

Migration Process of *Nikkei* Brazilians

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The aim of this paper is to examine the return migration process of *Nikkei* Brazilians to Japan focusing on the development of migration systems. While the American prototype of migration systems operates on the basis of reciprocity, on the other hand Asian migration systems rely more on market exchange relations. This kind of ‘commodified migration systems’ has emerged in the late 1980s to promote massive influx of *Nikkei* Brazilians to Japan. The difference in the form of migration systems leads to three different consequences. (1) Selectivity of migrants: the origin areas of migrants spread through Japanese communities in Brazil, while the majority of Brazilian migrants to the U.S. are from Minas Gerais. (2) Channelization of migration: though Mexico-U.S. migration flows are usually ‘channeled’ from specific origin villages to corresponding destination towns, Brazil-Japan migration flows are more randomly distributed. (3) Transplantation of social relation: Mexican migration to the United States formed daughter communities at the destination which maintain ‘transplanted’ social relations, whereas Brazilians in Japan are less likely to keep social ties transplanted from Brazil. These three differences give us a clue to initiate comparative study of various migration systems, in which characteristics North American migration systems can be relativized through the analysis of Asian migration.

Keywords: migration system, labor recruitment, ethnic community, migration network, Brazilian migrants

INTRODUCTION

About fifteen 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 North American and West European countries, all attention was focused on the ‘foreigners’ problem’. Researches conducted by scholars and public authorities have helped provide theoretical insight. As American and European history of immigration stimulated a set of research, which resulted in distinct theories, the Japanese experience can provide a chance to build unique theories on international migration that is distinct from western counterparts.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is twofold. First, I will describe the migration process of *Nikkei* Brazilians, especially focusing on the development of recruiting agencies. Secondly, I take an inductive approach to elaborate the Japanese version of migration theory. The point of departure is a set of questions on characteristics of Brazilian migration to Japan: the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Then it applies the available theories to try to assemble the puzzle. As a result, the assembled puzzle indicates a new theoretical insight of international migration based on Brazilian return-migration experience.

RECONSIDERING MIGRATION SYSTEMS THEORY:

THE PIECES OF PUZZLE ABOUT BRAZILIAN RETURN-MIGRATION TO JAPAN

Every migration process is founded on social organizational infrastructures. Difference in wages earned does not generate massive migration flows unless social networks connect sending and receiving

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countries. Migration of *Nikkei* Brazilians to Japan is no exception. Hence, many researchers have referred to the importance of migrant networks, especially those based on kinship or family ties. Classical works of migration networks are based on experiences of European migrants to America from the late nineteenth century to early twentieth century (e.g. Thomas and Znaniecki 1918-20; Tilly and Brown 1967). The basic tenet of these studies is summarized as follows: “the effective units of migration were (and are) neither individuals nor households but sets of people linked by acquaintance, kinship, and work experience who somehow incorporated American destinations into the mobility alternatives they considered when they reached critical decision points in their individual or collective lives” (Tilly 1990, 84). Now the salience of chain migration and transnational migrant networks has prompted an upsurge of scholarly interest in the migration systems approach (Boyd 1989; Gurak and Fe Caces 1992).

Migration systems are defined as meso-level institutional arrangements that facilitate migration and determine the direction and volume of migration flows. They serve as social infrastructures that sustain a continuous and massive flow of migration. Though most migration processes are initiated by the labor shortages in receiving countries or bilateral agreements on contract labor, migration continues independently of external factors once migration systems have developed. Among many functions of migration systems, three are especially of interest to us.

The first is the selection function of migration systems¹. Migration is a highly selective phenomenon that occurs only in a few communities. Though the global society has reached “the age of migration,” migrants count only less than two percent of the world population. Moreover, most migrants come from relatively few communities that send many emigrants to destinations (Faist 2000). Consequently, as migration process develops, the gap between migrant-sending communities and others widens.

Secondly, the channelization function is also important. Migration systems approaches are best at explaining the direction of international migration (Faist 2000, 50). To put it more closely, migrants from a certain village are canalized to a certain district of the destination through chain migration (Gutierrez 1984; Jones 1984). Residential concentration of migrants from specific areas is generated in this way.

Thirdly, transplantation function of migration systems is worth examining. Chain migration brings ‘transplanted’ social relations as well as residential concentration at destinations (Bodnar 1985; Ostergren 1988). Migration systems bring more or less continuous social relations that foster daughter communities in receiving countries (Massey et al. 1987). New arrivals find jobs and housing and learn the ropes at the destination through interactions in daughter communities. That is, social relations at the origin are maintained even after immigration.

However, since the migration systems approach owes much to American experiences, some modifications may be required before applying it to Asian cases. The American prototype of migration systems takes it for granted “people from the same communities are enmeshed in a web of reciprocal obligations upon which new migrants draw to enter and find work in the receiving society” (Massey et al. 1987, 5). Most studies using migration systems approach focus on the role of family, kinship or friendship ties that accelerate migration flows (Massey and España 1987; Massey and Epinosa 1997; Palloni et al. 2001).

Whereas the ties that facilitate migration are not always personal but also impersonal (MacDonald and MacDonald 1964). In Japan and other East Asian countries, labor recruiters or intermediaries have been more salient in facilitating the influx of migrant labor (Caouette and Saito 1999; Eelens and Speckmann 1990; Goss and Lindquist 1995; Lindquist 1993; Martin 1996; Okunishi 1996; Okunishi and Sano 1995; Singhanetra-Renard 1992; Sobieszczyk 2000; Spaan 1994). Rather than family and personal networks, legal and illegal recruitment agencies have determined destinations, occupations, and housing of

¹ It is related to inter-community comparisons. So far diffusion function has been much more referred to than the selection function. The former is about intra-community comparison. At the initial stage of migration processes, only those blessed with human or other resources (usually male adults) can migrate. But migration systems reduce the costs and risks associated with international migration, providing necessary resources and knowledge for living and working at destinations (Gurak and Fe Caces 1992; Massey et al. 1987). As a result, migration opportunities expand to include the whole community, in contrast to the first stage of migration in which migrants tend to come from a particular class, age, or gender.

new arrivals. In short, commercial institutions replace the role of family or kinship referred to as follows: “A place to stay, help in getting a job, the loan of money, or payment for the trip are just a few examples of how the ties of brotherhood are extended and tested in the migration context” (Massey et al. 1987, 141).

In the case of our survey on *Nikkei* Brazilians, table 1 shows that two-third of respondents came to Japan using loans from recruiting agencies. This means majority of *Nikkei* Brazilians depended on labor recruiters as to where to stay and to work, instead of family members or kinsmen.

Table 1. Source of expenses for respondents’ first trip to Japan

Source	No. of respondents (%)
Personal savings	444 (21.9)
Loans from family	115 (5.7)
Loans from friends	92 (4.5)
Loans from recruiting agencies	1310 (64.7)
Others	64 (3.2)
Total	2025 (100.0)

Source: Worker data (see data and method)

Hence we can classify two ideal-types of migration systems. *Nikkei* Brazilians moving to Japan are driven by “commodified” migration systems in which recruitment agencies serve as facilitator of migration process. Most migrants to the United States rely on “reciprocal” migration systems based on kinship and neighborhood ties². So far reciprocal migration systems have been the reference point of analysis. But recently, scholarly attention has been focused on commodified migration systems around the world (e.g. Kyle 2000; Kyle and Koslowski 2001; Kyle and Liang 2001; Prothero 1990). Yet these studies have failed to analyze the distinct characteristics of commodified migration systems. Therefore it is worth analyzing the differences between reciprocal and commodified migration systems. It is the pieces of puzzle to be assembled using the case of *Nikkei* Brazilians. The point is whether the assembled puzzle represents ‘another world’ of migration systems theory or not. For the sake of clarity, it is convenient to list three pieces of puzzle in correspondence to three functions of migration systems I mentioned above.

The first point is concerning the selection function of migration systems. Literatures on reciprocal migration systems suggest that only few communities can establish transnational migration networks since migration social capital based on reciprocity is a scarce resource for most communities (Faist 2000). Now we can provide the first piece of puzzle.

Piece 1: Does the difference in migration systems result in different patterns of selecting migrants at the origin?

The second point is about the channelization function. Migration flows are not randomly distributed in accordance with wage differentials. They are rather aggregate of canals that lead members of a certain community to specific point of destinations. As the migration process develops, migrants tend to concentrate in particular areas. Hence the second piece is as follows:

Piece 2: Does the difference in migration systems lead to different spatial distribution at the destination?

Third, and closely related to the second piece, the transplantation function should be examined. Conventional migration systems approach takes it for granted that social relations at the origin are

² I do not dismiss the role of intermediaries to propel (mostly undocumented) migration to the United States as marginal. Typical examples are snakeheads transporting Chinese smugglers. Coyotes are also important to cross the U.S.-Mexico border (e.g. Kyle and Koslowski 2001; Zahniser 1999). Likewise, I do not overlook the role of reciprocal relations in Asian cases. But the point is to show ideal-types that help comparative study of migration systems.

maintained at the destination areas. But those who relied on commodified migration systems do not need to keep close relations at the origin, since recruiters and contractors provide functional equivalents.

Piece 3: Does the difference in migration systems generate different patterns of keeping and building social relations?

In the following sections, I first describe the migration process of Brazilians to Japan. Then I will assemble the three pieces of the puzzle to induce the characteristics of commodified migration systems.

DATA AND METHOD

The principal source of data for this study comes from a set of mutually related five researches. A series of studies was conducted from June 1997 to September 2000.

- (1) The ethnic business survey, which was conducted between February and October 1997, involved interviews with the owners of 77 *Nikkei* Brazilian businesses (hereafter ethnic business data)³. Since no complete list of Brazilian enterprises is available, we could not use the random sampling method. Instead, we made a list from four Portuguese newspapers and several magazines, brochures and personal acquaintances, and visited each business owner as much as possible. Except for a few, Brazilian entrepreneurs answered interviews.
- (2) The labor contractor survey was conducted between April 1997 and February 1999, involved interviews with 56 labor contractors (hereafter contractor data)⁴. Though there are thousands of labor contractors employing Brazilians, no complete list of them is available. Therefore we combined snowball techniques and direct contact with contractors advertising Portuguese newspapers.
- (3) The third set of data comes from 2,054 Brazilian employees (hereafter worker data)⁵. The survey required the collaboration of thirty labor contractors and was conducted between January and March 1998. Brazilian employees were distributed questionnaires and responded to it.
- (4) The labor recruiter survey in São Paulo was conducted between January and March 1998, involving 66 interviews with owners of recruitment agencies (hereafter recruiter data)⁶. We visited every building in Liberdade district, known as Japanese town in central São Paulo, except for a few, the owners answered our questions. The labor recruiter survey in Paraná was conducted between July and August 1999, involved 35 interviews with owners of recruitment agencies⁷. I compiled a list of 35 agencies using advertisements of local newspapers in Curitiba, Londrina and Maringá, yellow pages of Paraná province and personal acquaintances. Then I visited and could have interviews with all of the 35 agencies.
- (5) Lastly, we conducted a survey research on manufacturers in Toyota city in September 2000 (hereafter Toyota data)⁸. 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, 102 companies had employed or were employing Brazilian workers.

THE RISE OF THE COMMODIFIED MIGRATION SYSTEM FROM BRAZIL TO JAPAN

1. Four Phases of Brazilian Migration to Japan

The number of Brazilian population in Japan is shown on figure 1. Since *Issei* (first generation) and

³ The survey was supported by the grant from Matsushita International Foundation and Japan Security Scholarship Foundation. For details of the data, see Higuchi and Takahashi (1998a; 1998b).

⁴ The survey for worker data and recruiter data was supported by the grant from the Science and Technology Agency. Detailed analyzes are shown in Kajita (1999b) and Tanno (1999).

⁵ See Kajita (1999a, 1999b).

⁶ Detailed data can be seen in Kajita (1999b) and Higuchi (2001b).

⁷ For details, see Higuchi (2001a).

⁸ The survey was supported by the grant from Toyota City Government. For details, see Higuchi (2001c).

Nissei (second generation) with Japanese nationality are not counted as Brazilians, they are excluded from this statistics. The number suddenly increased in 1988, followed by skyrocketing growth from 1989 to 1991. It should also be noted that Brazilians basically increased in number even after the collapse of the bubble economy. But 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 four phases. While each phase reflects structural changes both in Brazil and Japan, more emphasis is placed on the shaping and transformation of commodified migration system that became auspices of Brazilian migration to Japan.

1-1. Phase One (1980-84): Invisible Migration of the *Isseis*

First temporary return-migration from Brazil to Japan began in the early 1980s. Most migrants in this period were the *isseis* (first generation) fluent in Japanese and familiar with the Japanese society. They were nearly negligible in number and many felt ashamed to work in Japan because they recognized their return to Japan as “losers” in Brazil. Their migration to Japan tended to be invisible both for Japan and the Brazilian *Nikkei* society (Kajita 1998). But early *issei* return-migrants played an important role to generate a massive flow of migration.

1-2. Phase Two (1985-89): The Shaping of the Commodified Migration System

Though Brazilian population in Japan remained stable until 1987, the 1985 saw a qualitative change in Brazilian migration. In this year the first advertisement offered job opportunities in Japan on a Japanese newspaper in Brazil (Mori 1992:149). This means Japanese firms ‘discovered’ Brazil as new labor reserve and labor recruitment from Brazil began to be institutionalized.

Behind this new way of labor recruitment lie structural conditions both in Japan and Brazil⁹. In Brazil, the inflation rate had exceeded 100% throughout the 1980s (Nishijima 1990). Especially it reached 682% in 1988 and 1,769% in 1989, which caused emigration of Brazilians in general as well as *Nikkei* Brazilians (Goza 1994). In fact, the Brazilian government acknowledged 1.4 million Brazilians migrated abroad from 1986 to 1990 (Margolis 1994, 3-6).

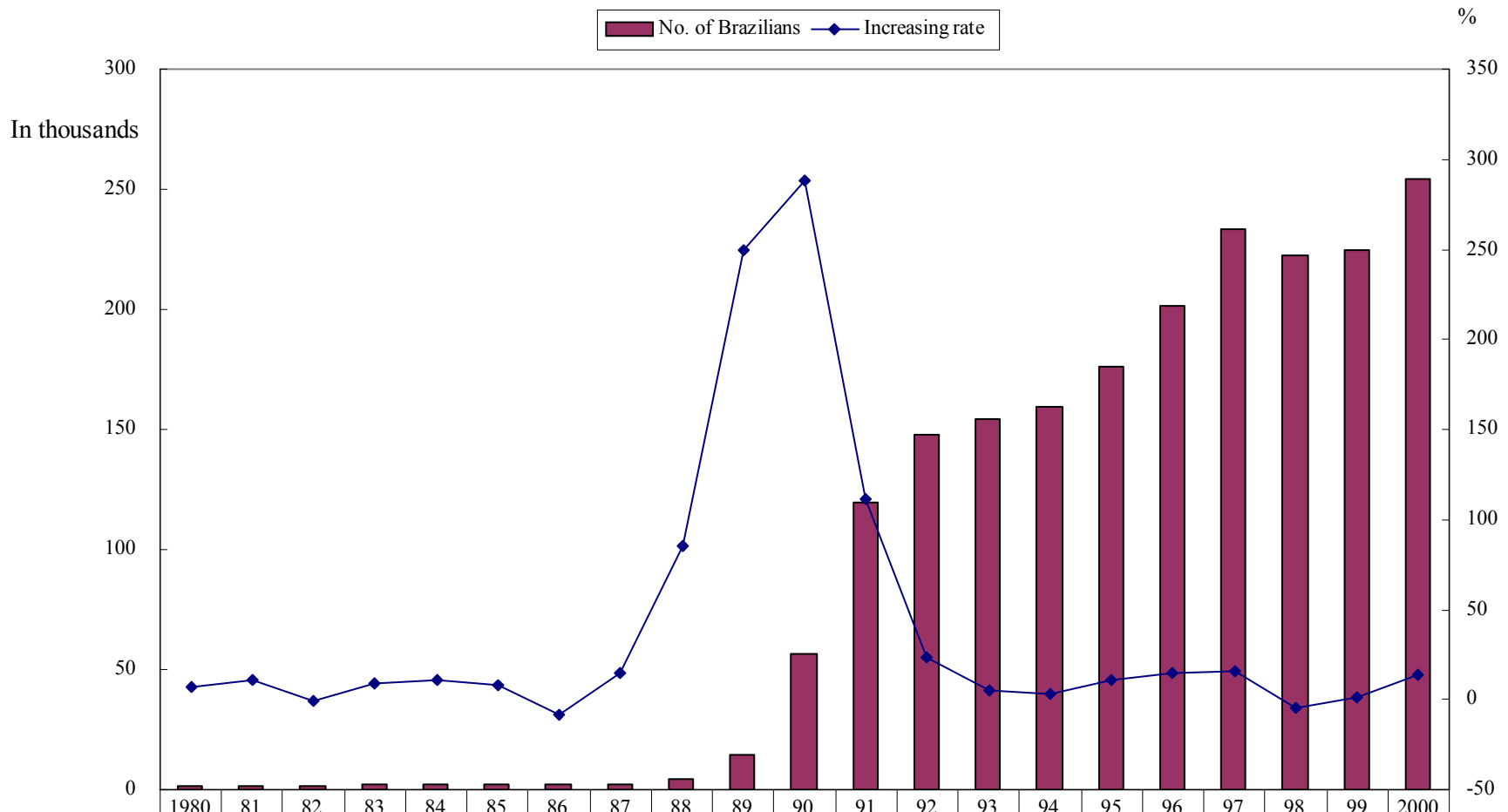
The economic crisis in Brazil coincided with the economic boom in Japan. After the Plaza agreement in 1985, the exchange rate rapidly became in favor of the yen. In 1990, the value of yen compared with the U.S. dollar rose twice as high as five years ago, which made working in Japan much attractive for *Nikkei* Brazilians. In addition, an acute labor shortage urged Japanese (especially small- and medium-sized) firms to look for alternative source of labor. Roughly these are push and pull factors of Brazilian migration to Japan.

However, the massive influx of Brazilians to Japan did not occur without recruiting agencies that connected Brazil and Japan (cf. Brettel 2000, 108). Most Japanese Brazilians do not migrate until they acknowledge concrete job opportunities at destinations, such as work at Suzuki factory in Kosai city or at Sanyo factory in Oizumi town. Labor recruiters served as ‘translators’ of macro conditions. In fact, these macro conditions are not automatically translated into micro motivation to migrate (Higuchi 2002a).

The first labor recruiters were *Issei* return-migrants who worked in Japan and were asked to bring other *Nikkei* Brazilians. They went back to Brazil again and began to hire *Nikkeis* there. The first recruitment agency office was opened by an *Issei* return-migrant in 1984. Another *Issei* return-migrant opened an office in 1986 as a branch of a Yokohama-based labor contractor, in which he used to work. The latter established a recruiting network ranging from Amazon to Argentina and Paraguay. In this way, the commodified migration system emerged in the late 1980s. Soon networks of intermediaries spread all around the *Nikkei* communities in South America. Moreover, recruiters began to loan necessary expenses to Japan in 1987 (Mori 1992, 150). This loan system rapidly became a standard condition for recruitment, which enabled even the poorest Japanese Brazilians to migrate.

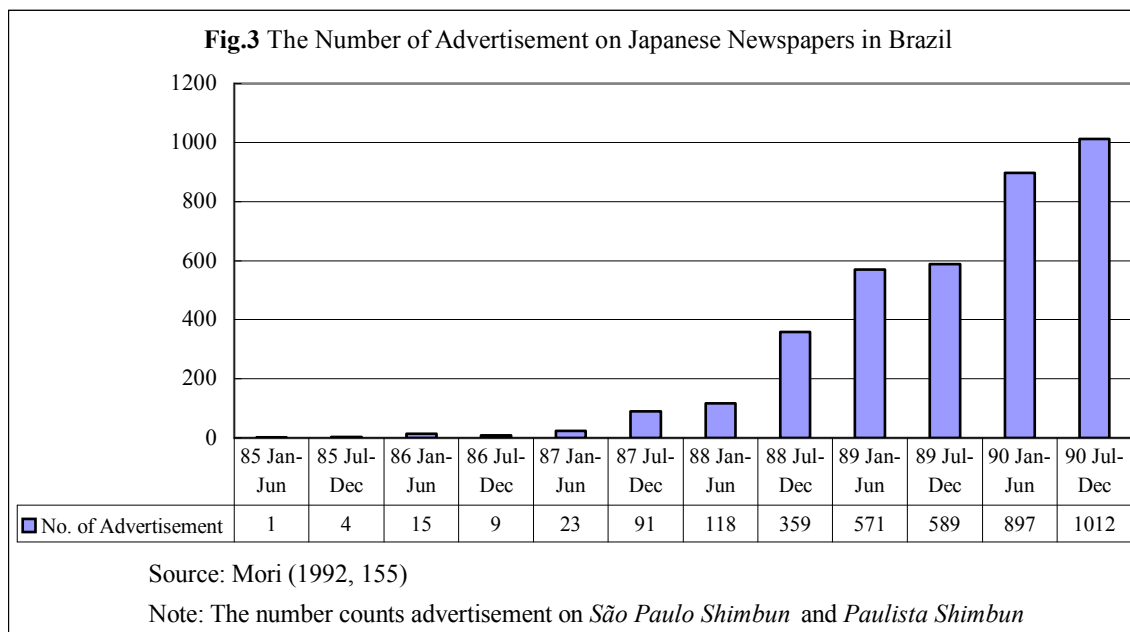
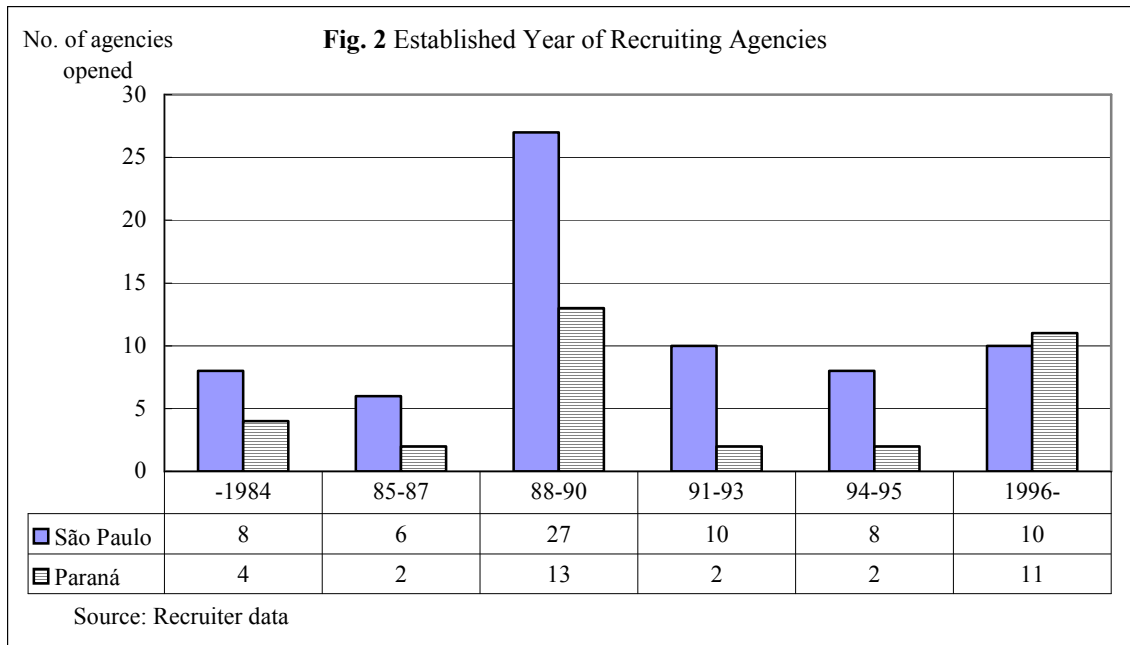
⁹ For details of structural changes that caused migration, see Tsuda (1999).

Fig. 1 Number of Brazilians in Japan and Its Increasing Rate



No. of Brazilians	1.4	1.7	1.6	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.3	4.2	14.5	56.4	119.3	147.8	154.7	159.6	176.4	201.8	233.3	222.2	224.3	254.4
Increasing rate	7.1	10.7	-0.5	9.3	10.6	7.5	-8.43	15.1	84.8	249.3	288.4	111.5	23.9	4.6	3.2	10.5	14.4	15.6	-4.7	0.9	13.42

Let me point out the two indicators of the development of the commodified migration system. One indicator is the year recruitment agencies were established¹⁰. Those opened before 1984 were not established as recruiting agencies but as travel agencies. When return-migration became popular, they entered in brokering jobs, acknowledging they were highly profitable. Both in São Paulo and Paraná province, the peak period of opening is 1988-90 (see figure 2).



To examine more closely, it is useful to look at the number of wanted advertisements. The number of advertisements in Japanese newspapers exceeded one hundred in 1987. Then it rapidly increased in 1988, reaching more than one thousand in the latter half of 1990 (figure 3)¹¹. Therefore it is

¹⁰ Because this data includes agencies still exist in 1988 and 1999, they do not reflect the precise number of established agencies.

¹¹ There were three Japanese newspapers in Brazil, namely *Paulista Shimbun*, *São Paulo Shimbun* and *Nippaku Mainichi*. Now most advertisements are found on *Noticias Japão*, a weekly newspaper written in Portuguese, and local newspapers.

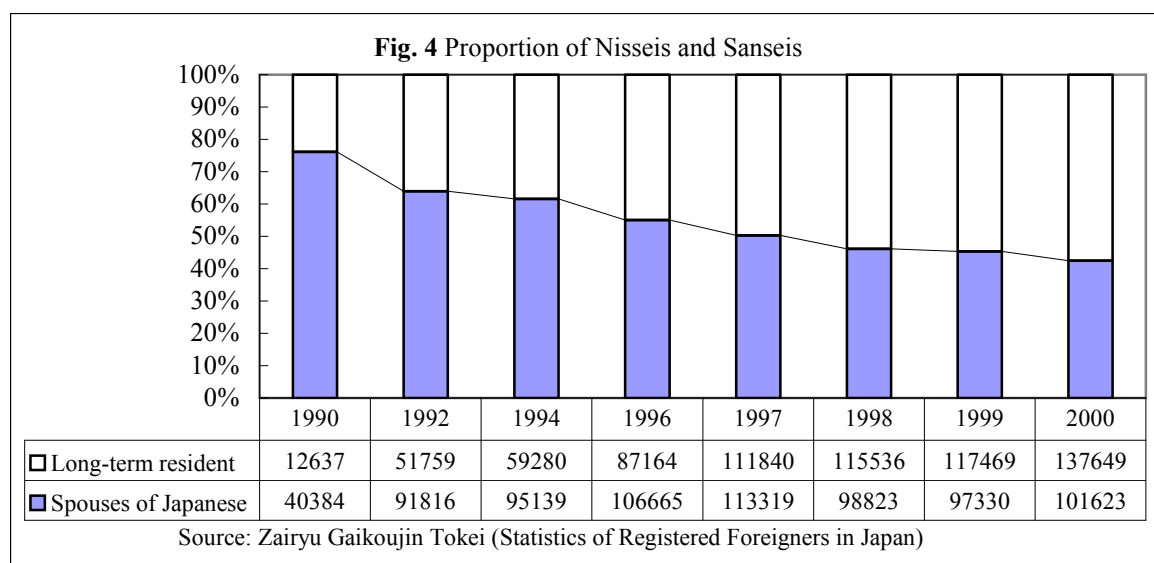
safe to say that the commodified migration system was formed in 1984 and began to grow in 1988. In this way, the number of recruiting agencies in São Paulo multiplied from a few in 1985 to 130 in 1990 (Asahi Shimbun 1990.8.2).

It should be emphasized that commodified migration system was already formed 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 prepared in the late 1980s.

1-3. Phase Three (1990-92): Migration of *Sanseis*

Though Brazilian population suddenly increased in 1988 and 1989, the year 1990 should be remembered as the year in which the basic concept of current immigration control policy was formulated. *Nissei* Brazilians were issued working visa as children of Japanese nationals even before the revision of the law. Since the reformed law set up a new visa status called “long-term resident”, *Sansei* Brazilians and non-Japanese spouses of *Nissei* and *Sansei* Brazilians were granted renewable stay with unlimited access to labor markets. Therefore the qualitative impact of the revised immigration law appeared as the influx of *Sansei* (third generation) and non-Japanese spouses of *Nissei* and *Sansei*. Figure 4 shows the proportion of *Nissei* Brazilian migrants has been decreasing¹².

Quantitatively, this period experienced the largest increase of Brazilian population. The increasing numbers are 41,901 in 1990, 62,904 in 1991 and 28,470 in 1992. As a result, more than 130,000 Brazilians increased during this phase.



1-4. Phase Four (1993-): Recession and Transformation of Labor Market

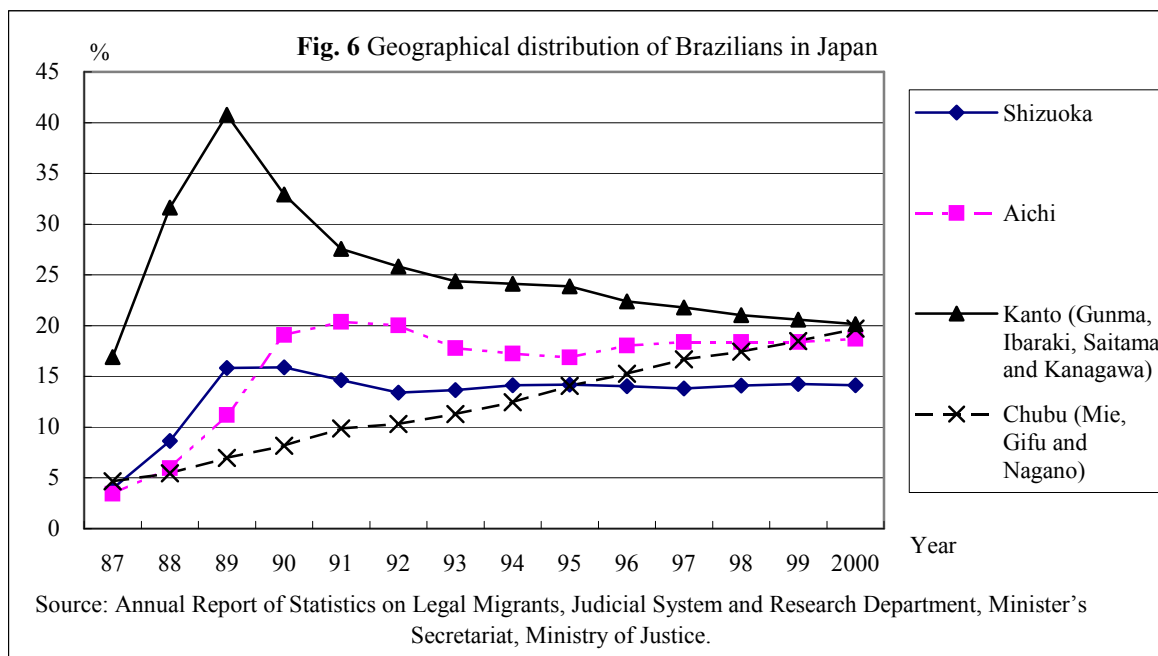
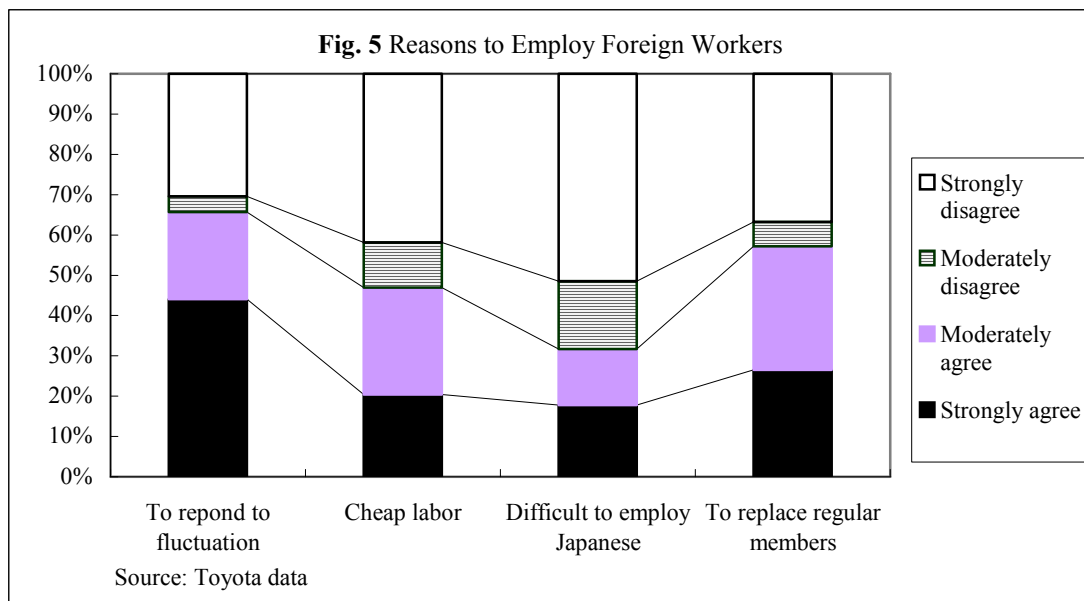
Long-term recession since 1993 had a significant effect on Brazilian migration to Japan. Not surprisingly, the increasing rate of Brazilians suddenly dropped, though it may reflect the shortage of labor reserve in Brazil¹³. However, we should not overlook the fact that the number of Brazilian population has been steadily increasing throughout this period. It can be explained by two factors: (1) demand for flexible labor and (2) geographical dispersion of workplaces.

First, the structure of labor market has transformed after the collapse of the economic bubble. Brazilians have been employed as temporary workers, partly replacing Japanese seasonal migrant workers

¹² Roughly “spouses of Japanese” are *Nissei* Brazilians and “long-term residents” are *Sansei* Brazilians or spouses of *Nisseis*.

¹³ Since population of Japanese Brazilians is said to be around 1.3 million, the number of potential migrants would be limited to a few hundred thousands.

from peripheral areas such as Tohoku and Kyushu. But their positions in firms have changed. At the time of economic boom, they were expected to solve acute labor shortage. During the period of economic stagnation, on the contrary, they were employed as highly flexible labor force that can easily be laid off (Tanno 1999; 2001). Figure 5 shows that majority of 102 firms 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 the fluctuation of production or to replace regular members. In this way, Brazilian workers were assigned the role just what Piore (1979) attributed to secondary labor market.



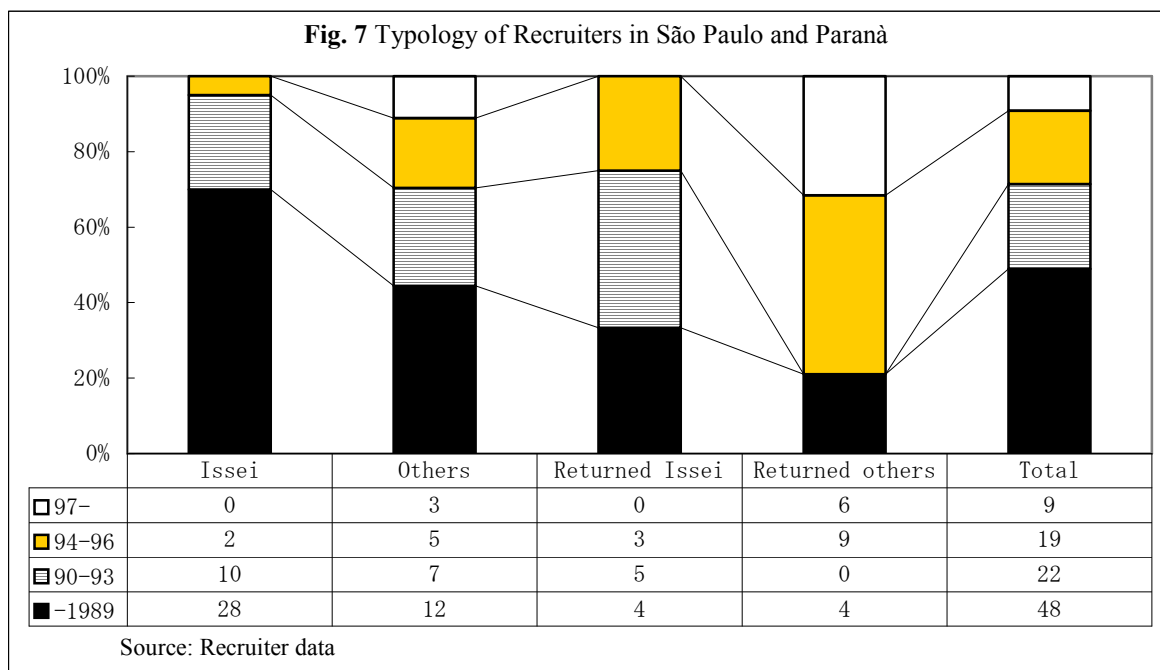
Secondly, labor contractors responded to the sudden shrinking of Brazilian labor market by geographical expansion. While Shizuoka and Aichi prefectures have been keeping a considerable share of Brazilian population (see figure 6), Kanto region (Kanagawa, Gunma Ibaraki and Saitama) was exceeded

by Chubu region other than Shizuoka and Aichi (Nagano, Gifu and Mie). Brazilian population in Kanto has been basically stagnating since 1991. On the other hand, many labor contractors in Aichi and Shizuoka found exploitable labor market semi-peripheral area in Chubu region¹⁴. That is why the number of Brazilians has been increasing even during the recession.

2. Many Ways to Become Recruiting Agencies

Behind the steady increase of Brazilians in Japan lie recruiting agencies in Brazil¹⁵. There are four types of those who become agents: (1) *Issei* with work experience in Japan, (2) *Issei* without work experience in Japan, (3) others (*Nissei*, *Sansei* and non-Japanese spouses) with work experience in Japan and (4) others without work experience in Japan.

- (1) As mentioned earlier, they are the first to open recruitment agencies in Brazil. But most of them were asked by their employers to employ other Brazilians after going back home.
- (2) Some of them are ‘proper’ travel agencies established before the beginning of return-migration and then entered in brokering businesses. Others had nothing to do with travel agencies. They were asked by Japanese companies to send workers. In Paraná, some opened offices as branches of São Paulo-based travel agencies. Otherwise, some found better opportunities to earn money.
- (3) Like *Issei* migrants with work experience in Japan, *Nissei*, *Sansei* and non-Japanese spouses were told to employ workers in Brazil. Because they migrated to Japan later than *Issei* migrants, the year of establishment is also later.



- (4) Some of *Nissei*, *Sansei* and non-Japanese spouses opened travel agencies before beginning labor brokering. Unlike *Issei* migrants without work experience in Japan, other *Nissei*, *Sansei* and non-Japanese spouses neither have acquaintances in Japan nor fluently write in Japanese. For them, the only way to enter the brokering business was to work at another agency and gradually open their

¹⁴ For example, twenty -four among thirty labor contractors in Minowa town, Nagano prefecture, are not based on Nagano but Aichi or Shizuoka.

¹⁵ Of course the increasing number of labor contractors in Japan greatly contribute to the steady increase of Brazilians in Japan. But I will limit myself to describe the recruiting agencies in Brazil. For details of becoming labor contractors, see Tanno (1999).

own offices.

Figure 7 suggests that a majority of the recruiting agencies established before 1989 belong to *Issei* without work experience in Japan. About 70% of them already began recruiting business before 1989. So we can say they are ‘early risers’ of the commodified migration system, though the first recruiting agency was established by *Issei* with work experience in Japan. Next to them are *Nissei*, *Sansei* and non-Japanese spouses without work experience in Japan. ‘Latecomers’ are *Nissei*, *Sansei* and non-Japanese spouses with work experience in Japan. In general, the brokering industry expanded with the involvement of new players¹⁶.

3. The Mechanism of Labor Recruitment

3-1. Definition of Actors

Most recruiting agencies are working 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 2). 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 solely engaged in recruiting workers. Brokers are not registered as travel agencies. They help provide employment opportunities in Japan and buy air tickets from other agencies.

Table 2 Three Types of Agencies

	Brokers	Recruiting agencies	“Pure” travel agencies
Numbers in our survey	21	68	12
Inward business	×	△	○
Qualification (EMBRATUR/IATA)	×	○	○
Issuing tickets	×	○	○
Loans to trip	○	○	×
Labor brokering	○	○	×

In terms of getting visas for workers, only registered agencies can apply to Japanese consuls in São Paulo and Curitiba. In São Paulo province, about seventy agencies are registered, while 17 agencies are registered in Paraná. Other agencies ask registered ones to apply visas for them. The relation between registered and non-registered agencies in Paraná is shown on figure 8. Agencies in cities other than Curitiba tend to ask other agencies for applying visas, since it is a six-hour bus trip to Curitiba.

It is difficult for most *Nissei* or *Sansei* Brazilians to apply for visa, since paper work for application requires fluency in Japanese. As a result, some *Issei* migrants opened independent scrivener offices. In addition, more than half of the recruitment agencies (35 out of 57 in São Paulo and 11 out of 31 in Paraná) have subcontractors to send workers as soon as possible. They are called promoters and serve as intermediaries between workers and recruitment agencies.

These actors are related to send Brazilian workers to Japan. As mentioned in the next section, the more actors are committed to the recruitment process, the more expensive travelling becomes.

¹⁶ I borrowed the term “early risers” and “latecomers” from Tarrow (1989).

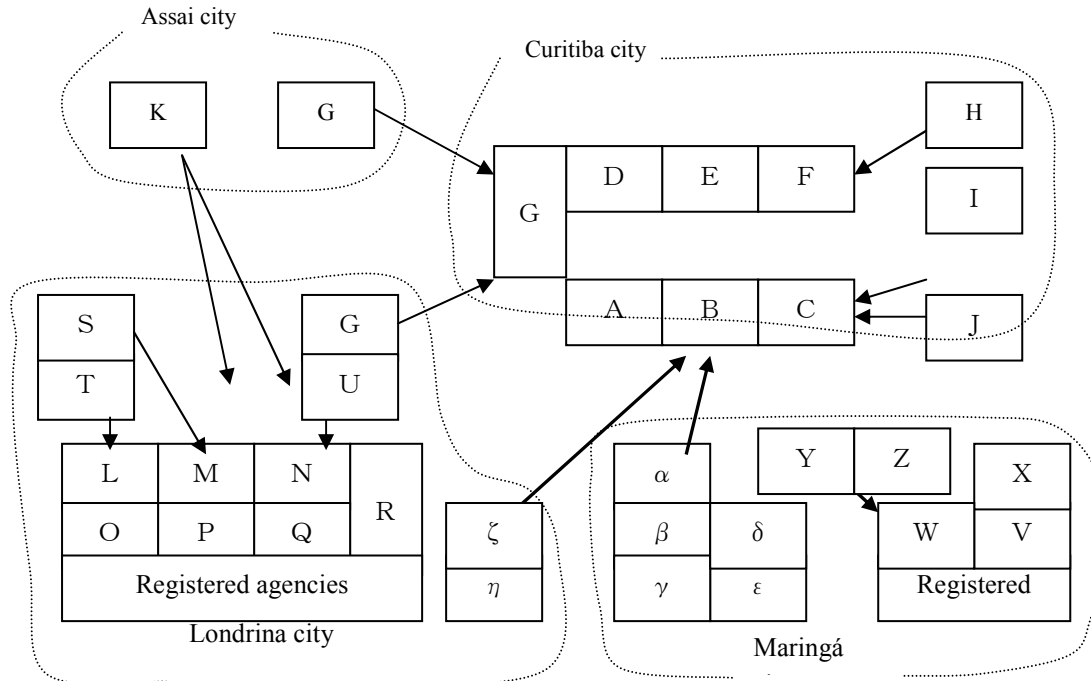


Fig. 8 Relation between Agencies for Visa Application in Paraná

3-2. A Long Way to Workplace in Japan

Recruitment agencies get commissions worth US\$500 or more from migrants or Japanese firms. Some direct-employment manufacturers used to pay commission, but in almost all cases migrants still had to pay for the commission after the economic boom¹⁷. Even so, employers have to loan the travel expenses in advance. Nevertheless, Japanese employers, both direct and indirect, prefer to bring migrants directly from Brazil, because they think Brazilian workers to be better than those employed in Japan. Table 3 shows half of the respondents have the means to employ workers from Brazil. These tendencies are clearer in larger labor contractors. That is why transnational recruitment networks still exist even though many Brazilian residents are living and looking for new jobs in Japan.

Table 3. Method of recruitment by labor contractors

Method of recruitment	No. (%)
Branches in Brazil	10 (17.9)
Through recruitment agencies in Brazil	19 (33.9)
In Japan	27 (48.2)
Total	56 (100.0)

Source: Contractor data

But the system of labor brokering is not favorable to Brazilian workers. Though recruitment agencies finance all the travel expenses to Japan, they are later deducted from the salaries of Brazilian workers. The total expense depends on how many of actors on figure 9 are involved in the brokering process.

If a Japanese-Brazilian potential migrant contacted a promoter, the candidate is taken to a broker or a travel agency. On not finding a job at the first agency, they may be introduced to another agency to be offered a job¹⁸. The candidate has to pay commission for each actor if he or she was able to find a job in Japan. This is represented as Case 1.

¹⁷ There are two modes of employment: direct and indirect. For details, see Tanno (1999).

¹⁸ This time the broker or travel agency turns promoter, but this case is not unusual. For them, they can earn commission whether they send workers to Japan or they introduce a future migrant to other agencies.

Figure 9 illustrates the distribution of travel expenses in Paraná. This shows that standard minimum prices range between \$2000 to 2800. In terms of maximum price, there are clearer tendency that \$2500 or are standard.

DISCUSSION: ASSEMBLYING THE PUZZLE

Now let us assemble the pieces of the puzzle based on section two and three: How is the difference between two migration systems?

1. Patterns of Selecting Migrants at the Origin

The first piece is concerned about selection of migrants in Brazil. Most Brazilians in Japan come from São Paulo and Paraná provinces: a survey conducted by JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) shows that 76.1% of the respondents were from São Paulo and 14.5% were from Paraná (Kokusai Kyoryoku Jigyodan 1992). But this concentration reflects the geographical distribution of *Nikkei* Brazilians. By and large, almost all Brazilian cities or towns with some amount of *Nikkei* population experienced a migration boom since the late 1980s.

On the contrary, Brazilian migration to America shows a quite different pattern. About half of the Brazilian migrants in the U.S., which counts from 350,000 to 400,000, are undocumented. But more important is that a majority of these migrants are from Minas Gerais province (Goza 1994, 141; Margolis 1994, 10-1; 1998, 2-4). If deterioration of Brazilian economy had generated emigrants to the U.S., they should have come from every province of Brazil.

Why are Brazilians in Japan from every area of Japanese-Brazilian concentration? Why are Brazilians in the U.S. from particular area of Brazil? This will be because of the difference in migration systems.

Brazilians in the U.S. seem to rely on a reciprocal migration system. The merit of this system is to provide cheap and reliable means of migration and adaptation for newcomers. But reciprocal relations have to be based on mutual trust. Then mutual trust takes it for granted to keep long-term relations, expecting that one's goodwill will be returned at some point in the future (Granovetter 1985). This nature of reciprocity makes migration systems cheaper and reliable in the short term. But it also puts restrictions on expanding migration systems to outside groups, because reciprocity is not only social capital for in-groups but also inaccessible resource for external groups (Waldinger 1995). Therefore, though reciprocal migration systems spread within the boundaries of particular groups that succeeded chain migration, most people outside the boundaries are excluded from opportunities to migrate.

On the other hand, commodified migration systems are driven by the principle of market exchange. Recruiters welcome anybody who is profitable, regardless of whether they know each other or not. They just care whether they can gain profit through recruitment. If labor contractors require more workers, recruiting agencies go even to Amazon to employ new workers as many as possible. In this sense, commodified migration systems offer more 'open' opportunities for potential migrants¹⁹.

Consequently, it is different principles of selection between commodified and reciprocal migration systems that brought a contrasting pattern of the geographical distribution of origin areas. For Brazilians motivated to migrate to the U.S., reciprocal relations are so scarce that most of them cannot migrate in reality. But for Japanese Brazilians necessary resources for migration can easily be purchased with loans of labor recruiters.

2. Spatial Distribution at Destinations

The second piece is about the channelizing function of migration systems. Conventional findings of migration systems approach agree with the point that migrants from the same migration network are canalized to particular districts in particular cities or towns. This is because later migrants rely on their

¹⁹ Reciprocity and market exchange are terminology of Karl Polanyi. As to the different principle of selection between market exchange and reciprocity, see Offe (1996).

pioneer migrants to look for housings and jobs in their neighborhoods.

But in the case of commodified migration systems, it is not migrants themselves who decide housings. Recruiting agencies do not consider whether migrant's family members, kin or friends live near the destination. Because they are usually trading with several labor contractors, and because labor contractors are sending their workers to several workplaces in different areas, even migrants using same recruiters are dispersed in Japan. Though migrants can select destination cities among jobs offered, they are often taken to other places because of the fluctuation in demand.

As a result, the commodified migration system tends randomly to canalize migrant workers. Therefore Brazilian migrants from a particular town do not concentrate to a particular city in Japan. That is also one of the great difference between Brazilian migrants in the U.S. and Japan.

3. Patterns of Keeping and Building Social Relations

The last piece of puzzle is concerned with maintenance of social relations. Such terms as "transplanted" (Bodnar 1985; Ostergren 1988) and "daughter community" (Massey et al. 1987) take it for granted social relations at the origin are still alive after migration²⁰. Massey et al.'s seminal work on Mexican migration to the U.S. reveals that daughter communities formed in the U.S. cities facilitate residential concentration and maintain social cohesion. They introduce the case of soccer team in Los Angeles:

There, people from Santiago began to meet every Sunday, bringing their families for free diversion and entertainment. The field, nicknamed '*Los Patos*' ('The Ducks') by the townspeople, became an obligatory place of reunion for all paisanos. It became the focal point of the out-migrant community, the place where one made dates, obtained work, located friends, welcomed new arrivals, and exchanged news of the town itself (Massey et al. 1987, 146).

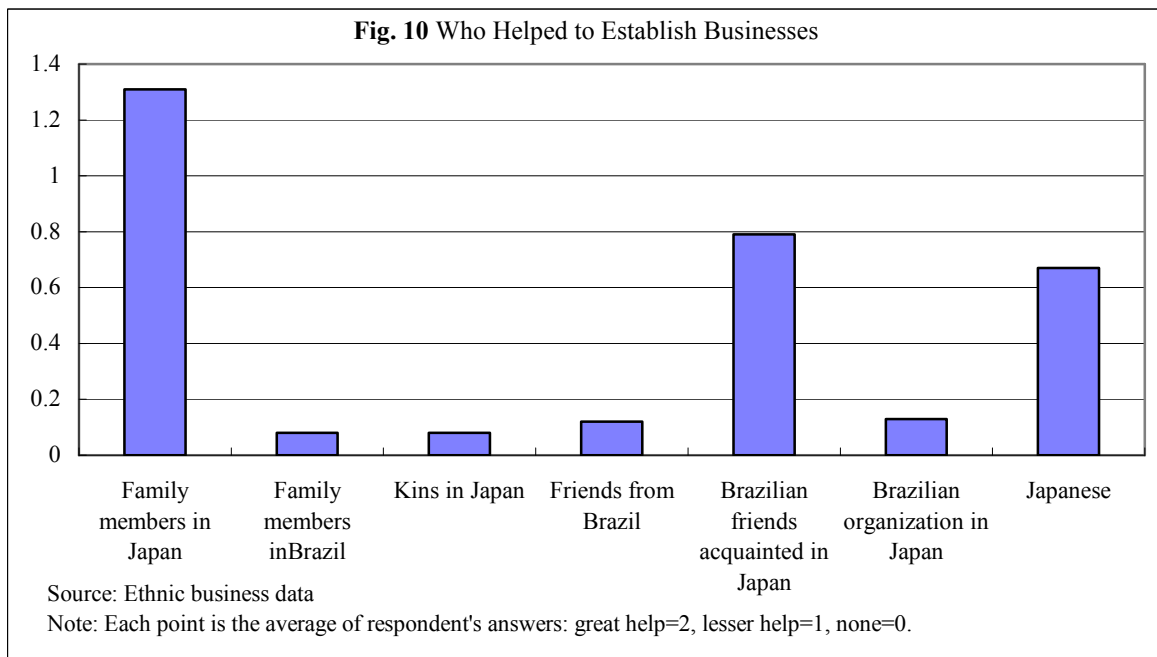
Whereas in terms of Brazilians in Japan, *paisanos* (community members) are not canalized to same cities. Though there are tens of soccer teams in Japan, they are not based on the friendship at the places of origin but on destinations²¹. Most members were not acquainted each other in Brazil and construct social relations at workplaces or Brazilian restaurants in Japan. In addition, figure 10 shows the source of mutual help to establish Brazilian ethnic businesses in Japan. It is by far family members that help establishing businesses. Next to families come Brazilian friends acquainted in Japan and Japanese people. Both of them are newly constructed social relations. To the contrary, friends from Brazil and kin members count only a negligible contribution. These results suggest that social relations except family ties are reorganized in Japan rather than transplanted from Brazil. As a result, though some 'little Brazil' towns, such as Oizumi and Hamamatsu, appear to have emerged, they are not daughter communities of particular Brazilian towns.

These views also require us reconsidering presuppositions of conventional studies on Brazilian migrants in Japan. They may be overemphasizing the shaping of social networks among Brazilians in Japan (e.g. Hirota 1997, Watanabe 1995). The findings of this article suggest only strong social relations, such as family ties, are kept at the destination in the case of commodified migration systems. That is why we need to focus on how social networks and communities are reorganized in Japan as well as how they have emerged²².

²⁰ In a broader sense, these viewpoints emerged to emphasize migrants are not 'uprooted' people atomized at destination cities, which researchers of early Chicago school presupposed. But recently scholars seem to overemphasize migrants' integration into migration networks. As Portes (1995) analyzes, it is important to evaluate the strength of migration networks in a comparative way.

²¹ For example, there are seven Brazilian and Peruvian soccer teams in Himeji city, Kobe prefecture. But they are based on the districts in the city and almost all teammates were not acquainted before migrating to Japan.

²² It also relates to the participation and mobilization in host societies. Discontinuity and reorganization of social relations require additional cost of constructing community institutions such as ethnic enterprises and organizations. Without substantial organizations, it is difficult for Brazilians to participate in political processes, though they became active participants in Hamamatsu city (Higuchi 2002b).



CONCLUSION

Migration systems approach focused on the role of social institutions that facilitate migration by mediating macro-level opportunity structure and micro-level individual motivation. These institutions do not only include family, kinship, neighborhood and community organizations, but also 'migration merchants' or recruiting agencies. Recently scholarly attention has been paid to the latter, but previous studies have failed to recognize theoretical implications of them. There are at least two principles of mediation to propel migration: reciprocity and market exchange. The difference of principle results in different patterns of migration. I have tried to illustrate some of the differences by assembling the puzzle.

Table 4. Comparing the Characteristics of Two Migration Systems

	Reciprocal migration system	Commodified migration system
Mode of mediation	Reciprocity	Market exchange
Selection	Limited within reciprocal groups	Depends on the market values of migrants
Channelization	Regularly channeled to particular destinations	Rather randomly channeled with weak regularity in the choice of origin and destination areas
Transplantation	Social relations at the origin are kept at the destination	Social relations except family ties are reorganized and newly selected at the destination

The assembled puzzle of this paper is summarized in table 4. Though the comparison between two migration systems is ideal-typical, I suppose it tells much about Brazilian migration to Japan. But how can the findings be generalized? I am not sure whether the distinct patterns of *Nikkei* Brazilian migration to Japan are applicable to other migration flows driven by commodified migration systems. At this point I do not know whether these patterns will be replaced by the reciprocal migration system in the future, as the American experience suggests. Nevertheless, so far Brazilian migration to Japan has characteristics much different from what conventional migration system approach presumed.

In a broader context, the idea of commodified migration system will also be useful to analyze

migration to other East Asian countries (especially to South Korea). While migrants to the U.S. only partly rely on brokers in the migration process, intermediaries dominate most migration processes to East Asian countries. This is because of immigration policies: reciprocal migration systems are not likely to develop where family reunification of migrant workers is not allowed and immigrant visas are not issued.

Consequently, Brazilian migration to Japan tells us of the need for comparative study of migration systems in relation to immigration policies. It will contribute to reconsider the presupposition of existing theories of migration networks and to evaluate the characteristics of migration to Asian countries.

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