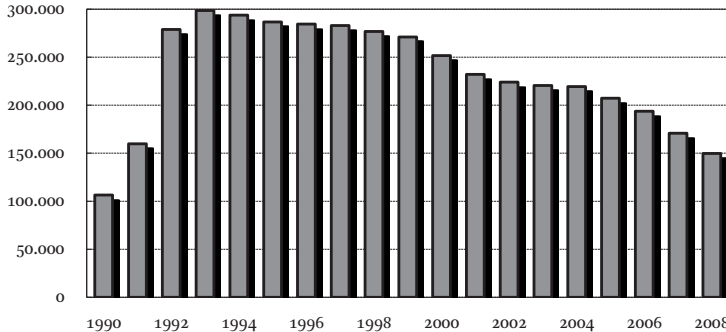


Graph3: Estimated number of over-stayed foreign residents



* Created by author according to the statistics of the Immigration Bureau, Ministry of Justice.
<http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/toukei/index.html> (15 December 2008).

4. Backgrounds of Irregular Foreign Nationals Residing in Japan

4.1 Japanese Immigration Policy: »No Unskilled Workers Accepted«
 Foreign nationals who wish to come to Japan to work legally should have a »Status of residence« listed in the Immigration Control Law, such as professor, engineer, artist, and so on¹³. So called »unskilled workers« are not accepted under the Japanese immigration policy and law. In other words, the Japanese government maintains the professionally-segmented status system rather than accepting foreign workers in general even if the demand for less skilled workers exists in the labor market.¹⁴

4.2 High Demand of Workers in Japanese Labor Market

Despite the fact that the demand for workers in the Japanese labor market remains high, the Japanese immigration policy consistently maintains the precondition that unskilled workers are not accepted.¹⁵ As a result, due to the economic gaps between Japan and its neighboring countries, and a high excess supply of workers in these Asian countries, people from the Philippines, Thailand and South Korea come to Japan to benefit from job opportunities and higher levels of wages in the labor market. Natural-

13 The Appended Table I of the Immigration Control Law at <http://www.cas.go.jp/jp/seisaku/hourei/data/icrra.pdf> (15 December 2008).

14 Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan, *Living together with migrants and ethnic minorities in Japan: NGO policy proposals*, Gendaijinbun-sha (2007), pp. 10–13.

15 The third Basic Plan for Immigration Control at <http://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/information/bpic3rd.html> (15 December 2008).