

Challenges of Integration in an 'Ethnic' Nation: Experience of the Second- Generation Brazilians of Japanese Descent (Nikkeijin) in Japan

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Abstract

This thesis examines the integration experiences of second-generation Japanese Brazilians in Japan, a group often referred to as the ‘invisible’ immigrants because of their ethnic ties to Japan yet frequent marginalisation within its society. Set against the backdrop of Japan’s incremental immigration policy, often likened to squeezing a toothpaste tube for its slow and cautious adjustments, this study investigates integration in a country that officially disavows formal immigration policies while pragmatically expanding them.

Through in-depth fieldwork, this thesis investigates how Japanese Brazilians—one of the largest immigrant groups in Japan with ancestral links—navigate the complex, multi-dimensional process of integration in a society that selectively accepts foreign residents while expecting cultural conformity. This thesis identifies four distinct integration pathways: marginalisation, partial integration, biculturalism, and assimilation. These pathways illustrate the interplay between legal status, socio-economic positioning, and cultural expectations, challenging linear integration models by demonstrating how these dimensions are interdependent and dynamically influence one another. Additionally, this thesis incorporates subjective indicators of integration to reveal how Japan’s emphasis on ethnic homogeneity impacts the identity and self-perceived social acceptance of this ‘invisible’ group.

By examining the lived experience of second-generation Japanese Brazilians, this research offers a new perspective on how integration unfolds within a non-Western cultural context. The findings suggest that economic pathways alone are insufficient; political recognition and cultural inclusion are equally critical for fostering a sense of belonging and a subjective sense of successful integration. This thesis sets the stage for future studies on integration in similarly ‘closed’ societies and calls for a rethinking of traditional integration frameworks to better accommodate the unique cultural contexts of host countries and the diverse realities of immigrant communities.

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at this University or elsewhere. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Chapter One: Introduction and Research Questions

1.1 Introduction

Japan's hesitance to fully embrace immigration is often attributed to its deeply rooted ethno-nationalist self-identity, which envisions the nation as a cohesive whole, unified by shared ancestry, land, culture and languages (Liu-Farrer, 2020, p. 4; Befu, 2001, p. 92). Scholars have explored how this identity shapes Japan's approach to immigration, not only policy decisions but also societal attitudes toward who is considered 'Japanese' (Tsuda, 2003; Goodman, 2005; Burgess, 2004). Japan's approach to immigration is characterised by the incremental incorporation of foreign residents under specific conditions while resisting fundamental shifts toward broader societal inclusivity (Kuga, 2024).

For Nikkeijin, descendants of Japanese emigrants, primarily from Brazil, who are the focus of this thesis, this dynamic creates distinct challenges. Under the 1990 revisions to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, Japanese Brazilians were granted special visa statuses, facilitating their 'return' to Japan. However, while these policies opened a pathway for migration, Japanese Brazilians often encounter exclusion from Japanese society due to linguistic, cultural, and systemic barriers (Tsuda, 2003; Carvalho, 2003; Kajita et al., 2005; Lagones, 2015; Yamanaka, 1996).

Japan's integration approach shares similarities with the paradigms of other major immigrant-receiving nations yet also exhibits differences in application (Milly, 2014). Japan's citizenship law stipulates that nationality is typically conferred automatically at birth to children with at least one Japanese parent. Conversely, being born on Japanese soil does not guarantee citizenship, except in cases where the child would otherwise be stateless. While this *jus sanguinis* approach is not unique to Japan, being similarly adopted in countries such as Italy and Greece, it contrasts with *jus soli* policies in nations such as the United States, Canada, and Brazil. Japan's model for accepting migrants, focused on short-term labour input, mirrors policies in other countries but is distinct in scope, purpose, and execution.

Despite these commonalities, this study highlights unique features of Japan's immigration approach. First, Japan's policies and societal practices link 'Japaneseness' to the bloodline,

language proficiency and even physical appearance. This exclusionary attitude is reinforced by the ‘outsider-free’ narrative propagated through laws, media, and societal behaviours, including the imposition of high naturalisation barriers (Sugimoto, 2010; Arudou, 2015). Second, Japan offers limited recognition to long-term ethnic minorities and naturalised citizens (Yoder, 2011), who are often overlooked in research and public discourse, unlike the more visible minority discussions in other OECD countries.

Despite Japan’s seemingly clear articulation of citizenship, emphasising bloodline over birthplace, a paradox emerges with the Japanese Brazilian community. Often referred to as ‘invisible immigrants’, Japanese Brazilians occupy a unique position: while they share ethnic ties with Japan, they frequently face marginalisation in Japanese society. Their experiences reveal the inconsistencies between Japan’s legal frameworks, socio-economic realities, and cultural expectations, which collectively challenge their integration into Japanese society.

This study locates the experiences of the Nikkeijin, particularly the Japanese Brazilian community within broader debates on national identity, immigration policy and integration. Smith (2012) argues that the absence of full legal status and socio-economic marginalisation frequently inhibit residents’ full integration. Citizenship, as framed by the welfare state, is not only a legal status but also a critical gateway to social rights, economic opportunities, and cultural belonging. Scholars such as Castles and Davidson (2000) argue that excluding migrants from citizenship creates a permanent underclass, exacerbating their social isolation.

The segmented assimilation theory proposed by Portes and Zhou (1993) suggests that second-generation migrants follow divergent paths: mainstream assimilation into the middle class, downward assimilation into marginalisation, or selective cultural assimilation alongside socio-economic success. This study extends these frameworks by exploring how marginalisation, assimilation and transnational identities interact in Japan’s socio-cultural context.

Unlike Western contexts, where Berry’s (1997) model emphasises individual strategies of assimilation, integration, separation, or marginalisation, the Nikkeijin experience reveals a different process, such as exclusion from Japanese society and strengthening cultural bonds within their ethnic community. This exclusion fosters reliance on ethnic networks, both

locally and transnationally. While Portes and Zhou's (1993) theory highlights the advantages of ethnic ties for upward mobility, this study argues that in Japan, such ethnic embeddedness offers limited benefits due to systemic socio-economic constraints and Japan's stringent cultural expectations.

The integration challenges in Japan are compounded by structural barriers such as language proficiency and cultural conformity, which are prerequisites for upward mobility and social acceptance (Sugimoto, 2010). Despite holding long-term or permanent residency, many Japanese Brazilians struggle to be recognised as full members of Japanese society. This leads to the development of a 'half identity'—a form of marginalisation that differs from the bicultural identities observed in Western contexts (Tsuda, 2000). This exclusionary reality underscores the limitations of integration frameworks that fail to account for Japan's rigid socio-cultural dynamics.

Building on Garcés-Mascreñas and Penninx's (2016) analysis of integration as a multi-level and context-sensitive process, this thesis situates the experiences of Japanese Brazilians within broader debates on immigrant integration. Their conceptualisation of integration provides a framework for understanding the fluidity of integration outcomes in Japan. Japan's immigration approach is framed as part of the global trend towards tightening migration controls, reflecting the challenges many countries face in balancing demographic and economic imperatives with cultural and national identity. However, Japan represents a more extreme case (Hollifield and Sharpe, 2017), distinguished by its strong emphasis on the intersection of racial and cultural identity in defining citizenship (Arudou, 2015). This is reinforced by a legal and social structure that systematically maintains and institutionalises a binary division between 'outsiders' and 'insiders'. By exploring Japan's approach to immigrant integration, particularly examining how second-generation Japanese Brazilians 'integrate' into Japanese society, this study reveals the tensions within Japan's selective application of *jus sanguinis* and its ethno-nationalist framework in a globalised era.

1.2 Research Question

The central research question of this study is:

To what extent have Brazilians of Japanese descent been 'integrated' into, or excluded from Japanese society? This question emphasises not just the processes of integration but also the

systemic and societal mechanisms of exclusion, moving beyond the responsibility of migrants to 'integrate' and examining the structural barriers they face.

In addressing this question, this study positions second-generation Japanese Brazilians as part of a broader global phenomenon of ethnic return migration. This persists as a policy exception in nation-states that otherwise tend to prioritise skill-based immigration but continue to use ancestry as a criterion for selective inclusion (Ellermann, 2020; Tsuda, 2010). Examples of such ethnic return migrations include Indian Americans returning to India (Jain, 2010), ethnic Koreans from China and North Korea migrating to South Korea (Hough, 2021), ethnic Germans migrating from the former Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries to the Federal Republic of Germany (Schüpbach, 2009). These examples show that ethnic kinship often functions more as a symbolic inclusion mechanism than a guarantee of full social membership. Being acknowledged as ethnic kin by the state does not prevent returnees from being seen as cultural strangers. Even among those of a common ethnic group, generational separation may result in profound linguistic and cultural divergence (Ozers, 2024). As a result, structural support in the reintegration process is needed to prevent returnees from finding themselves trapped in the paradox of being social outsiders.

Return migration, where some generations of immigrants return to the country of their ethnic origin, has been documented (King and Christou, 2011). As a sub-process of international migration, return migration has been approached from various theoretical perspectives. Neo-classical economics (Todaro, 1969) and the new economics of labour migration (Stark, 1996) have focused on the economic rationality and household-level strategies underlying migration decisions. Structuralist accounts (Cerase, 1974) have highlighted the role of structural constraints in shaping return. Social network theory has emphasised the importance of social ties and informal support mechanisms (Cassarino, 2004). These studies have provided valuable insights into the causes, forms, influences, and conditions under which return takes place. However, the question of integration after return remains relatively underexplored in these approaches, and it forms the core focus of this thesis.

To better situate the case of second-generation Brazilians' integration in Japan within the broader phenomenon of return migration among global diasporic populations, this study draws on two interrelated theoretical frameworks. The first concerns the construction of nationalism and national identity.

This involves how states define legitimate membership through ethnic criteria. As Joppke (2005) argues, liberal states often experience a tension between their commitment to moral universalism and their continued preferential policies toward co-ethnics in their immigration policies. In cases such as Germany's policy towards ethnic Germans (Aussiedler) or Israel's Law of Return for Jews, preferential treatment was granted to co-ethnics based less on civic values and more on descent. Japan's immigration policy towards Japanese Brazilians reflects a similar logic, thereby reinscribing a racialised conception of national belonging.

Brubaker argues that the modern state plays a central role in the process of categorisation and creating identities (2004, p.42). Drawing from Bourdieu and Foucault, he highlights how the state uses material and symbolic resources to define who belongs. The ethnic categories could have enduring effects on access to education, employment, and political representation (Brubaker, 2004, p.63). Although the state is a powerful "identifier", it is not the only one. Families, schools, social movements, and bureaucracies of all kinds often challenge official identifications (Tilly, 1998). Accordingly, this study adopts Brubaker's critique of groupism, avoiding viewing ethnic returnees as possessing stable collective identities. While the Japanese state plays a dominant role in legally defining descent-based categories, this research focuses on how labels such as "Japanese" or "Nikkei" are not only state imposed, but also continuously negotiated through public discourse and everyday social practices.

Brubaker's cognitive approach moves beyond asking "what is an ethnic group" to asking how, when, and why people interpret social experience in ethnic or national terms. By focusing on how categories of ethnicity and national identity are reproduced, transformed, or resisted in daily life, this approach helps analyse the mechanisms through which broader processes of integration and exclusion are enacted in the lived experiences of return migrants.

The second theoretical debate this thesis engages with concerns how return migrants interpret and negotiate belonging, home and identity. This perspective shifts attention from institutional definitions of membership to the subjective dimensions of integration. It draws from diaspora and identity studies (Clifford, 1997; Hall, 1991; Hall and du Gay, 2011; Fanon, 1986; Gilroy, 1993; Ong, 1999).

Early diaspora theories focused on ideal types and typologies (Safran, 1991, p. 83; Cohen, 1996, p. 515). Their work presented key characteristics of diaspora such as dispersal from an original homeland, a collective memory and an idealisation of the putative ancestral home, and a longing for return. These foundational studies laid important groundwork for subsequent diaspora research. However, recent scholarship has highlighted the limitations of these ideal types as they do not arise from empirical research (Demir, 2022, p.16). Applying these features to determine whether a dispersed ethnic group qualifies as diasporas constrains our understanding of diasporas (Tsuda, 2019, p. 189).

Another strand of diaspora theorisation focuses on processes, viewing the diaspora as “becoming,” not as an “entity” (Bhabha, 1994; Clifford, 1994; Hall, 1990). This perspective emphasises a sophisticated understanding of hybridity and subjective experiences of diasporas. The concept of identity in this approach provides a valuable lens for this research. By examining how factors such as nationality, generational status, and the specific Japanese context shape the identities of Japanese Brazilians, this study presents the internal diversity within this group.

In sum, the first theoretical framework helps address how states construct the boundaries of national belonging. The second shifts the focus to the subjective dimension of integration. Both are essential for understanding the empirical case of second-generation Japanese Brazilians, whose ethnic status does not shield them from being perceived as cultural outsiders. As Antonsich (2010, p.647) argues, belonging involves a personal feeling of being at home and formal recognition through structures such as citizenship, yet these two aspects do not always align. Research in Japan also shows that naturalisation does not necessarily foster a sense of belonging (Liu-Farrer, 2020a, p.15). Because of a narrow identity of Japaneseness, the state brought back ethnic Japanese such as Japanese Brazilians, yet Japanese cultural nationalistic discourse continued to pose barriers, especially when such discourses were internalised by migrants to explain their experiences and inability to integrate into Japan. These studies show that return migration is not simply a matter of returning to a putative ancestral home but rather a process of negotiation constrained by institutional silences, linguistic hierarchies, and racialised expectations.

Seen in this light, the everyday strategies of integration and resistance among second-generation returnees illustrate the limitations of ancestry-based inclusion. By situating this

case at the intersection of state-centred and subject-centred theories of belonging, the thesis offers a more nuanced understanding of how identity, legitimacy, and integration are negotiated in contemporary return migration. It offers new insights into both diaspora studies and research on integration by foregrounding the gap between symbolic recognition and substantive inclusion.

I will focus in the following chapters on how legal, socio-economic, and cultural factors shape their experience separately and collectively. I shall argue these are key areas in understanding Japan's selective approach to integration. Chapter Four will empirically explore how citizenship status and legal frameworks influence the integration experiences of second-generation Japanese Brazilians. Chapter Five will examine the critical roles of language, education and employment factors in the socio-economic dimension. The interplay between these factors shows how language proficiency and educational experiences shape employment opportunities and broader integration outcomes. Chapter Six will investigate the meanings and implications of diverse ethnic identities among second-generation Japanese Brazilians, which will include how cultural narratives of 'Japaneseness' and experiences of exclusion influence their sense of belonging and strategies for coping with stereotypes.

In literature, the question of 'how second-generation individuals from immigrant backgrounds 'integrate' into their host societies' closely correlates with the realities of immigrant integration in major receiving countries. In the 1990s, there was an increase in the population of individuals with immigrant backgrounds who were establishing roots in their host countries. Consequently, this phenomenon prompted a wave of investigative research endeavours to understand the integration experiences of second-generation immigrants in the United States, Europe, and Japan. 'Immigrant integration' has become an essential focal point for envisioning and understanding societies in the context of developed nation-states and migration issues (Schinkel, 2017, p. 45). This thesis delves into the integration experiences of second-generation immigrants in Japan, with a particular focus on the Brazilian community as a case study. Immigrant studies typically focus on Western nations, leaving space for the study of Japan.

Before delving into the question of citizenship access for third-generation descendants of Japanese nationals from Brazil (also known as second-generation returnee immigrants living in Japan), it is essential to contextualise the situation of these communities. Historically,

significant numbers of Japanese emigrated to Brazil, and over generations, their descendants have maintained ties with Japan. Yet, upon their return to Japan, these individuals often find themselves caught between two worlds, neither fully Brazilian by local standards nor Japanese in the eyes of Japanese law and society.

Japan's citizenship laws, based on the principle of 'jus sanguinis' (citizenship by descent) and ethnicity, expanded in 1985 and 2008 to children who were at least half Japanese (Orita, 2022, p. 463). Theoretically, it would grant citizenship to Japanese diaspora with direct lineage to Japanese ancestors, such as second- or third-generation returnees. However, in practice, this is not the case. Japanese Brazilians returning to Japan, even those whose grandparents are of Japanese origin, often find that their claims to citizenship are denied or complicated, despite their ancestral ties. Similar to many European countries, such as pre-unification 'ethnocultural' Germany, Italy, Greece, France, and Spain, Japan also strongly facilitates the transmission of citizenship through descent. However, importantly, in most European countries, this does not mean that those who are not perceived as belonging to the 'ethnic nation' find it difficult to naturalise (Vink and Bauböck, 2013, p.624-646). France, for example, does not exclude other naturalisation pathways and incorporates policies that flexibly balance birthright citizenship with other inclusive approaches.

Japan differs from most European countries in several significant ways. Japan is currently the only advanced industrial democracy with a fourth-generation immigrant problem (Chung, 2010), which reflects its exclusionary approach to incorporating long-settled migrant communities. Although Japan also places emphasis on jus sanguinis (Suzuki, 2015, p.121), it does not allow for the intergenerational transmission of citizenship across multiple generations like strongly jus sanguinis-oriented countries such as Ireland and Italy. Secondly, unlike France and Spain, Japan does not balance its naturalisation policies with jus soli, or implement flexible naturalisation processes based on cultural affinity. This results in a large number of long-term residents, including its diaspora, finding it difficult or even impossible to obtain citizenship. Japan's nationality law has historically excluded many children born to foreign mothers and Japanese fathers unless paternity was recognised before birth, a situation amended only after a 2008 legal case (Suzuki, 2015, p.122). Furthermore, Japan's rejection of dual citizenship marks it as an outlier compared to European countries that use dual citizenship to strengthen ties with their diaspora. Finally, Japan has low 'territorial inclusiveness', making it a restrictive, jus sanguinis-dominated regime characterised by strict

cultural assimilation requirements and limited pathways for naturalisation or diaspora engagement. These policies distinguish Japan from the majority of European countries, which are generally more inclusive in their approach.

Japan's approach to *jus sanguinis* highlights a paradox within its national identity and citizenship policies. Despite the theoretical emphasis on bloodline, *jus sanguinis* is selectively applied to exclude many descendants of Japanese emigrants. This selective application is particularly evident in the case of Japanese Brazilians, whose return to Japan has exposed a deeper tension between Japan's desire to maintain an ethnically homogeneous identity and its practical need to engage with global migration trends. The experience of these Japanese Brazilian returnees reflects a broader aspiration to preserve a more homogeneous ethno-cultural identity, as Chung (2010, pp. 18-21) notes.

Tsuda (2003, p. 52) elaborates on this tension by highlighting the social and cultural marginalisation Japanese Brazilians often face upon their return. While ethnically connected to Japan, they are perceived as neither fully Japanese nor fully Brazilian, exposing the limitations of *jus sanguinis* when national identity is tied not only to bloodline but also to broader socio-cultural expectations. Similarly, Liu-Farrer (2020a, p. 4) observes that Japan's restrictive approach to citizenship is part of Japan's broader hesitation to fully embrace immigration and multiculturalism, further compounding the challenges faced by Japanese Brazilian residents in Japan.

The case of Japanese Brazilians serves as a compelling lens to explore broader contemporary challenges related to ethno-nationalist policies. Japan's assertion of national identity is deeply rooted in ethnic homogeneity, predominantly centred on the ethnic majority, 'Wajin' (Arudou, 2015). The idea of ethnic homogeneity is a hallmark of the concept of an 'ethnic nation-state'. An 'ethnic nation-state' is a concept where national identity, citizenship, and belonging are closely tied to a singular ethnic group (Leoussi, 2001; Anderson, 1991). Japan's policies, cultural norms, and societal expectations often reflect and reinforce this ethnic homogeneity, distinguishing it from more multicultural or civic nation-states where citizenship and national identity are defined more by shared values, laws, and civic engagement rather than ethnicity (Kohnm, 2017).

Japan's narrative of ethnic homogeneity can be traced back to the Meiji period when the modern Japanese nation-state began (Lie, 2001). Paradoxically, Japan has long grappled with internal diversity. On the one hand, the narrative of a homogenous Japan simplifies and obscures the rich, complex history of diversity within the nation, such as the presence of nearly 2 million registered Korean residents post-World War II and the complex legacies of Japan's imperial and global economic roles. On the other hand, it also results in a paradox where the need for foreign labour clashes with the state's efforts to sustain an image of an ethnic and culturally homogeneous society. The experience of Japanese Brazilian migrants reflects these contradictions, which are the challenges of reconciling a mono-ethnic national identity with the realities of globalisation and demographic shifts.

Ethnic migration, as exemplified by Japanese Brazilians, is particularly significant in this context. It is defined as the movement of individuals who share the same ethnicity as the host country's majority population (Oda, 2010, pp. 515-516; Dietz, 2000). They 'return' to their countries of ethnic origin, often after several generations (Varjonen, Arnold and Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2013, p. 111). Japanese Brazilian 'returnees' have been seen as ethnically similar to the Japanese majority, which theoretically could facilitate their 'integration' into Japanese society. However, upon their return, they often face exclusion from full acceptance, a challenge that also extends to their children, many of whom are raised in Japan. This exclusion reveals the tension between the perceived ethnic similarity and their culturally distinct Brazilian heritage. This means in the Japanese context, integration is not simply a matter of shared ancestry but also cultural alignment. These individuals and their families often navigate the nuances of being seen as both ethnically 'half' Japanese but culturally 'half' Brazilian.

As Vink and Bauböck (2013) observed in European contexts, citizenship laws are often shaped by multiple, sometimes conflicting purposes, such as intergenerational continuity, territorial inclusion, and maintaining genuine links. Although Japan's emphasis on ethnic homogeneity resonates with an ethnocultural model, it may not necessarily lean toward ethnic homogeneity if complemented by inclusive naturalisation policies. The experience of Japanese Brazilians exemplifies Japan's restrictive policies for all foreign residents and limited pathways to integration, which contrast sharply with expansive regimes that integrate newcomers while maintaining cultural cohesion.

Japan's struggle to balance traditional conceptions of nationhood with the practical realities of global migration reflects its hesitation to envision a more inclusive approach to citizenship and belonging. In this context, citizenship emerges as a more than legal status. It becomes a critical factor in influencing individuals' cultural identification and sense of belonging. For Japanese Brazilians, the lack of institutional and cultural inclusion, compounded by restrictive citizenship policies, complicated their ability to identify culturally as Japanese. While ethnicity may serve as a formal marker of potential inclusion, citizenship or the denial of it, actively shapes the lived realities of cultural and national identity.

Ultimately, this study of ethnic migration, particularly among Japanese Brazilians (often referred to as 'Nikkeijin'), serves as a critical lens to deconstruct rigid notions of ethnicity and national identity. By recognising ethnicity as a socially constructed category, we are better equipped to understand the ways in which the Japanese state's ethno-nationalism often simplifies and homogenises diverse identities into fixed categories, masking the complex realities of migration and belonging. At the same time, citizenship, when combined with ethno-nationalist frameworks, shapes how inclusion and exclusion are experienced at both institutional and societal levels. The thesis does not suggest that ethnicity is fixed or immutable. Instead, it aims to explore how ethnicity is operationalised by different actors: the Japanese state, which has employed ethno-nationalist policies to maintain a sense of homogeneity; Japanese society, which navigates these constructed identities through everyday interactions and institutional practices; and the individuals themselves, who often self-identify in ways that intersect with or diverge from official narratives. The case of Japanese Brazilians reveals the limitations of essentialist concepts of national identity in the face of increasing global interconnectivity and cultural exchange, highlighting the importance of reimagining citizenship and belonging as central to fostering successful integration.

1.3 Historical and Demographic Context

This section will first review the historical and demographic background of large-scale Japanese emigration to Brazil and the subsequent "return" migration of Japanese Brazilians. It will then compare this group to other foreign migrant populations who arrived in Japan from the 1990s onward. This contextualisation helps to clarify the specific position of Nikkei returnees within Japanese society and lays the foundation for understanding the institutional arrangements and cultural tensions they face in the process of integration.

1.3.1 Historical Emigration to Brazil

Large-scale Japanese emigration to Brazil began in 1908. The first group of migrants arrived aboard the *Kasato Maru*, which reached the port of Santos in June 1908 after a 50-day voyage. The ship carried 781 Japanese passengers, approximately half of whom were from Okinawa Prefecture (Nishida, 2018, p. 21). Most were destined for employment on coffee plantations in the state of São Paulo. This voyage marked the beginning of mass Japanese emigration to Brazil. Between 1908 and 1941, nearly 200,000 Japanese migrated to Brazil (Brune, 2025, p. 25).

The majority of migrants who had settled in Japan's Asian colonies and occupied territories were repatriated after the Second World War (Morris-Suzuki, 2006), while approximately half a million remained almost permanently in the Americas, giving rise to Japan's most significant contemporary diaspora (Kadia, 2015). There are approximately 1.9 million Brazilians of Japanese descent, representing the largest population of Japanese descendants outside Japan (Valle, 2021, p. 85). Southeastern Brazil, particularly São Paulo state and its surrounding areas, holds the highest concentration of Japanese descendants outside Japan (Nishida, 2018, p. 18).

The majority of early migrants to Latin America, including Brazil, were male contract labourers. Most originated from southwestern Japan and the Ryukyu Islands, particularly Okinawa (Masterson and Funada-Classens, 2004, p. 11). Among the 781 passengers aboard the *Kasato Maru*, around 60% came from Kagoshima and Okinawa. They entered Brazil through the port of Santos in São Paulo and later settled in São Paulo and Paraná states. This migration was closely linked to Japan's rapid population growth and the increasing economic pressure on the working class during the Meiji period (Yoshida, 1909). Many of the migrants were small-scale farmers facing worsening hardship, alongside young men seeking to avoid military conscription (Masterson and Funada-Classens, 2004, p. 11). Supported by subsidies from the São Paulo state government, these migrants worked as family units on coffee plantations for three to four years. By 1920, 87.3% of Japanese residents in Brazil were concentrated in São Paulo (cited in Lesser, 2013, p. 82). During the first phase of Japanese emigration to Brazil (1908–1923), migrants endured harsh conditions, often described as semi-slavery (Tsuchida, p. 99).

From 1924 onward, support from the Japanese state expanded. Each migrant was offered a travel subsidy of 200 yen and a commission of 35 yen to promote mass emigration to Brazil. In 1921, the government allocated 100,000 yen to the Overseas Development Company (Kaigai Kogyo Kaisha) to oversee recruitment. Under the Hara Cabinet, the Social Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Home Affairs further promoted emigration through subsidies to local emigration associations and campaigns that portrayed overseas migration as “great ventures abroad.” These initiatives reflected a state-led emigration policy aimed at alleviating domestic socio-economic pressures (Tsuchida, p. 100).

Number of emigrants		Number of Japanese nationals abroad		
	1868-1941	1909 (Meiji)	1924(Taisho)	1936(Showa)
Brazil	188,985	605	41,774	193,057
Total (excluding mandated territories)	1,046,311	223,185	503,393	996,270
Brazil/Total (%)	18.06%	0.27%	8.3%	19.4%

Table 1: Japanese Emigrants to Brazil as a Proportion of Total Global Emigration, 1868–1941

Source: cited in Tsuchida, 1998, p.78

As shown in Table 1, between 1868 and 1941, Brazil received 188,985 Japanese emigrants, accounting for nearly one-fifth of all Japanese emigration during this period. From the outset, these individuals were viewed by the Japanese government primarily as migrant workers. In addition to emigration to the Americas, large numbers of Japanese were also sent to Asia, particularly to Manchuria, as part of Japan’s imperial expansion in the 1930s.

In the postwar period, Japan’s migration focus shifted back to the Americas. The United States and Brazil emerged as the two primary destinations for Japanese emigrants. Together, these two countries received the vast majority of Japan’s postwar overseas migrants (Tsuchida, 1998, pp. 77–79).

1.3.2 Return Migration and the Changing Demographics of Foreign Residents in Japan since the 1990s

By the late 1980s, the direction of migration between Japan and Brazil had shifted, as Japan transitioned from a country of emigration to one receiving return migrants from Latin America. While Brazil was facing a deep economic crisis, Japan was experiencing rapid economic growth and labour shortages. This reversal prompted the return of many Nikkei Brazilians, alongside a broader increase in foreign workers.

These newcomers are often referred to in academic literature as new migrants, in contrast to long-settled populations of Korean and Chinese descent, whose presence in Japan dates back to the colonial era. The new migrants included both Nikkeijin from Latin America and workers from neighbouring Asian countries, typically employed in jobs avoided by Japanese nationals. Another group, composed of professionals and businesspeople from Europe and the United States, tended to reside in Japan temporarily (Kajita, 1997, p. 122). According to the latest data from the Immigration Services Agency of Japan (2024), as of 2023, foreign residents made up 2.7% of Japan's total population (124.35 million), with a total of 3,410,992 registered foreign nationals. Among these, Brazilians ranked fifth in number (211,840), following Chinese, Vietnamese, South Korean, and Filipino nationals.

Year	Total Foreigners	Korea	China	Brazil	Philippines	Peru
1989	984,455	681,838	137,499	14,528	38,925	4,121
1990	1,075,317	687,940	150,339	56,429	49,092	10,279
1991	1,218,891	693,050	171,071	119,333	61,837	26,281
1993	1,320,748	682,276	210,138	154,650	73,057	33,169
1995	1,362,371	666,376	222,991	171,445	74,297	36,897
1996	1,415,136	657,159	234,264	201,795	84,509	37,099
1997	1,482,707	645,373	252,164	233,254	93,265	40,394
1998	1,512,116	638,828	272,230	222,217	105,308	41,317
2003	1,915,030	613,791	462,396	274,700	185,237	53,649
2006	2,084,919	598,219	560,741	312,979	193,488	58,721
2007	2,152,973	593,489	605,889	316,967	202,592	59,696
2008	2,217,426	589,239	655,377	312,582	210,617	59,723
2009	2,186,121	578,495	680,518	267,456	211,716	57,464

Table 2: Registered Foreign Residents in Japan by Nationality, 1989–2009

Source: Higuchi, 2011, p. 139; Matsushita, 2010, p. 21; National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, 2023; Immigration Services Agency, 2024

As shown in Table 2, the total number of registered foreign residents in Japan increased steadily from 984,455 in 1989 to over 2.2 million in 2008. The most significant rise occurred among Chinese and Brazilian nationals. Notably, the number of Brazilian residents jumped from 14,528 in 1989 to 312,979 in 2006. This increase is closely associated with the 1990

revision of Japan's Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, which introduced a renewable visa status for individuals of Japanese descent, allowing them to reside and work in Japan. In contrast, the number of Korean residents gradually declined during the same period, due in part to ageing within the long-established oldcomer population and the naturalisation of their descendants.

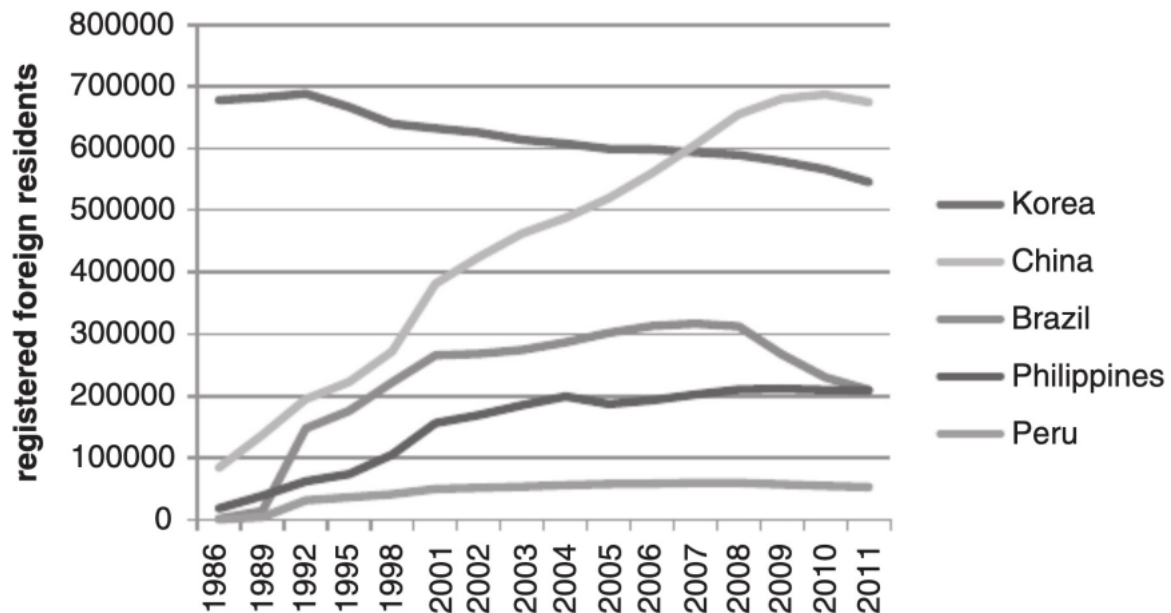


Figure 1: Trends in Registered Foreign Residents in Japan by Nationality (1986-2011)

Source: Vogt, 2015, p.571

Figure 1 illustrates the divergent demographic trajectories of different migrant groups. Chinese nationals show a consistent upward trend, surpassing Korean residents by the mid-2000s. Brazilian migration increased sharply in the 1990s, peaking around 2007 before declining post-2008, reflecting their vulnerability in times of economic crisis.

The year 2009 marked the first decline in Japan's registered foreign resident population since 1989. The 2008 global financial crisis disproportionately affected Brazilian migrants, whose numbers fell by over 45,000 within a single year. This sharp decline highlights their structural vulnerability in the Japanese labour market. Their heavy concentration in manufacturing, combined with their dependence on unstable employment arrangements such as contract companies and temporary staffing agencies, made them particularly susceptible to economic downturns (Takenoshita, 2013).

In terms of wages (see Figure 2), Brazilian migrants appeared to hold a relatively favourable position within Japan's migrant labour hierarchy. In 1992, for example, Japanese Brazilian men earned an average hourly wage of 1,250 yen, substantially more than Iranians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Filipinos. This wage advantage was often attributed to their legal status and employers' perceptions of their legitimacy and reliability (Mori, 1997, p. 192). Yet it remains uncertain whether this wage advantage continues today, as there is a lack of recent, detailed data broken down by nationality.

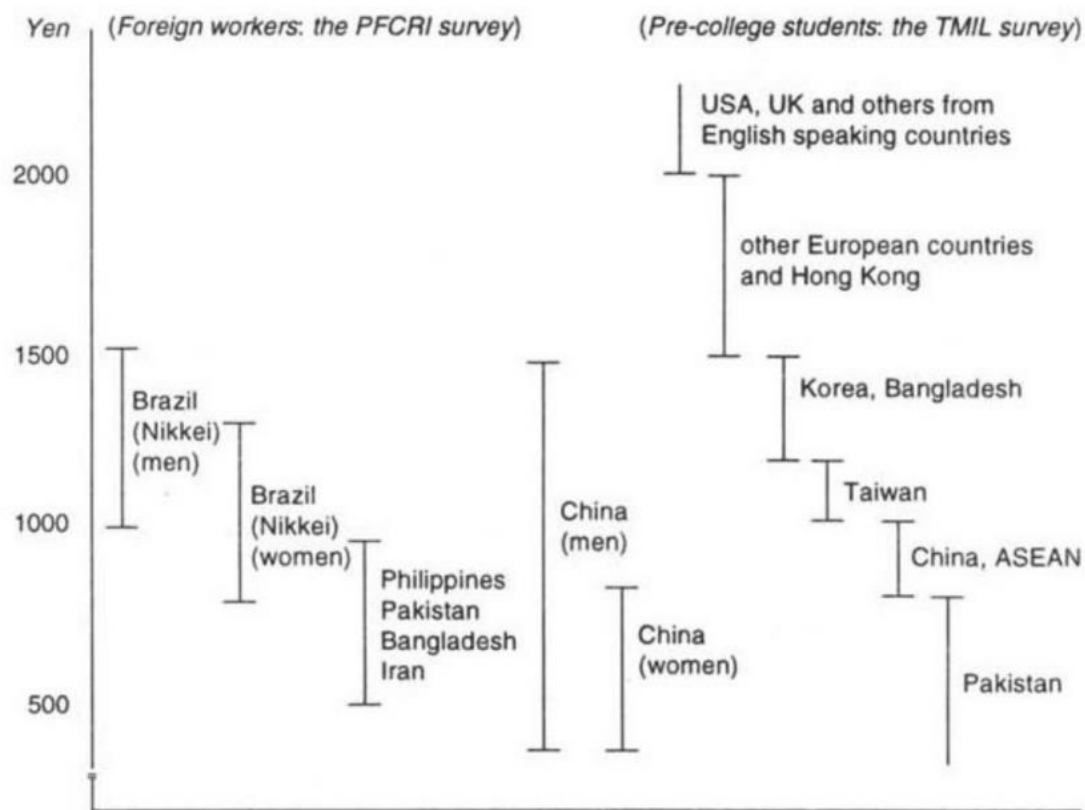


Figure 2: Hourly Wage Profiles of Foreign Workers in Japan by Country of Origin, 1992 (Yen per Hour)
Source: Mori, 1997, p.178

	Prefecture	Number of Registered Brazilians	Total Number of Registered Foreigners
1	Aichi	79,156	228,432
2	Shizuoka	51,441	103,279
3	Mie	21,668	53,073
4	Gifu	20,481	57,570
5	Funma	17,522	47,985

Table 3: Regional Distribution of Brazilian Residents in Japan (2009)
Source: Matsushita, 2010, p. 24

From a geographical perspective, although Japanese emigrants to Brazil originated from nearly all prefectures across the country, the majority came from so-called “high-emigration prefectures” such as Kumamoto and Okinawa. In contrast, smaller numbers came from regions like Hiroshima, Hokkaido, and Wakayama (Sukaguchi, 2010, p. 58). However, since the 1980s, the settlement patterns of returnee Brazilians in Japan no longer correspond to their ancestral prefectures. Today, Brazilian migrants are primarily concentrated in industrial areas such as Aichi, Shizuoka, Gifu, and Gunma (see Table 3). This spatial divergence suggests that their return to Japan is shaped more by contemporary labour market demands than by cultural or emotional attachment to ancestral homelands. This pattern supports a broader argument in this thesis: ethnic return migration does not necessarily lead to symbolic or cultural reintegration. While returnees may receive legal recognition through ethnicity-based frameworks, their everyday experiences often reveal a persistent social distance from the national majority.

1.4 Locating the Research within the Literature

In the academic literature on migration studies, there is an increasing focus on Japan as a destination for immigrants. Japan has become an ‘immigrant country’ de facto (Liu-Farrer, 2020a, p. 3). This term, in the context of this thesis, refers to Japan’s transformation in response to labour shortages and its attempts to receive foreign workers, while grappling with national identity and the preservation of a mono-ethnic narrative. From the 1980s onwards, to avoid an economic recession caused by labour shortages, Japan tried various schemes to import foreign labour in the name of ‘internationalisation’ (Kokusaika).

The term ‘internationalisation’ held a distinct literal meaning in Japan during the initial immigration debate (1989-1993). It encompassed two primary facets: the Japanisation of the foreign on the global stage and the Japanisation of the foreign within Japan, which were both indicative of a discourse aimed at preserving a mono-ethnic nation (*tan’itsu minzoku kokka*) and fortifying national boundaries (Burgess, 2004; 2020).

Japan has become a hidden migration state and has regularly ranked in the top five of all OECD countries regarding inflows of the foreign population since 2000 (Haruaki, Toshihiro, and Kawai, 2018, p. 95). While legal frameworks in Japan clearly define the statuses and rights of foreign nationals, the broader societal and policy discourse reflects the ambiguity in

the conceptualisation of ‘immigration’ and ‘immigrants’. This lack of clarity extends beyond legal definitions, touching upon national identity and societal consensus, as highlighted by former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. During the 196th meeting of the House of Representatives of Japan in 2018, Shinzo Abe, in response to a question from House of Representatives member Okuno regarding foreign workers and immigrants, made the following statement: ‘The present government’s immigration policies primarily aim to attract foreign nationals, especially those with expertise in professional and technical fields. Nevertheless, the concept of admitting foreigners in proportion to the national population without imposing any time constraints on their families contradicts the current approach to foreign admissions’ (Okuno, 2018). This statement illustrates the Japanese government’s approach to immigration, framing it as a temporary economic solution rather than a long-term societal transformation. The significance of this lies in its broader implications for integration. Without considering foreign residents in the policymaking process, policies risk reinforcing marginalisation and exclusion, ultimately hindering integration outcomes and perpetuating systemic inequalities.

In line with this policy ambiguity, Japan’s legal system does not explicitly safeguard the human rights of foreigners residing in the country, particularly concerning protection against discrimination. The Japanese Constitution, a significant legal document granting rights to citizens, Article 14 stipulates that ‘all citizens (kokumin) are equal before the law. In political, economic, and social relations, there shall be no distinction based on race, religion, gender, social status, or class’. However, the term ‘citizens’ provides a textual basis for excluding foreign residents from these protections. As Park (2023, p. 335) notes, while Japan enacted the 2016 Hate Speech Countermeasure Act, the law lacks punitive provisions and does not directly prohibit racial discrimination, raising concerns about its effectiveness in addressing systemic exclusion and xenophobia.

Although Japan has ratified the International Convention on the Status of Refugees, which grants fundamental human rights protections to foreigners, multiple Japanese Supreme Court cases have determined that these rights essentially apply only to Japanese citizens. In specific areas such as voting rights, employment, and social welfare, non-citizens may receive different levels of protection (Fisher, 2015, p. 133). The exclusion of foreign nationals from constitutional protections, especially in the absence of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, is troubling. This situation leaves foreign residents in Japan, including those with

permanent residency, without adequate protection against discrimination based on race or nationality.

In practice, the widely held notions of ethnic homogeneity and belonging continue to marginalise and exclude certain population groups. The transmission of citizenship is governed by the principle of *jus sanguinis* (by parentage), which emphasises descent rather than birthplace, and even if one is born in Japan, unless undergoing a naturalisation process, one remains a foreigner (Kashiwazaki, 1998, p. 278). Chapter Four provides more specific examples related to the Japanese Brazilian group, such as the naturalisation process, the impact of having or not having citizenship on integration, and their accounts of the discrimination they encountered, which shows how legal clarity is juxtaposed with societal ambiguity.

The phenomenon of Brazilian residents in Japan, numbering 209,430 by the end of 2022 and ranking fifth among various nationalities (Immigration Services Agency, 2023), represents a unique migration pattern that is worth closer examination. This number's steady increase, alongside the fact that 135,167 Brazilians were actively employed in Japan as of October 2022, the majority (63.8%) on long-term visas (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2023), underscores a trend towards long-term residency. However, these statistics only scratch the surface of a complex history of migration that intertwines the fates of Brazil and Japan. This history began with waves of emigration from Japan to Brazil and has evolved into a phenomenon where descendants of these emigrants, often second/third generations removed, 'return' to Japan. This process of return migration places Japanese-Brazilian individuals within the context of ethnic migration, a concept defined by their perceived shared ethnicity with Japan's majority population (Oda, 2010, p. 515; Varjonen et al., 2013, p. 111).

Contrary to initial expectations, Japanese Brazilians, who indeed share Japanese heritage, encounter significant challenges when it comes to their 'integration' into Japanese society, both socioeconomically and culturally. While the Japanese government initially accorded them a more privileged status in the Japanese labour market due to their ethnic affinity, the practical experience of Brazilians of Japanese descent reveals a different story (Higuchi, 2010). Despite initially considering themselves part of the ethnic majority group, they often find themselves excluded from the broader Japanese population. This paradoxical reality

challenges conventional wisdom about the preservation of ethnic identity within a nation known for its homogeneity.

1.4.1 Historical Context of Japanese Brazilian Migration: Moving Back and Forth Between Japan and Brazil

Reasons for Japanese Emigration to Latin America

Before proposing a theoretical framework for this thesis, it is necessary to introduce why the Japanese-Brazilian community exists in Japan. This section provides a historical context of Japanese Brazilian migration, exploring the back-and-forth movements between Japan and Brazil and the current situation of the second generation settling in Japan. It sets the stage for understanding the context in which second-generation Japanese Brazilians navigate their integration processes, providing a foundation for the detailed discussions in the following chapters.

There were many stories to tell about Nikkei Brazilians because people with Japanese ancestry have lived in Brazil for seven generations. The historical backdrop of Japanese emigration, catalysed by the Meiji Restoration and Japan's subsequent industrialisation and imperial expansion, underscores a pattern of migration driven by economic necessity and state strategy. This context laid the groundwork for the complex identity and status of Japanese descendants abroad, particularly in Brazil, where a significant Japanese diaspora developed over generations. Japanese people were sent overseas to North America, South America, and Australia after the Meiji Restoration began in 1868 (Bucerius and Tonry, 2013, p. 740). The Japanese emigration was an orchestrated endeavour strategically planned and executed by the state. The selection of emigration destinations was constricted by U.S. policies and guided by strategic considerations, emphasising regions of geographical significance or advanced development. The primary objective was to dispatch labourers abroad, facilitating access to overseas resources—a pivotal component of Japan's broader colonial expansion efforts.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Japan was embarking on imperial expansion in East Asia. This included the annexation of Taiwan in 1895, the acquisition of Korea in 1910, and the establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1930. The Japanese government actively promoted the emigration of Japanese settlers to these territories, fostering economic activities spanning agriculture, industry, and trade. This migration served the multiple

purposes of supporting domestic economic development and extending Japan's cultural and political influence. Beyond East Asia, Brazil emerged as a significant destination, attracting a substantial influx of immigrants who sought employment on coffee plantations. However, Japan's endeavours to expand its colonial sphere of influence and execute comprehensive colonial plans encountered limitations, particularly in regions outside of Asia. Subsequently, Japanese official emigration to Latin America gradually shifted into labour migration (Adachi, 2006), driven by the economic imperatives of the Japanese populace. Consequently, the involvement of Japanese migrants in the political activities of host Latin countries diminished, reducing their roles to those of labour migration. It is worth noting that while the political engagement of these migrants diminished, the Japanese government retained an enduring interest in their utilisation for various purposes (Adachi, 2010).

Japanese emigration to Brazil officially began in 1908, and this migration trend persisted in substantial numbers until the early 1960s (Phillips, 2007). While emigration to Latin America was not initially a central pillar of Japan's migration policy, it became increasingly institutionalised in the 1920s as a state-supported strategy to alleviate domestic socio-economic pressures. Many early migrants perceived themselves as *gisei imin* (sacrificed immigrants), relocated abroad to reduce population pressure and resource scarcity in Japan (Carvalho, 2003, pp. 5, 55). This shift was further accelerated by exclusionary immigration policies in the United States and Canada, which forced the Japanese government to open new migration channels to Latin America. The unofficial Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908 between the United States and Japan marked a turning point in emigration policy, specifically restricting the influx of Japanese workers to the United States. The exclusionary Immigration Act of 1924 further limited the number of Japanese immigrants to the United States. Concurrently, the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908, implemented in Canada, also imposed restrictions on the annual immigration of adult males from Japan to Canada. These restrictive immigration policies, coupled with the emergence of anti-Japanese marches and movements in the United States and Canada, prompted a shift in destination preferences for Japanese immigrants. The socio-political climate in North America, characterised by anti-Japanese sentiments, led to Latin America, notably Brazil, emerging as a viable alternative for Japanese emigration (Adachi, 2006). The allure of Brazil as a destination lies in its comparatively more open immigration policies (Yamanaka, 1996, pp. 68-69). Brazil, at that time, was experiencing acute worker shortages. The Golden Law, issued in 1888, officially ended slavery in Brazil, leading to a growing labour shortage that had a terrible effect on the

expanding Brazilian coffee plantation economy. An increasing number of coffee plantation owners in Brazil were unable to expand or even sustain their production needs due to the unavailability of new, reliable labour sources (Needell, 2010, p. 252). The emergence of labour migration patterns as an alternative to slavery thus served as the ‘pull’ factor for Japanese emigration to Brazil. In Japanese historiography (Lone, 2001, p. 20), it is argued that migration from Japan to Brazil was largely shaped by external constraints. Brazil was encountering difficulties in recruiting labour from its preferred sources in Europe, and the Japanese were being closed out of their preferred destinations in North America. However, the 1934 Brazilian immigration law marked a turning point for Japanese Brazilians. Under the nationalistic policies of former Brazilian president Getulio Vargas, Japanese entry was severely limited, and Japanese language education and publication in Brazil were strictly forbidden in 1940. Japanese Brazilians became completely isolated from their homeland since then. When the war in the Pacific broke out, Brazil broke diplomatic relations with Japan in January 1942 and joined the Allies to fight against Japan that August. Therefore, the Japanese entrance was halted.

After World War II, the United States occupied Japan from 1945 to 1952, during which time Japanese emigration was effectively suspended, with only minimal outflows taking place (de Carvalho, 2003, p. 7). Japan resumed its emigration process following the end of the U.S. occupation in 1952 (Goto, 2006, p. 12). To implement the emigration strategy to South America, the Japanese government encouraged Japanese emigrants to integrate into the local society by buying land and establishing local communities. Paradoxically, the Japanese government encouraged emigrants and their descendants to maintain Japanese consciousness to some extent and granted them the status of ‘Nikkei-jin’. By this means Japan adopted a new diplomatic strategy to keep in touch with overseas Japanese after the end of World War II (Takenaka, 2019, p.14).

The ‘Return’ Migration to Japan

The context of the return of Japanese Brazilians to Japan is closely linked to the fluctuations in the domestic labour market. Initially, due to overpopulation, Japan focused more on emigration. Labour export due to overpopulation gradually disappeared. Instead, the tightening of the labour market became a major challenge. There were two peaks of tightness in the Japanese labour market in the post-war period: the ‘Izanagi’ prosperity in the late 1960s and the ‘Bubble Economy’ in the late 1980s (Fuji, 2007, pp. 46-47).

During the 57 months from 1965 to 1970, Japan experienced an average annual growth of more than 10% through the so-called 'Izanagi Keiki'. Along with the rapid economic growth, Japan faced a shortage of manpower in the mid-1960s. Still, instead of importing foreign workers through the 'guest worker' program, as was the case in Western European countries, Japan emphasised the deployment and development of domestic human resources to meet the needs of the labour market (Surak, 2008, p. 561). In other words, at that time, Japan had enough domestic population to fill the labour shortage, and the migration of the domestic population from primary to secondary industries, the migration of the rural population to urban areas, housewives, and students taking part-time jobs became alternative choices, which temporarily solved the problem of labour shortage during the period of rapid economic growth. When the Cabinet adopted the '1st Basic Plan for Employment Measures' in 1967, the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare stated that 'there is no need to accept foreign workers exclusively at this stage,' and this was considered to be the Government's policy stance, which lasted until the mid-1980s (Mori, 1994, p. 26). In this plan, it was specifically mentioned that the government's primary goal was to 'achieve full employment,' and thus the Cabinet agreed not to accept foreign workers for the time being. This consensus was subsequently confirmed by the Cabinet in the formulation of the second (1973) and third (1976) Basic Plans for Employment Measures (Fuji, 2007, p. 48). Therefore, as discussed above, the economic prosperity of Japan during the Izanagi period was the first appearance of the problem of labour shortage in post-war Japan. Although some business groups, such as the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry, proposed the use of foreign trainees as a labour force, yet the desire for foreign workers at that time eventually disappeared. This was due both to the temporary fulfilment of labour demand through domestic labour reallocation and to the stagnation of the Japanese economy caused by the impact of the 1973 oil crisis. Although there were also Japanese Brazilians who returned to Japan from Brazil during this period, they were usually 'new immigrants' who had just arrived in Brazil, often with Japanese or dual citizenship and many of them spoke Japanese, thus making it easier to return to Japan (Yamanaka, 1996, p. 73). In contrast, returnees from the late 1980s and onwards were mostly Portuguese speakers who had grown up in Brazil and had little knowledge of the Japanese language and culture.

In the 1980s, Japan shocked its developed peers with an economic boom. Western economies had been facing a declining rate of profit in the 1970s, while Japan advanced with many

commentators, including politicians, referring to the processes of flexibilisation and 'lean' production as world-leading in developing productive economies (Standing, 2009, p.57). This period, characterised by a robust integration into the neoliberal global market, necessitated a labour force that was both adaptable and capable of sustaining the high productivity levels demanded by Japanese management practices. The surge in economic growth, propelled by international trade, created a labour market paradox where the demand for workers surged, yet domestic labour policies remained stringent, particularly regarding working hours and conditions (Blyton, 1989, p. 111). Japan's 'just-in-time' production was focused on short-term goals and reducing labour costs where possible (Hassard, 1989, p. 104). Japanese managers had no issue having workers at disproportionately high hours of labour, with fewer holiday days (Blyton, 1989, p. 111), and therefore generally receiving less benefit from increases in productivity than their European peers (Standing, 2009, p. 35). This less labourist perspective could easily lead employers to view their workers as disposable or have a culture that does not include the same norms of industrial citizenship as European nations enjoyed in the post-war period (Standing, 2009, p. 35). Japan has a clear dichotomy between legitimate workers, the Japanese 'salaryman', and its precarious workforce (Standing, 2009, p. 225). Henry Ford was famous for using immigrant workers (Beynon, 1973, p.19) with low skills but giving them high pay (5\$ per day) (Strangleman and Warren, 2008, p.111). Fordism is often considered the Western model for employment, while Toyotism is the Japanese model (Standing, 2009, p. 57). In contrast, Japanese workers are valued highly, in return for intensive work. This model is associated with feudalism, where large employers grant their employees consistent employment, buttressed on a general economy of outsiders or workers with similarly high workloads but less consistent work schedules. Japanese managers are considered the ultimate authority, recognising talent and promoting accordingly. However, precarious workers are, in large part, excluded from social life. Employers under Fordism have a strong motivation to pressure the government to increase their workforce. In contrast, Japanese organisations will rely on increasing workloads instead of taking on more staff.

The Japanese labour market, influenced by Toyotism, placed a premium on high commitment and intensive labour. This emphasis on productivity and efficiency, without necessarily providing equitable compensation or job security, particularly for low-skilled labour, made the Japanese labour market less appealing to domestic workers in certain sectors, thereby opening avenues for migrant workers. However, with the new labour demands generated by Japan's economic boom in the 1980s, which could not be met by domestic labour alone,

Japan's policy of refusing to accept foreign workers began to loosen. The introduction of policies to accommodate Japanese diaspora workers, such as the 1989 policy shift, indicated a pragmatic approach to addressing labour market needs while attempting to maintain cultural and social stability (Tarumoto, 2017, p. 218).

This dichotomy between legitimate workers, the Japanese 'salaryman', and its precarious workforce also extends to migrant workers in Japan. Migrant workers in Japan became integral to sustaining the economic model that emerged in the 1980s. They filled critical gaps in sectors experiencing acute labour shortages, such as manufacturing, construction, and services, which were pivotal to Japan's economic expansion. However, the systemic dichotomy within the Japanese labour market, which revered the 'salaryman' while marginalising precarious workers, positioned migrant workers in a vulnerable segment of the labour force. They often faced job instability, fewer protections, and a lack of social recognition, underscoring a broader issue of labour rights and social inclusion within the framework of Japan's economic policies. These workers navigated a labour market that valued the principles of lean production and just-in-time manufacturing, which prioritised minimal inventory and rapid production turnaround times, often at the cost of worker welfare. Moreover, the feudalistic employment model, which ensured consistent employment for a segment of the workforce, further exacerbated the marginalisation of migrant workers. They became the economic outsiders, essential for the functioning of the economy yet excluded from the benefits of long-term employment and loyalty rewards that characterised the traditional Japanese employment system. This scenario highlights the complexities of integrating migrant workers into a society and economy that values long-term employment and company loyalty, posing significant challenges to labour rights and social welfare.

Overall, the issue of foreign workers was not prominent in Japan and did not enter the official policy agenda until the mid-1980s. It was not until the bubble economy period of the late 1980s (1986-1991) that foreign labour gradually became a policy issue (Fuji, 2007, p. 49). Within the government, the Ministry of Justice was the first to explicitly raise the issue by preparing a 'Study on the Opening of Doors for Foreign Workers' (1987), which raised the possibility of opening the doors to foreign workers for a limited period of three years. Given that the Ministry of Justice's policies since then have intensified the crackdown on the employment of undocumented migrants, this bold proposal has been seen as alerting the

public to the seriousness of the situation of the rapidly increasing number of undocumented workers and to their reaction rather than a real desire to bring in immigrant labour.

After successfully overcoming the negative impacts of the two Oil crises, the Japanese economy achieved export-driven growth, fuelled by the depreciation of the yen. This led to trade frictions between Japan and the United States, eventually culminating in the Plaza Accord of 1985, which caused a significant appreciation of the yen and led to economic stagnation. However, this soon turned into an expansion period, later known as the ‘Bubble Economy.’ During this time, Japan’s manufacturing, construction, and service sectors again experienced a profound shortage of labour. At the same time, some tourists from Asian countries (mainly from Iran, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) overstayed their visas and became undocumented workers, their numbers rapidly increasing (Mori, 1989, p. 323). The composition shifted from predominantly female workers in entertainment and service industries to male construction and industrial workers. The issue of undocumented foreign workers popped up again.

In this context, Japan’s public opinion saw the ‘first debate’ on whether to introduce foreign workers, gradually forming viewpoints of ‘pro-opening’ and ‘pro-closing’ factions (Akashi, 2009, p. 217). Amid intense public debate, the Japanese government also began discussing the direction of its foreign worker-receiving policy. Although the ministries with similar attitudes had differences in their positions, overall, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, and the Economic Planning Agency had a permissive stance on the employment of foreigners in Japan, while the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour, and the National Police Agency advocated a cautious approach to receiving foreign workers (Koike, 1996, pp. 22-23). Finally, in 1988, the Five-Year Plan for Economics Management and the 6th Basic Employment Plan were issued, which established a unified position that ‘foreigners with special skills should be accepted as far as possible, but the acceptance of unskilled workers should be handled with great caution’ (Akashi, 2009, p. 224). Guided by this position, the Diet began to revise the Immigration Control Act, which was approved by all parties except the Communist Party in the House of Representatives in November 1989 and formally adopted by the House of Councillors in December and has been in force since June 1990, and the basic framework of Japan’s policy on foreign workers, which has been stipulated in the Act, will continue to be in place until the entry into force of the new Immigration Law in 2019, which is also called the ‘1990 Regime’ of Japan’s policy

on foreign workers. The 1990 revision to the Immigration Control Act is vital because it created a framework that governed Japan's approach to foreign workers for nearly three decades. Understanding the policy's evolution is crucial to understanding why Japan remained resistant to openly accepting unskilled workers, despite the growing reliance on foreign workers in key industries. Its main points are as follows.

Firstly, by expanding the eligibility for residency, Japan has broadened the acceptance of skilled workers, especially by adding six new employment-related residency statuses, including 'legal and accounting services,' 'medical,' 'research,' and 'education.' This point is important as it demonstrates Japan's desire to attract the talent necessary for its increasingly globalised economy. By clarifying the immigration management qualifications for highly skilled and specialised foreign nationals and by simplifying and expediting processing procedures, Japan has highlighted its selective approach to immigration, prioritising skilled workers while maintaining a strict stance against the influx of unskilled workers as a way of balancing the economic needs with concerns about the integration of foreign workers.

Secondly, the Japanese government maintains the principle of not accepting 'unskilled labourers,' refusing to set up residency status for entry into Japan for the purpose of 'unskilled work.' Furthermore, by establishing the new 'Crime of Promoting Illegal Employment' (The House of Representatives, 1989), Japan is cracking down on illegal employment, strengthening the penalties for brokers and employers who facilitate illegal work. This highlights the government's efforts to regulate the influx of foreign workers strictly. The distinction between 'skilled' and 'unskilled' labour in immigration policy is a central theme, reflecting Japan's longstanding preference for attracting high-skilled workers to fuel its technological and economic advancements. The 1990 law introduced the status of 'trainee'. These trainees are not recognised as workers or as immigrants, so their payments are 'training allowances' instead of 'salary' (Kajita, 1995, p.26; Shimada, 1994, pp.69-71; Komai, 1995, pp.37-54). This system was reformed further in 1993 to allow trainees to work full-time in Japan for up to two years after their training period, which made 'trainees' a new source of unskilled labour, although it was created with the stated purpose of 'training people to be able to contribute to the economic development of their home country upon completion of their training.' The Japan International Training Cooperation Organisation (JITCO) often supervised them. Their restricted visas made it almost impossible for them to apply for outside positions or to change employers. Thus, the government has tacitly established a de

facto guest worker system (Kajita, 1995, p. 26), through which foreign workers were recruited and implicitly acknowledged by employers and authorities. The creation of the 'trainee' status shows how Japan attempted to circumvent the direct acceptance of unskilled workers while still meeting labour demands. This point illustrates the duality of Japan's stance: while officially discouraging unskilled labour, the government allowed foreign workers to fill these roles in practice through indirect means. This tension between policy and reality is a key element in understanding Japan's immigration strategy.

Lastly, a new residency status called 'Long-term Resident (ていじゅうしや)' was established, with no restrictions imposed on the employment of those who qualify. This new category is primarily designed for individuals of Japanese descent, as it allows them to stay in Japan long-term and obtain unrestricted employment rights, including the third generation of Japanese descendants and their spouses. Although the official position is that no explicit residence status has been created to receive unskilled workers, people of Japanese descent are de facto accepted as unskilled workers based on the so-called 'principle of descent.' The establishment of the 'Long-term Resident' category, particularly for people of Japanese descent, plays a crucial role in understanding how Japan tacitly allowed unskilled workers into the country. Japanese Brazilians were favoured based on cultural and ethnic ties, even if they effectively filled unskilled labour roles. Given the huge disparity in per capita incomes between Japan and Latin America, within just a few years of the Immigration Act coming into force in 1990, this policy contributed to a four-fold increase in the number of Nikkeijin, mainly from Brazil and Peru, entering Japan each year, from 19,000 in 1988 to 79,000 in 1990 (Yamanaka, 1996, p. 65). Other unskilled foreign workers, most of whom are Asians of non-Japanese origin, are 'undocumented' and are subject to deportation.

The majority of the Japanese diaspora who returned to Japan prior to 1990 were holders of either Japanese citizenship or dual nationality. Post-1990, there was a significant influx of third-generation Japanese diaspora into Japan. Predominantly, they settled in the nation's key manufacturing hubs, filling employment typically shunned by the native Japanese population (Yamanaka, 1996, p. 65). This pivotal policy change accorded them the status of legal residents and permitted them to work legally. Furthermore, while the initial intent for most Japanese Brazilians was to undertake a short-term stay in Japan for financial gain, with plans of returning to Brazil at the earliest opportunity, a trend emerged similar to patterns observed

in other migrant destinations. Many of these individuals increasingly opted for prolonged stays, extending their time far beyond their original plans.

1.4.2 The Socio-Economic Marginalisation of Japanese Brazilians in Japan

This section provides an overview of the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of first- and second-generation Japanese Brazilians in Japan, highlighting their migration patterns, employment conditions, educational backgrounds, and the economic difficulties they encounter while adapting to Japanese society.

The migration of Japanese Brazilians to Japan, particularly in the late 1980s and early 1990s, was primarily driven by Japan's economic boom and the demand for labour in its rapidly expanding manufacturing sector. The 1990 immigration reforms, which opened doors for ethnic Japanese to return, coincided with labour shortages in industries like automotive and electronics manufacturing. Many first-generation Japanese Brazilians saw this as an opportunity to improve their economic prospects, with the intention of sending remittances back to Brazil or saving money to return home (Tsuda, 2000).

However, a significant number of these migrants eventually settled in Japan, with their children, the second generation, growing up in Japan's education system and labour market. This migration pattern highlights the interrelationship between Japan's economic needs and the decisions made by Japanese Brazilians regarding their long-term residence.

The socio-economic marginalisation of Japanese Brazilians in Japan reflects the broader issues of how Japan's immigration and labour policies treat ethnic migrants, particularly during times of economic crises. Japanese Brazilians, despite their legal acceptance as descendants of Japanese nationals, often find themselves in precarious positions within the labour market, oscillating between inclusion as ethnic returnees and exclusion as foreigners.

This marginalisation became apparent as many Japanese Brazilians were incorporated into the secondary labour market as unskilled workers, often through labour contractors. These workers were not only underpaid but also placed in highly unstable positions, making them the 'first fired' during economic downturns. As Higuchi (2014, p.185) noted, while they were hired during Japan's economic boom of the late 1980s and early 1990s, the global financial

crisis of 2008 had a disproportionately severe impact on them. Between late 2008 and early 2009, approximately 40–50% of Latin American workers lost their jobs, compared to an unemployment rate of under 5% among the general Japanese population during the same period. This vulnerability stemmed from their lack of integration into Japan's primary labour market and the absence of policies aimed at securing their economic mobility.

The precariousness of Japanese Brazilians in Japan's labour market is further compounded by cultural and ethnic expectations. Many first-generation Japanese Brazilians experience a form of partial marginalisation, where they are neither fully accepted as Japanese nor completely regarded as foreigners (Tsuda, 2000). Many Japanese Brazilians resist by asserting their Brazilian identity. In doing so, they form what Tsuda describes as 'ethnic resistance', whereby they actively perform their Brazilian identity as a way of opposing Japan's assimilative expectations. This resistance highlights a broader issue within Japan's immigration policy: although Japan selectively accepts Japanese Brazilians on the basis of shared ancestry, cultural and linguistic barriers make full integration difficult. Japanese Brazilians are expected to understand Japanese customs and language because of their ethnic background, but when they fail to meet these expectations, they are marginalised as outsiders. Due to the ethnic prejudice and discrimination they often face in the workplace, as well as cultural and linguistic differences, they are often treated as 'second-class Japanese' or 'ignorant foreigners' from a developing country (Yamanaka, 1996, p. 84).

Although Japanese Brazilians initially benefitted from privileged visa statuses as descendants of Japanese nationals, their integration into the workforce was characterised by their involvement in flexible, unskilled labour sectors, particularly in manufacturing (Higuchi, 2014, p. 185). These sectors were severely impacted by the 2008 crisis, resulting in mass layoffs. Higuchi points out that this crisis revealed the inadequacy of Japan's immigration policies, which failed to offer socio-economic protections for foreign workers like the Japanese Brazilians. Lacking sufficient language skills, vocational training, and access to stable employment, many Japanese Brazilians were forced to leave Japan during the crisis, marking a mass return migration to Brazil.

A significant economic challenge for the first-generation Japanese-Brazilian migrants in Japan is the precarious nature of their employment. Many are employed through dispatch companies or labour brokers, which control many aspects of their work, including

recruitment, housing, and visa renewals. These intermediaries charge substantial fees for their services, often leaving them in debt upon arrival and making it difficult for them to achieve financial stability (Yamanaka, 1996, pp. 83–85). Although Nikkeijin wages are relatively high by Brazilian standards, they remain lower than those of Japanese workers in stable employment. This economic disparity, reflected in income, job security, and benefits, underlies many of the integration challenges examined in subsequent chapters.

Japan's integration policies have historically been insufficient in addressing the needs of foreign workers, particularly those of Japanese descent. Japan's policies have often reduced the issues faced by foreign workers to matters of cultural difference, overlooking the deeper socio-economic inequalities that underpin their marginalisation. Local governments, while responsive to the growing foreign population, have primarily focused on cultural programs rather than providing essential socio-economic support, such as vocational training or labour protections. For Japanese Brazilians, this culturalist approach to integration has meant that their economic vulnerabilities have been largely ignored. While local governments may promote 'multicultural symbiosis', the reality is that Japanese Brazilians, along with other migrant groups, remain relegated to precarious and unstable jobs with limited opportunities for upward mobility.

Despite the fact that Japanese Brazilians in Japan predominantly work in unskilled jobs, studies have shown that many of them are relatively well-educated and come from middle-class backgrounds in Brazil (Tsuda, 2000, p. 54; McKenzie and Salcedo, 2014, pp. 73-82). This educational and socio-economic disparity highlights a critical aspect of their marginalisation: despite their qualifications, the majority are relegated to low-paying, unstable positions in Japan's labour market. This mismatch between their educational background and the roles they occupy in Japan, that is, the failure to recognise or utilise the skills of migrant workers, leads to downward social mobility upon migrating to Japan. Despite holding positions as engineers, teachers, and other professionals in Brazil, they frequently find themselves relegated to the ranks of unskilled labourers in Japan (Yamanaka, 1996, p. 84). The labour brokerage system has undoubtedly exacerbated their downward mobility, as brokers control multiple aspects of the workers' lives, including job placements, visa renewals and limit their financial independence. This system exploits the fact that the first-generation migrants, unfamiliar with Japan's labour practices and language, are highly

dependent on these brokers, who profit from their precarious situation (Yamanaka, 1996, pp. 83–84).

In recent years, the Immigration Control Act 2018 introduced a new visa framework, which includes a relaxation of entry requirements for fourth-generation Japanese Brazilians. The new Act states that ‘The system aims to accept the fourth-generation Japanese descendants who meet certain criteria and, through activities such as acquiring Japanese culture, deepen their understanding and interest in Japan. Thus, it seeks to nurture individuals who will serve as a bridge strengthening the ties between Japan and the local communities of Japanese descendants.’ Eligible fourth-generation individuals who can receive support from specific individuals or organisations, including relatives, host families and employers, free of charge for a period not exceeding five years, in order to successfully carry out activities aimed at learning about Japanese culture and the Japanese way of life in general, including learning the Japanese language, as well as being able to engage in paid work, in order to provide funding for the carrying out of such activities. These individuals will be granted a ‘Designated Activities’ visa (Immigration Bureau of Japan, 2018).

This new system contrasts with the visas granted to second- and third-generation Japanese Brazilians in Brazil, who have typically been able to obtain a ‘Long-term resident visa’ or ‘Spouse or Child of Japanese National visa’ without special restrictions on their activities in Japan. However, many of these Japanese Brazilians were employed in indirect forms of labour, such as dispatching or contracting, which left them vulnerable during economic crises as mentioned above. The 2018 amendment offers immigration procedures at no cost for fourth-generation Japanese descendants aged 18–30, with the requirement that employers or other sponsors provide support for their activities, such as learning about Japanese culture and language. However, this sponsorship system, which allows for requests for government assistance if support fails, presents several challenges. It is difficult to imagine a scenario where a sufficient number of employers would be willing to provide this support free of charge, just for these descendants to immerse themselves in Japanese culture.

If a Japanese Brazilian were to leave an employer due to dissatisfaction or mistreatment, the original employer could report their inability to continue sponsorship to the Immigration Bureau, potentially resulting in visa cancellation or renewal refusal. Given the link between visa status and employer support, fourth-generation Japanese descendants may find

themselves in a precarious position, compelled to endure adverse working conditions under the threat of losing their legal status in Japan. This arrangement raises significant concerns regarding the potential for exploitation. Descendants may face unethical demands, such as wage withholding or even coercion, as employers leverage the power, they hold over their visa status. The vulnerability of these workers increases the likelihood of human rights violations, as descendants may feel forced to comply with unfavourable conditions in order to remain in Japan.

As pointed out in LDP's 'Recommendations for building a society in which all citizens participate actively' (Liberal Democratic Party, 2017, p.48): 'One of the measures to leverage the workforce in the face of persistent labour shortages in many industries is the use of international students, as well as the support the acceptance and active role of the fourth generation of Japanese descendants through the establishment of a new working holiday system'. It can be seen that there is a discrepancy between the purpose of the system and the actual situation in the case of the admission of fourth-generation Japanese, as in the case of technical intern trainees. In reality, the admission of people of Japanese descent is part of the acceptance of unskilled workers and is not considered in terms of protecting the human rights of foreigners.

1.5 Collapse of Pre-war Ideas and Post-war Changes

Integration in Japan is best understood as a two-way process that reflects both state policies and individual experiences. This section unpacked the transformation of Japan's national identity from the pre-war imperial period to the post-war era and how this reshaped the nation's approach to cultural integration. Understanding this historical shift is essential for grasping Japan's stance on immigrant integration, particularly in relation to the Japanese Brazilians. By the time of the 1990s immigration policies, the legacy of Japan's post-war identity crisis had already set the stage for the complexities of integrating ethnic returnees like the Japanese Brazilians. This is explored in Chapter 6, which examines the cultural orientation and development of ethnic identity among Japanese Brazilians through an analysis of their real-life narratives.

Pre-war Japan had embraced an imperialist and more multiethnic ideology, extending its empire across Korea, Taiwan, Okinawa, and China. However, the catastrophic defeat in 1945

and the dissolution of the empire triggered a shift towards a monoethnic vision of the nation. The legacy of this transition is crucial for understanding how Japan views integration today, especially in the context of foreign workers and immigrants such as Japanese Brazilians. By tracing these historical developments, we can better understand the longstanding tension between Japan's monoethnic self-image and the demographic reality of a diverse population, particularly how this affects the integration of second-generation Japanese Brazilians. This discussion sets the stage for later chapters that explore how these historical frameworks continue to influence modern immigration policy and societal attitudes toward immigration.

At the end of the 20th century, the demographic composition of Japan underwent profound changes, characterised notably by an increasing number of foreign workers. This transformation posed a direct challenge to Japan's longstanding monoethnic narrative, which has been sustained through a synthesis of social, political, and ideological practices (Lie, 2001). These practices have historically marginalised or silenced longstanding minority groups within Japan, including the Ainu, Okinawans, and Burakumin, as well as generations of Korean and Chinese residents.

The arrival of Japanese Brazilian immigrants, among others, began rechallengeing what it meant to be Japanese. Japanese Brazilians who work in Japan are often regarded as ethnic return migrants, defined as later-generation descendants of diasporic peoples who 'return' to their countries of ancestral origin after living outside their ethnic homelands for generations (Tsuda 2009, p. 1). In the 1990s, creating an 'ethnically preferential' immigration program (Sharpe, 2010, p. 357) in Japan was the natural consequence of defining national belonging based on ethnicity. However, despite Japanese 'mythic' notions of common ethnic ancestry, Japanese Brazilians, provided with a renewable visa from Japan in 1990, were encouraged to return to Brazil in a 2009 paid voluntary repatriation program. Japan's separation of citizenship/nationality and ethnicity for the first time in the post-war period highlights the ongoing complexities of its national identity.

1.5.1 The Making of an Ethnonational Japanese Identity

In Japan, the Meiji Restoration marked a decisive transition from the decentralised political order of the Tokugawa era to a modern nation-state, a process that brought nationalism and ethnicity into close alignment (Tsuboi, 2019, p.41). Ethnicity is generally understood as a socio-cultural construct identifying groups based on shared traits such as culture, tradition, or

history. Since the 19th century, nationalism has advocated for aligning the state's political boundaries with those of the nation and culture (Bonikowski and Gheihman, 2015, p. 309; Anderson, 2006, pp.12-13). The overthrow of the Shogunate and the restoration of Emperor Meiji in 1868 marked a decisive turn toward industrial modernisation and national consolidation. This period saw the aggressive promotion of a singular Japanese identity constructed around myths, traditions, and symbols such as the national flag, language, and shared cultural practices. This identity strategically bridged the gap between Japan and the Western powers, aiding in avoiding colonisation. Simultaneously, this national narrative necessitated the forgetting or rewriting of contradictory histories, such as the assimilation of the Ainu and Okinawans. The assimilation policies under the Meiji government effectively erased distinct ethnic identities by suppressing cultural practices and languages (Connell, 2019, p. 12; Christy, 1993, p. 609). These actions were not incidental but were central to the state's strategy to project a unified national identity and maintain social cohesion and political stability.

Although during Tokugawa, Japan, a proto-nationalist ideology began to develop, overall, a cohesive Japanese nationalism and identity only began to solidify with the transformations of the Meiji Restoration (Lie, 2001, p. 118). During the Meiji era, local authorities were integrated under the centralised rule to dissolve regional and status distinctions, fostering a unified national identity through mass education and infrastructure development. These efforts were essential in creating a cohesive national identity. However, the establishment of the modern state in the Meiji period not only strengthened the national identity of the Japanese people but also led to national heterogeneity. This is because the establishment of Japan's national boundaries accompanied the expansion of its national borders. During the Meiji period, Japan annexed Hokkaido (1873), Ryukyu (1879), Taiwan (1895), and Korea (1910). In the process, the Ainu, Okinawans, Taiwanese, Koreans and other Asians were incorporated into the Japanese polity. The notion of the Japanese national identity that emerged during the Meiji period was inherently multiethnic, influenced by the empire's expansionist policies, which incorporated diverse populations. This multiethnic vision contrasts with the often perceived monoethnic narrative of Japan.

In occupied territories like Korea, Japan implemented policies aimed at assimilation and Japanisation, such as enforcing the use of Japanese names and integrating Koreans into the Japanese education system. However, these imperial activities required justifications beyond

mere power and a multiethnic approach to acknowledge its people's varied origins and composition. Therefore, from the annexation of Taiwan in 1896 to the end of World War II in 1945, the efforts to assert the multiethnic origins of Japanese identity were part of a broader strategy to homogenise the empire under Japanese culture and identity. It embraced a multiethnic constitution as a practical reality of Japan's imperial ambitions and geopolitical strategies (Lie, 2001, pp. 122-124).

Therefore, Japan's modern nation-state emerged during the Meiji period due to external pressures from Western imperialism and the strategic implementation of selective historical memory and ethnic homogenisation (Tsuboi, 2019, p. 29). This deliberate crafting and institutional enforcement of a cohesive national identity helped unify the populace and legitimise state power. Still, it often came at the cost of suppressing diverse ethnic identities within Japan. The efforts to promote a singular national identity during this period, particularly the assimilation policies toward colonial peoples, competed with a dominant multiethnic worldview and formed the hierarchical 'family' birth order of the Japanese Empire, with Okinawans ranked first, Taiwanese second, and Koreans third (Fuchi, 2019, p. 155; Lie, 2001, p. 123).

Therefore, when Japan was an empire, its dominant ideology was multiethnic rather than monoethnic. The Meiji Restoration and subsequent imperial expansion, including the colonisation of Hokkaido and Okinawa and the incorporation of Korean and Chinese populations, added complex layers to its demographic composition. During the Second World War, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere aimed at regional dominance, positing Japan as the 'elder sibling' to other Asian nations, thereby enforcing a hierarchical familial metaphor that further cemented its self-ascribed superiority. By 1945, the presence of 2.3 million Koreans in Japan highlighted the diversity within the nation (Yamawaki, 1994, p. 25).

Discussions on the rights of Chinese and Korean residents in various periods further illustrate ongoing debates around ethnicity and national identity, challenging the erasure of these groups' histories in Japan due to colonial amnesia. By the mid-20th century, the dominant discourse on national identity had evolved to acknowledge Japan's multiethnic constitution, shaped by historical, imperial, and societal influences.

This prompts the question: How did the concept of mono-ethnicity emerge and become the prevailing ideology? The ideology of monoethnicity became particularly dominant in the post-1960s political and cultural discourse in Japan.

The catastrophic defeat in 1945 and the sudden collapse of the Japanese colonial empire, coupled with post-war turmoil, led to a comprehensive invalidation of Japan's pre-war political structures (Ishizuka, 2019, p. 12). The rapid departure of many colonial subjects reduced Japan's ethnic diversity. However, the society remained fundamentally multiethnic with the presence of Koreans, Chinese, and other former imperial subjects, along with indigenous groups like the Ainu and Okinawans. Additionally, the six-year American occupation profoundly influenced Japan's political, cultural, and social frameworks, significantly shaping the nation's post-war identity (Jones, 2022, p. 107). However, this period witnessed significant erosion of regional diversity and status hierarchies, paving the way for a strengthened sense of a unified Japanese nation (Allinson, 2004, p. 61; Amemiya, 1997, pp. 14-16). The repatriation policies post-1945 and the stringent Nationality Laws of 1950 and 1952 were reactionary measures to a perceived dilution of ethnic homogeneity, aiming to reassert control over Japan's demographic narrative and revealing deep-seated anxieties about ethnic purity. The rapid Americanisation during the 1950s and reflection on wartime defeat gradually erased the dominant imperial worldview, highlighting the drawbacks of militarism and extreme nationalism (Yoshino, 1992, pp. 151-152). As Japan underwent significant economic growth in the 1960s, culminating symbolically with the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, a renewed introspection about Japanese identity began to surface (Droubie, 2009, p. 170).

The late 1960s in Japan were a time of significant socio-political transformation. The country had achieved rapid economic growth, and there was a conscious effort among intellectuals, policymakers, and cultural influencers to define what it meant to be Japanese in this new era of prosperity and global influence. This period saw the birth of the discourse of Japaneseness (*Nihonjinron*), which attempted to articulate a unique Japanese identity distinct from Western influences.

The discourse of Japaneseness, which crystallised in the late 1960s, emphasised Japan's notable homogeneity, a narrative strongly influenced by its historical isolation during the Tokugawa era and its geographical identity as an island nation (Lie, 2001, p. 130). This

narrative emphasises Japan's 'cultural continuity' (Flanagan, 2014, p. 20) and the equivalence of 'ethnicity/ minzoku' and 'nation/ kuni' (Arudou, 2015, p. xvii). As a key support to modern Japanese cultural nationalism, the discourse of Japaneseness often implies the overlapping connotations of race, ethnicity and nation. Although there is no one can argue what is the 'Japanese race', in such discourse, the Japanese have been seen as a unique and constantly homogeneous group while deliberately ignoring other ethnic minorities within Japan and skipping the historical ethnic mixture process (Yoshino, 1992, p. 18). The concept of monoethnic Japan, once established as a defining feature of Japaneseness, has seldom been challenged and continues to be reproduced by both Eastern and Western commentators (Lie, 2001, p. 131). Despite the subsequent development and change in Japanese society, the Japanese discourse insisted that the Japanese character and society had never changed. (Yoshino, 1992, p. 139).

It can be seen that the late 20th century saw a resurgence of ethnic and cultural nationalism as Japan sought to redefine itself as a prosperous, first-world nation, asserting that its economic success was intrinsically linked to Japanese cultural uniqueness (Hein, 2008). This revival of nationalism pivoted away from Japan's pre-war imperialist and militarist ideals. Instead, it was the emerging narrative of a monoethnic Japan. This new nationalism, which celebrated economic recovery and embraced corporate capitalism, aligned more with Western ideals than traditional elements of Japanese nationalism, gaining broad acceptance among the Japanese public who valued post-war economic advancements.

In conclusion, the emergence of a monoethnic Japanese narrative served as a convenient and strategic response to the quest for a cohesive national identity in a radically transformed post-war society. This belief, though flawed, has been perpetuated, reflecting a significant shift in national self-perception that prioritises economic achievement over historical or cultural authenticity. The revival of monoethnic discourse in post-war Japan represented a rediscovery of a pre-war identity and a strategic reinvention tailored to the socio-economic transformations of the era. This new nationalism, focusing on economic success rather than an imperialist or militaristic past, resonated widely and marked a shift towards valuing economic prowess as a cornerstone of national identity.

1.5.2 Cultural Hierarchies in the Discourse of Japaneseness: Japanese (Nihonjin) and Aliens (Gaijin)

This revaluation of what it means to be Japanese extends into the public sphere, where the public's criteria for determining who is considered Japanese are diverse and often contradictory. Some people rely on physical characteristics like appearance, while others consider language proficiency and cultural knowledge more heavily as the defining standards. These criteria lack uniformity, leading to a complex combination of personal intuitions and societal norms that frequently clash with the reality of a multi-ethnic population (Lie, 2001, pp. 142-143). In interviews conducted by Lie on this subject, in detailed interviews, perceptions about who qualifies as Japanese reveal a spectrum of opinions that underscore the subjective nature of national identity. For example, an interviewee, Yamamoto, considers Brazilian soccer player Ruy Ramos Japanese because he spent his career in Japan and played for the Japanese national team. He also showed his integration efforts and alignment with Japanese cultural values. Conversely, Yamamoto does not consider American-born Japanese sumo wrestler Konishiki Yasokichi to be Japanese because he has yet to attempt to integrate into Japanese society. Despite categorising some foreign athletes as Japanese, Yamamoto still insists that Japan is a monoethnic society, illustrating the selective and often inconsistent application of these identity markers.

Despite the varied methods these interviewees use to categorise individuals as Japanese or non-Japanese, their narratives are unified by the underlying assumption that 'Japaneseness' exists and serves as a valid criterion for classification. While categorising individuals as either Japanese or non-Japanese might appear straightforward to some, these methods are often subjective, blending personal biases and unique perspectives. Therefore, it is essential to critically examine the fundamental concept of 'Japaneseness' to understand how this identity is constructed and to explore its underlying assumptions and implications. This critical perspective is consistent with the literature challenging essentialist and static views of identity, arguing for a critical review and possible reframing of terminology in everyday use to avoid reinforcing simplistic or inaccurate understandings of social identities (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000, p. 6).

These individual narratives reinforce the prevailing societal discourse of Japaneseness, where nationality, ethnicity, and race are often conflated into a single concept of 'Nihonjin/Japanese', as outlined by Lie (2001, p. 145). This conflation emphasises a rigid,

essentialist view of identity that distinctly categorises individuals as either inherently Japanese or foreign based on a combination of racial, cultural, and linguistic characteristics. This essentialist binary classification inadequately addresses the discrepancies between race, nationality, and ethnicity, fostering a prevalent misconception. According to this view, individuals of Japanese descent are inherently part of the Japanese race, possess Japanese blood, hold Japanese citizenship, are fluent in Japanese, and have an in-depth understanding of Japanese culture. In stark contrast, ‘foreigners’ are perceived as fundamentally different: they are not of Japanese descent, they lack fluency in Japanese, and they do not possess an intimate knowledge of Japanese cultural norms.

This binary classification system creates significant obstacles for first- and second-generation Japanese Brazilians, who often need to meet the ‘Japanese’ criteria due to their appearances, cultural backgrounds, and linguistic abilities. Many Japanese Brazilians, despite being raised in Japan or having Japanese ancestry, these individuals often find themselves on the periphery of society, struggling to conform to the stereotypical Japanese image and battling the pervasive misconceptions about their identity. Even many of those raised in Japan come from mixed-race backgrounds and often do not fit the stereotypical ‘Japanese’ appearance. For second-generation Japanese Brazilians educated in Brazilian private schools within Japan, Portuguese usually remains the primary language at home. Additionally, as noted earlier, many of these second-generation individuals retain ‘long-term resident’ or ‘permanent resident’ visas, further complicating their identity.

The insights from the interviews with individuals above not only illuminate personal attitudes but also echo the broader societal narrative of Japan being a monoethnic island nation, underpinned by the ‘island nation spirit/ Shimaguni-Konjo’ and the view that Japanese were and always had been a homogeneous group of people. The unreliability of this narrative will be explained in detail in the next section. Still, as claimed by historians, even in Japan’s foundation myth, Japan was comprised not only of Japanese, the dominant majority but also of large numbers of people of diverse and mixed ancestry. Under the universal and fatherly love of the emperors, all people, regardless of their origins, were treated impartially as being the emperors’s children (Oguma, 2002, pp. 48-52). However, this narrative of a homogeneous Japanese populace has been further solidified by the post-war constitution and stringent immigration policies (Yamanaka, 2004, p. 164), directly impacting contemporary policies and social structures as it highlights a common nationalistic sentiment that values

uniformity and often views diversity as a threat or an anomaly. By linking theory with personal experiences, these stories vividly demonstrate how deeply ingrained and influential the concept of 'Japaneseness' is in shaping everyday interactions and societal norms.

Modern Japan is characterised by multiethnic imperialism rather than monoethnic nationalism. Despite the reality of ethnic diversity in contemporary Japan, the belief in ethnic homogeneity has been deeply entrenched among the Japanese people over the decades following World War II (Lie, 2001, p. 112). The contemporary discourse on Japaneseness asserts that Japan has been and continues to be an ethnically homogeneous nation. Another prevalent but unsustainable view associated with this belief is that class and nation are fused together in the dominant Japanese perspective. It is widely believed that Japan is wealthy and that immigrants from the Third World are poor. If the Japanese are perceived as middle class, newly arrived foreign workers are viewed as lower class. In contrast, white foreigners (*hakujin*), primarily from North America and Europe, are perceived as upper class. The discourse of Japaneseness composes the cornerstone of the late 20th-century myth of ethnic homogeneity. Within this discourse, national cultures are unequal and ranked on a singular scale of progress. Fukuzawa Yukichi, a prominent Meiji period philosopher, categorised nations in his seminal work 'An Outline of a Theory of Civilization' into 'civilized', 'semi-developed', and 'primitive lands'. This classification has historically reflected Japan's pursuit of modernisation and alignment with Western standards of progress, fostering a national identity rooted in cultural superiority (Fukuzawa, 2008, p. 17; Lie, 2001, p. 35), where Western nations are idealised as cultural ideals. The persistence of Western idealisation and cultural hegemony was evident post-World War II when American cultural elements, such as films and cartoons, found significant appeal among the Japanese populace, discussed by scholars such as Rimer (1992, p. 273). This shift exemplified the broader post-war American influence on Japan's cultural identity.

The Japaneseness discourse, although enduring, does not represent the facts, as further analysed in the next section. Not all Japanese are wealthy, nor are all people from the Third World poor. However, many equate poverty in Third World countries to low-status foreign labourers and take for granted the superiority of the West, including North Americans and Europeans. Nearly 40% Japanese in a 1982 survey reported experiencing economic difficulties in daily life. Most stated they had no leisure time (cited in Lie, 2001, p. 30). This belief system positions foreign workers in Japan as a class, cultural, and ethnic 'other'. In

1990, driven by an economic bubble, the mainstream self-image in Japan was that of a wealthy society. The new foreign workers, primarily engaged in unpopular jobs, reinforced the general consciousness of the Japanese as a middle class, whereas the foreign workers were seen as lower class. However, this is far from the truth, as immigrants in Japan display a vast range of educational levels and class backgrounds (Tsuda, 2003, p. 297).

However, the discourse surrounding ‘Japaneseness’ not only marginalises non-Japanese residents but also culturally justifies social and economic hierarchies based on racial and ethnic backgrounds, becoming an ideological tool that supports exclusive nationalist agendas. Therefore, it is essential to critically reassess and challenge Japan’s self-narrative based on its actual multicultural and multiethnic conditions.

1.5.3 The Reality of Multiethnicity and Challenge to Mono-Ethnic Ideology

Despite its widespread acceptance, this monoethnic ideology was based on misconceptions. This narrative, often portrayed as stemming from Japan’s three centuries of isolation during the Tokugawa era, inaccurately simplifies the historical and cultural complexities of the period. Scholars such as Lie (2001, p. 131) and Arudou (2015, p. 17) have discussed how the common belief of Japan as a particular, ethnically homogeneous nation-state—an idea embedded within the discourse of Japaneseness—has been constructed through national narratives rather than reflecting reality. Even during the seclusionist Tokugawa period (1603–1868), Japanese society was not entirely cut off from the outside world. The Tokugawa government maintained extensive interactions with other sovereign nations, and intellectuals of the era possessed a broad understanding of the world beyond the Japanese archipelago. Geographically, Japan’s island status facilitated rather than hindered intercultural contact, with maritime transportation proving more effective given its rugged terrain. Furthermore, Japan is not exactly a monolingual society, as a significant portion of its everyday vocabulary consists of loanwords. Also, the unification of languages across Japan is a relatively recent phenomenon that evolved in the 1880s through the unification of spoken and written language movements. Therefore, the complexities of the Japanese language do not preclude non-native speakers from learning it.

However, Japan’s exclusive notions of Japaneseness as a ‘stealth ideology’ persist (Araudou, 2015, p. 20). Sociologist John Lie’s fieldwork has pointed to the widespread conflation of

nation, state, ethnicity, and race in Japanese society, reinforced by the legal expression of nationality as *jus sanguinis* (nationality by descent) (Lie, 2001, p. 144). This conflation of ethnicity with citizenship has marginalised and disenfranchised minority groups in Japan, including immigrant groups settled in Japan. This principle of Japanese citizenship does not stem from the goal of ethnic homogeneity but has its origins in the late 19th century (Kashiwazaki, 1998, p. 280). The racial ideology of Europe in the 19th century influenced the concept of nation in Japan, and subsequently the Japanese race/nation (*Yamato minzoku*) - a solid fictive kinship system was formed, that is, the primitive bonds of language, culture, and lineage under the emperor combined with the family state (*kazoku kokka*). Japan's post-war ethnonationalism represents a mix of citizenship with ethnicity, forming a distinct ideology that has emphasised ethnic purity and cultural homogeneity, as encapsulated in the 'Nihonjinron'/'Japanesenesses' discourse, and is resistant to non-Japanese newcomers (Liu-Farrer et al., 2024, p. 4; Lie, 2001, p. 144). This discourse has long upheld the belief that Japan should remain a monoethnic society (Kashiwazaki, 2013, p. 42). Following the Meiji Restoration, these ethnonationalist ideas solidified into the state's ideology, deeply embedding themselves within Japan's post-war social consciousness and significantly shaping the nation's approach to immigration. Japan's resistance and reluctance to immigrate were actual practices until 1980. And then, it was more of a discourse, reflecting the struggle of Japanese society with this ethno-nationalist identity.

If we transition from the macro view of national identity and international posture to the internal socio-cultural dynamics, Japan's demographic reality contradicts its homogeneous narrative. After the collapse of imperial Japan, debates arose over which colonised peoples were granted Japanese citizenship, and which were not. Similar to the UK's 1948 Citizenship Act, the soon-to-be post-imperial nation decided to remove citizenship from former subjects. These actions aimed to introduce a new sense of national identity and implement punitive policies to delineate who is and who is not a citizen. Japan was taking steps towards becoming an ethnostate, removing Chinese and Koreans from citizenship to amalgamate national and ethnic identity. The last ordinance promulgated by the emperor before the implementation of the new Constitution of Japan in 1947, the Alien Registration Imperial Ordinance, redefined Japanese citizenship by making Koreans and Chinese, who had originally held Japanese citizenship, foreigners. This policy highlighted tensions between Japan's anti-immigration stance and emerging international humanitarian norms.

The late 20th-century increase of foreign workers further complicates this, as these groups are not seamlessly assimilated but rather seen through a lens of otherness, perpetuating a dichotomy between ‘pure’ Japanese and ‘foreign’ identities. This dichotomous view is not merely a social oversight but a structured approach to preserving a mythologised Japanese racial purity. Japan has, in fact, become a multicultural society. The ethnic composition of Japan at the end of the 20th century was that one-third of the immigrants were made up of ‘old immigrants’ who had settled in Japan before the end of the Second World War, including Koreans, and Chinese, including Taiwanese. More than half of the immigrants are referred to as ‘new immigrants’ who entered Japan mainly after the 1980s (Tarumoto, 2017, p. 218). Most of the ‘new immigrants’ from Brazil and Peru are referred to as ‘Nikkeijin’, which means people of Japanese descent. The entry of ‘new immigrants’ into Japan is directly related to the aforementioned changes in Japanese immigration policy.

In the decade from 2008 to 2018, the population of foreign workers in Japan saw a significant increase, tripling from 486,000 to 1.46 million. This rise occurred as the Japanese government incrementally broadened the avenues for accepting foreign workers, a move driven by the nation’s escalating challenges related to an ageing population and a declining birth rate. Despite this expansion, the core principles of Japan’s immigration policies remained largely unchanged.

Data indicates that the proportion of foreign workers in Japan’s workforce is significantly lower than in other developed countries, with only 1-2% foreign worker representation. This figure stood at 1.7% in 2010 and remained stable at 1.7% in 2016, increasing slightly to 2.2% by 2020. In contrast, the ratio of foreign workers in other developed countries is markedly higher: 13.1% in Germany (2020), 6.9% in the United States (2017), 7.3% in France (2020), and 9.0% in the United Kingdom (2018), as reported by the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training (2023, p. 84).

As Japan continues to shape its identity in a globalised world, the economic necessity for foreign workers is challenging the rigid frameworks of ideological purity. Economic developments in the 1980s and 1990s, driven by labour shortages in sectors such as construction, agriculture, and healthcare, necessitated the entry of foreign workers. While initially resistant due to the prevailing monoethnic ideology, the Japanese government gradually implemented programs such as the ‘Nikkeijin’ program and the Technical Intern

Training Program (TITP) to facilitate the controlled entry of foreign workers. These workers, primarily from Latin American and other Asian countries, brought with them not only their human resources but also their cultures, languages, and identities, which were distinctly non-Japanese. The presence of these foreign workers in various Japanese cities began to disrupt the societal silence surrounding Japan's de facto multiethnic reality. Unlike the historically marginalised groups like the Ainu, Okinawans, or Burakumin, whose struggles and voices had been largely confined to the peripheries of national awareness, foreign workers were centrally integrated into the economic machine. Their visibility in everyday life made it increasingly difficult for the public and the policymakers to ignore or deny their existence. As foreign workers began to form communities, their cultural practices, languages, and social institutions became a more visible part of the urban landscape in Japan. This visibility prompted a re-evaluation of what it means to be Japanese in a society demonstrably benefiting from and interacting with a diverse population. The narrative of cultural and ethnic homogeneity was directly contradicted by the lived experiences of not only the foreign workers but also the Japanese people who lived and worked alongside them.

The experiences of foreign workers including Japanese Brazilians and the varied personal perceptions of what it means to be Japanese challenge the monoethnic ideology. On the one hand, there has been a responsive movement that seeks to reinforce the traditional narrative of ethnic homogeneity, often citing cultural purity and social harmony as justifications. On the other hand, progressive elements within Japanese society have begun advocating for a more inclusive understanding of Japaneseness that acknowledges the contributions and rights of all residents, regardless of their ethnic origins.

Interviews with the Japanese Brazilian community highlight a growing tension between Japan's longstanding monoethnic ideology and the evolving realities of an increasingly diverse society. Although preferential ethnic policies for Japanese Brazilians are typically observed during the immigration process, these 'returnees' frequently encounter chilly responses from the citizens of their ancestral homeland when they attempt to settle permanently and seek supportive integration policies. This discrepancy emphasises a significant integration challenge: reconciling the diverse ethnic identities of immigrants with Japan's monoethnic national identity. The presence of foreign workers has sparked critical conversations about inclusion, rights, and the future of national identity in Japan, signalling a

potential move away from outdated notions of homogeneity towards a more realistic understanding of what it means to be Japanese in the contemporary era.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

In answering the research question, which is to what extent have second-generation Japanese Brazilians been integrated into or excluded from Japanese society, it is essential to adopt a multidimensional approach. Chapter Two explores integration theory and how it applies to the Japanese context. It defines key concepts and discusses the factors influencing integration in legal-political, socio-economic, and cultural dimensions. Chapter Two examines how these factors can act as double-edged swords in Japan, facilitating integration in some cases while hindering it in others. This multi-layer theoretical framework is crucial for understanding the complex and often contradictory narratives on integration and exclusion, which are further analysed in the following chapters.

This thesis focuses on three key dimensions: legal-political, socio-economic, and cultural. These dimensions were chosen because they encapsulate the core areas that significantly influence the integration process. These three dimensions correspond to different parties interacting with the integration process: the state, the market, and the nation (Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas 2016, pp. 11-29). Section 2.1 starts with an introduction to integration theory, emphasising its relevance to studying Japanese Brazilians. It sets the stage for discussing the various factors influencing integration. Section 2.2 defines the core integration concepts, highlighting the political-legal, socio-economic, and cultural dimensions. It outlines the objective indicators used to measure integration outcomes and discusses how these indicators help understand successful integration. In section 2.3, I examine the dual nature of integration factors, illustrating how they can both promote and hinder integration in different scenarios. This discussion is framed within the context of Japan, providing an understanding of the interplay between various dimensions of integration.

In the legal political dimension (2.3.1), the ability of Japanese Brazilians to ‘return’ to Japan is closely linked to changes in legal policies. This research focuses on laws and policies related to Japanese Brazilians’ citizenship and legal residency rights. Immigrants without legal status often face significant challenges in obtaining other basic rights such as education, healthcare, and employment protection (Long, et al., 2017, p. 3), which directly affects their

ability to fully participate in society. Immigration policies and laws also shape the experiences of individuals. Policies that support integration tend to enhance a sense of belonging, whereas restrictive policies hinder integration efforts (Soto Saavedra et al., 2023, p. 3).

The emphasis on economic integration (2.3.2) stems from the belief that economic stability and social mobility are crucial indicators of whether Japanese Brazilians have ‘successfully’ integrated into Japanese society. The lack of stable employment, low Japanese literacy rates, and the consequent increase in government social support are perceived as threats to Japan’s societal stability. As a result, in 2006, state officials declared the country’s ethnic repatriation plan a ‘failure’ (Tian, 2019, pp. 1503-1504). From April 1, 2009, the Japanese government has been offering Nikkei repatriation (Arudou, 2009). This framework includes objective indicators of economic integration, such as education, employment, and language proficiency, as these factors are fundamental in determining an individual’s ability to participate fully in the economy and society. Furthermore, it examines how individuals perceive economic integration and how the attainment or lack thereof of these indicators has influenced their varied experiences of integration, whether positive or negative.

The presence of Japanese Brazilian immigrants has not only stirred economic and social discussions but also profoundly questioned the traditional criteria for national identity within Japan. As this diverse group struggles with integration and acceptance, their experiences mirror the broader inconsistencies and contradictions in how Japan perceives and categorises its people. Research indicates that first-generation Japanese Brazilians often form a Brazilian identity (Tsuda, 2000, p. 55). Investigating how the second generation of Japanese Brazilians reconcile their ethnic identity and balance their national identity towards Japan helps to explain how they navigate the complexities between the two cultures. This thesis views ethnic identity as a way for Japanese Brazilians to use their ethnic identity as a form of empowerment and a means of negotiating their social status (García, 2000; Grossberg, 1996, p. 102). Focusing on this dimension of integration provides crucial insights into how Japanese Brazilians perceive themselves and how society perceives them. The thesis demonstrates that the maintaining of the diverse ethnic identity of most Japanese Brazilians is not necessarily a rejection of mainstream cultural norms nor integration, but rather a way to make sense of their experiences and maintain their unique identity within a society dominated by homogenising discourse.

This thesis improves upon Penninx and Garcés-Mascreñas' three-dimensional framework (2016, p. 16) by viewing integration as a two-way process, which aligns with the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach discussed in detail in the next section (1.6) and Chapter Three. By applying interpretative repertoires deductively, I identify and analyse recurring patterns of talk that reflect broader narratives and ideologies. This approach helps to ensure that the analysis remains focused on the key aspects of integration and exclusion as experienced by Japanese Brazilians. It also helps to uncover how participants' language reflects and reinforces broader social structures and power relations within Japanese society.

By establishing a framework for integration as a two-way process, encompassing legal-political, socio-economic, and cultural dimensions, this study provides a valuable tool for understanding the integration process. This comprehensive framework emphasises that integration involves not only the extent to which second-generation immigrants assimilate into the host society but also how the host society accepts and incorporates the newcomers' cultural identity. Conceptualising integration as a two-way process broadens the application of existing literature on integration.

Moreover, contemporary theoretical literature, which predominantly focuses on objective indicators of integration, often fails to adequately address subjective indicators and empirical evidence. This study's framework incorporates the subjective perceptions and experiences of individuals with immigrant backgrounds, thereby illuminating how second-generation Japanese Brazilians interpret their integration experiences. This approach not only fills a notable gap in the literature, which often overlooks the perspectives of second-generation immigrants, but also empirically investigates how legal status, language proficiency, and cultural identity serve as critical often positive factors influencing integration. However, these factors can also function as instruments of marginalisation when barriers to accessing these resources exist.

Consequently, the theoretical framework proposed in this study, combined with its real-world applicability, provides invaluable insights for formulating policies and measures aimed at enhancing integration. The findings indicate that immigrants, in their efforts to integrate into the host society, generally aspire to retain their original cultural identity to some extent. For these individuals, successful integration does not equate to assimilation. This suggests that

the host society must make appropriate adjustments to respect and comprehend diverse identities rather than imposing rigorous assimilation and exclusion.

Traditionally, immigration integration debates have been classified as two or three contrasting patterns: assimilation and pluralism (Gans, 1997, p. 875) or assimilation, guestworker, and integration (De Haas et al., 2020, pp. 326-327). Assimilation pattern refers to the process by which immigrants fully adopt the culture and norms of the host society, often to the point of losing their cultural distinctiveness. The guest worker pattern has also been described as differentiated exclusion: migrants will be initially granted temporary integration into specific sectors of society, primarily the labour market while being denied access to other areas (citizenship and political involvement).

Pluralism and often used interchangeably with terms like multiculturalism or integration, suggests that immigrants (and occasionally non-migrant minority groups) should be able to engage as equals in all aspects of society without the requirement to relinquish their own culture, religion, and language. However, there is typically an anticipation of adherence to specific fundamental values. Many researchers also use the term 'integration' to characterise a more moderate model between assimilation and multiculturalism. These research efforts aim to elucidate the process by which individuals with immigrant backgrounds become an integral part of their host society. They specifically concentrate on various aspects of their lives, including social, educational, economic, cultural, and intergenerational dimensions.

This thesis views integration as a dynamic, reciprocal process involving both the host society and migrants rather than a one-sided adaptation by migrants (Ager and Strang, 2008; De Haas et al., 2020). In the legal-political dimension, key objective indicators such as citizenship status, legal rights, and relevant policies are considered (Joppke, 1999; Soysal, 1994). These factors influence second-generation Japanese Brazilians' ability to fully participate in the living society. This framework also considers the subjective impact of these indicators, examining how individuals perceive their legal status and its relationship to integration, as discussed in Chapter Four. Understanding these perceptions helps to reveal under what circumstances legal and political factors facilitate or hinder the integration process (Bloemraad, 2006, p. 949; Kymlicka, 1995, p. 173). In the socio-economic dimension, objective indicators such as language proficiency, educational attainment, and employment status are selected (Berry, 1997, p. 22; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). These elements are

crucial for evaluating how well Japanese Brazilians adapt to and integrate into the socio-economic structure of Japanese society. Subjective indicators in this dimension include individuals' perceptions of their educational and employment experiences. Analysing these perceptions can provide a clear understanding of the barriers and facilitators to socio-economic integration and how they operate (Dustmann and Fabbri, 2003, p. 695; Alba and Nee, 2009, p. 244). In the cultural dimension, the focus shifts to the interaction between Japanese national identity and individuals' ethnic identity (Nagel, 1994, p. 152; Barth, 1998). The formation of identity in this dimension is influenced by the legal-political and socio-economic environment. Investigating how second-generation Japanese Brazilians navigate the relationship between Japanese national identity and ethnic identity provides insights into how cultural integration occurs and how they develop their sense of belonging and acceptance (Phinney, 1990; Portes and Zhou, 1993). The subjective indicator of ethnic identity here reflects how individuals see themselves and perceive how they are viewed by others within Japanese society (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Jenkins, 1996).

1.7 Methodology

Given Japan's unique socio-cultural context, this study employs detailed field data and discourse analysis within the aforementioned theoretical framework to understand two-way integration. Since official statistics are often categorised by nationality rather than ethnicity (Kadia, 2015), the data available to researchers inherently has limitations and cannot accurately reflect the integration experiences of individuals, such as the second generation of Japanese Brazilians. Therefore, this comprehensive methodology approach contributes to revealing the complex interplay between objective conditions and subjective experiences, providing valuable insights into the factors that promote or hinder the integration process.

Due to the interconnected nature of various indicators within the theoretical framework, I examine how each indicator specifically affects the integration experience of Japanese Brazilians by carefully analysing interview content and identifying recurring themes and patterns. I also examine how these indicators collectively influence the sense of integration among Japanese Brazilians.

Specifically, I will use the interpretative repertoires approach (Wetherell and Potter, 1988, pp. 168-183) in discourse analysis to examine respondents' narratives. This approach focuses on

how arguments construct social reality, assuming that language acts as a social practice with its own characteristic features and practical consequences rather than a simple neutral description of the social actor and the world (Wetherell and Potter, 1988, pp. 168-169).

Michael Billig (1995, p. 39) also refers to this as a rhetorical analysis in his work on banal nationalism. This approach highlights how everyday phrases and arguments create a common sense, suggesting that what may seem rational or true is conditioned by how people talk. The idea is that discourse is a good indicator of people's thoughts.

Therefore, concepts such as integration and identity can be understood through an analysis of discourse. Like with any interview-based method, it is argued that participants can give insightful accounts of their social experience. This approach, however, risks adopting an 'anything goes' attitude, which suggests that people might articulate or express their sense of belonging and identity in any way they deem appropriate. This suggests that an individual's account could be subjective and potentially not have explanatory power. Jonathan Potter (2003, p. 788) has contributed to the literature, stressing the importance of exploring all possible articulations or arguments through in-depth interviews. This study uses this approach to understand all the possible ways in which integration can be articulated and understand what separates them. In a collection on 'Ideological Dilemmas', the Loughborough school focussed on examining how ideologies, which they consider popular ways of thinking, are contradictory (Billig et al., 1988). But it is through the contradictions, the points at which two arguments contradict each other, that we can understand how the ideas do not resolve but are propped up. This process elucidates how what may seem irrational is rationalised or how societal logics govern behaviour despite appearing illogical.

Power, as discussed by Norman Fairclough (2015, p. 67) can be studied through discourse because the dominant narratives in a society control how people think. For example, 'subaltern' groups such as Brazilians have a power disadvantage in Japan, as cultural institutions create narratives surrounding what it means to be Japanese and what a Japanese citizen should do. While immigrants have agency, the ability to interpret these narratives and to transgress them, they have little ability to voice their opposition in legitimate publications. Out of the many available linguistic resources in reality, some words, phrases, and structures will be used and some not, which reflects the constructed nature of discourse. Discourse analysis acknowledges that discourse is variable and depends on its function, which challenges the traditional psychological view of the individual as a coherent source of

discourse (Wetherell and Potter, 1988, p. 171). Instead, identifying variability within and between the accounts that people give has a crucial analytic role in this approach. This is also particularly apt for examining the diverse narratives of Japanese Brazilians.

Discourse analysis serves as the primary analytical method to highlight the performative and constructive aspects of language in shaping social realities. Given the diverse backgrounds of the interviewees, this approach enables an examination of how respondents articulate their experiences, construct their representations of integration and navigate integration/exclusion within the Japanese context.

The analysis begins with a coding process of 31 in-depth interviews from Chapter Four to Chapter Six, identifying recurrent themes and patterns across the narratives, which include different aspects of respondents' experiences, including legal status, language acquisition, schooling, workplace dynamics, and diverse articulation of ethnic identification. Following the initial coding, the study analyses the interpretative repertoires, the analytic unit in discourse analysis (Wetherell and Potter, 1988, p. 169) that emerge from the data. These repertoires are seen as the building blocks of discourse, showing the shared and contested meanings that underpin the respondents' narratives. By exploring the ways in which respondents use language to make sense of their world, including their underlying assumptions, and perceptions of self and society, the ultimate goal of discourse analysis is to understand how the integration experiences of Japanese Brazilians are linguistically framed and socially situated.

A key aspect of the discourse analysis undertaken in this study is the focus on variability and the constructed nature of discourse. Recognising that the respondents' narratives are not static reflections of reality but are actively shaped by and shape their social environments (Roth, 2002, pp. 144-145), the analysis explores how language functions to negotiate, affirm, or challenge objective indicators of 'integration'. This approach underscores the dynamic interplay between individual agency and societal structures in the construction of identities and a sense of belonging.

1.8 Contribution of the Thesis

This thesis makes a pivotal contribution to the field of immigration studies through its empirical exploration of the lived experiences of ‘ethnic returnees’ in Japan, a group that has often been overlooked in existing research. Specifically, it sheds light on Brazilians of Japanese descent, a unique group that, despite receiving preferential treatment based on the principle that ‘blood is thicker than water,’ encounters significant challenges in settling in Japanese society. Contrary to expectations, their journey reveals a spectrum of experiences ranging from re-emigration (to Brazil) to circular migration and permanent settlement (in Japan), highlighting the complexities of ‘integrating’ individuals with shared ancestry but divergent cultural values into a society that prides itself on being civilised, modern, and democratic. This dilemma, while acutely observed in the Japanese Brazilian context, echoes the broader challenges faced by all foreign workers in Japan, thereby underscoring the wider relevance of this study.

This study has two main theoretical contributions. Firstly, it presents an in-depth qualitative account of the inner lives of second-generation ‘returnees’, illuminating the personal dimensions of their ‘integration’ journey (Zapata-Barrero and Evren Yalaz, 2022). Secondly, by situating individual migrant experiences within the broader institutional and policy framework of Japan, this thesis proposes a nuanced analytical framework that bridges the gap between micro-level ‘integration’ processes and macro-level immigration policies. This approach addresses a significant gap in the literature, where previous studies have either focused narrowly on descriptive aspects of Japanese Brazilian experience without linking it to broader policy contexts or have discussed Japanese immigration policy without adequately considering its impact on individual immigrants. By combining these perspectives, this thesis not only enriches our understanding of the integration of the unique group but also contributes to the development of a more comprehensive theory of immigrant research in Japan. It challenges and expands existing narratives, offering new insights into the dynamics of ‘integration’ in ‘ethnic’ nations like Japan, where the interplay between cultural identity, immigration policy, and societal values presents unique challenges and opportunities for immigrant communities. The study’s findings have the potential to inform policy discussions and contribute to a more inclusive understanding of ‘integration’ in contexts characterised by a strong emphasis on ethnic homogeneity.

Chapter Two: Integration Theory and Its Construction in the Japanese Context

2.1 Introduction

This thesis provides an answer to the question, ‘To what extent are Japanese Brazilians integrated into or excluded from Japanese society?’ This research focuses on second-generation Japanese Brazilians, all of whom were either born in Japan or arrived before starting elementary school with their parents. This group highlights the importance of understanding how these residents perceive and experience integration, their visions of the extent and possibilities of their integration, and the challenges they encounter.

This chapter explores integration theory and how it applies to the Japanese context. It defines key concepts and discusses the factors influencing integration in legal-political, socio-economic, and cultural dimensions. This chapter examines how these factors can act as double-edged swords in Japan, facilitating integration in some cases while hindering it in others. This multi-layer theoretical framework is crucial for understanding the complex and often contradictory narratives on integration and exclusion, which are further analysed in the following chapters.

2.1.1 Terminology

Nikkei-jin

Nikkei-jin is a Japanese word. The last three letters, ‘jin,’ translates as people or a person in English; the word Nikkei means Japanese diaspora. So Nikkei-jin refers to non-Japanese people of Japanese descent. For example, Japanese Americans can identify themselves as Nikkei Americans; Philippine Nikkei-jin is descendant of Japanese citizens who migrated to the Philippines; Nikkei Latin Americans are Japanese descendants in Latin America.

According to statistics from the Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad (2020), approximately 3.8 million Japanese descendants are currently scattered around the world. About 60% of Nikkeijin live in Central and South America. Brazil and Peru have two of the world’s largest Japanese descendant communities.

This thesis focuses on the experiences of second-generation Nikkei Brazilians in Japan. They are the offspring of Japanese citizens who immigrated to Brazil in the early 20th

century. Attracted by Japan's immigration policies in 1990, their parents returned to Japan from Brazil as first-generation returnees. So, the second-generation Nikkei Brazilians reside in Japan as a result of their parents migrating to Japan, their ancestral homeland, for work.

Second Generation

Who are the second-generation returnees in Japan? In fact, there has been no single definition of what it means to be first, second, or third generation. As Levitt highlights (2002, p. 12), the American definition of generation differs to the traditional British idea: studies of the second generation generally focus on the children of immigrants who were born in the United States; and people who came to the United States as children, usually accompanied by parents, but who grew up and attended school in this country. Zhou (1997) identifies the second generation as immigrant children who arrived in the U.S. before adulthood but were foreign-born. She also suggests that those who migrated to the new country before adolescence, after the age of 6, and before the age of 13 are defined as 1.5 generations (Zhou, 2004).

Therefore, the generational definitions as utilised in this study are:

First-generation returnees: refer to Nikkei Brazilians who have Japanese ancestors and started to travel to Japan from Brazil for work in 1990.

Second-generation returnees refer to the children of the first-generation returnees. The children may have been born in Brazil or Japan. If born abroad, they moved and settled in Japan at an early age (primary school) and received the majority of their schooling in Japan.

Second-generation Japanese Brazilian

There are two meanings of the word return itself. One is the movement from overseas to one's country of origin (Xiang, 2013, p. 7). The second is the movement from one's country of citizenship to the country of ancestral origin (Tsuda, 2009, p. 1). This study uses the second meaning of the term 'return'. Thus after living in Brazil for generations, the journey of Nikkei Brazilians migrating to their ethnic homelands -- Japan is regarded as the ethnic return migration phenomenon.

Overall, the available literature provides a substantial bibliography on Nikkeijin in Japan. They focus on different Nikkeijin groups, such as those from Brazil and Peru (Kosminsky, 2020; Tsuda, 2003; Roth, 2002; Adachi 2006, 2010; Takenaka, 2009; Linger, 2001; Yamanaka, 1999; Carvalho, 2003), and those from the Philippines (Ohno, 2015). Some work

is only available in Japanese (Maeyama, 1996; Ishikawa, 1997). These studies adopted different approaches and expressed Japanese Brazilians living in Japan in slightly different terminology. The terms ‘Brazilians in Japan’ and ‘Nikkeis in Brazil’ are used in Linger’s work (2001); ‘Japanese Brazilians in Japan’ is preferred by Tsuda (2003); ‘Nikkeijin in Japan’ often appears in Carvalho’s work (2003). I use the ‘second-generation Japanese Brazilian’ in this study.

2.1.2 Shortcomings of Assimilation and Segmented Assimilation Theory

Theory and research on ‘integration’, ‘assimilation’, and ‘incorporation’ all seek to explain how immigrants and their children become part of their host society with a focus on their social, educational, economic, cultural and inter-generational lives (Powers, 2013, p. 1).

For most of the 20th century, assimilation theory was one of the most influential explanations of how immigrants became part of the new country and improved their status over time. Assimilation theory was originally proposed by Park and Burgess (1969) based on their analysis of the experiences and characteristics of 19th and early 20th-century European immigrants to the United States. Implicit in the theory were assumptions of (1) a single majority culture and (2) a one-way process during which immigrants changed their language and cultural characteristics to become more like the dominant group in the host country. The term ‘assimilation’ is defined by Park and E.W. Burgess (1969, p. 735) as: ‘a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life.’ It implies a period during which immigrants and/or their offspring can become similar. However, this definition has been challenged by many later writers for appearing to portray assimilation as an inevitable outcome in multiethnic societies (Lyman, 1973; Stone, 1985). Over time, the assimilation paradigm has generally been the ‘mainstream’ in the American debate and was revisited from time to time for an adaptation to changed political and demographic realities (Schneider and Crul 2010, p. 1144). Studying ‘successful assimilation’ mainly refers to measuring the degree of incorporation into patterns of economic and social successes.

One of the main challenges is that the relationship between the national identification of immigrants and their ethnic orientations is not zero-sum. Instead, some studies have pointed out that the ethnic orientation of immigrants can be independent of their national orientation,

which means that in the process of integration, immigrants may retain their ethnic identifications (Berry, 1997, p. 5; 2005, p. 698). The second challenge comes from the segmented assimilation model, as mentioned below. Immigrants do not necessarily integrate into the middle class of the host society as the classical assimilation model implied. Lower-class immigrants living in lower-class neighbourhoods especially are prone to integrate into an underclass and adopt a rebellious identity that rejects the desirability of schooling and a professional career (Slootman, 2018, p. 14).

Segmented Assimilation

Segmented assimilation theory is a variant of assimilation theory. Portes and Zhou proposed the concept of ‘segmented assimilation’ in 1993. They referred to the three distinct adaptation patterns and, thus, the divergent destinies of second-generation immigrants as ‘segmented assimilation’ (1993, p. 74).

Portes and Zhou(1993) have observed three possible patterns of adaptation most likely to occur among contemporary immigrants and their offspring: (1) the upward mobility pattern, which dictates the acculturation and economic integration into the normative structure of middle-class America; (2) the downward-mobility pattern, in the opposite direction, dictates the acculturation and parallel integration into the permanently poor underclass; (3) economic integration into middle-class America, with lagged acculturation and deliberate preservation of the immigrant community’s values and solidarity (Portes and Zhou, 1993, p. 82; Zhou, 1997, p. 975). The introduction of the concept of segmented assimilation contributes to describing different processes and outcomes of immigration adaptation and poses an important theoretical question of what makes some immigrant groups become susceptible to downward mobility and what allows them to bypass or get out of this undesirable route.

Context of reception in migration studies emphasises how a specific migrant-receiving environment’s institutional, labour market and social features shape newcomers’ settlement experiences and opportunities for mobility (Portes and Borocz, 1989, p. 618). The prevalence of downward assimilation and the difficulty of upward mobility are rooted in Japan’s reception context. The labour market structure and education system provide an unfavourable reception for some children of immigrants. Local context plays an important role for reception due to the exclusion and lacking integration programs in the national level. Previous research is consistent with the segmented assimilation theory. The transnational

movement of parents between Brazil and Japan has a negative influence on the educational attainment of Brazilian children in Japan because it hinders them from learning both Japanese and Portuguese and from acquiring the education and job skills necessary to succeed in either setting (Ishikawa, 2005). Those second-generation children of immigrants who experienced upward mobility are more likely to live in cities with more integration programs and fuelled by their family's economic resources as well as the cultural adaptation of their parents (Takenoshita et al., 2014, p. 85).

Japan's education system and labour market structure are deemed to be significant for understanding the incorporation of immigrants (Takenoshita et al., 2014). Unlike the situation in the US, bifurcation of the labour market in Japan exists between standard and nonstandard workers. Lifetime employment, seniority earnings, and firm-based labour unions have shaped the employment protections for regular workers in Japan (Koike, 1988). However, increasing global economic competition requires labour market flexibility, leading to rapid growth in the number of nonstandard workers (Genda, 2005). In fact, many Brazilian workers are incorporated into the temporary employment sector controlled by labour brokerage agencies (Higuchi and Tanno, 2003). This implies that temporary Brazilian workers must accept employment instability. Furthermore, they have unskilled jobs in the manufacturing industry that do not require any work-related skills, knowledge, or even Japanese language proficiency.

The educational system is also important in the analysis of immigrant children. In Japan, compulsory schooling includes six years of elementary school and three years of middle school. And then the senior high school is not compulsory, instead, it is selective strictly based on entrance examination scores, and typically classified into two different tracks: academic and vocational (Ishida, 2007). Thus, to enter high school immigrant children need at least linguistic adaptation. However, Japanese Brazilian immigrant children face great difficulty in learning the Japanese language, which makes it more difficult for immigrant children to succeed in school (Sakuma 2006). Actually, immigrant children have to leave even compulsory schooling, and it is difficult to enter high school because of unfavourable reception in Japanese public schools (Sakuma, 2006).

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the Brazilian schools in Japan. Brazilian schools emerged in the 1990s after the reform of the Japanese immigration law in 1990. In the

beginning, schools served as nurseries, taking care of small children while their parents worked in factories (Kawamura 2003). In 1999, the Brazilian Ministry of Education (MEC) started to accredit Brazilian schools in Japan, enabling them to issue valid diplomas to be used in Brazil. Consequently, this accreditation entailed that each school follow the Brazilian curriculum. Many parents chose Brazilian schools instead of Japanese schools because they migrated with the goal of saving money and returning to Brazil. However, educational degrees in these ethnic schools may not allow Brazilian children to obtain good jobs in the Japanese labour market or to attain higher education in Japan because the curricula at these schools do not comply with the one specified by the Japanese Ministry of Education (Sakuma, 2006; Ishikawa, 2009). Brazilian children who graduated from the Brazilian school are not empowered to continue their studies in Japan due to their lack of Japanese language and the differences in curriculum. Instead, they usually end up reproducing the current social conditions, the marginalization of Brazilian migrants. These integration results in Japan coincide with the downward assimilation model in the segmented assimilation theory. Japanese Brazilians are excluded from mainstream Japanese society, which has been reflected in the education attainment as well as the occupational attainment of the second generation.

Although the overall trend of the second-generation Japanese Brazilians in Japan is that they have reproduced the social status of their parents, as indicated in the segmented assimilation theory, the further question is how to explain the different situations within people of the second generation? What makes some people avoid the downward trap, and others not? By looking at how second-generation Japanese Brazilians interpret their experiences, we can know some common factors as well as personal factors.

Integration in the Context of Japan: Multicultural Coexistence ('tabunka kyousei')

Although the term 'integration' is pretty similar to 'assimilation', more explicitly than 'assimilation', 'integration' includes structural aspects of incorporation into society, especially with regard to educational achievements and access to the labour market (Schneider and Crul 2010, p. 1146). Classical notions of immigrant integration assume that the second generation performs better than the first, and slowly closes the gap with their native peers. The following presented a theoretical framework, including the socio-economic integration of second-generation immigrants in the areas of education and employment. This is because the integration of immigrant children is often measured by their achievements in education and the labour market (Niekerk, 2007, p. 1063).

The word ‘integration’ itself is highly contested despite its popularity over other terms such as inclusion, incorporation and cohesion. There is no consensus on a single definition for integration (Spencer and Charsley, 2021). Definitions share commonalities but remain highly context or country specific. As a theoretical and political concept, integration involves the extent to which immigrants become part of the majority society. The criterion of successful integration varies among states based on their integration policies and social and historical context, and not all states see integration as a neutral word.

The concept of integration has fundamentally different meanings and functions in research and in policy. Leading scholars in the field of immigration regard integration as a concept caught somewhere between the poles of pluralism and assimilation. Penninx (2019, p. 6) provides an open concept for integration as ‘the process of becoming an accepted part of society.’ It refers to the process of settlement of newcomers in a given society, to the interaction of these newcomers with the host society, and to the social change that follows immigration. Integration often encompasses three analytically distinct dimensions in which people may (or may not) become accepted parts of society: (i) the legal-political, (ii) the socio-economic, and (iii) the cultural-religious dimension (Penninx, 2019, p. 6).

‘From the moment immigrants arrive in a host society, they must secure a place for themselves. Literally, they must find a home, a job and income, schools for their children, and access to health facilities. They must find a place in a social and cultural sense as well, as they have to establish cooperation and interaction with other individuals and groups in society. They also have to get to know and use the host society’s institutions, and the latter have to recognise and accept immigrants as political, economic and cultural actors. All of these elements are assumed to work as a two-way process, in which migrants adapt and change, but also the host society does not remain unaffected’ (Penninx, 2019, p. 5).

This study considers integration as a process rather than a result because no individual can ever be entirely integrated. Furthermore, during the process of integration, each part of society uses and explains the concept to facilitate and exclude certain individuals according to their own interests. This study highlights the role of migrants as actors rather than others such as policymakers, the media, associations and native citizens. Also, through fieldwork with second-generation Japanese Brazilians, this study presents how their integration

experiences in Japan are constantly being shaped by structural factors in the receiving society.

Concepts Regarding Ethnicity

Ethnic identity-related topics are becoming increasingly topical in discussions about immigrant integration. In Europe and the United States, many children of immigrants have grown up and successfully found their way into the middle classes. They got attention because some of them articulated their ethnic-minority identities publicly and privately.

The term ‘ethnicity,’ together with terms like ‘ethnic community,’ ‘ethnic group,’ ‘ethnic minorities,’ and ‘ethnic identity,’ has been used habitually only since the 1960s. In 1967, in *Race Relations*, Michael Banton stated that ethnicity was formed by the members of the minority groups themselves and race was the public skin-color-based way of typing human beings by those outside the group. However, this claim has many exceptions. In the late 1960s, some social scientists proposed new terminology, ‘emic’, to refer to an insider’s view and ‘etic’ to an outsider’s view. Thus, Banton’s definition of ethnicity corresponds to an emic view, and race corresponds to an etic view (Adachi, 2010, p.12). Seen in this way, ethnicity carries a positive categorisation and race a negative one. In addition, given the complexity of human feelings, Eriksen (1993) states that race and ethnicity are not types but human relations. Although both race and ethnicity are relations that emerge in people’s interactions—and both could be used for discrimination, identity, solidarity, cohesion, and so on—they are not the same kinds of relations. Race emerges in people’s interactions when they perceive a physical affinity. Ethnicity emerges in social relations when people feel they have cultural or historical similarities in common. These similarities are acquired through birth and upbringing (including language, cultural values, and historical memories). Such similarities could be imagined or invented. Therefore, ethnicity is not static but dynamic because people’s relationships are in flux and depend on specific social circumstances.

In the research literature on ethnic identity, the ethnic option is an important concept. Gans (1979, p. 73) argues ethnic identification is a kind of symbolic ethnicity which is explained by Waters (1990) as indeed costless, voluntary, and individualistic. That means the ethnicity of immigrants is not labelled by others, and their ethnic background only influences their lives when they want it to. Waters, in later work (1996), argues this optional ethnicity is not

available for many ethnic minorities because ‘non-white’ ethnic minorities have a socially imposed identity and are confined to a minority status.

Enlightened by the debate on ‘ethnic option’, this study believes that we should focus on the relation between structure and agency when we look at immigrants’ everyday life experiences. Even though individuals’ ethnic backgrounds are determined when they were born, structural forces can be very influential in stigmatising ethnic minority individuals, so they have almost no ethnic options; ethnic minorities have the agency to assert their preferred ethnic identities.

In the case of the second-generation Nikkei Brazilians, many of them are mixed-race. They are often labelled as ‘Nikkeijin’ by Japanese society. The state plays an important role in the creation of the meaning of this label. However, to resist being marginalised by Japanese society, Japanese Brazilians have developed various ethnic identities, including a Brazilian counter-identity, a transnational hybrid identity and a pan-ethnic Nikkei identity.

2.2 Concepts of Integration: Defining Successful Integration

The concept of ‘integration’ is frequently invoked in migration discussions but is often ambiguous and politically charged. It serves various purposes, from being used by conservative politicians to direct resentment towards groups seen as violating moral norms or threatening national culture to functioning as a benchmark for assessing migrant success within host societies. This research acknowledges the critique that integration is often framed normatively, implying a standard that migrants must meet, while host societies evaluate their ‘worthiness’ to become members (Gibney and Hansen, 2005). Importantly, no society is without flaws, and the notion of societal norms or mainstream culture is itself fraught with limitations (Schinkel, 2010). However, this research does not engage in normative judgments about integration. The interviews focus on how individuals with immigrant backgrounds articulate their experiences of interaction, drawing on various interpretative repertoires to construct and convey their understanding of integration and belonging (Wetherell and Potter, 1988), thereby providing a better understanding of the factors that facilitate or hinder integration.

A central challenge within integration literature is the lack of a qualitative research approach that acknowledges the complexity of social contexts and the active role of individual experiences while avoiding the oversimplifications common in discussions on integration. There is a need for an objective framework that incorporates the subjectivity of migrants themselves. Without such a framework, researchers risk relying on metrics that may fail to reflect the realities of integration. For example, native citizens might not meet certain standards, yet a wealthy tourist with only a superficial affinity for the host culture might appear ‘integrated’ by these measures. This discrepancy reveals little about meaningful assessments of integration and more about preconceived expectations. Traditional measures such as employment rates, language proficiency, and educational attainment often fail to capture the everyday experiences of racism and social exclusion faced by individuals with migrant backgrounds. These metrics typically do not include the perceptions and daily life decisions of these individuals. While high employment or income levels might suggest successful integration, the crucial question remains: Do individuals with migrant backgrounds themselves feel integrated or more accepted because of these indicators?

In response to this gap, a theoretical framework is developed that includes both objective indicators and, more importantly, the subjective experiences of individuals. This framework uses objective measures as background information, primarily focusing on the lived experiences of integration. When related to migration, integration is often discussed in relation to inclusion and incorporation (Spencer and Charsley, 2021). From this perspective, many studies also treat integration and exclusion or marginalisation as analytically related concepts (e.g. Cross and Turner, 2022; Penninx and Garcés-Mascreñas, 2016; Entzinger and Biezeveld, 2003; Ari and Herscovici, 2025; Phillimore et al., 2024). Social exclusion, grounded in Durkheim’s functionalist social theory, is defined as ‘the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live’ (Rawal, 2008, p. 164). This concept encompasses economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions and manifests in various forms such as poverty, limited access to education, healthcare, employment, and exclusion from political representation. It applies to a range of marginalised groups, including school dropouts, unemployed youth, and immigrants (Aasland and Flotten, 2001, p. 1027). Integration, by contrast, is conceptualised as the ongoing process of engagement that stands in opposition to the process of exclusion and disengagement. It can be understood as a non-normative process of interaction, personal and social change among individuals and institutions across structural, social, cultural and civic

spheres and in relation to identity (Charsley et al., 2021, p. 16). The study opts for integration rather than inclusion for two reasons. First, integration has a well-established tradition in migration and social policy literature, making it particularly suitable for analysing structural barriers and participation mechanisms across different dimensions. For example, Heath and Schneider (2021) take a multidimensional approach to long-term integration across Western Europe, operationalising it as social, structural, political, civic and cultural integration, measured by 10 indicators. Second, social inclusion can take different forms, but not all forms necessarily lead to integration (Belugina et al., 2020). The concept of integration implies a two-way process in which both migrants and the host society invest effort to interact and participate.

Besides, the integration is examined not merely as the adaptation of ‘newcomers’ like Japanese Brazilians but as the transformation of Japanese society to embrace and accommodate diversity. Thus, integration is viewed as a two-way process that relies on mutual recognition and adaptation, where both the host society and individuals with immigrant backgrounds contribute to creating a more inclusive and cohesive social environment. While each immigrant host country adopts its unique strategies toward integration, the underlying principles often oscillate between assimilation and multiculturalism (Kajita et al., 2005, p.297). The term integration is derived from the Dutch word ‘inburgering’, which has meanings related to naturalisation, habituation, or acclimatisation. With the introduction of the Dutch 1998 Newcomer Integration Law, the word integration requires new immigrants to the Netherlands to complete an integration course comprising Dutch language lessons and civics education, marking the formal beginning of integration policies (Joppke, 2017, pp. 2-3). Other European countries adopted this Dutch integration model, such as ‘Integrationskurse’ in Germany and ‘Contrat d’accueil et d’intégration’ (CAI) in France. While the names differ, the core idea remains integrating immigrants by mandating language acquisition and education in the political, historical, and cultural aspects of the host country (Joppke, 2017, pp. 2-3). Integration policies are often justified as a response to the perceived failure of multicultural policies. Critics of multiculturalism argue that it leads to ‘group separation’ where different cultural communities live parallel lives without significant interaction, which can hinder social cohesion and the overall integration of newcomers into the host society. The critique of integration policies is complicated as it potentially perpetuates a form of ‘liberal imperialism’ that imposes a dominant cultural norm on immigrants, potentially at the expense of their

original cultural identities. While promoting inclusion and rights, these integration policies might not have overtly aggressive implications like imperialism but subtly impose a form of cultural dominance, promoting the universalisation of liberal values (Brown, 2008, pp. 171-172). From this perspective, the debate around integration versus multiculturalism is about how societies balance the need for social cohesion with respect for cultural diversity. This study argues against the simple categorisation of integration policies as purely assimilationist. For example, in the Netherlands, there is a distinction made for newcomers between respecting the host society's values and fully adopting them. This suggests that while newcomers are expected to understand and respect Dutch liberal values, they are not necessarily required to abandon their cultural values and completely adopt the Dutch way (Scholten, 2015, p. 989).

This approach also resonates with insights from Japanese scholars, who advocate for redefining integration to encompass both ethnicity and class. Their approach seeks equality in political and economic spheres while maintaining cultural and ethnic distinctiveness (Kajita et al., 2005, pp. 297-300). These scholars highlight the importance of rights (as the framework for achieving integration) and community (as the resource for implementing these rights), promoting both cultural diversity and economic equality. Therefore, the analytical framework used in this research advocates the ability of different ethnic groups to maintain their cultural distinctiveness in the socio-cultural dimension, while achieving equality in legal-political and socio-economic spheres. Also, it suggests that these integration standards should emerge through negotiation between migrants and host communities (Joppke and Morawska, 2003, p. 3). Field research with second-generation Japanese Brazilians reveals that integration is often perceived as the ability to feel respected and accepted on equal terms across political, economic, and cultural spheres. However, deviations from societal norms can lead to feelings of exclusion.

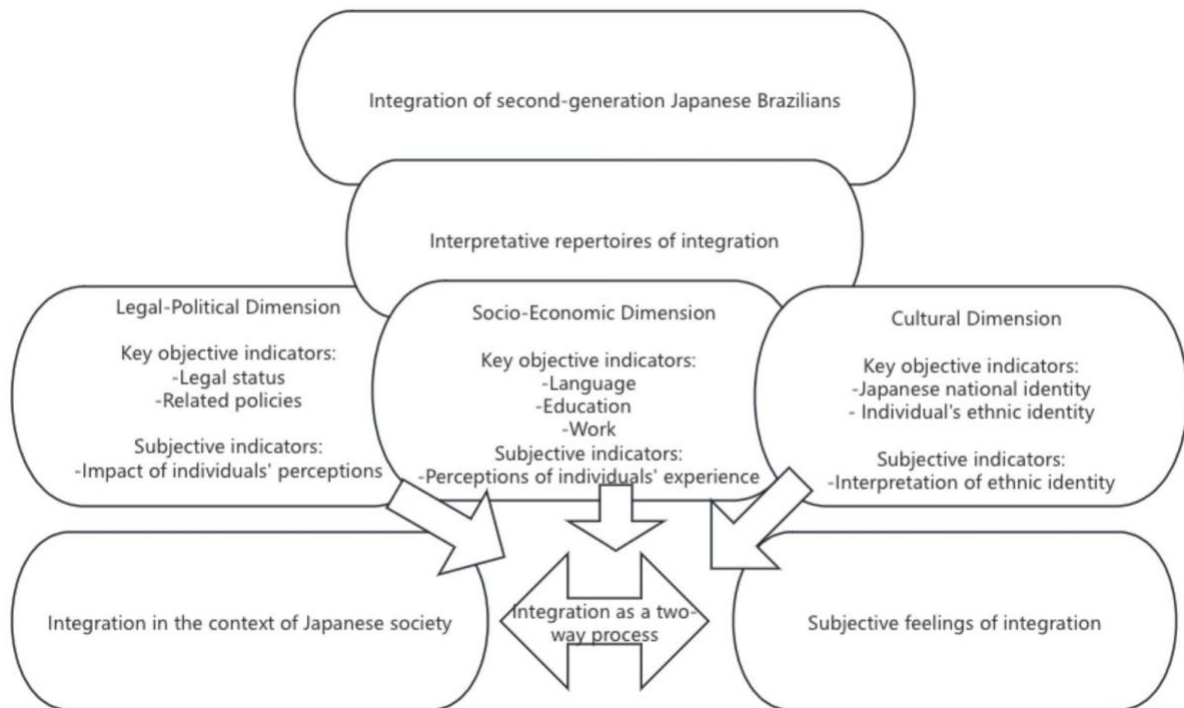


Figure 3: Framework for understanding the integration of second-generation Japanese Brazilians in Japan

Drawing upon the works of Entzinger and Biezeveld (2003, p. 19), and Penninx and Garcés-Mascreñas (2016, pp. 11-29), Figure 3 proposes a multidimensional framework, to comprehensively investigate the integration and exclusion of Japanese Brazilian within Japanese society. This allows us to investigate integration and exclusion across three critical dimensions: legal-political, socio-economic, and cultural domain. Each dimension shows the degrees to which individuals can access opportunities and rights, reflecting the interaction between personal agency and structural constraints in the journey toward equal societal participation.

Figure 3 shows how integration and/ or exclusion can be represented in three analytical dimensions. These three dimensions correspond to the three levels of actors that interact with immigration and integration processes: the state, the market, and the nation (Penninx and Garcés-Mascreñas 2016, pp. 11-29). Individuals may or may not be able to access opportunities and rights within these domains. Integration is viewed as a dynamic and ongoing process, wherein immigrants gradually achieve a status similar to that of comparable natives, e.g. immigrants with the same age, education, and gender characteristics have approximately the same social status as natives in important social areas such as the labour market (Doomernik, 1998, p. 5).

In the legal-political dimension, successful integration is understood as securing stable residency, citizenship, and political rights, ensuring equal legal status and participation. In the socio-economic dimension, integration is not only associated with upward mobility but also with equal opportunities, especially in accessing stable employment comparable to that available to the general Japanese population. In this case study, economic stability and equality in access to employment are deemed even more important than social mobility. Many respondents believed that wealth while conferring respect as a ‘foreigner’, did not lead to acceptance as ‘Japanese’. This highlights the importance of equal opportunities, rather than social class, in achieving a sense of belonging. Culturally, integration involves fostering a sense of belonging where all ethnic groups have the right to preserve their cultural heritage. Ager and Strang (2008) argue that a sense of belonging is both an outcome and an indicator of successful integration. Berry’s (1997) cultural adaptation model similarly emphasizes that maintaining one’s original cultural identity while developing a sense of belonging to the host society is central to integration. However, field research shows that while most respondents affirmed the importance of their Brazilian heritage, only a few felt fully integrated into Japanese society while retaining their Brazilian identity. Many believed that their Brazilian culture was seen as incompatible with Japanese norms, which hindered their sense of belonging and full integration.

2.3 The Double-Edged Sword of Integration Factors in the Japanese Context

Numerous studies (Watanabe, 2010; Takenoshita et al., 2014; Sueyoshi, 2011) have delved into the factors contributing to low education levels among second-generation Brazilian children. These studies reveal a complex web of societal factors at play, including Japan’s unwelcoming political stance towards foreigners, which affects migrants’ daily lives. Additionally, Japan’s non-compulsory education system exacerbates issues like truancy and dropout rates, while the transformation of Japan’s labour market results in precarious employment opportunities for non-regular foreigners. Furthermore, the economic resources of immigrant families, their acculturation patterns, and their transnational movements between Brazil and Japan all play pivotal roles in shaping the educational experiences of the second generation. Lastly, children themselves significantly impact education outcomes, with

factors such as their age at the time of migration, self-identities, and motivations for pursuing further studies all contributing to this intricate landscape.

Therefore, understanding the integration of Japanese Brazilians necessitates consideration of the Japanese social context, particularly the two primary logics guiding Japanese authorities in the admission of foreigners, which creates both barriers and facilitators for integration.

These include the economic motivation to expand the admission of foreigners, the desire to preserve cultural purity, and the securitisation of the state, which results in stringent immigrant intake and exclusionary integration policies.

2.3.1 Legal Status and Related Policies

The legal-political dimension of integration, as outlined in Figure 3, examines the extent to which second-generation Japanese Brazilians can secure residency, citizenship, and political participation rights. In Japan, the legal-political framework presents a challenging environment for full integration, influenced by the securitisation of immigration policy and the prioritisation of cultural homogeneity. This dimension assesses both objective indicators (legal status, related policies) and subjective experiences (perceptions of legal exclusion). A basic question here is whether second-generation individuals of immigrant background are regarded as full political community members and to what extent. There are two extreme degrees of integration here, one of which is the status of irregular immigrants, who are not part of the host society in a legal-political sense. The other is the status of immigrants who have already become citizens of the host country and thus have been integrated into this dimension. Integration within this dimension means having access to the same legal protections and political opportunities as native Japanese citizens, whereas exclusion manifests through restricted rights, limited access to citizenship, and barriers to political engagement.

The legal-political dimension addresses the rights and statuses conferred upon immigrants by the host country's legal and political systems. For Japanese Brazilians, this involves examining Japan's citizenship laws, residency rights, and the extent of political participation permitted to them.

As can be seen from Japan's immigration policy development and important policy changes, the concept of 'securitisation' has dominated the formulation of Japan's immigration policy

since the Cold War period. Although the Japanese government has been launching new immigrant admission programs in recent years in order to promote economic development, it has strengthened the rhetoric of its ‘non-immigration policy’ in order not to provoke domestic political controversy, which reflects the prominent influence of the concept of ‘securitisation’. Due to the government’s need to balance the interests of two major forces – the neoliberal faction and the business community demanding reforms in response to globalisation and conservatives calling for the protection of Japan’s culture as a ‘beautiful country’ – its policy needs to strike a balance among the interests of multiple parties, which has led to the dilemma that Japan’s immigration policy is still faced with the problem of accepting a large number of immigrants without recognising the immigration policy. Under these circumstances, the rights of immigrants entering Japan cannot be fully protected. This was highlighted in the revision of the Immigration Control Act in 2018. At the same time, this revision was accompanied by a restructuring of the foreign labour management agency, with the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice being upgraded to the Immigration Services Agency. Some analyses have pointed out that this shows that the Japanese government is still continuing its previous philosophy of using the Ministry of Justice as a ‘commanding tower’ in managing foreigners (Hashimoto, 2018). Considering the institutional characteristics of the Ministry of Justice, which focuses more on the control of immigration, it is difficult for it to assume corresponding functions in terms of social integration. As a result, Japan’s foreigner reception policy still exhibits strong colours of ‘supervision’ and ‘monitoring’.

Japan’s immigration policy does not fully embrace a diverse and inclusive immigration framework at both the admission and integration stages. Japanese immigration policy is primarily based on immigration control and regulations. The concept of securitisation exerts a dominant influence on the policy, while the impact of humanitarian considerations is relatively limited. Due to the uneven influence of various policy ideas, policies promoting the social integration and inclusion of immigrants are incomplete, and there is a lack of government agencies to formulate and implement related policies. Since Japanese legal society fails to incorporate foreigners into the logic of civil society, even with the Japanese Brazilian group who has status-based residency and freedom of choice of an occupation in Japan, life as a foreigner outside of employment becomes a de facto ‘second-class citizen,’ leading to multiple challenges in protecting their rights (Tanno, 2009, p. 34).

As mentioned above, prior to the 2018 amendment of the Immigration Control Act, the official policy stance was to accept only highly skilled foreigners for employment. Non-skilled foreigners were allowed to enter through ‘side door’ channels without emphasising their worker status. Regarding rights, Japanese descendants enjoyed relatively better protection, followed closely by highly skilled foreign workers, while the rights provisions for low-skilled foreign workers were the weakest. Overall, Japan’s immigration policy exhibits a strong ethnocentric characteristic, where the openness and rights protection for Japanese descendant workers are the strongest. From a policy perspective, the long-term/permanent status established by the Japanese government for Japanese descendants allows them less restricted employment and settlement in Japan. In practice, their transnational movement and integration occur within a ‘commercial’ immigration system and Japan’s temporary, flexible labour market, with both systems complementing each other. This complementarity facilitated a wave of workers of Japanese descent entering Japan in the 1990s. However, their dependence on these systems also led to their employment and living vulnerability, as vividly highlighted by the massive unemployment and forced repatriation of Japanese descendants following the 2008 economic crisis.

The prominent feature of Japan’s immigration policy is the opening up of employment to highly skilled foreign workers, but Japan also accepts unskilled foreign workers through the ‘side door’ by setting up visa categories such as ‘long term resident’ for mainly co-ethnic immigrants, and ‘technical trainee’ and ‘intern.’ Komine categorises foreign workers in Japan based on their level of access to the labour market and their visa status (2018). The ‘level of access’ includes three categories: unlimited access, limited access, and discretionary access. The worker’s status is divided into two types: economic migrants, whom the Japanese government officially acknowledges, and de facto migrant workers, who hold visas that are not supposed to be for economic purposes. As shown in Table 1, Japan’s legally recognised foreign workers are limited to highly skilled individuals, while there are various ‘de facto workers’ (mainly unskilled labourers). Compared to legally recognised workers, whose entry is somewhat restricted and requires a certain level of skill, de facto workers not only have more channels available but also face fewer restrictions upon entry.

	De jure	De facto
Unlimited	/	Status-based visas (co-ethnic migrants, e.g. Japanese Brazilians)

Limited	All remunerative activity-based visas (skilled migrants)	Technical intern training visa (trainees and interns)
Discretionary	/	Non-remunerative activity-based visas (international students)

Table 4: Classification of foreign workers in Japan (Komine, 2018, p. 113)

Komine (2018, pp. 4-10) quantitatively measured the channels for foreigners' entry into Japan based on the Openness and Rights Indicators for economic migrants set by Ruhs. Overall, the channel for receiving co-ethnic Japanese workers has the highest openness. The openness for receiving trainees/interns is comparable to that for receiving highly skilled workers. In terms of trends, in recent years, the openness of the Technical Intern Training Programme has been increasing, mainly due to the expansion of applicable industries and the extension of the internship period. Although the legal policy openness for highly skilled foreign workers is higher than for technical trainees/interns, this openness is not reflected in policy implementation, as for highly skilled foreign workers in Japan, there is a requirement to prove a certain level of skill, while there are no strict requirements for low-skilled workers. On the other hand, in terms of rights for various types of workers, Komine points out that co-ethnic Japanese workers score the highest in rights protection, while trainees and interns score the lowest. Highly skilled foreign workers score very high, slightly lower than co-ethnic Japanese workers. This reflects a clear distinction logic in Japanese immigration policy: foreigners who do not have the 'correct' education level and blood ties have no right to bring family members into Japan, find jobs on their own, or settle permanently.

Year	Skilled	Co-ethnic	Trainee/intern	Health care	Highly skilled
1988	0.70	0.69	0.40	/	/
2014	0.72	0.76	0.65	0.72	0.75

Table 5: Measurement of 'rights scores' granted to various categories of foreigners (Komine, 2018, p.115)

Despite a growing shortage of unskilled foreign workers in Japan, the official policy stance prior to the 2018 revision of the Immigration Control Act focused primarily on accepting high-skilled foreigners for employment. Unskilled foreigners were often permitted entry through indirect channels without explicit recognition of their status as workers. This policy context is particularly relevant for understanding the integration experiences of Japanese Brazilians, especially in terms of legal status and employment opportunities. In terms of rights, the protections afforded to workers of Japanese descent are relatively robust, followed by those extended to highly skilled foreign workers. In contrast, the regulatory framework for low-skilled foreign workers offers the weakest protections. This hierarchical approach to rights and protections underscores the ethnic dimension in Japan's immigration policy. The

preference and openness toward workers of Japanese descent are the strongest, reflecting a broader trend of favouring ethnic return migrants over other foreign nationals.

From the perspective of rights, even though the Japanese diaspora group scores the highest in terms of perceived cultural and legal affinity with Japan, their rights issues remain prominent, particularly in employment and settlement. Despite having the same employment rights as native Japanese citizens, many Japanese Brazilians face significant challenges in the labour market. They are often confined to lower-tier jobs, making upward mobility difficult (Takenoshita, 2013, p. 1177). Additionally, they encounter various labour rights issues, including limited access to social security benefits. The long-term settlement of Japanese Brazilians in Japan is further complicated by insufficient language skills, which hinder their integration into local communities and daily life. The education of their children is also a significant concern, as language barriers and cultural differences can affect their academic performance and social integration. Thus, from the perspective of rights, having a ‘co-ethnic’ cultural background and long-term legal status does not guarantee the resolution of the rights issues faced by the Japanese Brazilians. The government’s prioritisation of temporary economic participation over long-term integration leaves many second-generation Japanese Brazilians in a state of legal and social limbo.

Ultimately, the legal-political dimension of integration for second-generation Japanese Brazilians reflects a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they benefit from the relative openness of Japan’s immigration policies towards workers of Japanese descent, particularly through status-based visas that offer greater access to employment and residency. On the other hand, their exclusion from full citizenship and political participation, coupled with the broader societal emphasis on securitisation, constrain their ability to fully integrate. On a subjective level, the feeling of exclusion is further amplified by Japan’s rigid stance on citizenship, which places barriers to naturalisation. Many second-generation Japanese Brazilians often perceive themselves as outsiders within the Japanese legal-political system, where they are not seen as full members of the Japanese political community.

2.3.2 Socio-Economic Status: Education, Language and Work

The socio-economic dimension of integration focuses on the social and economic status of individuals with immigrant backgrounds. Important indicators within this dimension include labour market participation, educational attainment, and access to economic opportunities and

social welfare (Entzinger and Biezeveld, 2003). These indicators either facilitate access or create obstacles for individuals of immigrant backgrounds.

To what extent are Japanese Brazilians integrated into or excluded from Japanese society? The answer is directly related to their specific integration experiences, in particular, their school and work lives. It has been 30 years since the first generation of Japanese Brazilians returned to Japan in 1990. When they worked in factories and decided to bring their spouse and children, problems with schooling and then the employment of the children appeared. The 'return' migration of the first generation from Brazil to Japan and their aspiration to re-migrate to Brazil have had a multifaceted impact on their children's lives in Japan.

Some scholars have investigated how political and economic structural factors affect Japanese Brazilians' integration into Japanese society. An important reference in this regard is provided by Roth in 2002, who describes the work and daily life of first-generation Japanese Brazilians in Japan in factories after their return to Japan. His fieldwork analyses how Japanese Brazilians are denied full integration by national and local government welfare agencies. Structural integration refers to migrants' position in the host society and is conceptually understood as (economic) participation in structures and institutions (Geurts et al., 2019, p.1829). According to previous work, educational level and economic component (occupational status, labour market participation and income) are the main indicators of structural integration (e.g., De Vroome et al., 2011; 2014).

Japan's changing and ambivalent stance towards Japanese Brazilians reflects the tension between balancing economic and cultural interests, which is between neo-liberal economic goals and conservative cultural preservation. The need to satisfy both business demands for foreign workers and political calls to maintain cultural purity has led to a contradictory stance on Nikkeijin and other foreign workers, where the acceptance of foreign workers is not fully acknowledged as an immigration policy.

The 2008 economic crisis posed a challenge to Japan's immigration policy regarding the intake of foreign workers. However, the Democratic Party, which came to power in 2009, did not make any significant policy breakthroughs in this area, maintaining traditional stances. The economic downturn of 2008 led to a sharp rise in unemployment rates among foreigners in Japan and a significant decrease in their resident numbers. This was especially pronounced

among technical intern trainees and Japanese descendants who entered Japan through ‘side doors.’ For technical intern trainees, if the host company downsizes or goes bankrupt during the three-year internship period, the trainees effectively become unemployed and are forced to return to their home country (Kamibayashi, 2015, p. 199). During the crisis, some companies significantly reduced their use of trainees, leading to many being sent back before their contracts were completed, severely impacting their rights.

The impact on the Japanese descendants during the crisis was also significant. They often became targets for employment downsizing in many companies. Moreover, with over 60% of Japanese descendants employed in the manufacturing sector, they were more severely affected by the economic crisis. In some areas where Brazilians gather, such as Gifu Prefecture, unemployment rates among Japanese Brazilians soared to 40% (Higuchi, 2010, p. 53), compared to the overall Japanese rate of only 5%-6% (Higuchi, 2010, p. 52). The crisis also severely affected agencies specialising in dispatching Japanese descendant workers, making it difficult for them to continue operations. Some turned to Japan’s public employment agencies for help but faced competition from Japanese jobseekers, compounded by their limited Japanese language skills and qualifications. Because of the rise in unemployment rates in Japan led by the economic recession, the Japanese government encouraged the repatriation of Nikkei-jin workers to Brazil and Peru through a ‘pay to go’ program. The unemployed Nikkei-jin workers were offered relocation expenses, which were 3000 dollars, to buy a one-way ticket to return to their countries of nationality. People who accepted the government’s offer would not be allowed to re-enter Japan until an unspecified date, which would be set when Japan’s economic and employment conditions improved. After protests, this rule was changed to a ‘3 years re-entry prohibition’. Despite the criticism, the population of Nikkei-jin residents in Japan declined dramatically. Critics argue that the mass unemployment and repatriation of Japanese Brazilians during the economic crisis reflected a ‘government failure,’ as it did not actively promote the integration of Japanese descendants as workers but rather reduced the social costs and burden through deportation (Higuchi, 2010, p. 63).

To cope with the crisis, agencies dispatching Japanese descendant workers expanded their geographic and industry coverage to address employment issues, leading to the continued vulnerability of these workers in the labour market. Unlike after the 1998 crisis, a significant portion of Japanese Brazilians chose to settle permanently in Brazil after the 2008 crisis

rather than returning to Japan. Thus, although there has been a rebound in the number of Japanese descendant workers in recent years, the numbers have not returned to pre-2008 crisis levels. In the post-crisis period, more Japanese companies turned to lower-paid technical interns and Filipino workers in Japan, many of whom were spouses of Japanese nationals with ‘settler’ qualifications, leading to a contraction of the Japanese descendant labour market (Ikeda et al., 2014, p. 55).

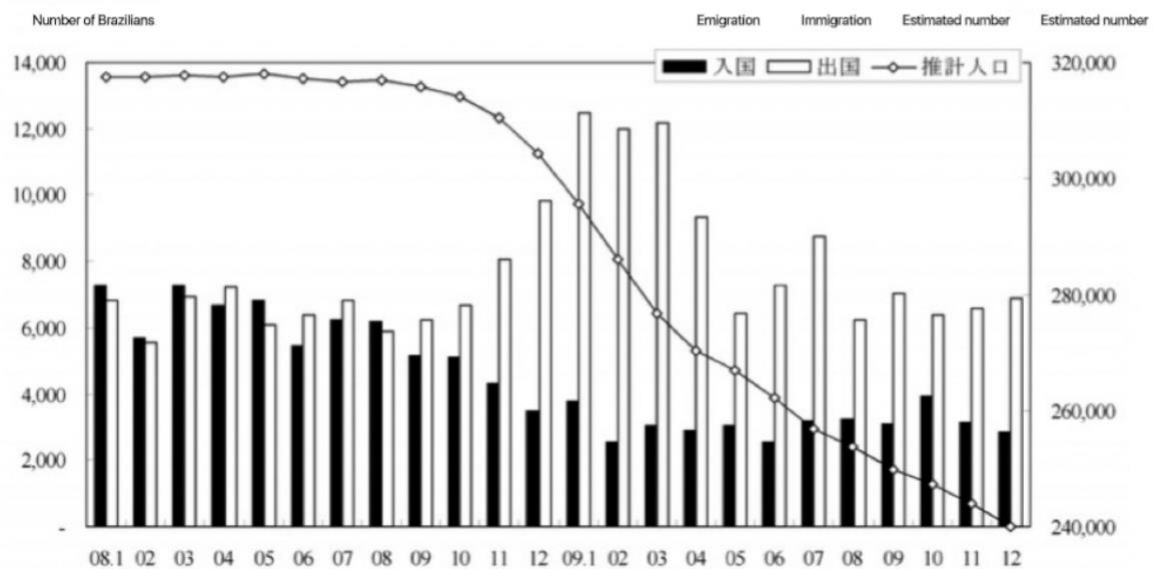


Figure 4: Estimated population of Brazilians in Japan (Higuchi, 2010, p. 53)

Since the financial crisis in 2007-2009, there has been a dramatic shift in the direction of Japan’s co-ethnic immigration policies. The post-2008 change in official attitudes towards migration policy implies the end of ethnicity as a factor for preferential selection (Tian, 2019, p.1498). On the contrary, the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) is a more practical solution for Japan. It has been proved that temporary labour migration does not necessarily result in negative social consequences because of Japan’s strong capacity for immigration management. Those trainees have provided the most value again and again in rotation. In contrast, simultaneously, their social welfare is paid for by the government, and the social integration costs have been set to a minimum.

Since the establishment of the second Abe Cabinet at the end of 2012, the Japanese government’s immigrant policy has made significant progress and has been placed in an important position in relation to Japan’s economic development. On the one hand, the Japanese government has emphasised attracting highly skilled foreign talent as the key to Japan’s economic revitalisation and has formulated specific policies to promote the receiving

and settlement of top talent. On the other hand, in the wake of the decline in the domestic workforce, the Japanese government has expanded the intake of foreign workers in labour-intensive industries where the shortage of workers has become more prominent, a policy direction that deviates from the Japanese government's long-held position of not accepting unskilled foreign workers. In order not to change this policy stance, the Japanese government is using the term 'advanced foreign human resources' more often than the previous term 'foreign workers' to highlight their contribution to economic growth and industrial competitiveness (Akashi, 2017a, p. 87).

At the CEEP meeting held on 20 February 2018, Prime Minister Abe stressed that there is a profound manpower shortage. While promoting reforms in labour practices, it is necessary to expeditiously promote discussions on a system for accepting foreigners with high-level technical and professional skills, a statement that reflects the basic demand for the revision of the Immigration Control Act. In the 'Basic Policy 2018 of the Economic-financial Administration and Reform', it is clearly stated that a new status of residence will be created for foreigners who have a certain level of skills and Japanese language ability, and a maximum stay of five years in Japan will be recognised as the direction. Discussions on amendments to the Immigration Control Act have since proceeded in this direction, and the bill was finally passed in December. During the process of amending the bill, there were voices within the Liberal Democratic Party and the opposition party that questioned the haste with which the bill was being amended, and many people were concerned that the amendment signaled a shift in Japan's immigrant admission policy towards the acceptance of unskilled labourers and the settlement of immigrants. In the face of these questions, Abe and his Cabinet members have explained by constantly stressing that the solution to Japan's manpower shortage has become imminent and has been placed in a key position for Japan's future development.

In the course of deliberations in the Diet, Abe has repeatedly emphasised that the establishment of the new residency status is not an immigration policy, stating that he would 'not consider adopting an immigration policy that would cause concern among the public' in the hope of alleviating the public's doubts about the policy. For example, in 'Basic Approach to the Acceptance of Foreign Workers for the 'Era of Coexistence'', published in 2016 by the LDP's Liberal Democratic Party Policy Affairs Research Council and the Special Committee on Securing the Labour Force, it was stated that 'In order to secure manpower in Japan,

which has a declining population, the conditions for accepting foreign workers should be adjusted,’ but it also states that the relevant policy ‘should not be misinterpreted as an immigration policy’. ‘The term immigration/immigrant refers to a person with so-called permanent resident status at entry. However, acceptance under a residence status for the purpose of employment does not constitute immigration/immigrant status. Also, it is appropriate to continue the Technical Intern Training Program as a system for transferring skills to developing countries, etc., which was the system’s original purpose.’ And this statement is often found in Abe’s speeches. For example, in 2018, Abe emphasised that the Government has no intention of adopting a policy of maintaining the country by admitting foreigners and their families for an indefinite period of time, and this is unwavering. It is not the case that acquiring a new qualification grants one permission to have permanent residence. On the other hand, five years of Abe-economics have led to an acute shortage of labour, including small and medium-sized enterprises and small businesses, with the ratio of job openings to job applicants reaching its highest level in 43 years. In order to increase productivity and improve the working environment for women and the elderly, it is necessary to urgently consider how to organise a system for accepting foreign professionals and technicians. This is on the premise of setting an upper limit on the period of stay and basically not allowing family members to accompany them (Cabinet Office, 2018, p. 9). Moreover, this amendment to the bill continues the tradition of Japan’s immigrant admission policy of placing emphasis on the full employment of its nationals. In order to address the concern that ‘if the admission of foreigners exceeds the limit, it will have an impact on the employment of Japanese people’, the bill stipulates that the expected number of admissions over a five-year period, approximately 340,000, will be positioned as the upper limit of admissions and that the issuance of a new status of residence will be halted in the event of changes in the economic situation and the elimination of labour shortages.

In addition, in the course of the revision of the law, some conservatives called for the ‘tightening’ of the immigration policy by highlighting the abuse of the National Health Insurance System by foreign workers and the problem of crime. They emphasised the phenomena of illegal residence, illegal employment and crimes committed by foreigners, arguing that the increase in the number of foreigners would lead to the deterioration of the social situation in Japan. For example, Koizumi Shinjirō, a member of the House of Representatives for the Liberal Democratic Party, requested the government to rigorously check the status of immigrants’ social security contributions, such as medical care and

pensions, in order to prevent unauthorised use of the social welfare system. However, according to data from the National Police Agency, while the number of foreigners in Japan has grown rapidly over the past decade, the number of crimes committed by foreigners has declined significantly. In terms of the number of reported crimes committed by foreigners in Japan, the number peaked at 47,865 in 2005 and dropped to 14,133 in 2016 (National Police Agency, 2014; 2017). The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's investigations have also shown that while insurance abuse by foreigners is possible, there are very few confirmed cases. As a result, the relevant challenges are exaggerated to varying degrees. This also shows that the idea of 'securitisation' of immigrants has significantly influenced political circles. As a result of this influence, the idea of 'strictness' was given a prominent place in the revision of the 2018 Immigration Control Act, and strict conditions were set for foreigners to settle in the country in terms of character, assets, and skills, which not only reflects the government's concrete approach to the admission criteria but also serves as the government's response to the conservative critics of the immigration admission policy.

The Immigration Control Act, which was amended at the end of 2018 (effective 1 April 2019), has further relaxed the admission of immigrants. New residence qualifications 'Specified Skilled Worker (i)' and 'Specified Skilled Worker (ii)' were established. The new Act provides for the admission of 345,140 skilled workers in 2019-2024 in 14 specified sectors where labour shortages are acute. Compared to the previous 'side door' entry of low-skilled workers into Japan, this amendment has opened the 'front door' for them. However, these workers are essentially viewed as a source of cheap labour. Conservatives are concerned that managing them could lead to increased social welfare spending, with cultural and language barriers cited as reasons that hinder further 'integration'. This raises concerns about increased unemployment among domestic workers and threats to public safety and social stability. Due to Japan's lack of policies under the concept of 'integration' (Kondo, 2002, p. 417; Nagai, 2019), the program's protection of rights and welfare for foreigners remains very weak.

It is evident that the progress of Japan's immigration policy has always been a short-term reaction to the shortage of labour, without considering a plan for the integration of immigrants into society. Conservatives' considerations of 'integration' are limited to the negative impacts of receiving foreign workers on the domestic labour market and the social problems caused by the unemployment of foreign workers. The revision of Japan's

immigration policy reflects a broader trend in the country's approach to foreign workers, where conservative pressures have underscored the securitisation of immigration, often focusing on perceived risks such as the abuse of welfare systems and rising crime. Despite these concerns, Japan continues to rely on foreign labour to address acute workforce shortages, particularly in sectors demanding low-skilled workers. While policy shifts, such as the introduction of the Specified Skilled Worker (i) and (ii) visas, have somewhat eased entry restrictions, they have done little to address the fundamental issue of integration. This policy gap is particularly evident in the experiences of second-generation Japanese Brazilians, whose socio-economic struggles highlight the limitations of Japan's immigration system. Although policy reforms are designed to address labour shortages, the absence of a comprehensive integration framework leaves many immigrants vulnerable.

For example, previous ethnographic studies have demonstrated that first-generation Japanese Brazilians often face unstable employment, being predominantly confined to irregular, low-wage jobs. Generational succession, as Takenaka (2009) suggests, could provide a mechanism for improving the socio-economic status of their children. Yet, second-generation Japanese Brazilians have not experienced meaningful upward mobility. Their stagnation is largely due to educational barriers (Riordan, 2018; Haino, 2017, p. 127), which hinder their ability to access higher education or even complete high school, limiting their career prospects and reinforcing a cycle of socio-economic marginalisation.

More than 200,000 of these recent returnees live and work in Japan (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2020), mostly as low-skilled manufacturing workers speak only Portuguese. Moreover, the parents, who were the returnees of the first generation at first, only returned to Japan for the purpose of earning money, and they believed they would return to South America as soon as possible, so they had no plans to live in Japan for the long term. As such, very few of their children received higher education in Japan, and the more common cases are that Japanese Brazilian children cannot enter high school and even drop out of compulsory schooling (Takenoshita et al., 2014, p. 85). After leaving school, most of them chose to work in factories like their parents (Ishikawa, 2009, p. 73).

In terms of educational integration, prior ethnographic studies have suggested that the back-and-forth movement between Brazil and Japan has a negative influence on the educational attainment of Brazilian children in Japan because it hinders them from learning both Japanese

and Portuguese and from acquiring education and job skills necessary to succeed in either setting (Ishikawa, 2005). In addition, many Brazilian immigrants continue to identify themselves as temporary migrants, even after long-term residence in Japan. Under these circumstances, Brazilian children often feel puzzled over whether they should study hard in Japan or prepare to return to Brazil (Ishikawa, 2005; Takenoshita, 2005). In the Japanese educational system, compulsory schooling includes six years of elementary school and three years of middle school. While education through the junior high school level is comprehensive and non-selective, senior high schools are selective and typically classified into two different tracks: academic and vocational (Ishida, 2007). The high school entrance examination is highly competitive, but once foreign students overcome the hurdles and study for 3 years in high school, including preparation for the university entrance examination, the road to tertiary education is paved. However, many Brazilian parents don't understand the Japanese education system due to their language limitations. What they know is their children's low Japanese proficiency once their children fail the high school entrance exam. Since Japan does not have a national-level integration plan for immigrant children, the educational opportunities for immigrant children vary across municipalities (Chitose, 2008; Sakuma, 2006). It is difficult to estimate the percentage of second-generation Nikkei Brazilians who enter high school or tertiary education all over Japan. According to the 2000 Japanese census, out of 1,755 Peruvians ages 15-19, only 731, or 42%, were in school on a full-time basis; among Peruvians ages 20-24, the equivalent rate was only 3% (Takenaka, 2009, p. 31). According to the results of Tamaki and Sakamoto (2012), Japanese pupils who go on to high school account for 98%, and the percentage of foreign pupils who enter high schools in Japan is much lower. In Tochigi prefecture, the ratio of entering high school is 58.6% for Portuguese-speaking pupils (most are Brazilians), while for Spanish speakers (from Peru and Bolivia) is 79.5%. Low enrolment in high school is not the only problem for Brazilian children. Studies also point out the problems faced by children who graduated from private Brazilian schools in Japan. They usually end up reproducing the current social conditions of their parents, working in factories, lacking Japanese language proficiency, and being marginalized by Japanese society (Kanasiro, 2014, p. 1).

There could be two situations among the second-generation Japanese Brazilians in the employment market. The first group includes people who overcame language barriers and continued to high school or higher education, and the second group is formed by those who did not complete high school. Their differences in employment status depend on which group

they belong to. In general, most less educated Japanese Brazilians work in factories, and highly educated Japanese Brazilians have opportunities to work as ‘salary men’ (office workers). Many second-generation people compare the wages of their parents who work in factories with the wages of a salaryman after receiving an education in college. Some concluded that it is better to work in factories to earn more money (Lagones, 2015, pp. 6-7).

There is very little systematic research on the experience of second-generation Japanese Brazilians in Japan from school to work. We barely know the stories of Japanese Brazilians who entered the labour market after only basic education. Their stories are also the most real lives that happen to the majority of the second generation who grew up in Japan. Therefore, their experiences help us know the integration process from the perspective of ethnic immigrants themselves. In this regard, a few studies can serve as references for us. Kojima’s study investigated the process of young Japanese-Brazilian people from school dropout to work. Among his ten interviewees, four people finished middle school in Japan, four graduated from primary school, and two dropouts from primary school. After leaving school, they worked in auto and electrical industries, as well as food processing, manufacturing of Pachinko parts. They are all engaged in simple operations on production lines, including assembly, inspection, packaging and handling. They rarely stay in the same job, and it’s not surprising at all for them to change jobs three or four times in five years (2008, p. 61). Jakeline Lagones (2015) wrote her doctoral thesis on Nikkei Peruvian first and second generations in Japan. Her fieldwork was carried out in Japan and Peru. She adopted a mixed method combining quantitative and qualitative research, including 100 interviews with Japanese Peruvians, and a logistic regression model (Probit Model) to estimate the main variables for Nikkei Peruvians in planning to stay or not stay in Japan. She concludes that marital status, Japanese language ability, children, and age have a significant influence on the decisions to stay in Japan; the main difference between factory workers and non-factory workers is related to their civil status, age group, education status, and access to social welfare.

In summary, why did Japanese officials come to the conclusion that the Nikkei population has failed to integrate into Japanese society? The main evidence built on low rates of Japanese language literacy and lacking stable employment amounted to a threat to Japanese social stability. (Cabinet Office 2013; Tian 2019, 1503-1504). Numerous studies highlight the

challenges that Nikkeijin residents face in both their workplaces and Japanese society in general (Tsuda 2003; Yamanaka 2004; Oda, 2010).

As mentioned above, the first generation of Nikkei has been investigated by many researchers, and in recent years, there has been an increasing interest in second-generation Japanese Brazilians in Japan. However, the existing literature still lacks regarding the education and employment status of the second-generation residing in Japanese society especially after the 2008 financial crisis. However, it has been observed that the first generation of returnees is quite different from the second generation. As being rejected by Japanese society, the first generation of Nikkeijin groups lived in a relatively closed environment and isolated from native Japanese. Not only did they misperceive each other from the beginning, but the misunderstandings persisted when they were living together in Japanese society because they generally did not contact each other. The Japanese social environment in which the second generation of returnees grew up has changed. The second generation gets constant contact with native Japanese during growth compared with the first generation working and living in isolation. Moreover, in recent decades, native Japanese people have realised cultural diversity among their descendants and the same blood does not necessarily lead to cultural similarity. Therefore, Japanese society has a more authentic understanding of ethnic returnees.

The socio-economic dimension of integration, as outlined in the theoretical framework, encompasses key areas such as labour market participation, educational attainment, and the ability of second-generation Japanese Brazilians to overcome language barriers. It examines how these individuals navigate the intersection of school, work, and the transition from education to employment, highlighting their structural and personal challenges. Chapter Five will present the empirical findings, drawing on fieldwork to provide an authentic understanding of the integration experiences of second-generation Japanese Brazilians, revealing how socio-economic factors shape their journey towards integration.

2.3.3 Cultural Integration: Ethnic Identity

The experiences of Japanese Brazilians in Japan, are deeply rooted in the historical waves of emigration that began with the Meiji Restoration. Over generations, these migrants and their descendants cultivated a distinct Japanese Brazilian identity, intertwining elements from both cultures. This dual heritage, however, presents unique challenges within the rigid framework

of Japan's citizenship laws, which are heavily influenced by the principle of *jus sanguinis* and an ideology of ethnic homogeneity.

Japan's modernisation process since the Meiji Restoration closely mimicked the European experience and was triggered by a strong need to protect Japan from European imperialism. Therefore, the ideology of citizenship in post-imperial Japan is predicated on the presumed superiority of Japanese culture in relation to the societal cultures of its Asian neighbours, positing Japan as a beacon to elevate neighbouring Asian countries to its level of economic and cultural development. Consequently, colonised peoples were recognised as Japanese citizens and accorded equal treatment before the law. However, this melding of cultural superiority with the notion of equal citizenship historically engendered a potent policy aimed at assimilating perceived perpetual minorities within Japan. The precondition for citizenship was the renunciation of minority cultural identities in favour of the wholesale adoption of Japanese culture. Historically, this led to the emergence of discriminatory patterns against those willing to assimilate, presenting a choice between exclusion from the periphery of Japanese society or acceptance of second-class citizenship status, both of which negated their identity as formal members of Japanese society (Lu, Menju, and Williams, 2005, pp. 100-102). Advocates from minority communities, including the Ainu, Koreans, and Burakumin, have in recent years become increasingly vocal in demanding recognition of their equality and cultural rights within Japan.

This section explores the expression of ethnic identity among second-generation Japanese Brazilians and its relation with cultural integration, set against the backdrop of Japan's mononational state ideology, a critical factor in shaping the Japanese-Brazilian experience.

Rinus Penninx provides a comprehensive framework of integration that includes legal/political, socio-economic, and cultural dimensions (Penninx, 2005, p. 139). This framework illustrates that participation in societal structures does not necessarily require abandoning one's cultural identity. While Structural integration—participation in societal institutions—was discussed in the previous two sections, this section focuses on cultural integration from a normative and ideological perspective. This perspective envisions cultural integration as the ideal state of society where different groups coexist harmoniously. It emphasises a two-way process, necessitating adjustments from both immigrants and the host society. Immigrants are expected to adapt to the host society's fundamental norms, values,

and institutions, integrating their backgrounds into their new environment respectfully and effectively. Concurrently, the host society must adapt to accommodate and incorporate elements of the immigrants' cultures. This adaptation may involve modifying existing cultural, social, and institutional frameworks to be more inclusive and represent the community's new, diverse composition (Gońda, Pachocka, and Podgórska, 2021, p.3).

For much of the 20th century, the prevailing assumption was that immigrants would fully assimilate into their new environments, a process expected to eliminate most visible and cultural distinctions between immigrants and the native population within up to three generations. This assimilation was often envisioned through the 'melting pot' metaphor, suggesting that immigrants and their descendants would merge their cultural identities with those of the host society, culminating in a new, unified cultural identity. However, this metaphor implied a harmonious integration of diverse cultures into a single national identity, a notion increasingly challenged by real-world observations (Entzinger and Biezeveld, 2003, p. 7). By the 1960s, it had become apparent that cultural differences between immigrants and their host societies did not necessarily fade over time. In fact, these differences often intensified and played a crucial role in community formation and the assertion of ethnic identities, introducing ethnicity as a central theme in discussions on cultural integration (Yann et al., 2012, p.5).

This context leads to an exploration of the ethnic identity expression of the second generation of Japanese Brazilians and its relation to cultural integration, considering Japan's mono-national state ideology, a key factor in shaping the Japanese-Brazilian experience. Assessing cultural integration underscores the necessity for a shared foundational understanding within a society. This requirement does not imply cultural assimilation but acknowledges core values inherent to modern democratic states, such as adherence to the rule of law, democratic principles, and gender equality. Notably, the prioritisation of these values varies internationally. For instance, Denmark's approach to formulating cultural integration metrics illustrates a commitment to preserving immigrant identity while insisting on conformity to the fundamental principles of Danish society, including constitutional respect and civil liberties encompassing religious, speech, and organisational freedoms, alongside gender equality (Entzinger and Biezeveld, 2003, p. 23).

Indicators of cultural integration often include proficiency in the local language and the dynamics of social relationships, measured by interactions between newcomers and native populations through friendships, work relationships, or intermarriages. Additionally, crime rates within immigrant communities are sometimes used as a reflection of the integration process. Higher than average crime rates could suggest a disconnection between newcomers and societal norms or indicate broader issues of societal inclusiveness towards newcomers.

Five indicators of cultural integration are summarised by Gońda, Pachocka, and Podgórska (2021) as follows: language (of the receiving state and of migrants), religion (of migrants), symbolic culture (of the receiving society), preserving and transmitting cultural patterns (of the sending country), and cultural identity/identification (of migrants). The cultural identity of migrants is a subjective indicator, including migrants' self-identification, measured by how migrants perceive themselves, for example, as part of the host country. Acceptance or rejection of values typical of the receiving country, along with cognitive, behavioural, and attitudinal changes resulting from contact with the new culture, are also significant indicators.

Phinney et al. argue that a strong, secure ethnic identity contributes positively to better integration. An integrated identity, which combines a strong ethnic and national identity, promotes healthy psychological well-being and integration (2001, p. 505). Strong assimilative pressures of giving up individuals' ethnic identity could result in depression and the risk of challenging integration.

In addition to the study of integration in terms of political structure and economy, most anthropologists and sociologists who have studied the Japanese-Brazilian population have focused on issues related to integration in terms of ethnic identity and nationalism (Tsuda 1999; Linger 2001; Yamanaka 2000; Higuchi and Inaba, 2023). In the published research on ethnic identity, there are various definitions. Tajfel (1981, p. 255) regards ethnic identity as a specific dimension of social identity derived from an individual's awareness of their membership in an ethnic group and the emotional significance attached to it. Some scholars emphasise feelings of belonging and commitment (Phinney and Ong, 2007). Helm's (1993) theory of racial identity development highlights the central role of attitudes and feelings in identity development. In contrast, Rogler, Cooney, and Ortiz (1980) emphasise the cultural aspects of ethnic identity, including language, behaviour, values and knowledge of ethnic group history.

In the case of Japan, favourable ethnic policies tend to exist only in terms of receiving immigrants into the country. Paradoxically, when these returnees seek to establish long-term roots and require integration support, their fellow citizens in their ancestral homeland often exhibit lukewarm attitudes. This growing disparity between ethnic and national identity poses an obstacle to the integration process.

In this study, 'ethnic identity' is defined by Glaser (1958, p. 31) as the use of racial, national or religious terms by an individual to identify themselves. For Japanese Brazilians, ethnic identity is conceptualised as how individuals perceive and self-understand their ethnic background within specific social contexts. This concept incorporates cognitive and emotional elements (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000, pp. 18-19). Ethnic identity can be reflected through an individual's public representation of that experience of ethnicity, often through shared stories or narratives (Tilly, 1996, p. 7). This understanding of ethnic identity allows for variability and potential for change, highlighting how it is deeply embedded in everyday social interactions.

As with other identities, ethnic identity involves self-identification and external identification. Self-identification involves individuals designing themselves, often in dialogue with others to define them. External identification involves more formalised and standardised categories, especially by powerful institutions like the state (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000, p. 15). The modern state plays a crucial role in the categorisation and identification processes, exerting symbolic power to define and classify its social members (Burchell, 1991, pp. 145-146).

Cultural integration here corresponds to the identification dimension in Marc Granovetter's work (1973), referring to changes in the immigrants' cultural orientation and identification. Cultural integration does not merely entail assimilating into the mainstream culture. Instead, it involves immigrants adopting certain aspects of the host culture without entirely relinquishing their original cultural identities. This process can be reciprocal, with the host society also adopting elements of immigrant cultures, especially in multi-ethnic environments. This reflects that full assimilation into the mainstream culture is not the only option and is not an absolute requirement for successful integration. Instead, the globalisation of the modern world increases the capability of migrants to maintain connections with their cultural heritage even as they adapt to some aspects of the culture in their living country.

Cultural integration involves the mutual recognition and reaction of immigrants and host societies when confronted with cultural and religious differences and diversity. Host societies may accept or reject cultural or religious diversity. There are two extremes here: one is where new diversity is rejected, and immigrants are expected to adapt and integrate into a society with a single culture and religion. In contrast, a pluralistic societal system can equitably accept different ethnic identities and cultures (Entzinger and Biezeveld, 2003, p. 23). Between these two extremes, there are many positions in between. For example, certain forms of diversity are acceptable but only in the private sphere. In exploring how Japanese Brazilians balance adapting to Japanese cultural norms and preserving their Brazilian cultural customs and ethnic identity, mutual cultural exchange and acceptance are seen as manifestations of integration. In contrast, discrimination and assimilation pressures that come at the cost of sacrificing Brazilian cultural traits are seen as manifestations of exclusion.

Ethnic identity can serve both as a reflection of and a response to cultural integration. Ethnic identity encompasses more than mere ethnic origin, it also involves a range of cultural dimensions that significantly influence an individual's sense of belonging. These dimensions include language proficiency and usage, religious practices and beliefs, and perspectives on norms and values (Green et al., 2015, p. 676). Therefore, this study posits that ethnic identity is a pivotal indicator of cultural integration. It is essential to clarify that while ethnic identity is used as a primary lens to assess cultural integration in this study, the extent to which it accurately reflects cultural orientations remains an open question. For instance, an individual with a Brazilian ethnic identity may manage family and social interactions within a Brazilian cultural frame in private settings. Conversely, the same individual might adeptly engage with Japanese cultural practices and language in public spheres, illustrating flexibility between private and public cultural spheres. This common phenomenon inspired this study to employ qualitative research methods to explore the ethnic labels adopted by Japanese Brazilians more deeply. Initial data collection involves structured interviews that query participants about their perceived ethnic identities, such as whether they identify as Brazilians living in Japan or as Japanese Brazilians et al. Following identifying these ethnic labels, the research will explore the specific connotations of these identities through detailed interviews. The interview contents in detail will be discussed in Chapter 5, which will address three key themes: (I) general co-ethnic practices, (II) language use and social networks, and (III) adherence to progressive norms. According to Sloodman (2018, p.94), these themes

effectively indicate individuals' socio-cultural orientations and provide a comprehensive framework for assessing the relationships between ethnic identities and cultural integration processes.

The word return means the movement from overseas to any part of one's nation of origin (Xiang, 2013, p. 7). Return is 'an idea, or, more precisely...an imaginary that defines the directionality of one's physical movement, gives particular meanings to mobility, and shapes the mobile subjects' self-positioning in the world' (Sasaki, 2013, p. 32). In the case of Japanese Brazilians, the return involved a two-part journey: one is to return to the country of ethnic origin, Japan; the other is a reverse return from Japan to the country of citizenship--Brazil. This research explores the former situation.

Since most returning Brazilians had long-term visas specific to the Japanese diaspora, from the beginning, both returnees and native Japanese had a preconceived idea of expectations of the other. When the Nikkeijin actually returned to their ancestral homeland, they were ethnically rejected and treated as foreigners by the native Japanese. In the case of Japanese Brazilians, they had been constantly assailed by self-doubt. They are Brazilians and yet not Brazilians as they cannot erase their Japanese race and Japaneseness. They are Japanese yet not Japanese because they lack Japanese 'cultural competence' (Tsuda, 2003, p. 377). As a result, the Nikkeijin learned from the experience of ethnic denial in Japan and reconstructed their ethnic identities.

An identity type characterised by a deep solidarity with group members and a clear distinction or opposition to outsiders is known as a 'strong group identity'. Described as affectively intense, this form of identity can lead to exclusionary, and sometimes even antagonistic, social behaviours. In contrast, the corresponding type is a loosely affiliative identity, which involves a more open, less intense form of self-understanding. This type includes feelings of commonality or connectedness with others but lacks the strong sense of overriding unity against an 'other'. These identities are more about affinity and affiliation without the sharp boundaries seen in the strongly groupist type (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000, p. 20). Building on this understanding, the work of the existing scholars is pivotal for grasping the shifts in ethnic identity among Japanese-Brazilian immigrants before and after migrating to Japan. Their research, primarily focusing on the first generation, reveals that returning to Japan often reinforces their Brazilian ethnic identity. This phenomenon occurs

because these immigrants have heavily internalised Brazilian culture and, upon their return, find themselves not readily accepted as part of Japanese society. Instead, they are frequently marginalised as a new minority group (Tsuda, 2003, p. 103). However, the question arises: does diversifying ethnic identity among these immigrants suggest poor integration outcomes? This study proposes that maintaining transnational identities may correlate with experiences of exclusion and discrimination in the host country. Besides, it could also reflect resistance to assimilation while integrating into the host society in more adaptable ways. The empirical segment in Chapter Six looks into the ethnic identity development of the second generation of Japanese Brazilians, exploring whether they retain a Brazilian ethnic identity akin to their parents and examining the implications behind identifying as Brazilian.

In recent years, Japan has seen the gradual development of integration policies and the concept of multicultural coexistence ('tabunka kyousei'), widely recognised across government, academia, and civil society to describe the social integration of foreigners. Historically, Japan lacked a coherent national immigrant integration policy that addressed all stages of immigration—from entry and temporary residence to permanent residence and naturalisation—until the 2000s (Kitawaki, 2008, pp. 5-25; Yamawaki, 2006, pp. 10-15). The first government definition of 'multicultural coexistence' emerged as a framework wherein residents of different nationalities and ethnic origins live together as members of local society by acknowledging cultural differences and striving for equal relationships (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2006; Noyama, 2009, p.149). For example, in June 2005, the Cabinet Office's Economic and Fiscal Advisory Council (CEFP) proposed to promote the acceptance of high-level human resources and to create an environment in which foreigners working in Japan can fully demonstrate their abilities in Japan (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2006, p. 9). In the same period, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications established the 'Research Institute for the Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence', and in March 2006, the CEFP recommended that 'the government should actively accept foreigners'. In the same month, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' Seminar on the Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence also formulated a plan to 'promote a multicultural society nationwide.' However, this emphasis on 'multiculturalism' has been interpreted as understanding, respecting, and accommodating different cultures in terms of language and religion. At the same time, political and economic rights such as participation in political parties have been completely ignored and have had limited effect on protecting the rights of foreigners.

Studies on the first generation of Japanese Brazilians agree that Brazilians of Japanese descent were a 'positive ethnic Japanese minority' in Brazilian society with good cultural respect and social status. However, when they arrived in Japan, they became a 'negative ethnic Brazilian minority' with a lower cultural image and social class status (Tsuda, 2003, p.46). Does the pattern persist for the second generation of Japanese Brazilians? A distinction needs to be noticed here between Brazilian children born in Japan and those who arrive after an older grade level in primary school. The children who arrive at an older age face more difficulties adapting to Japanese society, making them more likely to develop a 'counter (Japanese) Brazilian identity' like their parents. Tsuda argues that developing counter-identities among second-generation Japanese Brazilians may exacerbate their inner hostility and resistance towards mainstream society (2003, pp. 449-455). Because the 'second generation' may resemble an 'involuntary minority', their 'negative minority status' has been imposed on them through their parents' decision to migrate. Having not experienced the economic hardship and distress over public safety that their parents had in Brazil, they no longer feel the 'relative advantages' of living in Japan compared to Brazil. They will adopt native Japanese people's aspirations and expectations of socio-economic success and upward mobility. Besides, they do not see the discrimination of their confinement to low-social class positions as a transit discomfort to save money to return to Brazil later but instead as permanent oppressive discrimination against them. Such ethnic 'counter-identities' may have more serious social problems in integrating second-generation Brazilians of Japanese descent. There is still no systematic research on what ethnic identities second-generation Brazilians of Japanese descent have adopted. This research contributes to this sense.

The results of the interviews conducted for this study reveal that the identities of second-generation Japanese-Brazilians who grew up in Japan are notably diverse. These identities can be categorised into four main groups: (1) those who predominantly identify as Brazilian, (2) those who feel partly Japanese and partly Brazilian, (3) those who consider themselves entirely Japanese and also entirely Brazilians, and (4) fully identified as Japanese, entirely shedding any Brazilian characteristics.

The first identity type is similar to the counter-identity described by Tsuda. All this happens because 'they lack a political language necessary to articulate their transnational and post-

national aspirations' (Appadurai, 1996, pp. 165 – 66) and because 'transnational communities are unable to challenge the hegemony of the nation-state' (Tsuda, 2003, p. 293).

The second and third categories of Japanese-Brazilian identity involve a hybridisation or creolisation between Brazilian and Japanese cultures based on new synthetic forms. (Takenaka, 2009). In these two scenarios, while Japanese Brazilians did not fully return to the Japanese ethnic identity that most of their parents held before migrating to Japan, they did not develop the Brazilian counter-identity either. Eventually, a hybrid ethnic identity — a Descendent/Nikkei identity that consists of elements commonly attributed to both the Brazilian and Japanese cultures was constructed. The construction of the second and third ethnic identity types was based on 'Nikkei values'. Nikkei, here the word means foreign nationals of Japanese descent. 'Nikkei' identity is neither completely Brazilian nor completely Japanese, but a combination of cultures. Using their cultural and transnational resources to claim positive characteristics of Japanese and Brazilian culture, they have constructed a hybrid identity that merges the best of both nations. Consequently, they could benefit from their ethnic identity socially and economically, and gradually, Japanese descendants became a racially different group from the Japanese (Takenaka, 2009). Hybrid identity involves the overlapping, merging, and integrating various cultural elements into a single, dynamic ethnic identity (Anthias, 2008, p. 10). Like the second generation, Brazilians combine aspects of both Japanese and Brazilian cultures, adapting their identity based on their social context. However, that these new hybrid identities are not simply freely chosen from a range of ethnicities on offer but are context-dependent, developed, and negotiated under constraints and power structures. Depending on the context, social actors can make constrained choices regarding their ethnic identities.

More specifically, the second ethnic identity type is characterised as 'Half'. The experiences they acquired in Japan made an exclusive identification with either Brazil or Japan nearly impossible. The third type of ethnic identity primarily manifests as a dual identity. Respondents in interviews expressed that they consider themselves 'double', meaning both Japanese and Brazilian. This aligns more with a hybrid identity rather than a transnational one. While acknowledging second-generation identity involves multiple cultural identities, a transnational identity emphasises maintaining active connections and engagements with the country of origin and the host country (Basch et al., 1994). In this regard, the daily

behaviours of second-generation Japanese Brazilians are disconnected from a transnational identity as they lack sustained cross-border relationships in most cases.

The fourth type of people exhibit a resurgence of Japanese ethnic identity. Several factors contribute to it. Growing up in Japan has deeply influenced their cultural and social values, embedding a strong sense of Japanese heritage. Japan's status as a First World country, with its advanced economy, high standard of living, and efficient infrastructure, further reinforces its identification with Japan. Although they have not really lived in Brazil apart from travelling there for holidays, their knowledge and perception of Brazilian society—particularly the bureaucracy, disorganisation, and fear of crime—have discouraged them from embracing their 'Brazilianness'. Compared to the stability and order they experience in Japan, these negative perceptions of Brazil lead them to distance themselves from their Brazilian roots. This contrast between their positive experiences in Japan and their negative perceptions of Brazil results in a stronger affinity towards their Japanese identity. Consequently, they are less inclined to identify with Brazil, preferring instead to align themselves with Japan's stability and cultural familiarity.

Despite the prevalent discourse of homogenisation in Japanese society, these second generations' identities vary. The development of these identities is strongly linked to individual factors such as possessing Japanese citizenship, proficiency in the Japanese language, economic status, and experiences of discrimination and exclusion. These factors will be examined in greater detail later in the discussion. Identity is discovered through interaction. Consequently, ethnic identity is more likely to be reconstructed through these interactions. By focusing on the construction of the ethnic identity of second-generation Japanese Brazilians, we can include the agents of the minority group in analysis, as it turns out the malleability of ethnic identities can serve as potential protective resources for minorities to react to prejudice, discrimination, and, possibly, other stress sources.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter offers a critical examination of the concept of integration. The proposed framework challenged the traditional reliance on quantitative measures and highlighted the importance of understanding integration through the lived, subjective experiences of migrants alongside the expectations of host societies. As demonstrated, the integration of second-

generation Japanese Brazilians is shaped by political structures, as well as socio-economic and cultural factors, which collectively present both opportunities and challenges. The subsequent chapters will expand on this theoretical framework and investigate the lived experiences of this group. They will explore how individual behaviours, community norms, and societal expectations interact with broader structural forces to shape the diverse outcomes of integration, providing a comprehensive view of the integration process in the Japanese context.

Chapter Three: Method

3.1 Introduction: Research Design

This chapter outlines the methodological framework of the research, detailing the design, data collection techniques, ethical considerations, and the combination of interview-based fieldwork and limited participant observation with critical discourse analysis (CDA). It also explains why this qualitative approach provides methodological advantages for analysing the integration of second-generation Japanese Brazilians into Japanese society in the subsequent empirical chapters.

This thesis employs a qualitative research design to deeply explore the intersection of ethnic identity, migration, and the experiences of Brazilian nationals of Japanese ancestry within the framework of Japan's 'integration' policies. While the thesis encompasses a critical examination of these policies, its core lies in understanding how these policies translate into lived experiences for this ethnic minority community, focusing on both integration and exclusion.

Qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews and limited but meaningful participant observation, form the backbone of my data collection approach (Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz, 2022). These methods allow for an immersive understanding of the daily realities faced by my participants, providing rich, nuanced insights into their interactions with Japanese society and its 'integration' mechanisms.

3.2 Fieldwork and Access

Most Brazilians of Japanese descent live in the Tōkai Region (55%) (including Aichi Prefecture, Gifu Prefecture, Mie Prefecture, and Shizuoka Prefecture) and Kanto Region (25%) (including Ibaraki Prefecture, Tochigi Prefecture, Gunma Prefecture, Saitama Prefecture, Chiba Prefecture, Tokyo, and Kanagawa Prefecture) (Higuchi, 2010; Hashimoto, 2011). The fieldwork for this research was conducted from July 2022 to June 2023, during which I lived in Ota city in Gunma Prefecture and Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture, in Japan. This immersive experience facilitated the collection of rich, qualitative data through participant observation, informal conversations, and semi-structured interviews. Through participant observation, I was able to observe participants' interactions in various social settings, including households, schools, and community events, providing a comprehensive picture of their social integration (Geertz, 1973). During this period, I also conducted interviews with individuals living in Tokyo, and Chiryū (a city in central Aichi Prefecture), using the snowball method (Kirchherr and Charles, 2018, p. 1) and opportunity sampling (Alvi, 2016, p. 29) to find participants.

In July 2022, with two suitcases filled with all my belongings and a heart full of anticipation, I left the UK and embarked on a year-long field study in Japan. Despite Japan's reputation for its advanced economy and safe, civilised society, I couldn't shake off a sense of unease. I had no substantial social network in Japan, apart from my Japanese supervisor, and I had a few distant connections with some international students.

Before starting the fieldwork, I carefully studied relevant literature and prepared interview forms, questionnaires, information sheets and informed consent forms. Despite this preparation, I still did not anticipate all the difficulties I would face, especially the frustration of being repeatedly rejected while searching for interviewees. Although my target locations were the Ota-Oizumi area in Gunma Prefecture, known for its large Brazilian community, and Hamamatsu City in Shizuoka Prefecture, I initially struggled to find Brazilian landlords willing to host me in these cities through online searches.

To save money and begin my pilot fieldwork shortly, upon arriving in Tokyo, I stayed in a Japanese capsule hotel for the first month. The hotel, conveniently located near the Brazilian Embassy, was inexpensive but later proved to be inconvenient for my research. Beds had no

locks, and the space was entirely open apart from a flimsy bed curtain. Moreover, the room was off-limits from 10 am to 2 pm daily due to cleaning. Each morning, I would pack up my valuables and either sit in a nearby café or wander around the Brazilian stores, hoping to bump into potential interviewees.

My initial strategy involved opportunity sampling around the Brazilian Embassy, engaging with visitors in hopes of finding interviewees or key informants. As I engaged with individuals out of the Brazilian Embassy, it became evident that the language barrier was a significant obstacle. Many of the Brazilians I encountered were more comfortable speaking in Portuguese, a language in which I had no proficiency. This made initial conversations challenging and often stilted. Furthermore, many potential participants were wary of conversing with a stranger, especially one who did not speak their language, which makes sense but adds another layer of difficulty for my study.

Engaging with a minoritised community also demanded high cultural sensitivity and awareness. According to Carter (2007, p. 345), understanding the cultural nuances and socio-historical context of a community is crucial for meaningful engagement. This theoretical framework became practically significant as I realised that mere presence and curiosity were insufficient. As a Chinese woman, I found navigating the power dynamics with Japanese Brazilian individuals to be particularly complex. Both groups face exclusion from mainstream Japanese society, yet their experiences and histories are distinct. The Brazilian community in Japan often grapples with issues related to their identity and belonging, compounded by language barriers and socio-economic challenges. On the other hand, as a Chinese national, I was also navigating my own set of exclusions and stereotypes within Japanese society. These shared yet divergent experiences of marginalisation required me to be acutely aware of my positionality and the potential implications of my interactions. This shared marginalisation did not automatically bridge gaps. Instead, building trust required me to understand the historical context, cultural practices, and experiences of living in Japan. Moreover, reflecting on my positionality was an ongoing process. I had to constantly assess how my background, appearance, and the broader geopolitical context influenced my fieldwork. Historical and ongoing political issues between China and Japan can sometimes affect interpersonal relations. I found that my identity as a Chinese researcher sometimes caused cautious or reserved responses from potential participants, reflecting broader geopolitical anxieties, and affecting how I was perceived by the Brazilian community.

Despite these challenges, I persevered, continually reflecting on and adjusting my approach. In my frustration, my Japanese supervisor generously offered me accommodation in his vacant house during his study abroad visit, allowing me to stay there until I found a suitable place to live. This support provided a much-needed respite and enabled me to refocus my efforts on building trust within the Brazilian community in Tokyo.

This early period was the hardest part of my fieldwork. The lack of interviewees and the struggles of daily life in the youth hostel made it clear how challenging my research journey in Japan would be. Even worse, in August I had a troubling encounter with the police while wandering the streets. Two policemen stopped me without reason and took me to the police station for questioning, despite showing them my residence card. At the police office, they searched my belongings thoroughly and found a credit card that didn't match my name. They demanded proof that it belonged to my mother, which shocked me as they seemed to suspect it was stolen. Despite presenting all my documents to prove my legitimate research status, they then suspected me of carrying drugs after the clarification of my credit card. I expressed my desire to leave, but they didn't allow it. They made me sign several pages of Japanese documents and called in more officers, including two female officers who conducted a body search in a private room. After a strip search and a drug test, which proved I was clean, they told me I was free to go, as they found no illegal activity. This two-and-a-half-hour experience was frightening and upsetting. I asked multiple times during it and at the end why they had taken me in, but no one answered. They just repeated, 'you can leave now' without a single apology. Later, I learned from Brazilian interviewees that it was not unusual for them or their peers to have similar experiences. Being visibly foreign, they were frequently subjected to such checks. If they didn't carry their documents, the police would even follow them home to conduct a search. This incident made me acutely aware of the hardships of being a foreign resident in Japan.

After two months of pilot work, I had only two interviewees and a discouraging experience. Despite my frustration, I made some progress. I managed to establish connections with Brazilian students at a local university. My supervisor introduced me to a Brazilian student who kindly suggested looking for interviewees near her university. She introduced me to her Brazilian classmates, and with their help, I found accommodation in Ota City, Gunma Prefecture, my first fieldwork destination.

I rented this apartment near the junction of Ota City and Oizumi Town because I thought Ota-Oizumi would be a suitable location. Gunma has a high proportion of foreigners, second only to Tokyo and Aichi prefecture. According to the Population Census 2020, a national survey conducted every five years, Gunma Prefecture's population is approximately 1,939,110. The foreign population (53,432) accounts for 2.76% of this total. In Gunma Prefecture, Oizumi town and its neighbouring city Ota are known for their sizeable Brazilian population. Many Brazilians who came to Japan to work in the 1980s have settled in these areas, creating a distinctive 'Brazilian town'. Among the foreigners in Gunma, Brazilians account for the highest proportion, 21.4% (11,445).

With an area of just 17.93 square kilometres, Oizumi is the smallest town in Gunma Prefecture. After the Second World War, large companies such as Panasonic and over 100 other factories, including electrical appliances, food processing and auto parts, flourished here on the site of a former U.S. military camp located in the city's centre. As a result, despite being the smallest town in Gunma Prefecture, it has become the largest producer of manufactured goods in Japan's northern part of the Kanto region. The population of Oizumi Town has been growing since its establishment in 1957, but the booming secondary industry is still facing a severe labour shortage. Major companies such as Subaru, Panasonic, and Ajinomoto joined with over 70 other companies to form an organisation to attract the Japanese diaspora. They have advertised jobs in local Brazilian newspapers through dispatch agencies. The number of foreigners entering Japan increased dramatically after the 1990 revision of the Immigration Law. In 1992, 2,304 foreigners moved to Oizumi, of whom 1,528 were Brazilian. As of the end of June 2024, Brazilians accounted for 54% (4,615 individuals) of the 8,546 registered foreign residents in Oizumi Town (Oizumi Town, 2025).

The city of Ota, adjacent to Oizumi, is an important industrial city in northern Japan's Kanto region, particularly for automotive manufacturing. Ota City is also known as the company town of Subaru. The main Subaru factory and the other leading factories (Yajima and North) are located in Ota. As of June 2024, Brazilians made up 24.3% (3,646 individuals) of the 14,981 registered foreign residents in Ota City (Immigration Services Agency, 2024).

In Oizumi and Ota, where there is a high proportion of Brazilians, there are many Brazilian-related shops, supermarkets, restaurants, and schools. The stations and streets have signs in

Portuguese. Since Oizumi and Ota are smaller cities than Hamamatsu, the second study site, I got better acquainted with the community and its members.

My landlord was a ‘second-generation returnee’ living with her parents, husband, and two young children in Ota, a city adjoining Oizumi town, known as ‘Brazilian town’ in Japan. For five months, from September 2022 to the end of January 2023, I lived with them and gained invaluable insights into their working environment, daily routines, children’s education, and the policies and benefits in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. My landlord, fluent in English and Japanese and native in Portuguese, became a central figure in my fieldwork and a significant source of support and connection.

Every day, we shared our lives in a deeply meaningful way, exchanging stories about our cultures, joys, and worries. We built a bond that transcended our different backgrounds. This connection was not just about living under the same roof. It extended to every aspect of our daily lives. We frequently visited job agencies in search of part-time work, making me understand the realistic precarity of employment for non-citizens in Japan. She often changed jobs for different reasons. I learned about the hurdles and bureaucratic challenges they had to overcome, their resilience, and the strategies they employed to secure employment and support their families. On holidays, we often joined her friends for parties and picnics. These gatherings were vibrant and filled with laughter, music, and delicious Brazilian food. They provided me with a window into the social life of the Brazilian community, revealing how they maintained their cultural identity and supported each other in Japan. These social interactions were also opportunities to observe and participate in their cultural practices, strengthening my understanding of their way of life. We also worked together to prepare for her language exams after her work. She understood the critical role that education and language proficiency played in their lives. It was about securing a better future for her and her family. Through this process, I witnessed her balancing her daily job, caring for two young kids, cooking, cleaning, and then studying online at night. I felt deeply admiration for her unwavering commitment to achieving her goals.

In addition, my landlord played a crucial role in helping me with my research documents. She assisted in translating and checking my Portuguese documents, ensuring they were accurate and culturally appropriate so that I could communicate more effectively with my interviewees.

During this period, I also visited local city halls, local Brazilian schools, and museums. These visits provided further opportunities to understand the institutional support and educational environment available to the Brazilian community. I managed to interview one Brazilian teacher and a Japanese citizen who actively supports the Brazilian community locally. These interviews offered unique insights into the educational challenges and community support mechanisms in place, further enriching my research. Through all these activities, I met many more Japanese Brazilians. The trust and rapport I built with my landlord and her family extended to their friends and acquaintances, allowing me to expand my network and reach more potential interviewees. Many of my interviewees were recruited through snowball sampling during this period, thanks to the trust and connections I built while living with my landlord's family. Each new connection opened doors to more stories and insights, enriching my research with diverse perspectives and experiences. Living with my landlord's family was more than just an arrangement for accommodation. It was a profound immersion into the life of the Brazilian community in Japan. It provided me with an authentic and intimate understanding of their experiences, challenges, and triumphs. This period was a cornerstone of my fieldwork, offering a depth of insight that would have been impossible to achieve otherwise.

To diversify the sources of my interviewees and collect representative data on Japanese Brazilian communities in different cities, I needed to travel to Hamamatsu, another city with a significant Brazilian population. In February 2023, with a reluctant heart, I bid farewell to the wonderful Japanese Brazilian family I had been living with. After concluding my fieldwork in Ota and the nearby town of Oizumi, I moved to downtown Hamamatsu.

I regard Hamamatsu as a suitable site for three reasons: firstly, this city is a large industrial city with a high concentration of automobile manufacturers and has attracted a large Brazilian population in Japan. According to data from 2017, Brazilians are the largest group of foreigners in Hamamatsu. Around 39.3% of foreigners in Hamamatsu are from Brazil. Second, the Hamamatsu municipal government has provided various integration programs for immigrants and their children since the 1990s. For example, in 2001, the Hamamatsu municipal government hired many foreign language-speaking tutors to help immigrant children who are not fluent in Japanese and provide some support to their parents.

Furthermore, to facilitate the education of immigrant children, the Hamamatsu government has subsidised the funding of private ethnic schools and non-profit organisations (NPOs) that help educate immigrant children. Studies have shown that Brazilian children living in Hamamatsu have a higher rate of entering high school because a variety of integration programs exist in Hamamatsu. Third, Hamamatsu is one of twenty metropolises called 'ordinance-designated cities' that have the right to take the initiative in migration management (Ohsugi, 2011).

Upon arriving in Hamamatsu, I faced similar challenges at the beginning of my journey. I had no local contacts to introduce me to potential research participants, and being far from my previous location, my previous interviewees couldn't assist me either. To overcome this hurdle, I had several strategies. Initially, I sought assistance from employment agencies, hoping to find a part-time job that would allow me to work alongside Brazilians. However, the 'cultural activities' classification of my visa posed a significant barrier. The agencies were hesitant to offer positions involving manual labour, citing a mismatch with my visa requirements. Despite encountering opportunities for unpaid work, I had to decline these due to practical difficulties. Many of the factories were located in remote areas, and I didn't have a car, making it impractical to pursue these options. This situation highlights the complexity and unpredictability of fieldwork, where logistical challenges often intersect with the cultural and social dynamics of the research setting.

Determined to find a way, I turned to direct engagement within the community, visiting locales popular among Brazilians, including bars, cafes, churches, the Brazilian consulate, language learning centres, and city hall, in search of interviewees. This method, while effective, was not without its challenges. It proved to be time-consuming, faced a considerable rejection rate, and occasionally attracted attention from policemen. This necessitated that I always be prepared to validate my identity and research intentions through official documents. These interactions slowly helped me build trust and gradually led to introductions and recommendations, allowing me to expand my network and find potential interviewees. Though not many interviews were accepted, many informal conversations brought us to talk with an open mind and served as a bridge to interviews in Hamamatsu.

In pursuit of a broader participant base, I explored online communication, engaging with Japanese Brazilians residing in other cities across Japan and inviting them to participate via

questionnaires or online interviews. Despite these efforts, my preference remained for conducting face-to-face interviews whenever feasible. My prior experiences had affirmed the value of in-person interactions, often revealing richer insights and unexpected responses that were less commonly encountered through remote channels.

The problem of obtaining access to the data is often at its most acute in initial negotiations during the first days in the field (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 41). My time in Hamamatsu was a testament to this, as I had to continuously adjust my strategies to overcome linguistic barriers and logistical constraints. The concept of cultural sensitivity, as discussed by Liamputtong (2010, p. 86), was particularly crucial in my interactions. Understanding the socio-historical context of the Japanese Brazilian community in Japan allowed me to approach my participants with the necessary empathy and respect. This cultural sensitivity and competence are not merely about awareness of their lifestyles but involves actively engaging with and valuing the perspectives and experiences of the community members. I engaged in cultural immersion, participating in community events, and learning about Brazilian customs and traditions. These steps were essential in demonstrating my commitment to learning about their world including their beliefs, habits, needs and risks, which gradually helped break down initial barriers of mistrust.

Furthermore, resilience and adaptability played a significant role in my fieldwork. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, pp. 20-21) note, field research cannot be programmed, as not all problems can be anticipated, which requires researchers to be reflexive through every stage of the research process. The dynamic nature of fieldwork also often requires researchers to modify their plans and approaches based on real-time feedback and experiences. My initial attempts to find work through employment agencies suffered a setback due to visa restrictions, and the lack of local contacts initially seemed impossible. However, continuous reflection and adaptation drove me to seek alternative methods, such as pivoting from formal employment channels to more grassroots, community-based methods of participant recruitment, engaging directly with the potential participants at popular local spots and through social networks, which were vital for me to build genuine connections within their community.

These above were the practical realities I encountered during my fieldwork. My experiences in Japan reinforced that successful fieldwork is not a linear process but an iterative journey that demands continuous learning and adaptation.

3.2.1 Data Collection: Participant Observation and Semi-Structured Interviews

The primary data collection methods for this study included participant observation and semi-structured interviews, supplemented by questionnaires when participants felt more comfortable with or when time constraints necessitated this approach. Participant observation involved the researcher actively engaging with the community, observing social interactions, and taking detailed field notes. This immersive method allowed for the collection of rich, contextual data that is critical for understanding the participants' lived experiences and social dynamics (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 2011, p.72).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 first-generation and 31 second-generation Japanese Brazilians, and 39 questionnaire surveys were also administered. During the fieldwork, I conducted a five-month participant observation while living in the household of a second-generation Japanese Brazilian. The semi-structured interviews, conducted with 45 participants, were designed to elicit detailed narratives about their experiences and perceptions of integration. The flexible format of these interviews allowed participants to discuss issues most relevant to them while ensuring that key topics related to integration were addressed (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.3).

All participants were aged 18 or above. Among the 45 interviewees, 7 had acquired Japanese citizenship, while others held either permanent residency or long-term residency visas. To ensure anonymity, most respondents were assigned pseudonyms using random Japanese surnames, as most participants are of Japanese-Brazilian descent and have Japanese surnames. When a non-Japanese surname appears, it indicates that their mother is Japanese and their father is Brazilian; hence, they have a Brazilian surname.

The research lies in the ontological stance of Social Constructivism, which posits that realities are socially constructed rather than inherently objectives. This perspective acknowledges the complexities of human experiences, suggesting that knowledge and understanding are developed through social interactions and the interpretations individuals

and communities have of their world (Boyland, 2019, p. 30). This approach is particularly suited to exploring the nuanced experiences of Brazilians of Japanese descent in Japan, recognising that their settling processes are influenced by a myriad of social, cultural, and individual factors (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 60). Social constructivism guides the research design, emphasising the importance of understanding participants' perspectives and the meanings they attribute to their experiences. The selection of participants is deliberate, specifically targeting Japanese Brazilian individuals, aiming to illuminate the complex dynamics of ethnic identity and sense of belonging in Japan. The varied narratives from those who straddle cultural and national identities, offer a critical perspective on the multifaceted challenges and barriers to 'integration', and the systematic and societal mechanisms that facilitate or hinder their inclusion in Japanese society. In doing so, this thesis goes beyond merely auditing Japan's integration policies. It seeks to uncover the deeper implications of these policies on individual identities and the broader societal narrative of homogeneity and diversity. The ultimate goal is to question and deconstruct the conventional wisdom surrounding ethnic identity and integration within Japan, providing a platform for the voices of Brazilian residents of Japanese ancestry to be heard and understood in their quest for recognition and inclusion.

3.2.2 Interview Schedules

Following the guidance of Brinkmann (2022, p.18), semi-structured interviews are utilised to balance structured inquiry with the flexibility to explore participants' responses in depth. This approach is particularly effective in qualitative research where understanding the complexities of human experiences is paramount (Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz, 2018, pp. 176-177). Alignment with the social constructivist view that knowledge is socially produced and interpreted, semi-structured interviews allow for the capture of multiple realities and understandings. The use of inductive questions is inspired by the work of Thomas (2006, p. 238), who emphasises their role in allowing themes to emerge naturally from the data. Inductive questions are open-ended and exploratory.

The development of the interview schedule was informed by a review of relevant literature on integration, migration studies, and the specific contexts of Japanese Brazilians. Key themes were identified, including citizenship, education, employment, ethnic identity, and experiences of inclusion and exclusion. This thematic framework ensured that the interviews

covered essential aspects of the participants' lives related to their integration into Japanese society.

The interview schedule was divided into several sections, each focusing on a different aspect of the participants' experiences.

Questions of Semi-structured interview	Focus
Demographic Information	Collect basic demographic details, including age, gender, education level, and immigration visa status.
Migration History	Explore migration history, reasons for migration, age at migration, and initial experiences in Japan.
Citizenship and Legal Status	Investigate legal status, experiences with the citizenship application process, and perceptions of the importance of citizenship for integration.
Education and Employment	Discuss educational and employment histories, challenges faced, and their impact on integration.
Ethnic Identity and Cultural Practices	Examine ethnic identity, cultural practices, and their influence on the sense of belonging in Japan.
Experiences of Inclusion and Exclusion	Capture personal experiences of inclusion and exclusion in various social contexts, such as at work, in educational institutions, and in communities.

Table 6: Interview schedule

Each interview began with an introduction, where participants were briefed on the purpose of the study, assured of the confidentiality of their responses, and informed of their right to withdraw from the interview at any time. This introduction helped build rapport and trust, crucial for obtaining honest and detailed responses. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for initial exploring questions and follow-up discussions based on participants' responses (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p. 165). This flexibility was essential for capturing the special stories of participants' experiences and for exploring unexpected themes that emerged during the interviews. To accommodate the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the participants, the interview schedule was sometimes adapted during the interviews. For example, when interviewing second-generation Japanese Brazilians, more emphasis was placed on their educational and employment experiences in Japan, while first-generation participants were asked more about their migration history and initial adaptation experiences. Initially, interviewees were recruited through the researcher's social network and in-person searches during pilot fieldwork. At a later stage, a snowball sampling procedure was employed, where participants suggested other potential interviewees. This

approach helped to reach a wider and more varied sample. Interviews typically lasted between 30 to 70 minutes and were audio-recorded with participants' consent.

I transcribed the interview recordings, focusing on verbal language rather than nonverbal cues. Smith et al. (2005, pp. 310-311) argued that in studies focusing on ideology rather than interactional features, extensive interactional features might lead to less analytical focus on the substantive study focus. Therefore, only symbols necessary to understand how participants responded to the research questions were used. Most interviews were conducted in English. When participants responded in Portuguese, a fluent and native Portuguese speaker assisted with translation.

The interviews were designed to explore the impact of interviewees' perceptions of citizenship, education, employment, and ethnic identity on their subjective feelings of integration. Although the interviews were not strictly autobiographical, the interview schedule was structured to elicit life stories. Questions covered topics such as arrival and initial experiences in Japan, integration into school and peer groups, educational and employment trajectories, and ethnic identity and sense of belonging to Japan.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

Research is inherently entwined with ethical considerations, and these should not be treated as an afterthought but rather as a continuous and integral aspect throughout the entire research process (Zapata-Barrero, 2020, p.283). Scholars, therefore, bear the responsibility of maintaining ethical standards across various stages, encompassing data collection, processing, knowledge production, and their impact on the studied population. To uphold these ethical standards, the fieldwork for this research has been approved by an ethics committee of the University of York before starting. Moreover, the ethical implications of the research continue to be a focal point during and after the fieldwork phase. David Turton's perspective underscores the gravity of ethical considerations and emphasises the justification of researching others' suffering only when there is a clear objective to alleviate it (Turton, 1996, p.96). Central to this research is an unwavering dedication to respecting the equal rights of all individuals, irrespective of socio-economic status, race, sex, language, religion, ethnic or national origin, and nationality. An awareness of the ethical dimensions guided every interaction throughout the fieldwork phase. Principles of respect, anonymity, consent,

and a commitment to minimising inconvenience to participants were not only responses to practical challenges but also an ethical imperative rooted in the overarching goal of conducting research that upholds the dignity of all involved.

I requested consent from all participants before data collection. Without their consent, no data was gathered. Each participant received an information sheet detailing the research project and topics of the interviews, a privacy notice explaining the usage, processing, and storage of their personal data, and a consent form to grant permission explicitly. Subsequently, participants were asked to sign the consent form, affirming their agreement to partake in the study. The recruitment has been done on a purely voluntary basis.

Additionally, all field forms were translated into Japanese and Portuguese, with assistance from native speakers of both languages, to ensure their accuracy and clarity. This effort guaranteed participants' rights to fully understand the research content, enabling them to consent or decline participation knowledgeably. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without needing to provide a reason. This approach complies with the commitment to respecting participants' autonomy and safeguarding their welfare throughout the research process.

In consideration of potential sensitivities, certain interview topics may be perceived as delicate by participants, particularly regarding experiences of marginalisation, discrimination, and exclusion due to their minority status in Japan. Discussing integration experiences, including instances of exclusion or inclusion, could potentially upset participants. However, the paramount concern of this research is the health and well-being of the participants, and steps have been taken to prioritise their well-being. Participants have been given the option to provide a preferred contact phone number, offering an avenue for support if needed. If a participant appears distressed at any point during or after an interview, the option to contact a designated person or their general practitioner has been established. This contact would only be made if there is an immediate concern for the participant's well-being, and the circumstances triggering such a call can be discussed with participants for clarity.

Moreover, participants are offered the interview topic guide beforehand if they believed it would facilitate their participation. During the interview, participants are reminded of their ability to halt the conversation at any point, skip questions they prefer not to answer, or

request a break. Special attention is given to verbal and non-verbal cues indicating distress, prompting an immediate pause in the interview. Emotional support is then provided, acknowledging and validating the participant's feelings.

Post-interview, a follow-up courtesy call, with participant consent, is conducted to reaffirm support and clarify their right to withdraw their contribution to the project. Participants are assured that all data related to them will be promptly deleted upon their request. Additionally, each participant receives a printed copy of relevant helpline numbers and information about organisations offering support, which is also provided in the information sheet.

Issues of confidentiality are addressed at the time of data collection. I do not record personal identifiers when taking notes in order to create a 'clean' data set. All the participants are assigned pseudonyms and identification codes in my notes, transcripts, and file names. For example, when a participant mentions a location (a city street, a park, a school, a company) or a person (an employer, family members), these specific personally identifying names of people and places will be replaced by a code. I aim to ensure that anyone reading my notes or transcripts will not be able to identify participants from them. A password-protected recording device to record interviews. The original recordings on my device were uploaded to the University of York's encrypted Google Drive as soon as possible and immediately removed from the recording device. I kept paper materials, and recording devices in locked cabinets and stored interview recordings and transcripts on the University of York's encrypted Google Drive. Throughout and after the study's completion, data files containing electronic devices have been password-protected and encrypted. Files containing electronic data have been closed when computers are left unattended. During the fieldwork, I translated Japanese to English by myself. If an interview needs to be conducted in Portuguese, a translator who has been taught about this project's ethical protocols is asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

3.4 Field-Based Insights and Discourse Analysis

This research employs semi-structured interviews, supported by contextual field observations, in combination with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore the integration experiences of second-generation Japanese Brazilians. While CDA offers a powerful framework for examining how discourse reflects and reinforces social structures

and ideologies (Fairclough, 2010, p. 9), observational and field-based engagement were initially included to enhance the contextual grounding of the study.

CDA is particularly suited to investigating relationships between language, power, and identity. It examines how discourse can both reproduce and resist social inequalities, including the mechanisms through which ideas such as exclusion, assimilation, or belonging are constructed and contested. In this research, CDA is used to explore how interview participants talk about citizenship, education, employment, and ethnic identity, and how these discourses reflect broader ideological tensions. The interpretative lens of CDA allows the study to go beyond description and instead interrogate how power relations are embedded in everyday speech and representations (Van Dijk, 1993; Wodak and Meyer, 2016).

As data collection progressed, the semi-structured interviews emerged as the most methodologically reliable and analytically generative component. With a larger participant base, clearer thematic structure, and repeatable coding process, they provided a solid framework for discourse analysis that allowed for comparison across participants and themes. While ethnographic elements such as participant observation, informal note-taking, and community immersion were originally intended as a core component, their contribution ultimately became supplementary. This shift emerged not from a lack of effort but from the comparative analytical strength and consistency of the interview data.

During fieldwork between July 2022 and June 2023, I lived in Ota City (Gunma Prefecture) and Hamamatsu City (Shizuoka Prefecture), sharing housing with Brazilian families and participating in local gatherings. These experiences enriched my understanding of daily life and social dynamics, but they did not produce sufficient independent data for systematic discourse analysis. Ethnographic fieldwork was therefore retained as a contextual lens, enriching the interpretation of the interview data. Observational moments offered situational cues, emotional context, and behavioural insight, particularly in triangulating the tone, gestures, and everyday dynamics referenced in interviews but were subordinated to the more systematic and generalisable findings produced by the interview analysis. This decision reflects both a methodological pragmatism and a reflexive awareness of the limits of partial immersion.

The integrated approach taken here prioritises discourse while remaining grounded in the realities encountered during fieldwork. This combination enables a richer understanding of how structural factors such as legal status or employment insecurity interact with subjective representations of identity and belonging. It also highlights the value of CDA in uncovering the tensions between symbolic inclusion and actual integration. While the observational material is not directly analysed, it played a background role in guiding questions, interpreting tone and gesture, and situating the discourse in lived space. The methodological choices reflect the aim of balancing analytical rigour with empirical grounding.

3.4.1 Contextualising Discourse Analysis with Field-Based Insights

The central research question guiding this study is to what extent Brazilians of Japanese descent have been integrated into Japanese society. This is explored through how interviewees perceive citizenship, education, employment, and ethnic identity, and how these perceptions shape their subjective feelings of integration. The study draws primarily on semi-structured interviews, with contextual support from limited field-based observation. While the original design incorporated ethnographic fieldwork, its contribution to the analytical core of the study became supplementary rather than central.

The field-based insights gained through participant observation and informal notetaking provided contextual knowledge that supported the interpretation of interview data but were not themselves subjected to systematic discourse analysis. Instead, these observations helped particularly in understanding tone, gesture, and the affective content of the interviews. For example, field notes about participants' comfort levels in social situations or home routines gave background texture that enriched the interpretation of verbal responses.

CDA was employed to examine interview data, with particular attention to how discourse reflects and shapes power relations, ideologies, and identities (Fairclough, 2010, p. 9; Van Dijk, 1993). CDA is particularly well suited to analysing the micro-level narratives of second-generation Japanese Brazilians while connecting these to broader structural contexts. The method enables an analysis of how discourses surrounding citizenship, ethnicity, and belonging reveal tensions between symbolic inclusion and material exclusion (Wodak and Meyer, 2016).

Although ethnographic fieldwork did not form a separate analytical strand, it played a background role in supporting CDA through contextual grounding. The triangulation of data drawing from interviews, field notes, and relevant documents enhanced the robustness of the analysis (Flick, 2018). However, triangulation in this case was interpretive rather than methodological, as only the interviews were systematically coded and analysed.

CDA as a methodological approach encompasses multiple traditions, including Foucauldian discourse theory, discursive psychology (Loughborough School), and hybrid approaches. The Foucauldian tradition focuses on the macro-level structuring of discourse and its relationship to power and knowledge, whereas the Loughborough School emphasises everyday interaction and discourse as social action (Suurmond, 2005, pp. 12–15). Wetherell and Potter (1993), in particular, emphasised the role of discourse in constructing race and marginalisation through everyday talk, which is relevant for this study's focus on integration and exclusion.

This research draws selectively from these traditions, particularly the latter, to foreground the lived experiences of Japanese Brazilians while acknowledging the institutional discourses that influence their subjectivities (Van Dijk, 1992). While elite discourse and media texts are not the focus here, participant narratives indirectly reflect the ideologies those discourses produce. The study also recognises the limitations of CDA in attributing causality to discourse. Following Billig (1995), it treats beliefs and imaginaries as socially shared ideas that influence, but do not deterministically shape, action.

Rather than entering philosophical debates about whether ideas constitute subjects (Althusser, 2014), this research focuses on how ideas about citizenship, education, employment, and ethnicity are internalised, negotiated, or resisted by participants. It asks how these ideas affect participants' own understandings of whether they are integrated or excluded. By centring participant interpretation, the analysis reveals how structural barriers and social positioning are lived and narrated.

In summary, the study prioritises interview-based CDA, using field-based observations to provide contextual insight rather than standalone data. This approach balances analytical rigour with empirical sensitivity, offering a grounded account of integration as both discourse and lived experience.

3.4.2 Thematic Identification and Data Interpretation

In this section, I will elaborate on the process of thematic identification and data interpretation using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as influenced by the works of Jonathan Potter and Michael Billig.

In this study, I employ a deductive approach to thematic identification and data interpretation within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This involves using pre-established themes and interpretative repertoires to explore participants' responses.

CDA, particularly in the context of Jonathan Potter's approach, can be abductive, focusing on the perspectives of the participants. This approach, however, has its limitations. It risks not fully addressing the research questions or engaging with existing academic debates. When approaching these interviews from a deductive or problem-oriented perspective, more politically charged questions can be asked. This tension between studying lived experiences in CDA, some of which may be inherently political, and addressing policy-relevant questions highlights the complexity of the analysis. Studying lived experiences can reveal political dimensions, as personal experiences often reflect broader social and political issues. However, from a policy standpoint, the information obtained from lived experiences might extend beyond what is directly relevant to policymaking. On the other hand, a CDA focused on policymakers would capture the perspectives and intentions behind the policies but might miss how these policies impact the individuals they target. Consequently, the responses of those affected by the policies might provide deeper insights into the consequences of these policies than what policymakers are aware of.

Therefore, while CDA can be political by examining power relations and ideologies, it often focuses on subjective, sociological data, which may not directly address the research question of how far immigrants have been integrated and what barriers to integration there might be. To ensure that this approach contributes to ongoing debates and relevance to the research questions, I will use themes deductively established from theoretical frameworks to explore reactions to potential issues in integration, rather than allowing the themes to emerge solely from the interviews.

The deductive approach starts with theoretical frameworks and themes derived from existing literature in integration studies, as discussed in previous chapters. In this study, the interview questions focus on themes such as citizenship, education, employment, and ethnic identity to address the research question: to what extent have Japanese Brazilians been integrated into or excluded from Japanese society? These themes and interview questions were established based on theoretical frameworks and were subsequently reinforced by contextual observations during fieldwork. By using these predefined themes, the analysis is structured and directly addresses the research questions related to the integration of Japanese Brazilians.

Interpretative repertoires are a term, and an analytical concept used within discourse analysis, particularly within discursive psychology. Interpretative repertoires, as defined by Potter and Wetherell (1987), are recurrent ways of talking about objects and events in the world. These repertoires are used to construct versions of reality and are integral to understanding how individuals make sense of their experiences. By applying interpretative repertoires deductively, I identify and analyse recurring patterns of talk that reflect broader cultural narratives and ideologies. This approach helps to ensure that the analysis remains focused on the key aspects of integration and exclusion as experienced by Japanese Brazilians and also helps to uncover how participants' language reflects and reinforces broader social structures and power relations within Japanese society.

CDA, as employed in this study, focuses on the participants' perspectives and how their discourses reflect and construct social realities. This approach allows for the examination of both the participants' subjective experiences and the broader sociopolitical context in which these experiences occur. By analysing the language used by participants, CDA helps uncover the ideological influences and power dynamics that shape their integration experiences.

One of the key values of the interpretative repertoires approach within CDA is its ability to identify representational patterns within a set of interviews. The approach seeks to discuss certain arguments, which appear regularly, suggesting that these are not merely individual opinions but potentially representative of the broader group. While this does not encapsulate all views within the group, focusing on frequently appearing arguments increases the likelihood of identifying the cultural common sense or popular ways of thinking within a group (Billig, 1995, p.18). According to CDA, these common arguments are not just opinions but demonstrate group activity, reflecting a cultural common sense of the group and shedding

light on how collective beliefs and attitudes influence integration processes (Billig, 1995, p. 16).

One limitation is how far individuals within the group might claim something fictitiously or act in self-deception. However, having a collection of interviews helps to minimise individual misrepresentations. Common phrases and ways of thinking identified across multiple interviews can act as a form of self-policing within the group, reflecting shared beliefs rather than isolated opinions. Additionally, ideas and expectations regularly appearing in interviews are likely to be present in reality, especially in semi-structured and naturalistic interviews (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p. 155). This creates pressure within the group to adhere to certain norms, even if individuals do not consciously intend to do so (Billig, 1995, p. 18). Furthermore, although ethnographic engagement was limited in analytical scope, the extended time spent in community settings helped build rapport with participants and contributed to a more comfortable environment for interviews. This rapport facilitated more open and authentic communication, ensuring that the data collected genuinely reflects the participants' experiences and beliefs. The long-term engagement allowed me to observe social interactions and contextualise the interview data, better understanding the cultural norms and practices within the community.

My study approach is influenced by Michael Billig's (1995; 1996) style of analysis. Billig's approach to analysing the ways of thinking relies not heavily on linguistic theory, providing a more comprehensive explanatory framework. While it is legitimate for CDA to focus on linguistic choices at a micro level, my approach also explores group-level integration by incorporating interpretative repertoires. This method acknowledges that while individual choices are important, they are part of broader social patterns and norms. Therefore, this study can provide a comprehensive understanding of integration from both individual and group perspectives.

Understanding group-level activity through CDA is not exhaustive, and future research may benefit from larger-scale quantitative analyses to determine greater effect sizes. However, using a deductive approach with interpretative repertoires allows for a structured and systematic analysis of how Japanese Brazilians' beliefs and perceptions impact their integration. This method contributes to ongoing academic debates and provides valuable insights into the social realities of immigrant integration. By grounding CDA in contextual

insights from fieldwork, this research explores the lived experiences of Japanese Brazilians while situating these experiences within the larger framework of societal power relations and ideologies. This combined approach enables an exploration of the factors influencing integration and the barriers that may exist.

3.5 Conclusion

The study of integration is complicated by its relation to belonging or non-belong. As McGowan (2022, pp. 36-37) argues, nonbelonging is a universal experience. No one can fully belong to a social order that is itself incomplete and thus cannot precisely differentiate between belonging and nonbelonging. 'Being German' or 'being Hungarian' are inherently empty on their own. They gain meaning through opposition to an 'enemy' or 'other'. The question of whether someone belongs refers primarily to their subjective perceptions but are also shaped by the social order, the group discourse, and national policy, which influence individual interpretations (Billig, 1995, p. 85). Therefore, Michael Billig's (1995) approach to studying cultural common sense provides an appropriate framework for the study of integration as it is sensitive to the influence of society on the migrant, instead of blaming their activity of subjectivity on their integration or lack thereof.

On the other hand, there is the risk that migrants interviewed, like anyone else, may feel they do not belong to Japanese society. Their attitudes may be similar to those of nationals who feel excluded. McGowan's (2022, pp. 36-37) point is that no one is really included, suggesting that immigrants, and any minoritised identities, must navigate an external position to the collective identity to ease psychological tensions. However, Billig (1995) is on the side of common sense operating at an unconscious level, or unknown, and not tied to this integration issue. Moreover, Billig (1995) highlights a national-level way of thinking, which refers to broad, generalised societal norms, and contrasts this with the localised interpretations made by smaller groups or epistemic communities (Van Dijk, 2014, p. 8). This distinction reveals tensions within CDA, as scholars like Billig (1995), McGowan (2022), and Van Dijk (2001) all offer different models of analysis that each have unique advantages and limitations, particularly when analysing complex phenomena such as social integration and belonging.

At this point, more general theorists like Billig (1995) and McGowan (2022), who focus on broad, large-scale analyses of social dynamics, face challenges. Their wide-ranging claims about social dynamics might be seen as less credible because they cannot link what they consider to be happening with the interpretations of actors within those situations. Potter and Hepburn (2005, p. 292) take a less ambitious approach, to develop more careful epistemologies that avoid broad assumptions about the thinking of populations. This approach is relativistic, focusing on reconstructing what is said within speech situations, sometimes using functional linguistics, which I have avoided due to its difficulty in scaling up to group-level analysis. Instead, focusing on different arguments which are used commonly within groups, referred to as interpretative repertoires can allow for an understanding of group-level thinking (McKinlay, Potter, and Wetherell, 1993; Potter and Reicher, 1987; Wetherell and Potter, 1988; Wetherell, 1998). These interpretative repertoires can help answer the question of how far Japanese Brazilians have been integrated, by analysing the logic they employ and therefore allowing for an examination of how they co-construct their social reality (Potter, 1996).

While interpretative repertoires originate from the social psychological tradition, their use here is embedded in a broader critical framework that examines how discourse reflects, reinforces, or contests power relations in contemporary Japan.

The critical dimension of this study lies in its focus on how second-generation Japanese Brazilians articulate experiences of belonging, exclusion, and legitimacy in relation to dominant ideologies of ethnicity, citizenship, and integration. Rather than accepting participants' statements at face value, the analysis interrogates the assumptions, silences, and ideological underpinnings embedded in their language.

As Norman Fairclough (2015, p.7) explains, the meaning of 'critical' in CDA is often misunderstood. He argues that being critical is not merely about identifying problematic features in discourse, but about asking 'why is the discourse like this?' and seeking explanations. In this sense, CDA helps researchers move beyond surface descriptions by uncovering the structural and symbolic conditions that shape both what is said and what is left unsaid in migrant narratives.

This study contributes to integration debates from those who may know best if they are integrated or not. Just like Wetherell and Potter (1988), who studied racism from the perspective of those experiencing it to understand how it operates within a society, this research examines Japanese Brazilians' interpretations and how these influence their integration activities. Although this study does not deconstruct the idea of integration, although this could be done in future research, it contributes to integration debates. Given the limited sample size, it may not challenge broader integration theories but can explain why certain migrant groups fail to meet integration criteria from their perspective.

Chapter Four: Citizenship and Integration

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the legal-political integration of the second-generation Japanese Brazilians. In the legal-political dimension, citizenship status and related policies are selected as objective indicators to analyse how legal status, and political rights affect the integration experience of second-generation Japanese Brazilians. On the one hand, legal and political integration provides a foundation for other forms of integration. However, a lack of citizenship can hinder access to socio-economic opportunities and social acceptance. Moreover, the positive impact of citizenship as a factor in facilitating integration can be offset by negative experiences in other dimensions. In other words, even individuals who possess citizenship may not necessarily have a strong sense of belonging or integration. On the other hand, Integration in other dimensions influences the possibility of access to citizenship.

Approximately 80 years after the Japanese first settled in Brazil, the economic situation of the two countries reversed. Brazil's financial crisis in the early 1980s led to severe recessions, enormous external debt, hyperinflation, and high unemployment. In contrast, Japan experienced a period of rapid economic growth known as the Japanese economic miracle, becoming the second-largest economy since 1968.

This economic boom and the resulting job opportunities with higher salaries attracted many South American Nikkei-jin, primarily second and third-generation Japanese, to return and settle in their ancestral homeland (Ishikawa, 2009, p.59; Tsuda, 2003, p.110). Consequently,

over 200,000 ‘returnees’ moved to Japan, predominantly low-skilled workers in the manufacturing sector and primarily Portuguese speakers (Immigration Services Agency, 2020).

Most Japanese Brazilians who migrated to Japan held a visa category known as ‘*tei-jūsha*’ (long-term resident), established in 1990 for ‘ethnic’ immigrants who could prove Japanese ancestry up to the third generation and their spouses. This visa, typically valid for up to three years with the possibility of indefinite extensions, grants long-term residency (but not full citizenship) and unlimited employment rights to those who meet the government’s broad criteria (Tian, 2019, p. 1505; Watarai, 2014, p. 664). Additionally, it allows their spouses and children to stay for one year, with indefinite extensions possible. Comparatively, these rights place ‘ethnic’ immigrants in a relatively advantageous position compared to ordinary foreigners without Japanese blood ties.

As Japanese Brazilians settled in Japan, their unique bicultural identity clashed with Japan’s monolithic national identity framework. The legal system’s emphasis on *jus sanguinis* complicates their integration, as Japanese Brazilians, despite their Japanese ancestry, often face legal and social hurdles due to their mixed cultural heritage and the Japanese government’s narrow definition of citizenship.

Yamanaka (1996, pp. 67-68) highlights that the late 1980s saw a significant ‘return’ of Japanese Brazilian immigrants to Japan, driven primarily by acute labour shortages affecting small-scale employers. This demographic challenge, characterised by an ageing population and low birth rates, contrasts with Japan’s national identity, which values ethnic homogeneity. The Japanese government thus faced the dilemma of attracting a flexible labour force for less desirable jobs without undermining the nation’s commitment to ethnic homogeneity. In response, the 1990 immigration policy revision strategically utilised the Japanese diaspora, offering them employment and residence privileges and creating the new category of ‘*Nikkei*’.

Second-generation Japanese Brazilians who lack citizenship face significant disadvantages, particularly in accessing equal educational and employment opportunities. Research indicates that entering Japanese high schools and universities is challenging for them (Sharpe, 2010; Takenoshita, 2010, p. 174; 2013, p. 1191). The strategy of integrating these immigrants

introduced complexities within Japan's distinct commitment to full employment, as Mori (1994, p. 42) illustrates. Traditional employment practices have historically limited the participation of foreign workers. However, recent trends toward labour market flexibility have facilitated the inclusion of foreign workers in certain sectors. While this inclusion has expanded their presence in the labour market, it has also heightened their exposure to market vulnerabilities (Takenoshita, 2013, pp. 1191-1192; Higuchi, 2010, pp. 63-64). The vulnerability of the Japanese-Brazilian community became especially apparent during economic downturns in Japan, leading to widespread job losses despite their eligibility for indefinite residence renewal. The disadvantages faced by second-generation migrants in the labour market are often referred to as the 'ethnic penalty' (Heath and Cheung, 2007). This term describes the additional challenges and barriers that ethnic minorities face compared to their native-born counterparts.

4.2 Legal Framework and Citizenship Policies in Japan

Japan's immigration policy stance after World War II was markedly different from other developed countries. Bartram (2000, p. 5) refers to Japan's migrant worker policy as a 'negative case' compared to Western Europe, where foreign workers often exceeded 10% of the labour force during the post-war economic boom. In Japan, foreign workers constitute less than 1.5% of its labour force, even if we include the non-citizen Korean population, marking it as a typical 'non-immigrant country'. If we look at Japan's welfare spending, Japan's policy leaned more towards conservatism and liberalism, with little support for socialism, making it comparable to America and Ireland rather than European states (Esping-Anderson, 1990, p.74).

Japan has enacted many laws and Acts to regulate its migration policy, but I do not have space to cover all of them. Therefore, this section will focus on the most significant legislation: the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, or Immigration Control for short (Akashi, 2009; 2017a; Higuchi and Inaba, 2023; Fuji, 2007; Takahashi, 2016). There have been two main pillars within Japan's immigration policy: the employment of only highly skilled foreigners and the notion that the acceptance of foreign workers is contingent upon their temporary residence (Vogt and Achenbach, 2012, p. 8). The Japanese Brazilian group has been an important part of the second pillar. Generally, 'restriction' has been one of the main characteristics of Japan's migrant worker policies. One of the major exceptions was

in 1989, when Japan shifted its immigration policy to favour the Japanese diaspora workers. This shift addressed labour market shortages and eased re-entry barriers for Japanese Brazilians.

	<i>Nikkei-jin</i>	Trainees under TITP
Duration of stay	Unlimited (renewed every 3 years)	Up to 3 years (up to 5 starting from 2017)
Access to social services/welfare	Yes	No (except medical insurance)
Inter-firm mobility	Yes	No
Family reunion	Yes	No
Application of Labour Law	Yes (de facto limited by the contract-work system)	De jure Yes after a period of training (de facto limited by lack of effective enforcement mechanisms)

Table 7: A comparison of the rights of Nikkei Brazilians and others (Source: MOJ, 2016; Tian 2019, p. 1506)

In the two decades after the establishment of Japan's '1990 regime', the fundamental policy of not accepting unskilled foreign workers and discouraging foreign workers with the intent of settlement remained unchanged. However, in the 21st century, especially since the introduction of the 'Multicultural Coexistence' idea in 2005, along with the 2008 financial crisis and the 2018 amendment to the Immigration Control Act, prompted incremental revisions to Japan's immigration system.

Until the 2018 amendment, Japan's immigration policies primarily operated within the framework established by the 1989 Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, which introduced the legal framework that facilitated the acceptance of foreign workers, including Japanese Brazilians.

The '1990 system' was originally proposed by the Japanese scholar Junichi Akashi (Akashi, 2009). He noted that under this framework, foreign residence status consisted of two categories: status-based visa and activity-based visa. Status-based visas include 'permanent resident,' 'long-term resident', etc., which mainly involve ethnic Japanese and spouses of Japanese nationals, and there is no restriction on the type and duration of engaged work. Activity-based visas are categorised according to the type of activity undertaken, and there are restrictions on the type of industry, job, and hours of employment. This type of qualification has three types: (I) Qualifications in 'specialised fields of technology,' such as

professorships, arts, etc., which allow foreigners to engage in work. (II) The qualifications that do not allow foreigners to work, such as ‘Cultural Activities,’ ‘Study,’ ‘Family Residence,’ ‘Short-term Stay,’ etc., these qualifications require permission to engage in activity other than that permitted by the qualification to work. (III) ‘Specified Activity’ status allows foreigners to work within the scope specified by the Minister of Justice, such as entering Japan to engage in nursing care based on an economic cooperation agreement. In addition, there is a special type of ‘technical internship qualification’: Since the Japanese government emphasises that this qualification is considered to be the same as the ‘Study’ qualification, it is established for the purpose of study rather than employment. However, this internship system became a critical pathway for foreign workers, especially from developing countries, to enter Japan under the premise of skill acquisition, though it often functioned as a backdoor for cheap labour (Liu-Farrer, 2020b; Komine, 2018, p.3).

The 1990 regime reflects a tension between Japan’s economic needs, its desire for social cohesion, and its preservation of cultural identity. Ethnicity became a central theme in Japan’s migration policy during this period. The preference for Japanese descendants was codified in immigration laws, allowing access to the labour market for those with Japanese heritage. This selective preference reinforced the notion of Japan as an ethnically homogenous nation. It highlighted the contradiction in the country’s approach to immigration—welcoming foreign labour when necessary but maintaining restrictive pathways to integration and citizenship. Historically, Japan’s immigration policy has been heavily influenced by the post-war context and Cold War geopolitics. Japan’s reluctance to accept large-scale immigration in the post-war period stemmed from its desire for post-war conservative rulers and nationalists to rebuild a national identity and to align themselves closely with the United States while retaining a strong sense of cultural superiority (Lie, 2001, p. 18; 112; 135). This historical background laid the foundation for a cautious and selective immigration policy in later decades.

The entry of Japanese Brazilians during the late 1980s and early 1990s directly resulted from Japan’s booming economy and the need for labour in industries such as construction, manufacturing, and services. As shown in the table below, the number of Brazilians who entered Japan before 1990 was very small. However, there was a considerable increase in both the number of Brazilians and their percentage relative to the total number of foreigners between 1988 and 1990, with the Brazilian population in Japan increasing from 4,159

(0.44%) in 1988 to 56,429 (5.25%) in 1990, reflecting a clear policy shift that encouraged the migration of Nikkeijin (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 1984-1992). The table below illustrates that the emergence of Japanese Brazilians as a prominent immigrant group was not the result of spontaneous individual migration decisions, but rather the outcome of state-driven, institutionalised migration. This pattern highlights how Japan implemented an ethnicity-based return migration policy. The table thus offers essential contextual grounding for the integration challenges that emerge in the interview narratives.

Year	Total number of foreigners in Japan	Numbers of Brazilians
1984	840,885	1953 (0.23%)
1986	867,237	2135 (0.25%)
1988	941,005	4159 (0.44%)
1990	1,075,317	56,429 (5.25%)
1992	1,281,644	147,803 (11.53%)

Table 8: The percentage of Brazilians relative to the total foreign population from 1984 to 1992

Source: Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2024 (Compiled by the author)

The 1990 policy changes, while ostensibly created to address labour shortages, were also shaped by Japan's preference for migrants with Japanese ancestry. Japanese Brazilians, who were ethnically Japanese but culturally Brazilian, were seen as ideal candidates because their perceived ethnic ties to Japan were expected to facilitate smoother integration (Tsuda, 2003; 2000, p. 56). However, as Tsuda argued, the reality was far more complicated. Japanese Brazilians often faced significant cultural barriers, and their experiences exposed the limitations of Japan's ethnic-based approach to immigration.

Recent legislative developments, such as the notable legislative development occurred at the end of 2018 when the National Diet passed an amendment to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act. This amendment, effective in April 2019, introduced a new residence status named 'Specific Skills,' intended for individuals with particular skill sets. The plan, projected over the following five years, aims to welcome approximately 340,000 foreign workers across 14 industries. This initiative also includes provisions to extend the duration of their work permits and potentially offer rights for settlement in Japan.

This amendment represents a significant shift in Japan's approach to immigration, marking the first substantial move towards accepting unskilled foreign workers, as perceived by public opinion. However, the process of amending the legislation was fraught with controversy.

Intense debates and confrontations within the Diet highlighted the issue. The opposition criticised the government for failing to rectify the flaws in the existing immigrant admission system and accused it of hasty decision-making and legislation. On the other side, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who advocated for the bill, underscored its importance for Japan's economy. He also clarified that this change did not signify a departure from Japan's traditional immigration stance. As a result of this legislative change, there has been a modest increase in the number of foreign workers in Japan. Nevertheless, the broader dilemma of effectively facilitating the inclusion of immigrants into Japanese society persists, underscoring a complex and ongoing issue in the nation's immigration policy. As Liu-Farrer (2020) noted, this shift has not been without controversy, with intense political debates revealing deep-seated resistance to large-scale immigration. Critics argue that these legislative changes do little to address the systemic barriers that prevent immigrants from fully integrating into Japanese society. The government's cautious approach to immigration reflects underlying concerns about maintaining Japan's ethnic and cultural homogeneity, even as economic demands drive incremental policy shifts.

The legal framework established to address labour shortages, along with piecemeal reforms over the years, has profoundly shaped Japan's naturalisation policies, creating systemic barriers, particularly for migrants like Japanese Brazilians, who are predominantly engaged in non-skilled industries. The Japanese government does not automatically grant citizenship to Japanese Brazilians, thereby preventing them from obtaining a Japanese passport and voting rights. In fact, the number of Japanese Brazilians with Japanese citizenship is low (Sharpe, 2010, p. 358). It is estimated that only 9% to 13% of Nikkei individuals possess Japanese citizenship. Tsuda's estimation suggests that the proportion of Nikkei individuals with Japanese citizenship residing in Japan is around 10%, Cornelius's survey indicates 9%, and the Japan Labour Society's survey reports 13% (Tsuda, 2003, p. 98). The chart below illustrates the number of individuals naturalised as Japanese citizens from 2015 to 2020. The Korean Peninsula and China numbers far surpass those from Brazil and Peru.

Year	Application statistics for naturalisation	Acquisition of citizenship statistics		
		South Korea and North Korea	China	Other ⁽¹⁾
2015	12,442	5,247	2,813	1,409
2016	11,477	5,434	2,626	1,494
2017	11,063	5,631	3,088	1,596

2018	9,942	4,357	3,025	1,692
2019	10,457	4,360	2,374	1,719
2020	8,673	4113	2881	2085

Table 9: The number of naturalised citizens (2015-2022)

Source: Ministry of Justice, 2023.

(1) Note: This category includes individuals of various nationalities who have been naturalised as Japanese citizens. It likely includes a low proportion of Brazilians or Japanese Brazilians, as the official data does not specify ethnic background.

4.3 Case Studies: Integration Experiences of Japanese Brazilians without Citizenship

This section analyses the legal and social implications of citizenship status, focusing specifically on the role of Japanese citizenship in shaping respondents' subjective feelings of integration. Citizenship status significantly influences the ease and stability of life for immigrants, affecting their legal rights, access to resources, and overall sense of belonging. However, the importance of acquiring citizenship varies among immigrants (Birkvad, 2019, p. 809). The collected data on respondents' nationality and visa types, along with the analysis, contribute to an empirical understanding of their feelings towards Japanese citizenship and integration, including their aspirations to naturalise and the motivations behind their decisions.

Tables 9 and 10 show that naturalisation in Japan is a steady but limited process, with approximately 10,000 individuals acquiring citizenship each year. This relatively small number points to structural barriers in converting long-term residence into full membership. Brazilian nationals are not classified as a distinct category in Ministry of Justice data but are instead grouped under "Other," reflecting their relatively small share of total naturalisations compared with larger migrant communities. Table 9 presents the annual totals of newly naturalised citizens in recent years, while Table 10 details the national origins of those naturalised between 2019 and 2021. However, the figures do not provide cumulative naturalisation numbers by ethnicity, nor do they allow us to calculate the proportion of Nikkei Brazilians, Koreans, or Chinese residents who have naturalised. What we can observe is that, in recent years, naturalised citizens from the Korean Peninsula and China have consistently made up the majority.

One explanation for this disparity is demographic. Both Korean and Chinese communities in Japan are larger than the Brazilian community. Another factor is that return migrants must

still go through the standard naturalisation process. Japan's prohibition on dual nationality, combined with the cultural and symbolic ambiguity surrounding what it means to be Japanese, introduces additional hurdles. These include vague moral criteria such as demonstrating good conduct and the expectation to conform to unspoken norms of what a good Japanese citizen should be (Delmarcelle, 2023). As a result, naturalisation often occurs only after decades of residence and partial social integration. Delmarcelle (2023) notes that many who eventually naturalise have lived in Japan for years, if not generations, before applying. These individuals usually hold stable jobs, possess higher levels of human capital, and are deeply familiar with Japanese institutional expectations. By contrast, most Brazilian migrants arrived during the 1990s under short-term labour schemes. Their later arrival, smaller population, and lack of institutional pathways partly explain their lower visibility in naturalisation data.

Among the 45 participants in this study, 7 held Japanese citizenship, including 4 who were second-generation Japanese Brazilians. The remaining 38 individuals (84.4%) held either long-term or permanent residence visas. Japan's national statistics for 2022 indicate that 89% of Brazilians in Japan hold long-term or permanent residency visas (E-Stat, 2023).

2019			2020			2021		
1st	South Korea, North Korea	4360	1st	South Korea, North Korea	4113	1st	South Korea, North Korea	3564
2nd	China	2374	2nd	China	2881	2nd	China	2526
3rd	Brazil	383	3rd	Brazil	409	3rd	Brazil	444
4th	Vietnam	264	4th	Vietnam	301	4th	Vietnam	269
5th	the Philippines	235	4th	the Philippines	301	4th	the Philippines	237
6th	Peru	168	6th	Peru	172	6th	Peru	175
7th	Bangladesh	81	7th	Bangladesh	125	7th	Bangladesh	129
8th	Russia	47	8th	Nepal	100	8th	Nepal	108
8th	USA	47	9th	India	66	9th	Sri Lanka	77
10th	Sri Lanka	46	10th	Sri Lanka	55	10th	India	66
	Other	448		Other	556		Other	572
	Total	8453	Total		9079	Total	Total	8167

Table 10: 2019 - 2021 naturalised citizens by country of origin

Source: Ministry of Justice, 2023.

Among the 39 respondents who completed the survey, when asked, 'Do you think Japanese citizenship is important?', 24 people (61.5%) answered that it is important or very important. This majority suggests a strong inclination towards the value and benefits associated with holding Japanese citizenship. These respondents may perceive citizenship as crucial for various

reasons, including legal rights, social acceptance, and access to certain opportunities within Japanese society. On the other hand, 8 respondents (20.5%) were unsure about the importance of Japanese citizenship. This group reflects a level of ambivalence, possibly due to mixed experiences or a lack of clear information about the advantages and disadvantages of acquiring citizenship. Their uncertainty might also stem from the perception that obtaining Japanese citizenship is a complicated and potentially unattainable process. Finally, 7 respondents (18%) answered that Japanese citizenship is unimportant or not very important. This minority view could be influenced by several factors, such as a strong identification with their Brazilian heritage, satisfaction with their current residency status, or a belief that citizenship would not significantly change their experience or opportunities in Japan. Additionally, these individuals might have faced discrimination in Japan, leading them to feel that their integration into Japanese society and personal identity are not heavily dependent on their citizenship status. Their experiences of discrimination may reinforce the perception that even with citizenship, they would still be viewed as outsiders.

Of the 31 second-generation Japanese Brazilians interviewed, those with citizenship, 3 out of 4 interviewees described a strong feeling of integration, while one individual felt weakly integrated. For those without citizenship, 44% (12 out of 27) interviewees felt well integrated, while 56% (15 out of 27) felt weakly integrated. This indicates that a significant portion of non-citizens experience challenges in feeling well-integrated due to the limitation in legal rights and the social acceptance that often accompanies non-citizen status.

The data in table 11 result clearly shows that citizenship is associated with a higher likelihood of feeling well-integrated. However, it also reveals that different dimensions of integration are interconnected. While legal and political integration act as positive factors, individuals' socio-economic and cultural experiences can significantly influence their overall sense of integration. For example, nearly half of the non-citizens still manage to feel strongly integrated, which suggests that non-citizens may have had positive experiences in other areas, thus compensating for the unfavourable effects of the lack of citizenship. Moreover, the offsetting effect of negative experiences in other dimensions is evident, as one citizen does not feel strongly integrated. This indicates that legal status is just one piece of the integration puzzle and that challenges in other areas, particularly cultural acceptance in this case, can diminish the sense of integration even for those with citizenship.

Feeling Integrated to Japan

Legal Status	Strong Count	Weak Count
Citizen 4	3 (75%)	1 (25%)
Non-Citizen 27	12 (44%)	15 (56%)

Table 11: Feeling of integration among 31 second-generation Japanese Brazilians by citizenship

4.3.1 Interview with Kudou and Hirata: Contrasting Marginalisation and Partial Integration without Citizenship

This section presents and analyses the narratives surrounding the citizenship of two second-generation Japanese Brazilians who do not hold Japanese citizenship. Kudou, aged 28, and Hirata, 27 are second-generation Japanese Brazilians who came to Japan with their parents at the ages of 3 and 1. Both women are of mixed heritage, with Japanese fathers and Brazilian mothers. They hold a long-term resident visa, which needs to be renewed every two years. Kudou is a Christian, married with a child. Hirata has no religious affiliation and is also married with two children. The interview with Kudou was conducted in Portuguese with the assistance of an interpreter, and the interview with Hirata was conducted in English. Drawing on interpretative repertoires, this analysis explores how both women articulate their struggles to access full membership in Japanese society. Their accounts offer insight into the discursive and structural boundaries faced by residents who are legally present but symbolically excluded.

The analysis begins with the interpretative repertoire of ‘legal stability and bureaucratic burdens’. Kudou’s narrative reflects significant challenges due to her long-term resident visa, which must be renewed every two or three years. The requirement to remain in Japan for five continuous years before reapplying for naturalisation exemplifies the administrative hurdles she faces: ‘I have to try. But as I went to Brazil once, I have to spend 5 years in Japan and then try again.’ This repertoire highlights the instability and insecurity associated with her visa status, as frequent renewals and complex legal requirements create ongoing uncertainty and stress. Despite living in Japan for most of her life, Kudou’s inability to secure permanent residency or citizenship exacerbates her feelings of instability and foreignness. The frequent need to renew her visa serves as a constant reminder of her temporary status, fostering a sense of exclusion from the broader societal framework. This is evident when she states, ‘I identify myself as Brazilian, only Brazilian. I like Japan but feel different from the Japanese, more in appearance than behaviour.’ She shared an experience of her friend, whom Kudou

described as a pitiful woman. This woman is a third-generation Japanese Brazilian who initially obtained long-term residency due to her father's visa status. She later married a Japanese man and received a spouse visa. However, after their divorce, she lost her eligibility to reside in Japan because her father had passed away and could no longer sponsor her visa. She has since returned to Brazil.

The integration experiences of Kudou and Hirata share similar patterns through the lens of interpretative repertoires. Hirata also has a long-term resident visa and faces similar bureaucratic challenges. She notes, 'It's not so easy. But you can get it easily if you work and have a Japanese-style life. I guess you need to pay the tax like Japanese and work and live here for five years.' The need for frequent renewals creates ongoing uncertainty and administrative burdens for both individuals. Despite her prolonged residence, the inability to secure permanent residency exacerbates feelings of instability and foreignness. This is further illustrated when she notes, 'If you have permanent, you can go to Brazil and back. You don't need to pay many visa fees because every time I need to and do the process to get another long-term resident (visa).'

The 'citizenship and integration' repertoire discusses the considerations and obstacles related to citizenship. While Hirata acknowledges the benefits of citizenship, the complexity of the process and the language requirements deter her: 'to be a citizen, you need to be fluent in Japanese. And I'm not.' This repertoire highlights the additional barriers that prevent many long-term residents from further integrating into Japanese society through naturalisation. Kudou and Hirata's citizenship status significantly impacts their integration experiences. Both of them feel that their lack of citizenship perpetuates their foreigner status and creates a persistent feeling of being outsiders. The need for frequent visa renewals and the associated administrative burdens reinforces their sense of exclusion and instability. Kudou said: 'I think my behaviour is more like Japanese because I have spent most of my life in Japan. But I think that a Japanese wouldn't like to hear that I am Japanese. In my work, they treat me really well, um, but sometimes on the streets or with someone that I don't know, they are not that good.'

Another key interpretative repertoire is 'educational and cultural barriers'. Her parents thought 'they would spend only 2 years in Japan, so they put me in a Brazilian school. Also, they were afraid of discrimination in traditional Japanese schools.' Kudou's education in

Brazilian schools, chosen to avoid potential discrimination in Japanese schools, has resulted in limited Japanese language proficiency: 'I studied here, but all in Brazilian schools from 3 years old to 16 years old. So that's why I don't speak Japanese.' 'I think if people don't know Japanese very well, it's hard for them to go out of Gunma or like this (Brazilian) community. If they want to go out of this to develop more, maybe the first thing is language. I feel I would be less happy if I were recognised as Japanese. It would be good because I don't have to get a visa, but that's the only good thing. Apart from that, I think it's normal (be seen as Japanese).' This repertoire underscores the impact of educational choices on language acquisition and cultural integration, illustrating how efforts to avoid discrimination can inadvertently perpetuate barriers to full societal participation.

The interpretative repertoire of 'educational and language barriers' is also relevant to Hirata's experiences. She has had a mixed educational experience, including both Brazilian and Japanese environments. She comments on her limited use of Japanese at work: 'I study, but I forget very fast because I don't even use my Japanese. And I live in a city that has many Brazilians.' Despite living in Japan for most of her life, her language proficiency remains basic, influenced by her educational experiences, work environment, and community support structures. She relies heavily on translators for essential services, indicating ongoing language barriers, which reinforce her sense of otherness and limit her integration. The support systems in place, such as hospital translators, provide some relief but are not sufficient to overcome the broader challenges, such as her social interactions with Japanese and professional opportunities - the dream of starting her own business.

The repertoire of 'discrimination and social acceptance' is evident in Kudou's experiences of subtle social exclusion and professional discrimination. She perceives that her appearance and cultural markers, such as tattoos and clothing, set her apart from Japanese society: 'I feel my look from Japanese are different because of my tattoos and clothes.' Additionally, she experiences slower career progression compared to her Japanese colleagues: 'I have some discrimination at work as well, where Japanese employees are promoted faster than foreigners.' This repertoire reveals the persistent social and institutional biases that hinder her feeling of full acceptance and integration. Despite her efforts to behave more in a Japanese manner and maintain a positive image of Japan, the feeling of being a foreigner persists, impacting her social and professional life.

Hirata also experiences social exclusion due to her appearance and cultural background: ‘They see me as a Gaijin, meaning foreigner. I know that, and I don’t have a Japanese face. It’s very easy to see me as a Gaijin.’ Despite efforts to respect and adopt Japanese cultural practices, she finds full acceptance elusive: ‘I want to be accepted as a Brazilian, not to be like the Japanese, because I think this is impossible for us.’ This repertoire underscores the persistent social and institutional biases that hinder her full acceptance and integration. She recounts difficulties in securing housing and the frequent social alienation: ‘Many times when we sit in a place, the Japanese get up and go away.’ ‘It’s very frustrating because we live in here so much time, we pay the tax, and we work so hard.’ This repertoire illustrates the systemic biases and social barriers that hinder her full integration into Japanese society.

Citizenship status deeply influences the feeling of being a foreigner. For Kudou, the lack of Japanese citizenship reinforces her status as an outsider. Despite her deep ties to Japan, her inability to secure citizenship perpetuates a sense of exclusion and marginalisation. This is particularly evident in her workplace experiences and daily interactions, where she is often treated as an outsider. The interpretative repertoire of ‘citizenship and the feeling of being a foreigner’ is deeply intertwined with her legal status. The bureaucratic challenges and frequent visa renewals not only create administrative burdens but also serve as a constant reminder of her outsider status. This is articulated in the narrative: ‘I have to try. But as I went to Brazil once, I have to spend 5 years in Japan and then try again.’ The repeated need to justify her right to stay in Japan exacerbates her sense of not fully belonging.

The ‘hybrid identity and partial belonging’ repertoire is crucial in understanding Hirata’s self-perception. She identifies as neither fully Japanese nor Brazilian but as a mix of both: ‘when you are half, you are not 100%. Nothing. And it is very complicated because they call me a Japanese girl when I go to Brazil. And when I’m here, they see me as a Gaijin (foreigner).’ Both Kudou and Hirata exhibit a hybrid identity, feeling partially connected to both Japanese and Brazilian cultures but fully accepted by neither. Hirata’s hybrid identity and societal perceptions reflect a persistent sense of not fully belonging anywhere.

The ‘economic insecurity and labour challenges’ repertoire focuses on the financial difficulties and labour conditions faced by Brazilian immigrants like Hirata. She discusses the harsh realities of working in Japan, particularly for older Brazilians: ‘my father is one of these people who is here is 65, and he’s still working in a very hard factory... It’s exhausting

even when you are young.’ This repertoire highlights the economic challenges and the lack of sufficient social support, which force many Brazilians to continue working in strenuous conditions even in old age.

Kudou and Hirata’s narratives, analysed through these interpretative repertoires, reveal the challenges of integrating into Japanese society as a long-term resident. Legal instability and bureaucratic burdens, educational and cultural barriers, economic insecurity, discrimination and social acceptance, and citizenship and the feeling of being a foreigner—reveal critical challenges in the integration experiences of those without citizenship.

Respondents who did not acquire Japanese citizenship in this research were numerous and displayed similar discourse patterns. What are the views of the following two interviewees who have acquired Japanese nationality?

4.4 Case Studies: Integration Experiences of Japanese Brazilians with Citizenship

This part of the analysis focuses on the narratives of two interviewees: Miyamoto (24, unmarried, no religious affiliation; father Japanese Brazilian, mother Brazilian), a second-generation Japanese Brazilian, came to Japan with his parents at the age of six. He naturalised as a Japanese citizen at the age of 21. The interview was conducted in Japanese with the assistance of an interpreter. Sugiyama (31, father Japanese Brazilian, mother Brazilian) is a second-generation Japanese Brazilian born in Japan who holds both Japanese and Brazilian citizenship. She is fluent in Japanese but tends to answer questions in Portuguese, so the interview was conducted with the support of an interpreter.

4.4.1 Bicultural Integration Facilitated by Japanese Naturalisation: The Case of Miyamoto

Miyamoto, a second-generation Japanese-Brazilian, naturalised as a Japanese citizen at the age of 21. Interpretative repertoires provide us with an understanding of how various themes influence his identity and integration into Japanese society. Miyamoto emphasises his journey to Japanese citizenship. His decision to naturalise stems from a desire for stability and full integration into Japanese society. He explains, ‘I just thought that it would be better to become a Japanese citizen because although I had a permanent visa, I was still like a Brazilian citizen. So I would be seen as like a foreigner still in Japan.’ This illustrates the

significance of legal status in reducing feelings of foreignness and enhancing security. The 'citizenship and integration' repertoire highlights Miyamoto's motivations and naturalisation process. He sought Japanese citizenship to avoid being seen as a foreigner and to enjoy the benefits of dual nationality: 'If I took the Japanese nationality, I wouldn't lose the other one... there are only good things to me.' This decision shows his commitment to long-term integration and the practical benefits of legal recognition in Japan.

The 'hybrid identity and cultural duality' repertoire explores Miyamoto's sense of self. He identifies as both Japanese and Brazilian, describing himself as '60% Japanese and 40% Brazilian.' This duality is evident in how he navigates different social contexts: 'When I am with my foreign friends, I feel that I am Japanese... But like I always work in Japanese companies... they treat me like a foreigner.' This highlights the complexity of his identity, balancing cultural pride with experiences of otherness.

Miyamoto had an initially challenging educational experience, but his integration improved over time. He became popular in school and adapted well to Japanese culture: 'I was the popular kid in the classroom... They treated me really well. So my impression of Japan changed a lot.' Miyamoto acknowledges the initial fear of bullying due to his foreign appearance but notes that his school experience was positive. His bilingual ability and sense of belonging to Japan were enhanced by his schooling in Japan and subsequent return to Brazil for a few years. The hybrid identity repertoire also appears in the 'professional discrimination' repertoire. Miyamoto discusses the challenges and advantages of being perceived as different in the workplace. He acknowledges instances of discrimination: 'In some job interviews... they just kind of thought that since I am a foreigner, maybe I wouldn't be able to stay longer in Japan.' However, he also views his unique background as an asset: 'They value... that's the difference that I have.' This repertoire underscores the dual-edged nature of his foreign identity in professional settings. The 'social and cultural adaptation' repertoire examines how Miyamoto deals with cultural differences and the expectations of both Japanese and Brazilian societies. He appreciates Brazilian society's close-knit, friendly nature but also values Japan's structured, respectful environment. He criticises Brazilians for lacking long-term ambition: 'They don't challenge themselves to become something bigger...' This reflects his belief in the importance of integrating fully and making efforts to get opportunities in Japan.

In summary, Miyamoto's narrative demonstrates his smoother educational and cultural adaptation likely facilitated his decision to obtain Japanese citizenship. His experience highlights how citizenship has helped mitigate feelings of being a foreigner, reducing the perception of being an outsider. Compared with those of non-citizens like Kudou and Hirata, Miyamoto's citizenship provides legal stability and a stronger sense of belonging.

4.4.2 The Limits of Assimilation: Interview with Sugiyama

Sugiyama, is a second-generation Japanese-Brazilian with dual citizenship. The 'dual identity and cultural integration' repertoire is central to Sugiyama's experience. She identifies as 'half-half,' reflecting her immersion in both Brazilian and Japanese cultures from a young age. This dual identity is a core aspect of her self-perception: 'I always see myself as half-half. I never see myself as just Japanese or Brazilian.' This repertoire illustrates her internal struggle and the external challenges of fitting into both cultures simultaneously. Her upbringing in both Brazilian and Japanese schools and her interactions with diverse cultural groups highlight the fluidity and complexity of her identity. Her unique cultural background prompts her to envision a 'half-blood world,' where mixed identities are normalised and accepted. This concept comes from her desire for a space that embraces multiculturalism and recognises the legitimacy of hybrid identities.

The 'social perception and discrimination' repertoire examines how societal views and biases affect Sugiyama's life. Despite her fluency in Japanese and her Japanese citizenship, her appearance often leads to her being perceived as a foreigner: 'When I tell my name, they will ask, are you a foreigner?' (Her Brazilian first name is written in katakana.) This perception affects her social interactions and professional credibility. Discrimination is a recurring theme in her narrative, revealing deep-seated stereotypes about Brazilians: 'They think that Brazilians are all Black and poor... They don't understand that Japanese went to Brazil first during the war.'

Her experiences show the persistent social and institutional biases that mixed-heritage individuals face. Despite her efforts to integrate and her professional competence, she faces ongoing scepticism regarding her education and professional qualifications further: 'Some people (Japanese customers) doubt that I went to a Japanese school. They asked if it was really true that I went to a Japanese school?' Her attendance at both Brazilian and Japanese schools reflects the difficulties of navigating two distinct educational systems. 'People don't

believe that I went to a Japanese school.’ This repertoire illustrates how educational choices can impact long-term professional opportunities and social integration. Her professional experiences reveal a lack of recognition for her skills and qualifications, which is compounded by her mixed heritage. The disbelief reflects broader societal biases and a lack of understanding of multicultural identities.

The ‘economic and lifestyle considerations’ repertoire addresses practical aspects of living in Japan, such as financial stability and quality of life. Sugiyama values the economic opportunities available in Japan, which enable her to maintain a comfortable lifestyle and plan for the future: ‘What makes me keep living here is that I can afford my lifestyle, and I can save a little bit of money on travel and living and planning the future.’ However, she also expresses concerns about the rising cost of living and the changing sense of safety: ‘Inflation in the food is getting more expensive, the services got more expensive. And before, it was better, and it was safer than now.’ This repertoire highlights the balancing act between economic benefits and the challenges of evolving socio-economic circumstances. Despite these challenges, Japan’s economic advantages and stability remain significant factors in her decision to continue living there.

The ‘identity and belonging’ repertoire examines the impact of Sugiyama’s mixed heritage on her sense of belonging. She feels like an outsider in both Japan and Brazil: ‘In Brazil, they call me Japanese girl. And when I’m here, they see me as a Gaijin, means foreigner.’ This dual marginalisation is compounded by societal expectations and stereotypes, creating a fragmented identity and leading to a sense of not fully belonging anywhere. Her desire for her son to attend an international school or study abroad reflects her hope for a more inclusive environment that better accepts and understands their mixed identities.

The ‘attitudes towards Japanese society’ repertoire reveals Sugiyama’s views on Japanese culture and society. While she appreciates Japan’s safety and economic stability, she is critical of the lack of openness and rigid social structures: ‘Japanese people have a way to live but I don’t want to be like that.’ Her critiques highlight the cultural differences and the challenges of adapting to a society that values homogeneity and conformity. This repertoire also reflects her internal conflict between appreciating the benefits of living in Japan and her desire for a more inclusive social environment. Her critiques are not just personal grievances but are indicative of broader societal issues that affect many Japanese Brazilians.

The ‘family dynamics and future plans’ repertoire explores how family relationships and future aspirations influence Sugiyama’s integration experience. Her narrative reveals a strong attachment to both Brazilian and Japanese cultural elements within her family. She expresses a commitment to staying in Japan for the near future. Besides, she recognises that her family’s future may not be permanently tied to Japan. Her brother and other family members’ inclination to move around the world or return to Brazil indicates their transnational lives potentially.

In conclusion, citizenship alone does not guarantee full acceptance or integration, as evidenced by Sugiyama’s experiences. Despite her fluency in Japanese and legal status, the societal perception of her as a foreigner highlights the limitations of formal citizenship in fostering a sense of belonging. Sugiyama’s experiences illustrate that citizenship is a crucial but insufficient factor in achieving a sense of integration and belonging in Japan. True integration requires not only legal recognition but also social acceptance and the dismantling of deep-seated stereotypes and biases. For mixed-heritage individuals like Sugiyama, fostering an inclusive environment that values diverse ethnic identities is essential for enhancing their integration and overall well-being in Japanese society.

4.5 Conclusion

The integration outcomes of second-generation Japanese Brazilians with and without Japanese citizenship reveal that legal status is crucial in shaping an individual’s sense of belonging and stability within Japanese society. However, while citizenship can be a critical facilitator of integration, it does not guarantee full acceptance or the eradication of barriers, such as discrimination or cultural differences.

For those holding Japanese citizenship, the legal rights and security it provides clearly contribute to a greater sense of stability. Individuals like Miyamoto and Sugiyama, who possess citizenship, describe feeling more accepted in professional and social settings, in part due to the formal recognition their legal status provides. Citizenship also offers access to wider opportunities in education, employment, and social welfare, which are more limited for non-citizens. This is reflected in the interviews where individuals with citizenship feel they have more control over their long-term futures in Japan, enhancing their integration prospects.

However, as seen with Sugiyama, citizenship alone does not guarantee social acceptance or eliminate experiences of bias. Despite her fluent Japanese and dual nationality, societal perceptions of foreignness based on appearance and cultural background persist, demonstrating that legal inclusion does not always translate into social inclusion.

On the other hand, non-citizens, such as Kudou and Hirata, face more profound challenges in pursuing integration. The lack of citizenship creates bureaucratic burdens and legal instability due to frequent visa renewals and reinforces a sense of exclusion and alienation. This legal status contributes to their ongoing identification as ‘foreigners’, both in the eyes of the state and society. The experiences of non-citizens suggest that legal and political integration is a critical foundation for other forms of integration. The frequent visa renewals and the complexities involved in naturalisation are more than just administrative issues; they perpetuate feelings of impermanence and prevent the full realisation of integration. Moreover, language barriers and limited social mobility further exacerbate the exclusion of non-citizens, keeping them on the margins of Japanese society.

Across both groups, the role of discrimination stands out as a significant barrier to integration. Even those who have obtained citizenship report instances of professional or social exclusion based on their ethnicity or perceived foreignness. For non-citizens, the sense of marginalisation is often more pronounced, as they face both legal and social barriers to acceptance. Discrimination manifests in various ways—from biased treatment in the workplace to everyday encounters in public spaces. For example, both Kudou and Hirata have recounted how their appearance and cultural markers make them targets of social exclusion. The ‘ethnic penalty,’ as identified in the literature, remains a critical issue, explaining how Japanese Brazilians, regardless of citizenship status, often struggle to be fully integrated due to deep-seated societal biases.

In conclusion, this chapter has revealed that while citizenship is an important factor, it does not guarantee full integration. Legal status plays a pivotal role in providing security, access to rights, and opportunities, yet the deeper issue of social acceptance remains unresolved for many Japanese Brazilians, even for those who hold Japanese citizenship. The comparison between those with and without citizenship highlights that integration is a process influenced by legal, social, and cultural factors. Non-citizens face heightened challenges in achieving a sense of belonging due to legal instability and social exclusion. Ultimately, the findings from

this chapter suggest that true integration requires not only legal and political inclusion but also a broader societal shift towards recognising and accepting hybrid identities.

Chapter Five: The Role of Language, Education and Employment in Integration

In the socioeconomic dimension, language proficiency, education experience, type of employment, income levels and stability are selected as key indicators for examining the feeling of integration. This chapter first examines the critical role of language in the integration process. It then provides a comparative analysis of the education systems in Japanese and Brazilian schools, evaluating the distinct impacts each system has on the integration results of second-generation Japanese Brazilians. The findings demonstrate that educational experiences significantly influence language acquisition, which, in turn, affects opportunities for higher education and employment. Furthermore, the case studies reveal that language, education, and employment are intertwined in the integration process and play a crucial role in shaping the diverse ethnic identities among Japanese Brazilians.

5.1 Language and Integration

‘I changed from a Japanese school to a Brazilian school when I was in the second year of secondary school. The reason was that, at that time, I didn’t have any friends, and I couldn’t keep up with my studies. The teachers always treated me differently. Teachers always said that I got bad grades because I was Brazilian. My teachers were always prejudiced against Brazilians. I was thinking about the future. I thought that my Japanese would be bad in the future, but if I continued to study here, my Portuguese would also be bad. And I’m really not happy in Japanese school. At that school, with my grades, I couldn’t get into a Japanese high school. So I went to a Brazilian middle school to go to a Brazilian high school here. After graduating from the Brazilian high school, I went to work in a factory.’

— Quote From Interview with Kamiya

‘They don’t speak Japanese, and the kids at Brazilian schools and their parents say they will go back to Brazil. Even the kids say they will go to Brazil and don’t want to go to a Japanese school. They said they would go to the factory if they didn’t return to Brazil because they didn’t know Japanese. If they knew Japanese, they could go to university here, but they don’t know Japanese. So there is no way to work outside of the factory.’... ‘I don’t think the

Japanese will give many opportunities to Japanese Brazilians who don't know Japanese. Brazilians may like to have a stable job, even in a factory, because when you're a regular employee, when you have a contract with the factory, you get more money and bonuses. You can get promoted. To do that, you need to know a little bit of Japanese, and a lot of Japanese Brazilians don't know Japanese, but they want better job opportunities. But they don't learn Japanese.'

— Quote from Tomita

'I don't speak Japanese very well, so I don't think I've fully integrated into Japanese society.'

— Quote from Kudou

'The Japanese have always been good to me. There's no problem getting along with them. I just don't think they see me as Japanese ... I don't think it's about nationality. It doesn't matter to them because they don't ask you to 'let me see your passport'. But I can't talk in Japanese, I can't keep a conversation going, so how can they see me as Japanese?'

— Quote from Morinaga

In the 1950s, while conducting anthropological research in Algeria, Pierre Bourdieu began to focus on linguistic issues, recognising language as a form of linguistic power rather than a value-neutral entity and as something inherently connected to power and social space (Grenfell et al., 2011, p. 2). Bourdieu's concept of 'legitimate language' refers not merely to a nation's official language but to a dominant linguistic system within a specific socio-historical context (Snook, 1990, p. 174). His other works also engage with linguistic issues to varying extents, including his seminal text *Language and Symbolic Power*, which specifically addresses language. Bourdieu contends that official institutions safeguard legitimate language and are closely tied to the process of state formation, both in terms of its origins and societal use (Bourdieu, 1991, pp. 45-47). The legitimacy of this language is maintained through obligatory use in official settings such as schools, public administrations, and political institutions. As the enforcer and representative of these institutions, the educational system plays a decisive role in legitimising the use of this language. In effect, the education system reproduces the legitimacy of the legitimate language and thereby supports the state apparatus. Moreover, the state utilises the labour market to impose linguistic requirements on job seekers, which implicitly excludes potential challenges from various dialects—whether based

on class, region, or ethnic group. This process further reinforces the dominance of the legitimate language and solidifies its authoritative status.

The generalisation of the use of legitimate language is considered a dimension of integrating the market for symbolic goods, developing in tandem with the unification of the educational and labour markets alongside the expansion of state administration and the civil service (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 49). Bourdieu observes that habitus continually adapts to new experiences, though this adaptation is a gradual, non-radical revision that operates on the foundation of prior states (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 161). This study reflects this process in the relocation and integration of second-generation Japanese Brazilians into a new social system. Their adjustments to habitus—often manifesting in their language choices and educational experiences—constitute an ongoing adaptation that influences their employment opportunities, social mobility, and the shaping of their identities.

Poor language skills and the resulting feeling of not integrating into Japanese society frequently emerged as an interpretative repertoire in the narratives of many interviewees in this study, highlighting the significant impact of language proficiency on the sense of integration. Second-generation Japanese Brazilians who do not speak Japanese or are not fluent in the language generally experience a lower sense of integration in Japanese society, adversely affecting their opportunities for higher education and employment.

The interview results show that the respondents' Japanese language proficiency is closely related to the type of school in which they were educated. Table 9 presents data on Japanese language proficiency among respondents from two different types of schools in Japan: Japanese schools (17 respondents) and Brazilian schools (14 people). All respondents from Japanese schools are fluent in Japanese, but only 21% of respondents from Brazilian schools are fluent in Japanese.

School Type	Count	Language Proficiency	
		Fluent	Basic
Japanese School	17	17 (100%)	0
Brazilian School	14	3 (21%)	11 (79%)

Table 12: Japanese proficiency levels by school type in Japan

5.2 Education in Japan: Japanese Schools vs. Brazilian Schools

In terms of education and employment, Japanese diasporas in South America have different educational backgrounds. However, it is widely reported that Japanese Brazilians have a high level of education (Bianka, 2005, p. 37). However, when Japanese Brazilians arrived in Japan, they were primarily concentrated in the manufacturing industry. They mainly worked for large car and bike manufacturers such as Toyota, Suzuki, Yamaha, and Honda. They also work in small or medium-sized suppliers, making machining parts and auto parts for manufacturers. As a result of subcontractors usually built around large manufacturers, more than 50% of Nikkei-jin from South America live in prefectures such as Shizuoka, Kanagawa, Saitama, and Gunma in Japan (Bianka, 2005, p. 32).

As discussed in Chapter 2, many Brazilian parents face language barriers that limit their understanding of the Japanese education system, and the unfavourable reception in Japanese public schools further discourages their participation. Immigrant children have faced more difficulties in passing the high school entrance exam; some leave even compulsory schooling.

Figure 5 displays the disparities in university graduation rates among people of different nationalities in Japan. First-generation immigrants, including Brazilians, are generally considered to have a higher level of education, with a smaller gap compared to Japanese nationals. Immigrants of Filipino nationality even have a higher proportion of university students than Japanese nationals. Among Brazilians born in the 1950s and 1960s, the proportion of university graduates also exceeds 10%. Although a significant portion of first-generation immigrants generally possess relatively higher educational qualifications, a younger generation has lower levels of education, with a larger educational gap compared to Japanese nationals. The author infers that the critical reason is that Japan's pathway to university education is closed to immigrants. However, it is unclear whether these statistics apply to all Brazilian migrants or just Nikkei Brazilians, as official statistics in Japan do not collect information on ethnicity. The 31 respondents in this study are all second-generation Japanese Brazilians, and the findings indicate that these educational barriers continue to persist within this group.

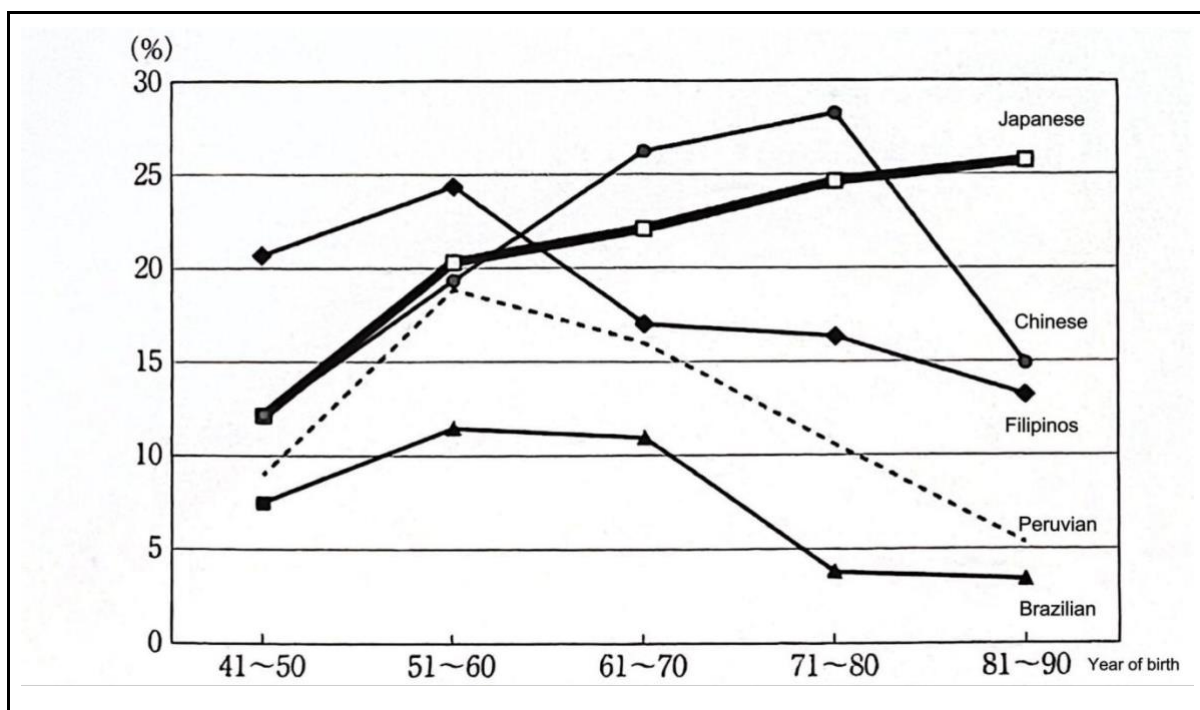


Figure 5: Percentage of university graduates by nationality and birth cohort in 2010 (Higuchi and Inaba, 2023, p. 11)

Recent empirical work by Hagiwara and Liu (2023, p. 34), drawing on Japan's 2010 Population Census, offers a comparative analysis of high school enrolment rates between native and immigrant-background children. Their findings reveal a persistent enrolment gap. While 96.8% of Japanese children proceed to high school, the corresponding rate for children with one or both parents of foreign nationality falls notably lower, ranging from 89.7% to 90.9%. Further disparities emerge when university enrolment is considered. Higuchi and Inaba (2018, p. 572), analysing 2010 census data on individuals aged 19-21, report that only 11.8% of Brazilian nationals were enrolled in university, compared with 45.2% of Japanese nationals, 47.0% of South/North Koreans, and 44.5% of Chinese nationals. Given that individuals in this age bracket are likely to include many second-generation migrants, these figures highlight that disparities in higher education attainment are not merely a function of time spent in the host society. Rather, they reflect enduring differences in access to socioeconomic resources, parental educational background, and culturally embedded forms of capital. The findings point to a broader pattern in which ethnicity and national origin remain salient predictors of educational inequality, even among those educated entirely within the Japanese system.

Japan	South/N orth	China	Vietnam	Philippines	Peru	Brazil
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			Korea					
Junior High School Graduation	%	<u>3.9</u>	4.7	10.3	10.0	26.4	26.3	<u>33.7</u>
	N	129,350	390	560	60	380	210	1,090
High School Graduation	%	<u>29.5</u>	26.7	28.2	35.0	48.6	43.8	<u>42.1</u>
	N	972,730	2,240	1,540	210	700	350	1,360
High School Enrolment	%	<u>1.6</u>	1.8	3.1	5.0	4.2	5.0	<u>4.0</u>
	N	54,160	150	170	30	60	40	130
Junior College/ Technical College Enrolment/Graduation	%	<u>19.3</u>	19.0	12.6	16.7	10.4	11.3	<u>7.1</u>
	N	637,530	1,590	690	100	150	90	230
Enrolled in University	%	<u>45.2</u>	47.0	44.5	30.0	9.7	11.3	<u>11.8</u>
	N	1,492,340	3,940	2,430	180	140	90	380
Total (Including pre-schoolers)		3,298,220	8,380	5,460	600	1,440	800	3,230

Table 13: Census data (2010) on school enrolment by nationality of 19-21 years old (Higuchi and Inaba, 2018, p. 572)

A critical factor contributing to these education challenges is the difficulty Japanese Brazilian children face in accessing high schools, also leading to a notably high dropout rate (Takenoshita et al., 2014). Higuchi and Inaba's research (2018, pp. 576-578) investigates how 70 immigrant individuals accessed high school and university. The results show that about a quarter did not progress to full-time high schools after graduating from junior high, indicating a significant barrier at this transition point. Some of these students ended up in part-time or correspondence high schools, with a few dropping out, some graduating and working, and a small number proceeding to higher education. They note that socioeconomic status is critical to second-generation students' academic performance. Given the vulnerable situations immigrant families are in, the risk of becoming an underperformer is likely high. Only a handful of immigrants raised by socio-economically advantaged parents can remain top performers. Even for those who enrolled in university, the second generation can find only up to lower or mid-tier universities, with elite universities remaining closed off. Therefore, compared with Japanese nationals, the gap in academic achievement for Brazilians, Filipinos, and Peruvians has been further advancing.

In Japan, students must take a competitive entrance examination to advance to high school. Japanese language proficiency has become a barrier for foreign students with different

linguistic and cultural backgrounds. According to the demographic analysis from 2016 of students in Japanese public schools who required Japanese language support, a total of 34,335 foreign-national students and 9,612 Japanese-national students were reported to need assistance with the Japanese language. Among these foreign students, those with Portuguese as their mother tongue accounted for 25.6%. The lack of teachers dedicated to the education of immigrant students, combined with inadequate training programs focused on diversity, poses significant challenges for educators. These challenges include the selection of appropriate teaching methodologies, curriculum design, lesson planning, and the choice of textbooks suitable for diverse needs (Tokunaga, 2018, p.5).

High schools in Japan are selective and have a hierarchical structure, ranging from high-ranked schools to low-ranked schools and academic to vocational, which often determines students' educational and career paths after graduation. The socioeconomic status of immigrant students has a huge impact on high school advancement rates. Immigrant students from working-class families are less likely to advance to high school (Tokunaga, 2018, p.6; Korekawa, 2012). Many scholars state that the educational problems of immigrant students are less of a cultural problem but more of a class issue. Brazilian immigrant parents' economic instability negatively affected the high school enrolment of their children (Takenoshita et al., 2014; Korekawa, 2012).

Most Japanese students enrol in full-time high school, and only a few attend a part-time high school (Tokunaga, 2018, p.7). Though some immigrant students enter high school, many of them face barriers, leading them to drop out of school. According to Kaji's (2011) analysis of the 2000 national census, the approximate high school retention rate is: Chinese 70-80%, Filipinos 40%, and Brazilians 30%. Non-mainstream schools, including nighttime junior high schools (yakan chugakko), and part-time high schools (teijisei koukou), have become important educational spaces for immigrant youth. Students who are above 15 years old and did not finish nine years of compulsory education in their countries of origin commonly attend these schools since they are not eligible to enrol in a full-time junior high school in Japan (Tokunago, 2018, p.9). Second-generation Brazilian students commonly attend 'schools for foreigners', especially 'Brazilian schools. Most of these schools are not 'clause-1 schools' (ichijoko) but 'miscellaneous schools' (kakushu gakko) or schools without legal status and are thus not qualified for government funding and tax exemptions (Tokunago, 2018, p.11). Though the students have to face even more expensive tuition and accreditation issues, they can learn by using their native language, affirm their ethnic identity, and avoid

the bullying that often occurs in Japanese public schools. Given the absence of a multicultural education approach in most Japanese schools, these schools play a critical role in affirming the ethnic culture and ethnic identity of immigrants (Okano, 2013).

The findings from Ishikawa (2005) and Takenoshita (2014) corroborate the previously discussed data, illuminating the challenges that second-generation Japanese Brazilians face. They notice that these difficulties stem from the transnational movements of families between Brazil and Japan, negatively impacting the educational achievements of these children in Japan. Such movements interfere with the acquisition of linguistic skills in both Japanese and Portuguese, as well as hinder the attainment of crucial educational qualifications and vocational abilities necessary for success in both cultural contexts. Despite these hurdles, instances of upward mobility highlight the importance of local integration initiatives, economic stability within family units, and the ability to adapt culturally.

Further research by Watanabe (2010) and Sueyoshi (2011) explores additional factors influencing these educational outcomes, including Japan's unwelcoming attitude towards foreigners, a non-mandatory educational system contributing to increased absenteeism and dropout rates, and precarious work conditions. The age at which children migrate, their sense of self-identity, and their motivation to pursue education are also crucial factors affecting their educational trajectories.

Incorporating affirmative action into Japan's education system, as Higuchi and Inaba's study (2018, pp. 578-580) suggest, can be seen as a critical step towards addressing the systemic barriers that immigrant students, particularly those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, face in accessing education. The principle of affirmative action rests on the acknowledgement of existing inequalities and commitment to rectify these through proactive measures (Bowen et al., 2019, p. 270). In the context of Japan, the educational pathways of second-generation immigrants create an obvious divide in access to universities. It seeks to provide underrepresented students with the support and opportunities needed to compete on more equal footing with their peers. The effectiveness of special admissions exams, as highlighted by Higuchi and Inaba, underscores the potential of alternative pathways in democratising access to higher education. However, these measures alone may not suffice. Tierney (2020) argues that without a comprehensive approach addressing the broader socio-economic challenges immigrant families face, educational reforms may only offer partial

solutions.

The challenges faced by immigrant youth in Japan's education system are deeply rooted in systemic inequities. The absence of a national integration project has left many second-generation children without Japanese citizenship, relying on fragmented and inconsistent support from local governments, non-mainstream schools (e.g., private Brazilian schools), and NGOs (Tokunaga, 2018, p.12). This approach fails to provide comprehensive solutions, particularly for second-generation immigrants, many of whom still struggle with linguistic barriers, socioeconomic disadvantages, and a rigidly competitive educational framework.

The findings reveal that the educational trajectories of second-generation Japanese Brazilians significantly shape their integration into Japanese society. Language barriers, socioeconomic challenges, and a lack of tailored support in schools often lead to lower high school enrolment and graduation rates compared to their Japanese peers. While affirming cultural identity, private Brazilian schools struggle to equip students with the language proficiency and credentials necessary to accommodate Japan's competitive education system. The implications of these educational challenges extend into the labour market. For many second-generation Japanese Brazilians, limited educational attainment translates to precarious employment in temporary or low-paying jobs, mirroring the socioeconomic struggles of their parents. The following section will discuss how this dynamic interacts with economic mobility and shapes their sense of belonging and self-identity within Japanese society, highlighting an interplay between language, education, and employment in the integration process.

5.3 Employment Opportunities and Challenges

As mentioned above, there is a large gap between the high school enrolment rate of Brazilian youth and that of Japanese youth. In 2011, the enrolment rate for Brazilian students was 42.2%, compared to 97.0% for Japanese students (Korekawa, 2012, p.11). While the specific figure may be dated, it serves as a crucial historical benchmark. It highlights that children with one or two foreign parents face systemic barriers to accessing and completing secondary education, and this issue remains highly relevant today. Recent research provides compelling evidence of the persistence of this educational disparity (Higuchi and Inaba, 2023). Hagiwara and Liu (2023), analysing data from the 2010 Japanese Population Census, found that

children with foreign backgrounds still had a high school enrolment rate (89.7%–90.9%) lower than that of native children (96.8%).

It is significant to have a high school diploma in Japan. Otherwise, one is usually considered to be disadvantaged in the labour market. Low enrolment in high school is not the only problem for Brazilian children. Studies also highlight the problems children who graduated from ethnic Brazilian schools in Japan face. They usually end up reproducing the current social conditions of their parents, working in factories, lacking Japanese language proficiency, and being marginalised by Japanese society (Kanasiro, 2014, p.1).

Among the 31 second-generation respondents in this research, employment patterns reveal a diverse range of occupations and employment types. Five respondents are engaged in full-time work, with four holding administrative roles and one working full-time as a delivery worker. Eight respondents are contract workers or work part-time jobs, primarily employed in the service industry, including restaurants, hotels, and convenience stores. The largest group, consisting of fourteen respondents, are temporary employees (dispatch workers) engaged in various roles that often change with contract renewals. These roles span industries such as construction, food manufacturing, automotive parts, and packaging inspection. Additionally, one respondent is self-employed, managing their own businesses. The remaining respondents include a housewife, one university student, and one individual who emigrated to Europe after the interview.

The questionnaire survey of this study posed a crucial question: How important is receiving higher education and achieving a higher socioeconomic status for Japanese Brazilians to be accepted as ‘real’ Japanese in Japanese society? The responses varied significantly: 20 people (51.3%) answered that it is ‘important or very important’, 8 (20.5%) viewed it ‘neutral or unsure’, and 11 (28.2%) answered it is ‘relatively unimportant or completely unimportant’.

The majority of respondents (51.3%) believe that ‘higher education and socioeconomic status as pathways to acceptance’ are essential for acceptance as ‘real’ Japanese in Japanese society. This interpretative repertoire highlights the perception that educational and economic achievements can help overcome stereotypes and barriers, enhancing legitimacy and recognition within Japanese society. This group likely views education and economic success as pathways to social mobility and integration, as demonstrated in the interviews below.

A smaller portion of the respondents (20.5%) are neutral or unsure about the importance of higher education and socioeconomic status. This ambivalence reflects recognition of the potential benefits of higher education and socioeconomic status while also valuing other factors, such as cultural integration and personal identity. These respondents tend to feel that socioeconomic status and education are not social acceptance determinants.

The remaining 28.2% of respondents believe that higher education and socioeconomic status are relatively unimportant or completely unimportant for being accepted as 'real' Japanese. This view indicates that for a substantial minority, factors like legal status, cultural assimilation, language proficiency, and social connections are more critical for integration. Additionally, discrimination and perceived foreignness are not mitigated by educational or economic achievements.

Unlike the United States, Japan's labour market bifurcation exists between standard and nonstandard workers. Lifetime employment, seniority earnings, and firm-based labour unions have shaped the employment protections for regular workers in Japan (Koike, 1988). However, increasing global economic competition requires labour market flexibility, leading to rapid growth in the number of nonstandard workers (Genda, 2005). Many Brazilian workers are incorporated into the temporary employment sector controlled by labour brokerage agencies (Higuchi and Tanno, 2003). This implies that temporary Brazilian workers must accept employment instability. Furthermore, they have unskilled jobs in the manufacturing industry that do not require any work-related skills, knowledge, or even Japanese language proficiency. In 2009, 54.1% (56,450) of Brazilian nationals were in manufacturing industries, followed by the service industry at 30.2% (31,496). The average rate for manufacturing and service industry workers is 38.9%, and 13.2%. A small portion of Brazilian nationals work in retail at 2.4%, or hotel or food service at 0.7%, information/communications at 0.6%, and education/tutoring at 0.5% (Yamada, 2010, p.10).

Table 14 below presents the occupational status of Japanese and Brazilians aged 40-49 based on the 2010 census in Japan. It reveals significant differences between these two groups. While Japanese individuals are more likely to be found in professional roles (42.6%), Brazilians are predominantly employed in other occupations (68.4%), potentially pointing to a concentration in manual or low-skilled jobs. The unemployment rate among Japanese

nationals in this age group is lower at 4.3% compared to 6.6% among Brazilians. This suggests that Brazilians face greater challenges in securing employment.

		Japan		Brazil	
		N	%	N	%
occupation	Speciality/management/office work/marketing	6,982,800	42.6	2,020	6.8
	Other occupations	5,647,540	34.5	20,470	68.4
	Unemployed	697,340	4.3	1,970	6.6
	Total	16,392,790		29,910	

Table 14: Occupational status of 40 – 49 years olds by nationality according to the 2010 census (Higuchi, and Inaba, 2018, p. 573)

	15-19 years old		20-24 years old		25-29 years old		Total	
	%	Odds ratio	%	Odds ratio	%	Odds ratio	%	Odds ratio
2000	5.6	0.3	3.7	0.4	3.2	0.6	2.9	0.8
2005	12.5	0.8	5.5	0.5	4.3	0.5	4.7	0.8
2010	23.8	1.1	11.5	1.0	10.6	1.3	9.7	1.5
2015	9.5	1.4	10.4	1.6	5.2	0.9	6.3	1.5

Table 15: Ratio of unemployed persons of Brazilian nationality (Higuchi and Inaba, 2023, p.157)

Note: Odds ratio = migrant unemployment rate ÷ Japanese unemployment rate (same age group).

Table 15 presents the unemployment rates and odds ratios for Brazilian nationals in Japan across three age groups. This comparative analysis, against the backdrop of Japanese nationals, reveals that an odds ratio exceeding 1 indicates a higher risk of unemployment for Brazilians compared to Japanese nationals, and conversely, a ratio below 1 indicates a diminished risk. For example, in 2015, the unemployment rate for Brazilian nationals aged 20–24 was 10.4%, with an odds ratio of 1.6. This indicates that they were 60% more likely to be unemployed than their Japanese peers in the same age group. Compared to raw unemployment rates, the odds ratio offers a clearer metric for comparing the relative unemployment risk between migrant groups and Japanese nationals. As the data shows, prior to 2005, although the unemployment rate for Brazilian nationals was relatively high, there was no clear evidence of structural disadvantage when compared to Japanese nationals. However, after 2005, the odds ratios increased across multiple age groups, indicating a

growing level of structural inequality in the labour market. This was the point at which the second-generation Japanese Brazilians in this study began to enter the workforce, and their employment trajectories unfolded within a context of growing labour market inequalities.

As we discussed above, in examining the educational trajectories of second-generation Brazilians in Japan, it is imperative to contextualise the socio-economic challenges these families encounter within Japanese society. The decision to discontinue schooling, often justified as being for ‘the sake of the family’, might superficially seem aligned with Brazilian familial values. However, this needs a deeper examination beyond cultural attributions. Following their school years, a substantial portion of second-generation young individuals follows in their parent’s footsteps by seeking employment in factories. The downward trend in education can exacerbate challenges when they enter the labour market. Consequently, they often find themselves more inclined to engage in informal, temporary, and low-paying employment sectors, effectively inheriting the same occupational positions as their parents (Kanasiro, 2014, p. 1). Japan’s welfare policies also exacerbate the marginalisation of their socio-economic situation as the government focuses on immigration control and border enforcement measures, neglecting the social rights of migrants and their children in Japan (Higuchi 2010, p. 59).

Oscar Lewis introduced the concept of a ‘culture of poverty’ to describe a set of behaviours and attitudes observed among people in persistent poverty, suggesting that these form a self-perpetuating cycle (Lewis, 1966). His work posits that poverty engenders a specific lifestyle and mindset that are passed down through generations, including the reprioritisation of formal education when faced with immediate economic pressures. However, Carol Stack’s ethnographic research (1974) offers a critique of Lewis’s theory. Stack’s observations of African American communities demonstrated that what might be perceived as a ‘culture of poverty’ is, in fact, a complex network of mutual aid and support, a strategic response to systemic exclusion and marginalisation rather than a static ‘culture’.

Higuchi (2023, p. 155) introduces the term ‘ethnic penalty’ to explain the labour market predicaments of Brazilians after the 2008 financial crisis. Except for the 25-29 age cohort in 2015, odds ratios persistently exceeded 1, underscoring a consistent disadvantage. This amplifies the inference that post-crisis, the labour market instability for Brazilians intensified, subjecting them to an ‘ethnic penalty’.

Applying Stack's critique to the case of second-generation Brazilians in Japan, it becomes evident that low attendance in higher education and the concentration of employment in specific industries should not be hastily categorised as merely a cultural trait. Rather, these educational decisions are strategic responses to the socio-economic and political landscapes these families experience. The concept of 'familialism', is also a survival mechanism in the context of socio-economic precarity. The interviews with second generation consider the broader structural considerations that influence educational access and attainment. If the socio-economic circumstances were altered, where parents enjoyed stable employment and were shielded by a robust social welfare system, the so-called 'culture', or more accurately, the adaptive strategies employed by these communities might very well change.

5.3.1 Different Interpretative Repertoires on Integration and Socio-economic Status

Komatsu (29, married with one child, no religious affiliation, father of Japanese descent who returned to Brazil after losing his job in Japan) illustrates how socio-economic status can influence the sense of integration into Japanese society. He views education and socio-economic status as crucial for integration. However, his personal experiences reflect significant barriers to achieving these goals. Komatsu came to Japan with his parents at the age of four and holds a permanent resident visa. He works through a dispatch agency, a role characterised by temporary contracts, lower wages, and fewer benefits compared to permanent employment. He notes, 'We only know how much we receive... For the percentage the dispatch agency takes, it's a secret.'

He also highlighted wage disparities: 'If you work in the same factory with Japanese people, they get more money than you.' Additionally, he mentioned unfair work schedules: 'For example, I and a Japanese guy were in the same place doing the same job. My job is at night from 8 pm. The Japanese had 8:00 am. And twice a year, the Japanese get a bonus, but I don't. Brazilians cannot; only Japanese people receive bonuses like salary, money, or vacation. Holidays are simple, but if you are Haken, you can't.' He also added, 'Sometimes, when you are contracted with Haken, you can try to become a long-term worker, but it's still hard. I have been working in the same place for 10 years. I was trying but not enough to become a Shain.'

The Komatsu family experienced multiple financial hardships during periods of unemployment: 'I spent all our money because we just didn't have enough to pay. Life was so hard.' Komatsu recognises the importance of higher education and socio-economic status for achieving acceptance and stability in Japanese society. However, his personal experiences reflect significant barriers to changing his socio-economic status, resulting in a stronger Brazilian identity. He can speak Japanese very well now, but his poor Japanese proficiency when he was younger led to significant bullying by school teachers and students. He said, 'At school, for many classes, if I said I am from Brazil or my Japanese wasn't good, I would be chosen to go to another classroom. Sometimes, the Japanese tried to help me, but many times, I was bullied by Japanese people because of the teacher's attitude, which caused real problems like ijime, meaning bullying. Physical bullying was very common.'

He does not feel accepted as Japanese. He said, 'It's hard to see me as Japanese,' but conversely, he finds it strange because 'Japan is a country that values blood connections,' and his grandparents are Japanese. Growing up in Japan was 'horrible' for him. 'It was very, very difficult... I stopped studying because it was scary... They insulted my body colour. Actually, it was only three months until I finally finished school, but I stopped because I didn't want to wait even three months.' He regrets not getting a degree, as it significantly impacts his life choices: 'For example, I want to be a photographer because it's very hard in the factory. But I don't know how to work with Japanese people and start in the Japanese system. Japanese clients, I think they don't accept me and are afraid of me... so I need to go to the factory because it is the only place I have. But it is so exhausting. That's why sometimes I think about Brazil.'

Komatsu feels he doesn't have a true home country. If he had to choose one, he said, 'maybe Brazil.'

The experience of Morinaga (38, married with children, both parents of Japanese descent, Christian) reveals her neutral and uncertain perspective on higher education and socioeconomic status in relation to integration. Although she has lived in Japan since she was six years old and has adopted many aspects of Japanese culture, her journey highlights the complexities of integration beyond mere socioeconomic achievements.

Morinaga holds a long-term visa. Her long-term visa status provides stability but limits her sense of belonging and opportunities. Her employment in a factory through a dispatch company. Despite her long-term residence, she remains in temporary positions with limited chances for promotion and benefits.

Morinaga started initially attending a Japanese primary school. However, her mother decided to move back to Brazil soon, which led to her transferring to a Brazilian school at around ten years old. This decision, she feels, limited her ability to become fluent in Japanese, which she thinks is essential for true acceptance and integration into Japanese society, such as participating in Japanese customs. She said: 'I feel sorry for that because I could have learned Japanese, and now I'm not fluent in Japanese. I can do things like going to the doctor and doing everything by myself, but not fluently... the citizenship, it's not so important to us, because they (Japanese) will not ask you, let me see if you have (Japanese passport), but I cannot talk as Japanese, cannot keep a conversation, so how they will see me as the Japanese?' She did not complete high school due to the financial difficulties caused by the 2008 economic crisis. Her father couldn't afford to pay for her schooling. She began working as a part-time worker and changed to different jobs to support families. Nor is she working in a factory through a dispatch agency, a common route for many Japanese Brazilians, earning 6 pounds per hour, three days a week.

The economic crisis of 2008 had a profound impact on Morinaga's perception of her place in Japanese society. The Japanese government's offer to pay for return tickets to Brazil, with the condition of not returning in the near future, reinforced a sense of disposability among Japanese Brazilians. Morinaga's recollection of classmates who left Japan under these conditions illustrates the precarious nature of their acceptance and the conditional support provided by the government. She said: 'I remember that my father thought it was not good because people could not come back here. So it was not real help.' She also noted, 'I had classmates who went back to Brazil using this ticket payment because they had no money here. They were desperate.' This experience deeply affected her sense of belonging and highlighted the discrimination that persists despite long-term residence and efforts at cultural integration. She explained, 'They can discard you any time. Now I have a kid, so I know more that Japan will not look at me as Japanese.' The fact that Japanese Brazilians were encouraged to leave during economic hardship suggests a conditional acceptance that prioritises native citizens over others, regardless of their contributions to society. Morinaga's

concerns for her children's future integration reflect her own struggles with acceptance and stability in Japan. She worries about the possibility of bullying in Japanese schools, but despite these concerns, she chooses to keep her son in a Japanese school, hoping that early cultural immersion will aid his integration. This decision highlights her commitment to ensuring that her children have greater opportunities for acceptance and integration than she experienced.

Morinaga's narrative reveals a dual identity struggle. While she performs and respects Japanese cultural norms, she is still viewed, and views herself, as an outsider. This internal and external perception of foreignness highlights a critical aspect of integration that goes beyond economic status. Her experience demonstrates that true acceptance in Japanese society involves profound social and cultural acceptance, often hindered by visible differences and language barriers. She has a neutral attitude and mixed feelings towards the importance of higher education and socioeconomic status for integration, as she is unsure if these factors can significantly change her 'foreignness'.

Kawasaki (19, unmarried, both parents of Japanese descent, Christian) and Furukawa (34, married with children, father of Japanese descent) demonstrate that they do not place significant importance on higher education or achieving a high socioeconomic status for integration into Japanese society. Despite their different paths, both individuals emphasise cultural integration and personal identity over educational or economic achievement.

Kawasaki explicitly mentions his lack of interest in pursuing higher education: 'I am not interested in studying. I took a mock exam, but because I don't like studying, I didn't apply for university.' ... 'It wasn't difficult, but it was hard for me because I wasn't interested in studying. I was always playing soccer.' ... 'My friends around me didn't study either. We didn't understand the point of going to university. They had a big impact on me. Most importantly, I didn't see the point. It costs a lot of money, you know. In Japan, you would spend a lot of money to attend university. No one around me went. Those who did had to borrow money, and I didn't understand why.' This shows that he did not view university education as necessary for personal or professional growth.

Despite the challenges he faces as a temporary worker through a dispatch agency, Kawasaki accepts his employment situation: 'Japanese high schools are good. They help students find

jobs when they graduate. Many dispatch companies also come to recruit.’ ... ‘Compared to full-time employees, we don’t have as many rights. For example, there are no bonuses or holidays. Often have to work night shifts. I work on weekends too. Because I am a temporary employee.’ He had opportunities to be employed by a company directly as ‘shain’, but he decided not to go. ‘I am trying (to be a full employee), but it depends on luck. I once found a regular job, but it required working until ten at night, sometimes until midnight. But then I couldn’t go to church. So, I gave up that opportunity.’ His decisions are shaped more by his immediate circumstances and personal values (such as faith) rather than long-term socio-economic goals. He focuses more on job stability provided by his faith and less on climbing the socio-economic ladder through higher education or permanent employment. ‘Because I have a connection with God, I am not worried. If you do well, they (the dispatch agency) won’t easily fire you. My job renews the contract every three months.’

Kawasaki expresses a strong sense of identity tied to Japan despite being perceived as Brazilian by others on some occasions. He expressed his sad feelings when he is not seen as Japanese: ‘I would feel sad. For example, I grew up in Japan, so I hope I am Japanese. And I behave like a Japanese. So, when people say I am a foreigner, I feel like maybe I am not Japanese. But I feel personally like I am Japanese, even though I use my Brazilian name regularly. I was born in Japan, but my nationality is Brazilian. I have lived and studied in Japan all my life. So, I hope people see me as Japanese’. This indicates that his sense of belonging is more influenced by cultural integration and personal identity than by educational or economic achievements.

Furukawa’s perspective on her occupation and ethnic identity further supports this group’s opinions: ‘I did not think that the type of occupation I had had much impact on my ethnic identity... I consider myself Japanese and only feel Brazilian when I am with my Brazilian family and friends’. She was a full-time employee and chose to work for a dispatch company after her marriage. This choice indicates prioritising personal circumstances over pursuing higher socio-economic status through stable, full-time employment.

For some second-generation Japanese Brazilians like Kawasaki and Furukawa, cultural assimilation, personal identity, and job stability are more critical factors for integration than higher education or achieving higher socioeconomic status.

The varied responses from the survey highlight how different second-generation individuals perceive these socioeconomic factors in their integration experience. The semi-structured interviews on employment provided deeper insights, revealing the complex reasons behind their opinions.

5.4 Case Studies: Intersection of Language, Education, and Employment

This section provides an empirical analysis of how these second-generation individuals are integrated into Japanese society through their interactions with the education system and the labour market. Case studies within the section reveal that language, education, and employment are closely interlinked in the integration process. These elements significantly shape the diverse ethnic identities among Japanese Brazilians, highlighting the complex nature of their experiences in Japan.

Specifically, it explores the factors influencing the choice between Brazilian and Japanese schools and how this decision impacts their employment prospects. It also investigates the varying experiences of those entering the labour market, whether through factory jobs or by completing university and securing full-time employment.

The results contend that irrespective of their educational path, the second generation still encounters different levels of challenges in integrating into Japanese society as ‘Japanese’. Many opt for factory work, which offers low job security and limited opportunities for advancement. Even those who pursue higher education and full-time positions face obstacles such as discrimination and a lack of social networks, which influence their choice of integration.

This section will analyse the impact of the educational experiences of 31 second-generation Japanese Brazilians on their feeling of integration. The analysis of the 14 first-generation participants has been skipped because their education primarily took place in Brazil, and upon returning to Japan, they immediately entered the labour market. Among the 31 second-generation Japanese Brazilians, 17 completed their school education in public Japanese schools (including those who eventually transferred from Brazilian schools to Japanese

schools), and 14 completed their school education in private Brazilian schools (including those who eventually transferred from Japanese schools to Brazilian schools).

Of these 31 respondents, 9 pursued university or higher degrees, 18 completed high school, and 4 completed only junior high school or entered high school but did not finish.

In the survey of 39 individuals, when asked about the level of difficulty they face in various aspects of life in Japan, the responses to ‘managing academic or work responsibilities’ were as follows: 8 people (21%) found it very difficult, 13 people (33%) found it moderately difficult, and 18 people (46%) found it not difficult. Regarding the question ‘entering high school, university, or obtaining a higher degree’, 17 people (46%) found it very difficult, 12 people (32%) found it moderately difficult, 8 people (22%) found it not very difficult, and 2 people did not respond.

5.4.1 Study in Japanese School: Interview with Furukawa

Furukawa is a 34-year-old second-generation Japanese-Brazilian with a permanent visa who came to Japan with her parents at the age of 6. She was educated in a public Japanese primary school after her arrival. The interview was conducted in Portuguese with the assistance of an interpreter.

Furukawa’s interview provides a rich narrative on the role of education in the integration of second-generation Japanese Brazilians into Japanese society. Having arrived in Japan at age six, her entire education, from elementary through high school, took place in Japan, facilitated by living in a community with other foreign workers where access to Japanese schools was convenient. Her educational journey highlights the challenges and opportunities faced by immigrant children in adapting to a new educational system.

The interpretative repertoire of ‘community and convenience’ is evident in Furukawa’s narrative. Her family’s decision to enrol her in Japanese schools was driven by the practical aspects of their living situation. The factory where her father worked provided housing and facilitated access to local schools for the children of foreign workers. This communal living arrangement, with a mix of Chinese, Brazilians, Peruvians, and Filipinos, facilitated easy access to local Japanese schools and created a supportive environment where foreign children could integrate more smoothly into the Japanese education system, mitigating the need for

specialised Brazilian educational institutions. The shared experience among foreign workers' children created a sense of community and mutual support, which was crucial for their integration.

Furukawa reflected, 'Because we used to live in a place where my father worked. There are many other foreigners there, many Brazilians and all the kids were in a Japanese school with me. That was very convenient. This is because that workplace has all the necessary facilities for foreign workers. We used to live in places provided by the factory like the factory helped you find a place to live. And there were many other Brazilians. All the kids were going to the same school, so sending us to the same place was convenient. We never thought about going to another school. Chinese, Brazilians, and Peruvians, all living in the same place at that time, were doing okay. Philippines, many.'... 'Our parents were not used to talking (Japanese). Yes, uh. They could not read, there were translators at school and all the Japanese letters sent to us were translated.'

The repertoire of 'educational challenges and sports talent' is another significant theme in Furukawa's experience. Transitioning from elementary to junior high school was relatively smooth, but the shift to high school presented more significant challenges, particularly due to entrance exams. However, her athletic talent in volleyball provided a unique pathway that allowed her to bypass some of these academic hurdles. Schools often offer specialised admission processes for students with exceptional talents in sports, arts, or other areas, which can ease their transition and integration. This highlights how non-academic skills can be crucial in educational advancement and integration for immigrant children. Furukawa explained: 'I was in a simple time. I was good at football, so it was easy for me to pass as a student with special talent. I think that from しょうがっこう (elementary school) go to ちゅうがっこう (junior high school) was fine. But after that, you need to do some tests to go to こうとうがっこう (high school). It's become more difficult. In my case, it was not difficult because I played volleyball. So they sent me to this high school. Actually, the difficult test was like a math or Japanese test. For me, I just did sports tests. There was this difficult test, but I didn't need to do it because I was good at sports. I was lucky. I mostly did physical tests. They did other tests, but they were not so important when you enter by sports ... Normally, going to high school is difficult for all Japanese students.'

The 'language and cultural adaptation' repertoire is central to Furukawa's integration into Japanese society. Despite initial language barriers, her continuous exposure to Japanese through schooling and additional evening classes significantly improved her fluency. Her narrative highlights the importance of language acquisition in feeling integrated and accepted in a new country. The supportive environment of her friends and the supplemental education she received at a special training school were pivotal in her language acquisition and cultural integration. This adaptation was essential not only for her academic success but also for her social integration, as she mentions that her friends eventually did not distinguish her as a foreigner after the initial years of integration.

When I spoke about her excellent Japanese, she replied with a smile, 'Yeah, because of Japanese schools. I was always in Japanese school when I was learning. In my case, I also went to a special training school. At night, my parents used to drive me to this place. I think it doesn't exist anymore, but it was a place where they taught Japanese and homework to kids. Things like how to write and basic things in Japanese. They helped us. Also, when I was a kid, my friend taught me everything when I first came here. They were very kind. They never cared about if you were poor or if you were foreign; they were nice to me and maybe because of my personality. Anyway, they are kind.'

The repertoire of 'ethnic identity and self-perception' is complex in Furukawa's experience. She began to see herself as Japanese by the fifth grade, largely due to her immersion in Japanese school life and culture. This self-identification is also noted in her brother's experience, who feels disconnected from Brazilian culture despite a more Brazilian appearance. This dual identity is a common theme among second-generation immigrants, who often navigate multiple ethnic and cultural identities. Furukawa's story underscores the fluidity of ethnic identity and how it can be shaped by one's environment and social interactions.

Furukawa reflected on her identity during school life: 'I started seeing myself as Japanese at grade five in elementary school because all my friends were Japanese and everything I was doing was Japanese. My brother doesn't know basic Portuguese now. He has a more Brazilian face, so Brazilians here would think he knows Portuguese. Once, they meet up in factories, and they just talk to him. And then my brother asked me what they were talking about to me, haha. He doesn't understand.'... 'At the beginning, they did a little bit of saying

that you are a Gaijin/foreigner, this kind of thing. But they started treating me like Japanese. So it was the first 2 years I didn't want to go to school. I was always saying that I had some pain, a belly pain or something like that. I was always going to the doctor because I didn't want to go to school. The first 2 years were more difficult until I made friends. So, from then until now, I have always felt that I am Japanese. When I am with Japanese, I feel Japanese, but when I am with relatives, I remember, as I didn't have Brazilian relatives before, other than parents, so now when I am with relatives, I feel I am Brazilian.' ... 'I guess I don't think that the Japanese face is important because I know some celebrities who aren't completely Japanese, but they are accepted as Japanese. Language, I think, is more important. Otherwise, there is no communication.'

Apart from Portuguese, she admitted that she has not kept much of the Brazilian culture and that she has developed a deep bond with Japan. She brought up an example, 'I don't remember Brazil, um. I don't cook Brazilian food, for example. I like Brazilian food, but I don't cook. When I wanted to eat it, I asked my mom to cook for me.' Then she said firmly to me, 'I think Japan is my country. I don't feel that Brazil is my place. I want to go to Brazil just to visit to see my relatives and go to see my grandparents. But I was raised in Japan. So I think here is my place. I just went back to Brazil for a visit.'

'Work and family responsibilities' form another significant repertoire in Furukawa's career choices. After high school, she chose to enter the workforce instead of pursuing a university education to support her family financially. Her work history includes long-term employment at Subaru, where she benefited from being a 'shain' (full-time employee and/or employed by the company) with the potential for promotions. However, family responsibilities, particularly raising her children, influenced her decision to switch to less demanding jobs with more flexible hours. This shift allowed her to balance work and family life more effectively, highlighting the impact of family dynamics on career choices. She explained, "I was there for 13 years in Subaru and was a 'Shain' there. Then I had children, so that's why I stopped it. They were busy in the afternoon, and I had 3 kids, so I needed to stop. Then, I chose a job where I worked for fewer hours because I had many things to do by myself. I need to come home earlier. This was because of my husband as well. He wanted me to stay at home with the kids. My mother-in-law was a nurse, and my father-in-law worked at the post office, and they were very busy. So, my husband was raised by his grandmother. He told me

that being raised by someone else, he knew that, was bad and that he wanted our kids to have more time with parents.”

Furukawa’s narrative sheds light on the reasons many Japanese Brazilians opt to work for Haken (dispatched) companies in Japan. This choice is influenced by several factors, including ‘job flexibility’, ‘financial considerations’, ‘work-life balance’, and the nature of the employment system in Japan. These factors collectively make dispatched work an attractive option for Japanese Brazilians seeking to navigate the challenges of living and working in Japan. By offering higher initial wages, flexible hours, and the ability to change work locations, haken companies provide a viable alternative to the more rigid and demanding permanent employment system, thereby facilitating a smoother integration into Japanese society for many Japanese Brazilian workers.

One of the primary reasons Japanese Brazilians choose to work for dispatched companies is the flexibility these jobs offer. Dispatched (‘haken’) workers have the ability to change their work locations and specific work types more easily compared to permanent employees (‘shain’). Furukawa explains that if a dispatched worker is unhappy with their current job or factory, they can request a transfer to a different workplace. She noted, ‘You can ask to go to another place for work. Saying I don’t enjoy this factory. Do you have another factory? Then they can change it.’ This mobility particularly appeals to those who seek flexibility in their work environment or need to adapt their work time to personal circumstances. ‘Financial considerations’ also play a significant role in the decision to work for haken companies. While permanent employees start with lower salaries that gradually increase over time, dispatched workers receive a higher initial wage. This immediate financial benefit is attractive to many Japanese Brazilians who may need to support their families or have immediate financial needs. The higher pay for dispatched workers can offset the lack of long-term job security and bonus or holiday benefits that permanent employees enjoy. Permanent employment in Japan comes with significant constraints, including rigorous work expectations and long hours. Many Japanese Brazilians, even native Japanese, may prefer the less demanding nature of dispatched work, which allows them to avoid the intense pressure and commitment required of permanent employees. She mentioned, “For ‘Shain’, if you need to take care of kids, cannot go to work, it’s a more difficult situation. That’s why many Japanese people also work in haken (dispatched).”

Lastly, the key interpretative repertoire of ‘citizenship and legal statuses’ reflects the bureaucratic and personal challenges associated with maintaining legal status as a foreigner in Japan. Initially, Furukawa was content with a long-term visa and, later, a permanent visa. However, the complexities of handling legal documents in Portuguese for her parents prompted her to consider Japanese citizenship. This decision highlights the practical implications of legal status for immigrants and their families, such as simplifying bureaucratic processes and ensuring stability for her children. Even though Furukawa’s husband and children are of Japanese nationality, and she holds a permanent visa, she encountered great difficulties when applying for naturalisation. She reflected: ‘I had a long-term visa, and then I got a permanent one after marrying my husband. He is Japanese. Before I tried it, I applied for citizenship, and they didn’t accept it because I hit my car. I should have waited a long time and then applied again, but I hit the car again.’ With sadness, she told me why she had to make an effort to acquire Japanese nationality, not only for herself but also to avoid any possible inconvenience to her family in the future: ‘I am still trying now. Before, I never thought about changing my permanent visa to a Japanese citizen because it’s almost the same when you are permanent. You don’t need to renew your visa, and you can get a house. But now my father has died, and I realise how difficult it is to do my family’s documents in Brazil and in Portuguese. I need to ask people for help with Portuguese when verifying documents. I am thinking about my kids and my husband because he is Japanese; the kids are Japanese, so how will they do everything in Portuguese if there is a similar situation? I will change my citizenship for my family.’

In summary, Furukawa’s interview provides a comprehensive view of how language and education play a crucial role in the integration of second-generation Japanese Brazilians. Her story highlights how community support, language acquisition, sports talent, and practical considerations around work and family responsibilities contribute to the integration process. Despite identifying strongly as Japanese, her narrative reveals the ongoing challenges and dual identities faced by bicultural individuals in a predominantly homogeneous society. Through the lens of these interpretative repertoires, we gain a deeper understanding of the factors that facilitate and hinder the integration of immigrant youth into Japanese society.

While the aforementioned case focused on attending Japanese schools, many interviewees were educated in Brazilian schools or started in Japanese schools but later transferred to

Brazilian institutions. The impact of these varied school experiences on their integration will be analysed in the following sections.

5.4.2 From a Japanese School to a Brazilian School: Interview with Chiba

Chiba (31, divorced, mother of two, father of Japanese descent, no religious affiliation), a second-generation Japanese-Brazilian, moved to Japan when she was seven years old to start first grade. This interview was conducted in Portuguese with the help of a translator. Struggling to adapt to life in a Japanese school and experiencing bullying, she transferred to a Brazilian primary school in second grade, where she continued her education through high school.

The analysis focuses on the role education plays in her feeling of integration. When Chiba arrived in Japan at the age of seven, she was enrolled in a Japanese school despite not knowing any Japanese. This immediate immersion presented substantial challenges as she struggled to communicate with teachers and peers. The lack of language proficiency isolated her from her classmates and made her educational experience daunting and stressful.

Chiba reflected: ‘I came to Japan when I was 7 years old in 1999... One week after my family arrived, I entered a Japanese school, but I didn’t know any Japanese at that time. At the time, the Japanese schools were cheaper than Brazilian schools. So that’s why my dad decided to put me in the Japanese school.’

Chiba’s enrolment in a Japanese school, without knowing the language, reflects the economic constraints and practical decisions made by immigrant families. This repertoire emphasises how financial considerations can shape educational paths, sometimes placing children in linguistically and culturally challenging environments.

‘Bullying’ due to language barriers and cultural differences is a recurring theme in the experiences of immigrant children. This repertoire illustrates the psychological impact of bullying and its impact on educational trajectories and identity formation.

Chiba remembered: ‘I continued, maybe 1 year in the Japanese school, but I suffered bullying ... so here in Japan, in the morning children go to school walking in lines, but after

school when I go back home, I went normally alone at that time because my parents were working. One time, I was going home alone, and then two kids followed me. They were the same age. They entered a house that had a dog, and then they released the dog and got the dog to attack me. I was attacked by the dogs... In my first year of primary school, I suffered a lot of bullying. So the second year, my mother decided to put me in a Brazilian school because of bullying.'

The bullying experience had a profound impact on Chiba, leading her mom to transfer her to a Brazilian school, where she completed her primary and secondary education. This decision highlights the difficulties that non-Japanese-speaking children face in integrating into the Japanese school system, especially when they are isolated from peers who share their language and culture. The bullying was both physical and psychological, further emphasising the alienation reflected in her ethnic identity.

Chiba's sister, who also initially attended a Japanese school, had to switch to a Brazilian high school due to the language barrier and the difficulty of high school entrance exams that require knowledge of kanji. This illustrates a common challenge for many Japanese Brazilian families in Japan, where the language barrier can severely limit educational opportunities. Chiba believes: 'As here in Japan, to go to high school, you need to know at least some kanji. We didn't know.' ... 'After I left Japanese school, my mother didn't want me to not speak Japanese. So my mother sent me to a Japanese language course, also an English language course.'

Despite the challenges, Chiba's family prioritised her education and language skills. After leaving the Japanese school, her mother enrolled her in Japanese and English language courses to ensure she retained some level of Japanese proficiency. However, financial difficulties due to her mother's illness led to the discontinuation of these courses.

Chiba's identity formation was heavily influenced by her negative experiences in Japanese schools. The bullying and isolation reinforced her Brazilian identity, shaping her sense of self and belonging. This repertoire illustrates how early educational experiences can have long-lasting effects on ethnic identity. 'I think things might be different if those bad experiences hadn't happened. I don't think I would have thought I'd been fully Brazilian,' said Chiba, regretfully.

The lack of comprehensive Japanese language education in Brazilian schools in Japan is another critical issue. While Japanese is taught, the proficiency level achieved is often insufficient for full integration into Japanese society. For example, Chiba felt that in her school 'it was terrible for learning Japanese. That's why I went to the Japanese tutorial classes.'

The efforts to ensure language proficiency and cultural education reflect the hope of maintaining Japanese Brazilian ethnic identity. This involves balancing the acquisition of necessary language skills for integration while preserving one's cultural heritage and identity. While Chiba once considered returning to Brazil for university, her priorities changed after her daughter was born. She now values the opportunities and safety that Japan offers, despite the challenges and discrimination she faces. Chiba is trying to preserve her Brazilian heritage while raising her daughter in Japan. She wants her daughter to benefit from the Japanese education system but also to retain her Brazilian cultural identity. 'After my daughter was born, everything changed because I think my daughter will have more opportunities here in Japan. The education is better. It's safer... I told my daughter that she is Brazilian and that she will have the opportunity to study here in Japan, in a Japanese school, and hopefully have Japanese friends and learn the Japanese language, but I didn't want my daughter to lose her essence, the Brazilian essence,' so said Chiba.

The interview with Chiba highlights several interpretative repertoires that shape the educational experiences and integration of second-generation Japanese Brazilians. Economic necessity often drives educational choices, potentially leading to significant language barriers and social isolation in Japanese schools. Bullying and the search for culturally comfortable environments further shaped these children's educational trajectories and identity formation. The role of education in integration is complex, involving both the acquisition of necessary language skills and the preservation of cultural identity. The transition from Japanese to Brazilian schools reflects efforts to protect children from bullying and provide a more supportive educational environment. However, these choices also reflect the ongoing challenges Japanese Brazilian children face in integrating into the mainstream education system.

5.4.3 Challenges in Language and Education Resources: Interviews with Adachi and Aoyama

Adachi and Aoyama's narratives further illustrate the impact of education on the sense of integration. Both are in their twenties, unmarried, and have one parent of Japanese descent. Aoyama is Christian. Adachi came to Japan at the age of six and began first grade at a Brazilian primary school. In contrast, Aoyama attended a Japanese primary school for two years before transferring to a Brazilian school because of bullying, where she completed her education through high school. This interview was conducted in English and partly in Japanese.

Their educational experiences are framed through a critical lens. The education repertoire highlights the gaps in their education and the resulting challenges in languages, academics, and resources for integration.

Adachi's parents chose a Brazilian school due to their expectation of returning to Brazil in a short amount of time, making Japanese education seem unnecessary. This decision created a barrier to his full integration into Japanese society. He highlights the poor quality of education in Brazilian schools in Japan compared to those in Brazil, describing them as 'more of a business than educational institutions'. However, his struggle to adapt academically when he temporarily returned to Brazil highlights the inadequacy of the Brazilian schools in Japan. Aoyama further pointed out the lower academic standards of Brazilian schools in Japan. As Adachi mentioned, upon returning to Brazil, he struggled academically due to the lower standards of the Brazilian school he attended in Japan: 'So when I went back to Brazil in 13, I started to fail a lot of classes because I couldn't keep up with studying for their level. But after a while, I got used to it. And when I came back to Japan again after 3 years, I came back at 16 years old, and I entered the last year of high school. And when I came here, it was so easy. I really feel the exams here were easy. The classes were kind of free, so that is not a good thing necessarily.' The gap in Brazilian schools in Japan, especially in extracurricular activities and support for higher education, which contrasts with the more structured environment of Japanese schools, was also mentioned by Aoyama. 'There are no special activities except studying (in Brazilian schools). Japanese schools were fun, difficult, but fun. For example, some sports, many clubs, many activities. In the last three years of Brazilian high school, the supportive activities for getting into the university have been completely absent. So, I'm glad I made a lot of good friends. But I'm sad that I didn't get into university.'

Of course, if you end up back in Brazil, Brazilian schools are definitely better. But I didn't end up going back.

Both people's narratives showed the crucial role of education in their integration experiences. This is first reflected in their language acquisition and proficiency. Adachi has basic Japanese proficiency despite spending a significant part of his life in Japan. This limited proficiency primarily stems from his continuous education in a Brazilian school where Japanese language learning was not a priority. His description of struggling with kanji and keigo (respectful language) highlights the gap in his Japanese education, significantly affecting his daily interactions and professional opportunities in Japan. He said, 'Before, there was one 40-minute class per week. Now it's increasing to three classes.' 'It's not enough also because there are many different levels in the classroom. And so, one teacher cannot really conduct all different levels because some people come from Japanese schools and are almost fluent in Japanese. So, they still only need to learn complicated grammar or kanji. There are other students who have just come to Japan and know nothing. So the teacher cannot coordinate that. So, from 40 minutes to almost 2 hours a week, it's a big improvement, but I hope it can become more like an international school in the future. Aoyama's initial experience in a Japanese school exposed her to Japanese culture and education. However, she faced significant challenges, including language barriers and bullying, leading her parents to switch her to a Brazilian school.

The lack of Japanese language expertise impacts their social networks, further consolidating the Brazilian identity of the respondents. Their narrative highlights the role of schooling, particularly language acquisition, in maintaining cultural boundaries and limiting integration into the mainstream Japanese community. Adachi's continuous education in a Brazilian school solidified his Brazilian identity. His narrative emphasises the lack of deep relationships with Japanese peers and his limited engagement with Japanese culture.

He described himself as 'Brazilian, 95% Brazilian'. He explained, 'Because even though I live in Japan, I don't have as much contact with Japanese culture as I do with Brazilian culture. I don't think I'm like a Japanese person, or I don't think I behave like a Japanese person most of the time. I can only consider myself a Brazilian.'... 'I went to the Brazilian school. So, I never had any deep relationship with any Japanese person. There would be a work relationship or some activity that I might do together with Japanese people. But I have

never had a really, really close, deep relationship with any Japanese person. So I cannot really understand them if you ask me what kind of food they eat every day. I'm not even sure what they eat every day. Right? Yeah, like a normal Japanese house, a really traditional Japanese house, while they eat every single day; I'm not really sure because we're stuck in this bubble. So, I never had the question of being Brazilian. I never saw myself as a Japanese person since forever. I am Brazilian.'

Adachi expressed a strong connection to Brazilian culture, including both public traditions and private life. As he explained, 'It's about the culture itself and the religious aspect (Protestant). Personally, for example, I believe that the Japanese are more likely to be private. Brazilians are like outgoing.'... 'I think I am 95% Brazilian because when I went to Brazil when I compared myself to a Brazilian person in Brazil, I saw some differences. So I think I feel like 5 % Japanese.'... 'I like being perceived as Brazilian. Maybe if I went to a Japanese school, I would want to fit in during school time. So this is why many students, foreign students, especially when they are in school, want to change themselves and really be perceived as Japanese, or it happens that they feel ashamed that their parents are foreigners. I also heard from some friends that once these foreign students go to high school, it becomes better because when you're younger, you want to fit in, but when you get teenagers ages, it's good to be a little bit different. But kids often suffer bullying for being different. But then, when they enter high school, there is a good to be different. So I think if I went to the Japanese school as a kid, maybe I would want to change myself.'... 'I behave more Japanese in Japan than in Brazil because, in Brazil, I don't have to follow the logic of Japanese people or Japanese laws, but here I have to'.

He describes adapting to Japanese social norms, such as not eating while walking on the street or speaking quietly on the train, but he emphasises that these adaptations do not change his core identity.

Aoyama's narrative again demonstrates the role of education in limiting integration. The switch from a Japanese primary school to a Brazilian school significantly impacted her self-identification. Initially, she aspired to be Japanese, but her transition to a Brazilian school reinforced her Brazilian identity. Aoyama felt '100% Brazilian.' She told me that: 'There are many very large Brazilian communities in Japan. My parents, who live in Japan, don't speak Japanese. We talk Portuguese. Also, I went to a Brazilian school. All my friends are

Brazilian, and I regularly go to a Brazilian supermarket. Everything is as if I am living in Brazil.’... ‘I went to a Japanese primary school for two years. At that time, I had the idea that I wanted to be Japanese. But then I went to a Brazilian school, and then the idea changed completely.’ Aoyama also has basic Japanese. Her initial two years in a Japanese primary school helped her to learn the language, but her subsequent education in a Brazilian school limited her further development in Japanese.

She encountered significant challenges in understanding kanji and the intricate system of polite and formal Japanese, known as respectful language/Keigo. This includes forms of speech like honorifics and humble expressions, which are used to convey politeness and show respect based on social hierarchy and context. Like many other participants, she found these linguistic nuances particularly difficult to grasp.

Her reliance on translators for official matters highlights the challenges she faces: ‘Also, my mom still now cannot speak proper Japanese. She often behaved very respectfully to staff when she needed to go to a hospital, school, or city hall like that. But they often have no patience with her when she doesn’t understand and are very rude. I saw how she behaved, and I was very sad. So now we don’t go to hospitals without translators. Because of the information, we want to go to university, but we don’t know how to. We don’t have the information. The information for us, in many aspects, is absent. And we don’t get much support. Even though we tried so hard to search, we could not get it many times. Even though I know basic Japanese, it is still hard for me. For people who don’t know Japanese, it’s really, really difficult. There are many places that don’t have English as well; all are in Japanese. I think that’s very hard.’

Their experience demonstrated the difficulty of fully integrating into Japanese culture when educational and social experiences are rooted in a different cultural context, especially in Brazilian schools in Japan. Brazilian schools in Japan play a dual role in maintaining ethnic identity and providing education. However, their effectiveness in facilitating integration into Japanese society is questionable.

In exploring why many second-generation Brazilians opted for Brazilian schools in Japan, several interpretative repertoires come to light. Firstly, the experience of bullying in Japanese schools is a recurring theme among almost all respondents who switched from Japanese to

Brazilian schools. Transferring to Brazilian schools often provides a safer environment while limiting their exposure to Japanese culture and language. Additionally, the parents' Japanese language proficiency, convenience for their work, and plans to return to Brazil in the near future are significant factors influencing this choice.

Adachi reflected: 'The biggest problem is not the Brazilian schools; they are not bad. The problem is the parent's decision because the school is very good if you're going back to Brazil. For example, in my situation, I went back to Brazil for two years and came back here again. I didn't lose these years of education. But my parents need to be more informed to decide if they're really going to go back or if they're going to stay in Japan. There was a kid in my class who was born here in Japan and had never stepped in Brazil. From 2 years old until he was 17, he was in a Brazilian school and didn't speak a single word of Japanese, but he had never stepped in Brazil. So that's the parents' fault, like 100 % is their fault.'

Aoyama shared struggles faced by parents: 'I think the parents cannot speak Japanese, so it is easier in the Brazilian school because they can speak to the teacher, et cetera. So they just put kids in Brazilian schools. It's convenient for them.'

In summary, respondents' educational experiences, whether in Japanese or Brazilian schools, significantly influenced their sense of ethnic identity and integration. Japanese schools have a dual impact: they facilitate language acquisition, interpersonal relationships, and adaptation to Japanese society, but bullying can harm children's sense of feeling integrated. Brazilian schools help maintain Brazilian identity and cultural heritage through Portuguese education and a familiar cultural environment. However, the quality of education in Brazilian schools affects students' Japanese language proficiency, opportunities for further education, and overall ability and motivation to integrate into Japanese society.

5.5 The Educational Experience of Different Brazilian Children: Is It Challenging to Graduate from High School?

This section explores the impact of educational attainment on respondents' identity and subjective feelings of integration. Compared to other factors, the influence of educational attainment on integration is less prominent in their narratives. However, the findings of this

study still contribute to understanding why Japanese-Brazilian youth have a lower rate of higher education attainment. Of these 31 respondents, 9 pursued university or higher degrees.

Interpretative Repertoire 1: Quality of Education

The ‘quality of education’ repertoire emerges from respondents’ discussions about the differences between Brazilian and Japanese schools. Adachi, for instance, expressed a clear critique of Brazilian schools in Japan: ‘When I went back to Brazil, I started to fail a lot of classes because I couldn’t keep up with studying at their level. The education in Brazilian schools in Japan is not really their purpose, only it’s a business. They want to make money.’ This repertoire positions Brazilian schools as inferior in academic rigour compared to Japanese schools, impacting students’ preparedness for higher education and their integration into Japanese society. Aoyama’s experience highlights the lack of supportive activities in Brazilian schools that are essential for university admission. She said, ‘The last three years of high school, the supportive activities to get into the university, are completely absent. So I’m glad I made a lot of good friends. But I’m sad that I didn’t get into university.’ This absence of preparatory support could explain why many do not pursue higher education in Japan, whether in Japanese schools due to language barriers or in Brazilian schools due to insufficient support. It also deeply impacts respondents’ sense of belonging and their integration into the Japanese education system and broader society.

Interpretative Repertoire 2: Financial Constraints

The ‘Financial Constraints’ repertoire is evident in many interviews. For instance, Adachi’s narrative is about his family’s approach to education savings. He noted, ‘When the parents came in the 90s, they were thinking about going back to Brazil. So they didn’t save money for kids to go to college.’ He noticed one of his friend’s experiences: ‘I have a friend who is the only person I know who went to an international university. She got into a lot of debt. She needs to pay off for the next 20 years. So you either go back to Brazil or you get into a lot of debt here in Japan.’

Interpretative Repertoire 3: Frequent Relocation

The experience of Silva (21, unmarried, no religious affiliation, mother of Japanese descent) exemplifies how frequent relocation significantly disrupted her educational progress. Her movement between Japan and Brazil created multiple challenges that hindered her academic development. She initially attended a Japanese primary school but then moved to Brazil for

several months during her middle school years, making it difficult to keep up with her peers upon returning to Japan. She stated, ‘When I came back, everyone had groups, and I felt left out. I tried to study, but I was so lost.’... ‘But I stayed there (in Brazil) for just 7 months. So they were like, we cannot put you on the school because it’s so short. So I didn’t study.’ Each move necessitated a shift between Portuguese and Japanese, making it hard to become proficient in either language. Silva mentioned feeling lost and giving up on her studies due to adapting to a new school environment and catching up with missed courses, leading her to work part-time jobs instead of continuing her education. Additionally, the lack of a continuous educational path meant that Silva missed foundational knowledge critical for progressing through the Japanese school system. She mentioned this gap in education made it difficult for her to pursue further studies, such as entering a high school or vocational school for her dream: ‘I think if you go like from primary school to high school in Japanese school and then university, you can easily enter. But I think for me I didn’t go to the high school. So I have to enter a school that has a high school and a senmon gakko (professional training college). To proceed to the senmon gakko, I first need to take a test to obtain a high school certification, similar to getting a diploma before moving on. Or I could complete the full three years of high school and then enrol in the senmon gakko. It’s difficult.’

Interpretative Repertoire 4: Motivation Factors

The motivation was also repeated multiple times in the interviews. Adachi mentioned: ‘Students don’t care much because they know that once they graduate, they’re just going to go to the factory. And the test is meaningless.’ Kawasaki (more details of this extract are in the next section) completed his school education journey in Japanese schools; he also explained the biggest problem for him was that he did not know why higher education was meaningful for him, so he had ‘no interest in applying’. This repertoire highlights a lack of motivation, as many do not see the value in striving for academic success if they perceive their future prospects as limited to low-skilled jobs. This lack of motivation further affects their ability to move upward in Japanese society.

The interpretative repertoires identified in the respondents’ narratives. The quality of education, lack of supportive activities, financial constraints, frequent relocation, and motivation factors highlight the impact of educational attainment on their identity and subjective integration feelings. While educational attainment may not be the most prominent factor in their narratives, it remains to shape their experiences and outcomes, contributing to

the lower rate of higher education attainment among Japanese-Brazilian youth and their integration ability into Japanese society.

5.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, although Japan has laws designed to protect human rights and ensure equality, achieving true multiculturalism ('tabunkakyosei') requires focusing on the children growing up in Japan, regardless of their foreign origins. These children, having the right to reside and attend school in Japan, lead lives indistinguishable from their Japanese peers. They learn, study, and engage in typical childhood activities. Emphasising their integration is essential for fostering a truly inclusive and multicultural society.

Chapter Six: Understanding Integration from a Cultural and Belonging Perspective

6.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the meanings and implications of four distinct ethnic identities among second-generation Japanese Brazilians, shaped by Japanese mainstream cultural narratives, individuals' citizenship status and language proficiency. Section 6.3 examines mainstream cultural narratives in Japanese institutions and the challenges posed by its diverse populations. This chapter then analyses the expressions of ethnic identities (entirely Brazilian, half-Brazilian and half-Japanese, both Brazilian and Japanese, and entirely Japanese) and their articulation of a sense of belonging. These expressions are not indications of detachment from broader society but rather a way for individuals to ascribe meaning to their status and experiences. They also represent their methods of coping with or challenging negative stereotypes, reflecting their understanding of their integration into mainstream Japanese society.

The previous chapters explored the integration of Japanese Brazilians into Japanese society from a macro and theoretical perspective. Chapter Four addressed the evolution of Japan's immigration policies and their impact on Japanese Brazilians' legal and political status, analysing how the presence or absence of citizenship affects their integration experiences. Notably, the number of Brazilians who have obtained Japanese citizenship is very low, significantly less than that of ethnic Koreans and Chinese. After the financial crisis 2008,

many Japanese Brazilians left Japan and returned to Brazil. Chapter Five, from the perspective of language, examined the critical role of language in the integration process, highlighting its close relationship with the socio-economic status, educational achievements, and labour market experiences of second-generation Japanese Brazilians. The case studies in Chapters Four and Five indicate that citizenship, language, education, and employment are interwoven in the integration process, playing a crucial role in shaping the diverse ethnic identities of second-generation Japanese Brazilians. This chapter reveals the contrast between Japan's self-perception as a mono-ethnic nation and the multi-ethnic identities of Japanese Brazilians. It specifically explores the four types of ethnic identities among the second generation and explains what these diverse identities mean for their integration into Japanese society.

6.2 Ethnic Identity in the Integration Process

The empirical findings of this study challenge the prevailing notion in existing research that identifying with Brazil implies a rejection of Japan (e.g., Tsuda, 2003, p. 252). For many participants in this research, identifying as Brazilian does not preclude their simultaneous identification with Japanese society or as Japanese. Furthermore, an affinity for Brazilian identity does not necessarily imply a refusal to integrate into Japanese society or indicate increased ethnic antagonism). Instead, there exists a remarkable diversity of identity experiences among this group. Interviews with second-generation Japanese Brazilians reveal complex identity perceptions that transcend simple binary categories. Many do not identify strictly as Japanese or Brazilian. Instead, many of them accept being labelled as 'half' Japanese and 'half' Brazilian. Those who have adapted well to Japanese culture often view themselves as 'double', embodying full membership in both cultures. This perspective highlights the hybrid nature of identity among Japanese Brazilians.

Previous research has pointed to the development of an ethnic Brazilian identity that reflects the poor integration status of Japanese Brazilians. First-generation Japanese Brazilians generally reinforce their Brazilian ethnic identity after their return to Japan. This is because of their deep absorption of Brazilian culture and the lack of acceptance in Japanese society. Instead, they are segregated as a new ethnic minority in Japan (Tsuda, 2003, p. 103). This chapter looks at the development of the second generation's ethnic identity and reveals the diverse ethnic identity of second-generation Japanese Brazilians.

Many researchers agree that first-generation Japanese Brazilians are a 'positive Japanese minority' in Brazilian society, culturally respected and socially favourable. However, upon arriving in Japan, they became a negative 'Brazilian minority' with a lower cultural image and social class status (Tsuda, 2003, p. 46). Therefore, in Japan, many Japanese Brazilians have failed to find the homeland they had envisioned and have experienced disappointment, prejudice, and pressure to assimilate. In response, most of them developed a Brazilian counter-identity, which allowed for a more significant psychological distance between themselves and the native Japanese. This reaction has led to what Tsuda (2003, p. 292) describes as a 'greater nationalisation of a previously strong transnational identity.' Before return migration, Japanese Brazilians in Brazil had already developed transnational hybrid identities as 'Japanese' due to their awareness of their ancestral ethnic origins. However, upon residing in Japan, their self-identity shifted to a 'Brazilian counter-identity.'

Additional studies suggest that economic concerns are also an essential factor besides identity (Ishi, 2003, p. 81). Most Japanese Brazilians temporarily return to Japan for better income and more opportunities to improve their families' lives in Brazil eventually (Au Yeung et al., 2016, p.73). This explains why some Japanese Brazilians might migrate again to Brazil from Japan.

A key question is whether this situation is similar for second-generation Japanese Brazilians. There is still no systematic research on the type of ethnic identity they adopted. This chapter fills this gap by showing the diversity among the second generation, with some maintaining a Brazilian ethnic identity while others develop a hybrid identity or lean towards a Japanese identity.

Tsuda (2003, p. 449) suggests that developing an anti-identity in the second generation of Japanese Brazilians may exacerbate their antagonism towards mainstream society. I interviewed the second generation who were born in Japan or those who arrived before seven years old, as those coming in older grades after late primary school are likely to face more adjustment difficulties, which leads them to be more likely to develop a 'counter identity' similar to that of their parents.

I analyse the interpretative repertoires that respondents use to articulate their ethnic identities and experiences of integration in Japan. By examining these recurring talk patterns, this section reveals how the second-generation constructs meaning and identity around their ethnic identities.

The results of the interviews conducted for this study reveal that the identities of second-generation Japanese Brazilians who grew up in Japan are notably diverse. These identities can be categorised into four main groups: (1) those who predominantly identify as Brazilian, (2) those who feel partly Japanese and partly Brazilian, (3) those who consider themselves entirely Japanese and also entirely Brazilian, and (4) those who fully identify as Japanese, entirely shedding any Brazilian characteristics. The category (3) and (4) often show a strong sense of belonging to Japan. Category (2) showed more complicated feelings as they usually focused more on not being accepted despite their efforts to integrate into Japanese society. Category (1) reflects people's dashed hopes of integrating into Japan, but most of them had made efforts to do so.

For instance, Silva's experience reflects the complexity of these identities. She initially felt Brazilian due to her father's strong Brazilian identity, but over time, she realised that neither Japan nor Brazil entirely felt like home. She noted, 'When I was younger, I wanted to be accepted by other people. Now, I don't care if they see me as Japanese or Brazilian.'

The intensity of one's feelings of belonging to an ethnic group depends on more aspects than just ethnic origin but also other important cultural dimensions. Examples include language proficiency and use, religious practices and beliefs, transnational relations, and views on norms and values (Groenewold, 2008, p. 106). In this respect, therefore, the ethnic identity of individuals is a reflection of and a response to cultural integration.

To further understand the meaning of these ethnic identity labels, after asking about ethnic orientation, we discussed three separate themes during interviews, which are (I) general co-ethnic practices, (II) language and social networks, and (III) progressive norms. According to Sloodman (2018, p.94), these three themes can be considered indicators to show the socio-cultural orientation of people. The analysis of the three themes represents the different interpretative repertoires used by respondents. Respondents' narratives not only express their personal orientation towards cultural integration but also reflect how these personal

perceptions are shaped by the environment, e.g. more positive external feedback tends to promote the formation of identities with positive connotations rather than marginalised identities with implied negative connotations.

The findings of this chapter warn against taking expressions of ethnic identification as straightforward indications of broader integration orientations. It is crucial not to frame identifications in a way that implies a zero-sum character, for instance, asking whether someone feels more Brazilian or Japanese without allowing for the possibility of identifying with both cultures simultaneously. Additionally, ethnic identity is dynamic and socially constructed, meaning that people with the same ethnic identification may not share similar behaviours, attitudes, or skills (Brubaker 2002, p. 164). For example, Japanese Brazilians who identify themselves as entirely Brazilian in Japan can have differing opinions on Japanese social manners, such as showing respect and politeness, and may possess varying levels of Japanese language proficiency. In summary, the interviews reveal that the struggle and conflict with a sense of belonging are recurring themes closely connected to respondents' expressions of ethnic identity. The following section explores different aspects of ethnic identity based on individual experiences.

6.3 Challenge to the Mainstream Cultural Narrative

The idea that identity is a socially constructed phenomenon rather than a primordial given has become prevalent in social sciences. Castells (1997, p. 7) agrees that 'from a sociological perspective, all identities are constructed' and 'identity is people's source of meaning and experience.' Castells has identified three forms and origins of identity building: legitimising, resistance, and project identities. Legitimising identity is 'introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalise their domination vis-a-vis social actors.' It generates a civil society and is linked, above all, to nationalism. Resistance identity is 'generated by actors in positions/conditions devalued or stigmatised by the logic of domination.' It is linked to identity politics and leads to the formation of communes or communities, which may, in reality, be little more than fragmented 'tribes'. A project identity appears 'when social actors . . . build a new identity that redefines their position in society and . . . seeks the transformation of the overall social structure.' It produces desiring subjects who are not individuals but more like 'collective social actors', such as new social movements (Castells, 1997, pp. 8–10). Social identity has been defined in sociology as how

individuals label themselves as members of particular groups, producing national, gender, and work identities. Ethnic identity as a form of self-consciousness is not simply a matter of internal experience but is actively displayed, demonstrated, and enacted in practice. In turn, such practices can either consolidate existing hegemonies or generate resistance to the dominant order (Comaroff 1985, pp. 5-6).

Counter-identities can be regarded as similar to what Manuel Castells calls 'resistance identities', which are 'generated by those actors that are in positions/conditions devalued and stigmatised by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and survival based on principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society' (1997, p. 8). According to Takeyuki Tsuda's *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Return Migration in Transnational Perspective* (p. 313), the Brazilian counter-identity formed by Japanese Brazilians in Japan leads them to assert Brazilian cultural differences, enabling them to oppose assimilative pressures successfully. Therefore, although this type of deterritorialised nationalism (represented by the Brazilian counter-identity) is a passive, secondary cultural nationalism that does not involve a struggle to establish a nation-state, it does result in a type of identity politics of resistance against Japanese ethnic hegemony and power (Befu, 1993, pp. 127).

Brubaker and Cooper explore the multiple uses and meanings of the term identity in academic discourse. In many studies, identity is seen as a deeply fundamental aspect of individual or collective's 'selfhood', meaning identity refers to basic, abiding, foundational aspects of the self. Or as a shared essence among group members, which may lead to solidarity and collective action. Identity can simultaneously suggest fundamental, unchanging qualities in collective or individual contexts and a dynamic, constructed nature in social and political actions (2000, pp. 6-8). Bulmer's definition of ethnicity, involving common ancestry and shared memories, highlights how these elements shape group identity along kinship, religion, language, and appearance (1999). This study assumes that groups, especially those defined by ethnicity, race, or nationality, may be perceived as having unique identities. However, this assumption does not mean that groups are highly homogeneous and have clear boundaries with members outside the group. The reason for this is that identities are not fixed and immutable. Secondly, similar to the classic Marxist view of class consciousness (Lukács, 1971, pp. 60-62), true class identities may be unrecognised by the individuals themselves,

meaning that individuals or groups may have identities they are unaware of, which can be discovered or changed.

Ethnic identities are just one type of collective affiliation that people hold. Different types of collective identities, including ethnic, local, national, and supranational, interact and affect each other in the context of globalisation. Individuals often simultaneously belong to regional, national, and sometimes supranational communities. This diversity of identities historically was seen as a contradiction to each other. For example, it was argued in EU studies that European and national identities were inherently opposed. A stronger national identity often correlates with lower support for the EU (Carey, 2002, p. 407). The thought was that for European integration to succeed culturally, national loyalties needed to diminish. However, more recent research from scholars like Díez Medrano, Gutiérrez, and Bonikowski and Gheihman (Díez Medrano and Gutiérrez, 2001, p. 753; Bonikowski and Gheihman, 2015, p. 311) have found that European and national identities can coexist and even mutually reinforce each other, especially among the educated and cosmopolitan segments of the population. This suggests that identities are no longer confined to traditional national boundaries but are influenced by a broader, more interconnected world.

6.4 Ethnic Identities Among Japanese Brazilians

6.4.1 Group 1: I feel I am totally Brazilian

Of the 31 second-generation respondents, 9 (29%) responded in a way that could be categorised as considering themselves to be Brazilians in Japanese society.

The common characteristic among these interviewees is that all of their grandparents were Japanese, and their parents included one Brazilian and one ethnic Japanese. This results in often distinguishable physical features that set them apart from indigenous Japanese, which strongly correlates with their ethnic identity, a relationship often acknowledged by the interviewees. For example, Iwai is 39 years old, married, and has no religious affiliation. He began working in a factory after finishing junior high school and continues in the same job. He speaks fluent Japanese but still identifies as fully Brazilian. He shared, “I think I am fluent in Japanese, but I am not considered native. I work very hard every day just to meet the basics of life. I never thought about acquiring Japanese citizenship. When I was young, I felt I lost many opportunities because I wasn’t Japanese. But now I feel it’s meaningless.

Japanese people see me as a ‘Gaijin’ (foreigner) because of my appearance, and sometimes I’m considered like a ‘threat’. This is annoying. I feel 100% Brazilian now. Acquiring citizenship won’t change the fact that they see me as ‘Gaijin’. No one will think I’m Japanese because of my appearance.” Similarly, Mogi, who identifies herself as Brazilian, mentioned she doesn’t look Japanese and has a different skin colour. Her dream is to become an international model, and thus, she thinks being Japanese is not her main goal. Other interviewees echoed these sentiments. Marino, who considers himself 90% Brazilian, recounted several verbal and physical bullying and being told to ‘get back to your own country’. Instances of exclusion due to appearance have been reported multiple times in the field. For example, during my stay at Komiya’s home, she appeared very upset during dinner one evening. When I inquired about her mood, she recounted an incident in the park that had left her upset and sad. She said: ‘We were in the park, and some kids were petting a dog. My son wanted to join, but as soon as the owner saw us, they called the dog back and quickly left with a disgusted expression. It felt like they thought we had frightened their dog. I felt very sad because other kids were allowed to pet the dog, but when we approached, their attitude changed. I felt it was because of our appearance, and they knew I was a foreigner.’ Such daily experiences significantly shape Komiya’s strong sense of Brazilian identity. These narratives illustrate despite their deep connections to Japan, the experience of being seen as outsiders in Japan was ever-present and shaped their ethnic identity.

Beyond the influence of physical appearance on ethnic identity, the following analysis will illustrate how general co-ethnic practices, language use and social interactions, and attitudes towards Japanese social norms collectively reveal the meaning of the Brazilian identity of the interviewees in Japan.

The nine respondents consistently expressed a stronger Brazilian identity in private settings regarding general co-ethnic practices. This was particularly evident in their preference for speaking Portuguese at home and socialising primarily with Brazilian friends. For instance, Pereira (24, born in Japan, father of Brazilian descent, mother of Japanese descent, no religious affiliation) stated, ‘I feel more comfortable speaking Portuguese than Japanese. At home, I only speak Portuguese.’ He further remarked, ‘I have more Brazilian friends than Japanese friends. A lot of my friends are from Brazil, so I didn’t grow up in a predominantly Japanese environment. I’m more outgoing and talkative, which I think is more characteristic of Brazilian culture.’ These reflections highlight how language acts as a cornerstone of their

ethnic identity. Such private spaces allow them to uphold cultural practices, reinforcing their connection to Brazil despite being physically distant. Marino shared a different experience, noting differences between social environments in Gunma and Nagano. While he mentioned having only workmates in Gunma, he maintained some friendships with Japanese individuals in Nagano. When asked about his opinions on living in Japan, he commented on regional variations, 'Instances of xenophobia persist among some Japanese individuals. They don't like foreign people. This is very characteristic of Gunma because other cities are more friendly to foreigners.'

This pattern of maintaining strong ties with the Brazilian community was present in all nine interviewees, except for Iwai, who frequently participated in Japanese gatherings due to his Japanese wife. Pereira shared an example of cultural habits, saying, 'I like to hug people, which is uncommon in Japan.' Despite considering Brazil his home, he acknowledged that living in Japan is easier for him, so he has yet to make a plan to move to Brazil. From my observations, my landlady, Komiya, rarely watches Japanese TV programs, preferring Brazilian ones. She also does not attend Japanese-organised parties but celebrates Japanese New Year and birthdays with Brazilian friends, enjoying Brazilian rather than traditional Japanese food. The interviewees had rarely if ever, been to Brazil, with only Kudou, Marino, and Mogi having made family visits or travelled there. Other respondents had not returned to Brazil since arriving in Japan before the age of seven. Their memories of Brazil remain as children.

Language is also crucial to understanding their Brazilian identity. While some, like Mogi and Pereira, Marino and Iwai, are fluent in Japanese due to their education in Japanese schools, they still heavily rely on Portuguese in their personal lives. This duality means that while they deal with public and professional spheres proficiently in Japanese, their private lives are steeped in Brazilian culture. Pereira expressed frustration, noting, 'Sometimes my bosses treat me as if I don't speak Japanese well, which really annoys me'. Marino feels that his Japanese is fluent but not native, so the biggest challenge he faces in Japan is the language issue.

The other five interviewees' Japanese language skills are pretty basic. As a result, they live in cities with large Brazilian communities where they can access essential Brazilian institutions and facilities, creating a Brazilian enclave within Japan. Their daily lives, work, and

education revolve around this Brazilian bubble. This group of respondents seems to occupy a unique position, marginalised by both Japan and Brazil. On the one hand, their limited proficiency in Japanese acts as a barrier, preventing them from smoothly integrating into mainstream Japanese public and professional life. This struggle amplifies their sense of Brazilian identity, as they frequently encounter experiences where Japanese individuals perceive them as outsiders or fail to accept them entirely. Conversely, their ties to Brazil are somewhat tenuous. While they staunchly claim to maintain Brazilian cultural traditions, the reality is that they have yet to live in Brazil for an extended period, and none have plans to return. Their connection to their 'homeland' is more nostalgic than practical, rooted in cultural practices rather than lived experience.

Chiba candidly said, 'I consider my Japanese quite low. I speak maybe 30 to 40% Japanese. I can manage everyday tasks like visiting the city hall or the doctor. However, for more specific situations, I hire a translator to help me. Normally, I can get by with my basic Japanese.' Chiba has worked exclusively in Brazilian-related businesses for the past three years. Although she doesn't send money back to Brazil, she has visited Brazil four times in total, mostly as a child. She has many Brazilian friends in Japan but only one Brazilian friend in Brazil. The following section analyses the experiences of individuals identifying as 'Half', further confirming and illustrating this phenomenon. Due to the long-term residence of second-generation Japanese Brazilians in Japan and their partial assimilation into Japanese norms, they often struggle to fully identify with Brazilians living in Brazil. When they visit Brazil, their experiences can tingle with a sense of otherness, as they have adapted to some Japanese ways and might not share the same experiences as their peers who remained in Brazil.

When it comes to Japanese norms, attitudes within this group are mixed. Some embrace these norms, like Marino (29, married, Christian, father Brazilian), who appreciates the safety and order brought by strict Japanese rules. He mentioned: 'Japan's many rules contribute to its safety. Some rules are annoying, but they maintain the country's safety.' While others criticise the conservative aspects and rigid hierarchical relationships of Japanese society. Adachi's comments on the submissive nature of Japanese work culture highlight a significant cultural clash. He notes, 'In Brazil, we don't necessarily respect someone just because they are a boss. Respect comes more from an equal footing,' indicating that he sees himself as

more Brazilian, as he associates hierarchical structures with Japanese characteristics, whereas he prefers egalitarian interactions as a Brazilian.

Komiya (33, married, no religious affiliation, mother of Brazilian descent) has a strong sense of belonging to Brazil, which she says stems from Japanese cultural norms, particularly those related to employment. Employment practices in Japan, especially for women with child responsibilities, are strict and often ruthless, which marginalised people like her. Her repeated job dismissals due to family emergencies reflect a lack of support and flexibility for working mothers in Japan. The rigid work culture she experienced exacerbates her feeling of being a mere 'tool,' valued only when she can conform to the ideal employee model: 'as long as you are young (under 30), childless, can drive, and speak Japanese, you can find a job here.' Now past that age and feeling the physical toll of having two childbirths, she often struggles with physical discomfort just to make it to work. Despite her dedication, she frequently faces dismissal because she must handle sudden emergencies at her child's kindergarten or take leave when her children are sick. This often results in her being bluntly told, 'Don't come in tomorrow.' Her strong Brazilian identity acts as a wellspring of resilience and self-worth amid these challenges. Growing up feeling unique and special has instilled in her a sense of pride and identity that Japanese society does not value. She feels she is Brazilian at heart but lives in a society that doesn't fully accept her.

In summary, a recurring theme in this group is the respondents' struggle and conflict with a sense of belonging. They still consider Brazil their true home, showing that their sense of belonging is still intricately tied to their ethnic identity. This sentiment is intensified by their social interactions and experiences of exclusion or xenophobia. The inability to form deep relationships with Japanese people further alienates them, keeping them within their co-ethnic social bubble. In practice, however, returning to Brazil is not a feasible option for most of them. Practical realities such as economic stability, established lives in Japan, and the challenges of adjusting to life in Brazil, a country they have never really lived in, make the idea of returning to Brazil seem unattainable. This conflict between identity and reality results in a group of people remaining in Japan, navigating a life that straddles two cultures yet entirely belongs to neither.

6.4.2 Group 2: I feel I am 'Half'

11 of the 31 respondents (36%) categorised their self-identity as 'half Japanese and half Brazilian'. This section explores what this type of ethnic identity means to them.

Many respondents in this group articulate a sense of belonging tied to specific locales and childhood memories rather than to the broader national identity of Japan. For instance, Morita (27, unmarried, culturally inclined toward Buddhism, mother of Brazilian descent) said, 'I have a sense of belonging, mainly to Gunma prefecture, which is where I used to live when I was a kid.' This highlights the importance of the local community and local authority in fostering integration and a sense of belonging. Another respondent, Mukai (26, unmarried, Christian, father of Japanese descent), explained how appearance could have a complex effect on integration. 'When I'm walking around, people think I am Japanese ... But, I don't feel personally fully identify myself with Japan. I think I belong more to the city I grew up, and my parents live.' While Mukai identified herself as 'half', the superficial acceptance people experience based on appearance is also observed in some respondents who feel themselves as 'both Japanese and Brazilians'. Kurokawa identifies himself as 'both Japanese and Brazilian', and from his observations, 'it appears that being mixed with Japanese heritage can sometimes result in more favourable treatment compared to other ethnic background individuals.' He thinks this can be good and bad because 'people might have certain assumptions about my language abilities or cultural knowledge', which he indicates is challenging for him. Whereas this 'Japanese-like appearance' was mentioned as undoubtedly a contributing factor to the interviewees' feeling of acceptance in Japanese society, it was other factors that led individuals to develop different ethnic identities as 'half' like Mukai or 'double' as Kurokawa. Kurokawa adds that 'as for my personal experience, I don't think that having a Japanese face had a huge impact. My education, language, and work experience have a more important role in my life.' ... 'Japanese people were generally friendly and polite to me.'

In this group, challenges to integration also emerge prominently. Respondents reflect on societal resistance to real integration. Mukai thinks Japan is a perfect world, and everything is so convenient only when you are a tourist or a consumer. But when you want to actually live here, as a foreigner, the difficulties are just too much. Similar interpretative repertoires exist in interviews with Morita and Hirata. Hirata thinks that the Japanese do not want or like a Brazilian who comes to work with the intention of living here forever. Therefore, they

believe that Japanese Brazilians are seen as a temporary presence, a conditional acceptance. Japanese society has no plan for permanent acceptance of multiculturalism or integration. In the face of social pressure to assimilate, this group of respondents had their own coping mechanisms, with some choosing self-accepting and others adapting to Japanese societal norms to avoid trouble. Kamiya chose the former, so she eventually embraced her identity after trying to fit into Japanese norms: 'When I was younger, I tried a lot to do makeup. Then I stopped and just accepted myself better as myself, half Japanese, half Brazilian.' This journey towards self-acceptance helps her realise there is no need to conform to external expectations in all aspects. In contrast, Kawachi chose to adapt herself to better align with Japanese social norms. She said: 'When I was young, I had some problems because of dressing and behaving not like a Japanese.' She describes her younger age as too 'naive' because she 'didn't realise that the way they (Japanese) looked at me was a judgment.' Now, she has changed because 'the Japanese think that they are different from us, and if I continue to do things in my way, they will feel that we don't respect them.' She highlights these changes make her follow the 'conservative thinking of the Japanese society', not because she really wants to, but because 'she has no choice.' Kawachi further explains her approach to raising her children with a more 'open-minded' perspective: 'I will still teach my children how to speak English and Portuguese so that they may grow up with a more open mind, communicate with more people, and learn different cultures by reading Brazilian poetry and books, not just from Japanese society.' Kawachi is proud of herself for being 'half', and she hopes that her children will become 'good people' in Japanese society, but she does not want her and her children to lose the excellent parts of Brazilian culture.

In terms of language and social networks, the salient feature of these 11 respondents was the use of Portuguese at home, either because their parents were not proficient in Japanese or because their parents did not want them to give up their Portuguese language skills. This highlights the direct impact of the Portuguese as a symbol of their Brazilian identity. For example, Morita says, 'I feel that I am part of Japan for sure.' But he also adds the influence of language in shaping his integration feeling: 'At home, I use Portuguese when talking to my mum. She always reminds me that I am Brazilian, not Japanese. When I was outside, I was considered different from other Japanese.' This typical interpretative repertoire can also be visualised in Silva's speaking: 'In my family, we have a rule: at school, I speak Japanese; at home. I speak Portuguese. We have this rule because my mum said that my brother and I started to speak Japanese together. So my mum was worried that we would forget

Portuguese.’ Some respondents, including Morita in this group, have good Japanese speaking skills, ‘I can speak and understand (Japanese), but I have difficulties writing and reading. Portuguese is my native language.’ Some more respondents in this group considered their Japanese to be at a more basic level. This ability to speak Portuguese as a mother tongue and Japanese as a second language was important for these interviewees’ self-perceived sense of partial integration into Japanese society, as well as for the maintenance of Brazilian cultural practices in the family. The importance of language skills is also reflected in their ability to browse Japanese and Brazilian media and social networks. Without sufficient proficiency in Japanese, there are often challenges in gathering information that is relevant to their lives, as evidenced by difficulties in gathering information on further education, greater reliance on dispatch companies for employment, and frequent visits to hospitals with Brazilian interpreters. Therefore, many interviewees pointed out that Japan should provide more support in languages such as English or Japanese.

In addition to the endeavour to preserve Brazilian traditions at home, the interviewees all acknowledged that when people come to Japan, they have to respect the Japanese way of life and their laws. Interviewees usually associated personal expressions of politeness, introversion, individualism, and respect for elders with Japanese culture and traits such as openness, friendliness, helpfulness, caring, extroversion, talkativeness, and warmth with Brazilian culture. For example, Mukai feels ‘half’ because sometimes she feels Japanese, and sometimes she feels Brazilian, and she said, ‘Some of my values are Japanese, maybe I wasn’t even aware of them, such as being polite or trying to respect elders. It’s something I had in my subconscious, and I think it comes from my Japanese part. Also, being Brazilian is about warmth and the connection I have with people.’ Morinaga thinks ‘our Brazilian culture and habits are more open, friendly and warm to people.’ They think the way of establishing and maintaining relationships with people is different in Japan.

When the respondents were asked about their attitudes towards Japanese culture and social norms, the results showed that this group of respondents mostly limited their retention of co-ethnic customs to within the family and in terms of building friendships with more Brazilians. However, the personal desire to retain both cultures and the reality of not being able to balance this desire for two identities largely contributed to their perception of not being fully Japanese, not belonging fully to Japan, or half belonging to Japan. Respondents’ appreciation of Brazilian cultural values and the relative perception of Japan as more rigid appeared

several times. Sugiyama (30, married, naturalised Japanese citizen, mother of Brazilian descent, no religious affiliation) said, 'I felt it's very important to understand both cultures', but 'I always knew I was not Japanese because they learned everything about Japan at home first.' Despite being able to study at school, she felt that cultural differences still existed, especially when the interviewee completed their education in a Brazilian school in Japan. Therefore, Sugiyama concludes that she is 'half-half'. She thinks that even though she was born in Japan, it doesn't matter. Her mixed heritage predetermined her to not be 100% Japanese, so she thought she 'would never be a Japanese'.

In short, individuals in this category tend to have grown up in two cultural environments. They often maintain close friendships with Brazilians while also having more or less interactions with Japanese peers at school and colleagues in the workplace. Consequently, they tend to describe themselves as living in two worlds. Unlike respondents in the 'both' category in the next section, those in the 'half' category do not consider themselves to be fully Japanese. Instead, they identify as half-Japanese. When interacting with Japanese people, they often identify as Brazilian or half-Japanese to avoid causing offense or to avoid answering more challenging questions.

For those who are not fluent in Japanese, their sense of being 'half' Japanese and 'half' Brazilian is often tied to language. The belief that being unable to speak and write good Japanese precludes one from being considered Japanese is widely accepted within this group and, according to them, in Japanese society. Conversely, even those fluent in Japanese could still identify as 'half' due to immutable factors such as bloodline and appearance. Therefore, individuals in the 'half' category generally see themselves as unlikely to be fully accepted as Japanese.

There are two main strategies for coping with integration within this group. One approach involves striving for respect and acceptance in Japanese society as 'half'. The other strategy is to make changes where possible to better fit into the Japanese social norms.

When asked about their sense of belonging to Japan, responses varied in two ways. Some respondents developed a sense of belonging to the specific town where they grew up. Others had a relatively negative attitude, feeling they had no 'true' homeland or hometown, as they did not fully belong to either Japan or Brazil. Although many initially considered Brazil their

homeland during childhood, they realised they had never lived in Brazil, so they would be perceived as ‘Japanese’ when they actually returned to Brazil.

6.4.3 Group 3: I feel I belong to both Japan and Brazil

This section explores what dual ethnic identity means to the integration of second-generation Japanese Brazilians. 5 of the 31 respondents (16%) identified themselves as both Japanese and Brazilian.

Respondents in this group frequently reflected on the distinction between personality traits and cultural differences. For instance, Kurokawa (26, unmarried, mother of Brazilian descent, no religious affiliation) described himself as shy and quiet. As a child, he thought of himself as ‘purely Japanese’ due to these traits. Over time, he realised that being quiet and shy were aspects of his personality rather than his nationality. He noted that both Japan and Brazil have polite, family-oriented, introverted, and extroverted individuals. He believes his dual identity stems from the combination of his nationality (dual nationality), language skills (fluent in Japanese and Portuguese), and mostly positive experiences in Japan. He explained that the Japanese concepts of ‘uchi (inside)’ and ‘soto (outside)’ aptly describe his identity. His internal environment, such as his family, is more Japanese, whereas his external environment, including friendships, is more Brazilian. Thus, Japanese and Brazilian cultures are inseparable in his life, leading him to consider himself ‘double’.

Another interviewee, Yoshikawa (30, married, no religious affiliation, mother of Brazilian descent), stated that she combines Japanese manners with Brazilian ones. For example, she often hugs instead of bowing, prompting her Japanese friends to say, ‘Oh, you’re so Brazilian.’ She explained that this comment is positive because her friends appreciate her enthusiasm, even if they are too shy to hug on similar occasions. As we can see, this group of respondents also maintain Brazilian cultural practices, such as frequenting Brazilian restaurants and expressing love directly to family members, which they consider uncommon in Japanese culture.

In terms of language, this group of respondents is generally fluent in Japanese and uses it appropriately in the workplace. Though two respondents indicated occasionally not understanding complex or uncommon Kanji, with the ease of the internet and translation software, these hardly posed a challenge to their lives and work. Consequently, these

respondents showed fewer language dilemmas compared with the aforementioned two groups.

Yoshikawa encapsulated a common sentiment: 'I think Brazil is my hometown because my family and friends are there. But I also think Japan is my hometown because I grew up here and will continue to live here. Maybe I have two hometowns.' They see no point in integrating into only one culture. They accept that they may occasionally feel unwelcome in either culture but have become more aware and accepting of their dual identity. Yoshikawa said, 'I realised that I have both cultures. I now try not to think about which one I am but to accept that I have both.' This perception echoes the notion of 'bicultural identity integration,' where individuals perceive their two cultural identities as compatible and complementary rather than conflicting (Benet-Martínez and Haritatos, 2005). Such an integrative approach prompts a more adaptive sense of self, enhancing their overall well-being and cultural competence.

This group of respondents often expressed a balanced view of Japanese social norms, appreciating some aspects while criticising others. They showed adaptability in the face of pressure, valuing certain aspects of Japanese culture, believing that the comfort of life in Japan comes from its laws and regulations and that it is necessary to identify with these rules as Japanese people do. Miyamoto shared his experience receiving positive and negative feedback: 'sometimes I get comments that I am too loud or a bit rude, but my Japanese friends are interested in learning about Brazilian culture, such as music, dance, football, and language.' In general, both female and male respondents in this group made efforts to appear 'not like foreigners.' Kurokawa noted, 'I sometimes feel pressured to be Japanese, for example, in the way I dress and talk. When you look like a foreigner, people understand you're different. But they expect me to act more Japanese because I look Japanese.'

Criticisms also come from the Japanese work culture in this group. Kurokawa said: 'One of my least favourite things in Japan is related to work. For example, we have the right to paid holidays, but if you want to take eight days off, Japanese people think it's too much. They think it's embarrassing to ask for paid holidays. I get 10 or 15 days of holiday a year, but it's hard to actually ask for it because other people will judge you.' Oohashi (20, born in Japan to parents of Japanese descent, long-term resident visa holder, Christian) criticises the hierarchical nature of Japanese society by discussing how hierarchical relationships often

hinder discussions in schools and workplaces: ‘Students were afraid to discuss problems freely with teachers and shy to give wrong answers.’ In the workplace, ‘there is too much obedience to superiors and a lack of flexibility in thinking outside the written rules.’

These interviewees also noted problems similar to those faced by the two groups mentioned above. Yoshikawa expressed concerns about Japan’s slow adaptation to multiculturalism. She said, ‘with more foreign children in Japan, things are changing, but too slowly. Now, as I can see, there are a lot of multicultural slogans in many places. But still, if you have a foreigner’s face, it’s impossible for Japanese people to see you as Japanese. I have a lot of friends who are fluent in Japanese, and some of them are also Japanese in documents, but when they say they are Japanese, the Japanese people are shocked or hardly believe. Because they don’t know why, why are you Japanese? Some of them are very upset to hear my friends say they are Japanese.’ She gave examples to highlight the prejudices they often encounter: ‘Japanese people have two prejudices against foreigners: One is all foreigners speak English, but actually most Brazilians don’t speak English. Second, all foreigners don’t speak Japanese, but many do. I don’t face these problems because I look Japanese, but my mum does. So she deals with sometimes ridiculous situations daily because of these prejudices.’ Finally, she said that she would still maintain her own logic of thinking while adapting to Japanese society, for example, by adding the ‘Brazilian way’ to her interpersonal interactions instead of following the ‘cold’ way of always keeping people at a distance from each other. She calls her Brazilian side, keeping her ‘warm temperature’.

In summary, this group of respondents embraces a positive dual identity, incorporating elements of both Japanese and Brazilian cultures. Their bicultural identities are sustained through the ongoing negotiation between personal identity and social expectations. They maintain a balance between the two and respond flexibly to the challenges and benefits of their ‘double’ identity. They respect and adapt to Japanese norms while retaining aspects of their Brazilian cultural practices. Their sense of belonging is tied to both Japan and Brazil, emphasising the importance of understanding and appreciating both cultures.

6.4.4 Group 4: I feel I am Japanese

In this section, I analyse the responses of six individuals who consider themselves fully Japanese. They represent 19% of the 31 participants in this study.

Respondents in this group often describe a deep connection to Japanese culture and values. Tomita (19, no religious affiliation, both parents of Japanese descent) stated, 'I consider myself mostly Japanese because the Japanese culture and way of thinking are the main parts of me.' This feeling is also expressed by Okumura (22, no religious affiliation, both parents of Japanese descent). He noted, 'I think I am a Japanese person. Because I was born in Japan, I am Japanese in body and mind, and it has never changed.' Kawasaki said he couldn't tell if what he does daily is a Brazilian thing because he grew up immersed in Japanese culture. These statements highlight the influence of Japanese socialisation on their identities. The respondents have internalised Japanese cultural norms, which they see as integral to their self-identity. This internalisation is supported by their participation in Japanese institutions, such as schools and workplaces, which reinforce these cultural values. For instance, Tomita discussed her schooling experience: 'I went to a Brazilian school in Japan and then transferred to a Japanese public school and stayed there until I graduated from high school. Initially, my Japanese wasn't very good, but I liked studying, so I attended some extra training classes. I now attend a Japanese college through a correspondence system.' This educational trajectory reflects her adaptation and commitment to integrating into Japanese society.

Language proficiency plays a crucial role in shaping these respondents' identities. Tani (28, Japanese citizen, with a Japanese father and a mother of Brazilian descent, no religious affiliation) emphasised her fluency in Japanese and the limited use of Portuguese: 'Japanese is my mother tongue, I don't speak Portuguese, I know a little bit, but I don't understand a lot of times.' Tomita said: 'I first learnt to speak Portuguese as a child, but Japanese is the best language I speak.' Moreover, at the time of my interview with Furukawa, she was going through her father's funeral. As her father was of Brazilian nationality, all formalities and certificates had to be carried out through Brazilian officials. Assistance was sought from a friend who could write Portuguese as Furukawa only spoke basic Portuguese and faced challenges in communicating with lawyers and dealing with written documents. This proficiency in Japanese and lack of fluency in Portuguese further cements their identification with Japan.

An important point to note is that this group of respondents is proficient in Japanese. However, this proficiency does not mean they face no challenges in achieving native-level fluency. Instead, the challenges they encounter are not significant enough to undermine their

identification as Japanese. This finding is intriguing, as I initially assumed that these respondents would face no language-related difficulties. Therefore, it can be said that once Japanese proficiency reaches a certain level, even if it is not at a native level, individuals can still feel well-integrated into Japanese society. For instance, Tomita stated, ‘as a Brazilian growing up in Japan, my struggles mainly come from not knowing how to better use Japanese to adapt to university life. Even though I can speak Japanese now, sometimes it’s still a bit hard to follow in class.’ Similarly, Okumura mentioned, ‘I can’t remember anything special that makes me happy at school. I remember that at that time, I had trouble with complex Japanese kanji, hiragana, and so on. I also didn’t think about going to university because it costs a lot of money, and Japan has a wide range of job opportunities. Despite these difficulties, their ability to navigate Japanese society predominantly in Japanese strengthens their connection to Japan. These experiences illustrate that achieving a functional level of proficiency in Japanese, even if it falls short of native fluency, can significantly enhance one’s sense of belonging and integration within Japanese society. Their proficiency allows them to engage effectively in various aspects of daily life, reinforcing their identification with Japanese culture and society.

Respondents’ perceptions of Brazil and Japan also influenced their strong Japanese identity. All of these respondents indicated a preference for Japan’s stability and order in Japan, and often compared this to the disorganisation, challenging economic conditions, and crime in Brazil. Tomita noted, ‘I have always tried to be more Japanese because I have spent all my time in Japan and have been familiar with the life and culture. I am seeking Japanese citizenship because I want to continue to live in Japan. I like living in Japan.’ Okumura has Japanese citizenship. He said, ‘I consider Japan to be my home country; it’s where I was born and raised. And I want to live in Japan all the time because all my habits are Japanese.’ Similarly, Tani expressed her feelings about Brazil and Japan: ‘I have Japanese citizenship because my dad is Japanese. I am used to living in Japan, and it would be difficult for me to establish new contacts if I returned to Brazil because, so far, all the people I have network with have been Japanese.’ These narratives highlight the practical and emotional attachments that reinforce their Japanese identity. Their preference for Japan over Brazil reflects their experiences and the socio-economic advantages they perceive in Japan. Their limited direct experience of living in Brazil further distances them from their Brazilian heritage, making Japan the primary reference point for their identity. Additionally, Kawasaki discussed a common perception among these respondents about Brazil, associating it with an unsafe

social environment. Although he has not directly experienced these conditions, his belief is reinforced by his parents' accounts. This narrative is a key part of the interpretative repertoire in this group, shaping their understanding of their Brazilian heritage: 'Actually, I don't know much about Brazil. I have been studying, living, and working in Japan, so I naturally feel that I am Japanese. Sometimes, I really forget that I am Brazilian in terms of nationality. My parents always say that Brazil is not safe. They almost lost their lives before moving to Japan. One night, while they were sleeping, some people broke into their house. They had a dog that didn't bark because it had already been killed. They were awakened by the sound of a gunshot. My mom said she thought she was dreaming until they were actually tied up. Those guys took everything valuable: money, a very expensive camera, and all their belongings. It was Christmas Eve, and that experience brought them huge, endless fear. They later decided to leave Brazil and never wanted to go back.'

When discussing the challenges of living in Japan, this group of interviewees often expresses frustration at not being recognised as Japanese. This frustration is understandable, given their efforts to embrace and pursue a Japanese identity. Tomita articulated this sentiment by stating, 'Because of my background, I sometimes feel different from the people around me, so I've decided that I'm not that different from those around me. I subconsciously want people to think I'm not that different.'

These interviewees also mentioned experiencing incidents of bullying during their childhood, similar to the experiences described by interviewees in the other three groups. However, their strong identification with being Japanese was not eroded by these experiences. A crucial factor in maintaining their strong Japanese identity is their improvement in language skills, maturity, and adaptation to Japanese cultural traits. As they grew older, these instances of bullying or being offended became less frequent or even incidental. Furukawa recounted her experience of being bullied when her Japanese language skills were still developing: 'They said I was a foreigner. Asked me why I came here. Because they always bullied me, I made all kinds of excuses not to go to school.' Now, as a mother of two kids, she reflects, 'After primary school, I started to see myself as Japanese because all my friends were Japanese and everything I did a Japanese person would also do.' Similarly, Tani shared her feelings about her Japanese identity: 'I would feel a bit sad if I was not seen as Japanese. I also don't have anything to say about common customary behaviours or opinions originating from Brazilian culture. However, my name is still Portuguese, and sometimes I was treated differently

because of my katakana name. Other than that, I can do everything reaching Japanese standards.’

All in all, this group of respondents shows a strong Japanese identity. In terms of co-ethnic practices, their Japanese identity means they adopt Japanese cultural norms as their primary framework for behaviour while retaining certain aspects of Brazilian customs to a lesser extent. In terms of language and social networks, this group of individuals is fluent in Japanese, or at least Japanese language skills do not pose a significant challenge for them in their studies or professional lives. Their social networks are predominantly composed of Japanese friends, further reinforcing their integration into Japanese society. Finally, their attitude towards Japanese norms is based on respect, consciousness, and positive adaptation. They strive to align themselves with Japanese societal expectations while also maintaining a reflective stance towards certain controversial work norms.

6.5 Conclusion

The empirical findings of this chapter illustrated the formation of four major types of ethnic identities among second-generation Japanese Brazilians: those who predominantly identified as Brazilian, those who felt half-Japanese and half-Brazilian, those who identified as both Japanese and Brazilian, and those who fully identified as Japanese. The analysis employed interpretative repertoires frequently used by the respondents to explain how they negotiated and constructed their identities through general Brazilian co-ethnic practices, language and social networks, and attitudes towards cultural and societal norms in Japan. This revealed the meanings behind the respondents’ expressions of identity.

By understanding these identity expressions, the chapter identified factors that influenced the formation of ethnic identity, including understanding Japanese mainstream cultural narratives, citizenship status, language proficiency, and both positive and negative experiences in Japan. Additionally, the chapter demonstrated that different ethnic identities reflected how individuals perceived their integration process.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This study examined the integration experiences of second-generation Japanese Brazilians within Japan, revealing how legal-political, socio-economic, and cultural factors shape their

sense of belonging in a society that values ethnonational homogeneity. By focusing on legal-political policies, socio-economic realities, and cultural expectations, this thesis has provided a comprehensive account of the authenticity facing these individuals as they navigate a society that values Japanese ancestry yet often resists their full inclusion.

Japan is a nation that continues to uphold an entrenched notion of a culturally and ethnically homogeneous society. Despite facing increasing demographic pressures, including population ageing and a shrinking workforce, the government remains committed to unsustainable population self-regulation strategies alongside assimilationist and exclusionary migration policies. As of November 2024, Japan's birth rate remains significantly below the replacement level. According to the latest data released by the Statistics Bureau of Japan in 2024, the nation's total population stands at approximately 123.79 million, marking a decline of around 560,000 compared to the same period in the previous year. Demographically, individuals aged 15 and under account for only 11.3% of the population, while those aged 65 and over constitute approximately 29.3%, highlighting the nature of Japan's demographic imbalance. Research by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (2020) projects that, if current trends continue, Japan's population will fall below 100 million by 2056. The working-age population is expected to decline further, while the proportion of those aged 65 and above will increase, presenting potentially severe challenges for the nation's social security system and overall economic stability.

At present, Japan has not adopted a strategy of creating 'new Japanese' through the integration of foreign residents. In response to labour shortages in the 1990s, the Japanese government revised the Immigration Control Act and introduced the long-term resident visa, which allowed Nikkei migrants to live and work in Japan. Although framed as facilitating ethnic return, the policy has been widely regarded as a *de facto* guestworker programme (Sharpe, 2010; Koido, 2021). As Yamanaka (1993, p.79) notes, government documents prior to the 1989 reform emphasised preserving Japan's identity as a nation of 'one ethnic group, one language.' Nikkeijin were accepted because they were seen as relatives who could assimilate regardless of nationality. However, this assumption of ethno-cultural affinity ultimately masked the structural exclusions they faced in practice. In Japan, where racial discrimination is unconstitutional but not illegal, long-term residents classified as foreigners face significant barriers to integration. Assimilationist pressures and cultural expectations often lead to marginalisation. This reality not only challenges Japan's migration policies but

also provides a critical perspective for examining the intersections of race, migration, and social inclusion in a ‘homogeneous nation-state.’

This study contributes to migration and integration research on three levels: theoretical, methodological, and practical. From a theoretical perspective, it employs a multidimensional integration framework to reveal the dynamic and interconnected nature of integration, offering a complementary perspective to traditional one-dimensional and linear theories of integration. Methodologically, it prioritises semi-structured multilingual interviews, supported by contextual field-based observations, to address language and cultural barriers in cross-cultural research. While field observations provided supplementary insight into cultural behaviours and adaptive strategies, it was the interview data that served as the primary analytical material due to its structure, depth, and comparability across participants. This combined approach enhances the authenticity and reliability of the data and provides a valuable reference for future research in complex cultural contexts. Practically, the analysis of how Japanese society engages with the Japanese Brazilian community provides empirical support for more inclusive migration policies. The findings emphasise the importance of simplifying naturalisation processes, particularly for long-term residents, while implementing support measures in education and social services, particularly targeted language training and anti-discrimination legislation. Japan’s case offers a lens through which to understand the shared challenges faced by traditional nation-states in navigating multicultural integration in the context of globalisation.

This research argues that integration at the legal and political level—particularly the acquisition of Japanese citizenship—is a central determinant of second-generation Japanese Brazilians’ sense of belonging. The lack of citizenship not only limits access to educational planning and social welfare but also fosters feelings of exclusion and uncertainty. Citizenship emerges not merely as a legal status but as a powerful symbol of social inclusion and acceptance. Expressions of ethnic identity were also prominently observed in this study as a way for individuals to cope with social exclusion. Many respondents reconstructed their sense of belonging by reinforcing ties within their ethnic community and preserving cultural traditions. However, this defensive ethnic identity often served as both a coping mechanism against mainstream societal rejection and a barrier that deepened their separation from the majority society. The prevalent strategy of seeking cultural acceptance within the Brazilian

community in Japan has, in the long term, constrained their socio-economic opportunities, creating a dual challenge of cultural and economic exclusion.

7.1 Data Results: Key Insights on Multidimensional Integration

As established in Chapter Two, this thesis draws on a multidimensional approach to measure the objective indicators of integration, examining the legal-political, socio-economic, and cultural dimensions. This selection of these three dimensions stems from their correspondence to the three main entities involved in the integration process: the state, the market and the nation, providing a comprehensive understanding of integration by highlighting the interdependence of different dimensions in individuals' lives. Each dimension significantly impacts the others, emphasising that integration is a holistic process.

By complementing this main theoretical framework, especially the development of its subjective integration indicators, this thesis applies this framework in the Japanese context and addresses the main research question: To what extent are second-generation Brazilians of Japanese descent integrated or excluded from Japanese society? The results of the research revealed several important factors that influence the sense of integration of second-generation Japanese Brazilians: citizenship (Chapter 4), educational background and language acquisition (Chapter 5), and ethnic identity and appearance (Chapter 6).

7.1.1 The Legal-Political Dimension: The Foundational Role of Citizenship

In the legal-political dimension, citizenship status and related policies were selected as objective indicators to analyse how legal status and political rights affected the integration experiences of second-generation Japanese Brazilians. This study identifies citizenship as a foundational element in the integration process. The Japanese government's strict restrictions on 'permanent resident visas' and the high barriers to naturalisation directly impact the second generation by limiting their access to educational resources. This, in turn, prevents first-generation migrant families from planning for their children's long-term futures. Furthermore, the lack of citizenship creates direct barriers for second-generation Japanese Brazilians in areas such as employment and access to social services. The uncertainty stemming from their citizenship status not only restricts their socio-economic opportunities but also intensifies their struggles with identity and belonging, reinforcing the perception that 'Japanese society does not truly accept us.'

Specifically, on the one hand, legal and political integration provided a foundation for other forms of integration. However, a lack of citizenship hindered access to socio-economic opportunities and social acceptance. Moreover, the positive impact of citizenship as a factor in facilitating integration was often offset by negative experiences in other dimensions. In other words, even individuals who possessed citizenship did not necessarily have a strong sense of belonging or integration. On the other hand, integration in other dimensions influences the chances of obtaining citizenship.

Among the 31 second-generation Japanese Brazilians, with citizenship interviewed for this study, 3 out of 4 interviewees reported a strong sense of integration, while one individual felt weakly integrated. For those without citizenship, most (56%) felt weakly integrated. This indicated that a significant portion of non-citizens experienced challenges in feeling well-integrated due to the limitations in legal rights and the social acceptance that often accompanied non-citizen status.

The data clearly showed that citizenship was associated with a higher likelihood of feeling well-integrated. However, it also revealed that different dimensions of integration were interconnected. While legal and political integration acted as positive factors, individuals' socio-economic and cultural experiences significantly influenced their overall sense of integration. For example, nearly half of the non-citizens still managed to feel strongly integrated, which suggested that non-citizens might have had positive experiences in other areas, thus compensating for the unfavourable effects of the lack of citizenship. Moreover, the offsetting effect of negative experiences in other dimensions was evident, as one citizen did not feel strongly integrated. This indicated that legal status was just one piece of the integration puzzle and that challenges in other areas, particularly cultural acceptance in this case, could diminish the sense of integration even for those with citizenship.

7.1.2 Socio-economic Dimension: Dual Stratification in Education and Employment

The socio-economic dimension of integration has been extensively discussed in Chapter Five. In this dimension, language proficiency, education experience, type of employment, income levels and stability were selected as key indicators for examining feelings of integration. The results revealed significant disparities faced by second generations in the realm of education,

and the respondents' Japanese language proficiency was closely related to the type of school in which they were educated. Language and cultural differences have led many second generations to enrol in under-resourced Brazilian schools. While these private institutions provide a sense of cultural familiarity, they often lag behind mainstream Japanese schools in curriculum quality and support for further education. This educational division exacerbates the rigidity of socio-economic stratification. This marginalisation extends into the labour market, where many second generations are concentrated in the informal sector, characterised by low wages and precarious working conditions. Even those with long-term legal residency face substantial barriers to accessing high-paying jobs or entering the mainstream labour market. Such socio-economic marginalisation is not solely attributable to legal restrictions but is also reinforced by cultural stereotypes and biases.

Secondly, as discussed in Chapter Five, it became clear that while upward social and economic mobility, including access to higher education, was valued among second-generation Japanese Brazilians, it was not usually seen as the decisive factor for integrating into Japanese society. This is because, for many of them, educational or economic achievements did not necessarily mitigate discrimination and the perception of foreigners in Japan. These findings suggested that while economic and educational attainment could facilitate integration to some extent, equality in opportunities and treatment and the broader issue of cultural and social inclusion were more pivotal for many Japanese Brazilians, including first and second generations.

However, challenges in education and employment often reinforce cultural exclusion. For example, language barriers and resistance to assimilation limit the occupational opportunities of many Japanese Brazilians and exacerbate societal biases against them. Moreover, this study revealed a strong connection between Japanese language proficiency and the expression of ethnic identity, with varying levels of ethnic identification closely linked to the perceived strength of integration. Respondents fluent in Japanese were more likely to express a 'Japanese' or 'Double' identity, whereas those with only basic proficiency in Japanese rarely identified as 'Japanese' or 'Double'. These findings suggest that language acquisition plays a crucial role in mitigating negative experiences of discrimination and is essential for fostering a sense of belonging in Japanese society.

7.1.3 Cultural Integration: Ethnic Identity and Conditional Acceptance

In terms of cultural integration, Chapter Six explored how Japanese Brazilians navigate the balance between embracing Japanese culture and maintaining aspects of Brazilian heritage. The outcome of cultural integration was expressed through their ethnic identity. The findings revealed that the way ethnic identity was expressed reflected the individuals' perceived sense of integration into Japanese society. This sense of integration was largely built upon cultural competencies, particularly language proficiency, positive social participation, and knowledge of Japanese cultural norms. In addition to the significant influence of language on shaping ethnic identity, as discussed earlier, ethnic background also played a crucial role, particularly in how individuals perceived themselves and were perceived by others. Ethnic background, as frequently referenced by respondents, related to whether they possessed a 'Japanese appearance', which was associated with whether a respondent had one parent who was ethnically Brazilian or if both parents were ethnically Japanese. Participants frequently cited this factor as influencing their sense of identity, particularly referencing their physical appearance and how 'closely' it aligned with 'Japanese looks.' These observation results were closely tied to dominant cultural narratives in Japan, as discussed in Chapters One and Six. These narratives implied ethnic purity and visual conformity (Suzuki, 2003, p. 4), making it challenging for Japanese Brazilians to achieve a sense of acceptance within Japanese society, particularly if they did not conform to 'Japanese appearances'. Berry (1997, p. 10) argued that successful cultural integration involves maintaining one's original culture while also feeling accepted as part of the host society. Integration could only be successfully pursued when the host society was open and inclusive to cultural diversity and valued non-dominant groups' identities. However, in the context of second-generation Japanese Brazilians, the extent to which individuals felt they achieved cultural integration was often constrained by the rigid norms of Japanese culture, which included certain physical traits as markers of being 'Japanese'. In other words, individuals who were differentiated from settled society because of their physical characteristics had difficulty in seeking integration or completed assimilation in a society where ethnocentric prejudices remained strong and multicultural ideologies were not yet fully developed. Therefore, the second-generation Japanese Brazilians' cultural integration had internalised Japanese societal expectations and reflected by their corresponding ethnic identity to adapt these expectations strategically.

In this study, respondents' ethnic identity could be categorised into four main types, further divided into two groups. 'Japanese/Double' referred to respondents' positive attitudes towards the Japanese aspect of their ethnic identity. In this group, respondents believed that they felt more Japanese than Brazilian, or they could be identified as Japanese or Brazilian and had the flexibility to switch between Brazilian and Japanese identities depending on the social context.

The 'Brazilian' and 'Half' identities referred to Japanese Brazilian respondents who held a negative view of the Japanese aspect of their ethnic identity. Their sense of ethnicity was varied and complex. Some respondents felt that they either could not or did not want to be identified as Japanese, instead identifying more strongly as Brazilian. Others found it difficult to categorise their ethnic identity, feeling torn between two identities. They did not see themselves as fully Japanese in common sense or entirely Brazilian; thus, they considered it more appropriate to refer to themselves as 'Half'.

Chapter six showed the varying degrees of integration felt by individuals with different ethnic identities within Japan, suggesting a strong correlation between ethnic expression and the sense of belonging or integration into Japanese society. Therefore, in the cultural dimension, ethnic identity reflects personal integrated feelings and a sense of belonging. Those who identified as 'Japanese' or 'both Japanese and Brazilian' generally expressed a stronger sense of integration and acceptance into Japan than individuals who identified as 'Brazilian' or 'half Japanese and half Brazilian'.

These findings suggested that, in terms of cultural integration, a stronger identification with 'Japanese' or 'double' ethnic identity was associated with a greater sense of integration and acceptance in Japanese society, while those who identified more strongly with 'Brazilian' or 'half' identities tended to experience weaker feelings of belonging.

7.1.4 Social characteristics facilitating integration

This study also showed the inseparability of the various dimensions of integration in real-life scenarios, demonstrating that progress in one area often influences and is influenced by progress in others. For example, legal status significantly impacted socio-economic opportunities and cultural integration. This was evident in Chapters Four and Five, where some respondents reported that their lack of Japanese citizenship hindered their access to

equal employment opportunities. Others mentioned that their status as non-citizens led their families to constantly consider the possibility of returning to Brazil whilst they grew up, which influenced their educational choices such as opting for private Brazilian schools rather than mainstream Japanese schools. Moreover, integration related to socio-economic status, particularly through language acquisition and educational and work-related experiences, played a pivotal role in shaping ethnic identity for cultural integration and motivating individuals to participate in legal and political integration. The experiences within the Japanese and Brazilian educational systems were closely linked to Japanese language acquisition, with language proficiency (even if not at a native level) correlating with fewer and less severe negative experiences of discrimination. Language proficiency not only affected the likelihood of obtaining Japanese citizenship through naturalisation but also influenced the willingness and motivation to pursue it. Integration across different domains could superimpose to either promote a sense of belonging or hinder its establishment. This was evident when examining the interaction between language proficiency and ethnic background.

In sociological literature, the study of integration evolved from a linear perspective (Park and Burgess, 1921; Gordon, 1964; Stryker, 1980) to a recognition of its inherently complex and multi-dimensional nature (Esser, 2004; Ager and Strang, 2008; Castles et al., 2014; Garcés-Mascareñas and Penninx, 2016). The analytical framework of this study helps us to understand how the various dimensions of integration interacted dynamically, forming what can be metaphorically understood as a building named ‘sense of belonging.’ Just as a stable building requires all its bricks to be securely placed and aligned, the success of integration and the formation of a sense of belonging depended on the strength and interconnection of different ‘integration building blocks’.

This study proved that certain key factors (such as language skills, work adaptability and satisfaction, and legal status) could promote integration (Berry, 1997, p. 14). Participants who reported a stronger sense of integration often shared several social characteristics. These included holding Japanese citizenship, arriving in Japan at an early age, completing compulsory education within the Japanese school system, attaining fluency in Japanese, and developing a bicultural sense of self. Stable full-time employment and broader social networks also contributed to a positive sense of belonging. At the same time, it was noted that none of these factors was inherently more important than the others, thus furthering research

in this area. This study has shown that the extent to which these factors influenced each person's sense of integration could vary. Some respondents argued that obtaining citizenship and political voting rights were essential components of integration. Other respondents placed little importance on political rights, instead prioritising a sense of recognition and acceptance in daily social interactions and workplaces. Therefore, while respondents generally interpreted successful social integration as a sense of belonging to Japanese society, the forming and meaning of this sense of belonging varied according to personal experiences and perceptions.

Finally, although certain factors might take precedence over others depending on individuals' experiences, integration in one area did not necessarily mean success in another. Similarly, a lack of integration in one area did not automatically translate into a poor sense of integration in other areas. However, this study found that respondents who experienced clear exclusion or particularly negative experiences in any aspect of their lives consistently reported feeling a lack of integration into Japanese society. This finding suggests that while the prioritisation of integration factors may vary, significant barriers in any dimension can undermine the overall sense of belonging. This highlights the need for a holistic approach to understanding and facilitating integration.

7.2 Key Findings and Their Implications

Integration Outcome	Legal/Political		Socioeconomic		Cultural	
	Objective	Subjective	Objective	Subjective	Objective	Subjective
Brazilian	Unable to participate in Japanese politics; Have residency but not citizenship	Feel excluded from political and legal frameworks	Low-status, precarious jobs - often in dispatch; weak language skills	Feel unable to move up economically	Limited participation in Japanese culture	Feel excluded from Japanese society; Strong identification with Brazilian culture
Half-integrated	Majority have residency but not citizenship	Troubled by frequent visa renewals and insecurity	Completed compulsory education in Japanese or private Brazilian schools; Japanese language skills are often a barrier to social mobility	Struggles to achieve economic mobility	Limited participation in both cultures	Feel split between two identities, not fully accepted by either
Bicultural	Some hold Japanese citizenship	Believe citizenship is attainable	Usually educated in Japanese schools; typically completed at least high school; most work full-time rather than at dispatch companies; fluent in Japanese	Feel capable in work, study, and life in Japanese society; face fewer difficulties in the labour market	Actively participate in both Japanese and Brazilian culture	Maintain both cultures; feel adept at navigating both but are often seen as an outsider in Japanese society
Assimilation	Some hold Japanese citizenship	Believe citizenship is attainable	A significant portion still works in flexible jobs such as part-time or dispatch work; some work full-time	Hold a generally positive attitude toward employment and educational experience despite challenges	Fully embrace and assimilate into Japanese culture	Embrace Japanese identity; distance from Brazilian culture and values

Table 16: Four integration outcomes of the second generation of Japanese Brazilians

Aligned with the theoretical framework, table 16 summarises the empirical findings of this study, which show that there is significant diversity in the integration experiences of second-generation Japanese Brazilians. It provides the different integration outcomes, using both objective indicators (actual participation in the political, socioeconomic and cultural spheres) and subjective factors (psychological sense of belonging). By examining four different integration outcomes, namely feeling Brazilian (marginalisation), half-integrated (between separation and integration), bicultural (well-integrated) and Japanese (assimilation), the results revealed the progress and challenges of integration of second-generation Japanese Brazilians in Japan as well as the complex process of integration and identity negotiation. Each pathway uniquely reflects the intersections of legal, socioeconomic, and cultural dimensions, illustrating the diverse ways in which they navigate life in Japan.

The group identifying as Brazilian was primarily characterised by ‘marginalisation,’ with significant barriers to political inclusion, economic stability and cultural integration. Participants reported being trapped in precarious jobs with limited opportunities for upward mobility. Their lack of citizenship further compounded their sense of alienation. Cultural obstacles, including conditional acceptance based on appearance and language proficiency, exacerbated marginalisation, leading to a strong identification with Brazilian culture and a sense of exclusion in Japan. These findings revealed the structural barriers faced by non-citizens, largely driven by Japan’s racially motivated laws and measures and restrictive immigration policies.

In Japan, the barriers to integration are particularly high due to language proficiency expectations, legal obstacles to citizenship, and the societal pressure to conform to rigid cultural norms (Sugimoto, 2010). Marginalisation did not simply lead to passive disengagement from the host society but rather positively contributed to the reinforcement of minority cultural identities. This sense of belonging, which could not be acquired in Japan, was fostered by maintaining a connection with Brazilian culture and participating in cultural practices. As noted by Douglass and Roberts (2003), Japan’s strict immigration and naturalisation policies reflect a reluctance to accept multiculturalism, creating an environment where marginalised groups must rely on their ethnic identities for psychological and cultural support. This group of interviewees’ interpretation of integration thus challenged the assumption that immigrants either fully assimilated or remained marginalised. Their experience of marginalisation and exclusion from mainstream Japanese society paradoxically

empowered them to maintain and even strengthen their ties with Brazil. This trend showed that strict assimilation policies and mainstream resistance to diversity did not necessarily erode the ethnic identity of immigrants but, in some cases, solidified them as a source of identity and resistance to marginalisation.

Partial integration emerged as the most common pathway. This group generally held long-term or permanent residency, achieving a degree of socioeconomic stability, primarily in low-skilled labour markets. However, they remained excluded from formal legal and mainstream cultural domains. While their economic contributions were significant, they lacked broader social recognition, highlighting structural imbalances in their integration process. Educational barriers also played a critical role as most respondents reported limited opportunities for themselves and their children to access mainstream Japanese education, further perpetuating inequality. This half-integrated group, although more involved in Japanese society, continued to face legal and socioeconomic uncertainties. They skilfully navigated both Japanese and Brazilian cultural spheres, cultivating neither fully Japanese nor fully Brazilian identity. However, they remained in a marginal space between separation—maintaining their Brazilian culture—and marginalisation—being pressured to abandon it. For these individuals, integration was not a straightforward process of either fully assimilating into the host culture or maintaining complete allegiance to their culture of origin. Instead, they developed a sense of ‘in-betweenness,’ indicating that traditional models of migrant integration—which often assume a clear trajectory toward full assimilation or a balanced dual identity—may not universally capture the complexity of their experiences. This hybrid ‘half’ identity suggested that second-generation immigrants were navigating multiple cultural spheres yet did not fully identify with any of them. As a result, their sense of integration was generally weak, and they only felt accepted within the Brazilian community in Japan. However, this limited their opportunities for economic mobility, often compelling them to focus on physically demanding jobs with dispatch companies (commonly among younger male respondents) to earn higher wages or to engage in part-time work or light manufacturing jobs through dispatch companies (typically among female or older respondents).

These findings suggested that segmented assimilation in Japan was not primarily driven by economic marginalisation but rather by subtle forms of exclusion and the pressures of cultural conformity. Thus, while this group of respondents expressed a weaker sense of integration overall, this sense of insufficient integration did not come from lower

socioeconomic achievement. Despite comparable income levels to the Japanese salary man, those employed in temporary or contract-based positions lack job security and benefits, which reflects the distinctive challenges of integration in Japan's rigid social environment. For this 'half' group, mastery of the Japanese language often became a prerequisite for upward mobility and a sense of belonging. In contrast to the U.S., where segmented assimilation theory suggests that partial preservation of ethnic ties can foster social mobility through ethnic networks and social capital (Portes and Zhou, 1993), in Japan, ethnic embeddedness played a much smaller role in fostering social capital and access to resources. In summary, there was no rapid Japanisation of the Half group, and although ties to the ethnic community were maintained, this uniqueness did not manifest itself as an advantage in the integration process, possibly because ethnic embeddedness and social capital were very useful in linking people to people with substantial resources. However, they were much less useful in the case of groups that were generally deprived. High cultural expectations and inadequate language skills created a huge barrier to integration, even for this group of individuals who had the privilege of having long-term and permanent residency. The 'half identity' they cultivated was not bicultural, as they lacked the environment for selective acculturation.

The group that identified as 'double' faced fewer language barriers and less experience of discrimination. They successfully balanced their Japanese and Brazilian identities by creating spaces to preserve Brazilian cultural heritage while integrating into specific aspects of Japanese society. However, this balance often required significant personal effort and community support, resealing the limitations of institutional mechanisms for fostering cultural inclusion. Many in this group had the potential to gain citizenship compared to other Japanese Brazilians and maintained relatively stable employment, demonstrating greater integration into Japan's political and socioeconomic structures. Unlike the U.S., where mainstream norms exhibit a degree of dynamism and heterogeneity that allows for the symbolic acceptance of cultural diversity, even if deeper differences in language and behaviour are less readily accommodated (Alba and Nee, 2009, p. 141), Japan's social expectations were more rigid, which subtly undermined the acceptance of dual identities. Their Brazilian side in dual identities was less accepted by Japanese society, which was mentioned and internalised several times by the interviewees, who still faced subtle social exclusion, and still faced with societal expectations of conforming to assimilated Japanese culture. While this group achieved a high level of integration, their biculturalism was often

downplayed in public spaces, as they strategically minimised expressions of their Brazilian identity to navigate the challenges posed by Japan's cultural expectations. They developed a stronger sense of integration because the Brazilian aspect of their bicultural identity was deliberately hidden from active expression in their contact with Japanese society. Their success was rooted in their ability to align themselves with Japanese norms, rather than openly preserving their ethnic differences. Their Brazilian culture was more often displayed in contact with Brazilian friends, and they were limited to the private sphere only. They had a strong Japanese cultural competence and were therefore able to overcome the challenge of 'cultural expectations.' Their greater sense of integration and economic success stemmed not from asserting ethnic differences but from maintaining conformity with mainstream Japanese norms. Therefore, this group identifying as Double. However, despite having a higher sense of integration into Japan, their experiences also revealed that Japan's focus on cultural homogeneity remained a significant barrier to accepting dual identities and biculturalism.

Finally, assimilation was rare and predominantly occurred among Japanese Brazilians with specific advantages, such as fluency in Japanese or naturalisation. Even within this pathway, full acceptance by Japanese society remained conditional, as participants' social and cultural integration often required adherence to Japanese norms and the suppression of certain aspects of their Brazilian identity. This pressured form of assimilation raised questions about its sustainability and desirability as a pathway to integration.

The group identifying as Japanese, who had assimilated fully into Japanese society, demonstrated that full participation in political, economic, and cultural life was possible, but often at the expense of their Brazilian heritage. Assimilation frequently led to the erosion of original cultural identity. Interestingly, even among those who had assimilated, many had not obtained Japanese citizenship, highlighting the persistent barriers to political integration. Despite their full cultural assimilation and a strong sense of belonging to Japan, legal barriers still hindered them from obtaining full citizenship. Their experiences suggested that cultural expectations, such as fluency in the language and conformity to societal norms, were perceived as the primary determinants of integration in Japan. While legal and economic integration were important, they were seen as secondary by these individuals. This was evident in the fact that many had yet to acquire Japanese citizenship and often held flexible or non-permanent jobs, revealing a distinctive pattern of integration in Japan, where cultural assimilation is prioritised over other forms of inclusion.

7.3 Reflections on Researcher Positionality

As a researcher, my positionality inevitably shaped how I accessed, interpreted and represented the Japanese Brazilian community. As a Chinese immigrant, I shared certain experiences with Japanese Brazilians that helped me build rapport. However, by not being Japanese, Brazilian, or Japanese Brazilian, there were likely opportunities missed for understanding the nuances of their group cultures. One such example was my participation in their church activities. The church served as a cultural and social nexus for many community members. Yet, my lack of familiarity with Christian practice made it difficult to engage with the subtleties or interaction in that space fully. To compensate for this limitation, I attended multiple church services in Hamamatsu and Tokyo and held extended conversations with participants who identified as Christian to deepen my understanding. Nevertheless, a researcher with a shared religious background might have been better positioned to gain deeper insights into how the community organises its activities. Furthermore, understanding the role of peer-to-peer relationships within these spaces could offer valuable insight into whether such venues support integration or function as sites of cultural segregation.

Equally, someone who had studied in the Japanese-Brazilian private schooling system could have a greater knowledge of how students felt the experience impacted their integration.

I was primarily educated in China and later in Japanese and British universities.

The differences in compulsory education systems compared to China made it difficult for me to fully grasp their school experiences. This is because I lacked the lived experience of bicultural education that many participants navigated daily. It is possible that this unfamiliarity limited the depth of follow-up questions I was able to ask during interviews. As a Chinese student, my different cultural background may also have shaped how I understood their narratives, possibly limiting my grasp of certain subtleties.

My nationality, language, and cultural background may have positioned me as an outsider to their group, yet also provided a degree of distance that sometimes encouraged participants to speak more openly. I did not encounter overt reluctance or hostility from participants.

Rather, as mutual understanding deepened, some began to see me as a sympathetic listener rather than an external observer. I remained aware of how my Chinese identity might have influenced how some participants framed their narratives. This reflexivity

was embedded throughout the research process. For example, I kept field notes daily to track my assumptions and potential biases arising from my cultural perspective. Living with Japanese Brazilians assisted with this process, enabling me to further integrate into their community through shared spaces and religious activities. Nevertheless, it is possible that a Japanese-Brazilian researcher might have been able to find a wider range of perspectives and resources. Ultimately, by remaining reflexive and engaging in informal conversations with the community, I became confident my interviews could reflect the community's views sufficiently within the scope of this research project.

7.4 Contributions to the Literature

This study makes significant contributions to the field of migration research, offering new theoretical insights and empirical evidence that enhance existing understandings in the discipline. While research on immigration and integration has been extensive in Western countries, this thesis offered a distinctive study by combining multilingual interviews with contextual field-based observations to explore the experiences of second-generation Japanese Brazilians in Japan. This research contributed to an under-explored context both in terms of subject matter and methodology. It may be one of the few, if not the only, studies to situate interview-based discourse analysis within a field-informed framework to examine the multi-dimensional integration of second-generation Japanese Brazilians. In contrast to existing studies that often generalised immigrant populations, this research highlighted the significant diversity associated with ethnical background, generational status, educational background, and social class, thereby capturing a more comprehensive picture of the integration experience.

This study advances our theoretical understanding of integration processes by applying a dynamic interaction model of integration within a non-Western context. By adapting and extending existing integration literature, it provides a detailed examination of how integration operates in Japan, a nation where cultural conformity and ethnocentrism significantly influences integration experiences.

Unlike the linear integration models proposed in earlier studies, such as straight line assimilation models or segmented assimilation frameworks, which often treat legal, socioeconomic, and cultural factors as independent or static variables, this thesis conceptualised integration as a multi-directional process, characterised by significant

interdependencies across various dimensions. This comprehensive perspective illustrated how developments in one area could have ripple effects across other aspects of integration. Legal barriers, particularly restrictive naturalisation policies, directly contributed to the ‘othering’ of non-citizens, limiting their access to employment and social welfare while exacerbating socioeconomic exclusion. Conversely, socioeconomic challenges, such as unstable employment and limited access to education, entrenched cultural stereotypes of non-citizens as outsiders, further marginalising them. The absence of anti-discrimination legislation compounded these challenges, exposing non-citizens to systemic and everyday racism. This multidimensional and interrelated perspective can provide a deeper understanding of integration, particularly in societies characterised by pronounced structural barriers and cultural homogeneity.

The theoretical framework adopted here also highlighted the importance of subjective indicators and incorporated the socio-political, cultural, and economic dimensions unique to Japanese society. By moving beyond traditional, quantitatively-oriented integration frameworks, this approach investigated the role of Japan’s cultural norms and educational structures, aspects which had not been examined in this depth before.

Moreover, this study challenged the assumption that ‘ethnic returnees’ face fewer barriers to integration. Japanese Brazilians were not automatically perceived as cultural ‘insiders’ due to their ancestry. Instead, their challenges stemmed from Japanese society’s idealised and unrealistic expectations for ‘foreigners’ to assimilate into ‘Japanese’ society. Critiquing the notion of ‘return migration’ has led to growing scholarly scepticism about simplistic concepts of cultural proximity.

From an empirical perspective, this study provided qualitative evidence on how Japan’s exclusionary practices operate within integration processes. By documenting respondents’ lived experiences, the research revealed how systemic discrimination manifests in employment, education, and everyday social interactions. These findings deepen existing critiques of Japan’s homogeneous national narrative by offering concrete examples of how exclusion is institutionalised.

Another significant empirical contribution lies in the documentation of cultural defence mechanisms. Efforts by non-citizens and newly naturalised individuals to preserve their

cultural heritage through community activities such as Brazilian schools and festivals highlighted the resilience of cultural identity in the face of exclusion. This enriched the understanding of reactive ethnicity as a concept. Furthermore, this thesis demonstrated that integration was not solely an individual choice but also a response to societal perceptions and pressures. It offered new empirical insights into discourses on belonging and cultural identity, particularly within a setting where multiculturalism remained relatively underdeveloped.

Finally, the empirical data questioned the unconditional applicability of existing integration theories and models to non-Western societies. This research thus laid the groundwork for new sociological discussions and practical applications in the realm of immigration policy.

7.5 Policy Implications and Future Research Directions

The core findings of this study reveal the multidimensional challenges faced by new migrants, exemplified by Japanese Brazilians, in integrating into Japanese society. These challenges are intertwined with structural barriers related to legal, socioeconomic, and cultural factors, as well as the migrants' individual pathways and Japan's cultural expectations. Migration integration policies should aim to address these challenges holistically, considering several key factors, as illustrated by the pathway and dimension based policy recommendations in the table below.

First, differentiated support is essential. Due to varying backgrounds, migrant groups on different integration pathways face distinct challenges, necessitating policies that are targeted and flexible.

Second, given the interwoven nature of the dimensions of integration, single-dimension policies are unlikely to be effective. A systematic and comprehensive approach is required.

Third, addressing structural barriers faced by non-citizens and newly naturalised individuals in Japan necessitates comprehensive policy reform. Simplifying the naturalisation process is a critical step, as current requirements disproportionately exclude long-term residents. Introducing anti-discrimination legislation would provide much-needed legal protection, ensuring every individual can participate in society without fear of discrimination.

Finally, policies must be designed to dynamically adjust to changing socioeconomic conditions to support a sustainable integration process.

Dimension	Marginalisation	Partial Integration	Biculturalism	Assimilation
Legal and Political	Introduce anti-discrimination laws to protect residents against unfair treatment in employment, housing and education, fostering equitable societal participation. Provide free legal aid services to vulnerable families and individuals, ensuring awareness and defence of their rights when needed.	Simplify permanent residency and naturalisation procedures by reducing financial and administrative barriers to help 'half' integrated individuals move beyond unstable legal statuses, enhancing their sense of belonging and participation in Japanese society.	Promote political participation of ethnic minority communities, such as establishing local migrant representation mechanisms to enhance minority voices in policies and laws affecting their rights to strengthen bicultural individuals' recognition as full members of society.	Legislate to guarantee equal rights for naturalised citizens in civil liberties, social welfare, and political participation, addressing implicit discrimination and restrictions. Create platforms for naturalised citizens to engage in high-level societal affairs, such as policy advisory roles, enhancing inclusivity and diversity in governance.
Socio-Economic	Provide basic living support, including housing subsidies, medical coverage, and food assistance, to address immediate survival needs and reduce economic vulnerability. Launch foundational vocational training programmes targeting low-skilled sectors, facilitating transitions from informal to formal employment.	Expand social security provisions, including educational subsidies and transport support, to ensure economic stability and prevent regression into marginalisation. Develop cross-sector skill transfer programs, offering training and career counselling for low-skill workers, especially second-generation or younger migrants, to transition into higher-income sectors and industries with structural labour shortages.	Establish systems to recognise and certify foreign qualifications and skills, thereby increasing employment opportunities for ethnic minority communities. Provide incentives for businesses to hire diverse employees, such as through tax benefits and the promotion of inclusive hiring practices. Support entrepreneurship within these communities by offering management training, access to loans, and tax incentives, thereby creating pathways for economic independence and growth.	Promote multicultural economic activities by recognising and leveraging the diverse skills and perspectives of multicultural communities to drive innovation and economic growth. Regularly monitor and evaluate the outcomes of these activities to refine policies and ensure inclusivity. Encourage high-potential individuals from immigrant backgrounds to take on leadership roles in policymaking and community development, actively challenging stereotypes and fostering integration.
Cultural	Provide cultural adaptation courses and resources, including language instruction, social norms, and foundational cultural knowledge, to support ethnic minorities in adapting to Japanese culture. Facilitate community activities that encourage informal exchanges between Japanese and non-Japanese residents, fostering trust and basic social networks as a pathway to greater societal participation.	Provide funding for multicultural events and activities to help individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds build confidence and reduce cultural alienation. Establish platforms such as community cultural centres for dialogue, mutual learning, and the promotion of mutual cultural integration.	Integrate multicultural education into school curricula to reduce biases and foster tolerance among younger generations. Encourage cultural exchange programs that promote mutual appreciation and understanding among all members of society, irrespective of their backgrounds.	Offer psychological support and cultural counselling services to assist individuals facing identity challenges or cultural suppression, fostering mutual acceptance and inclusivity. Celebrate cultural diversity through national events, highlighting the contributions of multicultural communities to Japanese society.

Table 17: Policy recommendations based on pathways and dimensions

7.6 Rethinking Integration: Global Insights from the Japanese Case

Japan's immigration policies exemplify the challenges faced by nation-states with a strong emphasis on cultural homogeneity in the context of globalisation. While such policies may preserve cultural uniformity in the short term, they exacerbate social fragmentation over time. By positioning cultural purity as central to national identity, individuals with migrant backgrounds are economically indispensable but remain socially and culturally excluded. The case of this study highlights these issues, raising questions about the fairness and sustainability of Japan's immigration policies. Against the backdrop of an ageing population and declining workforce, Japan urgently needs innovative policies to attract and integrate new and existing migrants. However, the restrictive nature of existing policies and the absence of a cohesive integration strategy undermines the potential contributions of 'new Japanese' in both economic and societal terms. This case study has implications not only for Japan but also for other nations characterised by a dominant cultural identity yet shaped by elements of underlying diversity.

The challenges of migration reception and integration policies are never unique to Japan. Charles Taylor's theory of the 'politics of recognition' highlights cultural recognition as the foundation of personal identity. Taylor's framework, however, reveals an underlying dilemma: How can the demand for the recognition of cultural diversity be reconciled with the requirement for social cohesion? The experiences of Western countries seem to demonstrate that multicultural policies are not without flaws. In 2011, former UK Prime Minister David Cameron criticised the doctrine of state multiculturalism, arguing that it led to community segregation and fostered extremism. He advocated for strengthening social cohesion through shared values (Cabinet Office et al., 2011). This 'post-multiculturalism' shift has also been observed in other European nations such as France. This trend reflects that when policies overly emphasise cultural differences while neglecting community building, they may inadvertently heighten social tensions. Similarly, in the United States and Canada, policies are being adjusted to address issues of ethnic segregation and identity conflicts.

The tension becomes more salient in cases like Japan, where policies emphasising cultural uniformity clash with the diverse realities of an increasingly globalised society. A comparison with western experiences suggests that, whether framed by Japan's narrative of

‘cultural homogeneity’ or the west’s ‘multiculturalism’, the underlying challenge often lies in addressing the tensions between diversity and unity, shaped by historical, cultural and political factors.

The shortcomings of multicultural policies do not imply that the principle of cultural recognition is fundamentally flawed. Likewise, narratives of a singular dominant national identity or coercive assimilation policies are ill-equipped to address the complexities of integration. A more viable approach combines the complementary strengths of multiculturalism and integration theories, emphasising the dual imperatives of recognising cultural diversity and fostering shared values through dynamic and reciprocal interaction among diverse groups.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the understanding of integration experiences within the specific context of Japanese Brazilians and also offers a theoretical framework with broader applicability to other societies where a single cultural identity predominates and strongly influences social norms and policies. Bridging empirical findings with theoretical discourse opens new pathways for comparative and quantitative studies to explore integration processes in diverse sociocultural settings. Future research could extend beyond Japan’s unique setting to test the applicability of this integration framework through cross-national comparisons, offering insights into how legal, socio-economic, and cultural factors intersect and interact within varying societal frameworks.

Finally, I conclude with a poignant quote from a Japanese activist interviewed during the fieldwork: “Japan has taken some steps towards multiculturalism, but the systemic barriers remain too high. Symbolic gestures are not enough—we need real change that ensures the recognition of foreigners as equals. The ‘wall’ between ‘them’ and ‘us’ is not only a physical divide in opportunities but also an emotional and psychological barrier. Yet, like any wall, it can be dismantled. Piece by piece, through innovative policy reform, honest cultural dialogue, and education, we can begin to break it down. True multicultural coexistence isn’t a lofty ideal or a hollow slogan. It’s a shared responsibility to build a society where every individual can belong and hope for a brighter future.”

Appendices

Appendix A: List of Interviewees

Second-generation Japanese Brazilians:

1. Kudou (6 September 2022)
2. Hirata (9 September 2022)
3. Miyamoto (15 September 2022)
4. Sugiyama (21 September 2022)
5. Furukawa (4 October 2022)
6. Chiba (8 October 2022)
7. Adachi (28 October 2022)
8. Aoyama (28 October 2022)
9. Komatsu (7 November 2022)
10. Kawasaki (13 December 2022)
11. Kamiya (21 December 2022)
12. Silva (22 December 2022)
13. Pereira (24 December 2022)
14. Oohashi (1 January 2023)
15. Marino (3 January 2023)
16. Morinaga (15 January 2023)
17. Hosoya (2 February 2023)
18. Kishida (20 February 2023)
19. Morita (4 March 2023)
20. Yoshikawa (6 March 2023)
21. Komiya (22 March 2023)
22. Okumura (28 March 2023)
23. Tomita (5 April 2023)
24. Tani (6 April 2023)
25. Kawachi (16 April 2023)
26. Mukai (16 April 2023)
27. Ogino (21 April 2023)
28. Mogi (1 May 2023)
29. Kurokawa (8 May 2023)
30. Iwai (16 May 2023)
31. Chaves (18 May 2023)

Appendix B: Questionnaires on Qualtrics before Interviews

People can think of themselves in various ways. For example, they may feel that they are members of various ethnic groups, such as ethnic Japanese/ ethnic Brazilians (etc.), and that they are part of the larger national society, such as Brazilian citizens. These questions are about how you think of yourself in this respect.

Japonês ou Brasileiro?

As pessoas podem pensar em si mesmas de várias maneiras. Por exemplo, elas podem sentir que são membros de vários grupos étnicos, como japoneses, brasileiros (etc.), e que fazem parte da sociedade nacional maior, como os cidadãos brasileiros. Estas perguntas são sobre como você pensa de si mesmo a este respeito.

人は自分のことをさまざまな形で考えることができます。例えば、日本人とブラジル人というように、様々な民族の一員であるとか、ブラジル国民というように、より大きな国家社会の一員であると感じることがあります。この質問は、このような観点から、あなたが自分自身をどのように考えているかということです。

Part One: How important do you think each of the following is for Brazilians of Japanese descent to <i>be accepted by Japanese society as 'real' Japanese</i> ?				
(1) Qual a importância de cada um dos seguintes aspectos para que os japoneses brasileiros sejam aceitos pela sociedade japonesa como japoneses "reais"?				
(1) 日系ブラジル人が日本社会で「本当の」日本人として受け入れられるために、次の各項目はどの程度重要ですか。				
1 Very important Muito importante 非常に重要	2 Important Importante 重要なこと	3 Not sure, Neutral Não tenho certeza, Neutro よくわからないニ ュートラル	4 Not very important Não muito importante あまり重要でない	5 Not important at all Não é nada importante 全然重要でない
① To have been born in Japan. ① Ter nascido no Japão ① 日本で生まれたこと				1 2 3 4 5
② Have a 'Japanese' face ② Ter um rosto "japonês" ② 日本人の顔を持っている				1 2 3 4 5
③ To have citizenship in Japan ③ Ter cidadania no Japão ③ 日本国籍を持っている				1 2 3 4 5
④ To have lived in Japan for most of your life ④ Ter vivido no Japão por a maior parte da vida de uma pessoa ④ 人生のほとんどを日本で過ごしたこと				1 2 3 4 5
⑤ To be able to speak Japanese ⑤ Capacidade de falar japonês ⑤ 日本語が話せるようになること				1 2 3 4 5
⑥ Understand and respect the political institutions and laws of Japan. ⑥ Compreender e respeitar as instituições políticas e as leis do Japão ⑥ 日本の政治制度や法律について理解し、尊重する				1 2 3 4 5
⑦ Have a Japanese boyfriend/husband or girlfriend/wife. ⑦ Ter um namorado/marido japonês ou uma namorada/espôsa japonesa ⑦ 日本人の彼氏・旦那、彼女・奥さんがいる				1 2 3 4 5
⑧ Have more interaction with native peers. ⑧ Ter mais interação com pares nativos (Japoneses) ⑧ ネイティブの仲間との交流が多い。				1 2 3 4 5
⑨ To live in a city which has supportive policies for immigrant integration.				1 2 3 4 5

⑨ Viver em uma cidade que tem políticas de apoio à integração dos imigrantes ⑨ 移民の統合を支援する政策がある都市に住むこと	
⑩ Personally have a feeling of belonging to Japan. ⑩ Pessoalmente, tenho um sentimento de pertencer ao Japão ⑩ 個人的に日本への帰属感を持っている	1 2 3 4 5
⑪ To be accepted by local communities as a member of Japanese society. ⑪ Ser aceito pelas comunidades locais como um membro da sociedade japonesa ⑪ 日本社会の一員として、地域コミュニティに受け入れられること	1 2 3 4 5
⑫ To gain a right to vote at the national or local level. ⑫ Obter o direito de voto em nível nacional ou local ⑫ 国や地方での選挙権を取得すること	1 2 3 4 5
⑬ Access to higher education and higher socioeconomic status ⑬ Acesso ao ensino superior e status socioeconômico superior ⑬ 高等教育へのアクセスと高い社会経済的地位	1 2 3 4 5
⑭ Be protected from racial/ethnic, religious, and nationality discrimination in all areas of life. ⑭ Ser protegido da discriminação racial/étnica, religiosa e de nacionalidade em todas as áreas da vida. ⑭ 生活のすべての領域において、人種・民族、宗教、国籍の差別から保護されること。	1 2 3 4 5

Part Two: How do you describe yourself ?				
(2) Como você descreve yourself ?				
あなたは自分をどのように評価しますか？				
1= Strongly agree Concordo plenamente 強くそう思う	2= Agree Concorde 同意	3= Neutral Neutro ニュートラル	4= Disagree Discordo 同意しない	5= Strongly disagree Discordo totalmente 全くの反対
① I am happy to be a Brazilian citizen. ① Estou feliz de ser um cidadão brasileiro. ① ブラジルの国民であることをうれしく思っています。				1 2 3 4 5
② I am proud of being a Brazilian citizen. ② Estou orgulhoso de ser um cidadão brasileiro. ② ブラジル国民であることを誇りに思う。				1 2 3 4 5
③ I feel that I am part of Japanese culture. ③ Eu sinto que faço parte da cultura japonesa. ③ 自分が日本の文化の一部であることを実感しています。				1 2 3 4 5
④ I feel that I am part of Brazilian culture. ④ Sinto que faço parte da cultura brasileira. ④ 私はブラジルの文化の一部であると感じています。				1 2 3 4 5
⑤ Learning Japanese languages makes Japanese Brazilians forget Brazilian cultural traditions.				1 2 3 4 5

⑤ O aprendizado da língua japonesa faz com que os japoneses brasileiros esqueçam as tradições culturais brasileiras. ⑤ 日本語を学ぶと、日系ブラジル人はブラジルの文化伝統を忘れてしまう。	
⑥ Nikkei Brazilians who come to Japan should change their behaviour to be more like mainstream Japanese. ⑥ Os nikkeis brasileiros que vêm ao Japão deveriam mudar seu comportamento para serem mais como os japoneses comuns. ⑥ 来日した日系ブラジル人はもっと日本人らしく振る舞うべきだ。	1 2 3 4 5
⑦ I prefer social activities which involve both Japanese members and Brazilian members. ⑦ Prefiro atividades sociais que envolvam tanto membros japoneses quanto brasileiros. ⑦ 日本人とブラジル人の両方が参加するような社会的活動を優先しています。	1 2 3 4 5
⑧ I don't feel accepted by Japanese citizens. ⑧ Eu não me sinto aceito pelos cidadãos japoneses. ⑧ 日本国民に受け入れられているとは思えない。	1 2 3 4 5
⑨ I have been teased or insulted because of my ethnic background. ⑨ Fui provocado ou insultado por causa de minha origem étnica. ⑨ 民族的な背景から、からかわれたり軽蔑されたりしたことがある。	1 2 3 4 5
⑩ I feel that Japan is a culturally and racially diverse society. ⑩ Eu sinto que o Japão é uma sociedade cultural e racialmente diversa. ⑩ 日本は文化的にも人種的にも多様な社会であると感じています。	1 2 3 4 5
⑪ Nikkei Brazilian immigrants who were born and raised in Japan should have the same rights as Japanese citizens. ⑪ Os imigrantes nikkei brasileiros nascidos e criados no Japão deveriam ter os mesmos direitos que os cidadãos japoneses. ⑪ 日本で生まれ育った日系ブラジル人は、日本国民と同じ権利を持つべきです。	1 2 3 4 5
⑫ If Nikkei Brazilian group want to keep their Brazilian culture in private life, they should not be asked to change. ⑫ Se o grupo nikkei brasileiro quer manter sua cultura brasileira na vida privada, não se deve pedir que eles mudem. ⑫ 日系ブラジル人グループが、私生活でブラジル文化を守りたいのであれば、変えることを要求されるべきではない。	1 2 3 4 5

Last Part: How much difficulty do you experience living in Japan in each of these areas?

(última parte) Quanta dificuldade você tem em viver no Japão em cada uma dessas áreas?

(最後)それぞれの分野で、日本での生活をどの程度困難だと感じていますか？

5 Extreme difficulty Extrema dificuldade 極度の困難	4 Great difficulty Grande dificuldade とっても難しい	3 Moderate difficulty Dificuldade moderada 難易度：中	2 Slight difficulty Ligeira dificuldade さほど難しくない	1 No difficulty Sem dificuldade 困難ではない
① Building and maintaining relationships with Japanese friends. ① Construir e manter relacionamentos com amigos japoneses. ① 日本人の友人との関係構築と維持。				1 2 3 4 5
② Managing my academic/work responsibilities. ② Gerenciar minhas responsabilidades acadêmicas/trabalho. ② 私の学術/仕事の責任を果たす。				1 2 3 4 5
③ Obtaining community services I require. ③ Obtenção de serviços comunitários que eu preciso. ③ 自分が必要とするコミュニティサービスを受けること。				1 2 3 4 5
④ Expressing my ideas to other students/work colleagues in a culturally appropriate manner. ④ Expressar minhas idéias a outros estudantes/colegas de trabalho de uma maneira culturalmente apropriada. ④ 自分の考えを文化的に適切な方法で他の学生 / 職場の同僚に表現する。				1 2 3 4 5
⑤ Dealing with the bureaucracy. ⑤ Lidar com a burocracia. ⑤ 官僚機構に関する事務を処理する。				1 2 3 4 5
⑥ Making myself understood. ⑥ Fazer-me entendido. ⑥ 自分の意見をわかってもらうこと。				1 2 3 4 5
⑦ Changing my behaviors to suit social norms, rules, attitudes, beliefs, and customs. ⑦ Mudar meu comportamento para adequá-lo às normas sociais, regras, atitudes, crenças e costumes. ⑦ 社会規範、ルール、態度、信念、習慣に合わせて自分の行為を変えること。				1 2 3 4 5
⑧ Worshipping to god. ⑧ Adoração a Deus. ⑧ 神への祈り。				1 2 3 4 5

⑨ Find a satisfying job.	1 2 3 4 5
⑨ Encontrar um trabalho satisfatório.	
⑨ 満足のいく仕事を見つける。	
⑩ Getting into high school/ university/ or higher education.	1 2 3 4 5
⑩ Entrar no ensino médio/ universitário/ ou superior.	
⑩ 高校 / 大学 / 高等教育への進学。	

Appendix C: Interview Guide

- 1-How old are you?
- 2-How old were you when you came to Japan from Brazil?
- 3- What is your visa status in Japan?
 - a. Long-term resident (定住者 Tei ju sha)
 - b. Permanent resident (永住者 Ei jyu sha)
 - c. Japanese nationality
 - d. Other: _____
- 4- Can you speak English? a. No b. Basic c. Fluent d. Native
 Can you speak Japanese? a. No b. Basic c. Fluent d. Native
 Can you speak Portuguese? a. No b. Basic c. Fluent d. Native
- 5- How do you perceive yourself?
 - a. I feel like a Brazilian
 - b. I feel I am Japanese
 - c. I feel half Japanese and half Brazilian
 - d. I feel that I am both Japanese and Brazilian
 - e. Other: _____
- 6- Regarding the previous question, why do you feel this way? Reasons?
 For example, since when, and for what reasons, did you start to feel Japanese or Brazilian?
- 7- In Japan, did you go to a Japanese school or a Brazilian school (primary and high school)?
 Would you like to share with me your happy/frustrating experience of studying in Japan?
- 8- Have you ever considered going to university? Why or why not?
- 9- What kind of work have you done in Japan since you graduated from school?
- 10- Do you want to be perceived as Japanese by others around you? Do you feel sad if you are not accepted as Japanese?
- 11- What common habits, behaviours or opinions do you have now that come from Brazilian culture? (These can be language and social media, religious beliefs, societal rules and norms, etc.)
- 12- Have you had any kind of troubles or struggles growing up in Japan as a Brazilian of Japanese descent (Nikkei)?
- 13- Do you consider Japan as your homeland? Why or why not?
- 14- Do you want to obtain Japanese citizenship? Why or why not?
- 15- Have you considered moving to Brazil in the future? Why or why not?

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