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THE IMMIGRATION OF JAPANESE-BRAZILIANS IN THE 1990S

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ABSTRACT

The government-sponsored Japanese immigration to Brazil from 1925 until 1942 created a Japanese-Brazilian community in Brazil. In return, when the Japanese government signed the New Immigration Control Act in 1990, the Japanese-Brazilians started to immigrate to Japan in search of a better life. They went to Japan with the purpose of working, saving enough money to buy a house or open their own business, and eventually return to their hometown, making them dekasseguis. This paper will explain the immigration of Japanese-Brazilians to Japan in the 1990s, and what hardships the Japanese-Brazilian faced while working and living in Japan. It will also touch upon the influence that the Japanese-Brazilians had on the Japanese society, and how the Japanese-Brazilians adapted to life in Japan.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Japanese Immigration to Brazil

Brazil has the largest population of Japanese living outside of Japan. According to the 2010 census, Brazil has approximately 1.5 million of Japanese and Japanese decedents, with about 1 million living in the state of São Paulo alone. These numbers are extremely high, considering the geographic distance between Japan and Brazil; one is located in Asia while the other is in South America. However, Japanese-Brazilian relationship started in the early 20th Century, and has continued through the years.

The immigration relationship between Japan and Brazil started in 1908, when the first ship with destination to Brazil left Kobe, Japan on April 27th (Geloneze, B). *Kasato Maru* arrived on June 18th, 1908, at the Port of Santos, São Paulo, with 781 Japanese on board. Soon, Brazil proved to be a popular destination for Japanese who were looking to get out of the harsh conditions of living in Japan; seven years after the first voyage, 15,000 Japanese had already immigrated to Brazil as contracted workers, with about 75% going to São Paulo (Geloneze, B).

In the 1990s, the decedents of the Japanese immigrants in Brazil, known as Japanese-Brazilians, or Nikkei¹ Brazilian (日系ブラジル人), started to immigrate to

¹ The term nikkei (日系) refers to immigrants of Japanese descent, especially the second or younger generations who were born in foreign lands, such as nikkei Brazilians, nikkei Peruvians, and nikkei Americans (Japanese-Americans), among others.

Japan. However, these Japanese-Brazilian immigrants were different from the Japanese immigrants who went to Brazil in the early 20th Century. Their goal was the same: they wanted to work and improve their lives, so they could eventually return to their home country (Imigração Japão – Brasil). The Japanese immigrants who went to Brazil and the Japanese-Brazilian immigrants who went to Japan were called *dekassegui*² (出稼ぎ), because they were temporary workers who saved their money with the purpose of eventually return to their home country. However, while the Japanese immigrants were mostly peasants or poor workers, the Japanese-Brazilians were mostly middle-class, well-educated people who were living in Brazil, but believed that Japan could provide them better opportunities for their lives (*Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland*, 13). They decided to sacrifice their comfortable life style in Brazil in order to achieve faster financial success.

This paper will go in depth about the life of Japanese-Brazilian in Japan; the difficulties they faced once they went to Japan and how they adapted to the new country. Interviews were conducted with some Japanese-Brazilians, in order to better illustrate the situation, and provide a deeper understanding of specific cases. Some of these individuals

² The term, *dekasegi* (出稼ぎ; *dekassegui* in Portuguese) was first used to describe Japanese seasonal workers, usually men from the countryside, who went to the urban cities, such as Tokyo and Osaka, in order to earn money. They would then send their earnings to their family back in their homes, a practice that was present until the 1970s. In the 1980s, the term started to be used to describe foreign workers who came to another country in order to work, save money, and return to their home country when they believed they were able to provide for their family.

still live in Japan, while others have returned to Brazil. Other sources were also used with the intention of supporting this research. The purpose of this paper is to show that, even though Japanese-Brazilians were accepted in Japan at first because they were Japanese decedents, since they were not raised in Japan, they faced many hardships; they were Japanese in blood, but Brazilians at heart. Even though Japanese-Brazilians were living in Japan, they were not assimilated into the society, mostly due to communication difficulties. As the Japanese government expected, the Japanese-Brazilians initially intended to stay temporary, thus there were little to no resources that helped the Japanese-Brazilians assimilate into the Japanese society. Yet, in reality, many Japanese-Brazilians remain in Japan and want to integrate further into the Japanese society. In order to do so, the Japanese government (as well as local governments) should provide adequate programs in Portuguese at the Japanese workplaces and other legal areas. For children of Japanese-Brazilians, more trained bilingual teachers in Japanese and Portuguese at public schools will be also urgently required.

The Japanese Immigration to Brazil

Since the Meiji Revolution in 1868, Japan's migration history in the 20th Century is closely related with Japan's attempt to modernize (westernize) the nation, transforming from an agricultural to an industrialized nation. The emigration process was a way to alleviate the social tension caused by the lack of productive land, and thus surplus in workforce, especially from country sides (Nogueira). The economy was not doing so well, and the land was not producing as much as it could, thus the Japanese population,

especially poor farmers, was struggling. This situation led to the mass transpacific emigrations, between 1885 and 1924, to Hawaii and the continental United States. Due to the exclusion from the U.S. (the Gentlemen's agreement in 1907, and Exclusion Acts in 1924), the Japanese government, as an alternative, promoted emigration to Brazil, where there had been a shortage of labor for coffee plantations. Given the imbalance in both nations, Japan with its surplus of workers and Brazil with its shortage, the Japanese-Brazilian labor immigration was started with the 1908 voyage of the *Kasato Maru*, and the first ten years of immigration was subsidized by the São Paulo government (Geloneze, B). Due to the further difficulties of Japan's domestic economic situation, the Japanese government-sponsored emigration called *Kokusai Imin* (国策移民) began in 1925 (Endoh, 2). Japanese citizens who wished to immigrate to Brazil were now able to travel with financial assistance from the Japanese government, as long as they immigrated with their families. In order to be able to receive government assistance and fit into the Brazilian immigration requirements, many Japanese got married to strangers on paper and combined their families.

Whereas Japan had a labor force but was suffering with lack of work opportunities, Brazilian labor force had declined greatly after slavery was abolished in 1888. As a strong coffee producer, Brazil needed as many workers as possible and many former slaves were unwilling to work for their former masters. At first, Italians started immigrating to São Paulo to work in the coffee plantations, as an alternative for the lack of labor force. However, because labor was extremely cheap and the conditions were harsh, the Italian government prohibited the immigration of Italians in 1902, leaving the Brazilian government in need for another source of labor (Imigração Japão – Brasil). The

Japanese emigration had just started, and Brazil looked as a good alternative, since the Japanese immigrants were no longer allowed to immigrate to the United States.

According to Nogueira, a historian specialized in Brazilian history, “the need for workers, above all in the coffee plantations, largely explains the entry of Japanese immigrants into the State of São Paulo from 1908 onwards” (Nogueira). Brazil and Japan signed an agreement, and Brazil started to accept as many Japanese as possible. The majority of the Japanese families arrived in Brazil between 1920 and 1930, but the immigration remained up until 1942, when the Japanese were no longer allowed to enter Brazil because of World War II. According to the governmental website *Imigração Japão – Brasil*, the Japanese immigrants were initially laborers in the coffee plantations, yet they gradually expanded their territories beyond coffee plantations such as working in strawberry, tea, and rice plantations, often as the owners of the land, rather than contract workers.

The Japanese were the first non-European immigrants to come to Brazil, and the Brazilian population was unsure of what to expect from the new immigrants. Brazil believed that the population should “whiten,” meaning the only immigrants allowed to come into the country should be white. As Nogueira explains, “Measures restricting the entry of Asians to Brazil were imposed by the laws and decrees promulgated immediately after the proclamation of the Republic, in 1889. Decree number 528, of 28 June 1890, for instance, banned the entry of Africans and Asians into the country” (Nogueira 45).

Before moving to Brazil, these Japanese immigrants did not speak Portuguese, and they mostly had no idea where Brazil was or how their working conditions would be. Despite the harsh conditions in the coffee plantations in Brazil and their desire to return

to Japan before 1945, most of the Japanese immigrants adapted and settled permanently in Brazil, having children, and building their own community around the country. In São Paulo, the Japanese settled in the neighborhood of Liberty (*Bairro da Liberdade*), where they opened their own shops and created a “Japan Town.” Most of their children and grandchildren did not learn the Japanese language or traditions, but rather adapted and became Brazilians. These Japanese-Brazilians looked Japanese, but acted and lived as Brazilians did.

In the late 20th Century, when there was a shortage of labor in Japan, the Japanese government implemented the New Immigration Control Act, which provided the opportunity for the decedents of the Japanese immigrants to go work in Japan. These Japanese-Brazilians immigrants had never been to Japan, and most of them did not speak their ancestors’ native language. The immigration of Japanese-Brazilians to Japan introduced a new concept to the Japanese people, and it shattered the myth of consanguinity. The Japanese population believed that, since these immigrants were ethnically Japanese, they would easily adapt to the Japanese life style and integrate into the Japanese society. However, the Japanese-Brazilians faced many hardships, and did not adapt as easily as it was expected. In return, they started facing discrimination for looking Japanese but not behaving or even sounding like one.

Chapter 2

The “Return” Migration of Japanese-Brazilians to Japan

In order to better understand why the Japanese-Brazilians decided to immigrate to Japan in the 1980s and 1990s, it is necessary to understand the economy of both countries, and why it drove people to immigrate.

The Japanese Economy in the late 20th Century

Following the end of World War II, Japan was occupied by the American forces, and an economic plan to help the country recover from the war was implemented. The plan was to first stop the high inflation that followed the war, and then to promote economic growth. In the 1960s, when the inflation was controlled, the Japanese government lowered the tariffs on imports, and promoted an export-driven economy. In the 1950s and 60s, as the economy improved and the population's power of purchase increased, consumerism also increased. The Japanese population had access to the most technological appliances at the time, such as washing machines, televisions, and refrigerators. As Kenichi Ohno states, “As markets and production scale expanded, costs and prices declined, which in turn further stimulated demand. The mass production system also generated a white-collar middle-class who purchased these goods” (Ohno, 176). This cycle continued into the 1970s, when the economy prospered.

By the 1980s, Japan had grown from the devastated country after the war into a mature and stable economy. However, the global oil crises at the end of the 1970s and early 1980s affected Japan, driving its high growth rate to slow down. In order to stimulate the economy once again, the Japanese government expanded fiscal and monetary policies to boost domestic demand, deregulated the economy and reduced the trade surplus. In addition, it lowered the interests so low that the country experienced an asset bubble in the late 1980s (Ohno, 1996). The asset bubble, known as the Bubble Economy, allowed the fiscal balance to improve, and keep the economic growth rate.

The Brazilian Economy in the 1980s and 90s

While the Japanese economy was experiencing growth and prosperity, Brazil was facing an economic recession and extremely high inflation rates. During the 1960s until 1980, Brazil was known as the “miracle economy,” and it experienced extremely high economic growth. CEDE, the Center for Studies in Inequality and Development, explains that, “Since post-War until the beginning of the 1980s Brazilian economy grew above the average of developed and underdeveloped economies” (CEDE, 4). The Brazilian economy experienced a 6.4% growth rate annually since the end of World War II until the beginning of the 1980s, which was a considerably high rate (CEDE, 4). However, the global oil crises of the late 1970s and early 1980s hit Brazil hard, driving its economy into a recession. From 1980 until 1993, The Brazilian economy grew only 1.5% annually, which was a drastic change from the previous economic growth (Ito). In addition, the Brazilian government, which had recently made the transition from a military dictatorship

to a democracy, faced another political turmoil: the impeachment of President Fernando Collor. President Collor, who had been elected on a platform promoting economic growth and renovations, was involved in scandals in 1992, and he eventually stepped down from presidency. However, the government as well as the economy had already suffered. As Tim Ito from the Washington Post explains, “the weakness of government further accentuated the economic problems of stagnant economic growth and industrial production, and the declining incomes of Brazilians” (Ito). Economic and political problems affected Brazil during the 1980s and 1990s, making the living situation in Brazil less prestigious.

On the other hand, Japan was in need for labor and it had started to import labor from its neighboring countries. Even though Japan needed workers, in 1980 the Japanese government adopted the “rotation policy” in order to prevent foreign workers from settling permanently in the country. Workers would rotate tasks in the company, thus only requiring a certain specialist for a limited amount of time. As Hiromi Mori, a researcher specialized in the Japanese economy, explains, “The intent of the policy was to ‘rotate’ visitors, and this basically prevented or at the least failed to promote the settlement of foreigners in the country” (H. Mori, 84). In 1990, Japan implemented the new Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, or simply the Immigration Control Act, which imposed stricter laws on illegal immigrants, but allowed for certain groups to come into the country through an intentionally opened side-door. As Mori explains, “the policy can be termed as a ‘side-door policy’, because the government granted access to the Japanese labor market to limited categories of foreign workers, such as Japanese-Brazilians, who are of Japanese descent, and to trainees, while for other

unskilled foreign workers the front door was firmly shut” (H. Mori, 84). The new Act allowed the Japanese- Brazilian to immigrate to Japan in search for jobs, thus providing to their family a better life. The immigration of Brazilians increased from 29,241 in 1989 to 67,303 in 1990, thanks to the new Immigration Control Act. In 1991, a total of 96, 337 of Japanese-Brazilians immigrated to Japan, and less than half of that number of people left Japan to return to Brazil in the same year (H. Mori, 85). Following 1991, the number declined slightly, but it remained higher than the number of departures. This can be attributed to the fact that the Brazilian economy was not growing, while Japan was experiencing the Bubble Economy effect, and had just implemented its newest immigration policy.

The Beginning of the Immigration to Japan

The actual year as to when the Japanese-Brazilians started to “return” to Japan is highly debatable, and it varies from some saying it was in 1985 and others saying it was in 1990, when the Japanese government implemented the new Immigration Control Act. There were some Japanese-Brazilian immigration to Japan in 1985, but it was relatively minor and it did not attract a lot of attention. The majority of the immigration during the mid-1980s was the return migration of the first generation Japanese, or *issei*. Isseis were Japanese citizens, born and raised in Japan, but who had moved to Brazil at some point of their lives. Since they had been born in Japan to Japanese parents, they still maintained their Japanese citizenship, and spoke Japanese. Some of them were people who had migrated to Brazil before WWII and had decided to return to Japan in the 1980s. In 1985,

there were a total of 1,955 documented Japanese-Brazilians in Japan, but these did not include the issei, who were Japanese citizens, thus they were not counted as foreigner when entering the country (Higuchi, Table 1). The issei were important in order to facilitate the immigration of the Japanese-Brazilians; they opened the doors for their sons and daughters to go to work in Japan.

The Immigration of the Issei

The issei knew Japanese very well, and since they were Japanese citizens, it was easier for them to get jobs and settle in Japan. As Naoto Higuchi, a professor at the University of Tokushima explains, “The first labor recruiters were the first-generation return migrants who worked in Japan and were asked to bring other Japanese- Brazilians. They went back to Brazil again and then began to hire Japanese-Brazilians. The first recruitment agency office was opened by a return migrant in 1984” (Higuchi, 3). The isseis were the intermediate between the Japanese companies and the Japanese-Brazilian, who usually were not able to speak Japanese and had never been to Japan.

The Immigration of the Japanese-Brazilian

However, the issei could also be the parent of a Japanese-Brazilian, and the one responsible for bringing him or her to Japan, leaving the Japanese-Brazilian without a choice in the matter. This was the case of Claudia Hayashi, one of the Japanese-Brazilian interviewed for this research. Her father had been a Japanese citizen who had immigrated

alone to Brazil in 1959, when he was only 18 years old. Mr. Hayashi had met and married Claudia's mother, and had lived in the rural area of São Paulo state, in Brazil. In 1990, the family decided to take a trip to Japan to visit Claudia's grandfather for the first time. Claudia was fluent in Japanese, since she had attended a Japanese boarding school since elementary school, so she had been able to enjoy the trip and be able to communicate with her relatives. They originally intended to stay for a couple of weeks, but Claudia's father had decided to remain in Japan to work, while Claudia and her mother returned to Brazil, in order for her to finish her high school education. After a couple of months, when Claudia had graduated from high school, her mother and she moved to Niigata, Japan, where they joined Mr. Hayashi and worked in a factory. When asked why she had decided to move to Japan, she responded "because of my family. My father was in Japan and I did not have any choice but following my parents' decision." Claudia is not the only person who had immigrated to Japan because of family situations; a lot of young Japanese-Brazilians traveled with their family when the immigration phenomenon started.

Sanae Taichi, another person interviewed for this research, had arrived in Japan under similar conditions. Sanae's mother, Keiko, is a Japanese citizen who has immigrated to Brazil in two different occasions: with her family in 1954, and later in 1972, when she immigrated with her husband, Tsuneo. Sanae, her older sister Saori, and her younger brother Jun were born and raised in Brazil, and they had Brazilian citizenship. In 1990, Sanae's father was offered a job in Japan, and he decided to accept it. In March of the following year, Sanae and her family moved to Tokyo, in order to work at the inauguration of a Brazilian steakhouse. The family had worked at the restaurant sector in Brazil, and once the economy deteriorated, they took the opportunity and

immigrated to Japan. Sanae's parents were both Japanese, and they had family and friends in Japan who were able to help them find jobs and adjust to their new lives in Japan. Even though their parents were Japanese, since they had attended an American school in Rio, the three children only knew Portuguese and English when they arrived in Japan.

The *isseis* were the bridge and the facilitator in the coming of the first Japanese-Brazilian to the country, but with the signing of the New Immigration Control Act in 1990, the doors for Japanese-Brazilians were widely opened. In 1991, a year after the Act was signed by the Japanese government, 96,337 Japanese-Brazilians went to Japan. It was an increase of over 65,000 immigrants from 1989, which had just a little over 29,000 Japanese-Brazilian immigrants from Brazil (H. Mori, 85). In the next 10 years, Japan witnessed an increase of 288% of Japanese-Brazilian immigration to Japan, and by the end of the decade, there were over 250,000 registered Japanese-Brazilian (Ishi, 14). The New Immigration Control Act allowed those who were not Japanese citizens but were of Japanese ancestry to apply for visa to work in Japan. Many Japanese-Brazilians were not Japanese citizens, as their parents had not registered them with the Japanese consulate upon their children's birth. However, because they were of Japanese blood, the Japanese government considered them Japanese, like the *issei*, thus extending the opportunity for them to go work in Japan. There were two types of visas issued: the "spouse or child of Japanese national" visa and the "long term" visa, which were visas for a period of six months up until three years. These visas allowed the Japanese-Brazilians to work in any job, carrying no restrictions (Roth, 25). The second generation Japanese-Brazilians (called *nisei*) were usually awarded the longer visa, which lasted 3 years, and the *sansei*,

which were the children of the second generation Japanese-Brazilians, were awarded shorter terms. The Japanese government claimed that the values and characteristics of Japanese have been diminished with every generation, thus the farther down the generation a person was, the less likely he or she was to get a long-term visa. The Japanese government and corporations found the Japanese-Brazilians more attractive than other immigrants because they shared a common ancestry to the Japanese population. They believed that the blood tie made these immigrants have similar beliefs and behave as Japanese, thus they would be able to work and adapt to the Japanese society much easier than other foreign workers.

Who were The Japanese-Brazilians who went to Japan?

Contrary to the Japanese who immigrated to Brazil nearly a century ago, the Japanese-Brazilian immigrants in the late 20th Century were usually not living in a poor economic situation in Brazil; they were also usually well educated. Most of these immigrants were middle-class and had earned a degree from a university before deciding to move to Japan; some of them were engineers or doctors, who had been unable to maintain their living standards in Brazil (*Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland*, 13). These Japanese-Brazilian immigrants were willing to leave their relatively comfortable lives in Brazil for short-term economic gain. As Roth explains, “most Japanese-Brazilian went to Japan with the intention of working between one and three years. They planned to return to Brazil with money to better take care of their families” (Roth, 93). They were not

initially expecting to stay in Japan for a long time, but this change, since there is still a large population of Japanese-Brazilians in Japan, as it will be discussed later in this paper.

* * * * *

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Japan experienced an increase in immigration of Japanese-Brazilians to Japan. They were attracted to the prosperous Japanese economy, and supported by the newest immigration policy. They were also driven because of the lack of opportunities in Brazil, and its decade-long slow economic growth. Japan provided these Japanese-Brazilians with a potential solution for their lives, and a way to provide for their families, thus motivating them to leave Brazil for Japan in the search for a better life.

In the 1980s, the first ones to immigrate to Japan were the issei, as they did not need a visa to enter and work in Japan. Soon, they started helping the Japanese-Brazilians to also move to Japan, or they were bringing their family members with them. Eventually, the shortage of labor force became a problem for the Japanese economy, and Japanese government started providing special visas to Japanese-Brazilians, as well as Japanese-Peruvians and other people who were of Japanese ancestry, increasing the immigration of Japanese-Brazilian into the country. These immigrants had given up on their middle-class and comfortable life style that they had in Brazil for the short-term economic gain, thus making them temporary workers,-called dekassegui.

Chapter 3

Working in Japan as a Japanese-Brazilian

After the Japanese government signed the Immigration Control Act, Japanese-Brazilians were allowed to immigrate to Japan and start working in various areas that they desired. There were a couple of sectors that the visa did not allow the Japanese-Brazilians to work, such as in the medicine area, but they still enjoyed more privileges than the other immigrants. Even with the higher-status among immigrants, the Japanese-Brazilian worked at jobs that Japanese people were not willing to do, putting them in a lower social position in the Japanese society. Many faced hardships at work, and were paid lower wages, especially compared to other Japanese employees.

Two anthropologists, Takayuki Tsuda and Joshua Roth, conducted two separate fieldworks in Japanese factories. They were both studying the Japanese-Brazilians living and working in Japan during the mid-1990s, focusing on those who were considered *dekassegui*. Tsuda, a Japanese-American, conducted his fieldwork in a factory in Gunma, while Roth, also a Japanese-American, conducted his fieldwork in a factory in Hamamatsu. Tsuda came to the conclusion that, while the immigration of Japanese-Brazilians to Japan brought the two groups, the Japanese-Brazilians and the Japanese, geographically closer, it actually made those groups ethnically distant. Similarly, Roth came to the conclusion that the Japanese cities had become more multicultural after the immigration of Japanese-Brazilians, but the country was still not as inclusive of foreigners as it could be.

Living Arrangements

Upon arriving in Japan, the Japanese-Brazilian workers lived in the city where they were assigned to work for at least a year. If they were joining a family member who was already at the city, they would most likely live with them. Claudia, one of the Japanese-Brazilians interviewed for this research, stated that, when she permanently moved to Japan, she joined her father in Niigata where he had been living in an apartment for a couple of months. However, this was not the case for many of the Japanese-Brazilians. Most Japanese-Brazilians had moved to Japan with a job waiting for them, and the company that hired them usually provided accommodations. They lived in dormitories located around the workplace, which it housed many workers. This had been the case for Sydney and Raimunda Hata, a couple who immigrated to Japan in the early 1990s. In the interview for this research, they explained that they have always been living in the accommodations provided by the company, -at a dormitory first, and now at an apartment. At first, when Sydney arrived, he was taken to a company dormitory, where he shared a room with two other workers. When he arrived, his two roommates had already been living in Japan for a couple of months, so they were able to help him adapt to Japan. Eventually, as his family moved to Japan to live with him, he moved into an apartment above the factory, where he and his family have been living ever since.

How Were the Working Conditions?

The majority of the Japanese-Brazilians worked at factories and industries, usually doing works that the Japanese people did not want to do. According to Tsuda,

“most of them work in small and medium-sized firms in the manufacturing and construction sectors and perform unskilled ‘3K’ jobs (the Japanese acronym for dirty, dangerous, and difficult) that are shunned by native Japanese” (*Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland*, xi). Because Japanese people find these jobs dangerous, they leave them to immigrants, thus many factory workers are Japanese-Brazilians. In 1998, about 83% of the Japanese-Brazilians were employed as labors, meaning they work at factories or other unskilled jobs. In total, 58% of the craftsmen and production process workers in Japan were Japanese- Brazilians (H. Mori, 89). Claudia Hayashi’s family also belonged to this category of workers. Once they arrived in Niigata, they started working at the local Citizen Watch’s factory. Claudia explained that, while the job was not dangerous, it was tedious and repetitive, making it a little hard. Her mother and she were responsible for putting the watch’s engine together, and that required a lot of attention and dedication. They usually worked eight hours a day, and if they were asked to work for a few extra hours, they were compensated for overtime. Since they were the first non-Japanese workers at the Citizen Watch’s factory when they started working there, they did not face a lot of discrimination. Because Claudia is fluent in Japanese, she said that, after a while, she even made some Japanese friends at the factory.

Claudia was one of the lucky ones; many Japanese-Brazilians suffered discrimination or simply did not interact with the Japanese workers at their work place. Even though both Japanese and Japanese-Brazilian employees were doing the same work, sometimes they wore different uniforms to distinguish them from each other, and even ate at different rooms. Tsuda went to work at a factory in Toyama, in order to observe the relationship between the Japanese workers and the Japanese-Brazilian workers. When he

was working at the factory, he realized that the two groups did not interact with each other. As a Japanese-American, Tsuda was treated just like another Japanese-Brazilian: with ethnic isolation and indifference. However, he soon realized that most Japanese workers did not interact with the Japanese-Brazilians because of the linguistic and cultural barrier, which made it harder for them to approach the Japanese-Brazilian. In return, the Japanese-Brazilians were used to the indifferent treatment, and instead of attempting to communicate with the Japanese colleagues, they simply remained in their own group (*Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland*, 16). This might be reason Claudia and her mother had no problems interacting with other Japanese workers: they are both fluent in Japanese.

Studies have been conducted to analyze the impact of the workplace discrimination on Japanese-Brazilian and it has found that it has left a psychological effect on the Japanese-Brazilian workers. A study conducted by Dr. Takashi Asakura, Dr. Gilberto Gee, and other psychologists have found that “among Japanese Brazilians, reports of ethnic discrimination in the workplace were associated with more psychological problems, lower self-rated health, and more somatic symptoms” (Asakura et al., 747). Workplace discrimination against Japanese-Brazilians exists, and it affects the workers in many ways. Most of this discrimination exists because of the language and cultural barrier, which leads workers to isolate into groups, instead of attempting to interact with each other.

Did the Workers Receive Benefits?

The Japanese-Brazilian were responsible for working at the areas that the Japanese people did not want to work, and most of the time, these Japanese-Brazilian workers were contract workers or subcontract workers, rather than full-time employee. As Roth observed in his book, when he worked at the Yusumi Plant³, out of the 300 Japanese-Brazilian workers, none were full-time employees. 50 Japanese-Brazilian workers were contract workers, and the remaining 250 were subcontract workers (Roth, 41). This means that most workers were temporary workers, and the factory did not have any concrete ties or responsibilities to them. Therefore if the economy entered a recession, the factory could simply fire those workers, for example. In addition, most of these temporary workers were employed by brokers, and these brokers did not bother to offer health or accident insurance to the workers. If they suffered some kind of accident during work, they would not be covered by insurance, and they would have to pay for all the medical expenses by themselves.

Japanese-Brazilians Outside of the Factories

Even though the majority of the Japanese-Brazilian workers were working in factories, some Japanese-Brazilian workers work in other areas. Because of the increase in Japanese-Brazilian population, Brazilian restaurants and stores were opened

³ The name of the factory was changed by the author of the book, in order to keep it private. The real name of the factory is unknown.

throughout Japan. These restaurants and stores were mostly owned and run by Japanese-Brazilians, or at least employed Japanese-Brazilians or Brazilians to run their business. Sanae Taichi and her family also moved to Japan in order to work in the restaurant business. Because her mother and father had owned restaurants in Brazil, when they arrived in Japan, they started working at the management of a Brazilian restaurant. As Sanae explained, she also worked in the restaurant along with other workers who were also Japanese-Brazilians. Claudia Hayashi also worked at a Brazilian restaurant in the 1990s, after she and her mother left the factory and moved to Tokyo. Among Japanese-Brazilians, factory employees were the most common ones, because it was easier to find a job in factories. However, there were others who, like Claudia and Sanae, worked in other industries besides factories.

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While working in Japan, the majority of the Japanese-Brazilians lived in the apartments or dorms provided by the company, usually close to the workplace. Most of the Japanese-Brazilian worked in factories, and did not interact with the Japanese employees because of the language and cultural barriers. Many of them were also part-time or temporary workers, thus they received no insurance or benefits. Even though many of the Japanese-Brazilian worked in factories, there were also those worked in areas other than factories, such as Brazilian restaurants and stores.

Chapter 4

Living in Japan as a Japanese-Brazilian

As the years passed, Japanese-Brazilians already working in Japan started to invite their families and friends to also go work in Japan, increasing the population drastically. In 1990, there were only a little over 50,000 registered Japanese-Brazilians in Japan, but that number had passed 200,000 by 1997 (Lesser, 180). Most of these people worked in factories, and lived around the workplace, often creating their own communities. As the Japanese immigrants had created their own community in Brazil in the early 20th Century, the Japanese-Brazilians started to live close to each other and to establish their own Japanese-Brazilian community. Most of the Japanese-Brazilians in Japan lived around big factories, especially motorcycle companies, such as Yamaha, Suzuki, Toyota, and Honda. Therefore, the Japanese-Brazilian population in Aichi, Shizuoka and Gunma increased drastically, as most of the factories were located within these prefectures. Hamamatsu, one of the cities in Shizuoka prefecture, saw a growing influx of Japanese-Brazilians and, by 1997, over 16,000 people out of the 560,000 people living in the city were foreigners. Out of this number, over 60% of the foreigners were Japanese-Brazilians (Lesser, 180).

Most of the Japanese-Brazilians went to Japan thinking they would eventually return to Brazil, thus they would work in order to save money or to send it back to their family. As mentioned above, they were often called “dekasegi” or “dekassegui” a

Japanese word that implies temporary workers, “working and earning money away from home.” These Japanese-Brazilians would work hard and save as much money as possible, so they would be able to return to Brazil and open their own business or buy a house. For example, one Japanese-Brazilian worker earned roughly 300,000 yen a month but only spent 20,000 yen (Roth, 95). They would often sacrifice their life by working night shifts and overtime with the purpose of making more money. They also deprived themselves from enjoying the life in Japan; they would save as much as possible, so they would rarely go on vacation or buy a commodity, such as a car or a technological good. Many of the dekassegui also sent money back to Brazil, so as to support their families, including children who were living in Brazil. At the end of the 1990s, the 200,000 Japanese-Brazilians working in Japan were responsible for remitting 2 billion dollars to Brazil annually (Vizentini). Some of the Japanese-Brazilian workers were able to return to Brazil after they had achieved the amount of money they had decided to save while in Japan.

However, among those who returned to Brazil, many ended up returning to Japan to work again. They are called “Repeat Entrants,” and they became more common at the end of the 1990s and early 2000s. By 2001, 52% of all the Brazilian immigrants who arrived in Japan were repeat entrants (*Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland*, 239). There are many reasons for such repeat entrants, but one of the most common reasons is that, after returning to Brazil with enough money to buy a house, they often run out of money. After a while living in Brazil, it becomes hard for them to maintain their economic status. Some had been many years away from Brazil, so they might not be able to find a job that they are able to make as much money as they did in Japan, thus making them return to

work in Japan. An estimated 24.8% of the Japanese-Brazilians who return to Brazil remain unemployed even a year after their return (*Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland*, 241).

Claudia Hayashi was one of these repeat entrants Japanese-Brazilians immigrants. In 2004, she married her Paraguayan husband and decided to return to Paraguay, where she lived with her husband and young daughter. Eventually they had another daughter, and opened a small local grocery store, but the economy in Paraguay was not doing so well. After four years living in Paraguay, they ended up in debt, and there was a risk that they would lose the store and the house. Claudia then decided to do what she thought would be the best: return to work in Japan. She left her two daughters and her husband in her husband's family home in Paraguay, and went to Japan. She moved to Oizume, Gunma, and started working at a *bento* (lunch boxes) factory. In the beginning she only worked the night shifts, since the wages were higher, and did as many overtime as she could. Eventually her husband joined her in Japan, and currently they both work at the same factory. Once her husband had joined her in Japan, the two daughters moved to Brazil, and now they live with Claudia's mother, in a small town in the state of São Paulo. Claudia explains that, even though she did not want to return to work in Japan, it was necessary in order to provide for her daughters and pay off the debt. She has not seen them ever since she left Paraguay in 2008. Despite the time difference, she tries to keep in contact with her daughters as much as possible, by talking to them on Skype at least twice a month, and by calling them every other day. At the time the interview was conducted, she had not talked to them in 2 weeks, because their computer in Brazil was broken. When asked if she wishes to return to Brazil, Claudia responded enthusiastically

that her dream is to be reunited with her daughters and to be able to live comfortably in Brazil. Claudia is just one of many Japanese-Brazilians who decide to return to Japan once their situation in Brazil, or in Claudia's case, Paraguay, becomes financially unstable.

Adapting To Japan

Even though most of the Japanese-Brazilian workers were *dekassegui* in the beginning, they eventually started to get used to Japan, and enjoy the comfortable life that Japan could offer. They switched their night shifts for normal daytime shifts, and started to settle in the country. It is believed that by the end of the 1990s their myth—becoming wealthy quickly by working in Japan—was broken (Ishi, 14). The Japanese-Brazilians realized that it was okay to make Japan their home, and started to give up on their dream to return to Brazil. However, they still considered Brazil their home country, and looked for ways to remain connected to Brazil, which in return isolated them even more from the Japanese society.

As the amount of Japanese-Brazilian workers increased in Japan, Japanese-Brazilian communities were created. Newspapers directed towards Brazilians, such as the *International Press*, appeared in 1997, TV cable companies started to offer TV Globo, the most popular TV channel in Brazil. Stores now selling goods imported from Brazil, such as *Guaraná* and *Chocolate Garoto*. All you can eat steak houses – known as *Churrascarias* – are visible in many cities around Japan, and these restaurants often offered live music, with bands playing MPB and Samba, two of many popular music

styles from Brazil. The first Brazilian shopping mall opened in Oizumi, Gunma in 1996, and it attracted many Japanese-Brazilians to buy clothes and accessories from Brazil (Ishi, 14). In 1999, the first Brazilian school was opened in order to teach Portuguese to the children of those Japanese-Brazilians who wanted their children to learn their parents' native language (Ishi, 14). All of these were part of the industry of "*Matar Saudades do Brasil*," which is an expression that has no direct translation to English, but it loosely means "ending the nostalgic feelings." The community created opportunity for Japanese-Brazilians to feel connected to their home country, and to be able to obtain news and objects from Brazil. In the 1990s, there was no easy access to computers and Internet, so these stores and newspapers helped create a "home away from home" for the Japanese-Brazilian.

As mentioned before, Sanae and her family worked at a Brazilian restaurant in Tokyo, where they provided the opportunity for Japanese-Brazilian to come and enjoy a little bit of home away from home. As Sanae explained, in 1992 her parents helped open a restaurant in Shibuya, Tokyo, called Sabbath, later renamed Copa Tokyo, and they attempted to create a place that was as "connected" to Brazil as possible. The restaurant offered live music every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights, and on New Year's they had a New Year's Countdown Party, where samba was played all night long. It was a steak house, and the bar offered Brazilian soft drinks, such as *Guaraná*, and cocktails, such as the famous *Caipirinha*. Most of the employees were Japanese-Brazilians who were seeking a job other than at a factory and also wanted to remain in the Japanese-Brazilian community. Sanae's parents also invited and hosted famous Brazilian artists

and musicians at their restaurant, providing an opportunity for Japanese-Brazilians to enjoy the flavors of the Brazilian arts and culture.

Because they believed that they would not be able to integrate into the Japanese society, especially because of the language and cultural barrier, Japanese-Brazilians got together and decided to help each other by creating their own community. However by creating their own communities, the Japanese-Brazilians isolated themselves from the Japanese society, and did not try assimilating into the Japanese society (“Migration and Alienation,” 12).

The Relationship between the Japanese-Brazilians and the Japanese People

When the Japanese-Brazilians started to live in Japanese cities, most of the places were smaller cities where tourists rarely visited, thus the residents in the area were not used to foreigners. Places such as Hamamatsu and Oizumi had virtually no foreign population until the Japanese-Brazilians moved in to work at the local factories. Even though many Japanese-Brazilians looked Japanese from the outside, they were culturally Brazilians, and acted as such. They also did not understand the Japanese traditions and life style, causing conflicts in the neighborhoods.

One of the most common problems was related to improper disposal of the trash. Many Japanese-Brazilians were unaware that, in Japan, the trash was required to be separated and thrown away on different days depending on what type of trash it is. Since in Brazil the trash is thrown away everyday, and nothing is separated, they simply threw away all their trash everyday. This caused problems in the neighborhoods where a lot of

Japanese-Brazilians lived. Trash would not be picked up if it was not sorted correctly, and it would just remain on the streets, causing problems to the city (Roth, 107). In addition, the Japanese-Brazilians also had a reputation of being loud and not respecting their neighbors. They were known for throwing parties on the weekends and being loud, irritating their Japanese neighbors. Because of such problems, most of the Japanese landlords did not rent apartments to foreigners, especially to Japanese-Brazilians. Landlords believed that the foreigners would not follow rules and the other residents would be troubled, so they preferred to avoid conflicts by not renting apartments to foreigners (Roth, 106). This was one of the problems that Raimunda Hata and her family have been facing ever since moving to Japan in the mid-1990s. They live in an old apartment, above the factory where they work, and they have been living there ever since they arrived in Japan. They have attempted to move to another location, but a lot of the apartment complexes reject them because they are foreigners.

Finding a place to live is not the only problem that the Japanese-Brazilians face in Japan. They are in a disadvantage compared to other foreigners, including “typical” Brazilians, meaning Brazilians who do not look Japanese. Because many Japanese-Brazilians’ appearance is not different from Japanese, they are expected by the Japanese society to understand and behave like Japanese. According to the belief in the blood ties, Japanese people expect Japanese-Brazilians who share the ancestors to behave as Japanese. Those who have blood ties to the Japanese people but do not behave or even know the Japanese way of life are often further isolated from the Japanese society. If they are foreigners, the Japanese people are forgiving, because they are outsiders who do not understand the Japanese culture. However, as Japanese-Brazilians, they are expected to

understand and follow the Japanese rules (“The Motivation to Migrate”, 15). This also makes it harder for the Japanese-Brazilians to communicate with Japanese people.

The same problem was explained by two of the people interviewed for this research. Claudia explained that she avoided Japanese people for a long time because she would say something and they would react surprised, because she looked Japanese and had a Japanese last name but had a strong accent. She said, “I would say something and they would reply saying that I was a weird Japanese person. So I avoided speaking to Japanese people as much as possible.” She eventually learned to accept her difference, and started to talk to others, and even made Japanese friends. This was also the case for Sanae. She explained that, when she first arrived in Japan and could not speak Japanese, she was ashamed of talking to people because they would approach her and start speaking in Japanese, but she did not know enough Japanese to reply. Although she later learned Japanese, still could not communicate as polite as the situation required, she sometimes felt that they looked at her with disapproving eyes.

Influence Caused by Japanese-Brazilian in Japan

The relationship between the Japanese-Brazilians and the Japanese was not one of only conflicts. They have also learned from each other to accept and even embrace the differences. The presence of Japanese-Brazilians in Japan has also slowly changed the nation, both politically and culturally.

According to the former Mayor of Hamamatsu, Yasuyuki Kitawaki, the presence of Japanese-Brazilians in Hamamatsu has changed the local population and forced the

government to adapt to the new situation. As the Mayor of Hamamatsu from 1999 until 2007, he had been responsible for implementing programs that allowed the integration of Japanese-Brazilians into the community of Hamamatsu (Kitawaki, 26). Underlining the simple and significant fact that Japanese- Brazilians were also residents of Hamamatsu and deserved the same opportunities and treatment as the Japanese citizens, Kitawaki implemented the “Views of a Global Municipal” (“*Visão sobre um Município Global*”). The program increased the number of night classes for Japanese-Brazilians to learn Japanese, among other measures that helped integrate the Japanese-Brazilian population to the city (Kitawaki, 23).

Hamamatsu is not the only city to have night classes for Japanese-Brazilians or other foreigners to learn Japanese; night classes have become popular in the country ever since the early 1990s. In fact, Raimunda and her daughter attended Japanese classes every Thursday night at the local community center in Kotoku, Tokyo. They both needed to learn Japanese and by joining the class, they met other foreigners, and went on vacations and events with the Japanese teachers and other students. All the teachers were volunteers, who, besides teaching the language, taught about the local norms and everyday rules, such as taking out the trash. Raimunda said the classes made her feel integrated to society, and she made many Japanese friends, and went to many places that she might not have gone otherwise.

These were great policy changes that attempted to integrate the Japanese-Brazilian into the Japanese society, but they were not always as efficient as it could be. While these classes provided great opportunities for Japanese-Brazilian workers, most workers would have the time to actually go and learn the language. As most workers

worked the night shifts in order to save more money, they would not be able to always attend classes, especially if they were night classes. In the long term, offering Japanese classes are beneficial for the Japanese-Brazilian community, but they do not solve the immediate problem of early adaptation into the country.

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As the number of Japanese-Brazilians increased in Japan, the number of Brazilian stores and restaurants also increased. The Japanese-Brazilians started to create a “home away from home” by opening stores that provided goods imported from Brazil, and by offering other commodities, such as Brazilian TV channel on cable TV. However, while keeping in touch with one’s country is comforting, it also isolates them from fully integrating into the host country’s society, thus preventing the Japanese-Brazilians from fully assimilating into the Japanese society. The Japanese-Brazilians were often criticized by the Japanese people for having Japanese blood but not acting as such. On the other hand, the presence of Japanese-Brazilian also affected the Japanese society in a positive way, by changing local policies that helped foreigners adapt to Japan quicker than before.

Chapter 5

The Current Situation of Japanese-Brazilians

Compared to the peak in the 1990s, the number of Japanese-Brazilians entering Japan has decreased in the 21st Century. According to the 2012 census, there were 210,032 registered Brazilians in Japan, an 8.2% decline from the 2011 population of Brazilians (Ministry of Justice 2013). One of the major causes of the decline is the economic recession. In 2007, Japan entered an economic recession, and in 2009 the unemployment rate reached 4.4%, an all time high number that had been increasing for the previous three years. In the midst of the recession, in 2009 the Japanese government decided to take a drastic step, by offering money to Japanese-Brazilians to return to Brazil and not return until the Japanese economy improved, if ever (Coco, 2009). The government offered \$3,000 to Japanese-Brazilians and \$2,000 for each member of the family, so they could return to Brazil and not come back until the unemployment situation improved. This was extremely polemical, especially among Japanese-Brazilians, who saw this as discrimination. Many refused to accept the money and leave, because it would mean they could not return in three or four years, and they would prefer to keep their options open (Coco, 2009). Some simply returned because they lost their jobs, and they thought they would have a better chance working in Brazil than working in Japan.

The Tohoku Earthquake of 2011 (3/11/2011) also caused Japanese-Brazilians to leave Japan and return to Brazil. In the month of the earthquake, 6.872 Japanese-Brazilians left the country and returned to Brazil, and in April of 2011, another 6.552

people left (Nadai 2011). When interviewed, Raimunda pointed out that two of the Japanese-Brazilian families, who worked at the same factory as her family, had returned to Brazil after the earthquake of 2011. She said that, even though she also wished she could return, she could not risk going back to Brazil and not having a job there. Many of the Japanese-Brazilians desired to return to Brazil, yet they choose to remain in Japan for the stability.

Children of Japanese-Brazilians Today

Many children who joined or moved with their parents to Japan in the 1990s have grown up and become adults. Because they were considered foreigners while growing up in Japan, but had not lived in their native country since they were little, many have conflicted identity. They have never experienced life in Brazil, and cannot identify themselves with Brazilians, but they cannot identify themselves as Japanese either, since they were foreigners (“Me Sinto Sem Identidade”). Many had attended Brazilian schools, and were never able to learn Japanese, making them outcasts.

Once they had grown up, many had decided to return to Brazil, while their parents remained in Japan. Pamela, Raimunda’s daughter, returned to Brazil in 2010, leaving her parents and her older brother in Japan. She had moved to Japan in the mid-1990s, when she was 12 years old. She attended a Japanese school, but had a hard time adjusting at first. She eventually learned the language well enough to graduate from high school, and even attended Meikai University, in Tokyo. She graduated from Meikai in 2008, and started working in Japan, but decided that she would be happier if she were to work in

Brazil. She then packed up her bags and moved to São Paulo. Her parents miss her, but they think that she made the right choice. As Raimunda explained, “she is happy there, and she is working at what she has always wanted to work on, at an NGO for Japanese-Brazilians.”

Even though Pamela was able to succeed in school in Japan, she is an exception; most children of Japanese-Brazilian do not succeed in school, or even attend school beyond 9th grade. Less than half of the Japanese-Brazilian students continue their education to high school, which is a very low number compared to the Japanese students; about 95 – 97% of Japanese students go to high school (Otsuka, 201; Higuchi). One of the reasons is that the Japanese public schools do not offer a multilingual program, making it harder for foreign-born children to adapt to Japan. In 1997, about 7,462 students in the public schools in Japan indicated Portuguese as their native language, and said that they had little to no knowledge of Japanese. However, of the 852 schools that these students attended, only 171 indicated that they had some sort of assistance Japanese language instructor and only 74 school offered some type of educational assistance for classes other than Japanese language (Noguchi, 187). Even the ones that indicated that they had some kind of help, these assistances were provided in Japanese, and often did not help the children who had no knowledge of Japanese. Therefore, Japanese-Brazilian students would often not succeed in school, eventually deciding to drop out. This has caused the education level of Japanese-Brazilians to remain low, and they are unable to fully integrate into the Japanese society or to find jobs that allow them to achieve a higher social status. Pamela’s brother is one example of this problem; he was never able to finish his education. He was older than Pamela when they moved to Japan, and he never fully

adapted to Japan, choosing to work instead of study. He now works in a factory with his parents, expressing his strong desire to return to Brazil. However, he understands the situation that he needs to work more years in Japan, since working in Japan is more stable than in Brazil. If more schools in the area

Some children of Japanese-Brazilians who went to Japan as teenagers, returned to Brazil as soon as they were able to. Sanae, who also immigrated to Japan in the 1990s, left Japan in 1996 to study in the United States and visited Japan several times, yet has not returned to live there ever since. She currently lives with her husband and three children in Brazil, after spending four years in Portugal. She says that, even though she likes to visit Japan, her home is in Brazil and she is happy that she left Japan. Her older sister, Saori, has also left Japan and currently lives in Maryland with her husband and two children. The younger brother, Jun, lives in Shanghai and he still works in the restaurant business.

There were also those children of Japanese-Brazilians who had been born and raised in Japan, thus knowing little to no Portuguese. Since their parents had arrived in Japan as adults, and most of them did not learn Japanese, their children had difficulties communicating with their parents. Because of this language barrier, children and adolescents born in Japan to Brazilian parents often believed that they did not have anyone that they could rely on, sometimes causing them to turn to juvenile delinquency. The rate of juvenile delinquency among Japanese-Brazilians in Japan has been increasing since the early 2000s, and studies have shown that identity issues among children of immigrants is one of the causes for them to turn to juvenile delinquency (Otsuka, 201).

They felt isolated at home, so they looked for a new family outside of their home, and it led them to their friends, who might not have been a good influence on their lives.

Assimilating Japanese-Brazilians into the Japanese Society

The presence of Japanese-Brazilians have gradually become part of Japan, and Japanese people seem to accept diversified pictures of the society. However, the full assimilation of Japanese-Brazilians in Japan will only be possible when more assistance is provided in Portuguese to Japanese-Brazilians. While there are classes to teach Japanese to foreigners, there is still little to no aid in public schools and workplace for those who do not speak Japanese. When some kind of aid is provided, it is usually in English and not in Portuguese. However, this is futile at times, as the majority of Brazilians have little to no knowledge of English (English Proficiency Index). In order for the Japanese-Brazilians to be able to integrate into the Japanese society, it is necessary to educate them in the Japanese norms and life style. Providing them with basic information about the society once they arrive in Japan, such as about the trash, will most likely decrease the incidents that cause tension between the Japanese and Japanese-Brazilians. A simple orientation in Portuguese at the workplace could help the Japanese-Brazilians understand some of the norms of the Japanese society.

Education for Japanese-Brazilians has also been inefficient, which leads to high dropout rates. In order to solve that problem, and shape Japanese-Brazilian children into contributing members of the Japanese society, it is important to provide support for them from the beginning. As mentioned before, the numbers of schools that provide assistance

to foreign students who speak little to no Japanese are considerably low, making it hard for Japanese-Brazilian students to adapt to Japan. These students need assistance in learning Japanese, and having more Japanese instructors who could help these students learn Japanese could make a difference. Most of the schools that offered some kind of help to foreign students saw a lower rate of failure among foreign-born students (Noguchi, 189).

Interview Results

A total of five Japanese-Brazilians were interviewed (conducted in Portuguese) for this research. One of the interviews was conducted by e-mail, while the other four were conducted by Skype. For the first question, when asked about the origin of their Japanese ancestors and when they moved to Brazil, the answers varied, as some were of them were third-generation and others were second-generation Japanese-Brazilians. However, in number 2, when asked when they had immigrated to Japan, every person interviewed explained that they had arrived in Japan sometime between 1990 and 1994. Contrary to my expectations, all of them had immigrated to Japan because of their family. Some went to Japan with their family, some moved to Japan in order to unit with their family who had been already living there. As expected, every person interviewed mentioned “the Japanese language” as one of the biggest difficulties of living in Japan. Even those who were fluent explained that it was hard to communicate with the Japanese people sometimes because they still had an accent. None of the interviewers expressed

that they had been openly discriminated, and they had amicable relationships with their Japanese neighbors.

Conclusion

In the height of modernization in the Meiji Japan (1868 – 1912), surplus workforces, mostly poor farmers, were sent to Brazil, dreaming of making fortune quickly and returning to their native land. Since the first voyage of *Kasato Maru* in 1908, the Japanese government introduced the immigration to Brazil, offering subsidy to the travelers as *Kokusai Imin* in 1925. This mass migration created communities of Japanese-Brazilians in Brazil, concentrated in São Paulo.

Nearly a century later, the first mass migration of Japanese decedents from Brazil to Japan started. The failing economy in Brazil, the blooming economy in Japan, along with the new Japanese policy on immigration in the 1990s pushed for the migration of Japanese-Brazilians to Japan. The Japanese-Brazilian workers were mostly *dekassegui*: they initially went to Japan to make fortune, so they could eventually return to their home country. They dreamed of buying a house or opening their own business. In reality, the majority of the Japanese-Brazilian worked in factories, performing jobs that were considered hard, dangerous or dirty by the Japanese people. Even though sometimes Japanese-Brazilians worked side by side with Japanese employee, they did not always have a good relationship. The workplace was often segregated and communication between the two groups was difficult.

The Japanese-Brazilians also had problems integrating into the Japanese society. The Japanese-Brazilians were at first expected to behave like Japanese, but the Japanese society soon learned that they were more Brazilians than Japanese, and most of them did not even speak the language of their ancestors. This caused Japanese-Brazilians to be isolated and often discriminated by the Japanese. They then turned to their own community. Ironically, for the first time in their lives, Japanese-Brazilians, who were regarded as “Japanese” in Brazil, considered themselves Brazilian. They started opening Brazilian restaurants and stores, for example, as a way of keeping ties with Brazil.

Ever since the economic crises of 2008, the Japanese-Brazilian immigration has been declining gradually. However, there are still considerably huge Japanese-Brazilian communities in Japan, with a total of over 200,000 Japanese-Brazilians. Many of those who return to Brazil eventually go back to work in Japan, due to the hardship to find jobs in Brazil. Even though the presence of Japanese-Brazilians has gradually become part of Japan, and Japanese people seem to accept more diversified pictures of the society, the full assimilation of Japanese-Brazilians in Japan will only be possible when there are more help provided in Portuguese to Japanese-Brazilians.

Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Quem na sua família veio do Japão? Quando que ele se mudou para o Brasil?
2. Quando você imigrou para o Japão?
3. Por que você decidiu imigrar para o Japão?
4. Como você ficou sabendo da oportunidade para ir para o Japão?
 - a. Anuncio no jornal? Família no Japão? Amigos? Outros?
5. Onde você foi morar no Japão? (Qual região)
6. Como foram os primeiros anos? Qual foi a maior dificuldade depois de se mudar para o Japão?
7. ? Onde você trabalhou? Como era a situação de trabalho?
8. Você tinha outros amigos Japanese-Brazilian?
9. Você fez amigos japoneses?
10. Você foi a algum evento Brasileiro (ex: carnaval em Asakusa)?
11. Você fazia parte da comunidade de Japanese-Brazilian no Japão?
12. Você tinha algum membro da família com você quando se mudou para o Japão?
 - a. Você tinha filhos?
 - b. Eles foram para escola japonesa ou para escola internacional/brasileira?
 - c. Você teve dificuldades para adaptar-se nos eventos das escolas japonesas?
13. Você sofreu discriminação no Japão?
14. Você aprendeu japonês ou foi à escola para aprender japonês?
15. Por quanto tempo você viveu no Japão?
16. Você alguma vez retornou para o Brasil e depois voltou para o Japão?
17. Você visitou o Brasil enquanto morava no Japão? (A passeio, férias)
18. Você se arrepende de retornar ao Brasil?

Appendix B

Translated Interview Questions

1. Who in your family is from Japan and when did they go to Brazil?
2. When did you immigrate to Japan?
3. Why did you decide to immigrate to Japan?
4. How did you find out about the opportunity to go to Japan?
 - a. Newspaper ad? Family members in Japan? Friends? Others?
5. Where did you stay once you arrived in Japan?
6. How were the first years? What was the hardest thing about moving to Japan?
7. Where did you work? Were the working conditions good/average/bad?
8. Did you make other Japanese-Brazilian friends?
9. Did you make Japanese friends?
10. Have you ever attended a Brazilian event (such as carnival festival in Asakusa)?
11. Did you get involved with the Japanese-Brazilian community?
12. Did you have any children/family?
 - a. If so, did you move with your family to Japan?
 - b. Did the children attend regular Japanese schools or did they attend an international school?
 - c. Was it hard for you to attend school events/integrate in the society?
13. Did you ever suffer discrimination while in Japan?
14. Did you learn/take Japanese classes?
15. How long have you been/did you live in Japan for?
16. Did you ever go back to Brazil and returned to Japan again?
17. Did you ever go on vacations to Brazil?
18. Do you plan to return to Brazil one day? (If still in Japan)
19. Do you ever regret returning to Brazil? (If currently in Brazil)

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Academic Vita

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Education:

Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA May 2014

College of Liberal Arts and Schreyer Honors College

Baccalaureates in Japanese and International Politics.

Volunteer:

Book Doctors: August 2011 – Present

- Clean and repair books at Schlow Library, in downtown State College, PA

Penn State Dance Marathon: THON Rules and Regulations:

- THON 2011 – 2012 and 2013 – 2014: Committee Member

Awards/Honors:

President's Education Awards Program

Member of the Paterno Fellows Program and the Schreyer Honors College

Liberal Arts Scholarship 2011-2012

Dean's List Academic Achievement December 2010, May 2011, December 2011

Schreyer Honors College Scholarship 2013-2014

Skills:

- Fluent in Portuguese, English, Japanese; basic knowledge of German and Spanish

Activities:

Japanese Friendship Association, 2010- Present

Gamma Sigma Sigma, January 2011 – Present

- Executive Board Member: National Liaison (Spring 2014)

National Society of Collegiate Scholars, January 2011 - Present

Honors Society Phi Eta Sigma, January 2011 – Present

Japanese A Cappella Club, President, January 2012 – Present