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Debora Hinderliter Ortloff

Christopher J. Frey

Bowling Green State University, [cjfrey@bgsu.edu](mailto:cjfrey@bgsu.edu)

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# Blood Relatives: Language, Immigration, and Education of Ethnic Returnees in Germany and Japan

DEBORA HINDERLITER ORTLOFF AND CHRISTOPHER J. FREY

## Introduction

Since 1989, large numbers of “ethnic returnees” have settled in Germany and Japan. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, 2.8 million *Aussiedler*, or ethnic German returnees, came to Germany from the former Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> In Japan, immigration reform driven by low-skill labor shortages induced nearly 300,000 *Nikkeijin*, or people of Japanese descent, to come from South America in the 1990s. This article analyzes the development of language education at the local and national level for the *Aussiedler* and *Nikkeijin* since 1989. In particular, we investigate how the policy makers and educators have problematized the returnees and in what ways discourses of national identity, citizenship, and belonging have (not) adapted to the slow integrations of the *Aussiedler* and *Nikkeijin* into the larger German and Japanese communities.

In both Germany and Japan, analysis of immigrant policies (rights, services, and protections for nonnationals) requires a brief discussion of both countries’ immigration policies. These countries’ immigration and citizenship policies have traditionally been based on *jus sanguinis*, the principle that one’s nationality at birth is the same as that of one’s biological parents. These boundaries of nationality and citizenship close the door to many long-term, non-national residents (such as the Turks in Germany and the Koreans in Japan) but create openings for “ethnic” immigrants whose ancestors may have left hundreds of years ago. One’s relationship to the nation is not spatial, but hereditary, an ontological category. In the case of Germany, Stefan Senders (2002, 88) points out that *jus sanguinis* reproduces the nation “in its own image” and by definition is a rejection of diversity. The return of large num-

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<sup>1</sup> Ethnic Germans from the regions east of Germany are called *Aussiedler* (repatriates), *Spätaussiedler* (late repatriates), or, if they were expelled under the Potsdam Accords, *Vertriebene* (expellees). The *Aussiedler* are those who returned between 1954 and 1993; the *Spätaussiedler* are those who arrived after 1993 legal reforms. However, *Aussiedler* will be used unless it is necessary to emphasize the legal difference. *Aussiedler* and *Spätaussiedler* are often referred to as Russian-Germans (*Russland-Deutsche*) or just Russians, since the majority of them come from the former Soviet Union.

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bers of *Aussiedler* and *Nikkeijin* to Germany and Japan, respectively, in the 1990s challenged the foundations of ethnic identity in both countries.

The development of language education policies for the returnees over the past 15 years also illustrates how national and local officials have problematized return migration and how notions of multiculturalism and national identity have evolved. Our analysis of these policies suggests that the comprehensive national policy framework in Germany has not resulted in substantially better outcomes for the *Aussiedler* than the local and nongovernmental implementation framework we found in Japan. Previous studies, in particular that of Betsy Brody (2002), have argued that the German model should be used as an example of positive government involvement. However, this ignores the persistent segregation the *Aussiedler* have experienced, and thus increased government support appears unlikely greatly to improve the situation of the *Nikkeijin*. Further, we will show that in the case of *Aussiedler* and the *Nikkeijin*, whose heritage are tied to the notion of Germanness and Japaneseness, respectively, the returnees' inability to speak their ancestral language is consistently offered as the primary reason for their lack of integration. Language deficits are the preoccupation of educational and government authorities in both countries, and consequently we posit that this narrow focus on language emerges as the premiere means of distancing the ethnic returnees from the "real" natives.

#### Literature Review

This comparative study of immigrant language education policy is framed within the broader theoretical discourses on citizenship, immigrant integration, and multiculturalism. Much like Germany and Japan, other countries have engaged in debates about immigration and citizenship. Denmark has passed recent reforms to its immigration policies, and the German Immigration Act of 2005 is modeled off an earlier Dutch law, which required language and culture classes. In both Germany and Japan, immigration policy is the sole purview of the federal government, whereas immigrant policy formation and implementation, especially in education, has generally been left to state and/or local governments. As we will see, this is changing in Germany, though the Japanese central government has resisted taking action in this arena.

Many authors have considered the challenge of immigrant language education and multiculturalism both in traditional immigrant nations (Ogbu 1978; Perlmann 1988) and in countries that have considered themselves homogeneous (Suarez-Orozco 1991; Senders 2002). In Germany, there is a large literature problematizing nationalism and exclusion in historical and contemporary terms (Brubaker 1992; Joppke 2000). Since unification, notions of citizenship and multiculturalism have been interrogated, but education is rarely discussed. The few notable exceptions consider textbook or

curricular representations of the nation, community development, or psychological perspectives (see Harris 1999; Dierkes 2003). These studies, however, do not explicitly examine immigrant education policies or practices. Case studies of immigrant education practice mainly focus on economic migrants, in particular Turkish-Germans (Hansen and Hornberg 1996; Horrocks and Kolinsky 1996). For example, Luchtenberg (2004) found that there is a strong emphasis on linguistic and religious differences as well as on the perceived unwillingness of immigrants to integrate. Carole Hahn's (1998) comparative study sheds light on student political attitudes and pedagogical style, and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) survey on civic education, led by Judith Torney-Purta (2002), reveals much about student learning across the participating countries. In Germany, for example, the country mean measuring positive attitudes toward immigrants was significantly lower than the international mean (Torney-Purta et al. 2001). The availability of the data for secondary analysis, including the less-often used teacher data, may produce more literature on teacher perceptions of citizenship education in Germany. Japan did not participate in the IEA study. Moreover, none of these studies looked specifically at the relationship between education and immigration policies.

In Japan, scholarship on multiculturalism has blossomed.<sup>2</sup> Research on *Nikkeijin* has focused on returnee identities (Tsuda 2002), integration issues (Roth 2002; Hamada 2005), Latin American children who return to their home countries after several years in Japan (Nakagawa 2000), and local immigrant policy (Watanabe 1995; Ikegami 2001). Most research on education has focused on the problems faced by the *Nikkeijin* and their host schools. Ōba Sachio and colleagues (1998) found that language and school culture were barriers to integration of young children but argued that kindergartens were generally accommodating to *Nikkeijin*. Ōta Haruo (2000) found that Japanese middle schools were sites of assimilationist pressures (*dōka asturyoku*) and deculturizing education (*datsu bunkaka kyōiku*) for non-Japanese students, a problem compounded by language problems and the examination pressures. Sekiguchi Tomoko (2003) found that assimilationist pressures were stronger for *Nikkeijin* who identified as "pure" Japanese compared with those of mixed parentage. With the exception of Brody (2002), little attention has been given to education policy, especially in a comparative framework.

These literatures, taken collectively, show that in Germany and Japan exclusion based on (ethnic) difference underlies fundamental notions of the nation. In Japan, integration is only superficially thematized because foreigners are generally not expected to assimilate, while in Germany the strong discourse about integration belies the pressure to assimilate to existing linguistic, religious, and cultural norms. Examining language education policies

<sup>2</sup> Mori 1997; Ryang 1997; Kerr 2000; Komai 2001; Røkkum 2006.

becomes particularly important because through such an analysis we are better able to comprehend the evolution of the respective national narratives. In nations such as Germany and Japan, where there are long-standing and dominant national languages, language proficiency is the first step toward political, economic, and cultural participation. Likewise these language education policies have the potential to deny access and/or to demand forms of assimilation. The case of the *Aussiedler* and the *Nikkeijin* is particularly interesting because in the absence of traditional forms of “othering,” for example, race, ethnicity, and religion, language emerges as the premiere means of distancing the ethnic returnees from the “real” natives.

Because citizenship and immigration policies are nationally controlled, it is imperative to consider national-level language education initiatives. Margaret Sutton and Bradley Levinson (2001) aptly point out that local-level practice often reinterprets policies in ways that require us to consider state and local practices as well. Further, Germany and Japan have addressed the needs of the ethnic returnees differently. Germany developed a strong national response but left implementation of educational directives to localities (sometimes at the *Länder* level, but generally municipalities reacted as necessary).<sup>3</sup> In Japan, we see very little national-level policy and intense local involvement. This difference further underscores the need to examine comparatively national and local language education policy.

#### Methodological Considerations

In order to capture this spectrum we designed a comparative case-study design in which we examined national-level policies in both countries since 1989. For this we analyze both immigrant and immigration laws with close attention to language education policy. We also interrogated federal and local policies, through document analysis and interviews with stakeholders and key informants. We chose two similar regions with significant return migrant populations from which to gather local policy data. While the federal and local analyses should not be generalized, within this greater comparative case study they elucidate conflicts around integration and multiculturalism that might otherwise remain unproblematized. In Germany, where education policy is centralized at the *Länder* level, local-level school and community responses to youth problems remain atomized and uncodified. As a result we relied primarily on interviews with school directors, social service providers, government officials, and educational policy makers. In Japan, the lack of national policy has led localities to develop a multitude of policy statements (but few comprehensive policies), which were analyzed together with voluminous school policy reports, local and activist press, and community and

<sup>3</sup> In Germany there are 16 federal states, or *Länder*, which control education policy, while citizenship and immigrant policies are federally controlled.

nongovernmental organization (NGO) publications. This was complemented by interviews with public officials, local residents, and researchers. Key informant interviews, however, were helpful for interpretation and analysis. In terms of validity we followed the standards of qualitative research using both peer debriefing and member checks to confirm our interpretations of policy artifacts and policy processes as explained through stakeholder interviews (Creswell 2005). By using multiple interview partners within each stakeholder group, key informant interviews, and a myriad of policy artifacts and observations gathered in multiple visits to our communities, we were able to triangulate our data. Below the results of our analyses are detailed.

### Historical Background of German and Japanese Citizenship Standards

#### *German Citizenship and "Aussiedler"*

Until recently, the dominant political rhetoric in Germany rejected multiculturalism in favor of the ethnocultural *volk* concept of citizenship. The exclusivity of the *volk* concept, which maintained the appearance of a monocultural state while disenfranchising the large number of non-German permanent residents, was manifest through citizenship and immigration laws. These laws were a means of continued cultural categorization of both immigrants and Germans. Perhaps more important, they privileged the *Aussiedler* over the economic migrant groups, in particular the Turkish guest workers, using the existence of the former to deny full rights to the latter.

The interment and persecution of ethnic Germans in the Soviet Union and the expulsion of nearly 13 million Germans after World War II are the primary justifications for ethnocultural citizenship (Brubaker 1992), which for the *Aussiedler* was codified in Paragraph 116 of the German constitution. Further, the 1959 Federal Law for Expellees and Refugees (*Bundesvertriebenengesetz*) guaranteed the "right of return" and provided services to assist returning ethnic Germans. Together these two laws codified the ethnocultural nation.

The "right of return" was a policy in name only because the Soviet Union's restrictive travel policies kept the number of *Aussiedler* repatriates to approximately 36,000 a year between 1950 and 1984 (Federal Ministry of the Interior, Germany 2006b). Most of those returning were ethnically pure German families, who spoke German or older dialects. For the most part the integration of these repatriates drew little attention from the majority population (Ingenhorst 1997). The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 dramatically altered this situation.

Between 1988 and 1998, 2.7 million repatriates, the vast majority from the former Soviet Union, immigrated to Germany (Federal Ministry of the Interior, Germany 2006b). A second wave of repatriates, who returned after 1993 and were called the *Spätaussiedler*, generally did not speak German, were less likely to consider themselves to be ethnically German (Ingenhorst 1997),

and thus challenged the ethnocultural notion of being German. The laws regulating Russian-German return became increasingly strict throughout the 1990s, and the political rhetoric shifted toward “maintaining” German heritage in Russia and restricting *Aussiedler* immigration. The tighter restrictions rested mainly on “proving one’s Germanness” (Senders 2002, 89) and the ability to speak German.

The sheer volume of the post-1993 *Spätaussiedler* and their perceived “Russianness” contributed to a political will for reform that was realized in the highly contested Immigration Act (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*), which was enacted on January 1, 2005. This law was a complete paradigm shift, declaring that Germany needs, desires, and welcomes immigrants; it also regulates the purpose of immigration, eligibility for immigration, and conditions for deportation. Most salient for our discussion, the 2005 act required 600 hours of German language study and an “orientation to the German culture” course for all adult immigrants. This was a major departure from earlier policy not only because it was made applicable to all immigrants (and not just *Aussiedler*) but also because it ventures into education policy—a political realm normally reserved to the 16 federal states.

*Japanese Citizenship and the “Nikkeijin”*

Compared to the developments in Germany, the return of over 300,000 *Nikkeijin* to Japan since 1990 has caused fewer ripples. Since the mid-1980s, the percentage of foreign residents in Japan has nearly doubled, to 1.57 percent of the total population (Ministry of Justice, Japan 2006). However, few protested when Foreign Minister Aso Tarō declared Japan a monolingual and monocultural country in 2005 (*Japan Times* 2005). Most national political leaders refuse to acknowledge Japan’s ethnic diversity in favor of accessing the popular, cultural nationalist view of Japanese homogeneity and uniqueness.

The vast majority of *Nikkeijin* in Japan returned from Brazil, whose Japanese population grew quickly after the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 closed U.S. borders to most Asian immigration. Around 205,000 *Nikkeijin* resided Brazil by 1940, which today has the largest overseas *Nikkeijin* population (de Carvalho 2003). Within Japan, citizenship rights for non-Japanese expanded and contracted in tandem with Japan’s colonial empire. The indigenous Ainu in Hokkaido were declared commoners (*heimin*) in 1871 and were entered into family registries (*koseki*) after 1875 (Siddle 1996). Colonial expansion into Taiwan and continental Asia brought millions of Koreans, Taiwanese, and Chinese to Japan before 1945. For the most part, colonial subjects residing in Japan were granted considerable rights, including the right to vote. But after World War II, the government reclassified non-Japanese as foreign aliens (1947) and stripped them of citizenship in 1952 (Sugimoto 2003), (re)establishing an exclusivist, blood-based immigration regime that strictly regulated foreign immigration (Morris-Suzuki 2006).

While West Germany enshrined space for the *Aussiedler* in national law, the opening of a “side door” for *Nikkeijin* in the 1990s grew out of demand for unskilled workers in Japan and the economic instability in Brazil in the 1980s. Strong economic growth and increasing domestic labor shortages in the late 1970s and 1980s attracted undocumented workers, mostly from Southeast Asia and Iran, to the dangerous (*kiken*), dirty (*kitanai*), and demanding (*kitsui*) “3K” jobs in small factories around Tokyo. Media scares over foreign crime and pressure from manufacturers and some government ministries for more low-skill labor resulted in revisions to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (*Shunyukokukanri oyobi nanmin ninteiho*) in 1990 (Tsuda and Cornelius 2004). The act attempted to balance demand for unskilled laborers and concerns about cultural and racial homogeneity by allowing *Nikkeijin* up to the third generation to apply for renewable “settler” (*teijū*) visas and also allowing them to work in low-skill positions. By 1996, nearly 230,000 *Nikkeijin*, about 180,000 from Brazil, were residing in Japan, up from just a few thousand 10 years earlier (Brody 2002). By 2004, the number of *Nikkeijin* in Japan has stabilized around 330,000; about 280,000 of those were *Nikkei-Brazilian* (Higuchi 2005).

Assumptions that second- and third-generation *Nikkeijin* would either quickly adapt or not settle in Japan turned out to be false. Though some *Nikkeijin* had enrolled in Japanese-language schools in their home countries, few spoke Japanese fluently, and World War II–era assimilation policies in Brazil caused most *Nikkeijin* to sever their cultural ties to Japan. As this comparison will show, the immigrant policies in Germany and Japan have evolved from very different historical foundations and in different directions, but the results for the *Aussiedler* and the *Nikkeijin* have not been markedly different.

#### National-Level Adult Immigrant Language Education Policies Compared

##### *Germany: Reaction and Reform*

Over the past 15 years support for language training at the national level has changed considerably. Indeed, the nature of citizenship, the nature of immigration, and the status of the *Aussiedler* and foreigners have been subjected to public scrutiny and reform. These reforms often have acquisition of the German language as the central feature even as they more holistically address immigrant integration. Below we will briefly summarize the initial language education policies before examining the policies developed since 2005.

The Federal Expellee Law granted *Aussiedler* right of entry and established a Guarantee Fund for emergency housing, a 10-month language course, and job training for returnees. Three years after the first major wave of *Aussiedler* migrated to Germany, the 1959 law was replaced with the Law for Settling the Consequences of War (*Kriegsfolgenbereinigungsgesetz* of 1993), which aimed to limit the number of *Aussiedler* immigrants. This law no longer accepted



that all people of German heritage living in the former East Bloc were persecuted. It is the first in a series of changes to immigration policies, which ultimately also changed immigrant policies by addressing language services. It also shortened the German-language course to 6 months, just as the number of returnees requiring that service increased. In 1996, the government required a language test to prove *Spätaussiedler* status, which resulted in many *Aussiedler* spouses and children being categorized as foreigners and thus being denied special services, including language classes, for repatriates. Now, however, all foreigners have access to these services under the 2005 Immigration Act.

Between the initial swell of *Aussiedler* immigration and the passage of the Immigration Act, the *Aussiedler* maintained their special, separate legal status, but public discourse began to demand integration of all foreigners, including Russian-Germans. Ability to speak German was held up as an absolute minimum requirement for immigration and continued residence, and the *Aussiedler* became seen not as “returnees” but as foreigners who needed to become German by learning German. One school director in charge of adult classes declared: “The only thing German about them [*Aussiedler*] is that their dog peed on a German oak tree somewhere in Siberia. They need to take the time to learn German if they want to live here and be a part of Germany.” However, federal provisions under the Guarantee Fund for *Aussiedler* integration measures and language training were meager. In 1997, for example, when roughly 98,000 *Aussiedler* entered the country, DM 3 million, or about US\$1.5 million, was spent on so-called integration aid for *Aussiedler*—equivalent to about US\$15 per person. Nearly one-half of this money went to language training (InfoDienst Deutsch-russische Ausgabe 1997).

The 2005 Immigration Act expanded the government’s commitment to immigrant integration in the form of language-training courses for all immigrants, regardless of heritage. Access to these courses, which are modeled on the initial language and orientation course once offered only to *Aussiedler*, is legally guaranteed by the act. The 2005 federal budget line items €208 million for language courses for foreigners (Federal Ministry of the Interior, Germany 2006a). The federal government carries the full cost for the language courses, enough to enroll 138,000 newly arrived immigrants and 56,000 current resident aliens. After 2005, family members of *Aussiedler* were eligible for language training, whereas their former status as foreigners had excluded them from this right. With the expansion of the course to all groups and the federal control of the policies, the government recognized the need to commit financial and human resources to immigrant integration. The newly renamed and reorganized Federal Office for Migration and Refugees oversees most federal integration measures and coordinates state and local efforts. The ordinance regulating integration courses specifies course details, in par-

ticular curriculum design and content and also the length and certification procedures for course providers.

Clearly this new law represents a considerable change in the nature of citizenship and immigration in Germany. For the *Aussiedler*, in particular, it further reduces their special status and also standardizes and attempts to equalize immigrant services. Sanctions for not completing the language course, primarily a 10 percent reduction in welfare benefits, are aimed at all immigrants. With the 2005 Immigration Act, language became the central criterion for integration of adults, and consequently language education policies now form the crux of federal policies on adult immigrant integration. This has an added effect on the *Spätaussiedler*. As of 2005, all people applying to be repatriated based on heritage and their family members (most of whom will have had no exposure to German previously) have to pass a basic German test (Federal Ministry of the Interior, Germany 2006b). While heritage and Soviet-era persecution remain important factors for repatriation, knowledge of German has emerged as the deciding factor in granting repatriate status.

*Japan: Adult Education Policies*

Unlike the German case, there are no national-level policies for adult *Nikkeijin* in Japan. As a result, the responsibility for adult immigrant education programs has fallen to local authorities and volunteers. In this section, we address how the adult immigrant education infrastructure has grown out of the existing adult education services sector and how recent legal change and proposals may extend language programs for adult immigrants.

Japan's century-old lifelong learning system was revised in 1990 under the Lifelong Learning Promotion Law (*Shōgai gakushū shinkō hō*). Like the immigration reforms the same year, this law sprang from anxiety over Japan's creative capacities and its aging population (Ishikida 2005). At the national level, at least, the expansion of adult education in the 1990s did not envelop the needs of Japan's foreign populations. However, although the local governmental and social organizations hosting adult education programs have wide curricular latitude driven by the interest and initiative of local residents, for the most part the adult education services sector has not expanded its services for immigrants.

Much like Germany, the labor shortages in comparatively high-skill health-care and technology industries may expand the central government's role in immigrant policy, especially in adult education. In the summer of 2006, Lower House member and then Senior Vice Minister for Justice Kōno Tarō proposed opening the "front door" to highly skilled foreign workers (Kōno 2006). Like many education and immigration laws of the past 2 decades, Kōno's proposed changes were driven by concerns over economic competitiveness, the aging workforce, and fears of foreigner crime. Much of Kōno's proposal focuses on Japanese language proficiency. Like the 2005 German revisions, this plan

would require foreign workers to have basic Japanese language ability upon entering the country. In addition, continued residency in Japan would be contingent on regular, marked progress in the language, and immigrant children would be required to attend school. Acknowledging some of the difficulties low-skill workers face in Japan, the plan also calls for equal treatment of foreign workers in labor and housing, although it stops short of calling for antidiscrimination laws. The most controversial aspect of this proposal would gradually allow the number of foreign residents in Japan to double, to about 3 percent of the total population.

New agreements also extend Japanese language requirements to new high-skill workers (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 2006). The increasing need for home help workers (*kaigoshu*) induced the Japanese government to agree to admit 1,000 Filipino nurses in 2007 and 2008 under the 2006 Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). Those admitted will study Japanese during their first 6 months of residence, and government-mandated classes will be paid for by Japanese employers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan 2006). After 3 years, the nurses must also pass the Japanese medical board exams in Japanese to be allowed to remain in Japan. Like the 2005 revisions in Germany, these changes represent steps away from *jus sanguinis* immigration law. These new frameworks close the “side door” for *Nikkeijin* in favor of an “open door” that privileges credentials, selected skills, and language ability.

#### National Level Education Policies for Youth

##### *Germany—Language Education Policies for Youth*

Unlike Japan, public education in Germany is constitutionally a state (*Land*) responsibility. School organization, immigrant education practices, teacher training, and language education policies are therefore all decided at that level. However, some generalities exist—specifically, the shortage of teachers trained in *Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (German as a foreign language [DaF]). Although there are a wide variety of DaF programs within Germanic Studies departments, these are part of the masters’ programs and not compatible with the state examination program required for teacher licensing. For the most part, DaF remains an elective secondary field for elementary and *Hauptschule* (school form ending at ninth grade) preservice teachers. The teacher education programs for the two other common school forms, the *Realschule* (tenth grade) and *Gymnasium* (college preparatory), rarely include DaF as a secondary field, because the entrance examinations keep most foreigners who need language training out of these schools (Auernheimer 2006).

The emphasis on early tracking in the German education system and its tripartite division at the secondary level (Phillips 1995) help explain why the 2003 Program of International Student Assessment found that Germany has the highest correlation between student class and educational achievement

(OECD 2006). Although there has been some movement away from this tracking in some *Länder*, the tripartite system itself is not being seriously challenged. For immigrants, regardless of their German heritage, this is particularly true. Nearly every teacher, administrator, or government official interviewed stated confidently that the *Aussiedler* “only have a chance if they start out in Kindergarten here.” In several federal states children were tracked after completing sixth grade, but in many others this happens as early as fourth grade. As Jim Cummins (2001) reminds us, academic language development generally takes 4–7 years, making it difficult for foreign students who do not start their education in Germany to progress to high school and beyond. A school director explained: “Our Russians [*Aussiedler*] who came here as older students, even eight or nine, have not done well. And the teenagers, they are a lost generation; they have nowhere to go and nothing to do. But what could they do with no German and no desire to be here in this community?”

Finally, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK), the federal body charged with providing nonbinding oversight and guidance to the 16 federal states, has not addressed DaF as an area of reform. This conference offers guidelines but also creates policies, which must be signed by all 16 state ministers to take effect. De facto this represents federal policy, although implementation ultimately rests within state rights. It is therefore interesting that despite a comprehensive report on teacher training, there is no mention of intercultural competencies or German as a Foreign Language, despite the fact that both of these areas are underdeveloped in teacher training programs (Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1999). However, a 2004 decision that forwards standards for teacher education does include, as one of eleven core competencies, social and cultural knowledge of students as a means of differentiating instruction (Sekretariat der Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 2004). Yet, there is still a question of the effectiveness of KMK guidelines, as a 1996 decision to require intercultural education in the curricula has been followed, as one education policy maker in Bavaria explained, in name only: “We have it in our curricula, Baden-Württemberg has it in their curricula, and I think the other states do too, but teachers don’t really know what to do with it, and since it is not tested we have no real way of knowing if it is there.”

*Japan: Policies of Convenience*

The Ministry of Education, Sports, and Technology (MEXT, or *Monbukagakushō*) has resisted adapting the Japanese educational system to meet the needs of immigrant children, and its policy of leaving immigrant education to localities suggests that that it views the *Nikkeijin* as short-term

guest workers rather than residents. To date, MEXT has assumed a coordinating function among different educational agencies but has not produced clear guidelines for immigrant education. The ministry's policies for immigrant children have been appended to much more elaborate provisions for the education of the *kikokushijo* (children of home country returnees). These are children who were educated abroad, usually when a parent was dispatched to an overseas management position. As we will see, fusion of these two very different populations under a single policy umbrella mirrors a similar practice at the local level.

The Ministry of Education, Sports, and Technology has identified five priorities for returnee and immigrant education. Under closer scrutiny, however, it is clear that funding and support measures are heavily weighted in favor of the *kikokushijo*, while those for immigrant children are limited to "projects" to address and "encourage" *Nikkeijin* children to fully participate in Japanese schools, on Japanese terms. Programs for *Nikkeijin* education are limited to research projects for educational support and reducing absenteeism, encouraging integration, limited teacher training, and publishing a four-page Japanese as a Second Language curriculum. By comparison, measures for the *kikokushijo* include 19 university-affiliated high schools and positive discrimination (*sekkyokuteki ukeiri*) measures in university admissions (Ichi 1983), policies that have been extended to neither their fellow "returnee" cousins nor any other minority group in Japan (Goodman 2003).

The reasons for the positive discrimination measures for the *kikokushijo* and the absence of meaningful policies for the *Nikkeijin* hinge on citizenship and yet transcend ethnicity. Even though *Nikkeijin* are among the most privileged newcomers to Japan, relatively few have sought Japanese citizenship because of their strong, if yet unrealized, desire to return permanently to Brazil. In contrast, the *kikokushijo* were already citizens of Japan, expected educational support from the state, and have mostly resettled in Japan permanently. The few privileges enjoyed by the *Nikkeijin* in the labor market have not been transferable to the education sector. This only reinforces the official view of the *Nikkeijin* as "temporary" and "foreign" and ignores the growing diversity of Japanese schools (Okano and Tsuchiya 1999).<sup>4</sup>

Similar to Germany, there are very few Japanese as an Additional Language (JAL) programs at Japanese universities, and the subject is not certified by prefectural boards of education. Existing JAL programs focus on preparing instructors for university settings and are unaffiliated with schools of education. Before public school programs can be established, the teacher training infrastructure in Japan must be developed.

<sup>4</sup> The authors wish to thank Onai Taoru at Hokkaido University for his interpretations regarding the lack of national policy.

### Adult Education Policies and Programs at the Local Level

#### *Germany: Adult Education Policies at the Local Level*

Stemming from the national-level policy changes discussed above, adult language education policies at the local level have seen significant changes over the past 15 years. Initially, under the federal guidelines for repatriate support, a federally funded 6-month language course was implemented by local communities in response to repatriate settlement. The language course was normally taught in the local People's Colleges (*Volkshochschule*), which initially maintained strong curricular control. Much like the current guidelines established in the 2005 Immigration Act, ethnic German returnees were required to attend 25 hours of instruction a week. Pedagogy and teacher training were not established federally and differed by state and municipality. These differences, in part, are held up as the reason for the general failure of *Aussiedler* adults to learn German, though there are no official statistics to support this, partly because *Aussiedler* are not separated out in reports. Further, few anticipated that most older *Aussiedler* would resist learning German once they resettled. Summarizing the problems with the old courses, a social worker in charge of repatriate counseling in a large urban area said: "The courses were sometimes good and sometimes not good. They failed to consider how hard it is for an older person to learn a language. . . . But more importantly, I think, and this does not change with the new policy, is that there was a lack of will. Most of them had no reason to learn German. They were not going to find a job, and they knew this, and the German community did not make them want to venture out of their little Russian enclaves." This assessment seems particularly important given the new language courses prescribed by the 2005 Immigration Act; the Immigration Act cannot force change within the German community, nor can it make immigrants learn German.

As the federal government sought to require German-language training for all immigrant groups, it examined the failures of the *Aussiedler* language courses and, with centralization, attempted to improve outcomes. With the Immigration Act, as discussed above, curriculum was centralized and taught by teachers who are either formally trained in DaF or have attended a special continuing education certificate course developed by the federal government. While there has been only one initial assessment of these language courses, there are already implementation problems. In addition, differentiated instruction, a recommended change from the earlier, *Aussiedler*-only language courses, has been difficult. Resource constraints, particularly in rural areas, compound the challenge of offering differentiated instruction to the mainly *Spätaussiedler* population. Teacher certification is also uneven. An interim assessment conducted by the Federal Ministry of the Interior reported that roughly 60 percent of instructors have neither a degree nor federal DaF certification (Federal Ministry of the Interior, Germany 2006a). Furthermore, nearly 85 percent of the teachers are adjuncts, meaning that they have no

permanent relationship to their employer. Despite greater federal oversight, locally employed teachers remain underqualified and in precarious employment situations that make the profession unattractive to highly qualified individuals.

Although the 2005 act was a significant compromise between federal and state powers, local officials still must deal with ongoing negotiations between the states, who implement the programs, and the federal government, which oversees the coordinated integration program. In our interviews, state and local officials consistently called for stricter regulations and for the authority at the state level to enforce them. The “failure” to integrate is viewed as a lack of enforcement tools. The mayor of one small town with a 25 percent *Aussiedler* population summarizes what nearly all the officials interviewed expressed: “The new [language and integration] courses are fine and a good idea. But they will never work if we don’t make them attend. We know this from the Russians [*Aussiedler*]. They had every advantage, more advantages than any German would have, and most of them still sit there in there groups and speak Russian all day long.”

The federal interim assessment of the program also found deficits in state services. The 2005 act established integration counseling services (staffed by social workers with intercultural training) to accompany language and integration courses. Social workers are state employees, and as such these immigration services must be established and paid for by the state. The federal report recommends strengthening the language in the law to enforce state responsibilities in this area. Interviews with social workers tasked with immigration counseling confirmed that resources are tight. Initially, most of these social workers provided services only for *Aussiedler*; now they are responsible for all immigrants.

#### *Local Level Adult Education Policies in Japan*

As we have seen, local and prefectural officials have discretion about what is taught in adult education courses in Japan, and there are few curricular prescriptions for lifelong learning from the Ministry of Education (MEXT). Thus, local lifelong learning programs tend to reflect both the organizational ability and educational demands of the local population, the *Nikkeijin* included. The availability of adult education services at the local level can illustrate the degree to which foreign residents, and in this case the *Nikkeijin*, have been accepted and incorporated into the existing social service and educational infrastructure.

Lifelong learning projects in Toyota City, where a significant number of *Nikkeijin* reside, operate out of a network of neighborhood “exchange halls” (*kōryūkan*) administered by the local government. A wide variety of courses and programs are available, including health and safety classes, instruction in traditional Japanese arts, and other courses that are in demand from local

residents. At Homi-danchi, where about half of the 10,000 residents are *Nikkeijin*, all of the courses listed for the fall of 2006 appear to be directed at the Japanese residents (Homi kōryūkan 2006). Although two nonprofit organizations (NPOs) hold Japanese-language classes there, none are regularly scheduled, and none of the information for the courses has been translated into Portuguese. This was found across Toyota City and in other communities and strongly suggests that *Nikkeijin* are not seeking or not being provided with courses through the existing adult education infrastructure.

Under the 1998 Law to Promote Specified Nonprofit Activities (*Tokutei hienri katsudōsokushin hō*), NGOs and NPOs have assumed much of the responsibility for implementing immigrant education policies across Japan. Typical among these is the NPO *Nihongo kyōshitsu* (Japanese Classroom) in Toyota City, which operates volunteer-staffed classes. The class meets for 2 hours on Sunday afternoons, and the group charges very nominal fees for the participating adults, who are mostly from China and Brazil. The city also provides introductory training courses for volunteer teachers. Despite their availability, language courses like these are often not widely advertised, and many *Nikkeijin* are not comfortable using municipal services due to language barriers and concerns about legal status. In addition, the courses often conflict with other activities, such as church or family obligations. Perhaps most important, many are simply too exhausted from work to study Japanese on the weekends (Hirataka et al. 2001). From an institutional perspective, the reliance on volunteers illustrates the undeveloped nature of immigrant services in Japan and the reluctance of government officials to fund services for non-Japanese. Herman Smith's (1995, 108) criticism that the Japanese adult education system was a "low priority and of low status" can also be said of immigrant services.

The belief among many *Nikkeijin* that their stay in Japan is temporary also complicates their integration into the broader Japanese community. A recent survey of eight prefectures by Hamada Kunisuke (2005) found that only 13 percent of *Nikkei*-Brazilians planned to settle in Japan, while 46.8 percent planned to return home when they had saved some money, and 30 percent said they would return to Brazil "no matter what" (*nani ga attemo kikoku*). However, Hamada also found that a higher percentage of *Nikkeijin* who have been in Japan over 10 years were willing to return to Brazil only if they could find a good job there, suggesting that many long-term residents have established relatively comfortable lives in Japan.

The transnational lives of those *Nikkeijin* known as *ripitaa* (repeaters) is a significant difference from the *Aussiedler* experience and has resulted in educational underinvestment by the Japanese government and the *Nikkeijin* themselves. For the *Nikkeijin*, this becomes a significant hindrance to workplace advancement and is a particularly high barrier for their children given the heavy emphasis on entrance examinations at the high school and university levels. The repeater phenomenon also reinforces the central govern-



ment's view that foreigners are transient and do not require services, a logic that Tsuda Takeyuki and Wayne Cornelius (2004) argue makes the presence of foreign workers more acceptable to the Japanese public.

Coupled with *Nikkeijin* reluctance and/or inability to invest in education, the central government's inactivity reinforces a circle of educational underinvestment. It seems clear that the central government must take the lead in expanding Japanese language classes, as well as taking measures to assure immigrants that their labor and housing rights are protected, before *Nikkeijin* and other immigrants will reciprocate the investment necessary for their long-term settlement in Japan.

### Local Education Policies in Public Schools

#### *Germany—Language Education Policies in the Public Schools*

In one year we went from having two non-Germans, both of whom were born here, to having 45 *Aussiedler* who spoke no German. We were completely unprepared; we had no materials, no training, no space, and basically no idea where to start. At first it was OK, we sort of did the best we could with what we had. But then the German parents started to complain. They did not want the teachers spending all their time teaching somebody to speak German when their child needed to learn the fourth-grade material. (School Director, in a small community that nearly doubled in size in a 7-year period due to *Aussiedler* immigration)

This community's experience is not isolated. Schools in formerly homogenous rural areas were unprepared for the language-learning needs of the *Aussiedler*. In subsequent years, individual schools learned to accommodate the language learners, and textbook publishers now produce good materials for these classes. However, as discussed earlier, the school structure and lack of trained DaF teachers are a consistent problem at the local level. School directors in each of the 25 schools visited for this study all reported a lack of financial and human resources to address language learning needs. In most schools none of the teachers had DaF certification, and the least senior teachers were pushed into tutoring. In addition, *Länder*-level funding cuts have severely limited the time dedicated to DaF classes, leaving DaF instruction to the initiative of the individual teachers.

When asked what was needed to improve integration for the Russian-German youth, every single stakeholder interviewed—from mayors to teachers to education policy makers to social workers—replied “they have to learn the language.” Most school directors desired more money for language courses and a definitive and lasting policy for DaF programs. At the *Länder* level (where education policy is created) there have been a variety of school-based initiatives to assist immigrant children, but they are small-scale. By way of example, Bavarian Minister President Edmund Stoiber announced in July 2006 that no child should enter a German school without adequate German

knowledge and pledged to require German-language courses in preschools for nonnative speakers (Bayerisches Staatsministerium fuer Arbeit und Sozialordnung, Familie und Frauen 2006). The school directors welcomed this announcement but doubted that it would be adequately funded. In a system that relies on strong and consistent state policy, the absence of clear guidelines meant that individual schools could only react to the specific situations presented to them. We do not mean to suggest that individual school and teachers are uncaring or callous about the needs of the *Spätaussiedler* children. Countless administrators and teachers bemoaned that they could not do more. However, the lack of government policy, at both the federal and *Länder* levels, has created bureaucratic confusion at the school level about the appropriate language policies for immigrant children, regardless of their heritage.

*Japan: Grasping for Frameworks, Problematizing the Foreign*

As we have seen, in the absence of MEXT guidance, local and prefectural authorities assumed responsibility for immigrant education policy making in the early 1990s. In this case, teachers, principals, and local school officials looked to policies established in the 1970s for the “returnee children,” or *kikokushijo*, as a framework for immigrant education. This seems reasonable given that *Nikkeijin* settled in manufacturing centers like Toyota City, Hamamatsu, and Ōta, home to Toyota, Yamaha, and Subaru, respectively. *Nikkeijin* found work in the second- and third-tier firms affiliated with the larger companies, who had for many years sent mid- and upper-level managers and engineers abroad for 3–4 years at a time. As a result, there were established networks and policies for *kikokushijo*. The pairing of returnee and immigrant education policies, however, was a marriage of convenience masking considerable differences in the needs of the students (Shipper 2002).

Used partly out of necessity, the *kikokushijo* policy framework was also the sole existing discourse of difference in Japanese public education, even though research in the past 2 decades has shown that most *kikokushijo* experience few problems readjusting to Japan (Goodman 2003). By combining *kikokushijo* and immigrant education policies, educational institutions only address student deficits in relation to Japanese educational expectations and almost completely ignore the cultural or linguistic backgrounds of immigrant students. As a result, the adjustment problems that *Nikkeijin* experience are attributed to language difficulty, much like the *kikokushijo* and the *Aussiedler*. More important, foreign children are not required to attend school in Japan, freeing MEXT from organizing programs for them. Most *Nikkeijin* children, especially if they arrive after age 10, learn only colloquial Japanese in school, while their Portuguese-language skills atrophy.

The high absentee rates among foreign children is causing increasing concern both at the local and national levels. According to Sekiguchi Tomoko (2005, 2), in both 2000 and 2005, slightly over 40 percent of *Nikkeijin* children

in Japan did not attend school; ominously, the number of children not attending school more than doubled during that time, from about 7,000 to 17,000. There are many reasons for this: social discrimination, language problems, and residential instability are most commonly cited. Rather than addressing these issues, officials regularly cite *Nikkeijin* crime as the most pressing problem relating to student dropouts (Shipper 2005), with the concomitant desire to prevent the creation of a foreigner underclass that would produce a “reserve army of juvenile delinquents” in the *Nikkeijin* community (Yamanaka 2006, 114).

Although *kikokushijo* children have come to represent Japan’s internationalization, both national and local policy frameworks present immigrant children as a problem to be “dealt with” or the object of “countermeasures” (*taisaku*). At the local level, the discourse and policies constructed around the *Nikkeijin* focus on linguistic deficiencies and truancy (*fushūgaku*), though often wrapped in a veil of “internationalization” (Miyajima and Ōta 2005). Municipal internationalization efforts are threefold: providing (1) services for Japanese students who are residing overseas, (2) foreign language and cultural exchange, and (3) programs for foreign children residing in the community (Toyota City 2006). Our analysis of Toyota City’s policy goals suggests that lines between “Japanese” and “foreign” are studiously maintained. Programs for resident foreigners mostly consist of lectures by outside experts, data gathering, and coordination with NPOs to help truant students. Few measures have clear goals, and outside of hiring a Japanese-language teacher, these projects demand little funding. In contrast, the city sends two teachers abroad every year for overseas Japanese students and supports exchange trips abroad to the United States and the United Kingdom. Beyond the financial commitment, these programs draw clear lines around the kind of internationalization that is envisioned for Toyota City: language and cultural exchanges with (industrialized) English-speaking countries and the maintenance of a “Japanese” education for residents of Toyota City, even when they live overseas; *Nikkeijin* are generally not expected to contribute to “internationalization.” Rather, the measures mainly address problems that foreign students have adapting to the Japanese system or their refusal to attend school at all (Toyota City 2005). These challenges are compounded in Japan by a general unwillingness to even acknowledge the substantial non-Japanese population, and by underdevelopment of research, educational, activist, and political organizations to address and push for solutions for Japan’s foreign populations.

### Discussion

This comparative policy study of immigrant and immigration policy has shown that, despite similar ethno-national, *jus sanguinis* definitions of citizenship and community, Germany and Japan have forged starkly different

immigrant and immigration policies for the *Aussiedler* and the *Nikkeijin*. The difference can be explained by the rhetorical and political use of the *Aussiedler* in West Germany (Levy 2003), the need for low-wage labor in Japan, and the extent to which the central governments acknowledge the presence of and provide services for their long-term foreign residents. The resulting policy frameworks could not have been more different: citizenship, compulsory education, financial and housing support, and extensive, free language classes for the *Aussiedler*, compared with ad hoc, volunteer language classes; limited educational opportunities; and little to no political, financial, or housing support from any level of government for the *Nikkeijin*. Despite these differences, several of the outcomes have been strikingly similar: a paucity of German/Japanese as a Second Language teachers and a resulting reliance on untrained or volunteer teachers; the emergence of “language” as the primary problem for immigrants; overarching expectations of immigrant assimilation to the dominant culture, mostly through language acquisition; and concern about foreigner crime. It would appear that the outcomes from the strong government interventions in Germany and the *laissez-faire* policy in Japan are not so different.

The immigration policy framework that has developed in Germany in recent years suggests that language, skills, and education are becoming more important than the *volk* in determining who will be welcomed as German. Other minority groups, such as the Turkish-Germans and asylum seekers, are put on more equal ground with the repatriates through this movement. Recent developments also suggest that similar changes are brewing in Japan, in both low- and high-skill sectors, in light of its aging and shrinking population. However, if both countries move toward accepting more immigrants in the future, successful integration will require more than language classes and exams. The belief that immigrants will automatically assimilate into the existing community once they learn the national language ignores the different worldviews, religious and political beliefs, and social memory that immigrants bring into their host countries. Similarly, the education policy, particularly citizenship education and the humanities curriculum, must adapt to the expanded borders of citizenship and ethnicity. Though the national discourse has, at least officially, changed in Germany, it remains to be seen if similar changes will occur in schools. The likelihood of this happening in Japan seems rather more remote, given the recent “patriotic” reforms to Japanese civic education (Tokita 2006).

Analysis of national and local immigrant education policies in Germany and Japan suggests that for the past 15 years, the burden of accommodation has been placed squarely on the returnees themselves, because of the perception that—as Germans or Japanese—they would quickly revert to their ancestral language and culture. The slow pace of integration and/or assimilation of the *Aussiedler* has initiated a reevaluation of immigration policy as

well as the monoculturalism that marked the first decade of German immigrant policy. Germany also has adopted new immigration policies that require German language capability and testing to ensure adequate progress, a plan that is also under consideration in Japan. However, it remains to be seen whether Japan will follow a similar course in revising its immigration policies and acknowledging its growing immigrant population as a permanent and vital part of Japanese society.

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