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Filipino Careworkers in Ageing Japan: Trends, Trajectories and Policies[1]

Ma. Reinaruth D. Carlos

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Abstract

For a country like Japan that has for long maintained a restrictive immigration policy and a mostly homogeneous society, the acceptance of foreign workers to take care of its ageing population is a very controversial issue. Amidst extensive media coverage and despite the lack of consensus among different domestic stakeholders and ambivalent stand of the Japanese government towards the issue, the first batch of Indonesian and Filipino nurse-candidates and care worker candidates *(Kaigofukushishi Kouhosha)* recruited under bilateral economic partnership agreements (EPA) arrived in 2008-2009. Up until then for the last 10 years or so, long-term Filipino residents (*Zainichi Firipinjin*), many of them wives of Japanese nationals. There are also the Filipino-Japanese descendants *(Nikkeijin)* who have turned to care work especially after the global economic crisis hit Japan in late 2008. In this paper, I compare and contrast these three trajectories/sets of care workers based on their (1) motivations and long term goals; (2) human capital and (3) facilitators of their migration and incorporation into the labor market. Finally, we draw some of the implications of their incorporation in the labor market for care workers on the future direction of this country's migration policies.

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[1] Ryukoku University, Kyoto and Seta, Japan. For correspondence, e-mail to rdcarlos@world.ryukoku.ac.jp. The author would like to thank the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (Research Project Number 20402028) for its financial support.

Introduction

The demographic imbalances among countries, through its effects on the demand for long-term (elderly) care services and domestic labor supply of care workers, have contributed greatly in the intensified international movement of care workers[2] (care providers, caregivers) in the past 20 years. In the East Asian region, Singapore and Taiwan have been in the forefront of hiring care workers from neighboring countries like the Philippines, Vietnam and Myanmar, and recently, Japan and Indonesia have joined the labor market in the East Asian region. With the predicted further graying and shrinking of many populations, it is expected that international labor market competition for this kind of workers will further gain momentum. As this will impose serious implications not only on the human security of those needing care, the elderly, the children, the physically and mentally disabled, but also of the workers themselves, in both sending and host countries, as well as the families of migrants left behind, the question of how to manage their migration emerges as a very important policy issue. Against the backdrop of increasing demand for long-term care and the implications of migration policies, in this chapter we focus on the potential of the Philippines as a provider of long-term care workers to Japan.

The objectives of this chapter are two-fold. First, it aims to discuss the labor market situation for long-term care in Japan. As in other sectors, arguments on the incorporation of foreign workers are largely based on assumptions on the labor market of the host country. We show that the labor shortage problem in this sector is real and will become more imminent in the future, and relying exclusively on domestic workforce can only bring marginal results, unless drastic changes are made in the social security and health care systems.

One of the options, which has already been a trend in many industrialized countries like the US, Canada, UK and Australia, is to employ foreign care workers. The problem is

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[2] In this paper and in the context of Japan, we use the word “care worker” *(kaigoshoku)* to define a laborer who has undergone some formal education and/or passed a qualifying licensure examination about providing care services to the elderly, either in a care institution or home setting. This excludes live-in caregivers or domestic workers who are primarily engaged in taking care of the elderly, children and handicapped at home and perform household chores – a trend seen in Canada, Taiwan and Singapore.

how to incorporate foreign workers in this sector that is emotional-labor intensive and unattractive to many domestic workers. On the other hand, many developing countries are actively promoting the migration of its workers as a development policy. The Philippines is one of the leading countries that has been marketing its workers overseas, including women as nurses, care workers and domestic helpers.

Therefore, the second aim of this paper is to explore the three trajectories of incorporation of Filipinos, (1) long-term residents *(Zainichi Firipin jin)*, (2) Japanese-Filipino descendants *(Nikkeijin)* and (3) care worker candidates *(kaigofukushishi kouhosha)* under the recently concluded bilateral economic partnership agreement between Japan and the Philippines (JPEPA), in the emerging market for care workers in Japan. We compare and contrast these three groups of migrants based on their motivations and long-term goals, human capital and the facilitators of their incorporation. Based on these analyses, we draw some implications on Filipinos as a source of care workers in the labor market. We show that in the short- to medium-run, the first two groups can be tapped to alleviate the labor shortage, even without formally opening its front doors to the third group. In the long-run, however, the "import" of care workers becomes inevitable and thus the management of care worker migration from the Philippines under a bilateral agreement becomes relevant.

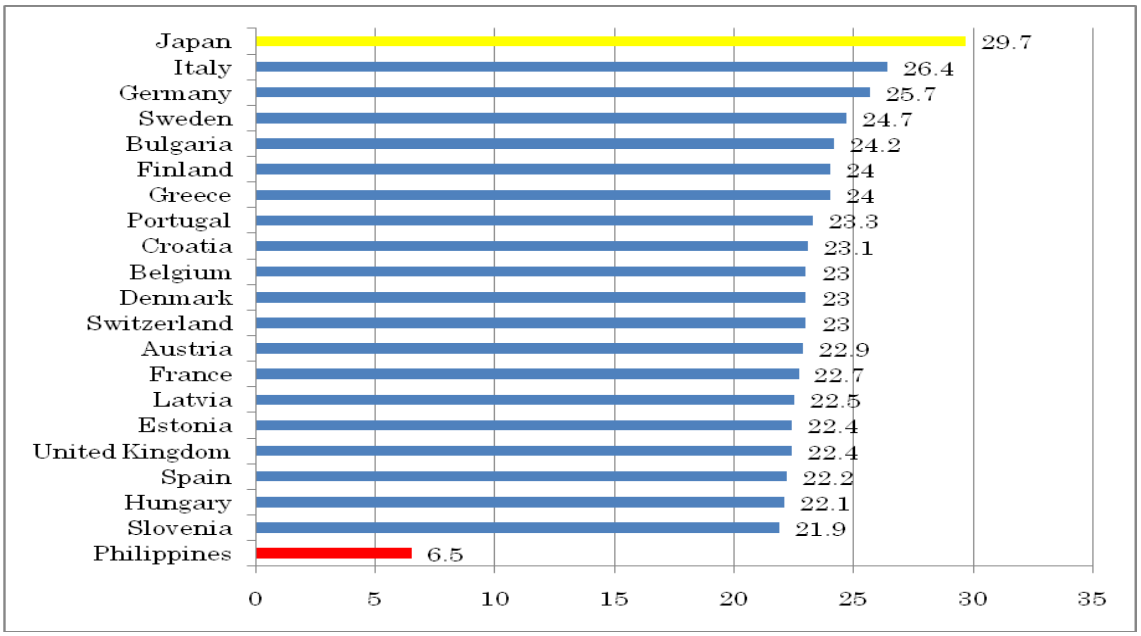
1. Japan's Labor Market for Long-term Care

There are two interesting features of the demographic state of Japan. First, it has the world's highest percentage of elderly to total population (see Figure 1) with low mortality and birth rates, and the only country in Asia that landed in the list of top ten ageing societies in the world. Second, it has a significantly small migrant population. In fact, the Human Development Report (2009) reveals that of the 200 countries surveyed, Japan ranks 137th in terms of the proportion of international migrants to total population, with its rate of 1.6% way below the world average of 3.0% (see Table 1).

As the long-term care sector becomes one of the fastest growing sectors in Japan, the plight of the workers was also put to limelight. Takagi (2008:23-40, in Japanese) argued that the problem of poor working conditions of these workers already existed since long time ago. However, since care of the elderly was usually done by the "wife" as an extension of domestic work and as a familial duty, it had been largely and naturally considered as a "volunteer job." Moreover, there is a general opinion that this work does

not require professional skills, hindering the development of work assessment and career formation systems. Thus, care work has become one of the most underpaid jobs in the country.

Figure 1：Top Twenty Countries with High Percentage of Population Aged 60+ (2009)



Source: UN Statistics Division website

Any discussion on whether to accept foreigners in this rapidly expanding sector begins with the question of whether they are necessary, i.e. on whether there is labor shortage in this sector or not. Therefore, we cite below several quantitative indices that will give us an idea on the size of labor demand and supply, and thus the conditions of the labor market. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare estimates that since the implementation of the LTCI in 2000, the number of workers engaged in care services has been increasing at the rate of about 100,000 a year, reaching about 1.29 to 1.42 million in 2011. The nationwide survey conducted by the same Ministry (MHLW) to care institutions for 2007 shows that, as of October 1, 2007, there are approximately 830,000 workers who are actually engaged in long-term care work in elderly institutions and home visits. Regarding the future projections, the National Meeting on Social Security under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Prime Minister conducted a simulation of the size of the labor force in health and care services sectors based on 4 different scenarios and claimed that in 2025, 2.11 to 2.55 million care workers, comprising around 1.6~3.60% to 1.75~3.98% (depending on the population projection used) of the

working-age population, will be needed to sustain the care needs of the aged population.

Table 1. International Migrants as (%) of Total Population (2005)

Rank	Country/State	(%) of Total Population	Rank	Country/State	(%) of Total Population
1	Qatar	80.5	22	Australia	21.3
2	United Arab Emirates	70.0	25	Canada	19.5
3	Monaco	69.8	38	United States	13.0
4	Kuwait	69.2	39	Germany	12.9
5	Andorra	63.1	41	Sweden	12.3
6	Nauru	48.7	45	Spain	10.7
7	Occ. Palestinian Territories	44.1	47	France	10.6
8	Jordan	42.1	54	United Kingdom	9.7
9	Israel	39.8	78	Italy	5.2
10	Hong Kong, China (SAR)	39.5	112	South Africa	2.6
13	Singapore	35.0	137	Japan	1.6
20	Switzerland	22.3	149	Korea (Republic of)	1.2

Source: Human Development Report 2009

Whether the demand for care workers is currently met or not can be confirmed by looking at the effective job offer – job-seeker ratio index, which shows the number of available positions for one worker who is in-between jobs. In Japan, this index for the social welfare sector was 1.42-1.82 (based on 2 different sources) in November 2008. In the same period, the average ratio for all sectors was only 0.76. In November, 2009 when Japan was experiencing recession and high unemployment rate, the job offer-job seeker ratio was 0.90-1.12 against a mere 0.45 for all sectors. The large gap between the indices for the care work sector and all sectors in general implies either an imbalance or mismatch in Japan's labor market, with workers not as strongly inclined to take on jobs in the care sector as in all sectors, or with workers finding it difficult to switch to carework from other kinds of jobs, or both. Nevertheless, it can be said that the

current economic recession, the market has achieved some success in alleviating labor shortage in the care sector.

Labor shortage is also felt by those in the workplace, and affect the quality of their services. The result of the 2008 Survey of Actual Situation of Care workers reveals that 51% of the 18,035 respondents chose “lack of manpower” when asked about their main worries and concerns in the workplace. Such will have further impact on labor shortage since the resulting heavy load for the remaining manpower becomes sufficient reason for quitting. The vicious cycle can only be remedied by making the workplace more attractive to care workers – not only in terms of higher remuneration but also of better and more benefits and prospects for career development.

There are also supply-side issues to the problem, the first of which is their retention. Workers do not seem to stay in this sector for a long time compared to other sectors in which the life-time employment can still be observed. The turn-over rate is high and retention rate for workers in this sector is low. In the 2008 Survey of Actual Situation of Care workers, the supervisors of care institutions were asked about the rate of entry, defined as the number of workers recruited as a percentage of the total number of employees in a year, and the rate of exit, which is computed as the number of employees who quit, also as a proportion of the total number of employees in a year. It was found out that the rates of entry and exit in 2008 were 22.6% and 18.7 respectively, implying very minimal growth in the size of manpower to only 3.9%. Evidently, the current labor force is not attracted to care work, thus labor supply cannot catch up with the demand in this sector. It must be noted also that the high entry and exit rates is a problem for care institutions because of the cost of training every new employee.

The problem of labor supply is further evidenced by the declining enrollment in learning/training courses offered by vocational schools, colleges and universities. In other countries like the US, South Africa, and the UK in the early 2000s, labor shortage was a result of lack of capacity to produce such workers. The US is suffering from a shortage of schools and instructors that can train nurses and nursing aides. In Japan, however, such is not the case, only 55% of the intake quotas in care workers’ learning institutions were met in school year 2009. Therefore, the problem of how to motivate workers to join the labor market for care workers should also be dealt with.

All these figures point to one thing – that while there is an expanding labor force

engaged in care work today, it is not enough to meet the current demand, more so in the future. The relevant question, therefore, is how to secure enough workers to cater to the labor demands in the light of rapid population ageing and the poor working conditions for care workers. In the official front, Japan seems to be confident (and hopeful) that the domestic labor market is capable of responding to the needs of the long-term care sector. The MHLW committee looking at this matter came up with a series of recommendations that centered on the training and betterment of working conditions to guarantee a stable supply of domestic care workers. To what extent these will be implemented and whether these will have considerable impacts largely depend on two important issues: the government's propensity to spend public funds in the long-term care sector, and the domestic labor force's response to such programs. Given the current fiscal budget constraints of the government and as shown in the experiences of other countries, relying exclusively on the domestic labor force will bring limited results. It will take a long time to see the effect of these government programs. Above all, Japan's population is declining, meaning that there will be a shrinking of the pool of workers that can be "redistributed" to the care sector from other sectors. In this paper, we explore another option that Japan can take – that of employing foreign workers.

While most of the industrialized countries have chosen to receive immigrants for economic purposes in the post-War II era to the present, Japan has maintained a highly restrictive immigration policy of accepting only highly-skilled workers. In reality, however, the contribution of "*internal*" foreign labor resources – comprised of immigrants from the former colonies, foreign spouses of Japanese nationals and Japanese descendants - to this country's economic development and sustainability cannot be undermined. In the light of demographic transformations, can Japan still adapt the same strategy? We argue that in the short run, it can still count on the "internal" pool of foreign workers as a steady source of care workers, like what it did in the past. Eventually, however, it has to receive care workers from overseas. Here, we explore the potential of the Filipino migrants as care workers in Japan.

2. The Philippines as an International Provider of Care Services

The Philippines is one of the world's largest exporters (and the biggest in East Asia) of labor, with an estimated 10% of its population living abroad and has deployed close to a million land-based workers (new hires and rehires) overseas in 2008 (POEA). Such large exports of labor are attributed to the government's general policy of promoting

international migration as a national development strategy and its position in alliance with the general view of international organizations on labor and migration (ILO and IOM) of respecting the individual's right to international mobility (Carlos and Sato, 2008; Interview with Lorenzo, 2008, Brush and Sochalski, 2007:43)

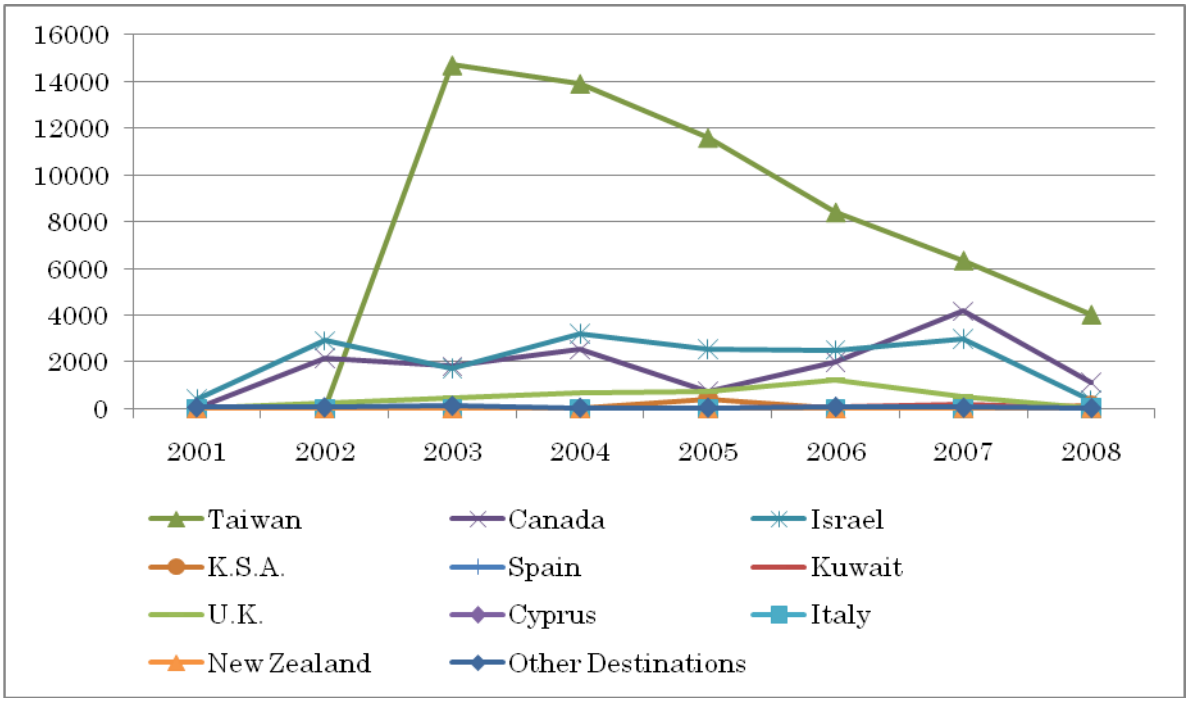
Lorenzo (2007:1415) noted that the direction of migration policy of this country is currently "implicit and reactive of overseas demand." Indeed, the Philippine society and government have strongly responded to the current and perceived future international labor demand, resulting in a highly-established and lucrative "international migration" industry, consisting of institutions and businesses involved in educating, training, recruiting and deploying Filipino workers overseas. The "culture of migration", in which values and norms have been supportive of international migration and career aspirations are shaped by what would be "marketable" overseas, has developed in the country (Asis in Huang et.al. 2005:27). With the government setting and implementing the recruitment and deployment rules, the business sector facilitating the training and recruitment, and the society motivating and inspiring the labor force to target overseas work, the Philippines has been relatively successful in mobilizing its resources to capture a considerable part of the international market for labor.

Such trends are remarkably observed in the case of workers in the services, particularly in the health and care work sectors. Of the new hires in 2008, the largest number (14.8% of total) comprised of household service workers, followed by waiters, bartenders and related workers at 4.1%, professional nurses (3.4%), and caregivers and caretakers (3.0%). Filipinos have become a major group of care workers in developed countries in Europe, Canada, Asia and the Middle East (Chang and Ling, 2003, Browne et.al., 2006). The government believes that there will be a rise in the demand overseas due to population ageing. According to an estimate by the Philippine Training, Education and Skills Training Agency (TESDA), there will be an overseas demand, thus the need to train 29,171 in the period 2006-2010 (TESDA website). This number is impressive as care workers as an occupation or sector did not even exist in the Philippines. The "caregiver course" was created to cater to the requirements of the foreign markets, with TESDA regulating the training through accreditation of schools offering caregivers' course and granting "certificate" to its graduates.

It must be noted, however, that the international market for labor has been largely unpredictable and highly dependent on the economic conditions and policies of the host

countries (Carlos and Sato, 2008). Figure 2 shows the number of newly-hired caregivers deployed in the period 2000-2008. Although this data set is not complete as some caregivers do not undergo the POEA exit procedure and excludes care workers who were rehired, we can still infer that there was limited expansion in this labor market. Moreover, we can also see how the demand has abruptly changed even in the top 3 destinations, usually without prior notice; and that the destinations have become diverse.

Figure 2: Deployment of Filipino Caregivers by Selected Destination (New Hires) 2001-2008



Source: POEA Compendium of OFW Statistics 2008 Table 25

Despite the instability of the international market, the number of caregivers' and allied programs/courses such as nursing aide, practical nursing, and health care assistants, registered with TESDA went up from 768 in 2004 to 1,466 in 2009 (author's calculation from TESDA website). This means that there is still a demand for this course, that it is still a popular course in the country, and that the society has responded poorly to changes in international demand. Moreover, it implies that this country's capacity to produce caregivers is high. These situations prompted the Philippine government to

explore other markets for caregivers, one of them, Japan.

Indeed, for both Japan and the Philippines, manageing migration, particularly of care workers, has emerged as a great concern and major policy agenda. For Japan, the issue is how to keep its immigration policy aligned with the current needs of its labor market, particularly in the light of its ageing population. To what extent can it keep its front doors close to foreign workers while at the same time manage to let them in through the sidedoors of some of the critical industries like long-term care services and amidst pressures from local and international stakeholders? For the Philippines, whether labor export-oriented development strategy can be sustained is questioned since its success largely depends not only on the government's ability to mobilize remittances for economic development, but more importantly and in the long run, on predicting and being able to supply workers in the international market amidst the often changing migration policies of the receiving countries and brisk competition from other sending countries.

3. The Three Trajectories

3.1 Long-Term Filipino Residents

It was not until 1970s when the influx of Filipinos to Japan took place. Of the Filipino settlers, the most prominent were the musical and athletic entertainers who gained high reputation for professionally excelling in their fields. (Suzuki, 2008: 68-70, also, for details about the history of interactions between the two countries, see Sato, 1994). It was also in the same period when the general shortage of labor surfaced in the country, as a result of the export-led rapid economic growth in the 1960s and the strong international trade competition during and after the 2 oil crises. In the 1980s, the bulk of Filipinos in Japan comprised of spouses of Japanese nationals on dependent's visa, the Filipinos who came to work as entertainers and the undocumented ones who came as tourists and worked as cheap labor in the manufacturing and construction sectors (for details, see Ikehata and Yu-Jose, 2004: pp.583-619).

With the generally steady increase of Filipinos coming to Japan, the number of registered (documented) Filipinos in the country exceeded the 10,000 mark in 1984, 100,000 in 1998 and doubled to 200,000 in 2007. In 2008, the number of Filipino residents is 210, 617, with Filipinos making up 9.5% of the total number of registered

foreign nationals. They now comprise the 4th largest foreign nationality group in Japan, the top three of which are China, Korea and Brazil respectively.

Immigration Bureau data on registered Filipino nationals in Japan in 2008 (see appendices 1 and 2) reveals the following three features regarding their composition: First, 77.87 percent of all Filipinos are holders of residence visa without restrictions on activities in Japan. Their permission to live in Japan permanently is granted either as a result of their present or previous marriage to a Japanese, by being a Japanese descendant *(Nikkeijin)* or by merit of living in the country continuously for at least ten years and ability to support himself economically. Second, 77.53% of these Filipinos are women, many of whom hold entertainers' visa, those who are married to Japanese and those who have already divorced their Japanese husband but chose to stay in Japan. It was also noted that a considerable number of those who had worked as entertainers eventually married their Japanese customers (for details about strong positive relation between Filipino entertainers and international marriages between Filipino and Japanese, see Satake, M (2008) and Ballescas (1994)). This also includes the women who married Japanese males under "fictitious" arrangements, making marriage an "economic insurance" for prospective Filipino entertainers in the light of Japan's rule on allowing them to work in Japan for at most 12 months at a time, and stricter rules on entertainment visa implemented since March 2005 (CFO, 2007? website, accessed Jan. 10, 2010, p.1). This was the result of a US report identifying Japan as guilty of human trafficking of women, particularly entertainers, and therefore is in need of surveillance (US-DOS 2005:132-133). Third, that less than 1% (a mere 0.44%) of the registered Filipinos are aged 65 years old and above, while 89.96% are aged 15-64 years old as their influx began in the 1970s. Therefore, the Filipinos form a relatively new ethnic group in Japan, thus classified as "*newcomers*," in contrast to the Korean and Chinese "*oldcomers*" who arrived in Japan until the end of WW2. There are also those Philippine-born migrants who have already acquired Japanese citizenship, but their exact number is known. However, based on general data released by the Ministry of Justice, we can infer that their number is small.

From these three features, we can estimate that as of December, 2008, more than half (52% of total or 114,000) of the registered Filipinos in Japan are "Filipino women residents in their working age whose visa do not impose any restrictions as to the type of work and period of stay." (There are also some men who took the Homehelper Level 2 course but the number of those actually employed is very small.) They form a potential

source of care workers in the country, although we cannot say how many of them will actually become one as their visa allows them to choose their job freely.[3] They are found working in long-term care institutions or as home visit care aides since early 2000s (for details, refer to Yuchengco Center, 2004:35-40). Many of these care workers have obtained the "Homehelper Level 2" license, the entry-level preference (not a formal requirement) for care workers. This is issued by the prefectural government after the worker undergoes 130 hours of classroom lectures and training and 3 days of practicum. Takahata (2009) estimates that there are more than 2,000 Filipino long-term residents who hold this license by the end of October, 2008, of which those who are actually engaged in carework probably comprise only about 10% of the total. This suggests that although at present, there are many who are qualified, not many have been actually employed in this sector.

3.2. The Japanese-Filipino Descendants (*Nikkei Firipin jin*)

Japanese-Filipino descendants (*Nikkei Firipin jin*) working in Japan's long term care sector is a relatively new phenomenon. They are broadly classified into two groups: the first group is the "old" *(Kyuu) Nikkejin* who are the "Japanese people who have relocated overseas on a permanent basis, as well as their second, third and fourth generation descendants, irrespective of current nationality and degree of Japanese ethnicity" (Association of Japanese . Their influx to Japan began in 1990 when the Japanese government amended its Immigration policy to allow them to obtain a permanent resident visa. They have come to Japan to work as contractual/temporary workers in the manufacturing and food processing sectors.

The number of Filipino *kyunikkeijin* that can be tapped in the labor sector, however, is difficult to estimate. In 1935, there was an estimated 20,000 registered Japanese settlers in the Philippines (Kawai, 2005:25 – in Japanese). Many of them married locals and bore children, with whom they had to be separated due to repatriation or death during WW2. However, the total number of these descendants is not known since many

[3] Although we did not include Filipino men, this does not mean that they are excluded in this sector. They can also be tapped as care workers, however, based on the result of our survey, Filipino men living in Japan are not inclined to take up this kind of work, even if they possess the Homehelper 2 license. This is probably because the pay is low. It must be noted, however, that there is an increasing trend for Filipino males going to Taiwan, Israel and Canada to work as caregivers.

of them had lost contact with their Japanese relatives, hid their Japanese identities and found difficulty in proving their Japanese descent and nationality. In order to address this problem and in response to strong demand for Japan to take political responsibility, Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducted three nationwide surveys (1995, 1997 and 2004) on Japanese War Orphans in the Philippines and came up with a list of 33,180 Japanese descendants (up to 6th degree of consanguinity). Although most of them have already left for Japan in the 1990s, they were working in the manufacturing sector, and it was only recently that many have expressed interest in becoming care workers. This is because of the recent global economic crisis that hardly hit the sectors that employed them. Some were forced to go back to the Philippines, trained as care workers and have now returned to Japan to work in long-term care institutions. It must be noted too that most of them are employed even without holding a Homehelper Level 2 license.

The second group is the so-called *Shinnikkeijin* (new) and their Filipino parent, usually the mother. The term "s*hinnikkeijin"* began to be used by the media and NGOs in 2003 (Interview with Sakai, 2009), although they are officially called the Japanese-Filipino children (JFC) (Japanese Embassy in Manila website). There is an estimated 100,000 children born from intermarriages between Japanese and Filipinos whose births are registered in the Japanese family registry, thus they are considered Japanese citizens. While the lucky ones are now living in Japan, there are those children who have remained in the Philippines with the Filipino parent (usually the mother) without the support of the Japanese parent (usually the father). There are also those who were not able to obtain Japanese citizenship because they were not able to satisfy the conditions stated in the Nationality Law – (1) Japanese and Filipino parents were married at the time of birth and (2) the birth was reported within three months from the date of birth in Japan or in the Japanese Embassy in the Philippines. An NGO in the Philippines estimated that there are at least 50,000 of Japanese-Filipino children (SNN document, 2008) who are not recognized by the father before birth or failed to report their birth within three months. Some are abandoned by the father and are now living in poverty in the Philippines.

With the passing of the new Nationality Law in December, 2008, these children are now allowed to gain Japanese citizenship (and consequently, the right to live in Japan) even if the parents were not legally married at the time of birth, as long as the child is recognized/acknowledged *(ninchi)* by the Japanese parent. Those whose parents were married but failed to report the births are given until 2011 to undertake the necessary

procedures to “regain” their Japanese citizenship. In some cases, the children are also allowed to come to Japan with the Filipino mother to seek recognition of birth from the father. In any case, the amendment paved the way for these children and their mothers to live in Japan even without the support of the Japanese parent as long as she can prove her ability to support the child economically in Japan. Both the mother and the child are eventually issued visas without any restrictions as to their activities. As such, they can work in any sector that is willing to accept them.

The long-term care institutions have emerged as one of the employers of the mothers and the *shinnikkeijin* aged 15 and above. The first batch of 27 *shinnikkeijin* came to Japan in October, 2008. Of the 27 who came, only one *shinnikkeijin* child came alone, 2 were mothers of *shinnnikkeijin* and the rest were mother and under-aged child teams (12 pairs) (SNN Press Release, 7 October, 2008). The children who had not yet obtained or regained their citizenship were granted long-term visa. The mothers were initially granted at least a 90-day short term visa for the purposes of “raising the child in Japan, or to make preparation or preliminary inspection for possible long-term stay in Japan with the child, or to conduct the necessary procedures for the child to gain Japanese citizenship” (Embassy of Japan in the Philippines website). This status can be renewed upon arrival in Japan, the type of which depends on the decision of the Immigration office. Generally, as long as they are able to prove that they can support themselves financially and the children are in school, they are allowed to stay on a long-term (1-3 years) visa. The author estimates that there are at least 100 of them who came in 2009, and of this number, about 60 are currently working in care institutions. That they can now come to Japan as a result of the amendment to the nationality law and the care institutions are willing to hire them imply that the *nikkeijin* can also be potential source of care workers in the country.

3.3. Care worker candidates under JPEPA Scheme

The third trajectory of Filipinos’ incorporation in the labor market for care workers is that within the framework of Japan-Philippine Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA). This government-to-government scheme allows a limited number of nurses and careworkers (initially 400 and 600 respectively for the first 2 years) to come to Japan as “candidates” on a “specified visa” under which they are only allowed to work in the receiving institution. Under the current provisions of the agreement, they should pass the Licensure examination within 3-4 years from arrival to entitle them to continue

working in Japan. Failure to pass the licensure exam within this designated period will require them to go back to the Philippines. The first batch of care worker candidates (217 of the 600 quota for 2 years) arrived in May, 2009 and was deployed to hospitals and long-term care institutions after finishing a 6-month intensive Japanese course. (Details about this trajectory will be discussed somewhere in this book).

Here, we have described the three doors from which Filipinos can enter the Japanese labor market for care workers and their magnitude as potential source of care workers. We can find those who come in from the front gate: the care worker candidates under EPA, and those who passed through the side entrance: the Filipino long-term residents and the *Nikkeijin*. In any case, they comprise a promising and potential source of manpower in the care sector, for reasons further explained in the next section.

4. Comparison and Contrast of the Three Trajectories

4.1. Motivations and Long-term Goals

There are significant differences in the motivations of these three groups of Filipino workers. It is well-known in migration literature that workers choose to join the international labor market mainly for economic reasons. In 2 separate surveys in 2008/2009, Filipino long-term residents in Japan who possess at least Homehelper 2 license and care worker candidates were asked about their motivations for taking the Homehelper 2 license or wanting to work in Japan under JPEPA Scheme respectively (Carlos, et.al.). They chose economic reasons such as “to augment income”, “high salary”, “low recruitment fees” and “stable (long-term and daytime) job” (see Tables 2 and 3). On the other hand, the *nikkeijin*, in a focused group discussion (FGD) conducted in August, 2009, also mentioned wanting to come to Japan to achieve economic goals. However, a closer look at the results of the surveys and FGD reveal that this financial remuneration may not be the most important concern of these three groups.

First, for the Filipino long-term residents, their top motivations, that of wanting to “be of service to others”, “be recognized by the Japanese society” and “challenged” reflect their desire to alleviate their social standing in the Japanese society and improve their relationships with the Japanese (see Table 2). It must be noted that many, but not all, came to Japan as entertainers, and as such, for a long time have been socially stigmatized (Suzuki, 2008). As care workers, they feel they want to be treated for their

social and personal worth - not as “victims of exploitation” or “opportunists” (Suzuki, 2008:71). They are inspired by praises from the elderly who see them as “savior” or “angel” (Interview with a Filipino long-term resident, Feb. 2009).

Table 2: Motivations for Taking the Homehelper Level 2 Course (Filipino Long-Term Residents (2008)

Motivations (multiple answers, n=189)	(%)	Rank
I want to be of service to others	45.5	1
I want to be recognized by the Japanese society	43.9	2
It is challenging	42.9	3
I want to have a long-term job	37.0	4
I like the elderly people	32.8	5
Career Development	32.3	6
Someone close to me is in need of caregiving	19.6	7
To augment income	15.3	8
I want to have a daytime job	9.5	9
No answer	9.6	10
Others	6.3	11
Recommended by my family	3.7	12
Because caregiving is booming in Japan	1.6	13

Source: Carlos, M.R.D., S. Takahata, N. Suzuki, H. Nakai and Y. Goto (2009) *"Survey of Filipino Caregivers in Japan (2008)"* (Unpublished) Note: Complete Results scheduled to be released in March, 2010. "

Moreover, although the long-term residents have economic motivations, their concern was not for its financial remuneration, but mainly on this job being a stable one. The perception that care work is a stable job can be justified by the following: First, the survey was conducted at the beginning of the global recession in 2008 when manufacturing sectors that hired many foreigners closed down its factories. Even at that time, there was a strong demand for care workers, thus making a general impression that it is the most stable job. Second, a number of the respondents came as entertainers

in the 1980s-1990s and currently work in Filipino pubs to the present. However, with their advancing in age and the global economic recession, it becomes more difficult for them to continue in their current job.

On the other hand, an FGD conducted to *Nikkeijin* who were undergoing a pre-departure special training in care work in the Philippines in 2009 revealed that economic motivation is indeed strong, but this is expressed not merely as augmenting current income but also as a desire to give better “future” to their children. In the case of the *Kyunikkeijin*, this can be interpreted as providing for the children in the Philippines through remittances. For the *Shinnikkeijin* mothers, coming to Japan means providing the opportunity for the children to live and enjoy the benefits as a Japanese citizen, such as free education and health services, some assurance for a brighter future (FGD, August 2009). The *Shinnikkeijin* therefore looks at their incorporation in the care work labor market not only as a way to augment their economic position, but as a first step towards their actual incorporation in the Japanese society.

Table 3: Motivations in Wanting to Become Care worker in Japan (Care worker Candidates under JPEPA Scheme)

Motivations (multiple answers, n=49)	(%)	Rank
High level of care technology	57.1	1
Had the opportunity because the JPEPA was approved.	55.1	2
High salary	51.0	3
Possibility to obtain Japanese care worker license	42.9	4
Low recruitment fees	24.5	5
Interested in Japanese culture	16.3	6
Others	14.3	7
Had experience living in Japan	12.2	8
Japanese people are kind	10.2	9
Family and relatives live/work in Japan	6.1	10
Japan and Philippines have good relationship	6.1	10
Can speak Japanese	4.1	12

Source: Carlos, M.R.D., S. Takahata, N. Suzuki, H. Nakai and Y. Goto (2009) *"Survey of Care worker Candidates under JPEPA. (2009)"* (Unpublished) Note: Complete Results scheduled to be released in March, 2010.

Finally, Table 3 shows the results of a survey conducted to 49 care worker candidates in 2009. Japan's high salary for care workers ranked third in the motivations of these workers. Indeed, while in Japan, the financial remuneration for care workers is low compared to workers in other sectors, it is still high compared to those in other Asian destinations like Taiwan and Singapore. This, conjointly with the low recruitment fees and the opportunity provided by JPEPA, yielded strong motivations for them to come to Japan. It is also noticeable that the top choice (although the gap with the second and third top choices is small) as motivation was "high level of care technology." Further inquiries on what the respondents had in mind when they chose this option revealed that Filipinos have the impression that everything in Japan was "high-tech," even the machines and equipments in long-term care institutions, thus making care work less physically demanding and also more "professional." The care worker candidates also think that the skills they obtain in Japan and passing the Japanese licensure exam will be advantageous for them when they find work in another country (Interviews, June and September, 2009).

4.2. Human capital

For the purpose of this paper, we define "human capital" as the personal attributes of the Filipino care workers that will contribute to their "productivity" in the workplace, either directly or indirectly. This can include but not limited to their educational attainment and skills in care work, age, visa status in Japan, and language and cultural proficiency.

Undoubtedly, the care worker candidates under EPA have generally the highest average educational attainment because of the requirement of having a 4-year college degree. Moreover, they are required to possess the TESDA caregiver certificate which is obtained after undergoing training (lectures and practicum) for at least 786 hours. Some of them even have a nursing degree and work experience in the hospital setting so that compared to most of those in the other groups, they possess more care work skills.

In the case of most of the *Nikkeijin* who arrived in 2009, they were given training in care work and basic Japanese language before coming to Japan. However, what they learn

in the Philippines is limited by the short training period as well as instructors capable of teaching the Japanese way of care giving. Their training is mostly conducted by instructors in the nursing college, with only the last two weeks taught by staff from a Japanese care institution. In contrast, the long-term residents are taught from the beginning in Japan when they take the Homehelper Level 2 course. Although many of them do not have any background in care work, the care institutions are willing to take them in because they can speak the Japanese language and are familiar with the Japanese culture (Interview with care institution administrator, February, 2009).

For the care worker candidates and the *nikkeijin*, the issue is to what extent the skills obtained in the Philippines through the caregiver course can be utilized in the Japanese workplace. Care work, compared to nursing or medicine, is a profession that is more "national" than "international" in nature so that care giving skills can greatly vary between the host and sending countries. Moreover, the Homehelpers Level 2 course curriculum is more focused on elderly care, while the Caregivers' course curriculum's scope is wider – including child care and housekeeping. Therefore, there remains the problem of "bridging" the gap between the skills they learned in the Philippines and those that are taught and required of care workers in Japan.

In the absence of international standards for caregiving/carework, there is a strong tendency for care work to rely on culture and close communication with co-workers and the elderly. Thus, learning the language and understanding Japanese culture are prerequisites for the smooth incorporation of foreigners in this sector. In this aspect, the long-term residents have the advantage over the two other groups since they have been exposed to Japanese culture and society for a longer period of time. Although their writing ability is still limited, most of them can understand and speak Japanese. The *Nikkeijin* can also speak a little Japanese which they learned in their previous workplace in Japan or from their previous interactions with the Japanese. Also, before leaving the Philippines, many of them also take basic Japanese language course sponsored by an NGO. In the case of the care worker candidates, they undergo a 6-month language training immediately after their arrival in Japan. Their Japanese language instructor, however, emphasized that this period is not enough to cover Japanese for both daily living and technical terms in the workplace.

The common concern for all groups is on learning and understanding technical terms in

caregiving, which is very important for their full incorporation in the labor market, as care workers are required to read the care plan and chart the resident's condition. Moreover, this proficiency will increase the chance of Filipino workers to pass the examination for registered care workers *(kaigofukushishi)* license, which is administered in Japanese. With the current move towards integrating all care worker licenses into this one, and with this qualification as one of the basis for performance assessment, wage and promotion system, this license is necessary for the career mobility of the Filipino care workers.

Skills, language and cultural proficiency can best be achieved by gaining experience in the workplace and over time. For the care institutions, the cost in terms of time and effort (supervision) in educating and training the Filipinos in the Japanese way of care giving can be recovered only if the workers stay for a considerable time. In this aspect, the visa status, which determines how long the Filipinos can legally work in Japan to achieve his personal, economic and social goals, as well as that of the employer, is another form of personal attribute that should be considered in examining their incorporation in the care sector. In the case of long-term residents and the *Nikkeijin,* they possess visas that are not tied to their type of work, unlike the care worker candidates who need to pass the licensure exam in order to work beyond four years. This has been one of the major issues raised by care institutions regarding the JPEPA scheme.

The possession of an unrestricted visa, however, does not assure the employer that the *Nikkeijin* and the Filipino long-term residents will remain in the sector for a substantial period of time. This is because they have other job opportunites in sectors in which the production, and therefore the demand for labor, is "procyclical" to the general economic conditions, like for example, manufacturing and entertainment. Currently, because of the recession, many migrant workers are being trained as care workers but considering the poor working conditions and low pay in the care sector vis-à-vis other sectors, there is a possibility that they will switch jobs to these other sectors when the economy improves. However, these negative effects of conditions in other labor market might be partially offset by the sense of fulfillment, pride and hopes in achieving their long term goals through working in this sector.

In analyzing the retention and the span of time in which these Filipino workers can

participate in the labor market, their age and family relations in Japan can also be important factors. For Filipino long-term residents, they themselves are ageing, as revealed by their age composition in Appendix 2. Moreover, as they age, so are the parents of their Japanese spouse whom they feel they have a duty to take care of. In Table 3, we can see that about one out of five of the 189 Filipino long-term residents surveyed were inclined to take the Homehelper 2 course because someone close to them is in need of care. Based on these observations, we can predict that the current pool of Filipino long-term residents will diminish significantly in 10-20 years time.

For the *Nikkeijin*, their dwindling number, in addition to their ageing and availability of other job options can also limit their manpower supply to the care sector in the future unless the long-term visa issued to them is extended beyond the 4th generation descendants. Neither can we rely on the mothers of the *Shinnikkeijin* as a source of manpower in the future because under the current Immigration rule, their stay in Japan is assured only until the children turns 20 years old. Moreover, the possibility of switching to other jobs should be considered as they may see care work as an initial step for them and the children to be incorporated in the Japanese society, but not necessarily a precondition to their settlement in the country.

4.3. The facilitators of incorporation

The success or failure of migrant incorporation in the host society depends on how the government, the civil society and the ethnic community receive them. In this study, we look at how the different actors in the host society, such as the government, the recruitment agencies, the care-institution employers, and the ethnic community have facilitated the entry/participation of the Filipino workers in the Japanese labor market for care services.

Of these three trajectories, the JPEPA scheme has been the most prominent in terms of attracting public and academic discussions. This is because it was initiated by the governments of the two countries and migration was negotiated together with other areas of “economic partnership” such as investments, trade and technical cooperation. Moreover, the entry of workers under this scheme is highly regulated, with conditions such as “recruitment monopolized by the POEA,” “same salary as the Japanese counterpart” and “annual reporting about the worker to the government agency in

charge of the scheme." While the government policy is "receptive" of their entry to Japan, it has not gained popularity in Japan as a trajectory due to these regulations and the insufficient post-arrival support schemes that are very important for their smooth incorporation in the labor market. Moreover, the cost, in terms of providing free airfare, Japanese language, skills training and review for the national exam, and other fees necessary for the deployment of the care worker candidate is very expensive and thus a great burden to the receiving institutions.

On the other hand, the incorporation of both "new" and "old" *Nikkeijin* has been solely facilitated by the business sector (recruitment agencies and care institutions) in close collaboration with NGOs. In a pioneering case, the local NGO that provides legal assistance and Japanese language education to the *Nikkeijins* has tied up with a university in the Philippines and one (or several) Japanese recruitment company to provide free training in carework for 3 months and free accommodation and stipend within that period. During the same period, they are matched with employers in Japan who also act as guarantors in Japan (as proof of ability to support themselves and the child was a precondition for visa to be granted). They are immediately employed as caregivers, and their welfare (including their children) are looked after by the employer, from housing to education or daycare needs of the children. When necessary, they are also provided legal assistance in obtaining Japanese citizenship. One big difference, however, with those who came under the JPEPA scheme is that the Filipino workers pay for their deployment - passport and visa processing fees, airfare, and fees for legal documents. Upon arrival in Japan, they are also loaned money that they can use until the first month salary is received and are immediately given on-the-job training. Moreover, in contrast to the JPEPA scheme in which the candidates are required to take the national licensure exam, this is not necessary for the *Nikkeijin* to stay in Japan, so that there is less pressure and motivation on the side of the employer to let them take up any qualification, like for example, the Homehelper Level 2.

Of these three trajectories, the long-term residents are the ones whose entry to the labor market for care workers is least organized and most dependent on the initiative of the worker to obtain qualification and take up care work. Because they already live in Japan, they are able to have access to more information regarding the labor market. The information is transmitted through varied agents within the community – Japanese and Filipino friends, Japanese family and ethnic media (see Table 4).

Table 4: Source of Information about Homehelper Level 2 Course (Filipino Long-Term Residents

Multiple Responses n=188 (%)	Family	Friends and Acquaintances	Ethnic Newspaper/Media	Others
All Samples	11.2	59.0	33.0	16.5
Length of Stay in Japan				
20 years ～	12.1	66.7	21.2	21.2
15-19 years	13.2	60.5	34.2	15.8
10-14 years	4.2	62.5	25.0	16.7
5-9 years	7.0	55.8	39.5	14.0
～4 years	28.6	52.4	42.9	9.5

Source: Same as Table 2

Table 5. Type of Course Taken by Filipino Long-term Residents

Single Response n=190 (%)	Course Exclusively for Filipinos	Regular Course for Japanese	Correspondence Course
All sample	88.9	10.5	0.5
Length of Stay in Japan			
20 years ～	70.6	29.4	-
15-19 years	92.1	7.9	-
10-14 years	93.8	6.3	-
5-9 years	93.2	4.5	2.3
～4 years	95.2	4.8	-

Source: Same as Table 2.

Moreover, about 9 out of 10 took the course offered exclusively for Filipinos (see Table 5), implying the preference of Filipinos to take up the course together with other Filipinos,

not only because they feel more comfortable as they share the same problems like Japanese language proficiency, but also more importantly, because they consider attending the class a way of "socializing" with other Filipinos and obtaining mutual learning support (Group Interview with Filipino long term residents taking up caregivers' course in Fukuoka, November, 2008). That Filipinos rely on the ethnic community can also be detected in the way they care workers currently find their job – through referrals from Filipino friends who are already employed as care workers and job advertisements in ethnic newspapers (Interview with Filipino care workers, February, 2009, Kyoto). Indeed for these Filipinos, the ethnic community plays important roles in their incorporation in the labor market.

5. Summary and Conclusion

From the discussions above, we saw that because of demographic (ageing, smaller working age population and low birth rate), social (attitudes toward elderly care and child rearing, etc) and institutional (establishment of the LTCI system) transformations, Japan's market particularly for long-term care services has seen a significant expansion in the last ten years, resulting in the rapid increase in the number of care workers in this labor-intensive sector. However, the supply for laborers fail to catch up with such demand because of problems that are perennial to care work in most countries, such as low wages, poor working conditions and lack of recognition for this profession, among others. In the case of Japan, mobilizing domestic workers is difficult, more so in the future, because it will require massive reforms in the health care system, including fiscal expenditures. Even then, the impacts are not guaranteed and will take time to reflect in the labor market. One option that many ageing populations are adopting is the incorporation of workers from other countries, one of them, the Philippines, one of the world's biggest exporters of care givers and domestic helpers.

In this chapter, we looked at the potential of Filipino workers to be incorporated/participate in the care work sector. At present, there are three categories, or what we call, trajectories of incorporation: (1) Filipino long-term residents *(Zainichi Firipin jin)*, (2) "Old" and "new" Japanese-Filipino descendants *("Kyu" and "Shin" Firipin Nikkeijin)*, and (3) Care worker candidates *(Kaigofukushi shi Kohousha)* under JPEPA scheme. After describing their background and magnitude as potential care workers in Japan, we compared and contrasted them based on their motivations and long term

goals, human capital and facilitators of incorporation in the labor market.

We found the following essential differences among them. First, although the three groups are motivated by economic goals, this is expressed not only as higher salary. The long-term residents puts weight on achieving social recognition and self-fulfillment, while the descendants, especially the “new” ones, think that their incorporation in the labor market for care workers is one big step towards their and their children’s incorporation in the Japanese society itself. Finally, for the care worker candidates, Japan’s “high technology” and career mobility rank high in their motivations for coming to work in this country. Second, in terms of human capital, the long-term residents are highly favored as care workers because compared to the two other groups, they are the most language- and cultural- proficient, enabling the care institutions to train them more easily and at the least cost. However, because there is no restriction to their visa status, thus the possibility of switching to other jobs when the economic recession is over, and because of their ageing and social obligations, their future participation in the care work labor market becomes limited. The same situation also holds for the descendants. On the other hand, the care worker candidates in general possess the highest educational attainment and skills-proficiency. The third point of comparison is about how the different actors in the host society act as facilitators of their incorporation. We have shown that for the care worker candidates, the governments of the Philippines and Japan were the main facilitators, while the coming of the descendants has a tendency to become a business venture with the NGOs in the Philippines, the training and recruitment agencies and the care institution collaborate. In contrast, the long-term residents rely on the ethnic community and ethnic media to access information about the training course and labor market.

Apparently, each of these trajectories of incorporation has its own merits as well as problems that need to be resolved in order for Filipinos to be a stable source of care workers in the country. Based on our findings, we argue that in the short- and medium-run, the long-term residents and descendants whose incorporation is easier, should be tapped as care workers. However, since their entrance is through the “sidedoor,” they are prone to “exploitation” such as getting low salary and being stuck at the bottom of the career path because of lack of government regulations and government support. Neither are they required to take qualifications to secure their stay in the country. Moreover, their population is also shrinking. Based on these reasons,

hiring skilled care workers from overseas is a more feasible way to alleviate the labor shortage in the country in the long-run. In dealing with this issue, two important questions come to mind. First, who will facilitate their entrance? We believe that the workers should be allowed to enter through the “front door.” The government has taken the first step to this end, but the current scheme is problematic and is not expected to have significant impacts in the labor market for care workers. Thus, the government is challenged to review the scheme and make the necessary reforms. Second, when should their “serious” incorporation begin? It should start now since care work requires high level of language, cultural and skills proficiencies which cannot be achieved overnight.

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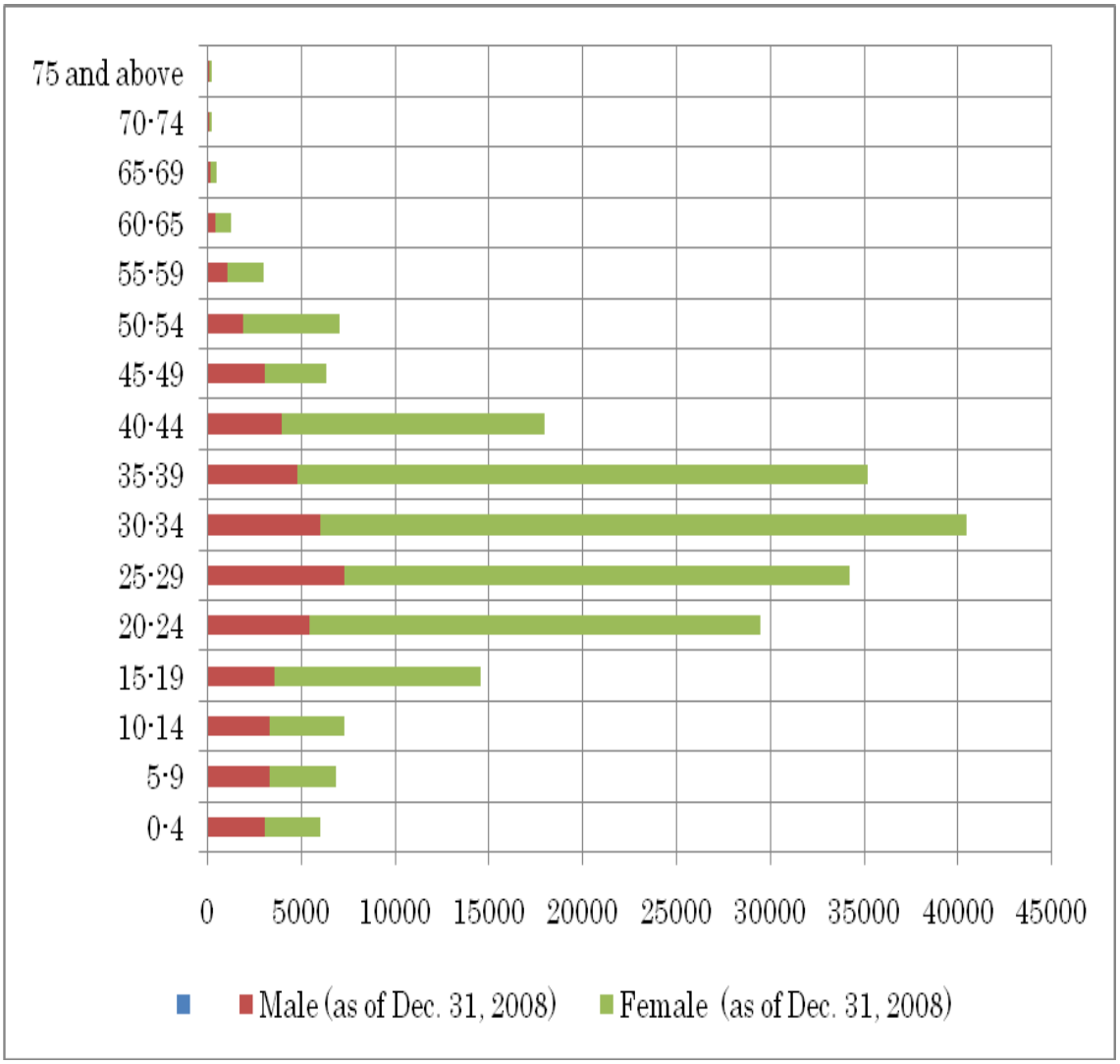
Appendices

Appendix 1. Registered Filipino Residents in Japan Classified According to Sex (Dec. 31, 2008)



Source: Immigration Bureau, Japan Ministry of Justice

Appendix 2. Registered Filipino Residents in Japan Classified According to Visa Types (Dec. 31, 2008)

Type	Number	(%)
1. Working Visa		
Professor	77	0.04
Artist	3	0.00
Religious Activities	253	0.12
Journalist	1	0.00
Investor/Business Manager	40	0.02
Legal/Accounting Services	0	0.00
Medical Services	0	0.00
Research	35	0.02
Instructor	117	0.06
Engineer	2,276	1.08
Specialist in Humanities/International Services	895	0.42
Intracompany Transferee	826	0.39
Entertainer	9,199	4.37
Skilled Labor	268	0.13
2. Visa Status Not Permitting Work		
Cultural Activities	16	0.01
Short-term Stay	8,698	4.13
College	614	0.29
Pre-college Student	144	0.07
Trainee	4,938	2.34
Dependent	2,047	0.97
3. Whether work is permitted or not depends on the contents of individual permits		
Specified Visa	7,660	3.64
4. Statuses of residence without restrictions on activities		
No visa given (permanent residence)	75,806	35.99
Spouse or child of Japanese national	49,980	23.73
Spouse or child of permanent resident	2,472	1.17
Long-term resident	35,717	16.96
Special long-term resident	42	0.02

5. No visa	3,050	1.45
6. Others	5,443	2.58
Total (Filipinos)	210,617	100.00
Total (All Nationalities)	**2,217,426**	9.50

Source: Same as Appendix 1