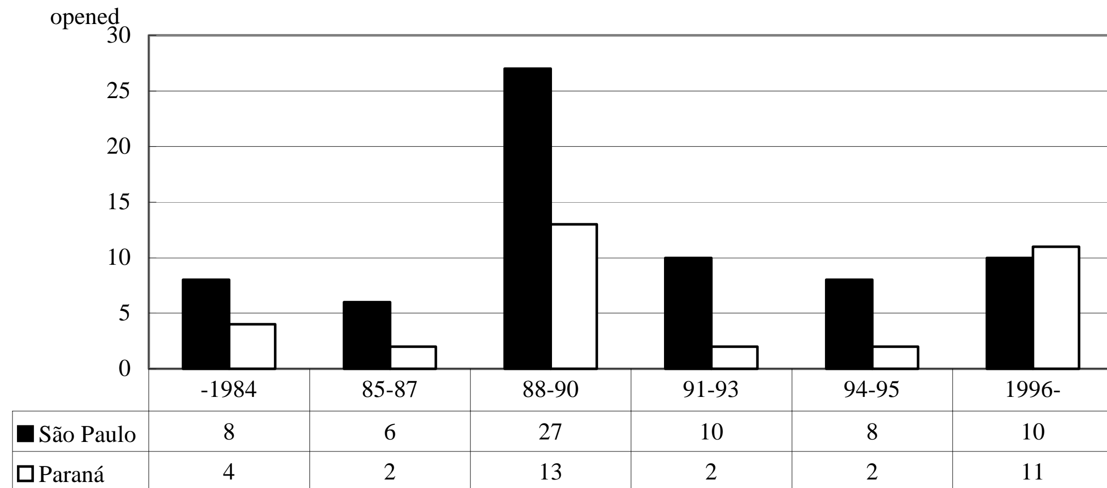


Figure III Established Year of Recruiting Agencies

	-1984	85-87	88-90	91-93	94-95	1996-
São Paulo	8	6	27	10	8	10
Paraná	4	2	13	2	2	11

Source: Recruiter data

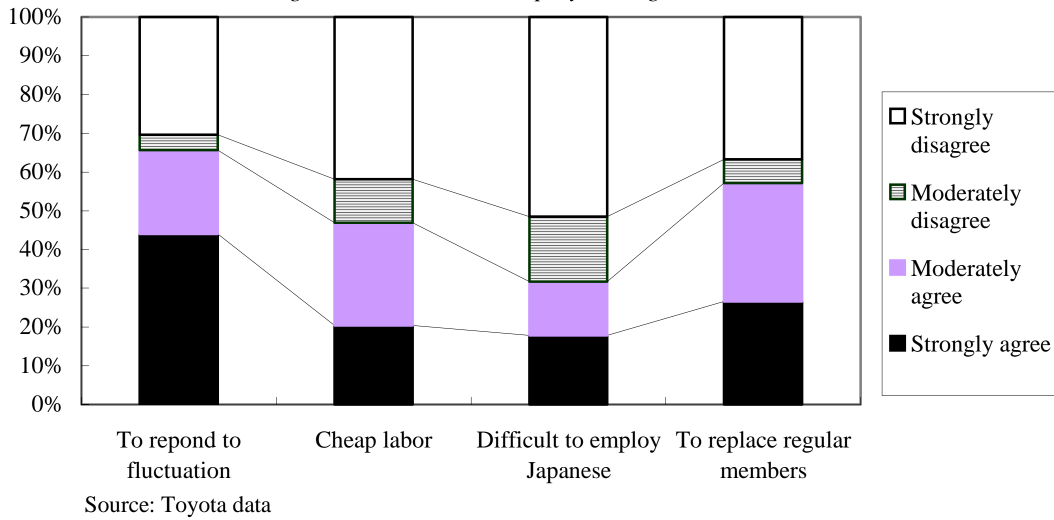


Figure IV Reasons to Employ Foreign Workers
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Strongly disagree
Moderately disagree
Moderately agree
Strongly agree
To repond to fluctuation
Cheap labor
Difficult to employ Japanese
To replace regular members
Source: Toyota data

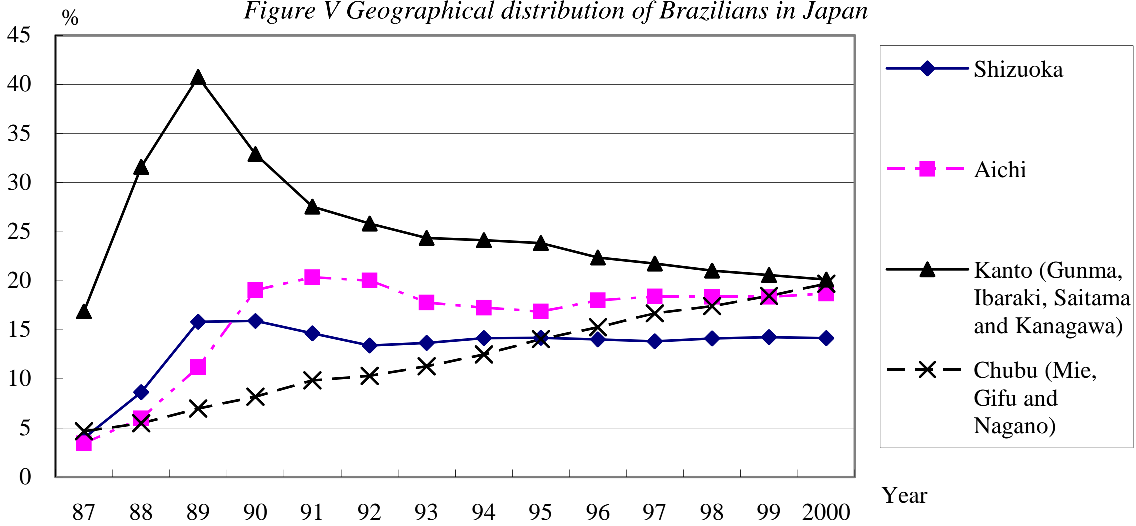
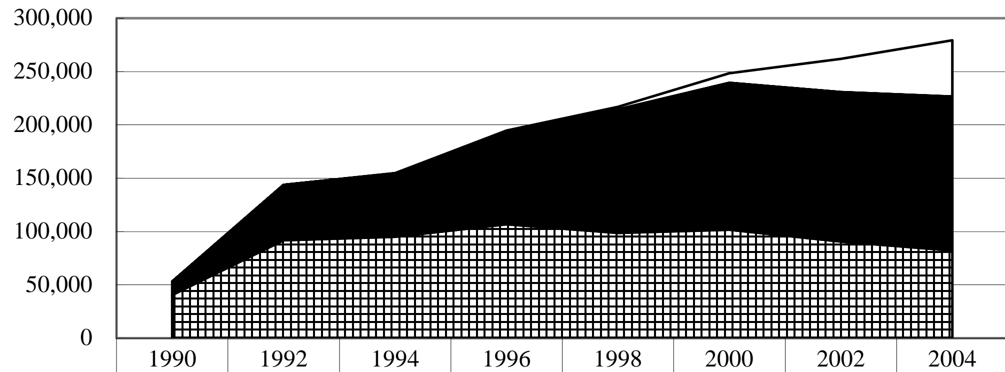


Figure V Geographical distribution of Brazilians in Japan
%
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
2000
Year
Shizuoka
Aichi
Kanto (Gunma, Ibaraki, Saitama and Kanagawa)
Chubu (Mie, Gifu and Nagano)
Source: Ministry of Justice (1988-2001)

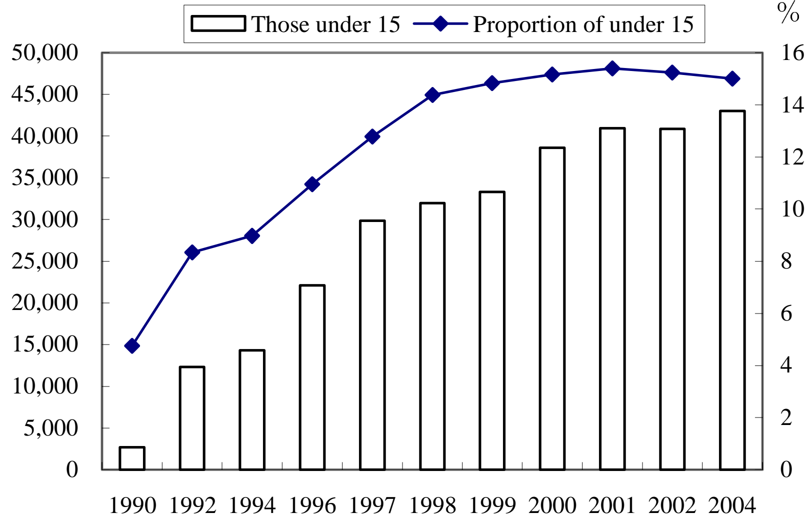
Figure VI Brazilian population by visa category



	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004
□ Permanent resident	164	220	373	931	2644	9062	31203	52581
■ Long-term resident	12637	51759	59280	87164	115536	137649	139826	144407
⊞ Spouses and children of Japanese	40384	91816	95139	106665	98823	101623	90732	82173

Source: Japan Immigration Association (1991-2005)

Figure VII The Number and Rate of Children under 15



Source: Japan Immigration Association (1991-2003)

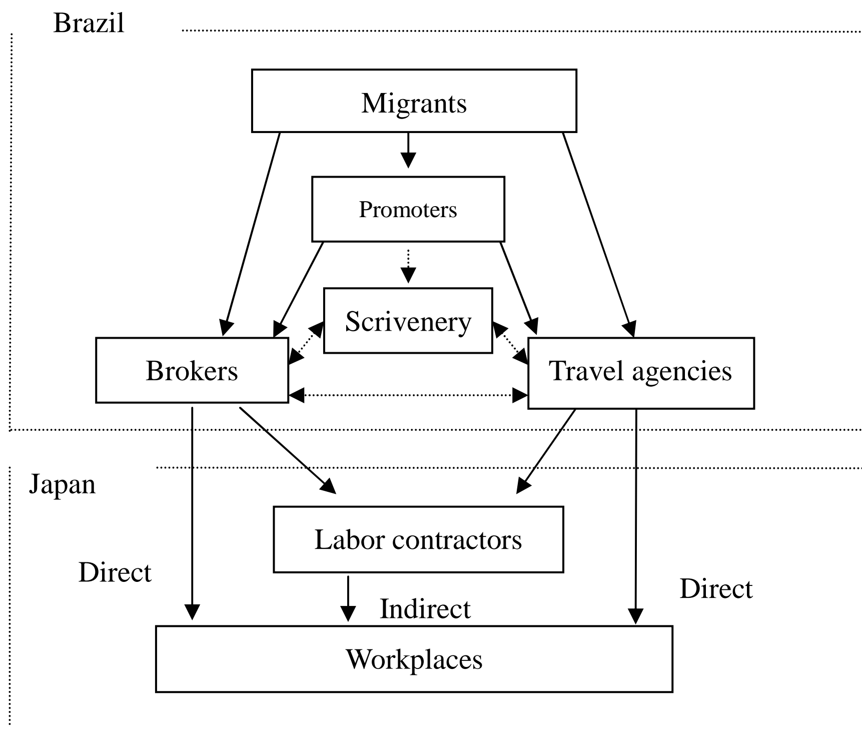


Figure VIII Stakeholders in labor brokering

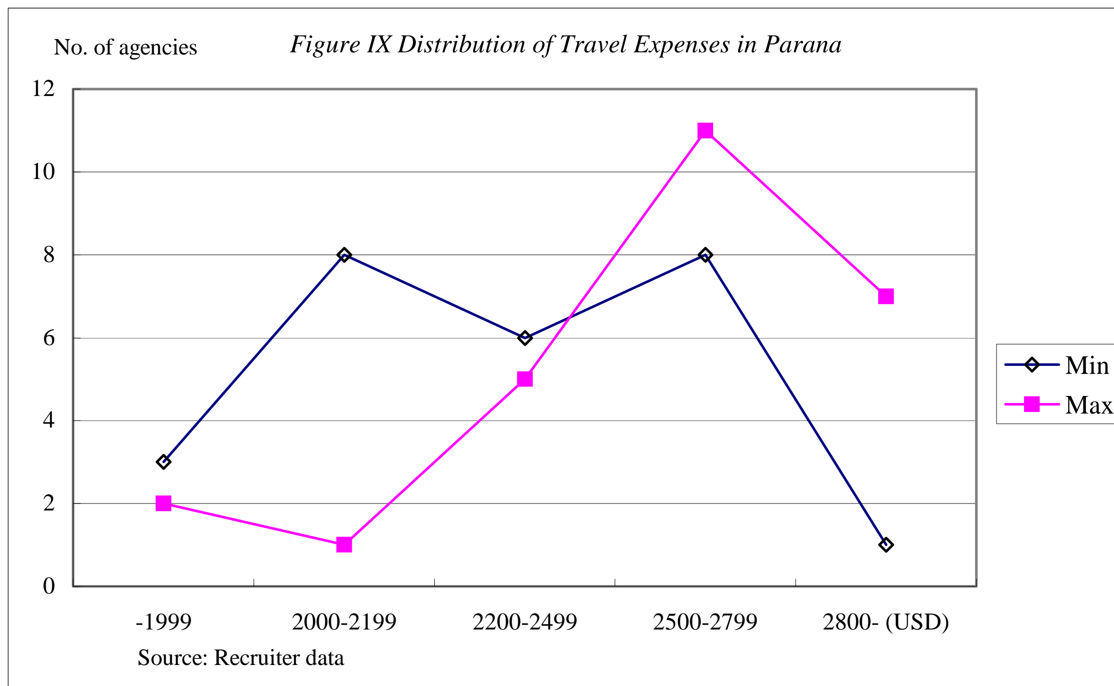


Figure IX Distribution of Travel Expenses in Parana

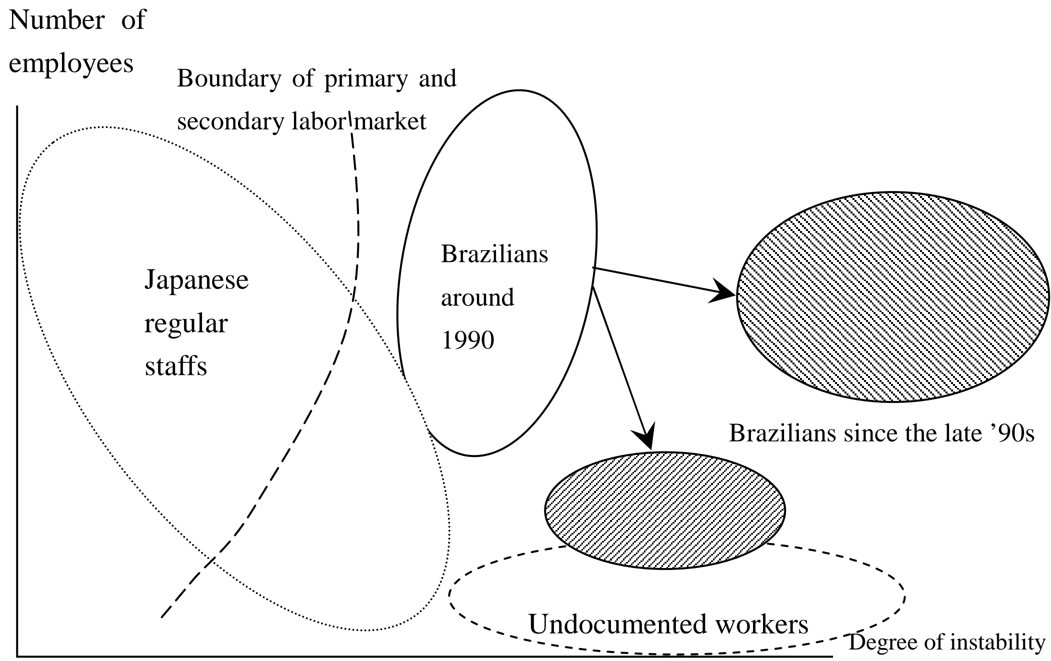


Figure X Changing positions of Brazilians in labor market