Feminized Migration, Community Activism and Grassroots Transnationalization in Japan*

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Japan's 1990 revised immigration law established a renewable 'long-term resident' visa category for non-citizens with Japanese ancestry (*Nikkeijin*) and their dependents. By the mid-1990s, this had resulted in an influx of more than 200,000 *Nikkeijin* workers, most of them from Brazil, of whom more than 40 percent were female. In the absence of governmental policy to incorporate immigrants into the nation's political and legal structure, Brazilian children growing up in Japan have encountered great difficulty in acquiring an adequate education. In response, a group of Brazilian mothers founded an organization, ALA Brasil, to help their children cope with study in a public school in Hamamatsu, Japan. In so doing, they collaborated with Japanese parents, teachers, local administrators and community activists, many of whom were also women. Global migration has thus brought dedicated citizens and non-citizens together in pursuit of shared goals, stimulating among them multicultural awareness and grassroots activism. In this process, gender has been found to play a pivotal role. This underlines the importance of gender analysis in achieving an understanding of social processes that can lead to the expanded participation of women in public roles in this era of decentralized power.

Introduction

The increasingly feminized migration in Asia requires that gender-sensitive policies and programs be implemented by receiving governments. Though migrant men are subject to many problems, women face problems specific to their sex and gender that require special attention (Yamanaka, 2003a). Nevertheless, most receiving countries in Asia have strict, nationalistic immigration policies rotating a pool of temporary workers while demonstrating little concern for the needs of migrants, especially those of women. In the absence of governmental protection, NGOs and civil society have played indispensable roles in filling gaps between governmental neglect and migrants' needs (e.g., Roberts, 2000). Recent studies, such as those in this volume, reveal that migrant women have also become increasingly vocal about problems with their employment and lack of rights in host societies. They commonly exercise their agency by organizing informal networks and mutual help associations in order to improve their working conditions and deal with other problems. These migrant organizations are usually based on shared national and ethnic ties, religious beliefs and social interests, and are often linked with community organizations in their countries of origin (Portes, 1999).

However, migrants frequently find it difficult to effectively address their problems on their own because their ability to understand the local language and collect information about protective laws and agents is inadequate. To reduce these cultural and institutional barriers, migrant organizations often collaborate with local citizens' organizations sympathetic to their situations. Together, these activists of diverse nationalities, ethnicities and classes work to fulfil the immediate needs of migrants, such as documentation, medical care and housing, and to advocate equal rights for non-citizen workers, and to provide cultural and legal guidance. This kind of civilian mobilization has recently drawn academic interest as a form of 'governance from below,' wherein ordinary citizens participate in "the exercise of power in a variety of institutional contexts, the object of which is to direct, control, and regulate activities in the interests of people as citizens, voters, and workers" (Robinson, 1996:347; see also Falk, 1993). When this kind of democratic governance is enacted transnationally, scholars find that it comprises a form of political 'transnationalism from below,' wherein coalitions of men and women of various nationalities, ethnicities and classes, exercise power for common goals transcending national boundaries (Guarnizo and Smith, 1998; Portes, 1999: Lister, 1997).

This article reports a case study of such governance and transnationalism from below exemplified by the community activities of Japanese Brazilian

mothers in Hamamatsu, central Japan.[1] Since 1990, the year Japan revised its immigration law, Japanese Brazilians have been granted renewable residence visas permitting them not only to be employed in Japan but also to live there with their families. This resulted in an influx of more than 200,000 Japanese Brazilians over the next five years, of whom 40 percent were female. Upon arrival, their Japanese ancestry notwithstanding, these Portuguese speaking Japanese Brazilians met systematic exclusion from the Japanese labor market, the administrative bureaucracy and the general public as a result of their nationality, culture and class. Japanese Brazilian children enrolled in Japanese public schools faced tremendous difficulty in understanding the instructions and materials given in Japanese. Meanwhile, as they studied in Japanese schools, their ability to speak Portuguese declined while their Brazilian identity was attenuated. In response, a group of Japanese Brazilian parents organized numerous activities to assist their children in meeting their educational goals and to enhance their understanding of Brazilian culture. In the process these immigrant activists, mostly women, collaborated with the local government and many citizens' voluntary groups, also composed mostly of women.

The results of this research show that in the absence of governmental policy facilitating immigrant incorporation, gender plays a critical role in motivating and mobilizing everyday activism across national and cultural boundaries. As a result, multicultural awareness and transnational identity are evolving among those citizens and immigrants who have participated in activities for shared goals.

Feminized Migration in Japan

Unlike other Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan, Japan officially prohibits unskilled foreign labor from being employed (Yamanaka, 1999). As a result, in response to labor shortages concentrated in occupations and industries shunned by Japanese, a number of 'back doors' have emerged through which migrant laborers have entered. This is revealed by the fact that as early as the late 1970s, Korean and Filipino

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[1] This is part of a broader sociological study of the Japanese Brazilian community in Hamamatsu, Shizuoka Prefecture and its vicinity, which began in 1993. To understand the 'return' migration experiences of Japanese Brazilians, in 1994 I interviewed migrants and others knowledgeable of migration issues in the Hamamatsu area. In 1995 I conducted a similar study in São Paulo, Londrina and Porto Alegre, Brazil (Yamanaka, 1997, 2000). In the fall of 1998, I lived in Hamamatsu for four months to investigate social interactions between local citizens and immigrants. That research, together with earlier and continuing research among Japanese Brazilians in Hamamatsu and Brazil, provided background for the present study.

women had arrived to be employed legally as skilled workers in the entertainment industry. In fact, however, they constituted a pool of inexpensive labor employed in activities unattractive to Japanese women: singers, dancers, bar hostesses and sex workers. The mass media coined the term, 'Japayuki-san' (women who go to Japan), that recalled the term 'karayuki-san' (women who go to China) used for Japanese prostitutes who went to Southeast Asia before World War II.

Many of these Korean and Filipino women overstayed their visas, thereby becoming unauthorized or irregular immigrants and were consequently arrested. Their numbers exceeded those of all categories of other foreigners arrested for being illegally employed (Ito, 1992, Morita and Sassen, 1994; Lie, 1994). These women formed the first wave of Japan's 'guest workers' in the late 1970s, but it was only after large numbers of male workers began to arrive in the late 1980s that the presence of unauthorized foreign workers came to be regarded as a significant problem. The belated attention by policy makers to undocumented employed female entertainers suggests that both racism and sexism played a role in determining policy priorities, and that women's work in the 'entertainment' industry is not, in fact, regarded as a legitimate form of employment (Ito, 1992). Rather it is stigmatized as immoral but tolerated because it is in demand.

By 1988, there had been a rapid increase in male arrivals from the Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan, South Korea, Malaysia and China in response to a rising demand for unskilled labor in manufacturing, construction and service industries (Morita and Sassen, 1994:156). The number of foreigners arrested for unauthorized labor also rose rapidly. Japan's policy prohibiting unskilled foreign labor continued to be an obstacle to both foreigners and their employers. Many factories went bankrupt when they failed to recruit sufficient workers. The incumbent conservative government, however, considered ethnic and class homogeneity to be of key importance to Japanese society in the context of progressive globalization. Faced with the dilemma of how to ameliorate the shortage of labor on the one hand, and maintain social homogeneity on the other, the Ministry of Justice came up with a solution. In December 1989, it revised the 1951 immigration law without changing its central provision that restricted imported labor to skilled occupations. The revision entailed the introduction of the following two measures designed to increase the supply of inexpensive labor while reducing unauthorized immigration and virtually stemming the tide of unwanted foreigners (Yamanaka, 1993, 1996; Cornelius, 1994; Weiner and Hanami, 1998).

First, the Revised Immigration Law made employers of unauthorized workers subject to criminal penalties – two years' imprisonment or a maximum fine of two million yen ($20,000). This was clearly designed to reduce

the flow of unauthorized workers, most of whom came from neighboring Asian countries. Second, it established a new 'long-term resident' (teiju) visa category, exclusively for non-citizens with Japanese ancestry (Nikkeijin) up to the third generation. This new category allowed the Nikkeijin, regardless of nationality, to stay for up to three years in Japan with no restriction on their socioeconomic activities (Yamanaka, 1996). Their spouses and children were also permitted to stay, usually up to one year. Visas of both the Nikkeijin and their families in this category could be easily renewed, as a result of which many of the immigrants remained beyond the initially designated periods.

The change in the law had an immediate effect on migration flows into Japan. In 1990, the year the law was implemented, there was an influx of Nikkeijin immigrant workers, mostly from Brazil, where the largest overseas Japanese population lived, that totaled more than 200,000 over the next five years (Table 1). Underlying this sudden exodus of citizens of Japanese ancestry from Brazil were, on the one hand, the serious economic and political crisis that plagued Brazil throughout the 1980s to the early 1990s, and on the other hand, Japan's unprecedented but short-lived economic boom (bubble keiki) from the late 1980s to the early 1990s that demanded continuous supplies of inexpensive unskilled labor (Tsuda, 1999). Upon arrival, the majority of working age Brazilian immigrants labored on assembly lines and shop floors in factories producing and assembling parts of automobiles, electric appliances and other manufactured goods. Commonly they signed short-term contracts with labor brokers (assen or haken gyosha) who in turn dispatched them to the factories where they worked as temporary laborers detached from the formal labor force (Roth, 2002:37-63). As this suggests, most Brazilian workers lack job security, health insurance, unemployment insurance and a variety of fringe benefits to which Japanese employees on permanent contracts are entitled.

From the beginning, this migration boom included a high proportion of females. In 1990, there were 21,145 registered Brazilian females in Japan, comprising 37.5 percent of the 56,429 total Brazilian population (Table 1). By 1998 their number had increased to 122,886 or 55.3 percent of a total of 222,217. The number and proportion of children under 14 years of age rose even more rapidly, from 2,709 (4.8 percent) in 1990, to 32,000 (14.4 percent) in 1998. These statistics indicate that Japanese Brazilian migration has been feminized and family oriented, rather than dominated by unaccompanied males. As discussed below, data on gender and family are crucial to an understanding of patterns and processes of settlement of migrants and their subsequent incorporation into the adopted countries. Literature on recent global migration to Japan, however, pays scant attention to gender specific issues and the family demographics of Brazilian Nikkeijin (254,394 in 2000)

TABLE 1
BRAZILIAN RESIDENT POPULATION IN JAPAN AND HAMAMATSU CITY, SHIZUOKA PREFECTURE, 1986-2001

| | JAPAN | | | HAMAMATSU CITY | | | | | | |
| | Brazilian Population | | | Brazilian Population | | | Total Hamamatsu City Population | | | |
Year	N of Residents*	% Female	% Age <14	N of Residents*	% Female	% Age <14	N of Residents	N of Foreigners*	% Foreign /Residents	% Brazil /Foreigners
1986	2,135	57.0	11.7	12	66.7	-	532,092	2,539	0.5	0.5
1987	-	-	-	26	46.2	-	536,587	2,689	0.5	1.0
1988	4,159	45.9	6.8	91	24.2	-	540,710	2,960	0.5	3.1
1989	14,528	-	-	815	34.5	-	543,759	3,864	0.7	21.1
1990	56,429	37.5	4.8	3,448	41.2	-	547,875	7,022	1.3	49.1
1991	119,333	-	-	5,771	43.5	10.3	549,962	10,973	2.0	52.6
1992	147,803	40.7	8.3	6,313	42.2	11.9	557,881	11,415	2.0	55.3
1993	154,650	-	-	6,288	42.9	11.8	560,660	11,348	2.0	55.4
1994	159,619	42.3	9.0	6,166	44.1	12.1	562,156	11,312	2.0	54.5
1995	176,440	42.4	9.8	7,011	44.2	12.9	561,606	12,327	2.2	56.9
1996	201,795	43.0	11.0	7,714	47.9	14.7	564,422	13,197	2.3	58.5
1997	233,254	43.8	12.8	9,639	44.3	16.7	568,796	15,469	2.7	62.3
1998	222,217	55.3	14.4	9,795	43.8	18.0	573,651	16,079	2.8	60.9
1999	224,299	44.7	14.8	10,431	43.4	18.0	577,489	17,074	3.0	61.1
2000	254,394	44.8	15.2	11,182	44.1	19.9**	582,095	18,591	3.2	60.1
2001	265,962	45.1	15.4	12,056	44.4	20.7**	587,048	20,446	3.5	59.0

SOURCES: Japan Immigration Association (1987-2002); Hamamatsu City Municipal Office (1987-2002).
NOTES: * N of registered foreign residents.
** Statistics for the years after 1999 indicate the percentage of children under 15 years of age in the total number of Brazilians in Hamamatsu.

who have become the country's third largest immigrant population, following the Koreans (635,269) and the Chinese (335,575) (Kondo, 2002:416).

Japanese Brazilian Women in Transnational Migration

"Birds of passage are also women…" (Morokvasic, 1984:886). This comment emphasizes the neglect of migrant women in the international migration literature. Japanese women, together with their husbands, were 'birds of passage' from the earliest stages of emigration following the opening of the country in 1868. In North America, from 1885 to 1890, 20 to 25 percent of the 89,000 Japanese immigrants to Hawaii were women (Nomura, 1989). The 1907-1908 Gentlemen's Agreement between the United States and Japan, while halting new immigration to the United States, permitted family members to enter the country as legal immigrants. Consequently, between 1910 and 1920, sizable numbers (about 17,000) arrived, most of them as 'picture brides' for immigrant Japanese men (Ichioka, 1980).

In South America, after the American gate was closed in 1908, Japanese emigrants headed for Brazil (Yamanaka, 1997). At this time Brazil was experiencing a labor shortage which had begun with the abolition of slavery in 1888 and was exacerbated by the expanding demand for coffee in Europe. Large coffee plantation owners (fazendeiros) first recruited farm hands (colonos) as contract workers from Italy, Portugal and Spain, and later from Germany and Japan. Unlike those Japanese who first emigrated to the United States, most of those arriving in Brazil were accompanied by their family members. In an effort to secure a stable labor force, employers' contracts required that a family unit comprise three to 10 laborers, aged between 12 and 45 (Suzuki, 1992:141). Frequently unable to meet this family requirement, the emigrants often created 'paper families' (koseki kazoku, 'constituted families'). Typically, a married couple incorporated relatives, friends or neighbors into their family unit and traveled together. Upon their arrival, many paper families were dissolved whereupon members reverted to their original relationships (Maeyama, 1996:43).

Such practices resulted from the outset in a high degree of participation of women in labor migration. In 1908, the first Japanese ship carrying immigrants to Brazil, the Kasatomaru, arrived at the port of Santos with 797 Japanese, of whom 180 or 22.5 percent were women (Yamanaka, 1997). Women continued to be part of migration flows in the next four decades. In the decade of 1911-1920, they represented 33.5 percent of the total of 26,947 immigrants. In the next decade, 1921-30, their proportion increased to 46.3 percent of a total of 70,914, dipping slightly in 1931-1942 to 39.2 percent of the total of 89,411. In the early period from 1908 to 1924, Japanese worked on contract as farm hands on large coffee plantations (fazedas) scattered in

Southern Brazil, primarily in the state of Saõ Paulo. These immigrant farmers and their families, mostly from southwestern Japan, intended to work for a few years and then return home with substantial savings. However, in the face of brutal working conditions, extremely low wages and autocratic employers, the immigrants' dreams of getting rich quickly and returning home were shattered.

Between 1925 and 1941, most Japanese left the plantations after completing their contracts and became independent farmers (*situantes*), first by leasing, then by purchasing, land in more remote and undeveloped areas. Away from cities and 'civilization,' these immigrants lived in their own ethnic settlements (*colonias Japonesas*), where Japanese language, school instruction and rural community ethos were maintained. In 1925 the Japanese government made it a national policy to promote emigration to Brazil, as a result of which the decade from 1925 to 1934 witnessed the peak of Japanese immigration to Brazil with more than 120,000 immigrants, among whom women accounted for 41 percent. This large influx of non-European immigrants, however, inevitably led to the anti-immigration policy of Brazil under its nationalistic government and its passage of the 1934 Constitution that drastically cut the admission of Japanese immigrants (Skidmore, 1990; Lesser, 1995, 1999). Japan's subsequent participation in World War II completely halted emigration from Japan to Brazil.

Japan's surrender in 1945 caused severe shock and much confusion among Japanese, most of whom had been convinced that victory for Japan was inevitable and their return to Japan would follow. As they came to realize that the country to which they had hoped to return no longer resembled the one they had left, most immigrants decided to settle permanently in Brazil. During the same period, Japan reentered the international community, giving rise in 1953 to a new flow of Japanese migrants to Brazil. The economic prosperity of Japan in the 1960s quickly eliminated the economic need to emigrate until, in 1973, the emigration program was discontinued. A total of nearly 60,000 Japanese had emigrated to Brazil between 1953 and 1973, of which an estimated 30 to 49 percent were women (Watanabe, 1994:126-128).

During the prosperous 1960s — the 'economic miracle' in Brazil — the Japanese Brazilian population underwent rapid internal changes. Following the war, declining agriculture pushed many immigrants to cities so that by the end of the 1950s almost half of all Japanese immigrants lived in cities of Southern Brazil. Lacking formal Brazilian education and not speaking fluent Portuguese, the first generation (*Issei*) immigrants and older members of the second generation (*Nisei*) immigrants, frequently undertook to establish small family businesses relying heavily on unpaid labor provided by family members. These generations, while persevering in family busi-

nesses, sought a brighter future for their sons by sending them to higher education for technical and professional training. Due to traditional gender roles, daughters received less education; most remained at home to assist their parents in family stores and farms until they married. By the mid-1960s the new middle class emerged, comprising younger Brazilian-born, Portuguese speaking, white-color second and third (*Sansei*) generation men, women and their children living in urban areas.

In the 1970s and 1980s the economic crisis that hit Brazil caused serious financial difficulty for most Brazilians, so many came to view emigration as a route to economic survival (Goza, 1994; Margolis, 1994). In the mid-1980s, a small number of older Japanese Brazilians who had retained Japanese citizenship and spoke fluent Japanese joined the exodus from Brazil. In June 1990 when Japan implemented the Revised Immigration Law opening the door to *Nikkeijin* without Japanese citizenship, stable middle class *Nisei* and *Sansei* followed in the footsteps of their parents to Japan. Prior to migration, many of them had completed education beyond high school and were enrolling in universities or entering white-collar occupations. By that time, extensive networks of recruiters and brokers between Brazil and Japan enabled job applicants without Japanese fluency to arrange employment prior to departure. Frequently, *Nisei* and *Sansei* men went first to Japan, whereupon they secured jobs and sent for their wives and children. Unknown but substantial numbers of *Nisei* and *Sansei* women also migrated independently without family or marriage ties. In Japan, almost all of these working-age Brazilians labored as assemblers or operators in factories, thus experiencing downward occupational mobility. However, few could resist the expectation of high income and large savings over a short period of time.

Immigration, Exclusion and Identity Change

Despite their Japanese ancestry, very few of these Japanese Brazilians had Japanese citizenship and spoke fluent Japanese upon their arrival in Japan. Consequently, most immigrants met widespread discrimination, grievous labor exploitation, and categorical political exclusion. Prior to the recent influx of Japanese Brazilians, most Japanese citizens living outside of major metropolitan areas had rarely if ever seen 'foreigners' or experienced their distinctive language, behavior and physical appearance. Because of a relatively high rate of interracial marriage in Brazil, the more than 200,000 Japanese Brazilians in Japan included a substantial number of non-*Nikkeijin* Brazilian spouses of *Nikkeijin* Brazilians and their *mestiço* children. Unfamiliar with *Nikkeijin* ethnicity and Brazilian nationality, many Japanese citizens soon came to regard Brazilians as cultural strangers and even dangerous intruders to their communities (Yamanaka, 2000, 2003b). Citizens found the

Japanese Brazilians to be disturbingly foreign and unwilling to conform to Japanese customs. Their complaints centered mostly on such everyday behaviors as Brazilians' irregular habits of garbage disposal, late night visitation with friends, and noisy congregation in public places — all of which were in violation of informally established community rules (Ikegami, 2001).

Although seemingly minor, such behaviors were sufficiently significant and resented by citizens that they came to comprise the basis for negative stereotypes of the foreigners as uncivilized, undesirable and untrustworthy residents and customers. In stores and restaurants that served immigrant customers, discrimination was common. Having experienced difficulty in communicating with foreign customers, some merchants became reluctant to serve them. The mass media have paid a great deal of attention to the increasing conflicts, violence and crimes allegedly committed by foreigners that were reported by police at both local and national levels. Such reports have further reinforced the public perception that foreigners are not only cultural strangers but also troublemakers, even criminals (e.g., Yamanaka, 2003b).

The suspicion and antagonism between these two peoples of shared ancestry has been the product of contradictory ethnic, national and class criteria employed by policy makers in seeking to attract inexpensive foreign labor to Japan (Yamanaka, 1996). By law, Japanese ancestry privileged these ethnic Brazilians by offering them long-term residence visas irrespective of occupation. The majority, however, end up comprising a reservoir of temporary workers hired by job brokers and farmed out to work in factories. There they perform essential but stressful manual jobs shunned by Japanese, while receiving few, if any, of the fringe benefits their Japanese co-workers enjoy (*see* Roth, 2002). Despite the fact that they pay taxes on their earnings, most city administrations exclude Brazilians and their families from enrolling in the National Health Plan.[2] Labor brokers rarely enroll their foreign employees in the Social Security Plan. In the housing market, Brazilians routinely encounter discrimination by landlords, most of whom are unwilling to lease apartments to foreigners. Frequently job brokers sublet apartments to their foreign employees during the period of their employment contracts. This sublet system severely restricts foreigners'

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[2] In 1993, following central government guidance, the Hamamatsu City administration adopted a policy whereby newcomer workers of foreign origin were no longer entitled to membership in the National Health Plan. Instead, foreign workers were instructed to participate in the National Social Security Plan, which combined health insurance with an expensive old age pension plan. For more details, *see* Roth (2002:69-73).

choice of residence and limits their occupational mobility. At the same time, because they are in the hands of their brokers, their private lives, particularly their children's schooling, are constrained by frequent and unpredictable changes of jobs and residential locations.

The systematic discrimination against Japanese Brazilians in every aspect of their lives in Japan has caused profound psychological shock to many of them, as a result of which many have come to redefine their ethnic and national consciousness. In their native Brazil, racial dynamics have historically revolved around the axis of 'white and black/native' relations. As a small ethnic minority, *Japonês*, are there regarded by the general population as constituting a social category racially and culturally removed from this axis (Maeyama, 1984: 455). The rapid upward economic mobility of Japanese has also distinguished the group from other racial and ethnic minorities. As a result of both of these factors, the Japanese in Brazil have come to define themselves as '*Japonês*' rather than as '*Brasileiro*,' thus exhibiting their own ethnic pride. Upon arrival in Japan, however, their ethnic pride plummeted as they found themselves regarded and treated as inferior to the 'true' Japanese. To escape this stigmatized image, the migrants came to define themselves as foreign — as 'Brazilians' rather than '*Nikkeijin*.' By intentionally shifting their collective identity from ethnicity to nationality, in accord with their emerging minority position, Japanese Brazilian immigrants have found psychological support for their long-term stay as 'foreigners' in the host community: 'outsiders' in their ancestral homeland. The sense of their cultural alienation in Japan has culminated in loss of feelings of belongingness to either Japan or Brazil. Many Japanese Brazilians remark poignantly on their isolation: "In Brazil, we were called *Japonês*, but in Japan we became '*Burajirujin*' (Brazilians). No matter where we go, we *Nikkeijin*, have no home."

Gender, Policy and Settlement

Since the 1980s, feminist scholars, such as Morokvasic (1984), have justifiably criticized the lack, or stereotypic nature, of academic attention paid to women and their roles in international migration and settlement processes in the destination. Most social science theories of civil society divide it into public and private domains, locating women and the family in the latter (Yuval-Davis, 1991, 1993). Theories of labor migration and immigration policies typically regard women as dependants of male immigrants, ignoring their economic and social roles entirely. By contrast, feminists point to the fact that significant numbers of women migrate on their own initiative, earning wages upon arrival for either their own or their household's goals. They note that patriarchal gender ideologies lead employers to regard

female workers as secondary earners, thus justifying wages lower than those for their male counterparts.

A paradox within male-centered immigration policies is the fact that European and American governments have allowed immigrants to reunite with their families but have paid little attention to the resulting large influx of wives and children. As a result, the rapid formation of communities of immigrant families has often escaped public attention and scrutiny. Once settled, as producers and reproducers, immigrant women have played central roles in uniting families, developing social networks and interacting with host populations, often through employment, daily household tasks and the education of children (Gabaccia, 1992; Kibria, 1993). But the state, markets and society have typically regarded immigrants as temporary workers, therefore defining their communities as short-term settlements of foreigners, with women and children as unimportant adjuncts. In countries such as Germany and Japan, where the 'differential exclusion' of immigrant workers has been practised, the state denies immigrants citizenship rights despite their prolonged stay and growing needs (Castles, 1997).[3] Thus, rigid nation-state ideology, together with prevailing male bias, contributes to increasing contradictions between official policy and unofficial consequences.

In 1998, the estimated 100,000 working-age Brazilian women, most of whom were engaged in factory labor, comprised the largest group of females of a single nationality and occupation in Japan's population of immigrants who arrived in the 1980s and 1990s. During the same period, 30,000 to 50,000 Filipino women arrived each year as 'skilled' entertainers who stay less than a year per contract (Japanese Ministry of Justice, 1998: 269). In practice, the majority of them served as bar hostesses or cabaret dancers. During the decade 1989-1999, in response to shortages of brides, especially in rural areas, 90,000 women from China, the Philippines, Korea, Thailand and Russia entered Japan to marry Japanese (Sadamatsu, 2002: 44). Moreover, throughout the 1990s, Japan had been home to an estimated 300,000 foreigners who had entered the country with valid visas (tourist, student, entertainer or other) and had illegally overstayed them to work in the unskilled sector (Morita and Sassen, 1993; Lie, 1994). Governmental statistics estimate that 40 percent of those illegal workers were females employed in service and manufacturing industries, of which the majority

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[3] According to Castles (1997: 115), differential exclusion is "a situation in which immigrants are incorporated into certain areas of society (above all the labor markets) but denied access to others (such as welfare systems, citizenship and political participation)."

were assumed to work in the entertainment and sex industries (Japanese Ministry of Justice, 1996).

The entry of immigrant women as factory workers and bar hostesses, but not as domestic workers, differs sharply from that of other labor importing Asian countries/ economies — Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan and Hong Kong — in that all others (except Korea)[4] utilize women workers primarily as domestic workers. As short-term contract workers, these foreign women are prohibited by their host governments from being accompanied by their families. Explanation of this contrast between Japan and its Asian counterparts requires investigation of gender ideology that is deeply embedded in Japanese culture and economy, together with its xenophobic immigration policy, in the context of the rapidly aging population and the dwindling unskilled female work force (Yamanaka, 2003a). It should be emphasized, however, that as a result of Japan's respect for 'blood ties,' Japanese Brazilian factory women in Japan are entitled by law to live and work in the country with their families indefinitely. As a result, by the late 1990s with the large presence of women, the gap between official policy (no unskilled foreign workers and short-term residence) and unofficial consequences (unskilled foreign workers and their long-term residence with families) was rapidly growing in those Japanese manufacturing cities where a sizable Brazilian population had settled.

Gender, Ethnic Enclave and Education of Children

With the arrival by 1997 of more than 10,000 Brazilians, Hamamatsu, a city of 570,000, witnessed the rapid growth of small Brazilian businesses in response to the needs of immigrants and their families (Yamanaka, 2000). These establishments, mostly Brazilian owned, include retail stores selling imported Brazilian food, drinks, clothing, cosmetics, books, magazines, newspapers, videos, tapes and compact disks. There are also a variety of Brazilian commercial services and cultural organizations, including restaurants, discos, banks, travel agents, documentation services, language schools, hobby and sports clubs, day-care centers and the like. Brazilian Catholic churches in various locations provide weekly Portuguese services for their congregations. Portuguese weekly newspapers and daily radio and television programs report Brazilian cultural and social activities and other news and provide important public space for communication and exchange of

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[4] Like Japan, Korea does not employ foreign women as domestic workers in private homes. Hye-kyung Lee (in this volume) discusses Korea's immigration policy and its increasingly feminized migration.

opinions within the immigrant population. Clearly, *Nikkei* Brazilians in Hamamatsu constitute a lively cultural enclave complete with familiar goods, activities and symbols.

Brazilian women, as well as their menfolk, are at the center of Hamamatsu's expanding multicultural social and cultural scene. This is demonstrated by the fact that a few *Nikkeijin*, usually those fluent in Japanese, interact and work with the main Japanese population, most conspicuously in the area of education. As Table 1 shows, 18 percent of the city's Brazilian population in 1998 were children under 14 years of age. In 1996, 372 of the 1,134 (32.8 percent) Brazilian children under 14 years of age in the city were enrolled in its public elementary schools and junior high schools (Ikegami and Kimpara, 1997: 17). Japanese teachers and the city's Board of Education were ill-prepared for the sudden increase in Brazilian pupils and experienced great difficulty in coping with it. In response, the Board of Education, the city administration and its affiliated organizations hired bilingual *Nikkeijin* women as advisors, coordinators and teachers to assist policy makers in the development of multilingual and multicultural programs. As early as 1992, in order to help immigrant children learn Japanese, the City's Board of Education launched a language class (*kotoba no kyoushitsu*) with the assistance of a voluntary group of female Japanese citizens. Such efforts by the city and citizens notwithstanding, the task of meeting the educational needs of immigrant children remained over-whelming.

The parents of Brazilian school age children growing up in Japan may choose one of three ways to fulfil their children's educational needs. They can enroll them in Japanese public schools, in Brazilian private schools, or neither. In Japanese public schools, instruction is provided only via the Japanese language, as a result of which most Brazilian children, especially those ten years and older, are linguistically and culturally unprepared to benefit from schooling. Moreover, as non-citizens, by law they are not required to attend schools, as a result of which the Hamamatsu Board of Education ignores those foreign children not enrolled in its public schools. By 2002 there were three private Brazilian schools in Hamamatsu where all instruction is given in Portuguese and whose credits can be transferred to schools in Brazil upon return. Most immigrant parents, however, cannot afford to pay the expensive tuition charged by the Brazilian private schools which receive very little financial support from either the Brazilian or Japanese governments. Consequently, many Brazilian children remain unschooled, or soon drop out. Many teenagers instead work in factories to make money. Others kill time roaming the streets in groups, which gives local citizens the impression that Brazilian teenagers are truants and delin-quents.

According to the 2001 statistics from the Hamamatsu Board of Education, of the 1,556 foreign children from 6 to 14 years old who were registered as residents of the city in the spring 2002, 816 were enrolled in the city's public elementary and junior high schools and 210 attended Brazilian schools (Hamamatsu City Board of Education, 2002a). Those in school thus account for 66 percent of the total number of registered children. The remaining 530, one third of the total number of foreign children, were considered not to be attending schools at all. These statistics capture the enrollment of school age foreign children at only one point in time. Because of the frequent relocation of their parents, enrollment figures for these children fluctuate widely over short periods of time. Moreover, they do not provide information about how enrolled children fare in Japanese schools. Recent studies by Japanese scholars report serious problems encountered by foreign children in schools, including language handicaps, inability to understand instructions and materials, misunderstanding and prejudice by teachers and school administrators, and social isolation and rampant bully-ing by their peers (Ota, 1996; Ikegami, 2001; Onai et al., 2001; Kobe Gaikokujin Shien Network, 2001).

A Case Study: Immigrant Mothers' Activism

Collaboration with the PTA and Town Association

In 1996, in response to the mounting problems faced by their children, a group of some 50 Brazilian parents and their sympathizers formed a support network in Takaoka township of northwestern Hamamatsu. This town and adjacent towns host many companies and factories subcontracted to the Honda Motor Corporation and therefore have attracted many Brazil-ian workers and their families. This influx has resulted in significant numbers of Brazilian children being enrolled in the town's publicly owned Mizuho Elementary School. Unfamiliar with Japanese language, education and school systems, immigrant parents were commonly confronted with a variety of serious problems. Heloísa Inoe, the group's leader and a former kindergarten teacher in São Paulo recalled, in an interview with a local newspaper, how and why she and other parents formed the volunteer networks:

> Many Brazilian parents did not speak Japanese and had consider-able difficulty in communicating with Japanese teachers. To im-prove the situation, some parents who were fluent in both Portu-guese and Japanese volunteered their help, translating papers and interpreting for conversations. This was the beginning (*Chunichi Shimbun*, 6 January 2002).

For the next four years, group members were busy with a variety of activities intended to assist their children in Mizuho. Those parents who had lived for some time in Japan taught the new arrivals about Japanese school customs and paraphernalia, including the pupils' backpack (*randoseru*), school lunch (*gakko kyoiku*), teachers' memorandum to parents (*hogosha renraku*), and their annual visit to a pupil's home (*katei homon*), etc. Those who returned to Brazil left behind their used textbooks, backpacks and clothes to be recycled among the new arrivals. Since most parents worked during the day, they could spare only a few hours in the evening and one day on weekends at most for participation in the parents' network. As the leader of the group, Inoe, a mother of two children, was the only full-time staff member, attending to planning, managing and coordinating school and community activities. Unable to speak fluent Japanese, she was usually assisted by bilingual members in her contacts with Japanese teachers, mothers and others. Inoe also taught Portuguese privately after school in response to Brazilian parents' concerns about their children's ability to speak in their Portuguese mother tongue. To make Brazilian children aware of their heritage, she and fellow members also organized many cultural and national activities common in Brazil such as Easter in March, the Carnival in February, Children's Day in October and Christmas in December.

Many mothers in the parents' network also earnestly participated in activities organized by Japanese mothers as part of the school's Parents and Teachers Association (PTA).[5] In 1998, when Inoe became a member of the PTA's Board of Directors, she was able to participate in the planning process of many events hosted jointly by Japanese and foreign parents. By 2000, the foreigners' PTA became formally integrated into Mizuho's PTA and was called the "Circle Rainbow" (*niji no kai*).[6] Typically, most PTA activities were held on weekend mornings at the school. In accord with traditional gender roles of both Japanese and Brazilians, it was mothers who usually represented the family. Beginning in 1996, twice a year mothers of different nationalities — Japanese, Brazilian, Chinese and others — cooked together Brazilian desserts, Korean pilaf, Japanese soup, Chinese dumplings, etc. Immigrant children and parents, together with Japanese children and their

[5] Information and materials about activities for international cultural exchange at the Mizuho Elementary School activities were provided by Yasuko Tsunoda (2003), the teacher in charge of its PTA.

[6] According to Tsunoda (2003), before 2000 the foreigners' PTA was called the "Foreign Parents' Association" within Mizuho's PTA. Because of its exclusionary implication, it was replaced by the Circle Rainbow which indicates unity of people in the world.

parents, participated in Japanese seasonal celebrations: the new year holiday (*oshogatsu*) in January, the doll festival (*hina-matsuri*) in March, the flying kite competition (*takoage taikai*) in May, the Milky Way festival (*tanabata-matsuri*) in July, the full moon festival in September, and the rice pounding festival (*mochituki*) in December. At times, mothers of different nationalities exchanged with one another their cultural customs and symbols. Brazilian mothers organized a samba class where they and their children helped Japanese mothers and children dance with fast-beat rhythm. In return, Japanese mothers helped immigrant mothers learn how to wear the *kimono* and to understand the unfamiliar customs and complex manners of Japanese weddings and funerals.

Brazilian parents' activities soon expanded from the school to the community. For decades, Takaoka's Township Association has celebrated its annual summer festival in the community's main park. In recent years Japanese residents had shown little, if any, interest as a result of which the festival had attracted fewer participants each year. But when, in 2000, the Brazilian group's members decided to participate in the festival, they brought with them the exotic music, dance and food of Brazil. In the festival's main program, Brazilian children danced the samba in colorful feathery Carnival costume, while their parents cooked *churrasco* (Brazilian barbecue) in a booth among the many Japanese food stands. In the evenings, many Brazilians in summer *kimonos* (*yukata*) joined the traditional folk dance (*bon-odori*) with Japanese community members who were also in summer *kimonos*. These lively scenes of international exchange drew large numbers of Japanese who packed the festival site, bringing unexpected success to the festival and appreciation by leaders of Takaoka's Township Association.

Collaboration with the City Government

Heloísa Inoe's term as a PTA Board member of the Mizuho Elementary School ended in 2000. By then she was firmly convinced of the importance of her group's role in bridging Brazilian and Japanese cultures. In January 2000, she founded the *Associação Latin America, Brasil* (hereafter, ALA), expanding its membership beyond Takaoka to all townships in Hamamatsu. The establishment of the citywide organization had unexpectedly paved the way for this small, theretofore relatively unknown Brazilian parents' group, to official and public awareness and participation. By 2001, ALA's reputation had reached the Office of International Affairs (OIA) of Hamamatsu's municipal administration whose officials had long wanted to establish a communication channel to the city's more than 10,000 Brazilian population. Until then, despite its rapidly growing numbers, the Brazilians had yet to

organize an association to represent a unified voice in the city administration.

This is not to suggest that Brazilians had never attempted to organize their community in Hamamatsu. A few years after their arrival, many Brazilians began to turn to religion, hobbies, arts and sports to enrich their lives that had theretofore been focused on saving money in order to return to Brazil as soon as possible. Since the early 1990s, therefore, there have been several organizations responding to specific interests in the Brazilian population. For example, the Brazilian Catholic Church has provided its congregation with advice and consultation in addition to a weekly sermon. Brazilian stores and restaurants have served as open spaces where customers socialize with one another. Brazilian schools have attracted parents to meetings and events related to educational needs. Throughout the city there are numerous small groups whose members pursue hobbies, arts, crafts, sports, etc. Yet, none of these organizations and groups has evolved into a citywide collective that unites the more than 10,000 Brazilians for achievement of their political goals.

In the mid-1990s, an attempt was made to establish a Brazilian organization unified by collective cultural activities. In his ethnography, *Brokered Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Migrants in Japan*, Roth describes a popular but short-lived Brazilian cultural center launched in downtown Hamamatsu by a young Brazilian man (Roth, 2000:92-117). It was a manifestation of the shift in goals and identities among many Brazilians as they made the transition from short-term migrants to long-term residents. It failed primarily because of weak leadership and resulting financial difficulty. Since then there have been a few attempts in Hamamatsu to establish a pan-Brazilian association, but none has garnered enough support to succeed.

ALA Brasil, composed of families with children enrolled in Takaoka's elementary school had been, until 2000, one of the small specific interest groups in the Brazilian community. Then, its five-year history of successful educational activities and its ability to reach out to Brazilian families beyond a single township, suggested to OIA officials that it could provide a reliable bridge to the city's Brazilian community. In this way, ALA became an official channel through which information was disseminated by the city about policies that were expected to be followed by all residents. These included garbage disposal practices, recycling procedures and disaster management plans. Because of barriers of language and culture, these policies had rarely reached Brazilians, thereby causing friction between them and neighboring citizens. The local mass media often reported successful collaboration between the city administration and ALA in reducing the barriers, thereby publicizing ALA's existence and enhancing its reputation to citizens and Brazilians alike (e.g., *Shizuoka Shimbun*, 5 March 2001).

ALA's largest contribution to the city's policy was yet to come until 2001 when OIA began to address problems of unschooled (*fushugaku*) foreign children that had attracted widespread public attention in Hamamatsu. A 1997 incident in which a group of Brazilian teenagers were found to have used drugs sold by underground gang members (*yakuza*) was of serious concern among educators, administrators and citizens, as it indicated a link between children who were not being schooled, and delinquent activities of adults (Hamamatsu City Board of Education, 2002b). The issue of unschooled children was also of serious concern in the Brazilian community.

In their homes, however, Inoe and ALA's members were confronted by the rapid 'Japanization' of their own children enrolled in Japanese schools. Some of them were born in Japan or brought to Japan by their parents at an early age. For these children, Japan was their homeland while Brazil was the parental homeland they had never seen. Their mother tongue was Japanese, while Portuguese was a second language imposed by their parents. Such erosion of Brazilian identity, together with the loss of Portuguese language among their children, posed a serious threat to the Brazilian parents, most of whom intended to return to Brazil in a few years. Some complained that their children spoke only Japanese as a result of which the communication gap jeopardized family solidarity. Some bilingual parents, recalling their own experience of growing up in Brazil and learning Japanese in an afternoon class, wished to send their children regularly to a Portuguese class in Japan. The cost of establishing such a class, however, far exceeded the group's financial ability.

Inoe and other ALA's representatives visited the OIA to request its support for their plan to launch a four-day after-school class for Brazilian children in which Portuguese was to be taught three days per week and Japanese was to be taught one day per week. The OIA's Director, Hisao Yasui, proposed an alternative plan. He was concerned about the looming issue of unschooled children in the city, and suggested that a Japanese class should be given thrice a week to currently unenrolled Brazilian children. After participating in this class, he suggested, they would understand Japanese and be ready to go to Japanese public schools. His office would find a venue, appoint Japanese volunteer teachers, and in addition, subsidize a once-a-week Portuguese class for these children. He believed that because they were in Japan, the children should learn Japanese rather than Portuguese. To Inoe and ALA's parents, the Director's proposal offered both a gain and loss. On the one hand, they were discouraged and offended by the city's strong emphasis on Japanese to the relative neglect of their native Portuguese. On the other hand, the Director's proposal was a significant step toward institutional support for Brazilian children who were not in school. Inoe reluctantly accepted the proposal for the benefit of

those children and helped OIA to recruit 10 Brazilian children for the Japanese class. In return, OIA appointed a voluntary, all-female group of Japanese language instructors, the Circle Sky (*sora no kai*), to teach the class. It opened in May 2001 in an unused classroom of the Mizuho Elementary School (*Chunichi Shimbun*, 22 May 2001).

Collaborations with Citizens' Organizations

As ALA Brasil's reputation grew in the city, Japanese citizens' groups who were interested in cultural exchange and multicultural education began working with it. During the decade of the 1990s, Hamamatsu witnessed the rapid growth of a wide range of voluntary services and activities among its citizens. Underlying this surge of community organizations in Hamamatsu, is a growing emphasis on self-governance at the grassroots throughout Japan. Arising from the ashes of the 1995 Kobe Earthquake, this civil society movement stresses voluntarism, public interest, non-profit making, and non-governmental organization (Tajiri, 2001:19). In contrast to traditional community activism serving the interests of specific neighborhoods, the new community activism addresses broad societal concerns such as education, health, aging, disability, environment, immigration and human rights. Women volunteers comprise a substantial majority of the new community activists (Japanese Economic Planning Agency, 2000, as cited in Tajiri, 2001:24). Under increasing budgetary constraints coupled with their rapidly aging populations, local governments are inclined to delegate policy projects to non-governmental organizations (Sakuma, 2001:147-148). In this age of decentralization of state power, the partnership between local governments and non-governmental organizations has been consistent with the interests of the national government.

The unprecedented influx of immigrant workers into Hamamatsu since the early 1990s has thus mobilized small but dedicated numbers of concerned citizens to organize a variety of community services for foreign citizens and their families. These citizens' services were intended to meet the needs of foreigners whose lack of citizenship denied them public services, legal rights and political participation. As early as 1990 the Hamamatsu Overseas Laborers Solidarity (*Herusu no Kai*) began consultation and mediation services for legal and unauthorized workers caught in labor disputes. In the mid-1990s, having witnessed increasing numbers of uninsured patients, health workers and civil activists launched the Medical Association for Foreigners of Hamamatsu to provide foreigners with free annual checkups in collaboration with local hospitals, professional associations and voluntary organizations. Similarly, Grupo Justiça e Paz (Group for Justice and Peace), a group of several nationalities headed by a female

Japanese citizen and a Brazilian Catholic priest, campaigned for foreigners' rights to health care, demanding that the national government attend to the inadequacy of current health insurance programs (Ikegami, 2001). During these years, in response to the lack of means by which foreigners could learn the Japanese language, a number of citizen's voluntary groups, many of whom were organized by women, offered free Japanese classes to foreigners (Takeuchi, 2001).

In response to the needs of the increasing population of long-term foreign residents in the city, citizen volunteers have recently expanded the scope of their community social service activities to include cultural and educational programs. For example, as part of its multicultural awareness program, in the summer of 2000 the Hamamatsu Non-Profit Organization Network Center (N-Pocket), a hub community network center run by female volunteers, provided seminars on health and health-related public services for immigrant communities. The following year N-Pocket, together with ten community organizations from throughout Japan, held a national conference on foreigners' health in Hamamatsu (Hamamatsu NPO Center, 2001). Similarly, in 2002 N-Pocket, together with twelve community organizations, organized a national conference on education in the city for foreign children (*Shizuoka Shimbun*, 22 September 2002). As another example, in November 2001, 50 university students from the city and adjacent areas, of whom 36 were female, formed the College Student Network, to provide a learning support program for groups of Brazilian children enrolled in Mizuho Elementary School. With the support of the city's OIA, it began its weekly tutoring in February in a community Center in Takaoka (*Shizuoka Shimbun*, 27 January 2002).

Gender and Activism in the Transnational Context

The progressive expansion of ALA Brasil's activities generated the productive and enriching interactions and relationships of Brazilians with Japanese citizens described above — a sharp contrast with the deep alienation experienced by the majority of Brazilians in Hamamatsu. While this small group of Brazilian parents in Takaoka were equally subject to institutional discrimination as other Brazilians, they united to act on behalf of their children as they confronted the problems of growing up in Japan. For six years, from 1996 to 2002, ALA's leaders planned and carried out numerous weekend activities with educational and recreational goals for their children and families. Many adult members participated in them enthusiastically in their limited time free from their taxing factory labor. Female members also joined in weekend activities organized by Japanese women as part of the PTA annual events for the elementary school where their

children were enrolled. In recent years the ALA group has attracted the attention of the city's administration and citizens' groups as a result of its multicultural activities and education. In January 2002, Heloísa Inoe returned to Brazil after which the vice president, MihoMiike, succeeded to the organization's presidency to continue and expand Inoe's leadership. ALA's achievements stand out as an exceptionally successful case among the numerous groups and networks that exist in the city's Brazilian community. Having ascertained this to be the case, the question for this research remained: what explains ALA's unprecedented success?

Interviews and surveys conducted among 25 member families of ALA Brasil between 2002 and 2003 reveal several socioeconomic, historical and cultural factors contributing to its success, in addition to the superior leadership and whole-hearted dedication of its president, Heloísa Inoe.[7] Results from written surveys indicate that prior to their migration to Japan almost all members — both males and females — in the study had obtained education beyond high school, after which the majority had engaged in white-collar occupations such as secretary, bank clerk, teacher, engineer, nurse, accountant, technician and retail sales. More than 80 percent of the families surveyed had migrated to Japan in the late 1980s to mid-1990s, and had lived in Hamamatsu for more than five years. This suggests that they have acquired considerable familiarity with Japanese culture and language while securing relatively stable employment and community lives. Interviews with 15 member families reveal that eight of them currently live in the city's apartment developments, thereby avoiding intervention by their employers in their private lives. These socioeconomic and residential conditions have undoubtedly been conducive to the development of long-term friendship and solidarity among the members as well as shared goals and feelings of identity.

The personal interviews also drew out informants' emotions and values embedded deeply throughout the one-century history of Japanese migration to Brazil. The recent return to Japan by Portuguese speaking *Nisei* and *Sansei Nikkeijin* generations exposed them to unexpected discrimination at the hands of Japanese, from whom they had expected to be welcomed. In response, they reoriented their collective identity in Japan from *Nikkeijin* to Brazilian. This is an example of the fact that ethnicity is subjectively defined as a result of the nature of social interaction with other groups. Conse-

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[7] The study was conducted from July 2002 to February 2003. The survey questionnaire, in Portuguese, was distributed to the 50 member families of which 20 were returned. Personal interviews were carried out in either Portuguese or Japanese in the homes of 14 member families. Heloísa Inoe, who had returned to Brazil before this study was conducted, provided her information through e-mail exchange.

quently, ethnic identity is constantly renegotiated, reconstructed and redefined as the groups' position in society alters over time (Barth, 1969:9-39). Historical continuity is important in this process because members of the group inevitably turn their attention to their ethnic roots in search of 'authentic' cultural symbols representing their 'traditional' ideals and beliefs. For Jenifer Yamazaki, a university educated mother of two children enrolled in Mizuho Elementary School, the authenticity of her *Nikkeijin* identity was grounded in her father's emphasis on education while she grew up in Brazil with eight siblings. Her belief in unbreakable family unity also distinguishes her as Brazilian from Japanese.[8] In recent years, however, her 12 year-daughter Emily's decreasing ability to speak Portuguese has been of a serious concern to Jenifer. She predicts that her close relationship with her daughter will be undermined in the next few years if the daughter enrolls in a junior high school in Japan. Jenifer therefore plans for her family to return to Brazil in order to prevent the probable family breakdown she foresees.

Historical continuity in Japanese immigration to Brazil is also demonstrated by three ALA leaders and coordinators of the Circle Rainbow — Miho Miike, Nahoko Mazakina and Nair Saito — when they recall their upbringing in the cities of Southern Brazil. All of them grew up in cities in which Japanese immigrants were well organized for community affairs through their community center, the *Nikkeijin* Club. Their parents took active part in activities intended to enhance solidarity and cultural preservation among Japanese immigrants. From early childhood, Miho, Naoko and Nair were socialized in Japanese culture, learned fluent Japanese by attending after-school Japanese language classes held in the Club. According to Putnam (1995), dense networks of reciprocity and civic solidarity constitute a basis for grassroots democracy and effective governance among citizenry. By drawing an analogy with the concept of human capital as enhancing individual productivity in the economy, Putnam (1995:67) defines 'social capital' as "features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit." This notion of collective action among ordinary citizens helps to explain why and how members of ALA Brasil, some of whom were socialized into community activities in Brazil, have been successful in organizing activities for their own children growing up in Japan while also developing their Brazilian identity.

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[8] Brazilians frequently observe that in Japan work is more important than family. By contrast, they say, the family is more important than anything else in Brazil: "Brazilians work to live; Japanese live to work" (Yamanaka, 1997:26).

Conclusion

Feminized migration gives rise to women-centered problems and identity based on their sex and on shared class, ethnic and national identities (Sassen, 1998). Feminized migration also tends to result in long-term family settlement in the host society, provided that such family reunification is permitted by governmental policies (Castles and Miller, 1998). The centrality of women in the subsequent process of incorporation of immigrants into local institutions is demonstrated by the fact that it is they who interact with local citizens, shopkeepers, teachers and administrators in carrying out the daily household and childraising tasks traditionally assigned their sex (Kibria, 1993). Rigid nation-state ideology and governmental neglect, combined with male bias, results in failure to address the needs of non-citizen populations, especially of women and children. The shared experiences of exploitation, discrimination and forced assimilation cause immigrants, women and ethnic minorities to develop the collective consciousness and common interests that lead them to rally for change (Portes, 1999; Naples, 1998). Economic globalization thus sparks grassroots activism and transnationalization among committed citizens and non-citizens as it brings them together across the boundaries of ethnicity, language, class and citizenship in pursuit of common goals.

In the example analyzed here, Japanese Brazilians in Japan, because of their alien status, have been denied access to most citizenship rights, including children's education and socialization in their mother tongue and culture. As a result, a substantial proportion of Japanese Brazilian children are not enrolled in schools, and those enrolled face severe obstacles to understanding Japanese instructions and materials. The failure of the government to attend to this devastating problem is ironic and inexcusable in view of the fact that governmental policy has encouraged their families' migration because, on the one hand, they share ancestry with Japanese and therefore could be expected to assimilate easily into Japanese society, and on the other hand, they comprise an inexpensive and willing source of labor. In response, immigrant mothers have assumed what should have been the government's responsibility, by taking charge of improving educational opportunities for their children in Hamamatsu. At the same time, they have done what they can to preserve Portuguese and Brazilian identity among their children who are rapidly turning Japanese through their Japanese schooling. In their PTA activities and community affairs, the Brazilian mothers have been able to build rapport with local citizen volunteers most of whom are women. The city government has also been receptive to their role in bridging the chasm between Brazilian and Japanese populations.

This research shows that grassroots cross-cultural exchanges comprise a small-scale but tangible form of transnationalization now occurring in Hamamatsu where, before 1990, most citizens rarely had contact with non-citizens. Citizens and immigrants have begun to interact with one another in community activities, as a result of which the two parties are developing a sense of shared 'global citizenship' in the absence of shared national citizenship (Soysal, 1994; Lister, 1997:56-57). That is, by carrying out projects together they are in the process of achieving a collective identity and shared societal history that crosses national boundaries. In this process gender has been a pivotal force. It motivates and mobilizes activism among both nationalities, thus triggering grassroots transnationalization — a form of social transformation in which everyday practices and relations of ordinary people generate "multiple and counter-hegemonic powers" for promoting equality and multiculturalism (Mahler, 1998:64). Findings from this research suggest the critical importance of understanding women's expanding public roles in this age of global migration, decentralization of power and an aging population. As women are increasingly drawn into public affairs, they will play a key role in challenging the existing gender dynamics in order to meet the needs of all who are denied citizenship rights because of institutional, legal and cultural barriers (e.g., LeBlanc, 1999).

This study suggests specifically that there are growing contradictions in governmental immigration policies in Japan. One such contradiction is the significant gap between the national government and local governments in their policies relating to the incorporation of immigrants into political, social and legal structure of the state (Tsuda and Cornelius, 2003; Kondo, 2003). The government of Japan remains indifferent to such policies because it denies that Japan is a country of immigration, and has therefore adopted an immigration law that merely regulates border control while ignoring the plight of immigrants. As a result, local administrations and concerned citizens are left to struggle within their own jurisdictions against budgetary constraints, while relying on their limited resources of voluntarism for practical solutions to the mounting problems associated with immigrant health, housing, education, culture and human rights. The fact that the Hamamatsu government has launched its own educational program for immigrant children puts this local authority at odds with the national government and far ahead of fulfilling the responsibilities of governance. In the glaring absence of guiding national policies, the local government is relatively flexible and free to devise local internationalization projects (Tegtmeyer-Pak, 2000). But without a national consensus, local autonomy is prevented from being exercised and voluntarism is inadequate to address such national issues as bilingual education and the cultural rights of

immigrant children growing up in Japan. Consequently, current efforts by local authorities and by groups of citizen and non-citizens to enhance educational opportunities and quality for immigrant children are at best highly experimental (Kobe Gaikokujin Shien Network, 2001). An examination of ALA Brasil's achievements and emerging transnationalization at the grassroots, therefore, can only be understood in the context of the limited and damaging effects of Japan's immigration politics above the local level.

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