

# A Minority Group in an Underdeveloped Nation : The Japanese Case in Brazil

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With relation to the emigrating peoples who are least useful for the normal evolution of the Aryan race, I will point out the Japanese, an admirable nationality because of being intelligent, brave, and progressive (Ferraz 1938 : 142).

## 1

There is a chronic difficulty in the taxonomic classification of such units as *ethnic group*, *minority*, *caste*, *class*, *race*, and the like. This is particularly the case in relation to "minority." All these sociological and anthropological models are concerned with patterns of association among people which lie between two "levels," that is, the state and the family (cf. Weber 1940 : 1; 1947 : 145-152). In contrast to formal organizations, such as voluntary associations, which also lie within the same social "level," they are not concerned with organizations of "voluntary" involvement. They are intrinsically related to the problems of *external classification* of some people by others within the same state society and also of *internal identification* by those classified. Thus they are not solely theoretical categories of scientists, but also "folk models" which serve guides, frequently pseudo-scientific models, for ordinary people to have social actions in everyday life.

There have been a great many studies trying to conceptualize these categories in a single general framework. Among them there is a trend to treat "minority," as well as "class" and "caste," in general terms of "stratified groups" or "ranked groups." In this paper I shall argue against this point of view on the basis of the data concerning the Japanese in Brazil.

Edmund Leach wrote, in his taxonomic discussion of anthropological categories of people, that "Class, Caste, Slavery.....each of these words is liable to carry overtones which suggest the exploitation of the underprivileged by the overprivileged" (Leach 1967 : 14). The same is true with reference to the concept of minority. Louis Wirth, in his frequently cited definition of minority group, pointed out "differential and unequal treatment" and "collective discrimination" as some of the crucial variables (1945 : 347); Schermerhorn mentioned "exclusion from full participation in the life of the culture" (1949 : 5); Wagley and Harris pointed out "low esteem by the dominant segments of the society" (1958 : 10); Harris, in his

later discussions, emphasized rather "low ranking" (1959 : 248-54) and "immobile" and "stratified" aspects (1967 : 298-324); and Yinger, in his theoretical formulation, referred to " 'permanently' ranked differentiation" (1965 : 10).

Even in these few examples one can observe a new trend in defining minority group, namely, a change from using less clear terms like "prejudice," "discrimination," "unequal treatment," incomplete "participation," etc., to a formulation in more specifically defined theoretical frameworks with reference to social stratification (this is of course only one of many trends). Many have rejected the term "minority" in their theoretical conceptualization, for example, Myrdal on the basis that it "fail(s) to make a distinction between the *temporary* social disabilities of recent white immigrants and the *permanent* disabilities of Negroes and other colored people" (1964 : 667). Others, for example Leach (1967 : 9), have rejected the use of the term "caste" outside the Indian context, notwithstanding that it is widely used in explaining the natures of the Black group in Southern U. S. A., of the *burakumin* in Japan, of the Indian as well as mestizo groups in Latin American countries, and the like. There is a strong tendency to conceptualize such concepts as class, caste, and minority in general terms with reference to stratification systems in complex state societies.

Harris, aside from his joint study with Wagley (1958), has developed such a conceptual framework (1959 and 1967). He incorporated caste and minority in a single concept of "ranked, endogamous descent groups" and then made a distinction between caste and minority in terms of status acceptance. He maintained that "Speaking.....in polar terms, high and low-ranking castes do not compete for status, whereas minority and majority are locked in a struggle for status. The members of low-ranking castes accept the status accorded them by the high-ranking castes; the members of the minority reject the status which the majority seeks to impose upon them" (1959 : 252). A class is for him a ranked, but neither endogamous nor descent, group. In his more recent discussion, he rejected the factor of descent because of its ideological nature which is basically a part of mobility variable (1967 : 303). (Mobility referred here is concerned with persons who move

Table 1 Eight Logical Types of Stratified Groups

Logical types	Endogamy	Mobility	Conflict
1	(+)	(+)	(+)
2	(+)	(-)	(+)
3	(+)	(-)	(-)
4	(+)	(+)	(-)
5	(-)	(+)	(-)
6	(-)	(+)	(+)
7	(-)	(-)	(+)
8	(-)	(-)	(-)

(Harris 1967 : 307)

into, and out of the stratified group under consideration.) To understand "stratified groups" in general, he sets eight logical types of groups in terms of three independent variables of endogamy, mobility, and conflict (this last is a revised factor of his early "status acceptance").

These are logical types, being not necessarily consistent with any existing group. For example, an endogamous, immobile, no-conflict "caste" is utopian. A "pure type" of minority is found in logical type 3 in this table, that is, a group with endogamy present, mobility absent, and conflict present.

Yinger's theoretization is somewhat similar to the above and includes four variables, namely, affiliation by descent, endogamy, acceptance of status by lower groups (up to this point it is almost the identical with Harris's discussion in 1959), and institutional support for differential treatment. The systems of caste, minority-majority, and class constitute three patterns of stratification characterized by "*permanently*" ranked differentiation. Minority groups "shade off on one side toward castes and on the other side toward classes" (1965 : 25) as are shown in the following table:

Table 2 Three Patterns of "Permanently" Ranked Differentiation

Systems	Affiliation by Descent	Endogamy	Institutional Support for Differential Treatment	Acceptance of Status by Lower Groups
Caste Systems	a	100	100	100
	b	100	100	90
	c	100	100	90
Minority-Majority Systems	a	100	100	80
	b	100	90	70
	c	90	80	60
Class Systems	a	80	70	50
	b	70	60	40
	c	60	50	30
	d	50	40	20

(Yinger 1965 : 24)

These two theoretical formulations by Harris and Yinger are characterized by the points that caste, class, and minority systems are juxtaposed and compared as ranking systems with common denominators while the factor of "physical and/or cultural traits," which has been most frequently pointed out by sociologists in defining minority groups, is here eliminated from their central discussions. To judge whether or not the concept of minority group can be appropriately included as one of the stratified systems and whether or not it is still a meaningful term after eliminating "physical and/or cultural factors," one must resort to empirical

data. I shall not argue these points in general terms, but only with reference to the Japanese case in Brazil.

## 2

In examining the Japanese situation in Brazil I shall use, first of all, Wagley-Harris's formulation (1958) for the following reasons: (1) it is more "orthodox" and therefore useful in guiding to access to the new data; (2) it is highly comparative; and (3) both authors are Latin Americanists and specialists on Brazilian society. Later I shall pay some consideration to Harris and Yinger's viewpoints.

Traditionally, the existence of minority groups in Brazil has tended to be denied by Brazilian sociologists and anthropologists on the basis that "racial prejudice" is, if any, extremely weak; that the Brazilian Negroes do not form groups; and that the foreign immigrants assimilate too quickly to form minorities. The following is one of the typical statements made by the Brazilian scholars on race relations:

In Brazil no restriction existed as to sexual intercourse between whites and Negroes, and consequently the Negroes in that country never considered themselves as an inferior minority group. As a matter of fact, there is no restriction, whatsoever, based on a caste system, nor is there limitation or discrimination along racial lines..... In Brazil we have one of the purest racial democracies in the Western Hemisphere (Ramos 1941 : 521-522).

Foreign immigrants have entered mostly in the southern part of Brazil. In a word, the most intensive immigratory currents have been directed to the coffee plantations in São Paulo, and the rest to the virgin forests in the three most southern states. An authoritative scholar on the acculturation and assimilation of the foreign immigrants in general in these two ecologically and historically different areas is Emílio Willems who wrote the following in his overview paper on the subject entitled "Minority Subcultures in Brazil":

Large scale immigration and temporary segregation of culturally different groups do not inevitably originate subcultures in the sense proposed here. In fact, it would seem that the largest concentration of immigrants, who occurred in the state of São Paulo, did not lead to the formation of distinct minority subcultures..... The development of minority subcultures,....., has been limited almost entirely to the three southernmost states of Brazil : Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul (Willems 1958 : 878-9).

He also denied an existence of the Japanese subculture in São Paulo (Ibid. : 878).

The "weakness" or "absence" of racial prejudice in Brazil has been interpreted by the American anthropologists studying Brazilian society in terms of "not racial but class discrimination" on the basis of a tendency represented by a most frequently cited Brazilian saying "A rich Negro is a white man, and a poor white man

is a Negro" (Pierson 1955 : 439-40; Wagley et al 1952:153-155, naming only a few).

At the very beginning of their study, Wagley and Harris maintained that "For many groups, everyone seems to be in agreement that minority is the appropriate label—the Negroes in the United States, the Japanese in Brazil, the Puerto Ricans in New York, and hundreds of others throughout the world" (1958 : 3). Thus it is assumed by the specialists of minority study and at the same time of Brazilian society that the Japanese in Brazil are one of the most representative minority groups in the world. Let us start where Wagley and Harris did. Utilizing a comparative perspective, they established five basic, universal characteristics of minorities. I shall examine briefly all these aspects with regard to the Japanese group in Brazil.

(1) *Minorities are subordinate segments of complex state societies.*

Brazil is a complex state society. The Japanese immigrants first arrived at the Brazilian shore in 1908 immediately after a "gentlemen's agreement" between the United States and Japan restricted Japanese immigration to the United States. They increased in number very quickly immediately after the United States introduced a quota system for immigrants in 1924. The Japanese immigrants to Brazil numbered 188,615 at the outbreak of World War II, and 242,171 by 1963 when the migratory current virtually ceased. More than 90% of them remained there. They and their descendants currently form a subordinate segment in Brazil.

(2) *Minorities have special physical or cultural traits which are held in low esteem by the dominant segments of the society.*

The Japanese in Brazil have clearly defined physical traits as well as cultural ones. By virtue of the relative absence of Amerindians in most of the Brazilian territory, particularly where the greatest majority of the Japanese are found and also because of in almost complete absence of other Asian peoples until quite recently (e.g., the Chinese since the red revolution in China and the Koreans since the late 1960's), the Japanese are apparently always "visible" for any Brazilian. The southern Brazilians have been so much accustomed to the Japanese that today many of the Chinese and the Koreans are physically and culturally mixed up with and called "the Japanese." From my personal experience through twelve years' residence, including four years' full-time field researches, and intensive as well as extensive travels throughout southern Brazil, I have been deeply impressed by the fact that any five or six year old child may easily recognize and identify me as a Japanese. Children either call me "Hei, Japanese!" without any ill feeling or simply mutter to themselves "Japanese," due to their simple curiosity. The immigrants and their Brazil-born descendants are indiscriminately called by the Brazilians "Japanese." The "Japanese race" is specifically designated as "*olhos puxados* (slant

eyes)." Any foreign-born or Brazil-born Japanese demonstrating his complete or successful cultural assimilation into the Brazilian pattern may be sometimes pulled back either by the Brazilians or by his Japanese colleagues with such an expression as "*Mas, ..... a cara não ajuda* (But, ..... your face doesn't help you)." This expression frequently operates as an internal brake for the Brazil-born Japanese to become a one-hundred percent Brazilian. Many young Brazilian nisei as well as sansei told me that there would have been no problem for their assimilation and socio-economic opportunity if they had not had such a physical appearance.

Although the Japanese are relatively quickly assimilating into the Brazilian cultural pattern, they still maintain many Japanese cultural traits which allow the Brazilians to identify them as "different." Those who assume a "successful" and "rapid" assimilation and acculturation of the Japanese in Brazil tend to point out only some most quickly changing cultural aspects as indicators. Language is such an example most commonly cited by them. Even it is, however, still obviously maintained in some way or another by most of the Japanese families. The following table shows the Japanese language practiced in their family life in 1958 when a self-census of the Japanese community in Brazil was conducted at the occasion of the semicentennial celebration of the Japanese immigration to Brazil:

Table 3 The Japanese Language Practiced in the Family Life, by Birth Place of the Family-Head and Locality of Residence (1958)

	Mainly Japanese	Japanese and Portuguese Mixed	Mainly Portuguese
I. Urban Area			
Immigrant (Family-head)	59.4%	32.9	7.9
Brazil-Born (Family-head)	30.4	40.1	29.5
Total	44.9	36.4	18.7
II. Rural Area			
Immigrant	75.5	20.9	3.6
Brazil-Born	45.5	35.3	19.2
Total	60.5	28.1	11.4

Note: Language spoken by the family head to their children in the family life.

Source: Comissão de Recenseamento da Colônia Japonesa, Descriptive Part 1964: 152.

As a whole, the Brazil-born Japanese came to adopt Portuguese relatively quickly and there is little doubt that Japanese as a spoken language in everyday life shall disappear in a few generations. This does not, however, mean that the Japanese do not have any "different cultural traits" altogether.

The point whether or not these special physical and cultural traits of the Japanese in Brazil are "held in *low esteem* by the dominant segments of the society"

constitutes one of the central issues of this paper. It will be, therefore, treated in a separate part below. This is the matter of *external classification* by the Brazilians, and not an *internal identity* problem of the Japanese themselves.

(3) *Minorities are self-conscious units bound together by the special traits which their members share and by the special disabilities which these bring.*

The Japanese in Brazil form a distinct group, that is, "a self-conscious unit." The "Japanese" is not only a category externally classified by the symbolic system of the Brazilians, but also a "group" formed on the basis of ethnic identity in terms of "Japaneseness" which usually does not contradict strongly with the fact that the Brazil-born are Brazilians in their nationality and their loyalty. In their *national identity*, most of the Brazil-born, especially the educated, are ideologically "Brazilians" as they are taught officially and informally by the Brazilian institutions as well as by their Brazilian neighbors and friends. In their group identification, however, they are "Japanese," or better, as they like to be called, "Nippo-Brazilians" and "nisei." There are many who react to be called "Japanese" because they think it opposes their identity as "Brazilians" and/or also because they think this label differentiates them somewhat negatively. But most of the Brazilians of non-Japanese origin continue calling them "Japanese." Despite this, they do not react much when they are called "nisei." The university students and the educated white collar nisei tend to identify themselves more with "*Brasilidade* (Brazilianness)" whereas the non-educated, the less-educated, and the old middle class nisei more with "Japaneseness" (See more details in, Maeyama 1973 : 240-272). Despite this general tendency, when asked where they were in a line with two extremities—one indicating "100% Brazilian" and the other indicating "100% Japanese"—, most of the university student nisei, who are generally considered to represent within the Japanese community the segment that identifies itself least with "Japaneseness," answered that they were to be located exactly in the middle (this research was conducted mainly by Ann Sutherland and Amélia Hiroko Shimidu in the metropolitan São Paulo region during 1966-1967, most of the results of which have not yet been published. A part of the data collected is found in, Cornell, Iutaka, and Smith 1968; Shimidu 1971; 1973 : 476-486).

Seichô-no-Ie is a Japanese religious sect which had 15,630 followers and 553 associations in 1966 throughout Brazil. Among them the unmarried Brazil-born youth maintained 130 associations with 4,500 memberships. The sect was almost 100 % Japanese, and predominantly old middle class, at the time I conducted an intensive research during 1966-1967 (Maeyama 1967). Japanese values and ethnic identity as Japanese together with its symbolic dramatization in emperor worship characterize the sect. The Brazil-born members have developed a peculiar ideology with respect to their relationship with Brazil and Japan. Brazil is for them *bo-koku* (mother

country) whereas Japan is *so-koku* (ancestral country) although the two concepts mean exactly the same thing in Japan, that is, "father-land." In Seichô-no-Ie rituals, the worship of the Japanese Emperor, which had been a central pseudo-religious practice of the Japanese community in Brazil before World War II, still plays a crucial role. The young nisei members do not object to this worship, but they, as one of my informants expressed very well, "forget the Emperor when they practice the rites at home individually."

The ideal image of the Japanese-Brazilians propagated by the "headquarters" (Society for the Diffusion of the Japanese Language in Brazil) of the Japanese schools as well as by the Japanese Language Teachers Cooperative is *the Brazilians of Japanese origin who contribute actively to the development of Brazil by virtue of the Japanese cultural tradition.*

In the metropolitan city of São Paulo, there live about 200,000 Japanese in the late 1970's, more than two-thirds of whom are Brazil-born. It is estimated that they form about 400 nisei associations which tend to be largely separated among them in terms of social class, that is, between the new middle class and the old middle class. The old immigrants usually form their own associations outside this framework which are not mostly class-oriented. The young immigrants also do not participate in the nisei associations, which are "nisei associations" in its strict sense. The postwar young immigrants are more inclined to form informal social networks and loosely-knit informal groupings rather than voluntary associations. The overall organization of Sociedade Brasileira da Cultura Japonesa (Brazilian Society of the Japanese Culture) represents symbolically and actually the entire Japanese community in Brazil. The community at large sends their ethnic representatives to the local and federal Brazilian governments. The nisei politicians are usually not concerned with the national problems as such, but rather with the *colônia* (colony) issues within the national framework. In this way the Japanese in Brazil form an ethnically as well as racially oriented "community" as a *self-conscious unit.*

The Japanese do not perhaps suffer any special disabilities with regard to material resources, but do lack to some extent access to some kinds of prestige and power. Today the Japanese group in Brazil is characteristically middle class.

By virtue of such factors as the "fit time" of their arrival in Brazil (e.g., lands were easily available during the decline of the coffee plantations), the economic prosperity due to World War II, their high value on hard working and close solidarity based on their ethnic organizations, the Japanese immigrants' upward mobility in the socio-economic ladder has been relatively quick. In the thirties, more than 90% of the Japanese lived in the rural area. In 1937, the agricultural positions of the rural Japanese population was as follows: 35.5% small landholders; 33.1% tenure farmers; 11.9% sharecroppers; and 19.5% *colonos* (rural wage laborers)



Table 4 Class Structure of the Japanese in Brazilian Society  
: Non-Agricultural Sector (1958)

Class	Foreign-Born	Brazil-Born	Total
New Middle Class	13%	25%	20%
Old Middle Class	75	52	63
Wage-workers	12	23	17
Total	100%	100%	100%
Number	32,407	33,456	65,863

Note: All the males and females 10 years old and over. Kindred workers are classified not as wage-workers, but as old middle class.

Source: Computed from the data presented in, Comissão de Recenseamento da Colônia Japonesa, Statistical Part 1964 : 124.

(Comissão de Recenseamento da Colônia Japonesa, Descriptive Part 1964: 314). In 1958, about twenty years later, 45% of them were living in the cities. Of the total non-agricultural sector 83% were middle class, of which 20% were white collar workers and 63% were small commercial or industrial entrepreneurs.

As seen above, the Japanese immigrants have risen in the Brazilian social ladder relatively quickly, but within a limited framework. No Japanese seem to have been allowed to enter the Brazilian "upper class." Roughly speaking, "Japanese in the Brazilian upper class" is unconceivable. The idea of "*fazendeiros japoneses* (Japanese plantation masters)" does not today meet a strong reaction from the part of the Brazilians, the fact which may be accounted for, not in terms of absence of disabilities of the Japanese people, but in terms of the global social change through which the past traditional *fazendeiro* oligarchy has lost most of their prestige, status, and power.

- (4) *Membership in a minority is transmitted by a rule of descent which is capable of affiliating succeeding generations even in the absence of readily apparent special cultural or physical traits.*

This point is very clear. Apparent physical traits are always present. Only offsprings of intermarriage, which will be discussed in the next section, may become "confusing" for those who try to identify them in ethnic terms. They are, however, not so numerous. Identification of Japanese descent is enough for one to be judged to belong to the Japanese group. Even those who reject the idea of their belonging to the Japanese community admit to be "nisei" and to being called "Japanese." Membership of offsprings of interethnic marriage to the Japanese group is today voluntary, and they are, except in the cases of Black-Japanese union's offsprings, ordinarily welcomed. The same did not happen up to the late 1950's. Few mixed elements join in practice the Japanese group, however.

There are some Brazilians of non-Japanese origin who participate in the activities of the Japanese voluntary associations. They are not rejected, sometimes

welcome, so long as they remain a sort of "guest members." Even after acquiring full membership to a specific association and participating more or less in all spheres of the activities, they may not go normally beyond the limit of "sympathizers." None of them come to identify themselves voluntarily or in some other way (if any) as "Japanese."

(5) *Minority peoples, by choice or necessity, tend to marry within the group.*

The Japanese in Brazil are a highly endogamous group. Endogamy is a rule. In the prewar period it used to be not only supported by norms, but also maintained through sanction and ostracism by the Japanese local community and kinship group. Up to the 1950's intermarriage used to be conceived as a sort of "ethno-suicide." Today ostracism because of "violation" of the endogamous rule is not usually enforced although many intermarried couples leave the local community, especially in the rural areas and small towns. The sanction is today usually maintained within the kinship group. Broadly speaking, intermarriage between an educated Japanese and an educated Brazilian, particularly when it happens in a big city like São Paulo, tends to face a relatively weak reaction. The Japanese reaction against intermarriage is strong when it happens between an educated or uneducated Japanese and an uneducated, lower-class, particularly colored Brazilian.

Table 5 Change in Rate of Interethnic Marriage of the Japanese in Brazil by sex

Period	Male	Female
1908-1922	1.5%	0.4%
1923-1927	4.3	0.9
1928-1932	2.0	0.3
1933-1937	2.0	0.2
1938-1942	2.3	0.3
1943-1947	2.8	0.7
1948-1952	4.7	1.0
1953-1958	6.1	1.8
1958-1962	14.1	7.4

Source: Comissão de Recenseamento da Colônia Japonesa, Statistical Part 1964 : 356.

As the above table shows, interethnic marriages had been insignificant until the end of the 1950's. Harris suggests that when more than 50% of the members marry within a given group, the group is endogamous (1967 : 308-9). Until relatively recently, more than 95% of the Japanese used to marry within the group. At the turn from the fifties to the sixties, however, the situation changed radically. This fact is frequently referred either by sociologists or by the very group members as a definite indicator of the recent radical changes in the general Japanese group structure. It is said that the assimilational process is now in a "rush." In fact, it

is striking to observe that the rate of intermarriage among the Japanese males suddenly jumped from 2.8% in the forties to 6% in the middle fifties and 14% in the early sixties. Although I cannot here discuss this point in detail, I would like to point out a danger in interpreting this particular change in terms of more general structural change. In part, it can be attributed to the changing Japanese emigration pattern. A number of single male adults have migrated individually to Brazil in the fifties, particularly during the second half of the fifties, immediately after the postwar diplomatic normalization between the two countries, resulting in a radical unbalance in sex ratio within the Japanese group.

Table 6 The Japanese Immigration to Brazil during 1951-1962

Age	Male	Female	Balance (Male)-(Female)
10-29	14,446	7,248	7,198
Total	25,593	17,507	8,086

Source: Comissão de....., op. cit. : 398-401.

For example, in accordance with a mutual agreement made between two agricultural cooperatives, one in Japan and the other of the Nippo-Brazilian community, thousands of Japanese male adults were systematically recruited from the Japanese rural areas and sent to Brazil. In 1958, there were 88,604 females and 93,753 males in the 10-29 age group. There was doubtlessly a demographic pressure. It is obvious that the immigrant youth got nisei girls as their mating-partners and nisei boys in turn Brazilian girls. This fact fails to explain, however, a jump in intermarriage rate of the females in the early sixties. This figure may be more closely related to a structural change. Although intermarriage is certainly increasing, about 90% of the Japanese in Brazil were marrying within the group at least up to the sixties. If we consider the fact that a given Japanese is surrounded by 100 Brazilians because the Japanese population constitutes only 0.6% of the total population in Brazil their in-marriage rate is extraordinarily high.

As far as these five characteristics are concerned, the Japanese group in Brazil is certainly one of the most typical minorities. One point is, however, still left to be examined.

### 3

It is a very complicated matter to discuss empirically whether or not the Japanese are given "low esteem" by the Brazilians and in what way they receive "differential and unequal treatment" in their life in Brazil. Today many of the Japanese themselves deny existence of such a treatment; others admit it. In the prewar period, most of them unanimously complained about unequal treatments. The cliché about

the "absence of racial prejudice in Brazil" is dominant even among the Japanese. Many of the Japanese recognize that those who hold more "racial prejudice" are the Japanese themselves, rather than the Brazilians, the majority people.

In this section, I shall deal only with Brazilian attitudes in the face of the "Japanese problem" chiefly in the pre-World War II period. The prewar situation is, in spite of many claims to the contrary, not thoroughly different from today's situation. In any event, a diachronic approach is always indispensable particularly in dealing this kind of topic. (I intend to write a separate paper on the present situation.) Here, I use mostly materials published by the Brazilians, therefore they are inevitably the elite's opinions. Thus the Japanese problem is a Brazilian problem.

There have been three major manifested anti-Japanese movements on the national level in Brazil since the first arrival of the Japanese to Brazil. In 1923, in response to, it was said, the American idea on emigration of the American Black people to the Amazon region in Brazil, Fidelis Reis, a member of the *Câmara dos Deputados* (House of Representatives), issued project no. 391 on the strict prohibition of the "black race" and the restriction of the "yellow race" to Brazil. "Yellow race" meant in practice the Japanese (Botelho 1925). During several years following this project, there were many debates on the issue either in the House of Representatives or on newspapers. This movement was also directly related to the restricting immigration law established in 1924 in the United States. In this way it was only partially an anti-Japanese problem. In 1933-34, the restriction of foreign immigration was discussed in the national constituent assembly and as a result the quota system was adopted, after the United States, in the body of the constitution. The major promoters of the restriction law were Miguel Couto, Artur Neiva, and Xavier de Oliveira. The center of the debates was Japanese immigration, the protection of the national laborers, and national defense. This was explicitly an anti-Japanese movement and characterized by the strong nationalism of the Getúlio Vargas régime. In another national constituent assembly held in 1946 the Japanese immigration was again specifically discussed. Project no. 3165 presented by Miguel Couto (the son of the chief promoter of the former restriction law in 1933-34) and José Augusto stated, "Regardless of age and birthplace, all Japanese immigrants are prohibited from entering the country." Only the president's vote prevented the project (99 ayes and 99 nays) from being written into the new national constitution (*República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil* 1950 : 71-76). Many voted against the project, not because of the Japanese immigrants, but only because such a sentence does not fit the national constitution of a democratic country. This happened immediately after some notorious in-group factional terrorism (mainly by a secret society Shindo Remmei) was carried out among the Japanese community. It must be said, however, that the voting also strongly reflected the basic Brazilian views of the Japanese

people.

The most systematic and wholesale anti-Japanese movement was that of 1933-1934. Many public opinions, stereotypes, "theories," etc. came out. I shall sketch below some of the representative Brazilian ideas, mainly from this period, on the Japanese people.

Miguel Couto, the principal and most influential promoter of the movement, university professor of medical sciences, president of the Brazilian Academy of Medical Sciences in Rio de Janeiro, and member of the House of Representatives, was also one of the good students of Japanese culture. In a conference held by the Brazilian Association of Education, on July 2, 1927, he gave a lecture entitled "*No Brasil só ha um Problema Nacional: A Educação do Povo* (In Brazil There is only one National Problem: The Education of People)" and later published it in a booklet form. In it he said:

.....why don't we follow the model of the great Sun Rising Empire? I invoke that model, in homage to the glorious, extraordinary and admirable people, which gave to the world, from the confines of Asia, the most complete lesson of wisdom with regard to the use of government,..... And for paying the homage nobody fits better than the one who proclaims untiringly the irremediable disaster to which Brazil is devoted when the *marus* (Japanese ships.....note of the translator), in their uninterrupted going and coming, have voided all their cargoes into the Nippo-Brazilian territories (Couto 1927 : 8).

In his speech at a meeting of the national constituent assembly on February 16, 1934, he stated:

If you are not cautious enough in time and in every way, Brazil shall turn, within a small portion of time, to a Japanese possession,..... Here shall be Occidental Sun Empire, as is already decided there among the people of Sun Rising. They arrive here and establish quickly their domination: now, as you know, the masters are coming, who are your masters (República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil 1935 : 80).

He was quite aware of the underdeveloped conditions of Brazil. Japan was for him in some way a "developed" country particularly because of its successful institutionalization of education among the ordinary people. His primary worry and fear was doubtlessly that uneducated Brazilian *caboclos* (countrymen or hicks) were greatly negatively handicapped in competing with the culturally equipped Japanese immigrants for assuring their livelihood. He intended to stop the Japanese immigrants from coming in great numbers and to educate the Brazilian *caboclos* after the Japanese national experience in view of bringing about the national development of Brazil. In this way his anti-Japanese activities were a strategy for his overall project of national development. This is why he was "stubbornly," as the Japanese folks understand, anti-Japanese and extremely nationalistic.

Artur Neiva was one of the first and most active anti-Japanese ideologists. Like

Miguel Couto, his knowledge on Japan and the Japanese immigrants in Brazil was not superficial. For some time he lived in Japan and later he happened to work for the Japanese immigrants in Brazil. Besides being a professional scholar, he had abundant first-hand experiences on Japan and the immigrants. He remarked at a meeting of the national constituent assembly on February 3, 1934:

Directing the service of prophylaxis against malaria, I was able to prove perfectly in what conditions the Japanese have arrived, and to collate their capacity of work and of resistance, and their efficiency, in comparison to those of our humble and despised *jeca* (hick.....note of the translator).....

The Japanese peril is not in the question of the superiority or inferiority of the race — because I don't have such a prejudice — but in the superiority of organization. The *nipões* (slightly despised designation of the Japanese—note of the translator) are the miracle men of the organization, whereas we are the prodigy of disorganization (República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil 1935 : vol. 7, 337).

Celso Vieira continued writing for some decades in favor of the restriction of foreign immigration, particularly of the Japanese. In his well cited book *Aspectos do Brasil* (1936), he remarked:

The Japanese worker offers the model of hard working, patient, silent, honest, and cheap immigrants. What else would São Paulo like to get?

Certainly, nobody loses his sleep and tranquility before the Japanese groupings, which are dispersed in the immensurable vastness of Brazil.....How can we Brazilianize the Japanese and their offsprings? (Vieira 1936 : 35).

Who does not admire in this *colono* the disciplined and hard working spirit? If we isolate him as worker or farmer, he is the ideal type, who would never rebel against the meanness of salary and the weight of a burden" (Ibid. : 26).

In these sentences, we can see the typical attitudes of the ruling class people in Brazil in respect to what they expected from the immigrants, substitutes for former slave laborers. The Japanese are here conceived as the ideal employees or servants in the eyes of the power holders, but not the "ideal human." He was nevertheless against the Japanese immigration because of their inability for assimilation and because of the cultural, psychological, social, and physical distances (Ibid. : 38).

Mario de Sampaio Ferraz, in his widely read book entitled *Cruzar e Nacionalizar* (1938), discussed the points that despite their admirable and intelligent nature the Japanese are not adaptable and do not fit to the racial and ethnic milieu in Brazil because of the distance separating the two peoples, that the problem is not of superiority or inferiority but of race (he admits that the Japanese may be in some respect superior even to Europeans), and that due to the lack of education, organization, and other institutions, "the sons of the country" are not able to compete with the culturally armed foreign immigrants such as the Japanese in the process

of the natural selection (Ferraz 1938 : 143-150). He cites a fact that the Brazilian government gives free lands to the nationals who in turn sell them at once to the foreign immigrants (Ibid. : 150).

Xavier de Oliveira's point was the Japanese militarism and imperialism. "The next Manchuria in South America will be Brazil" is his famous phrase.

As seen above, these promoters of the anti-Japanese movement were seriously concerned with the national problems. They did not talk about the "low esteem" of the Japanese people, but rather their positive, eminent characters. All of them admitted that the national peasants and workers were not able to compete with the Japanese immigrants.

I am quite aware of the fact that these "official" attitudes do not necessarily coincide with the national leaders' personal feelings and that they are not those of the ordinary men in everyday life. But these facts have, I think, still some value in considering the nature of the Japanese minority group in Brazil and the Brazilian attitudes toward it. In a highly relative sense, Japan is a "developed" country and Brazil is an "underdeveloped" country. In the prewar period when more than 90% of the Japanese were living in the rural area, "Abrazilianization" meant virtually for the Japanese "acaboclozation" (creolization in a devolutional sense. *Caboclo* is here understood as hick). The term "nisei" was liable to carry a sense of "spoilt Japanese" at least to the foreign-born Japanese. The Brazil-born Japanese were viewed by others and frequently by themselves as "backward" in comparison to the newly arrived immigrants. This was not so much due to their ethnocentrism. It was partly due to the "developed" and "underdeveloped" conditions. To marry a Brazilian peasant boy or girl meant for the Japanese to "marry down."

To look at this point, we may distinguish two major groups of the Brazilians, that is, the "classes" and the "masses" (Leeds 1965 : 397). The oligarchic "classes" are very different from the "masses" (or the "lower people") in their symbolic and social attitudes in general and in those toward the Japanese minority group in particular. For example, the "classes" may look down upon the Japanese, and the "masses" may give some "high esteem" to them. But this is not always the case. There are many reversed cases. The Brazilian national pattern is highly diffused in both sectors. Moreover, the fact that the "aristocratic" coffee planters invariably looked down upon the Japanese can hardly be interpreted primarily in terms of minority-majority relations. The anti-Japanese ideologists cited above belong personally to the oligarchies, but they discuss the topic with relation to the "masses" and to the nation at large. Although Harris, neglecting the factor of "physical or cultural traits," classified the Brazilian "classes" (not in Leeds' sense) as minority groups, I cannot separate successfully the Brazilians into divided groups in contradistinction to the Japanese minority group. The conceptual opposition between the "Brazilians" and the "Japanese" is so strong that despite the strong differentiation

the "Brazilians" are one in the Japanese eyes, we must take into account the factor of "nation" to understand this point. Today most of the Japanese in Brazil maintain their national identity and loyalty to Brazil, rather than to Japan. This interplay of the national and group identifications constitutes as one of the central issues of minority-majority relations. The Japanese in Brazil are so strongly culturally and "racially" defined by the Brazilians and by themselves that I cannot, as far as the Japanese minority is concerned, eliminate the factor of "special cultural and or physical traits" from heuristically defining minority group. Once it is neglected, there is no reason for me to approach the Japanese in Brazil in terms of "minority group."

## 4

Wagley and Harris did not distinguish the term "minority" from "ethnic group." They chose the term minority simply because of "its wider international currency" (1958 : 4). If one distinguishes minority as "stratified group" from ethnic group as "non-stratified group," he probably classifies the Japanese in Brazil as an ethnic group. I cannot take this viewpoint, however, because non-stratified ethnic group is also subject to exploitation by the dominant, overprivileged group. To my mind, it is clear that minority-majority relations are those of dominant group vis-à-vis dominated group in terms of power distribution. Minority group should be defined primarily in terms of power. Power is, however, "difficult to measure, and it is difficult to observe" (Kahl 1957 : 10). I understand sociologists tend to put it in brackets strategically. It is interesting to note that many Brazilians see the power of the Japanese nation in the immigrants who have tended, in turn, to regard themselves as *kimin* (abandoned people or subjects) by their loyal nation. In this way a tiny group of "abandoned people" was in some sense "threatening" to a huge country. The factor of institutional support proposed by Yinger is for me not a central issue, because its lack is so generalized in Latin American systems, for example, even in many slave systems. Conflict as a variable (Harris 1967) does not help much in defining minority, because it is universal in any human relations. I am not convinced by the thesis of looking at systems of caste, class, and minority as a continuum. I think they do not have enough common denominators to be treated in a continuum. Minority group seems not to be always stratified in "superior" and "inferior," or low and high, ranking. By minority-majority relations I understand tentatively those between dominant group and dominated group in terms of power distribution within a framework of a nation, both of which are endogamous groups symbolically identified by the members and classified by others as such in terms of cultural and/or physical differences.



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