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### Japan, labour migration and the global order of difference

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## Japan, labour migration and the global order of difference

### Abstract

In this chapter, I will situate Japan in the global flows of labour migration. While the focus will largely be on migration patterns in recent decades, it will first be necessary to review earlier patterns of mobility which have had a role in shaping current routes and modes of migration. I use two concepts to frame my discussion: Foucault's concept of "biopower" and an adaptation of Connell's concept of the "global gender order", which I will reframe as "the global order of difference".

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# **Japan, Migration and the Global Order of Difference**

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## **Japan, Labour Migration and the Global Order of Difference**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter I will situate Japan in the global flows of labour migration. While the focus will largely be on migration patterns in recent decades, it will first be necessary to review earlier patterns of mobility which have had a role in shaping current routes and modes of migration. I use two concepts to frame my discussion of migration: Foucault's concept of 'biopower' and an adaptation of Connell's concept of the 'global gender order', which I will reframe as 'the global order of difference'.

Foucault introduced the concept of biopower in order to describe the ways in which governments manage populations. As biopower, individuals are mobilised by the state as resources: as workers, as citizens, and as family members responsible for the reproduction of the population.<sup>1</sup> The concept of biopower is more expansive than the Marxist concept of 'labour power', for it allows us to consider matters of sexuality and reproduction as well as labour in the more narrow sense. It can also be distinguished from the notion of 'human capital', which refers to those skills and attributes which are meaningful to employers in the extraction of surplus value. The management of biopower has traditionally been one of the tasks of national governments. In the current age of economic globalisation, however, the management of biopower is also a matter which crosses national boundaries. Global corporations attempt to maximise profits through accessing cheaper labour power. Or, as Hancock et al explain, 'transnational capitalism demands flexible bodies for flexible accumulation'.<sup>2</sup> While workers attempt to maximise their income through crossing national borders, nation-states attempt to regulate these flows through border controls.<sup>3</sup> Matters of border control in twenty-first century Japan

interact with current domestic social issues involving demography, the labour market, and economic relationships with other countries in the region. Japan faces a rapidly aging population, the highest life expectancy in the world, a birthrate well below replacement level, and a shrinking population. Smaller families find it difficult to provide primary care for the sick, the elderly and those with disabilities, and the welfare system is stretched to the limit. At the same time, Japanese people are increasingly unwilling to undertake work regarded as 'manual labour' or 'unskilled labour'. Thus, questions of the management of biopower are increasingly linked to matters of migration. I have referred to these processes elsewhere as 'managing borders and managing bodies'.<sup>4</sup>

Current forms of transnational mobility also, however, have a history. Before the invention of the term 'globalisation', people moved around the globe according to trading routes, as part of colonising processes, as missionaries, as members or followers of the military, as workers of various degrees of freedom, as indentured workers or as slaves.<sup>5</sup> As I will demonstrate, an understanding of the historical patterns of mobility in East Asia can assist in understanding contemporary forms and routes of mobility.

Raewyn Connell has coined the concept of the 'global gender order' in order to capture the insight that gender relations are shaped by power structures which transcend the level of the nation-state.<sup>6</sup> This involves the connections between different local gender orders, and can also involve gender orders which transcend the scale of any one nation-state. I would like to apply this concept to an understanding of labour migration. In order to understand these gendered patterns of labour migration, it is necessary to come to terms with gendered structures in both sending and receiving countries. Needless to say, gender also interacts with other dimensions of difference, including class, caste,

ethnicity and racialised positioning. Furthermore, the migration experience has ‘important implications for class production and reproduction at both ends of the migration stream’.<sup>7</sup> This understanding of the global gender order, and its intersections with other dimensions of difference, will shape my discussion of patterns of labour migration centring on Japan. If we were to focus on socio-economic structures, we might call this ‘the global order of inequality’; if we were to focus on the cultural constructions of difference which accompany inequalities, then ‘the global order of difference’ might be an appropriate label. Ultimately, the global order of difference is also connected with culture, emotion and affect, as particular attitudes become associated with members of groups whose occupations have been gendered, classed and ethnicised.

### **Japan Enters the Global Flow of Labour Migration**

Between the 1630s and the 1850s, there was very little movement between Japan and other countries. The government of the Shôguns closed the country to most contact with other countries due to fear of the encroachment of Christian missionaries and European imperialists. Some limited trade with other countries was carried out through allowing Dutch traders access to the island of Deshima near Nagasaki. By the 1850s, such isolation was difficult to sustain, and unequal treaties were signed with the US and major European powers. From this time Japan embarked on a program of modernisation and industrialisation, initially based on the revenue from a land tax. As the tax put pressure on rural areas, this was one impetus for a wave of emigration. Gender also came into play as some young men emigrated to escape conscription, and young women emigrated as sex workers. There were also small numbers of European and North American immigrant sojourners in Japan, who entered as diplomats, traders, missionaries,

teachers, engineers, journalists and experts hired by the government to advise on aspects of the modernisation process.

The first emigrants moved to Hawai'i as early as 1868. There was a conjunction between rural poverty in Japan and the need for plantation labour in Hawai'i.<sup>8</sup> From this time, the concept of '*dekasegi*', or labour migration could apply to both internal and overseas migration.<sup>9</sup> The situation of these emigrants changed when Hawai'i (previously known as the Sandwich Islands) became a US protectorate in 1898 and thus subject to US regulations on border control. Descendants of different waves of emigration from Japan are the basis of the Japanese-American community in present-day Hawai'i.

From the 1880s to 1894, the Japanese government itself was the major labour broker, until it passed the Emigration Protection Ordinance and allowed private labour brokers to operate. Japanese emigrants also started to migrate to the West Coast of the USA and Canada from the 1880s. These countries used the labour of Chinese and Japanese workers in agricultural labour and construction work. Some immigrants set up small businesses such as laundries. Immigrants from these communities also provided domestic labour in what Evelyn Nakano Glenn has described as the 'racial division of reproductive labour'. Until large numbers of women started to immigrate, paid domestic labour was often carried out by the men of the Japanese and Chinese communities. The occupation was thus more strongly racialised than gendered, and this racialisation took different forms in different parts of the US, with domestic work being carried out by African Americans in the South, Mexicans in the Southwest, and Japanese and Chinese in Hawai'i and on the West Coast.<sup>10</sup>

After the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act in the USA in 1882, Japanese immigrants came to take the place of the Chinese, until they, too were excluded in the 1920s.<sup>11</sup> In agriculture the family was the most efficient unit of production. Under the ‘Gentleman’s Agreement’ the Japanese government agreed to stop issuing passports for travel to the United States, except for family members of those already in the US. This led to the practice of ‘picture brides’, or the contracting of a marriage from afar with a woman in the homeland who would then be able to enter the US. The possibility of marriage was restricted in other border control regimes which would not allow the entry of wives and families, or by laws which prevented marriage or sexual relations between members of different racial(ised) groups. The possibility of migration was also shaped by discourses of racialisation as Canada and the USA (like Australia and New Zealand) passed laws explicitly restricting immigration from Asia.

Japanese also emigrated to the countries of Latin America around the turn of the century and into the following decades. Altogether Japan sent 244,334 emigrants to Latin America before 1945. The descendants of these Japanese emigrants form the present-day communities of people of Japanese descent (*Nikkeijin*) in such places as Brazil and Peru.<sup>12</sup> It is largely these communities which have sent workers to Japan from the 1980s to the 2010s under a special visa category for those with Japanese ancestry.

Japanese emigrated to the colonies which would become the federated nation of Australia from the late nineteenth century. They worked as pearl divers, plantation workers and laundry workers. There were also a small number of business people. Restriction of immigration from Asian countries was an issue in each of the separate Australian colonies, but Japanese workers were allowed to enter in specific industries.

These immigrant workers were prohibited from bringing in family members, resulting in a largely male immigrant population from Japan, and hindering the formation of the kinds of Japanese communities found in Hawai'i and the Americas. Some formed liaisons with indigenous women in Northern Australia, and a very small number of Japanese men married (white) Australian women.<sup>13</sup> A small number of women came to Australia as sex workers. With Federation in 1901, one of the earliest acts of the new Parliament was the Immigration Restriction Act, also known as the 'White Australia Policy'. Nevertheless, some Japanese business people resided in Australia as sojourners up to the 1930s.<sup>14</sup> Japanese residents (and indigenous partners and children) were interned in Australia after the outbreak of World War II. Some were 'returned' to Japan at the end of the Second World War.

Japanese traders gradually set up shop in Korea, China and Southeast Asia. One of the first forms of emigration was of sex workers (known as '*Karayuki-san*') and their procurers. The name '*Karayuki-san*' literally means 'going to China' (*Kara* [China] + *yuki* [to go] + *san* [title]). Many argue that much of the economic activity of Japanese traders in Southeast Asia was built on the profits extracted from the sexual labour of these women. It has been reported that 'over 300,000 Japanese were working overseas in 1906 and it is estimated that between 20,000 and 30,000 Japanese women were engaged in prostitution around the world'.<sup>15</sup> Such women were found throughout Southeast Asia, on the West coast of the USA, in Australia, and even as far afield as Madagascar. Some of the women were able to return to Japan but others lived out their days in Southeast Asia.<sup>16</sup>

We can thus see that from the earliest days of labour emigration from Japan there were gendered patterns, depending on the interaction between conditions in rural Japan, the labour markets of receiving countries, the border control regimes of receiving countries, and the interaction of class structures, gender orders and regimes of racialisation.

### **Intercolonial Mobilities**

The boundaries of the Japanese nation-state were expanded from the 1870s – first with the incorporation of the northern territories of Ezo (present-day Hokkaidô) and the southern kingdom of Ryûkyû (present-day Okinawa). This was the impetus for the ‘internal’ migration of Japanese settlers to these territories. The people of Okinawa also became integrated into inter-colonial circuits of mobility.<sup>17</sup>

Taiwan was annexed in 1895 after Japan’s victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–5. Japanese travelled to Taiwan as colonial administrators and entrepreneurs. Taiwanese people also travelled to Japan as students and as workers. Their descendants form an important element of the present-day Chinese resident community in Japan. After victories in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–5 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5, Japan gained control of the Liaotung [Liaodong] Peninsula and increasing influence on the Korean peninsula. Korea was formally annexed in 1910. Japanese travelled to Korea as colonial administrators and entrepreneurs. Koreans travelled to Japan as students and as workers.<sup>18</sup> Their descendants form a major part of the present-day Korean resident community in Japan.<sup>19</sup> After Germany’s defeat in the First World War, Japan gained control of former German territories in the Pacific. This is a lesser-known destination of Japanese emigrants. Befu reports that in 1935 ‘some 636,000

Japanese were living in Asia and Micronesia, compared with 373,000 in North and South America'.<sup>20</sup>

The puppet state of Manchukuo, established in 1932, was promoted as a destination for Japanese farmers, who were encouraged to emigrate and settle as families. Women were encouraged to travel to Manchukuo as brides of male farmers, under the label '*Tairiku hanayome*' (brides [going to] the continent). Other men and women travelled as bureaucrats and traders, as teachers, as workers on the South Manchurian Railroad, as domestic workers, entertainers and sex workers. Manchukuo also became a destination for inter-colonial migration. The promotion of the migration of agricultural workers on a large scale was relatively unsuccessful. Rather, those who migrated were 'small traders and artisans, shopkeepers, and adventurous merchants'.<sup>21</sup> Labour needs in Manchukuo were rather met by impoverished Chinese labourers. Workers from Japan's colonies and peripheral territories moved between Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Okinawa and Manchukuo. By 1945, millions of Japanese people were residing in different parts of Asia.<sup>22</sup>

Japan also became a destination for students and workers from the colonies of Taiwan and Korea. The Japanese labour market needed workers in agriculture, factories and mines. As the war effort intensified in the 1930s and 1940s, colonial subjects were also included in the national mobilisation policies, and eventually were coerced into factory and mining labour and in support roles for the military.<sup>23</sup> In the gendered and ethnicised labour markets of Imperial Japan, Korean men were employed in mines and heavy industry, while women were employed in textile factories. Okinawan women, too, were found in textile factories. Thus, while textiles had originally been constructed as a gendered labour force, by the 1930s the textile labour force was also stratified according

to ethnicity. These gendered and ethnicised forms of differentiation also facilitated the management and control of different segments of the labour force.<sup>24</sup>

As well as movement between the metropolis and the peripheries, there were also circuits of inter-colonial mobility between Japan, Okinawa, Korea, Taiwan, Manchukuo and Japanese settlements in China. To provide just one example, women from Okinawa might move to Taiwan as domestic workers for Japanese families there.<sup>25</sup>

### **Militarised Mobilities**

From the late nineteenth century, the Japanese army had a presence on the Chinese mainland, starting with the Russo-Japanese War of 1894–5 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5. By the 1940s, the Japanese army occupied territories in the Pacific, Southeast Asia, South Asia and China. In 1945, an estimated six million Japanese were based overseas as soldiers, colonists and entrepreneurs.<sup>26</sup>

The military were supported by civilians in such roles as medical personnel and nurses. Wherever the military travelled, entrepreneurs (from Japan and other countries) supported them with supplies and lodgings, restaurants, entertainment and brothels. Journalists and other writers also followed the war effort. There were clearly gendered patterns as men moved as soldiers while women supported them as nurses.

Colonial subjects were also mobilised – sometimes through enforced recruitment – to support the military in quasi-military roles or as labourers. In colonies and occupied territories, locals were mobilised *in situ* but also taken to other territories with the military. These labourers were known as *rômusha*, and there are still unsettled claims for

compensation. Prisoners of war and internees were also mobilised as labour and travelled with the military.

While male colonial subjects were mobilised as labour in mines, factories and in construction, female colonial subjects were mobilised into domestic labour and factory labour. Female colonial subjects and women in occupied territories (and some Japanese women) were also coerced into work in military brothels (also known as military sexual slavery). These women were also transported throughout Southeast Asia and the Pacific alongside the military.<sup>27</sup>

It took years to repatriate the estimated six million Japanese who were overseas at the end of the Second World War. Some stayed behind and some were stranded. In subsequent decades there were occasional media waves of interest in ‘stragglers’ (soldiers who had stayed behind after the surrender), and of orphans who came ‘back’ to Japan as adults from China (often unable to speak Japanese).<sup>28</sup> Befu reports that more than 1,000 soldiers are said to have remained in Indonesia and over 700 in Vietnam.<sup>29</sup> Some descendants of Japanese fathers and Philippine mothers from the wartime period have recently petitioned the Japanese government to have their nationality recognised as Japanese.<sup>30</sup>

At the end of the Second World War, there were Koreans and Taiwanese resident in Japan who had been deemed to be subjects of the Japanese emperor. With the Japanese surrender on 15 August 1945 the former colonies were liberated. By the time of the end of the Allied Occupation in 1952, the Japanese government had decided to revoke the Japanese nationality of the former colonial subjects. Members of these communities thus had to decide whether to stay in Japan as ‘foreign residents’ or whether to ‘return’ to

Korea or Taiwan. The situation was particularly difficult for Koreans, due to the division of the peninsula and the Korean War. They had to choose affiliation with the North or the South. Those who chose the South could travel on South Korean passports. Those who chose the North were effectively stateless and had to travel with special travel papers. Those who stayed in Japan were classified as special permanent residents. Large numbers of Koreans were also ‘repatriated’ to North or South Korea.<sup>31</sup>

While the descendants of the pre-1945 Korean communities form the basis of the contemporary Korean resident community in Japan, there has been constant movement between South Korea and Japan in the post-Second World War era. These different groups of Korean residents are often referred to as ‘oldcomers’ and ‘newcomers’.<sup>32</sup> The descendants of the pre-1945 Taiwanese communities form the basis of the contemporary Chinese resident community in Japan. However, Chinese from the People’s Republic of China travel to Japan nowadays as students and trainees and there are recurrent panics about undocumented immigration from China to Japan.

### **Reconfiguring Migratory Flows**

There was some resumption of emigration to Latin America in the 1950s, but this was curtailed in the early 1970s.<sup>33</sup> Japan is now largely a receiving country rather than a sending country. There are, however, large numbers of Japanese overseas sojourners engaged in trading, in such businesses as restaurants, or as teachers of the Japanese language or martial arts. Young people travel as students or on working holidays (constructed as tourism, but also a form of labour migration).<sup>34</sup> There are also what some have referred to as ‘lifestyle migrants’ and retirees who choose to retire to overseas destinations.<sup>35</sup> Befu reports that by 1994, ‘699,895 Japanese citizens were living abroad

on a long-term or permanent basis, an increase of 201 percent since 1969 [but that] this figure obviously does not include those who lost or gave up Japanese citizenship in order to become naturalized citizens of the countries in which they now reside'.<sup>36</sup> There are gendered patterns in emigration depending on occupation and destination. Some countries, such as Australia, have a skewed sex ratio among Japanese immigrants.<sup>37</sup>

In the latter decades of the twentieth century, the Japanese economy gradually shifted from one based on agriculture and manufacturing to a largely post-industrial economy based on services, technology, knowledge, information and finance. In 2008 primary industry accounted for 4.2 percent of employment, secondary industry 26.4 percent and tertiary industry 68.2 percent. There has been a steady decline in the percentage of workers engaged in primary industry throughout the post-World War II period; the number engaged in manufacturing has shown a decline in every year since 1993 (except for a brief upturn in 2006); and there has been a corresponding increase in the percentage of workers engaged in tertiary industry from 1980 to the present.<sup>38</sup> This is so marked that Yoshio Sugimoto now refers to 'cultural capitalism' in contemporary Japan.<sup>39</sup>

From the 1970s to the 1990s, a large part of manufacturing production was moved offshore, in search of looser environmental controls, weaker labour unions, and cheaper labour power. Some sectors of manufacturing, involving sub-contracting and sub-sub-contracting to the large industrial conglomerates, did, however, stay onshore, and this work was variously undertaken by married women in part-time or casual positions, rural labour on a seasonal basis, and from the 1980s by immigrant labour. Small to medium enterprises which could not afford to move offshore started to employ immigrant labour. Some immigrants worked legally as *kenshūsei* (trainees) on limited term contracts and short-term visas, while others entered on tourist visas and overstayed. The construction

industry also became reliant on (largely undocumented) immigrant labour in these years (Yamanaka 2000: 63). The term *dekasegi* now expanded to include immigrant workers entering Japan. The savings to employers are not necessarily in wages. Rather, irregular workers ‘cost their employers significantly less because they do not receive the numerous expensive benefits, entitlements and job security that Japanese regular employees do’ (Yamanaka 2000: 87–88).

In the 1970s, concerns were raised within Japan about Japanese men who were travelling to Southeast Asia as tourists and purchasing the services of sex workers. By the 1980s, concern was rather about women from Southeast Asia who were travelling to Japan to work in a range of occupations in a continuum from entertainers to waitresses and hostesses to sex work. In some cases, these women were working under unfree conditions. In order to understand these movements, it is necessary to understand the conditions in such places as the Philippines and Thailand which were sending countries for such workers, and the conditions in Japan which produced the desire for the services of non-Japanese sex workers.<sup>40</sup> In sending countries, we need to look at rural poverty, gendered labour markets, rural to urban migration – which easily becomes cross-border migration (or forced migration) – and the gap between economic conditions in Japan and other parts of Asia. To trace the routes of labour migration is also to map the patterns of economic inequality in the region.

Some time in the 1980s, the proportion of male to female immigrant workers shifted. Once males were entering the country in similar numbers to females this began to be seen as a labour market issue rather than simply an issue of morality and policing.<sup>41</sup> Male immigrant workers were seen in such occupations as day labouring, construction and factory work. They came from regions such as the Philippines and parts of South

Asia. The sending countries shifted depending on border control regimes and visa agreements between Japan and the sending countries. There were gendered patterns with South Asia and West Asia largely sending male immigrants, the Philippines sending both men and women, and other Southeast Asian countries largely sending women.

One response of the Japanese government to the need for labour in particular occupations was the trainee (*kenshūsei*) system. The demand for trainees peaked at over 100,000 in 2007 and has been dropping yearly since then. Concerns have been raised about the working conditions of trainees. It was reported, for example, that thirty-four people involved in training programs had died in fiscal 2008, a record high: the deaths were from work-related accidents, traffic accidents, and brain and heart disorders. Advocates for the workers have attributed these deaths to overwork.<sup>42</sup>

As noted above, the Japanese economy and labour market has shifted to a focus on tertiary industries – information, knowledge and services. Even under ‘cultural capitalism’, however, there is a need for various kinds of work devoted to the care of individuals’ bodily needs. While much of the discussion of immigrant labour in other parts of Asia has focused on domestic work, Japan is relatively distinctive in not importing large numbers of domestic workers.<sup>43</sup> The explanation for these distinctive patterns of immigration lies in the connection between the gendered division of labour, the labour market and demography. In Singapore, for example, in middle-class families, both partners tend to stay in the full-time workforce in elite occupations, thus necessitating the employment of domestic labour.<sup>44</sup> Much of the discussion of these issues assumes a heterosexual nuclear family with a gendered division of labour where women have the primary responsibility for childcare, childrearing, domestic labour and

other forms of caring labour. However, a full discussion of this issue would start from the sexual division of labour and gendered ideologies in the home, and then situate this in the context of gendered, classed and ethnicised labour markets. In Japan, by contrast, the ‘double-burden’ of childrearing and paid work has often been handled by women leaving the full-time workforce in the years when their childrearing demands are heaviest, to return to the part-time workforce when children are older.<sup>45</sup> The relatively flat income distribution in Japan also means that it is rarely feasible to employ domestic help. With the aging of the population and the plummeting birthrate, the pressing need is for the care of the aged and infirm.

Because of the official prohibition on importing ‘unskilled’ labour, it is illegal to import labour for the purpose of domestic work, although anecdotal evidence suggests that some families are finding ways to employ overseas domestic workers. In one loophole, diplomatic personnel may employ domestic workers or chauffeurs who speak English, and this allows them to employ overseas workers. While such workers have a legitimate visa status, their home-based work does not come under the purview of the Labour Standards Law (*Rôdô Kijun Hô*, 1947), the legislation which regulates the working conditions of regular workers in workplaces such as offices and factories.<sup>46</sup>

Many commentators, however, see international marriage as a form of labour migration. The women who immigrate as wives of Japanese men often provide domestic labour, sexual and reproductive labour, childcare and care of the sick and aged in their marital families, not to mention engaging in paid labour in their communities.<sup>47</sup> As Piquero-Ballecas points out, women who had originally entered as ‘tourists, entertainers, spouses/children of Japanese nationals, trainees or students’ were, in effect, ‘recruited as

caregivers and providers of emotional labor in Japan'.<sup>48</sup> In a highly gendered labour market, women of the *Nikkei* (Japanese heritage) community, too, have apparently often been employed as *tsukisoi-nin* (workers who provide informal personal care for the sick or elderly, rather than medical or nursing care) and some have actually come to Japan for that purpose.<sup>49</sup> Once again, there are gendered expectations in the discourse on marriage and caring.

Piquero-Balleascas' comments on the relationship between immigration, the labour market and various forms of caring labour also remind us that, while immigration categories are rigid, individuals find ways of moving between these categories. Someone might initially enter on a tourist visa, but overstay to engage in various forms of undocumented paid labour. Or, someone may have originally entered as an entertainer (under an earlier visa regime), but enter into a relationship which transforms her into the 'spouse of a Japanese national', and thus be eligible to apply for permanent residency. Regardless of state attempts to regulate the entry of various categories of residents, once within the boundaries of the Japanese nation-state, individuals inevitably form relationships with Japanese nationals or with other immigrants. The offspring of these relationships have been the subject of many of the recent controversies concerning nationality and residence category. It has recently been reported that '[o]ne in every 30 babies born in Japan has at least one foreign parent' and 'about 6.5 per cent of all marriages in Japan in 2006 were international'.<sup>50</sup> The management of border control is thus intimately connected with the management of the labour market and the management of 'biopower' more broadly.

Much of the discussion of labour migration focuses on those non-élite workers engaged in occupations described as ‘difficult, dirty and dangerous’ (*kitsui, kitanai, kiken*). These are occupations which are seen as undesirable by Japanese people, the majority of whom (until the recent financial crises) saw themselves as middle class. These undesirable occupations then come to be associated with particular ethnic groups, or, in other words, the occupations become *ethnicised* (and, of course, classed and gendered).<sup>51</sup>

Japan is also integrated into élite circuits of mobility. Those members of the ‘new’ class – those international workers who travel between global cities – are also increasingly found in Japan. They work in law, banking, finances, trading, engineering, science, academia, language teaching, journalism, editing, translating and interpreting. While Japan is a host to members of this élite workforce, there are also Japanese sojourners who travel overseas as representatives of Japanese trading, financial and construction companies, and of Japanese aid agencies, diplomatic missions and cultural organizations.<sup>52</sup> There are different modes of mobility, with males over-represented as employees of trading companies, often travelling with their wives and children. There are also, however, single women who travel to such places as Shanghai, Singapore and Hong Kong to work.<sup>53</sup>

### **New Forms of Labour Sojourning**

In 1990, the Immigration Control Act was modified to allow descendants of Japanese emigrants to enter Japan for up to three years, in a long-term resident category with no restriction on engaging in employment (*Shutsunyūkoku Oyobi Nanmin Nintei Kanri-hô [Nationality and Refugee Recognition Law]*, as amended 1990). Those who

enter under this visa category may also bring their family members into Japan, and these may be people who have even less connection with Japanese society. The yearly admission of Brazilians quadrupled from 19,000 in 1988 to 79,000 in 1990. By 1996 more than 200,000 *Nikkeijin* workers and their families had registered as residents in major manufacturing cities. By 2007, there were 317,000 Japanese Brazilians in Japan.<sup>54</sup>

In the 1990s, the temporary immigration of people of Japanese descent was seen as a more acceptable way of dealing with labour shortages than inviting 'guest workers' with no apparent ties to the Japanese nation-state. Although the Japanese heritage of such immigrants was probably expected to cut down on problems generated by perceptions of difference, local communities soon found they had to deal with contact between groups with different social and cultural expectations, while schools needed to address the necessity of multilingual and multicultural education for the children of these families. The co-existence of the descendants of Japanese emigrants reinforces the primacy of Japanese lineage, but also has the potential to undermine the naturalised assumption that blood-line equates with cultural competence. This assumption is a feature of many national cultures, as pointed out by Barry Hindess, '[n]otions of descent (and the apparently more respectable surrogate notion of a distinctive national culture that cannot readily be acquired by persons who are not born into it) have always played an important part in the way citizenship has been understood within particular communities'.<sup>55</sup>

A labour ministry survey of companies in October 2008 found that there were some 486,400 foreign workers in Japan. Of these, 43.3 percent were Chinese, 20.4 percent Brazilians and 8.3 percent Filipinos. Many of these workers underpinned the production of cars and other exported products when the

economy was good. In addition, many small firms and agricultural enterprises employed foreign trainees. However, the national unemployment rate peaked at 5.7 per cent during 2009, and the automobile industry was hit particularly hard. This industry is concentrated in central Japan in Aichi prefecture, where an estimated 220,000 registered foreigners reside.<sup>56</sup>

In April 2009 the government offered financial assistance to unemployed immigrant workers of Japanese ancestry (and their families) who wished to leave the country. The government also allocated ¥1.08 billion for training, including Japanese-language lessons, for the workers of Japanese ancestry.<sup>57</sup> Some local governments also started support programs for such workers, and petitioned the national government for emergency support.<sup>58</sup> There were plans to train unemployed foreigners to work in nursing care, an attempt to implement change in what is a highly gendered and ethnicised labour market.<sup>59</sup> As Yamanaka points out, ‘immigration policy has created a labour force rigidly stratified by such collective characteristics as legal status, ethnicity, nationality, gender and skill level’.<sup>60</sup> Nearly two decades later we are seeing the failures in planning for the long-term needs of the *Nikkei* communities. If we compare the history of the use of immigrant labour of Japanese descent with current attempts to use short-term immigrant labour in the caring professions, the segmentation of the labour market according to ethnicity, nationality, gender and skill level is thrown into sharp relief.

### **Regional Mobilities of Care Workers**

Recent policies which provide insurance for the costs associated with the care of the aged attempt to come to terms with the social requirements of a population where the aged comprise an ever-increasing proportion of the population (*Kaigo Hoken Hô/Law*

Concerning Insurance for Nursing Care, 1997, amended 2000). As a supplement to the care provided by family members, volunteers, paid carers and nursing professionals, the Japanese government is moving slowly on bringing in care workers from overseas. This is being managed by bilateral agreements with Indonesia and the Philippines. Both countries are significant as sending countries for labour migrants, with remittances as a major element of their economies. ESCAP reports that Indonesia and the Philippines are estimated to be in the top ten remittance-recipient economies (in dollar terms) in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>61</sup> One reason for the cautious progress of these programs is the necessity to negotiate with advocates for the nursing and caring professions within Japan: the Japanese Nursing Association and the Japan Association of Certified Care Workers.

The agreement with Indonesia was concluded in 2007, and the first care workers entered the country during 2009 and commenced training and language study. However, almost as soon as the first workers entered the country, concerns were being raised about the effects of the economic recession. In addition, fewer jobs were being offered than expected because of a perceived burden on facilities for supporting the Indonesian workers, including Japanese language education, and the commencement of a similar program with the Philippines in the same year.<sup>62</sup>

All of the care workers admitted so far will work in hospitals and nursing facilities and not in private care. They will be expected to pass exams in three or four years in order to gain qualifications if they wish to stay on in Japan. They could in some ways, then, be seen as a specific form of 'trainee'. They have been provided with a six-month language course which allows them to communicate in basic spoken Japanese, but much more specialised language training will be necessary in order to tackle the national

caregiver qualifying examinations.<sup>63</sup>

The agreement with the Philippines (JPEPA) was signed in September 2006, but it took the Philippines Senate nearly two years to ratify it. Besides providing a framework for liberalising trade and investment between the two countries and allowing Filipino nurses (*kangoshi*) and caregivers (*kangofukushi*) to work in Japan, the agreement also detailed possible cooperative programs, including training courses for the regulation of and supervision of financial institutions, trade and investment cooperation, cooperation in the field of small and medium enterprises, technical cooperation in the field of science and communications technology and promotion of tourism. Under the agreement, Filipino nurses and caregivers arrived in Japan in 2009 and 2010 to undergo language training for half a year before going to work at hospitals and nursing-care facilities across Japan. The nurses and caregivers are endorsed by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. The Japan International Corporation of Welfare Services (JICWELS) is responsible for finding hospitals and health-care institutions in Japan willing to hire the qualified Filipino nurses.<sup>64</sup>

In the Philippines, more than 400 nursing schools are producing more nursing graduates than can be employed by hospitals and rest homes. Many of the fresh graduates are pinning their hopes on finding a job overseas. For those from the Philippines, who have been educated in English, however, other countries, such as U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Britain may seem more accessible than Japan. The migration of nurses from the Philippines to these Anglophone countries is well-established.<sup>65</sup>

Concern has been expressed internationally about the exodus of medical professionals from developing countries to first world countries.<sup>66</sup> This has prompted the

World Health Organisation to develop the Global Code on International Recruitment of Health Personnel.<sup>67</sup> As wealthy first world countries seek personnel from around the world to care for the bodily needs of their citizens, third world countries increasingly suffer from a lack of medical professionals, nurses and care workers to look after the needs of their own populations.

Until the 1990s, it seemed unimaginable that Japan might consider the use of the services of immigrant workers in order to deal with the crisis in elder care. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, however, this has become a reality. As there are not enough Japanese workers willing or able to engage in caring labour, it has become necessary to bring in immigrant workers who are qualified as nurses or carers, or to facilitate their entry into the country in order to undertake training. Nevertheless, the scale and forms of such immigration are being closely controlled and monitored.

What we have seen in this context is a gradual process whereby care work has shifted from largely invisible work carried out by family members on an unpaid basis, to a combination of family-based care and assistance by volunteers. There has then been a gradual marketisation facilitated by particular government policies such as the Carers' Insurance Law. The market in caring labour is now, however, a transnational one, involving both documented and undocumented migrant labour. Each stage in this process builds on, reproduces and in some cases transforms constructions of gender, class and ethnicity. Moving care labour from a purely family matter to a service which can be provided on a paid basis results in the increased visibility of such work, but if this work is still carried out by a largely female workforce, then gendered assumptions about care work remain undisturbed. Class comes into play when we consider who purchases and who provides such services. Ethnicity is always in play. There may, for example, be assumptions about the 'naturalness' of care work being carried out by Japanese nationals,

as in some of the debates leading up to recent policy innovations. The question of ethnicity becomes more visible, however, when care workers are of non-Japanese nationality or ethnicity. The globalisation of care work is also reflected in the phenomenon of (relatively) wealthy retirees from Japan moving to Australia or parts of Southeast Asia where they can access a more pleasant environment, more spacious residences and, in the case of Southeast Asia, the services of care workers on a cheaper basis.<sup>68</sup>

### **Conclusions**

To trace the circuits of labour mobility in the Asia-Pacific region is also to map the patterns of economic inequality in the region. The mobilisation of people as workers, citizens and members of reproductive families has hitherto mainly been considered within the frame of the nation-state, in some cases with reference to Foucault's concept of 'biopower'.<sup>69</sup> Globalisation, however, prompts us to consider questions of biopower on a regional and global scale, transcending the scale of the nation-state. The management of labour power, the management of populations and the management of care for the bodies of individuals also need to be considered in a transnational frame.<sup>70</sup> Global corporations attempt to maximise profits through accessing cheaper labour power, while workers attempt to maximise their income through crossing national borders. Some governments try to find ways of providing care for the bodily needs of their populations, while other governments facilitate the movement of their people as sojourners and providers of remittances. Some who cross borders undertake occupations characterised as 'dirty, difficult and dangerous', while others cross borders to take care of the bodies of others in nursing, caregiving or domestic labour. Nation-states attempt to regulate these flows through border controls. National governments like Japan, however, struggle to manage a

labour market which is stratified and segmented according to gender, class, caste, ethnicity and nationality. Indeed, this segmentation is in part attributable to the *ad hoc* decisions on recruiting labour power through specific bilateral agreements.

The body comes into play in distinguishing between prestigious, skilled occupations and less prestigious ones which are seen as unskilled and often seen as involving physical or manual labour. If we track the patterns of labour mobility over a long period, we can also track the shifting dynamics of the ‘global gender order’ (in Connell’s terms). Or, we might call this the ‘global order of difference’ (to adapt the phrase in order to consider not only gender, but also class, caste, ethnicity and racialised positioning). The patterns of labour mobility reflect the ‘gender order’ and the ‘order of difference’ of the sending countries and also of the receiving countries.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, these patterns of labour mobility also produce these ‘orders of difference’, for when particular occupations come to be associated with immigrant labour, they are thereby gendered, classed, ethnicised and racialised.<sup>72</sup>

The management of borders and the management of labour, as we have seen, is a matter of the management of bodies. However, it is also likely to be a matter of the management of affect. In those regimes where immigrant labour is restricted, this is often naturalised by discourses of difference, with negative affect being associated with particular immigrant groups. The classic example would be the ‘White Australia Policy’, which was not simply a bureaucratic method of controlling immigration, but was also associated with xenophobia and paranoia about perceptions of the threat of invasion from Asia. In Japan, discussion of labour migration has often been tainted by unfounded panics associating migrancy and criminality.<sup>73</sup> In this context, I would like to suggest that the

management of affect in a global frame needs to be the subject of future research.

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- <sup>18</sup> Hoerder summarises these flows: 'Korean peasants were uprooted to form an urban industrial, low-skill, mobile proletariat. People from the southern populous, rice-producing provinces in Korea were forced to move internally or to Japan, where a mere 800 had lived in 1910. They were assigned to menial jobs shunned by the Japanese, and anti-Korean riots in 1923 marginalized them even further. From 1917 to 1929, 1.2 million Koreans arrived, and 0.85 million returned. In 1940, 1.2 million lived in Japan, forced laborers increased the number to 1.9 million in 1944. By 1945, more than 10 percent of the Korean population worked outside Korea; another 20 percent had been drafted for urban work or were otherwise uprooted. Manpower shortages in Korea led to the promotion of Koreans to middle-rank positions, but, to counter potentially nationalist activities, the repression of the colonized was intensified.' Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, 484; see also: Michael Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan*. London: Routledge, 1994.
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- <sup>21</sup> Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, 481; see also Driscoll, *Absolute Erotic, Absolute Grotesque*.
- <sup>22</sup> Befu, 'Globalization as Human Dispersal', 23–4; Tamanoi
- <sup>23</sup> Erik Ropers, 'Testimonies as Evidence in the History of *Kyôsei Renkô*', *Japanese Studies*, 30.2 (September 2010) 263–282.
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<sup>33</sup> Befu, 'Globalization as Human Dispersal', 25.

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<sup>36</sup> Befu, 'Globalization as Human Dispersal', 25.

<sup>37</sup> This is often discussed in terms of 'marriage migration'. However, the picture is rather more complex, as discussed in recent research by Mayuko Itoh, who demonstrates that we must first look closely at the gendered patterns of mobility of those Japanese people who travel to Australia as working holiday-makers, students and sojourners, and then look at how this shapes the patterns of applications for 'fiancé(e) visas' and permanent residence. See Mayuko Itoh, 'Behind the Numbers: The Sex Ratio of Japanese Residents in Victoria', unpublished conference paper presented at the conference on *Japanese Communities in Transition: Australia 2010*, Monash University, 13 March 2010; see also Tetsuo Mizukami, *The Sojourner Community: Japanese Migration and Residency in Australia*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

<sup>38</sup> Statistics Bureau, Japan. 2009. *Statistical Handbook of Japan*. Tokyo: Statistical Research and Training Institute, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, <<http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/handbook/c12cont.htm>> date last accessed 16 September 2009.

<sup>39</sup> Yoshio Sugimoto *An Introduction to Japanese Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, third edition, 2010, 20–21; 88–123.

<sup>40</sup> Vera Mackie. 'Division of Labour', in Gavan McCormack and Yoshio Sugimoto eds. *Modernization and Beyond: The Japanese Trajectory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988; Vera Mackie, 'The International Division of Labour and Leisure', in David Harrison (ed.) *Tourism and the Less Developed Countries*, London: Belhaven Press, 1992; Vera Mackie. 'Japayuki Cinderella Girl: Containing the Immigrant Other.' *Japanese Studies*. 18.1 (May 1998) 45–63; Vera Mackie. 'The Metropolitan Gaze: Travellers, Bodies, Spaces', *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*. 4. (September 2000) <<http://www.she.murdoch.edu.au/intersections/>>, date last accessed 19 August 2010; Vera Mackie. "'Asia" in Everyday Life: Dealing with Difference in Contemporary Japan', in Brenda Yeoh et al. eds. *Gender and Politics in the Asia Pacific: Agencies and Activisms*, London: Routledge, 2002; Mackie, 'Managing Borders and Managing Bodies'. 71–85.

<sup>41</sup> As Tessa Morris-Suzuki points out, the 'newness' of the problem of undocumented immigrant labour was somewhat illusory, as there had been documented and undocumented movements between Japan and other countries for much of the postwar period. Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Borderline Japan: Foreigners and Frontier Control in the Postwar*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 239.

<sup>42</sup> 'Foreign trainees at Japan firms growing rare'. *Japan Times* (2 February 2009)

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<<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/mail/nn20090202a3.html>> date last accessed 1 June; ‘Overwork blamed for record-high 34 foreign trainee deaths’. *Japan Times* (24 June 2009)

<<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/mail/nn20090624f2.html>>, date last accessed 28 June 2009.

<sup>43</sup> Nicola Piper. ‘Gender and Migration Policies in Southeast and East Asia: Legal Protection and Sociocultural Empowerment of Unskilled Migrant Women’, *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 25.2 (2004) 216–231; Jose C. Moya. ‘Domestic Service in a Global Perspective: Gender, Migration and Ethnic Niches’. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 33.4 (2007) 559–579; Joya Misra and Sabine N. Merz. ‘Neoliberalism, Globalization and the International Division of Care’, in Amalia L. Cabezas, Ellen Reese and Marguerite Waller. eds. *The Wages of Empire, Neoliberal Policies, Repression and Women’s Poverty*. Boulder, Colorado: Paradigm Press, 2007, 9.

<sup>44</sup> Pheng Cheah, *Inhuman Conditions: On Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006, 178–266

<sup>45</sup> Mari Osawa, ‘Koizumi’s “Robust Policy”: Governance, the Japanese Welfare Employment Regime and Comparative Gender Studies’, in Glenn D. Hook ed. *Contested Governance in Japan: Sites and Issues*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005.

<sup>46</sup> It has been noted in several other national contexts that domestic workers do not come under the purview of labour legislation. See: Cheah, *Inhuman Conditions*, 206–207; Piper, ‘Gender and Migration Policies in Southeast and East Asia’. 220; ‘Editorial: The Rights of Domestic Workers’, *New York Times*, (16 June 2009).

<sup>47</sup> Itô, Ruri. “‘Japayukisan” Genshō Saikō – 80nendai Nihon e no Ajia Josei Ryūnyū” in Iyotani Toshio and Kajita Takamichi. eds. *Gaikokujin Rōdōsharon*. Tokyo, Kōbundō, 1992; Mackie. ‘Japayuki Cinderella Girl’. 45–63; Maria-Rosario Piquero-Ballescas. ‘Global Householding and Care Networks: Filipino Women in Japan’. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*. 18.1 (2009) 77–99.

<sup>48</sup> Piquero-Ballescas. ‘Global Householding and Care Networks’. 78.

<sup>49</sup> Takeyuki “Gaku” Tsuda, ‘Domesticating the Immigrant Other: Japanese Media Images of *Nikkeijin* Return Migrants’. *Ethnology*. 42.4. (Fall 2003) 294, 297.

<sup>50</sup> David McNeill, Minoru Matsutani, Alex Martin, Setsuko Kamiya, Jun Hongo. ‘Lowering the Drawbridge on Fortress Japan: Citizenship, Nationality and the Rights of Children’, *Japan Focus* (2009) unpaginated <<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Alex-Martin/3143>> date last accessed 22 June 2009.

<sup>51</sup> There are also, of course, emotions attached to the representation of occupations which come to be associated with particular ethnicities. See, for example, the controversy around Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintarō’s statements associating immigrant groups with criminality; see also my discussion of the use of romance narratives to depict relationships between Japan and the Philippines. Morris-Suzuki, *Borderline Japan*, 240; Mackie, ‘Japayuki Cinderella Girl’, 45–63.

<sup>52</sup> Mitchell Sedgwick. ‘The Globalizations of Japanese Managers’, in Jerry Eades, Tom Gill and Harumi Befu eds. *Globalization and Social Change in Contemporary Japan*, , Melbourne: TransPacific Press (2000) 41–54.

<sup>53</sup> Eiko Hasegawa. ‘Reconfiguring Boundaries: Japanese Expatriate Women in Shanghai’, *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*. 15 (May 2007) unpaginated.

<<http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue15/hasegawa.htm>>, accessed 19 August 2010.

<sup>54</sup> Keiko Yamanaka. ‘Nepalese labour migration to Japan: From global warriors to global workers’. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 23.1 (January 2000) 71; Takashi Oka. *Prying Open the Door: Foreign Workers in Japan*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1994. 41–49; Ryūhei Hatsuse. ‘Governance, Asian Migrants and the role of Civil Society’, in Glenn D. Hook. ed. *Contested Governance in Japan: Sites and Issues*, London: RoutledgeCurzon. 2005. 160; Sayuri Daimon. ‘Opening the door to foreigners: Expert warns Japan shuns the very immigrants it needs to thrive’. *Japan Times* (30 April 2009)

<<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/mail/nn20090430f1.html>> date last accessed 1 June.

<sup>55</sup> Barry Hindess. ‘Citizens and People.’ *Australian Left Review* (June 1992).

<sup>56</sup> Yamanaka. ‘Nepalese labour migration to Japan’. 80; ‘Editorial: Support Needy Foreign Workers’. *Japan Times* (16 March 2009) <<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/mail/ed20090316a2.html>> date last accessed 3 June 2009.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Axed Brazilians, Peruvians to be paid to leave Japan’. *Japan Times* (2 April 2009)

<<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/mail/nn20090402a1.html>>; last accessed 3 June 2009.

<sup>58</sup> ‘26 cities request emergency support for foreign workers’. *Japan Times* (18 December 2008)

<<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/mail/nn20081218a7.html>> date last accessed 1 June 2009.

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- <sup>59</sup> 'Editorial: Support Needy Foreign Workers'.
- <sup>60</sup> Yamanaka. 'Nepalese labour migration to Japan', 63.
- <sup>61</sup> Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2009: Addressing Triple Threats to Development*, New York (2009) 15.
- <sup>62</sup> 'Job shortage hits Indonesia nurses'. *Japan Times* (18 April 2009)  
<<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/mail/nn20090418a2.html>>; last accessed 3 June 2009.
- <sup>63</sup> Maya Kaneko. 'Indonesian caregivers working to adapt', *Japan Times* (18 March 2009)  
<<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/mail/nn20090318f1.html>> last accessed 3 June 2009.
- <sup>64</sup> Piquero-Ballescas. 'Global Householding and Care Networks'. 78; Dario Agnote. 'Filipino caregivers face hurdles'. *Japan Times* (20 December 2008) <<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/mail/nn20081220f2.html>> date last accessed 1 June; 'Filipino caregivers coming this year'. *Japan Times* (13 January 2009)  
<<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/mail/nn20090113a3.html>> date last accessed 1 June.
- <sup>65</sup> Barbara L. Brush and Julie Sochalski, 'International Nurse Migration: Lessons from the Philippines', *Policy, Politics and Nursing Practice*, 8.1 (February 2007) 37–46.
- <sup>66</sup> Rochelle Ball. 'Divergent development, racialised rights: Globalised labour markets and the trade of nurses – the case of the Philippines' *Women's Studies International Forum*, 27, (2004) 119-133.
- <sup>67</sup> Margaret Harris Cheng. 'The Philippines' health worker exodus'. *The Lancet*. 373 (10 January 2009) 111–112.
- <sup>68</sup> Xiang Biao and Mika Toyota, 'Shifting Boundaries, Moving Borders: The Emerging Transnational "Retirement Industry" and the Regionalization of Care in Asia', unpublished paper presented at the Conference on 'Shifting Boundaries of Care Provision in Asia: Policy and Practice Changes', Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, March 2011.
- <sup>69</sup> Michel Foucault. *The History of Sexuality*, Volume 1, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, New York: Vintage, 1980. 138–45.
- <sup>70</sup> Mackie and Stevens, 'Globalisation and Body Politics'. 269.
- <sup>71</sup> 'By the mid-1980s, a combination of several key factors increased the global demand and employment of Filipino women. Briefly, these key factors were: escalating economic decline in the Philippines; a rise in labour demand in the international service sector in both Asia and the Middle East; declines in (male) labour demand in the Middle East construction sector; and aggressive global labour marketing campaigns by the Philippine state... Thus, within a relatively short period, the gender structure of the global Philippine labour force was remarkably transformed. In the early 1980s, men comprised the majority of land-based Filipino labour migrants, and by 2001, Filipino women constituted 72% of migrant workers leaving the Philippines...'. Ball, 'Divergent development, racialised rights', 121.
- <sup>72</sup> Itô. "'Japayukisan" Genshō Saikō'; Mackie. 'Japayuki Cinderella Girl'. 45–63; Ball, 'Divergent development, racialised rights', 129; Bobby Benedicto. 'Shared Spaces of Transnational Transit: Filipino Gay Tourists, Labour Migrants, and the Borders of Class Difference', *Asian Studies Review*, 33.3 (September 2009) 289–301.
- <sup>73</sup> Morris-Suzuki, *Borderline Japan*, 240.