

PACIFIC PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL LEAGUES AND MIGRATORY PATTERNS AND TRENDS: 1995-1999

Naoki Chiba

This article examines the context and process of sports migration among the professional baseball leagues in the Pacific region from 1995 to 1999. During this five-year period, the number of foreign players in every league increased. Findings indicate that although some 90% of foreign-born players in U.S. Major League Baseball originate from Latin America, more than 50% of foreigners are Americans in the four Asian leagues. Furthermore, with respect to baseball migration patterns among the Pacific nations, it seems that economic and athletic factors are very important with a geographic dimension being particularly significant in U.S. Major League Baseball. Overall, the study found evidence supporting the increasing influence of globalization based on the relationships of interdependency in professional baseball.

Keywords: *baseball; migration; globalization*

In 1995, pitcher Hideo Nomo signed a contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers of U.S. Major League Baseball (MLB) system and became the second Japanese-born player to enter the big leagues.¹ Since his achievement, such first-class Japanese players as Kazuhiro Sasaki and Ichiro Suzuki (the Seattle Mariners) have also broken into MLB.² Furthermore, there are many foreign players such as Sammy Sosa (a Dominican: the Chicago Cubs) and Ivan Rodriguez (a Puerto Rican: the Texas Rangers) in the U.S.A.'s major leagues. Given that MLB in the United States is baseball's core economy in the world, player migration into the United States can be regarded as "in-migration" (Arbena, 1994).

On the other hand, American and Dominican players have recently flowed into the professional baseball leagues of East Asia, largely constituted by the following nations: Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. These reverse flows can be regarded as evidence of what Arbena (1994) described as "out-migration." These contrasting patterns of sport migration seem to be related to much larger global processes occurring in sport and in society in general.

To date, several researchers have studied the phenomenon of globalization in the sporting world (Chiba, Ebihara, & Morino, 2001; Donnelly, 1996; Harvey, Rail, & Thibault, 1996; Horne, 1998; Houlihan, 1994; Jackson

& Andrews, 1999; Maguire, 1994; Rowe, Lawrence, Miller, & McKay, 1994). Some of these studies are theoretical and empirical articles that are based on case studies of sport in specific countries. The current study focuses on one of the basic lines of research with sport globalization: athletic migration. As a starting point, the study set out to establish the veracity of whether there is data to support the argument that there has been a globalization of sports based on athlete migration within baseball.

For example, do we know the number of foreign-born players who have migrated over time, across different professional sports (e.g., baseball, soccer, and golf), and the various countries in which they are playing? Does the increase of foreign players in a professional league really equate to, and represent, the globalization of society in general? This article examines concrete data related to foreign-born athletes to answer the above questions. Arguably, one way in which we can begin to understand the complex phenomenon of globalization in sports is by examining the process of sports migration.

This article is structured into five parts. Following the introduction, the spread of baseball to East Asian countries (Japan, Korea, and Taiwan) and the subsequent development of their professional baseball leagues are outlined. The Method section describes the procedure including the sources of data used in the study. Next, the Results and Discussion section include an overview and explanation of the study's main data concerning trends in baseball migration in Pacific countries. This includes an analysis and interpretation of the number of foreign players, their average age and salary, along with playing position in each league. The Conclusion summarizes the evidence within the context of contemporary debates about globalization along with related implications.

Studies relating to sport labor migration have mainly been conducted in European and North American countries (Bale & Maguire, 1994; Lanfranchi & Taylor, 2001). Maguire examined the migration of foreign players in English cricket and British ice hockey, as well as that of professional footballers in European countries (Maguire, 1996; Maguire & Stead, 1996, 1998). Specifically with respect to baseball, Klein (1989, 1994) studied the process of player migration between the Dominican Republic and the United States.

In these previous studies, several factors explaining sport migration have been discussed. For example, Genest (1994) pointed out the importance of cultural and economic factors influencing the international migration of Canadian ice hockey players. In the case of European soccer, Maguire and Stead (1998) avoided explaining soccer migration solely from the viewpoint of economic factors and insisted on the necessity for examining political, economic, cultural, and geographical dimensions. Although the economic factors are often regarded as the most important dimension, few researchers, with the exception of Klein (1989, 1994), examined the players' salary disparity between the professional leagues. Arguably, by comparing them, we will be able to understand the flow of sport migration with respect to the

salary disparity among the leagues and gain further insight into the importance of the economic factors.

To date, little attempt has been made to study sport labor migration in Asia. Therefore, the current study enables future comparisons between Asia and certain Western countries. As baseball is a very popular sport in East Asia and there are many foreign players, the current study focuses on sport migration between Asian countries and the United States. Thus, this article seeks to examine the tendency of sports migration among the professional baseball leagues in the Pacific Rim countries (the United States **US IS NOT A PACIFIC COUNTRY**, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan) from 1995 to 1999.

THE DISSEMINATION OF BASEBALL TO THE PACIFIC REGION

Although there are various opinions about the origins of baseball (Guttmann, 1994), the game's invention has been attributed to Alexander Cartwright in New York in 1845. Formally, U.S. MLB was founded as the National League in 1876 and later established the American League in 1900. In 2003, U.S. MLB consists of 30 teams belonging to the National and American Leagues.

Historically, baseball spread through Pacific countries (including Japan and Australia) through teachers, international students, and soldiers (Guttmann, 1994). As such, a key starting point for the current study was to examine the dissemination of baseball within Japan, Korea, and Taiwan.

An American teacher, Horace Wilson, has been identified as the first person to introduce baseball into Japan in 1873 (Baseball Magazine Sha, 1994). Subsequently, baseball spread throughout Japan and became popular among students. In 1934, the Yomiuri Shinbun, a newspaper publishing company, invited an all-star team (including Babe Ruth) from the U.S. major leagues to compete against the Japanese national team. These games served as a turning point culminating in the establishment of the Japanese Professional Baseball League (JPL) in 1936. Since the original baseball series between the United States and Japan, MLB has influenced the development of the JPL that now consists of 12 teams belonging to the Central and Pacific Leagues.

By comparison, baseball was first introduced into Korea in 1905 by Philip Gillett, an American missionary belonging to the Young Men's Christian Association (Reaves, 2002). It gradually became popular among Christian people or students as a pastime. Notably, the formal institutionalization of baseball took longer than in Japan with the Korea Baseball Organization League (KBOL) emerging in 1982. As of the 2003 season, the KBOL has a total of 8 teams.

In Taiwan, baseball developed in 1897 during the colonial period overseen by Japan. Until the 2002 season, there were two professional baseball leagues in Taiwan, namely, the Chinese Professional Baseball League (CPBL) and the Taiwan Major League (TML). Notably, the CPBL is not a professional baseball league in China.³ Given that a professional baseball

league on China's mainland was only founded in 2002 and thus has a short history, the current study has chosen to not include it in the analysis.

The CPBL was founded in 1990, and the TML split from the former in 1997 because of disputes revolving around television rights. Although professional baseball in Taiwan was very popular from 1990 to 1996, the number of spectators has decreased in the CPBL since 1997 because of alleged corruption in the form of game fixing (Fukuzawa, 1998). Although the number of teams in the CPBL increased from six in 1996 to seven in 1997, it returned to four during the 2000 season.

The number of teams in the TML had consistently remained at four until recently when the TML dissolved in December 2002. After that, the CPBL merged with the TML and now consists of six teams for the 2003 season ("The Taiwan Major League Dissolved," 2003).

METHOD

The method employed was secondary data analysis utilizing sources that included player directories, baseball journals, and team and league public relations material. The main objective was to document the number of foreign players, identify playing position, age, and salary with respect to each league, that is, U.S. MLB, JPL, CPBL, TML, and KBOL between 1995-1999. The current study examined these data to explain the relationship between specific characteristics of foreign players' and the process of baseball migration.

Within the four Asian leagues, nationality was determined based on listings in official team and league public relations material. However, because nationality is usually not listed within U.S. MLB team materials, it was determined by the player's place of birth. Within the current study, Koreans born in Japan were not categorized as foreign players in the Japanese league. In part, this is because they are regarded as Japanese players, and there are potential negative consequences associated with disclosing their true national descent. Furthermore, it is important to note that the MLB (U.S.) data is based on the preseason 40-man roster and not the standard competitive season 25-man roster (Melchior, 1995, 1999; National League of Professional Baseball Clubs, 1995, 1999).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

BASEBALL MIGRATION TRENDS IN THE PACIFIC COUNTRIES

In 2003, U.S. MLB consisted of 30 teams belonging to either the National or American League. In addition, it incorporates a wide-ranging organization of minor leagues (Class AAA, Class AA, Class A, Rookie), which involves 180 teams in total. As MLB has increased by four teams during the 1990s (Colorado Rockies and Florida Marlins in 1993; Arizona Diamondbacks and Tampa Bay Devil Rays in 1998), there was an increasing

demand for professional baseball players in the North American marketplace.

For example, Klein (1994) estimated the impact of the four new franchises stating that: "The addition of four new teams will generate approximately 100 new major leaguers and 560 new minor leaguers" (p. 191). The total number of major league players has indeed increased by 118 players from 1,071 in 1995 to 1,189 in 1999. Notably, the number of foreign-born players has also risen from 201 (18.8%) in 1995 to 301 (25.3%) in 1999. These results indicate that most of the demand for major league players focused on foreign-born players.⁴

Of foreign-born players in MLB, Dominicans constitute approximately 40% and had a 37-man increase during 1995 to 1999 (Figure 1 and 2). Puerto Ricans and Venezuelans make up 34.3% of the total in 1995 (Figure 1). The percentage of Canadian, Cuban, and Japanese players has increased during this period (Figure 1 and 2). The main point to note in Figure 1 and 2 is that approximately 90% of foreign-born players in MLB are of Latin American origin. However, the number of non-Latin Americans in MLB has also increased from 18 in 1995 to 36 in 1999.

Although still speculative, it is highly likely that one of the main reasons for this change is that some teams in MLB own baseball academies that foster young players in the Caribbean. Of course, there are some professional baseball leagues (summer and winter) in Latin America. However, the summer leagues are also largely focused on developing and identifying young talent under the control of U.S. MLB. The Latin winter league is held during MLB's off-season enabling some individuals to play in more than one league. Indeed, Latin American players may be attracted by geographic proximity and salary disparity⁵ between the United States and the Caribbean. The next section presents comparative data on the East Asian leagues beginning with Japan.

In 1951, the JPL established a rule that each team could have a maximum of three foreign players (Ohmichi, 2000). In November 1995, the rules were changed so that teams could have an unlimited number of foreign players (Baseball Magazine, 2000). Overall, there have been a total of 617 foreign-born players in the JPL between 1952 and 2000 (Baseball Magazine, 2000). Furthermore, in 1998 the Nippon Professional Baseball League changed the rule regarding the number of foreign players allowed in each game from three to four (two pitchers and two fielders).

As a result, the total number of foreign players has increased from 39 in 1995 to 66 in 1999 (Figure 3 and 4). Of these, Americans have risen from 29 in 1995 to 36 in 1999 and Dominicans from 5 in 1995 to 11 in 1999 (Figure 3 and 4). In total, these two nationalities constitute 71.3% of all foreign players in 1999.

In the JPL, it has been suggested that the 1995 ruling that enabled unlimited numbers of foreign players was largely attributable to the Hiroshima Carp franchise (Yamagishi, 1996). The Carp requested that young talent from the Dominican Republic that were a part of their baseball

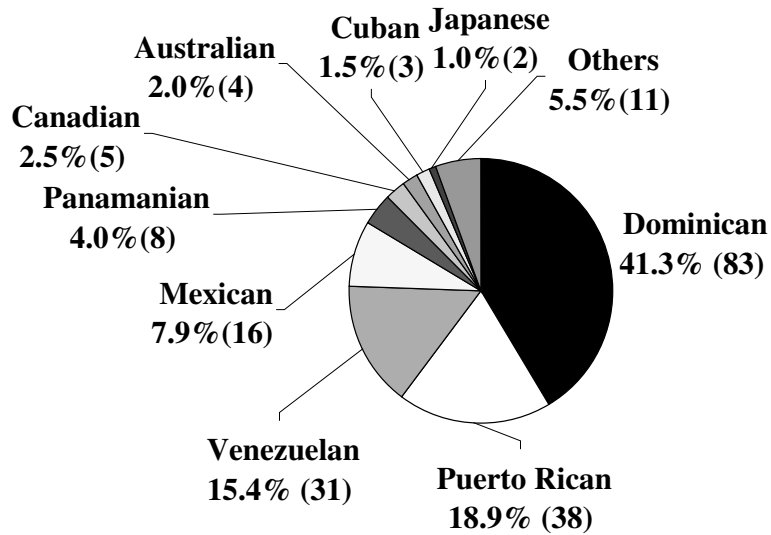


Figure 1: The Rate of Foreign-Born Players According to Birthplace in U.S. Major League Baseball, 1995 (N = 201).

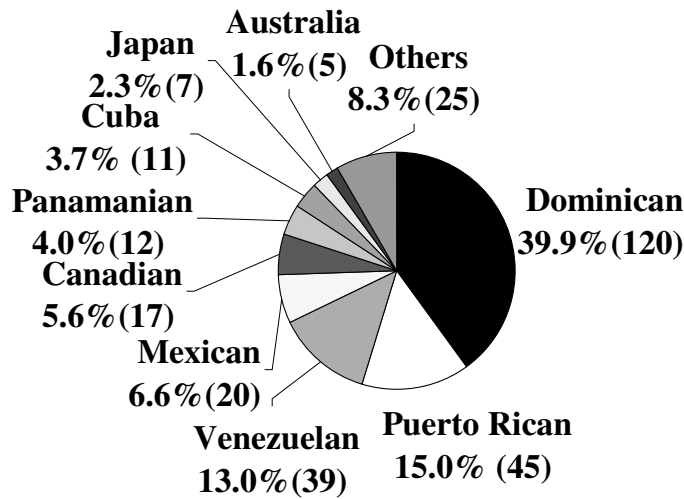


Figure 2: The Rate of Foreign-Born Players According to Birthplace in U.S. Major League Baseball, 1999 (N = 301).

academy should be allowed to play in the Japanese farm league. As a result of this deregulation, the number of foreign players has since increased.

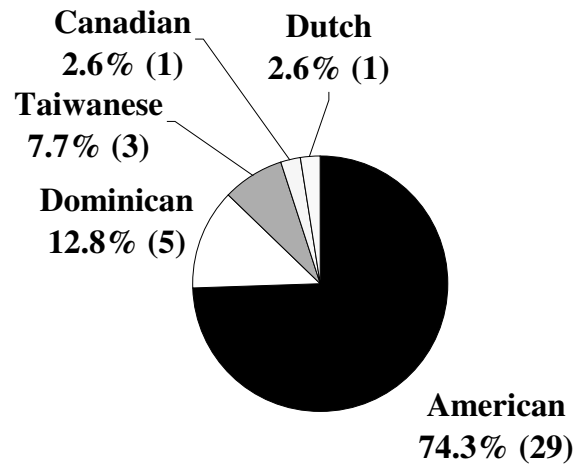


Figure 3: The Rate of Foreign Players According to Nationality in the Japanese Professional League, 1995 ($N = 39$).

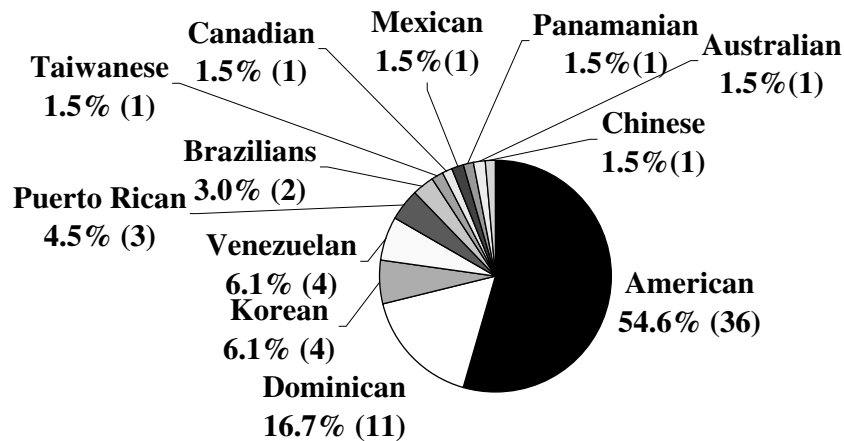


Figure 4: The Rate of Foreign Players According to Nationality in the Japanese Professional League, 1999 ($N = 66$).

Evidence of the Japanese corporate team's growing interest in off-shore player identification and development is highlighted by the fact that the Hiroshima Carp of the Central League opened a baseball academy in the Dominican Republic in 1990. This academy has sent 10 Dominican players, including Robinson Checo (who had 15 wins in 1995) and Alfonso Soriano (who had a regular position with the New York Yankees from the 2001 season), into the JPL as of 1999. The reason the Carp established this academy

was to foster the development of young Dominican talent at little expense. The Carp are not a well-funded team like the Tokyo Yomiuri Giants or the Seibu Lions, both of whom are sponsored by large corporations. Because it could not recruit major leaguers who often earn more than US\$1 million dollars, the Carp franchise chose to establish a baseball academy in the Dominican Republic.

Furthermore, the expanded recruitment of foreign players is demonstrated by the fact that between 1995 and 1999 the number of nations from which the athletes were drawn increased from 5 to 12 (Figure 3 and 4). In short, the global geographic recruiting base diversified during this period.

From its foundation in 1990, the CPBL stipulated that each team could field a maximum of three foreign players per game. However, by 1995, each team could have up to 10 foreigners on its roster. Furthermore, by March 1997 the roster restriction pertaining to the number of foreign players was lifted.

With the foundation of the TML in 1997, the number of teams in the CPBL increased from six to seven. After that, many foreign players were recruited to offset the competition for players being recruited by the TML. This pattern indicates how the demand for skilled labor, which is inextricably linked to the sports-entertainment product, affects local regulations regarding foreign player quotas. The results evident in the CPBL also point to the changes to the quota system regarding the number of foreign players and actual teams.

Overall, the total number of foreign players increased from 57 in 1996 to 117 in 1998 (Figure 5 and 6). In particular, they held a majority of positions in the total number of domestic and foreign players in 1998. Of these, Americans have gradually increased from 29 in 1996 to 69 in 1998 and constituted one half of the foreign players during 1996 and 1999 (Figure 5 and 6). Second highest were Dominican players who filled 36.8% of positions in the CPBL in 1996. It should be noted that there is a general expectation that foreign players will have an immediate impact and make a significant contribution to success. As a consequence, those who do not perform well tend to be dismissed quickly. Thus, from these results it would appear that only a few of them were carried until the end of the season.

In the TML, the quota system under the control of each team has decreased from nine in 1997 to four in 1999. Although four foreign-born players were allowed to play in each game during 1997 and 1998, the quota system has reduced to three since 1999. The number of foreign players was 50 in 1997, 37 in 1998 and 48 in 1999 (Figure 7). Of course, although the quota system reduced in 1999, the number of foreign players increased from 37 (1998) to 48 (1999). The reason for this seems to be that many players were dismissed within a short time period due to a perceived lack of performance. Furthermore, American players constituted about 60.4% of total foreign players in 1999 (Figure 7).

The KBOL was founded in 1982 and had a closed-door policy toward foreign players until 1997. Of course, some Koreans born in Japan played in

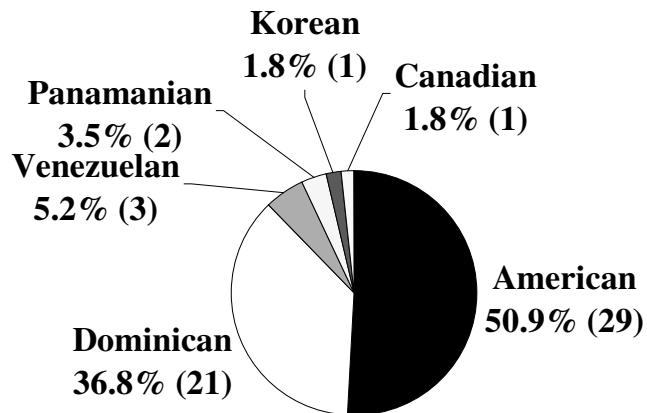


Figure 5: The Rate of Foreign Players According to Nationality in the Chinese Professional Baseball League, 1996 ($N = 57$)

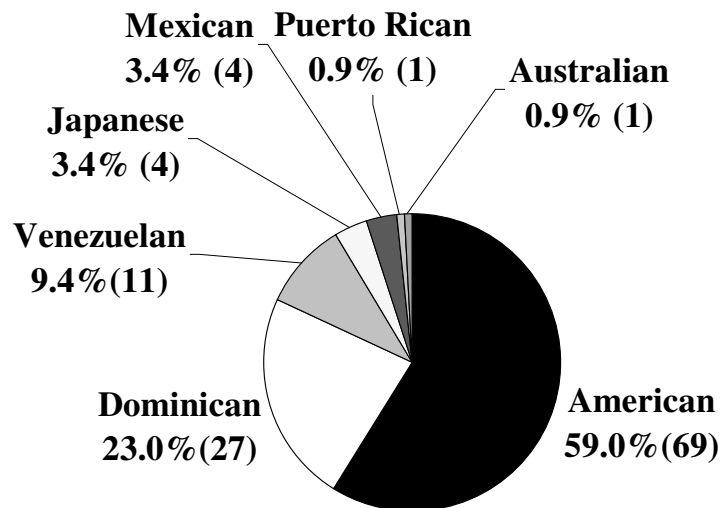


Figure 6: The Rate of Foreign Players According to Nationality in the Chinese Professional Baseball League, 1998 ($N = 117$).

the KBOL (Sekikawa, 1984). However, Japanese-Koreans were regarded as domestic players. After that, the Korea Professional Baseball League decided to open up to foreign players to enhance the popularity of the game and to improve the overall skill level of the league. This league allows each team to sign a maximum of two foreign players. There were 11 foreign

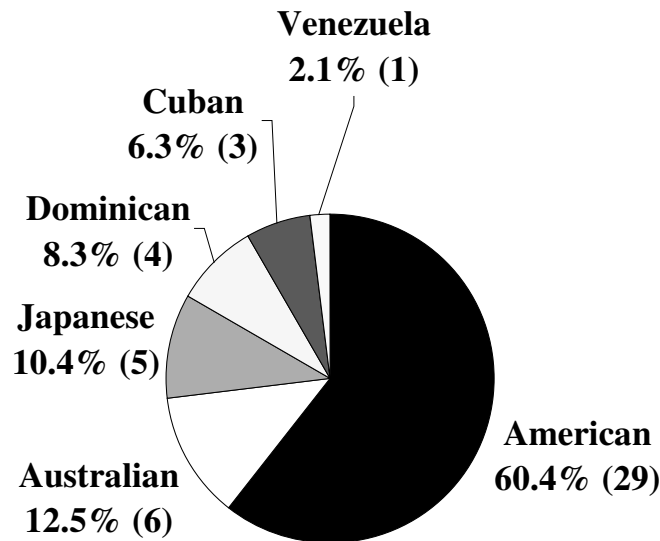


Figure 7: The Rate of Foreign Players According to Nationality in the Taiwan Major League, 1999 (N = 48).

players in 1998 and 17 in 1999. In particular, 76.5% of the total foreign players were Americans in 1999 (Figure 8).

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS IN THE PACIFIC BASEBALL LEAGUE

So far we have seen that the number of foreign players was changing according to variation in the quota system of the four Asian leagues under investigation. U.S. MLB system has also recruited foreign-born players to fill vacancies due to expansion.

These results support Straubhaar's (1986) study into labor migration. He pointed out that: "The decisive condition for the existence of migration flows was the demand for foreign workers in the destination country" (Straubhaar, 1986, p. 853). In short, he explained that if there is a demand for migrants in a marketplace, the number of foreign workers will increase in spite of the situation in the exporting country. This rationale is also useful for explaining sports labor migration.

Of course, there are some unique features of sports migration. For example, it is characteristic of professional baseball players to earn relatively high salaries over a short term (typically age 20 to 30 years), compared with workers in other fields of employment.

Furthermore, Americans occupied approximately 37% to 76% of total foreign players in the four Asian leagues during this period. Of course, about 20% to 40% of them were Dominicans in the CPBL. In addition, most of the

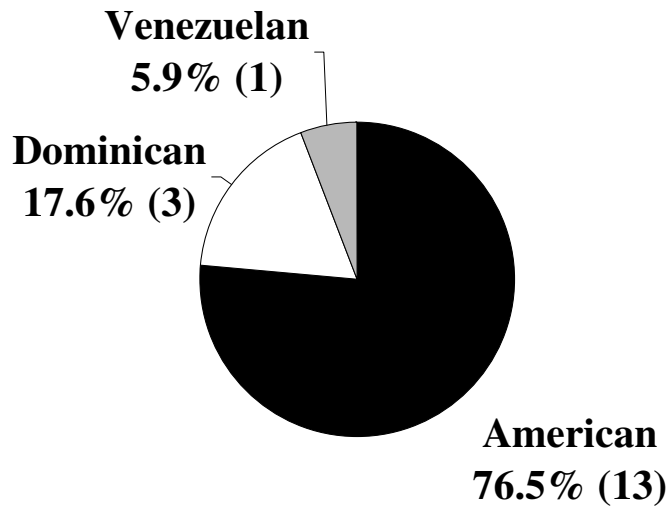


Figure 8: The Rate of Foreign Players According to Nationality in the Korea Baseball Organization League, 1999 (N = 17).

American or Dominican players in East Asia come from MLB, Class AAA, Class AA, and the Independent Baseball League in the United States.

An important question that needs to be addressed is “why these players moved to the professional baseball leagues in East Asia?” One of the reasons appears to be financial. In short, many minor league players take advantage of the fact that some Asian league teams pay better salaries than Class AAA. For example, players such as Randy Bass and Robert Rose said that their main reason for moving to Japan was to earn money⁶ (Baseball Magazine, 2000 **ARTICLE TITLE**; Brown, 1999). To date, no studies have been conducted to try and understand and explain the migratory motivation of foreign baseball players in East Asia. Future studies may wish to interview players and administrators about this important issue.

Furthermore, there is a ranking of professional baseball leagues according to athletic level, salary, and popularity in the Pacific countries. The U.S. MLB is baseball’s core economy and maintains the highest level of performance in the world. Generally speaking, a skill ranking of nations in the current study would be as follows: U.S. MLB, the JPL, the KBOL, and the Taiwanese leagues. In fact, Table 1 indicates that the average salary of foreign players corresponds to this skill ranking by nation.⁷ Judging from the above, some players who move from a relatively high level league (e.g., U.S. MLB) to low (e.g., the Asian leagues) would likely attach greater importance to the economic dimension than the athletic, or skill level, factor.

On the other hand, the athletic dimension has been considered of greater importance than the economic for Japanese players emigrating to U.S. MLB. For instance, famous pitchers, Nomo and Sasaki noted that their

TABLE 1
Average Annual Salary of Foreign and Domestic Players in Each League (1999)

Salary League	Foreign Players' Annual Salary	Disparity	Domestic Players' Annual Salary	Disparity
MLB	Unknown		1,606,760	33.5
JPL	592,509 ± 456,739 (<i>n</i> = 50)	9.4	282,281	5.9
KBOL	92,681 ± 14,011 (<i>n</i> = 16)	1.5	31,699	0.7
CPBL	54,000 ~ 66,000	1.0	48,000 ~ 60,000	1.0
TML	63,000	1.0	48,000	1.0

NOTE: MLB = U.S. Major League Baseball; JPL = Japanese Professional League; KBOL = Korea Baseball Organization League; CPBL = Chinese Professional Baseball League; TML = Taiwan Major League.

Monetary unit in this table is U.S. dollars. An average exchange rate in 1999 was used (US\$1 dollar = 114 yen).

main reason for moving to U.S. MLB was to compete with powerful hitters in the high-level league (Nomo, 19973; Sasaki, 2000). Of course, because of their achievements in the United States, they earned much greater salaries than they had in Japan. This is one of the clear advantages of having a great performance record in a well-funded league.

Judging from the above, there needs to some consideration for the demand for foreign players in professional baseball, the economical factors, and the relationship of athletic level between players in particular leagues to explain sport labor migration.

COMPARISON OF FOREIGN PLAYERS: AGE, SALARY, AND PLAYING POSITION

The data for the four Asian leagues are based on foreign players registered during the 1995 to 1999 period. However, the data for MLB is based solely on foreign-born players in 1999.

The average age of foreign-born players (*n* = 301) in U.S. MLB was 25.5±3.78 in 1999, and there was little difference when contrasted with results between 1995 and 1998. Furthermore, the average age of foreign players was 28.2±3.52 (*n* = 145) in the JPL, 28.2±3.45 (*n* = 309) in the CPBL, 29.1±2.73 (*n* = 55) in the TML and 29.5±2.73 (*n* = 24) in the KBOL. These results indicate that the average age of foreign-born players in the United States is younger than that in East Asia. The reason for this seems to be related to foreign players' careers in each league. American or Dominican players in their late 20s tend to migrate to the Asian leagues when they are past their prime. On the other hand, young Latin Americans are inclined to aim for U.S. MLB. Thus, it seems that the differences in these tendencies reflect the average age of foreign players in each league.

Next, from the results of playing position distribution, it is evident that of all pitchers, foreign-born players occupied one half the available spots in U.S. MLB, the JPL, the CPBL and the TML. In particular, some 60% of them were pitchers in Taiwan. The main reason seems to be that the pitcher is a very important, central, and controlling position compared to some others in baseball. Furthermore, the number of foreign players in these leagues by playing position was large according to the following rank order: pitcher, infielder, outfielder, and catcher. The exception to these rankings was foreign-born infielders in the KBOL where they constituted the highest number. The reason for this may be related to the fact that each team tends to be dependent on a powerful, foreign hitter playing first or third base.

One interesting finding was that there were very few foreign players in the position of catcher in the four Asian leagues. In particular, there was not a single foreign catcher in either the JPL or the KBOL during the 5-year period under study. The position of catcher has long been identified as a central position and attributed with important leadership qualities (Grusky, 1963; Loy & Jackson, 1990; Loy & McElvogue, 1970). Notably, in Japan, the catcher's position is regarded similar to a manager on the field (Nomura, 1995). Thus, for cultural and organizational reasons Japanese teams have not recruited foreign catchers. In South Korea, there has been a suggestion that some teams are afraid that a foreign-born catcher will tell the opposing foreign batter what the next pitch will be (personal communication with an official advisor of the KBO, February 17, 2001). This suggests some degree of distrust of foreign-born players within the Korean system.

Let us make a comparison between the average salaries of domestic players by league in 1999. The average salary of domestic players was U.S.\$1,606,760 dollars in MLB, \$282,281 dollars in the JPL, and \$31,699 dollars in the KBOL (Table 1). In the CPBL, it ranged from \$48,000 to \$60,000 dollars. In the TML, it was about \$48,000 dollars (Table 1). Please note that the salary data of the CPBL and the TML were based on personal communication with a representative in charge of each league.

Taking the average salary in the TML as one point of comparison, the salary disparity with regard to the JPL was about sixfold, and with U.S. MLB it was 33.5-fold (Table 1). Furthermore, the wage differentials of domestic players between the JPL and U.S. MLB were about 5.7-fold and between Japan and South Korea were approximately ninefold (Table 1).

On the other hand, the average salary of foreign players was \$592,509±\$456,739 dollars in the JPL, and \$92,681±\$14,011 dollars (which includes contract money) in the KBOL (Table 1). By comparison, the difference was between \$54,000 to \$66,000 dollars in the CPBL and approximately \$63,000 dollars in the TML (Table 1). The salary disparity of foreign players between the JPL and the TML was 9.4-fold, and the difference between Japan and South Korea was about 6.4-fold.

It is also worth noting the average salary of players in the JPL. The average salary of domestic players in the JPL dropped from \$287,234 dollars

in 1995 to \$282,281 in 1999. However, it has increased in Japanese yen year by year. In short, this difference stems from a fall in the exchange rate of the yen during this period.⁸ On the other hand, the average salary of foreign players has decreased from \$1,280,086±\$871,676 dollars in 1995 to \$592,508±\$456,739 dollars in 1999.

The average salary of foreign players in the JPL has decreased by one half during this period. The reason for this is that Japanese teams have recently tended to recruit minor leaguers (belonging to Class AAA or Class AA) to a greater degree than major leaguers who often earn more than \$1 million dollars. In addition, the number of foreign players registered per team increased from 3.25 in 1995 to 5.5 in 1999 because of the deregulation of the quota system. In short, although the number of foreign players in Japan has increased during this period, the average salary has decreased.

Furthermore, there is substantial salary disparity among foreign players in the JPL. For example, the annual salary of a Dominican young player emerging from the Carp Academy was approximately \$41,300 dollars that was equal to the lowest salary in the JPL (*Player Directory of Japanese Professional Baseball in 1997*, 1997). On the other hand, Shane Mack, who played for the Yomiuri Giants during 1995 and 1996, earned about \$4 million dollars year (*Player Directory of Japanese Professional Baseball in 1995*, 1995). This salary disparity equates to a 98-fold difference.

As salaries of young Dominican players were relatively cheap compared with other foreign players in Japan, there were some contract difficulties between them and the Carp organization. For example, Checo (1995) stated that young Dominican players from the Carp Academy often signed contracts written in English (which they could not understand) under considerable pressure and were unable to retain possession of their passport and bank deposits. As a consequence, Checo (1995) complained about the discriminatory treatment of the Carp franchise toward young Dominican players.

These examples may reflect one negative dimension of globalization. The Hiroshima Carp invested its money in fostering young Dominicans because it was a means of achieving success at a small cost. For example, Checo had 15 wins in 1995. In short, the Carp achieved a good record by exploiting young Dominican talent. Conversely, it could be argued that the Dominican players improved their skills and earned higher salaries as professionals because of the investment of the Carp organization.

This situation may be the same with foreign unskilled laborers in Japan. As the average salaries in Japan have increased relative to those in developing countries, foreign workers from Southeast Asia and South America have come to Japan to earn money. Of course, foreign unskilled laborers are not allowed to work according to Japanese law. Thus, they are regarded as illegal laborers in many cases. However, because there are demands for cheap labor they are able to work at lower salaries compared with Japanese workers (Sassen, 1998; Tanaka, 1995). In short, the need or desire to find employment often leads to people migrating to foreign countries thereby

contributing to aspects of globalization. However, there is some evidence of discriminatory practices toward foreign laborers in the Japanese Professional League as well as in other occupations in Japan.

EXPLAINING BASEBALL MIGRATION IN THE PACIFIC COUNTRIES

Let us consider some of the possible explanatory factors of baseball migration in East Asia. South Korea and Taiwan are geographically closer to Japan compared to the United States or the Dominican Republic and were historically and culturally concerned with the nation of the Rising Sun. However, the number of Korean and Taiwanese players in the JPL was fewer than that of Americans and Dominicans in the JPL (Figure 3 and 4). There are similar situations in the Korean and Taiwanese professional baseball leagues. For example, the number of Japanese and Korean players was fewer than Americans in the Taiwanese leagues (Figure 5, 6, and 7). In particular, there were no Asian foreign players in the KBOL during this period. In addition, although some Koreans born in Japan played in the KBOL during the 1980s, there have hardly been any such players in recent times.

It follows from what has been said that the geographic, historical, and cultural factors are not as important in the four Asian leagues as we might have thought. As a consequence, we need to consider other factors, such as the difference in athletic ability and salary disparity, among these leagues to explain baseball migration. Although the athletic level of the JPL is similar to Class AAA (Chiba, 2000), it is regarded as higher than the Korean or the Taiwanese leagues. Furthermore, if American players take an active part in the Asian leagues, they can earn more money than in the minor leagues of the United States. Therefore, American players belonging to Class AAA are likely attracted to East Asia based on their higher skill level and greater opportunity to earn income.

To summarize, the results of the current study indicate that the economic and athletic/skill dimensions are very important factors in influencing and regulating baseball migration in the four Asian baseball leagues. On the other hand, U.S. MLB retains the vast majority of elite athletic talent in the world, American and imported, largely through its enormous capital base. In addition, about 90% of foreign-born players are of Latin American origin. Therefore, it seems that the geographic, economic, and athletic factors are significant in explaining international baseball migration to North and Middle America.

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of globalization is becoming increasingly important for the professional baseball leagues in the Pacific region. For example, the existence of foreign players from various countries in each league, the emergence of baseball academies in the Caribbean, and the worldwide media exposure of U.S. MLB through satellite broadcasting. However, it is important not to jump to the conclusion that the increase of foreign players in each

league simply represents a process of globalization in the sporting world. As demonstrated in the current study at least part of the explanation for athlete migration can be attributed to variations in the quota system of particular professional leagues. Of course, different processes of globalization in wider society will directly, or indirectly, influence changes in the quota system. Yet administrators in the Asian professional leagues (such as the TML) sometimes limit the number of foreign players to protect domestic players. Whether such policies are intended to serve as protectionist measures to ensure the development of local talent or a sign of nationalism and even xenophobia is not clear. Thus, we will need to consider the overall impact of globalization in sports very carefully.

Although U.S. MLB expanded in the 1990s, some teams are currently facing financial difficulties. Thus, MLB is moving to cut the number of teams. Simultaneously, first-class players such as Nomo and Ichiro were recruited to U.S. MLB, contributing to what has been described as a process of hollowing within the JPL (Funabashi, 2000; Yamamoto, 2000). Given the decline of baseball's television ratings in recent times, the JPL will need to reconsider the one-sided situation that currently exists whereby the Yomiuri Giants completely dominate the league. Likewise, changes may need to be considered in South Korea and Taiwan given the low popularity ratings of professional baseball from the mid-1990s.

In light of recent deregulation, in conjunction with a need to enhance a declining television audience, there may be increasing shifts in global sporting labor migration. Moreover, it follows from what has been said that the professional baseball leagues in the Pacific countries have recently deepened their relationship of interdependency within the global marketplace. It is recommended that the context and process of change in professional baseball in East Asia should be examined and understood in relation to globalization occurring in society.

NOTES

1. Nomo had 13 wins and six defeats in 1995 and earned the Rookie of the Year Award in the National League. The first Japanese-born player in MLB was Masanori Murakami who played for the San Francisco Giants as a relief pitcher during 1964 and 1965.
2. Both Japanese players each received the American League Rookie of the Year award in their respective first seasons. In particular, Ichiro was selected as an American League Most Valuable Player in 2001 because of his great performance.
3. Many ancestors of Taiwanese came from China in the 19th and 20th century. Thus, they named their league as the Chinese Professional Baseball League.
4. Major League does not provide the quota system toward foreign players. However, the immigration and nationality laws state that each club including its minor league teams can give only 28 players working visas (Ikei, 1998). Thus the number of foreign players is actually restricted in the Major League.
5. For example, salary disparity of baseball players (per month) between MLB and the Dominican winter league was approximately 45-fold. Because the average salary of major leaguers per month in 1999 was some \$134,000 dollars and that in Dominican league was about \$3,000 dollars.

6. Randy Bass played for the Hanshin Tigers from 1983 to 1988 and contributed to win the championship in 1985. He got the triple crown (home run king, the leading hitter, and the RBI king) for 2 consecutive years from 1985 to 1986. Robert Rose played for the Yokohama Baystars during 7 years since 1993 and led his team to win the championship in 1998. Before coming to Japan, they had frequently moved between the Major League's team and its minor team.
7. It was very difficult to investigate foreign players' salary in U.S. MLB. However, it would be obvious that their average salary is higher than that in the four Asian leagues.
8. An average exchange rate in each year was used for this analysis (US\$1 dollar = 94 yen in 1995, 109 yen in 1996, 121 yen in 1997, 131 yen in 1998, and 114 yen in 1999). These data are derived from the International Financial Statistic of the IMF.

AUTHOR

Naoki Chiba, Ph.D., is a visiting postdoctoral researcher in the School of Physical Education, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.

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