

# **“Tudo filho de Deus” – The social integration of Latin Americans in Tokyo**

Dissertation  
zur Erlangung der Würde des Doktors der Philosophie  
der Universität Hamburg  
Fachbereich Japanologie

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Mündliche Prüfung: 28.05.2013

aus Hamburg  
Hamburg 2013

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## **I Introduction**

Worldwide migration flows have been increasing due to globalization and more flexible labor markets. Nations have been reacting to these global movements by restricting entrance for some and facilitating it for others, based on economic benefit, professional needs, or ideological beliefs. Independently from a single nation state, the debate about highly skilled migration has been emphasizing the importance of so-called hard skills of migrants, for instance formal education, language, and professional skills, in the industrial nations. Demographic change in Japan is becoming more and more of a political and a social challenge. The traditional, Confucian-based, understanding of gender roles is loosening; more and more people opt not to get married and have children. Extremely long working hours, a deficient day-care system and narrow spaces do certainly not help. Foreign workers are thus needed to fill the increasing void on the labor market and also to cover the expenses for the ever increasing number of retirees. Whether or not the actual outcome will match the government's output, however, is yet to see for migrants in Japan, especially those from non-Asian countries, do not plan to settle permanently but rather to work for a certain number of years and then move back home. Koreans and Chinese are still the largest minorities in Japan. However, the number of Brazilians has been increasing and constitutes at present the third largest minority (<http://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/IB/ib-01.html>). Differently from countries such as Canada, Japan has been focusing on ethnicity rather than on skills. While, for instance, Canada still actively promotes migration, it does so within clear-cut conditions. The Canadian point system has become famous or infamous, depending on whom one may ask; in any case it awards points for determined skills, in recent years mainly technical and educational. Migrants who do not meet the criteria have very low possibilities to live and work legally in Canada. Likewise, Australia has recently been focusing on migrants who benefit the Australian economy and has increased border controls to keep out others (Castles and Miller: 2009: 121). The two countries are examples of skill-based migration. Japan, on the other hand, has placed greater importance on ethnicity based on the assumption that migrants of Japanese descent will be easier to integrate into Japanese society. It exemplifies migration based on ethnic

descent. Among descendants of Japanese migrants from Latin America take up a substantial part.

### **Theoretical Premises**

Migration studies comprehend a large field and have evolved into an increasingly interdisciplinary subject with a variety of theories and models (Castles and Miller 2009: 21). It can be structured in three units of analysis or levels: the macro, meso and micro level.

The macro level focuses on the political, economic or legal framework of migration. It entails aspects such as global market, migration laws and strategies to promote or prevent migration. Relevant research disciplines in this field are political science, demography, political sociology, geography to some extent, among others.

The micro level, on the other hand, is interested in individual cases and experiences, mostly in anthropology, but also in legal studies, history, and economics. In the last decades, one more level has developed: the meso level. Half-way between the macro and the micro level of migration studies, the meso level looks for what connects political or economic frameworks to the individual. The keyword here is social networks, or social capital. Extensively researched in sociology (Putnam 2000), but also in anthropological studies, networks and the social capital they include provide an important insight into the mechanisms of migration (Castles and Miller 2009: 28). The three levels, however, are not to be seen as three entirely separated units of analysis but rather as interconnected and flowing.

Sociology has begun to focus not only on the macro, but increasingly on the meso level of migration. As mass migration and with it migrant communities have been increasing over the last decades network analysis has gained in importance. Half-way between economic and anthropological migration theory, kin and community are being increasingly focused on. Key words such as network analysis and immigrant transnationalism suggest a change, or rather an expansion, of theorizing about migration (Castles and Miller 2009: 21; 27; Santiago Cruz 2011: 66). Where sociology is more interested in the networks as such, i.e. the meso, sometimes even macro level, anthropology researches the micro level of

migration that is individuals and households living abroad. It is interested in individuals and in their experiences in the new country. Questions of identity and cultural peculiarities are often in the center of attention, mainly from the migrant's perspective (Brettell 2008: 116). However, recent research has started to focus on the meso level as well. Jenkins characterizes social anthropology and sociology as two neighboring and historically related academic "ethnic groups", social anthropology being positioned within what he very eloquently calls the "greater sociological tribe" (Jenkins 1997: 7).

There is a common denominator, not necessarily connected to migration but applicable on all three levels throughout society. It is the concept of life chances (*Lebenschancen*). Starting in the late 1970s Dahrendorf tried to theoretically define this terminus that deals with social inequality, social change as well as migration processes (Beuchling 2003: 273; Dahrendorf 1979). According to his view, life chances are crucial in order to understand social inequality within and between societies. They offer a range of individual possibilities within a socially structured frame for the individual, groups and society as a whole (Dahrendorf 1979, in Beuchling 2003: 274).

In the context of this study, life chances are crucial when it comes to understanding seemingly different sets of values. Often it is what I want to call social reality, rather than an actually different perception of values, that leads people to their actions. A person from a lower socio-economic stratum in an Andean country may well understand the importance of human capital. His social reality, however, may not permit him to act upon this consciousness because of his limited life chances which obligate him to make a living first. This is probably the main reason why I argue that intercultural competence is important and should not be dismissed as trivial or 'commonsense', especially in the area of social sciences.

### **Human, Cultural and Social Capital**

*Não há educação fora das sociedades humanas e não há homem no vazio.*

(There is no education outside human societies, and there is no mankind inside an empty space).

Paulo Freire 1981: 35

We can define capital as the investment of resources with expected returns in the market place. Capital is resources when these resources are invested and mobilized in pursuit of a profit – as a goal in action. Thus, capital is resources twice processed. In the first process, resources are being produced or altered as investment; in the second, the produced or altered resources are being offered in the marketplace for a profit. In one instance, capital is the outcome of a production process (producing or adding value to a resource); in the other, it is the causal factor in a production (the resource is exchanged to generate a profit). These are processes because both investment and mobilization involve time and effort” (Lin 2001: 3).

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1983, 1986/1990) used the economic concept of “capital” to indicate resources that can be acquired over time and classify social strata. He divided capital into three aspects: volume, composition and trajectory. Volume refers to the mere quantity of capital, while composition designates the prevailing form of capital in a particular case: economic, cultural, and social capital. Cultural capital is defined by what Bourdieu called *habitus*, namely upbringing in a particular social environment, and education. Based on this social environment the individual develops taste, knowledge and preferences which add up to cultural capital (Hall et al. 2003: 47). According to this view, a large amount of cultural capital is often accompanied by an equally large amount of economic capital, the further permitting the individual to acquire the latter. I want to include language in cultural capital being well aware of the fact that it touches the areas of human and social capital as well. Nevertheless, it is language in the concept of cultural capital that makes the individual part of a cultural group and thus enables investment in social capital, i.e. human networks. A person who has learned the basics of a foreign language will still lack the cultural competence that comes with acquisition from an early age on. If we see language as a mere tool for professional advancement this is perfectly acceptable. In order to be accepted by a cultural group as an insider, however, this will most likely not be sufficient for language encodes much more than semantic meaning. It fulfills a communicative function, but not only (Hidasi 2005: 162).

The most recent form of capital is human capital. Since the early 1960s economists have been placing more and more attention on people to define economic growth, namely on their abilities and their knowledge. In 1961 the US-

economist Theodore Schultz remarked that people constituted an important part of global wealth. People willing to accumulate human capital constantly invest time and money in their education, not only for education's sake but hoping that their efforts will translate into higher salaries and professional credibility as well as social prestige. Formal education has gained in importance in the wake of globalization and ever increasing competition on the global labor market.

Accordingly, there has been a focus on highly-skilled migration and governments' desire to increase the influx of highly educated workers, in other words those who dispose of a high level of human capital. On the other hand, this growing number of highly-skilled individuals leads to an over-saturation of the global labor market leaving people unemployed or in positions they could have worked in with a much smaller amount of human capital.

According to Esser (2006), language is part of productive human capital and has a direct impact on demand and positioning on the labor market. I include language in the sphere of cultural capital, being well aware of the fact that it touches the areas of human and social capital as well.

Social capital is rather about human networks, about "who you know" (Hall et al. 2003: 47). The terminus has been defined various times since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; most famously maybe by Bourdieu in the 1980s to emphasize the social and economic potential that can be found within social connections. Social capital can thus increase social and economic productivity through contacts and human connections (Putnam 2000: 19).

Cultural capital most often assumes, and is understood as, the shape of knowledge and cultural abilities the individual acquires not primarily through formal education but through socialization.

Sociologist Bourdieu defined social capital simply as "relations", pointing out that ordinary language often described important social facts very poignantly. The construction and maintenance of social capital takes time and energy. Further, it can be converted into, or arise from, economic capital, in other words, social capital carries an economic innuendo as a production of the group's members (Bourdieu 1984: 55).

Sociologist Lin defined social capital as capital that is captured primarily through social relations, thanks to actors' connections and their access to resources in the social network they are part of. Potentially useful resources are embedded in



social networks and can be accessed and used by actors for actions (Lin 2001: 19, 25).

Migration scholar Brian Keeley (2007: 102, 16) defines social capital as shared values and views that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and collaborate in a given society. Social capital consists of multiple layers made of social contacts, memberships in different organizations, the feeling about society, among others.

For this study, I have defined human capital as formal education, or hard skills. Cultural capital, on the other hand, is the sum of what an individual has acquired over time inside his family and through socialization, including language.

Language and culture are inevitably linked and form a substantial part of identity.

In the case of adult migrants, learning the language of the host society comports cultural knowledge to a certain degree. Thus, language can, but need not, be considered human capital. For my study, I define it as part of cultural capital for it allows individuals to open up to the host society's cultural peculiarities and facilitate contact with the locals, which brings me to the third form of capital:

social capital. As I have argued above, a person can work in a less-than-prestigious profession and yet feel comfortable and socially integrated thanks to social networks. I am aware of the fact that the three forms of capital are not always clear-cut and can interfere with each other, much like sociology and anthropology overlap and touch each other in migration theory and research.

Likewise, social reality is not clear-cut either and in constant motion. Putnam (in Keeley 2007: 107) argued that social capital increases educational performance, which is human capital, and vice versa. No matter what conclusion one draws from here, it is obvious that human-, social-, and cultural capital are interconnected and influence each other.

### **This Study**

This study tries to give an insight in the social reality of Latin American migrants in Tokyo from their perspective and investigate the factors necessary for their feeling socially integrated. I have tried to achieve this through a qualitative-empirical approach which reflects the opinions and actions of my participants. The presence of ethnic, linguistic and cultural minorities on the territory of today's Japan is by no means as recent a phenomenon as commonly assumed.

Ainu, burakumin, Chinese and Korean minorities hint at the dimension of cultural diversity in Japan (Mackerras 2003: 3, 11). However, it was not until the 1980s and Japan's so-called bubble economy that migration has been acknowledged by the public, starting to make its way into most social aspects. In the wake of the amendment of the Japanese immigration act of 1990, several important studies on migrants, mostly Brazilians, have been conducted and published (De Carvalho 2001; Del Castillo 1999; Linger 2001; Tajima 2003; Tsuda 2003). However, it is necessary to also take into account migrant groups of less frequent nations.

This study differentiates itself from other studies through variation within the sample and a different field work location, Tokyo. Most empirical studies are concerned with *nikkeijin*, descendants of Japanese, who work mostly in factories in industrial towns, especially in the prefectures of Aichi and Shizuoka. Migrants from Latin America tend to be labeled as "Brazilians", or "*nikkeijin*", other nationalities and ethnic descent being left out. Also, most studies focus on *nikkeijin*, that is on descendants from Japanese (hence the common label).

Recently scholars have begun to criticize this approach (De Carvalho 2001; Del Castillo 1999; Tajima 2003); the overall tenor, however, is still one of perceived national, cultural, and linguistic homogeneity. While this is of course understandable considering the actual numbers of *nikkei* Brazilians compared to other Latin Americans in Japan, this study has chosen to include different nations and ethnicities of Latin America in order to show the variety among this group and help narrow a gap in current research. The perceived homogeneity from the side of the Japanese compared to the actual cultural and linguistic diversity within the Latin American community reflects the perceived ethnic, cultural and linguistic homogeneity of Japan as a whole compared to the actual diversity (Refsing 2003). Similar to the seemingly homogeneous Japanese society, the perceived Brazilian enclave is made of more than Brazilian nationals of Japanese ancestry.

The second largest concentration of Latin Americans can be found near to Japan's main industrial areas, mainly in the prefectures of Gunma, Shizuoka, Aichi and Tochigi. Dominated by factories, these areas have attracted the biggest number of workers from Latin America, many of them of Japanese descent (Kawamura 2003: 408; Tajima 2003: 499; Tsuda 2003, 2004, 2006). Since they are allowed to reside and work legally in Japan, but many of them lack the language skills to

work in a white-collar position, factory work has been the most obvious source of income for many. Also, social inequalities are held responsible for Latin Americans working mainly on blue-collar positions. If we narrow the view from migration to Japan in general to the Latin American minority and specifically the minority residing in the Tokyo area, some remarks on the background of Latin American migration to Japan become necessary.

The area does not have the highest percentage of Latin American migrants but it shows great variety. People from different Latin American countries, varying considerably in age, academic background, ethnicity and occupation form a rather heterogeneous group. The premises are thus different from those found in 'typical' locations such as Hamamatsu in Shizuoka prefecture where the majority of migrants come from Brazil and, to a lesser extent, Peru, most of them holding factory jobs (Ikegami 2003; Linger 2001; Tsuda 2003, 2004, 2006).

This study has investigated the factors that are relevant for the feeling of being socially integrated. This might differ from objectively seizable factors such as income, legal status, etc. A person can fulfill all of those criteria and still feel excluded or alienated. This study hopes to contribute to theory building through an empirical approach as well as increase sensibility toward a topic that has been of great importance for the last decades and is likely to increase further due to worldwide migration.

### **Migration and Social Integration**

Esser defines social social integration as the participation of individual social actors in already existing systems. This includes the acquisition of knowledge, cultural concepts and norms (acculturation), making use of rights, taking on positions in relevant sectors of the labor and housing market as well as access to all relevant institutions (placement), interaction with the locals and inclusion in social networks as well as the identification with the local social system and its values (Esser 2003, 2006).

Social integration is of course partly subjective. This study is concerned with the feeling of being socially integrated and tries to investigate them through an empirical approach based on participants' experiences in Japan. I am aware of the fact that one small-scale qualitative study cannot explain all phenomena, nor can

it claim universal validity. It grasps the social reality of a group of people in the context of space and time. Different empirical studies, however, help and are necessary to see the big picture (Putnam 2000).

### **The Legal Circumstances of Migration**

Due to Japan's growing economic strength and the unfavorable situation in most Latin American countries (Tsuda 2003: 84), migration to Japan began in the 1970s. The Japanese government was under pressure for labor shortage could not be filled with Japanese workers and the country did not allow unskilled foreign workers (Ikegami 2003: 521; Tsuda 2003: 92). Due to an amendment of the Japanese immigration act in 1990, foreign workers were allowed into the country if they could prove Japanese ancestry up to the third generation (Del Castillo 1999: 108; Morita and Sassen 2004: 90; Tsuda 2003: 86, 93). Japan did thus focus on ethnicity or descent rather than on skills. The Japanese government assumed that the *nikkeijin* ("Japanese descendants born and raised outside of Japan": Tsuda 2003: 2; Del Castillo 1999: 298), being at least in part ethnic Japanese, would adapt very quickly to their new environment. In reality, quite a few still looked Japanese, but could not speak it nor did they master the cultural norms (Linger 2001: 6; Toma Carignato 2002: 189; Tsuda 2003: Preface XII). In order to talk about cultural norms and differences we must first define culture. Culture is the sum of behaviors and ideas among a certain group of people. It ranges from everyday common sense such as eating or clothing habits over personal and professional relationships to ideas and ways of explaining one's surroundings. I want to add language to this equation for the mother tongue(s) define(s) the individual's way of expressing himself within an according cultural framework. Within this framework certain behavioral patterns are acceptable or even welcome, while others are sanctioned. Culture thus enables people to communicate and function within given parameters (Del Castillo 1999: 142; Ekstrand 1997: 349; Kreitz-Sandberg 2003: 156; Ogbu 1995: 195; Ogbu 1995a: 271).

### **Methodology**

My methodology is qualitative-heuristic. As opposed to hermeneutic approaches heuristic aims at discovering new social phenomena rather than interpreting already known facts (Beuchling 2003, Kleining 1995, 1998; Silverman 2011). The researcher is in constant dialogue with the research object, by respecting the following four rules that determine the research process as well as data analysis.

*Rule 1:*

The first rule demands openness toward the research object and willingness to change thematic pre-knowledge when the collected data suggest a different reality. Since almost everybody will claim to be an open-minded person this rule sounds fairly simple. Yet, when facts draw a different picture from the researcher's expectations, he can end up confused or frustrated. Rule 1 thus demands that all findings be included and none dismissed as "trivial" or "false" (Kleining 1995a: 232).

*Rule 2:*

The research object is not fixed and will emerge gradually during the research process and through data analysis. This rule is opposite to the understanding that a research object must be defined as clearly as possible and then investigated. (Kleining 1995a: 233; Silverman 2001: 71). One reason for this approach is the inherent contradiction in an explorative approach which already knows the research object. Also, the research object in social sciences is based in a social environment which is dynamic and not likely to remain unchanged.

*Rule 3:*

Observe the research object from different perspectives and under different aspects. This can be achieved through variation in time, place and research objects from different social, educational or ethnic backgrounds. Also, a combination of methods guarantees variation, for instance by combining fieldwork with interviews or with document analysis.

*Rule 4:* The researcher tries to find out what the different aspects of the research object have in common. Finding these common aspects is the hardest part of heuristic research for we are trained to perceive differences rather than similarities (Kleining 1995a: 243). Even with different wording there can be a common meaning: the researcher abstracts so called identities from the data which permit to understand the connection despite non-matching wording (Kleining 1995a: 244).

Fundamentally speaking, heuristic methodologies are to be considered „dialogues with a question-and-answer sequence“ (Kleining 1995a: 255). Accordingly fieldwork should be considered a dialogue between the researcher and the informant.

Based on this methodology, this study gets its empirical data mainly from qualitative fieldwork conducted for a year in Tokyo. Differently from a true ethnography, characterized by the researcher being in constant contact with the same group over an extended period of time, this is a qualitative study with an ethnographic focus. A focus on interview extracts is a common method in ethnography and anthropology for they help gain an insight into participants' social reality and are not merely descriptive, as is sometimes argued by other disciplines. Also, the main part of this study consists of qualitative, semi-structured interviews, in some cases backed up by participant observation. The interviews give this study life, an insight in people's lives, and they should be as present as possible. I have conducted all interviews myself, in Spanish or Portuguese, transcribed them and translated them into English. I therefore know that my translations are correct, that no third party misunderstood or misinterpreted things. While I could certainly have someone translated or transcribed them for me, I did not want to rely on a third party for this task.

### **Research Journal**

*The purpose of anthropological self-reflexivity should not be self-exploration but methodological clarification and a better understanding of how the informants' lives were observed and interpreted.*

Tsuda (2003: 9)

Fieldwork is almost always a combination of the researcher's particular personal qualities and the particular social environment he researches. Tsuda examined how it entails a negotiation of identity between the researcher and his informants. My identity remained ambiguous to most people until they got to know me better. Growing up in a multicultural context and speaking Spanish, German and Brazilian Portuguese since childhood, surely helped me overcome initial difficulties such as the language barrier. However, the first moves were hard, and more than once did I find myself frustrated because gaining access to an

institutionalized community may be laborious, but trying to enter a social environment which does not exist as such can be even more so. While it had been my intention to focus on Latin Americans in Tokyo, precisely because I expected more promising results for my research than visiting the already well-explored and established communities of Shizuoka or Ibaraki-ken, finding people willing to talk to me was hard at first. I started my fieldwork in the spring of 2008 in Tokyo's southern Shinagawa ward where the Brazilian and the Peruvian consulate, as well as a Latin American supermarket, were located. From there, I would gradually expand my locus of research proportionally to my expanding contacts. By having informal conversations at first with the people I met during the next months, I tested the usability of my questionnaire and, after numerous changes and rewriting, finally settled for version I would later use for the actual interviews.

### **State of the Art**

Most empirical studies on Latin Americans in Japan focus on factory workers who live in areas with a high concentration of fellow nationals (Ikegami 2003; Kawamura 2003; Linger 2001; Tajima 2003). Other studies give a more generic overview over the situation of Latin American migrants in Japan. Again, they mostly focus on Brazilians of Japanese descent, *nikkeijin* (De Carvalho 2003; Roth 2002). Tsuda (2003) focused on identity matters among *nikkeijin* through empirical studies.

Lili Kawamura conducted research on Brazilian workers in Japan and social networks. She argued that the situation of many poorly educated workers from Brazil reflects, on a small scale, social inequality in Brazil. Despite of social and financial constraints migrants keep on coming from Brazil, not least because of social networks that act as pull factors. Similarly, Linger (2001) conducted empirical research on Brazilian *nikkeijin* in Gunma prefecture. He addressed working realities in the local factories. Ikegami (2003) focused on Brazilian factory workers in the city of Hamamatsu, the town with a large segment of foreign residents, most of them from Brazil. He concluded that deficient language proficiency on the Brazilian, and prejudice on the Japanese, side led to social friction between migrants and the receiving society.

Sekiguchi (2002) concentrated on the educational challenge migration, sometimes yo-yo migration, places on Brazilian *nikkeijin* and on their children. Among research on other nationalities Alvaro Del Castillo (1999) investigated the living situation of Peruvians in Japan. He came to the conclusion that most migrants did not work accordingly to their educational status. He named different reasons for this development, a lack of tolerance toward foreigners on the Japanese side, but no effort to learn Japanese and integrate into Japanese society from the Peruvian perspective. Chikako Yamawaki (2003) also focused on education but concentrated her research on the children of Peruvian workers in Japan. According to her study, *dekasegi* do not plan to remain in Japan; rather, their focus lies on making money and move back to their home country. According to this viewpoint, education would not be a priority. As a result, the children of temporary workers often lack formal education in both Japanese and Spanish or Portuguese, respectively.

Among studies concerned with ethnic media and the representation of Latin Americans in Japan Angelo Ishi (2003) analyzed the means of communication and their effects among Brazilians in Japan Betsy Forero (2003) focused on Latin Americans and on how the Japanese perceived them through public media. Tajima focused on crime among young Brazilians in Japanese factory towns. Finally, Hugo Córdova Quero (2007) conducted empirical research on *nikkeijin* in the Kantō region. He focused on religion, an interesting and not yet much considered approach.

As we have seen, most empirical studies are based in places with a high concentration of factories and of Brazilian, and to some extent Peruvian, *nikkeijin*. There are very few, if any, empirical studies concerned with Latin Americans of different ethnic descent and in social contexts different from factory life. This study wants to show a different reality, namely different nationalities and of different educational and professional status. Also, by choosing a different place for my fieldwork I have encountered not only educational, but also professional variety.



## **II Migration Theory**

Migration studies comprehend a large field and can be researched from different theoretical standpoints. Migration law, demographic change and political attitude towards migration are important areas of research, as are economic factors, research “at the base”, i.e. on an individual or community level, and the historical background. Migration studies have evolved into an increasingly interdisciplinary subject with a variety of theories and models (Castles and Miller 2009: 21).

I have grouped the main theories and approaches of the main areas of research around their respective levels, i.e. according to the aspect of migration they focus on. Migration theory can be structured in three units of analysis or levels: the macro, meso and micro level.

The macro level focuses on the political, economic or legal framework of migration. It entails aspects such as global market, migration laws and strategies to promote or prevent migration. Relevant research disciplines in this field are political science, demography, political sociology, geography to some extent, among others.

The micro level, on the other hand, is interested in individual cases and experiences. Especially important in anthropology, but also in legal studies, history, and economics, the micro level constitutes a fundamental pillar of migration studies.

In the last decades, one more level has developed: the meso level. Half-way between the macro and the micro level of migration studies, the meso level looks for what connects political or economic frameworks to the individual. The keyword here is social networks. Extensively researched in sociology, but also in anthropological studies, networks and the social capital they include provide an important insight into the mechanisms of migration (Castles and Miller 2009: 28). The three levels, however, are not to be seen as three entirely separated units of analysis. As we have seen, economic factors can be researched from the macro level, for instance studying international markets and sales strategies. Researched from the micro level, however, it can give valuable insights into an individual's

experience on local markets, economy-related factors that made him leave his country, etc. While these factors are all equally important in order to understand (international) migration, not all can be equally considered in one study.

## **The Macro Level of Migration**

### *Political science*

One of the main disciplines concerned with the macro level of migration is political science. The macro level investigates how the state reacts to migration, what measures it takes to encourage or prevent it, in short the political framework. Migrants take the decision to migrate not out of the blue and out of context. For instance, one might ask why migration from Latin America to Japan has been increasing since 1990 and not, say, since the 1950s. The answer partially lies in a change on the macro level, namely an amendment in the Japanese immigration act. Hollifield (2008: 184) identified three principal areas of research in political sciences: control, i.e. how nation-states control migration. The question of control and its limits leads to the second main issue in migration theory from a political point of view: security and the relation between states. Especially after 09/11, border control and security have become issues of central importance, as has the question “why do states “risk migration” and accept “unwanted immigrants”?” (Hollifield 2008: 185). The third area of interest deals with the incorporation of migrants on a macro, i.e. state, level. This question is about citizen rights, voting, but also about how an elevated number of immigrants affect the political behavior of both themselves and the ‘natives’.

Hollifield started his argument from Aristoteles according to whom “man is a social animal” (2008: 185). Following this premise, it takes a very strong motivation for a person to leave his known environment and go somewhere else. Political science starts from the assumption that the majority of mankind is sedentary, not migrating. Castles and Miller (2009: 21) shared this view. However, migration has greatly increased worldwide over the last decades, so much so that scholars have begun to name not only the advantages but also the problems linked to migration for even the most advanced first-world countries cannot take an unlimited number of migrants (Hollifield 2008: 188). From there, the question

very quickly moves into sociological territory which I will elaborate later.

Hollifield (2008: 190) argued that the more liberal and democratic a society is the more likely it is that migration control will become an issue at some point and that unwanted migration will occur. Especially in Europe, whose countries are not traditional immigration countries like the US, Canada, Brazil or Australia, a sudden growth in immigrants has led to several new challenges, on a political as well as on a social level. Entry rather than exit seems to be the problem here (Hollifield 2008: 190; Refsing 2003: 51).

Political science further asks who makes the rules and in the interest of whom, the states, workers, migrants, or other groups. Especially in the last decades the debate about how much immigration a state can take has been persisting. Most receiving countries have been trying to stop uncontrolled immigration, partly reflecting public opinion, increasingly opposed to an ever increasing number of foreigners. Yet, actual migration has not decreased, much the opposite. This discrepancy between political goals – outputs – and actual results – outcome is known as the gap hypothesis. Starting from there, different scholars have been trying to give some answers to the question of how the state should react to increasing migration, especially in times of global crisis. US- economist Gary Freeman created a model based on a microeconomic framework, trying to explain the costs and benefits of migration. It shows how the interests of certain groups, e.g. farmer organizations or industries of various types, play an important role in determining immigration (Freeman 1995; Hollifield 2008: 192). US- political scientist James F. Hollifield coined the name of another approach known as the Liberal State Thesis, focused on political outcome rather than output. Since the actual outcome is likely to be composed of a variety of factors it is harder to seize than the output which is usually proclaimed in political statements.

According to this viewpoint, migration must be seen in a context of “political realism” where it potentially represents another threat to national security states face in an increasingly globalized environment (Hollifield 2008: 222).

The political level can only make migration easier or harder; it cannot ban it altogether.

### *Sociology*

Sociology, especially politically-centered sociology, researches the institutional level of migration, i.e. the macro level. Main questions concern the origin of migration and its development over time (Brettell and Hollifield 2008: 5; Schmitter Heisler 2008: 83). Much like political science, most parts of sociology research immigration on state, i.e. the macro, level.

### *Economics*

Like other disciplines concerned with migration studies, economics has more than one dimension. One of the earliest models on the macro level is based on Ravenstein's statistical laws of migration (Castles and Miller 2009: 21). As a geographer, Ravenstein formulated theories on people's general likeliness to move from more to less populated, or from low- to high-income areas. These theories also linked migration to the development of the (labor) market originating the push-pull factors, the further including a low level of living standard and lack of economic opportunities, the latter demand for labor and a favorable economic setting (Castles and Miller 2009: 22). While push-pull factors have come to play a role in other disciplines as well, I want to focus on the economic dimension here. Neo-classical theory in economics further states that migrants choose the most attractive host country, i.e. the country that best suits their needs. From there two opposite views arise. Borjas (1989: 461, in Castles and Miller 2009: 22) claimed that this 'equalizing' approach has a negative impact on the average level of skills migrants bring to the new country, and thus leads to a decrease in human capital. Chiswick, on the other hand, claimed that migrants are positively self-selected, meaning that the highly skilled are more motivated to move because "they obtain a higher return on their human capital investment in mobility" (Chiswick 2000, in Castles and Miller 2009: 23). At this point, I want to argue, it is not a mere question of migrants' skills and their will to migrate, but of the host country and its migration policy. Migration is not only decided on the micro level, i.e. the individual deciding to migrate for one reason or the other; the macro level, i.e. political regulations and visa restrictions also play an important role. In fact, this has been criticized as one of neoclassical theory's weaknesses (Castles and Miller 2009: 22; 25). Often cited 'classical' countries of immigration such as Australia or Canada promote highly skilled migration and have in fact a point system

according to which they choose those migrants they want to enter (Castles and Miller 2009: 121 ). On the other hand, the Australian state has a strict policy against asylum seekers and undocumented migrants (Castles and Miller 2009: 121; 194; 251). Other states, Germany for instance, have a more liberal approach toward political refugees. In the early 1990s Germany accepted more asylum seekers than all other EU members combined (Beuchling 2003: 11). According to UNHCR data from 2007 Germany featured among the ten countries which hosted most refugees worldwide, hosting 605.000 refugees while the United States, a considerably larger country, hosted “only” 844.000 (Castles and Miller 2009: 190). This, of course, does not guarantee positively self-selection among migrants. Further, it becomes clear that not only migrants try to maximise their benefits but also some prospective host countries. The neo-classical approach further assumes that loosening immigration rules will result in equal wages worldwide (Castles and Miller 2009: 24). Its followers thus advocate a more liberal political framework to increase economic migration.

### *Law*

The legal aspects of migration are also of great importance in migration studies and migration theory. Legal theory is influenced by economics, politics, sociology, and history, among others (Schuck 2008: 240). Its aim is to explain how legal rules and constraints affect migration, i.e. the movement of people both on a national and an international level. In this sense, legal theory explores migration on the macro level. On the micro level, legal circumstances determine what kind of status will be assigned to an immigrant in a new country and what rights and duties he has. They also influence the decision to migrate in the first place, under the form of “how”, “where”, and “when” to migrate (Schuck 2008: 253). In the same chapter, however, Schuck argued that “few migrants know much about law and even fewer would point to law as a major factor in their migration decisions” (Schuck 2008: 241). This, in my understanding, would imply that law only plays a role in the sense that some countries are “off limit” for some people. Another factor might be whether or not migrants have the choice, i.e. whether or not they can choose the legally most favorably country. A central aspect of law enforcement and legal migration theory is the problem of clandestine migration. Despite most receiving societies now trying to control undocumented migration,

clandestine migrants in Europe and the US have increased considerably in the past years (Méndez 2011: 36; Schuck 2008: 247). Ever-growing migrant communities help illegal aliens to hide and make a living. Here, legal theory is connected to social science network analysis and the ethnic enclave economic model. Frequently denominated “victimless offence” (Schuck 2008: 251, 53), illegal immigration allegedly does not harm anyone despite being against the law (Schuck 2008: 253). This viewpoint, I argue, is flexible and depending on how one wants to define “harm”. If harming includes illegal migrants receiving social benefits, housing, schooling, etc. on the tax payer’s expense, then the concept of “victimless crime” might appear more questionable.

### *Demography*

Demography is a highly quantitative discipline. The three central units of analysis are fertility, mortality, and migration on a macro level. Highly quantitative means also highly abstract (Teitelbaum 2008: 51); therefore it is of limited help for qualitative research which centers on reality of migrant life. As Teitelbaum admitted, “while many theoretical propositions based on purely demographic patterns seem highly plausible, they often have not been borne out by reality” (Teitelbaum 2008: 54). In fact, this is probably the biggest shortcoming of quantitative research. By studying fertility and mortality, demographic researchers can draw a connection to migration. Decreasing population is likely to lead to an increased demand for migrant workers (Teitelbaum 2008: 54). Demographers often turn to economics for understanding migration. However, according to Teitelbaum (2008: 55) none of these theoretical approaches is universally convincing. Not unlike the gap hypothesis crucial for political sciences, demography is concerned with the potential and the actual, placing great importance on the state and its role in controlling migration. According to Teitelbaum (2008: 60), it remains unclear whether potential facilitating of migration will result in an actual increase.

### **The Macro Level of Migration in the Context of This Study**

Political sciences and sociology are concerned with the macro level as unit of analysis. My study, on the other hand, focuses on the micro- and, if in the form of negation, meso levels of migration. Also, I do not focus on migration processes but on migrants already living in Japan. While the macro level is important, as are the above-presented theories, I cannot apply this theoretical framework to my study and will therefore not focus on them in this work.

While the study of legal circumstances is extremely important to migration studies, my research includes migrants regardless of visa status or legal history. My interest in *nikkeijin*, i.e. people of Japanese ancestry born abroad, is based on them forming part of an ethnically differentiated sample. I therefore have to discard legal history, which would anyway be heavily influenced by other disciplines, as applicable to my study.

As for demography, it deals with migration on the state-, i.e. the macro level. It is further a highly quantitative discipline which makes the theoretical aspects hard to use for this study. This study focuses on individuals who have migrated to Japan for a variety of reasons. My research is qualitative and the focus lies on individual experiences which eventually create a pattern through analysis.

## **The Meso Level of Migration**

### *Sociology*

As stated above, sociology has begun to focus not only on the macro, but increasingly on the meso level of migration. As mass migration and with it migrant communities have been increasing over the last decades network analysis has gained in importance. This part of sociological migration studies is to be situated on the meso level, which deals exactly with immigrant communities as a whole and with social networks, rather than on the macro level, interested in migration movement on state level. Traditionally concerned with social class and incorporation or exclusion of certain groups, migration has been of central interest for sociologists since Robert Park and his race relations cycle from 1921. In 1927, Thomas and Zaniecki published their study *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (Schmitter Heisler 2008: 84). In the 1960s, the Chicago School of Sociology made migration one of its main areas of research. From there, theory

has evolved and gradually moved away from the early assimilation-based concept toward a more liberal, multiracial approach. Scholars have further come to realize that older assimilation theories start from a white environment in the United States; scholars such as Milton Gordon, who carried further Park's assimilationist perspective, rely heavily on this view. Similarly, the Melting Pot Theory of the 1950s and 1960s takes as a focal point immigrants who eventually assimilate into mainstream (white) America (Gracia 2000: 110; Schmitter Heisler 2008: 86). More recent approaches have come to put more emphasis on the interaction between migrants and the receiving society and on co-existence rather than complete assimilation. Also, they put greater emphasis on economic factors than their predecessors which are mainly concerned with cultural or religious aspects (Schmitter Heisler 2008: 86). Among those, I want to focus on the Ethnic Enclave Economy Model, developed in the late 1980s by Alejandro Portes for I find it interesting in the context of large Brazilian communities in Japan. Based on the Cuban minority in Miami, it claims the existence of a dual market system: a primary market made of stable working conditions and regular income, the second insecure and badly paid. According to Portes, migrants are largely limited to the second market for they lack the skills necessary to work in the first one and are usually discriminated against (Schmitter Heisler 2008: 87). The same model explains how migrants can also profit from this system for working within their own community, speaking their mother tongue, provides them with advantages in terms of security and social prestige. Within the migrant group, Portes identified considerable social stratification which leads me to a controversial viewpoint: ethnic identity can be used as a tool to oppress the own people. Empirical studies on Chinese in the US, for instance, have shown how the concept of ethnic identity is often used, and abused, by the economically powerful to gain major control over their fellow Chinese (Brettell 2008: 134). By convincing them that they are better off remaining inside the ethnic community Chinese business owners assure cheap labor for themselves. Both phenomena have been researched in the Japanese context, namely Latin Americans who manage to ascend the career ladder by remaining within their community and providing service to other members. However, abuse by co-ethnics is not as seldom as one might suppose, despite, or maybe because of, common background, kinship and ethnic ties (De Carvalho 2003; Del Castillo 1999; Linger 2001).



Key words such as network analysis and immigrant transnationalism suggest a change, or rather an expansion, of theorizing about migration (Castles and Miller 2009: 21, 27). The concept of transnationalism is rooted in the question of new relations between the sending and the receiving societies (Castles and Miller 2009: 30). Maintaining ties with one's country of origin, a phenomenon first observed in the case of migrants to the United States has become increasingly common, one reason being no doubt improved technology and relatively cheap air fares. The second reason is social networks, an increasing transnational community which, in turn, promotes transnational identity (Schmitter Heisler 2008: 95). While starting from the micro level, that is the individual, migrant networks increasingly move beyond the micro and up to the meso level. Network activities, in turn, can call upon the macro level, i.e. the state, in questions of migrants' rights, citizenship, etc. Again, this approach shows that all levels are interconnected and can influence each other. Where sociology is more interested in the networks as such, i.e. the meso, sometimes even macro level, anthropology researches the micro level of transnationalism that is individuals and households living abroad.

### *Anthropology*

As I have just pointed out, anthropology is generally concerned with the micro level of migration. However, recent research has started to focus on the meso level as well. The meso level is about social networks, situated between the individual on the micro, and the state on the macro level. Quoting from US-sociologist Jenkins,

*What remains characteristic of the anthropological point of view, however, is its holistic emphasis on understanding local meanings (culture) using data (about everyday life) gathered via participant observation [...] It is [...] no longer as easy as it might once have been to distinguish anthropology from sociology, its closest sibling and most obvious rival, simply by reference to method or area. Sociologists are increasingly enthusiastically embracing participant-observation ethnography (although, in fact, ethnography as a research tradition is at least as long-standing within sociology as within anthropology: remember the Chicago School?). On the other side of the coin, some anthropologists have been using quantitative and other non-ethnographic methods since at least the 1950s [...]"*

Jenkins (1997: 6)

Jenkins goes on and characterizes social anthropology and sociology as two neighboring and historically related academic "ethnic groups", social

anthropology being positioned within what he very eloquently calls the “greater sociological tribe” (Jenkins 1997: 7).

While “pioneers” of migration make decisions by themselves, for their own reasons; once they bring their families, start to establish ties with other pioneer migrants and gradually establish a community, migration takes off and keeps going, developing an automatism. Thus the question of how those networks are constructed and maintained is fundamental to the study of migration. The literature calls this phenomenon “network-mediated migration” (Brettell 2008: 124).

A possible consequence of this self-running form of migration can be the various groups within the migrant community becoming gradually heterogeneous and eventually splitting up. Sometimes the relationship between them is affected in a negative way: migrants do not “like” each other anymore. In the case of Latin Americans in Japan there is indeed a tendency to distinguish between *nikkeijin* and others, i.e. with no Japanese ancestry. During my fieldwork I have come across informants who claimed that *nikkeijin* were more hardworking and more intelligent; on the other hand informants of different ethnic background claimed the *nikkeijin* to be arrogant and feel superior. Also, the various nationalities did not always get along. Several informants who had worked in factories outside Tokyo related how Brazilians allegedly felt superior toward other Latin Americans, especially Peruvians, and behaved accordingly.

### **The Meso Level of Migration in the Context of This Study**

In this study, I focus on individuals rather than on entire households; the meso level is thus not of utter relevance. I deal with it mainly in the form of negation, namely by stating that an institutionalized network in Tokyo does not exist. While migrants form groups among themselves, which is to count as social network, the situation is not comparable to sites such as Shizuoka, Gunma, or Ibaraki.

### **The Micro Level of Migration**

## *Economics*

The second aspect of economics, as I will call it here, deals with the micro level of migration, meaning it analyses how individuals and families use their resources for maximum benefit. It is, as Chiswick (2008: 63) put it, “about the study of the choices or opportunities that people have”.

Since about 90% of worldwide migration is labor migration the economic approach and its theories are indispensable for migration studies. Among the most influential is the Human Capital Model which explains how the decision to migrate is influenced by cost-benefit calculations. A neoclassical approach, it places great importance on push and pull-factors, the further making people want to leave their country of origin (such as low living standard, political oppression, or limited economic opportunities), the latter making them migrate to determined countries (demand for labor force, political or religious freedom and favorable economic circumstances) (Castles and Miller 2009: 22). It further assumes that greater ability, e.g. higher schooling, has a positive influence on the individual's chances on the labor market. Also, migrants with more human capital are more efficient in dealing with the actual process of migration. If the ratio of wages is the same between the country of origin and the host country then there is no selectivity on the basis of skill (Chiswick 2008: 68). If the ratio of wages is greater for high-skilled migrants; positive selectivity occurs. If, on the other hand, the ratio of wages is greater for low-skilled migrants, the opposite is bound to happen and negative selectivity is the consequence. Therefore, it results that favorable, or positive, selectivity is proportional to the ratio of wages in the destination is greater for those who bring high skills and human capital.

In his application of the Roy Model Borjas found that a greater difference in wages for high-skilled workers on the one, and a smaller for low-skilled workers on the other hand leads to increased migration of low-skilled workers. Chiswick criticized this view: according to him larger skills differentials in the country of origin than in the destination “does not necessarily imply negative selectivity, but rather only less favorable (positive) selectivity” (Chiswick 2008: 72). Despite, or maybe because of, my not being an economist, I fail to understand the difference between “negative” and “less positive” selectivity.

One should note that the two presented models refer to economic migration. The case of non-economic migrants, for instance political refugees, is different.

According to Chiswick, there is less positive selectivity among non-economic migrants (Chiswick 2008: 76) – which makes quite sense, if one considers the reasons that led to migration in these cases. Economic models name the advantages, but also the limits of uncontrolled migration of unskilled workers or political refugees. A functioning economy is the key that enables a receiving society to accommodate migrants in the first place, so economic reasons for or against migration should be viewed along with ethical or social ones. While I find the economic approach appealing because of its neutrality and rationality and its lack of emotional debate about migration, it is not suited to this study.

### *Anthropology*

Anthropology works with the micro, and increasingly with the meso-, level of migration (s. above). It is interested in individuals and in their experiences in the new country. Questions of identity and cultural peculiarities are often in the center of attention, mainly from the migrant's perspective (Brettell 2008: 116). Early research divides migrants into different types; since the 1970s scholars have deepened the hypothesis that migration can go both ways in the form of return migration and that family ties play a fundamental role in the decision-making process (Brettell 2008: 115, 16; Van Hear 1998: 14, 15). I would think that a combination of both might also be realistic for the decision to migrate is usually a blend of reasons. Also, there is a difference between migrants who plan to eventually go back to their country of origin from the start and those whose migration is intended to be permanent. Margolis (1994: 260, 261) found that Brazilians in the US often claim they are staying to earn enough money to live comfortably in Brazil. These "target earners" do not plan to stay in the US. Rather, they plan to work until they can achieve a specific goal such as buying a house, founding a business, or disposing of a sufficient amount of money to cover unexpected emergencies. Empirical studies on Brazilians in Japan have shown similar results (De Carvalho 2003; Del Castillo 1999; Linger 2001; Tajima 2003; Tsuda 2003, 2006; Yamawaki 2003). Whether or not the migrants in question actually move back is a different story.

Circular migration is another phenomenon that has gained in importance over the last years. The basic concept is that migrants go work in another country for some years and then return to their country of origin. This can be based on a country's

policy, i.e. the macro level, on how to handle migration. On a micro level, it is influenced by the migrants who, in this case, see themselves as mere sojourners who will eventually move back to their home country. According to Castles and Miller (2009: 69) the concept is rather ambiguous for it is not clear whether circular migration seeks to combine temporary migration and development or whether the true motivation lies in convincing sending countries to cooperate and prevent migrants from moving illegally while at the same time receiving financial aid to develop their own countries. Much early research was influenced by Modernization Theory which, in turn, was influenced by the economic model and strictly separates push and pull-factors (Brettell 2008: 118). Again, the individual makes a conscious decision to move to a more favorable place in terms of labor, capital, and economic opportunities. Early approaches mainly deal with the difference between a modern versus a traditional, lifestyle and the consequences for migration. Not unlike in the economic model, migrants make a conscious decision based on economic differences between the country of origin, the sending society, and the country he wants to move to, the receiving society. The underlying assumption of this approach is that persistent migration from places with few opportunities to more favorable destinations will eventually lead to a balance between the two and help (economic) development in both the sending and the receiving country. Criticism points out, however, that migrants' earnings tend to be spent on consumer and luxury items, rather than invested (Brettell 2008: 119; Del Castillo 1999: 149; Linger 2001).

More recent approaches are based on transnationalism, a concept that describes a social phenomenon in which migrants inhabit different fields, independently from political or cultural borders (Brettell 2008: 120, Castles and Miller 2009: 21). It has its origins in the observation that most migrants do not cut off all relations with their country of origin but rather act in both social spheres to a more or less balanced extent. In the same wake, transnational identities are not limited to one nation but are often made of different parts stemming from different social and cultural influences.

As other population groups, migrants can be classified by gender, ethnicity, or social class; considering all these factors offers the best understanding of a complex process (Brettell 2008: 136). Not unlikely the output/outcome theory in political science, anthropological theory stresses the difference between the ideal

and the actual. Accepting this bias also enables the researcher to better understand the dualism in action between what influences and what is influenced by migration. Lastly, anthropology is not, as sometimes dismissed as, merely descriptive. Following Brettell's thought and quoting from Barrett,

*if theory is defined as "an explanation of a class of events, usually with an empirical referent, providing insight into how and what is going on, and sometimes explaining why phenomena exist", then much of this ethnographic work makes a significant and sometimes unique contribution to our theoretical conversations across the disciplines.* (Barrett 1997: 40, in Brettell 2008: 137)

This means that theory is the background against which empirical studies are conducted. Qualitative work does not focus on a very large sample as, say, a questionnaire asking 300 people whether they prefer the taste of beer a, b, c, or d. Its focus is different for it aims to show a piece of reality to an extent quantitative study mostly cannot. On the other hand, qualitative study is often accused to lack representativeness. Mostly, however, it does not claim to be universally applicable. An example might be politics: as often lamented in the media as in the literature, the output does not always match the outcome. Political decisions are perceived as far from reality, inadequate even. We need qualitative studies in order to depict reality – which only seldom fits neatly in pre-constructed categories. From a body of qualitative studies, for as "small" and "not sufficiently representative" as the single one may be, we can draw conclusions aiming at the macro level, base our decisions on them for they contribute to form the big picture, deepen our understanding of a given issue, and ultimately to theory building.

#### *Anthropological migration theory and ethnic identity*

As I have outlined above, anthropological migration theory is mainly interested in the micro level of migration. As migrant communities and social networks have been increasing over the last decades, the meso level has gained in importance, manifest through network analysis and the concept of transnationalism.

A central theme of anthropological migration studies is identity. Anthropology gives much importance to ethnographic field research, much like history gives to primary sources (Jenkins 1997: 4). Despite recent criticism, ethnography remains an important method and data. Even though anthropology is becoming an increasingly heterogeneous field, a common denominator keeps on existing:

“methodological holism”, or the aspiration to study all different facets of a certain group or living situation. Behind this lies the belief that they are all, or could be, interconnected in some way (Jenkins 1997: 5).

### **The Micro Level of Migration in the Context of This Study**

This study focuses on Latin Americans living in Tokyo, thus on individuals or, using the technical term, on the micro level of migration. I include the meso level, i.e. networks, only in the form that I state that there are no such networks in Tokyo comparable to those existing in prefectures with a more concentrated Latin American population. Therefore, the micro level is the most relevant for my research. This study has an ethnographic focus. It is concerned about individuals’ lives and experiences in the receiving society and about how the social reality they were brought up in contrasts with social reality in Japan. However, I have tried to leave out personal feelings, maintain a critical distance at all times, and focus on my sample and on my analysis alone. In **Methodology** I am going to elaborate more in detail how I have tried to manage, and hopefully achieved, this balance act, and refrain from seeing myself, the researcher, as a superior being dealing with his research objects in a distant, even clinical way. The methodology implied in this study is about dialogue between the researcher and the participants. Why a professional distance is crucial, it takes some sensitivity not to over-emphasize the gap between the researcher and the research object for the further needs the latter to be honest and thus gain his trust.

While ethnographic and anthropological approaches can bear the danger of blurring the boundaries between the researcher and the research object, economic theories tend to over-rationalize human behavior. Even though 90% of migration is labeled as economic migration, economic models alone cannot explain why some people leave their country of origin and others don’t despite equal economic circumstances. Brazil, for instance, is a newly industrializing country; the middle class is quite well-off and would not have to leave for, say, Japan in order to survive. Thus the economic model holds some precious aspects to explain

migration on an individual level. It helps explain reasons for coming to Japan; yet it cannot be considered the only reason for people migrating.

### **Further Theoretical Constructs**

Following, I am going to briefly introduce theoretical approaches relevant for this study. They are not necessarily limited to migration theory. Rather, they should help clarify why I have used certain concepts and how I have applied them to my research and my sample. Especially in qualitative research, different approaches are possible and plausible; I argue that it is a matter of defining and explaining the reasons for choosing one approach or definition and not another which might be equally plausible.

### **Ethnicity**

Nowadays one comes across the term “ethnicity” quite often and almost always referring to non-white minority groups. Fact is that everybody is part of an ethnic group or, as Castles and Miller (2009: 35) put it “has ethnicity”. Jenkins (1997: 9) defined ethnicity as follows:

*Ethnicity: from ancient Greek ethnos, which seems to have referred to a range of situations in which a collectivity of humans lived and acted together [...] and which is typically translated today as ‘people’ or ‘nation’. Since the early decades of this century, the linked concepts of ethnicity and ethnic group have been taken in many directions [...] They have passed into everyday discourse, and become central to the politics of group differentiation and advantage, in the culturally diverse social democracies of Europe and North America. With notions of ‘race’ in public and scientific disrepute since 1945, ethnicity has obligingly stepped into the gap, becoming a rallying cry in the often bloody reorganization of the post-Cold-War world [...] An ethnic group is based [...] on the belief shared by its members that, however distantly, they are of common descent.*

One of the important insights offered by the basic social anthropological model of ethnicity is the notion that ethnicity is not an immutable bundle of cultural traits, which it is sufficient to enumerate in order to identify a person as an ‘X’ or a ‘Y’ or to locate the boundary between ethnic collectivities. Ethnicity largely depends



on social circumstances and often develops against “the other”. Ethnic identity defines itself not only through common origin, common beliefs and traditions, but foremost through the contrast between a given ethnic group and the remaining society (Aoki 2005:159, 160; Barth 1996: 12; Cabrera 1968: 13, 14; De Vos 1995, 2006: 1). Ethnic identity is not a fixed construct but flexible and embedded in social context (Brettell 2008: 131, 132; Fenton 1999: 29-31). Thus criteria of ethnic ascription and subscription are variable in their nature and salience. Ethnic boundaries are, to some extent at least, permeable and osmotic, existing despite the flow of personnel or interaction across them (Cohen 1996: 61, 62, 63; Jenkins 1997: 52).

Jenkins (1997: 54, 60) distinguished between internal and external definition of identity. The further can be an individual process or a collective one, although ethnicity in an individual sense must nevertheless refer to a collective identity, a group one belongs to. This includes a set of cultural or religious practices common to the individual’s group of reference. The process of negotiating identity is dialectic and transactional. In external definition of ethnic identity someone who is not part of a determined group attaches some sort of ‘label’ to its members. Identity is thus constantly affirmed through the contrast between the own group and others. What was never a source of concern or even attention suddenly springs into life once a person finds himself far from home, set against a new, unfamiliar set of social habits and cultural values. In the best case scenario, this characterization is consistent with the group members’ internal definition, i.e. how they see themselves. On the other hand, however, there is the possibility of one group imposing a characterization on the other which can compromise the latter’s position in main society.

This last assumption, I find difficult. The question of “what comes first?” has been discussed extensively, not only, but very much so, in the field of migration studies. Does the receiving society’s hostile behavior towards newcomers lead to emphasizing ethnic origins and even the creating of ‘parallel worlds’? Or does certain migrants’ behavior, on the other hand, lead the receiving society to develop resentments against them? I do not want to dwell on this question because it is highly emotional and because I have no answer to it. The truth may lie somewhere in between; it may vary from context to context and depend on the receiving society or the migrant group in question. What my study has shown is

that once abroad migrants tend to develop a “collective identity”, in my sample a “pan-latino identity”. I will discuss this question in a different chapter.

## **Capital**

Lin (2001: 3) defined capital as the investment of resources with expected returns in the market place. He based his definition on what he called Marx’s Classic Theory of Capital which defines capital as a part of surplus value that creates further profit (Lin 2001: 4). According to this definition, capital is thus a product of a process and, at the same time, an investment process in which the surplus value is produced and captured. Since according to Marx, it is the dominant class that makes investments and captures the surplus value, his theory is based on the exploitive social relations between two classes (Lin 2001: 7). The basic idea is that capital is the investment of resources for the production of profit has been maintained in all subsequent capital theories. However, Lin argued that in the Marxian scheme, both investment and profit are vested in the capitalists. The labor involved in the process of production does not generate or accumulate capital for the laborers. Over the last decades, capital theory has evolved into what Lin referred to as to Neo-capital Theory. This approach essentially modifies or eliminates the class explanation as a necessary and theoretical orientation (Lin 2001: 8). Alternative renditions of capital notably include human capital, cultural capital, and social capital.

### *Human Capital*

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the concept of human capital occasionally surfaced in the economic literature claiming that laborers had become capitalists, not necessarily from owning corporation stocks, but from the acquisition of knowledge and skills that carry economic value. As a result, laborers can demand

payment beyond the exchange value for their labor thanks to their newly acquired skills (Lin 2001: 8).

Lin defined human capital as the value added to a laborer when he acquires knowledge, skills, and other assets useful to the employer. Human capital is thus the added value embedded in the laborers themselves. Typically, it is operationalized and measured by education, training, and experience (Lin 2001: 9). Neo-capital Theory challenges the classic theory of capital by arguing that the immobility of class distinctions no longer holds. If laborers can acquire skill, knowledge, and other capital to increase the value of their hourly labor, they can also claim and charge higher value for their labor and, ultimately, invest in and acquire human capital. Opportunities or motives in the acquisition or non-acquisition of human capital vary across individuals. Nevertheless, the social structure offers increased cross-grade mobility possible, rather than a rigid two-class system (Lin 2001: 10). This shift of analytic attention to the microstructure of production of skills and knowledge as investment in workers does not necessarily negate the macrostructure process of production of surplus value for capitalists in the classic capital theory. Workers who dispose of a high human capital make themselves available in the labor market so that capitalists and managers can capture this human capital by hiring these laborers. However, the labor obtained is no longer an easily interchangeable element in the production process, as Marx assumed (Lin 2001: 12, 13). In Neo-capital Theory laborers are thus capable of gaining and keeping some surplus value of their own labor. To an extent, it is up to the individual to decide whether and how much of an effort or investment he wishes to make to acquire useful skills and knowledge which he can “sell” to the producers. Also, there are constraints to the availability and range of choices for different individuals (Lin 2001: 18).

### *Cultural Capital*

The term cultural capital was made famous by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu who defined it as the result of a person’s upbringing in a particular social environment and according education (Bourdieu 1987, 1993, 1998). Cultural capital most often assumes, and is understood as, the shape of knowledge and

cultural abilities the individual acquires not primarily through formal education but through socialization. According to this definition, a society's dominant class imposes its culture by engaging in pedagogic action (e.g. education), which internalizes the dominant symbols and meanings in the next generation, thus reproducing the salience of the dominant culture. Through pedagogic action, the culture and values of the dominant class are "misrecognized" as the culture and values of the entire society. Such pedagogic action occurs in the family, in informal groups, and on informal occasions, and, most important, through education, especially schooling. The result is an internalized and durable training, habitus, in the reproduction of the culture. Lin (2001: 15) compared Bourdieu's symbolic violence and social reproduction to Marx's theoretical stance, both reflecting the imposition by one class of its values on another. Unlike Marx, however, Bourdieu focused on the laborer and on relations between acquired capital and the market. He did not rule out purposive action or choices of behavior. Less rigid than Marx in the demarcation between the exploiting and exploited classes, Bourdieu defined society as a network of positions, the better ones of which are struggled over. This reflects the Neo-capital theoretical stance of the cultural capital theory, as distinguished from Marx's classic theory of capital (Lin 2001: 17). According to Lin (2001: 18), cultural capital theory emphasizes the role of the class structure in society and what it does to individual actions. Not only do structural or class positions define the types of capital having differential values in the market place, but more important, they dictate what actions the underprivileged must take to acquire such valued skills and knowledge.

### *Social capital*

As in the case of the previous forms of capital, social capital can be defined as an investment in social relations with expected returns in the marketplace. The market can be economic, political, labor, or community. Individuals engage in interactions in order to produce profit. While human capital is seen as the investment or production of individual actors, and cultural capital as individuals indoctrinated into adopting the dominant values, social capital is captured through

social relations, connections, and access to resources in the network or group individuals are members of. Theory of social capital focuses on the resources embedded in one's social network and how the access and use of such resources benefits the individual's actions (Lin 2001: 19, 55). Lin further argued that not all resources available to individuals are in their personal possession but rather accessed through social ties and connections (Lin 2001: 43). We can thus distinguish two perspectives. The first focuses on the use of social capital by individuals. It investigates how individuals access and use resources embedded in social networks in order to gain returns in instrumental actions (for example finding employment) or to preserve gains in expressive actions. An accumulation of individual returns can result in benefits for the collective, the social group. The second perspective focuses on social capital at the group level, namely on how certain groups develop and maintain social capital as a collective asset and how such a collective asset enhances group members' life chances. Thus, social capital has both a private, or individual, and a public, or collective, side (Lin 2001: 21; Putnam 2000: 20).

In his analysis Lin concentrates on how individuals invest in social relations and how they capture the embedded resources in the relations to generate a return. Neo-classical theories thus emphasize the link between individual actions and structural positions with a focus on either the former or the latter (Lin 2001: 18). The three capitals are osmotic and not clearly separable. Bourdieu (1984: 57) pointed out that this is because the notion of capital is man-made. He further argued that sometimes a form of capital can lie dormant because it is not needed in a determined situation. I am aware of this difficulty. For the purpose of this study I have grouped them, well aware that mine is not the only possible approach. Language, for instance, can be considered part of human or cultural capital.

## **Social Integration**

Hartmut Esser defined social integration as the participation of individuals in an already established social system and the thither resulting properties, skills and resources (Esser 2006: 24). He further distinguished between two possible

constellations: a single actor in an established social system, for instance through membership of some kind, the possession of rights or a certain professional position on the one hand, and the (statistical) grouping of a certain number of social actors with similar properties of social integration into categories, according to educational level, income, ethnic identification, and so forth. Similarly, David Lockwood (2008: 36) distinguished between social integration and system integration. The former concerns the individual integration process while the latter focuses on the parts of a system as a whole and their relations. Therefore Esser distinguished between individual and categorical social integration. Individual social integration means the inclusion (or exclusion) of single actors in certain social spheres and institutions and the consequences for language, education, and income. Categorical social integration groups otherwise not connected individuals with similar properties of inclusion into categories of social inequality (Esser 2006:24). Following, Esser named four points crucial to social integration:

1. (Kulturation): the acquisition of knowledge, (language) skills, and cultural norms
  2. (Platzierung): the acquisition of rights, taking up relevant positions in the local social system, such as education, labor market and housing, access to relevant institutions
  3. (Interaktion): interethnic relationships of all kinds, contact with locals, inclusion in social networks
  4. (Identifikation): identification in form of emotional loyalties toward the local social system, mental and emotional bond with the receiving society, a feeling of belonging
- (Esser 2006: 26)

## **Terminology**

Following I want to briefly introduce terms relevant for this study and hopefully make it clear why I have chosen one and not the other in case of multiple options of naming the same phenomenon.

## Latin Americans

I have chosen to refer to my participants and to migrants from Latin America as Latin Americans for I find it to be the most neutral term. I did not opt for the term *Latino*, used to describe persons of Latin American descent, regardless of their ethnic descent, but which can carry a somewhat negative connotation (Gracia 2000: 25). The term *Latino* was created by the French in order to create a common denominator for French, Spanish and Portuguese America while, at the same time, differentiating it from Anglo America. Similarly, the term *Hispanic*, used in English to define nationals of Spain, Portugal, and Latin America while in Spanish *Hispanoamérica* designate former Spanish colonies, excluding Portugal and Brazil (Gracia 2000: 4, 5, 24).

My sample includes participants from both spheres Spanish and Portuguese America. Despite substantial differences in culture, ethnicity and language, I have opted for the term Latin Americans, especially against the background of public perception in Japan, where people from Latin America tend to be lumped together as Brazilians, partly understandable because of their numeric dominance. Another reason is that people tend to create a pan-Latino identity when living abroad. While at home one is primarily Cuban, Bolivian, or Brazilian, living abroad strengthens the feeling of common identity as opposed to the receiving society and other immigrant groups.

My sample hopes to at least hint at the ethnic, cultural and linguistic variety that characterizes Latin America. While variety is a requisite of my methodology, I also hope to paint a more differentiated picture of the Latin American community in Tokyo than what is commonly known.

## Participants

*“Informant” is a terrible word to have to use. It sounds like “informer” and makes ethnography sound uncomfortably like spying. Yet ethnographers are hard put to know what else they call the people they learn from [...] “consultant” implies collaboration and a shared understanding of the ethnographers purposes, an understanding that is not always present [...] “friends/teachers” can reflect sentimentality and wishful thinking. (Allen 2002: 22, 23.)*

In fact, giving a concrete name to the persons who constitute the researcher's sample can be a sensitive issue, especially in ethnographies or in studies with an ethnographic component. "[...] ethnographers never want to make the people they study look ugly" (Bourgois 1993: 15). This includes treating them and their stories with respect, which is why "informant" might be not the optimal choice. "Research object" sounds similarly sterile and unpleasant. I have preferred the term "participants" throughout my study, not least because it is in line with my methodology and the underlying concept of dialogue between the researcher and his sample.

### ***Nikkeijin***

Throughout this study I use the term *nikkeijin* to address people of Japanese descent. Adopted by the Japanese Ministry of Justice, I find it the most suited to academic research. In the Japanese-Brazilian discourse, however, one is more likely to come across the term *Nikkei*, both in Japan and Brazil (Ishi 2008: 118).



### **III Methodology**

This study is not a true ethnography for I did not live with my participants over an extended period of time. It is a qualitative study with an ethnographic focus. My methodology is based on Uwe Flick, Gerhard Kleining and David Silverman, German and American social scientists (Flick 2006, Kleining 1995, 1998; Silverman 2011).

The aim of qualitative research is to explore new social phenomena and develop empirically based theories. It allows taking into account participants' individual prerequisites which, in turn, influence the contents and the realization of the project. The participants of the study bring their viewpoints and social actions, linked to different subjective perspectives and social backgrounds. These individual aspects can be fully explored through a qualitative-explorative approach. On the other hand, a quantitative approach is linked with pre-established variables, that is unforeseen elements cannot be taken into account or are dismissed as aberrant or trivial (Flick 2006, Kleining 1995). According to Flick and Kleining, they further claim to be objective based on the quantification and the measuring of phenomena under exactly pre-established, controlled, and unchanging conditions. Actually, however, all controls cannot impede that research is at least in part co-influenced by the interests and backgrounds of the researchers. Social reality is not pre-established and unchanging; the outcome of a project is connected with the perspective of its participants. Qualitative research recognizes this from the start; therefore a qualitative approach is most suitable for this study.

In the research process, the researcher stands in a constant dialog with the participant and does not see him from a pedestal. Similarly, field work is to be seen as a dialog between the researcher and the participants. To achieve this, there are rules, for example the claim for the researcher being open-minded and willing to change existing knowledge concerning the research object if the gathered data suggest a different reality (Kleining 1995a: 232).

It is also important to remember that the research object is not clearly defined from the very beginning but generated from the data. It is not about testing hypotheses or interpreting already known facts, but exploring new social connections (Kleining 1995a: 233; Silverman 2001: 71).

This study works with a qualitative-heuristic methodology, intended to discover new social phenomena and connections instead of interpret already known facts and situations (Beuchling 2003; Damman 1991; Kleining 1994, 1995, 1998; Kleining und Witt 2000, 2001; Silverman 2011). It is based on explorative parts of sociology, ethnology, and pedagogic (Glaser Strauss 1967; Kleining 1995; Kleining 1995a; Kleining 1998; Silverman 2011). The base of this approach lies in the conviction that research is a constant dialogue between the researcher and the research object. Bourdieu rejected the researcher's alleged superior position compared to the research object and argued that it was not suitable for exploring and understanding social fields. In order to capture social space the researcher needs to give up his standpoint of perceived superiority and give room to different facets and perspectives (Barlösius 2001: 23).

The researcher and the research object are ideally engaged in a constant dialogue: the researcher asks a question, takes in the participant's answers in order to ask a new question, ideally better suited to the research object than the previous question. The researcher carries out his exploring approach intentionally. As in all kinds of research, he has certain intentions and tries to reach a certain goal. However, a peculiarity of heuristic research is that intentions can, should even, change throughout the research process in order to fit the social reality surrounding the research object (Kleining 1995a: 250). There are different rules the researcher should observe when intended to conduct qualitative research. While different scholars have formulated similar rules (see Silverman 2011), German professor of sociology, Gerhard Kleining, put them together in a quite organized way I am now going to elaborate.

#### *Rule 1:*

The researcher must be open for the research object and willing to change thematic previous knowledge if data suggest a different reality. The rule appears quite matter of course and easy to apply for most people will claim that they are open for new things. Actually, however, exploring new connections which question previous understanding and expectations can be frustrating for it can question the researcher's understanding of social reality, even the researcher himself. Expectations can refer to general ideas, ideologies, and scientific theories. The researcher's attitude can make difficult, or even hinder, the intake of new

information, especially if the researcher dismisses them as irrelevant. Thus the first rule demands from the researcher to question his understanding of things and of himself if research reality suggests otherwise. (Kleining 1995a: 232, 33).

*Rule 2:*

The second rule is against the scientific understanding which demands the research object to be clearly defined in order to then be investigated. In the beginning of the research process there are usually no clear-cut hypotheses the researcher either confirms or negates during the research process. This methodology changes the research object throughout the research process (Kleining 1995a: 233; Silverman 2001: 71). One reason is the viewpoint that an explorative approach which already knows the research object is an inherent contradiction. Also, social reality is in constant change and motion, not static. Kleining named three possible circumstances which could lead to a change in the research object:

1. Through a change in the researcher
2. Through a change as a consequences of research
3. Through a change in the research object

The first constellation is a known phenomenon in daily life: we perceive situations differently, sometimes from one day to the other. External and subjective factors can be responsible; sometimes perception re-changes again. In this case a different perception is caused by us. In the second case the research object presents itself differently from what the researcher initially assumed. This change is thus connected to the research object and must be considered in the following research process. Heuristic research begins with an initial idea the researcher has concerning the research object; otherwise, he could not start in the first place. However, the researcher is aware of the fact that his current understanding is temporary and can change any given time. Through the research process the researcher's initial subjective ideas become gradually more objective. This is possible only if the researcher does not insist on sticking to a previously fixed definition of the research object.

The last of the three points refers to changes in the research object which question the researcher's initial understanding. A well-known example is William F.

Whyte's study (1943) who conducted research on Italian immigrants in Boston in the 1930s. Initially, he had planned to investigate a slum mainly inhabited by Italians. The academic consensus during this time was that inhabitants of slums lived without any social rules or organization, much like human garbage (Kleining 1995a: 235). Through modifications in his research process, Whyte found out that social structure did exist, that it widely surpassed mere kinship relations, including rival gangs and political structures. This development would not have been possible had Whyte not followed the discrepancies between the literature and the social reality he encountered ("I spent 18 months in the field before I knew where I was going") (Whyte 1993: 321). Also, with his study Whyte showed a social reality different from his own initial prejudice and the stereotypes in the literature. This study hopes to make a similar contribution. Whyte thus did exactly what Kleining named rule 2 in his methodology. Especially in the social sciences, research objects are not fixed and universally valid. They move through time and space and change accordingly. Barlösius also argued that social reality cannot be captured according to the rules of a cognitively organized world (2001: 24)

*Rule 3:*

Maximal structural variation of perspectives. The researcher should regard the research object from different perspectives and vary the conditions which can influence the research object. This rule regards the different viewpoints and aspects under which we can look upon a research object. One aspect is the researcher himself who has his own understanding of a topic, but also considers different opinions from other researchers and from the literature. Perspectives further change through the contact with other people, be it "experts" or participants. Different perspectives are not subject to judgment in terms of relevance. Other variation can lie in time, place, or social environment. Another variation of perspective is a combination of different methods. We can, for instance, combine fieldwork with interviews or document analysis. Within a single interview, the researcher varies perspectives by asking a wide range of questions. If a participant is not willing to address certain issues in a formal interview, the information the researcher obtains from him under different, less

„formal“, circumstances are just as valuable. The researcher does thus not change his research method but rather enrich it. Finally, participants influence data. Age, gender, social position, or educational level can have an impact on a person's viewpoint. Being part of, or affected by, a certain social phenomenon also play a role. The construction of the sample is thus an important part of the research process. I constructed mine based on the above-mentioned methodology and selected my participants according to educational level, professional status and country of origin.

#### *Rule 4:*

The researcher tries to examine common characteristics among the different aspects of the research object. If we vary the perspectives as outlined above, the data that goes beyond subjective points of view remains. Finding these common aspects is the most difficult part of the research process for daily life is focused on finding differences. Substantial parts of early socialization aim at recognizing social and structural differences and at the capacity to move within and across them. Economic systems, media, and commercials exist thanks to an over-emphasizing of differences, often deliberately concocted to make the customer see the apparently „new“. The same holds true for political propaganda and the over-dramatization of ethnic conflicts and religious differences (Kleining 1995a: 243). The researcher must then find the common aspects in the data he himself has provoked as many differences as possible in. By focusing on different answers regarding the same topic in an interview, he can analyze them and look for common aspects.

Even if the wording is not identical, the researcher can grasp the abstract common denominator regarding the meaning of an answer. Common aspects can be manifest also in negation, not only through similarities. For instance, the affirmation that an object is „expensive“ or „not expensive“ can represent a common aspect for both are linked to the price of the object (Beuchling 2003: 37; Kleining 1995a: 248).

The researcher then groups the analyzed data and describes the groups, for example through a summary of the data. As the research process develops, these can change and evolve. The researcher then looks for common aspects within the

different groups, considering the abstract findings from the first level of analysis. New findings and negations are also considered. Kleining (1995a: 255) argued that heuristic research models are formalized units of action, or dialogues based on a question-answer sequence. Accordingly, fieldwork is a dialogue between researcher and participants. This holds true for interviews as for phases of observation.

## **Fieldwork**

Based on this methodology, this study gets its empirical data mainly from qualitative fieldwork conducted over an approximately one-year period in the Tokyo area.

While the area does not have the highest percentage of Latin American migrants it does show great variety. People from different Latin American countries *nikkeijin* and not, varying considerably in age, academic background, ethnicity and occupation form a rather heterogeneous group. The premises are thus different from those found in „typical „locations such as Hamamatsu in Shizuoka prefecture where the majority of migrants come from Brazil and, to a lesser extent, Peru, most of them holding factory jobs (Ikegami 2003: 522, 523).

While at the beginning of my research I mainly focused on observing, less structured activities, over the course of the study the more active parts of fieldwork increased, such as semi-structured interview which often included a biographic or narrative part.

Since there are only few qualitative studies that take into account the various nationalities of Latin Americans in Japan one research goal was to address this variety and show a different (iated), multi-perspective picture of the Latin American community in Tokyo. As I will elaborate more in detail in my chapter on education, the Japanese public tends to sum up all migrants as “Brazilians”. Also, Latin Americans in Japan are generally perceived as uneducated blue-collar workers. In this study I try to contrast this idea by showing a different sample of participants and their respective realities in everyday life.

Ethnography is an often employed device of research for the researcher is physically present in the places his target group gathers in. It is indispensable

when exploring social phenomena usually hidden from the public eye or subject to intern mechanisms (Curtis 2003: 42). This approach gives the researcher the chance to evaluate the situation with his own eyes. The combination of (participant) observation and semi-structured interviews serves as an assessment and a built-in cross-check of information and helps synthesize multiple viewpoints, putting events into context and facilitating a holistic approach and an accurate picture of reality (Curtis 2003: 41, 43). Different from a purely ethnographic study, characterized by the researcher being in long, uninterrupted contact with the same social group (Beuchling 2003), this study is a qualitative study with an ethnographic focus. The main part consists of qualitative, semi-structured interviews combined with participant observation. The interviews are centered around a questionnaire of 15 questions, involving participants' motives to come to Japan, their educational background, language proficiency and language acquisition, social contact with the Japanese and their social situation in Latin America. I also asked the hypothetical question of what ought to change in the eyes of my participants so that they could feel more accepted and at home in Japan. The previously constructed questionnaire served the purpose of guaranteeing a common structure for all participants. Open questions gave them the possibility to verbalize their own reflections and opinions beyond the actual questions. The combination of methods, interviews and participant observation, holds the advantage that I could rely on additional information. I further tried to increase this information by working together with my participants, spending free time with them, taking them to the hospital or to other institutions they did not want to, or could not, go to by themselves, often because of language problems. This helped decrease the so-called halo-effect, meaning basically that people tell the researcher what they think he wants to hear. In other words, people's actual opinion is hard to grasp with a single interview, especially when researching sensitive topics like the feeling of being accepted by the Japanese, perceived discrimination, and so forth. Spending additional time with many of my participants has thus provided me with additional information. I conducted all interviews myself, in either Spanish or Portuguese, transcribed them and translated them into English. This has given me control over the interviews, I know that nothing was misunderstood or misinterpreted by a third party. The average length of an interview was about an hour.

Unlike other places in Japan, there is no structured Latin American community in Tokyo. Accordingly, social contacts among Latinos are unstructured and often random. During my fieldwork I met people who introduced me to friends or acquaintances. More often, however, my participants did not maintain close contact with other Latin Americans or were part of different smaller groups. Group membership arose from common interests such as religious affiliation, child rearing or leisure activities.

I conducted all interviews myself, in either Spanish or Portuguese. The average interview was about an hour. Sometimes participants introduced words in Japanese to express Japan-specific concepts. I have collected and explained these expressions in a glossary at the end of this book. I have then transcribed the interviews and translated them into English for the readers' understanding. Since I have carried out all these tasks myself am certain that my translations are correct, that no third party misunderstood or misinterpreted things.

### **Research Journal**

Since this study has an ethnographic focus, and consequently fieldwork is a crucial part, I find it appropriate to insert a research journal at this point. During my fieldwork I met people from more than ten different Latin American countries. While only twenty-five of them became actual interview partners, I led many additional conversations which helped shape the picture that the Latin American community has of itself and of life in Japan.

Growing up in a multicultural and multilingual context and speaking German, Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese since childhood, surely helped me overcome initial difficulties such as the language barrier. However, the first moves were hard, and more than once did I find myself frustrated because gaining access to an institutionalized community may be tedious, but trying to enter a social environment which does not exist as such can be even more so. While it had been my intention to focus on Latin Americans in Tokyo, precisely because I expected more promising results for my research than visiting the already well-explored and established communities of Shizuoka or Ibaraki-ken, finding people willing to talk to me was a problem at first. The disadvantage of a close-knitted community, i.e. the difficulty to enter for outsiders, at the same time constitutes an advantage.



If the researcher finds a member of the group who can introduce him or her to the larger community, he has overcome the first, and maybe one of the highest, hurdles. However, where there is no such organization, the researcher depends on his own and every time he meets somebody the process starts all over again for the last person he talked to has usually nothing to do with the next person he might encounter.

I started my fieldwork in the spring of 2008 by trying to find out if, and if so, where Latin Americans in Tokyo tended to gather. Through early research on the internet I came across a building in Tokyo's southern Shinagawa ward which hosted the Brazilian and the Peruvian consulate as well as a supermarket which allegedly sold all kinds of merchandise from Latin America. So one chilly, rainy morning in March 2008 I went to see for myself.

When I arrived, the place was already full of people waiting in their respective consulates or in the hallway in front. The elevators displayed signs in Japanese, Spanish and Portuguese forbidding the access to floors different from the ones hosting the consulates (the Brazilian consulate is located on the Japanese *nikai*, i.e. the first floor, the Peruvian on the *rokkai*, the fifth floor). The shop was indeed crowded with people waiting for their paperwork to be finished, buying food, or simply having a cup of coffee because it also served the function of a coffee shop where people could have a chat over coffee and some Latin American food.

Another characteristic which distinguished the shop from a traditional supermarket was the vast choice of books and magazines, in both Spanish and Portuguese. As for the languages spoken inside, a vivid mix of Spanish, Portuguese and Japanese could be heard through the alleys of food, books and magazines. More than once did I hear people exclaim happily in Japanese: "Aaaah, natsukashii!"<sup>1</sup>, referring to a particular food of Latin American origin.

Apart from a large selection of self-help books I found several dictionaries and language courses for learning Japanese, as well as novels and non-fiction books on different topics. The languages one could hear in the room were equally varied, a mix of Spanish, Portuguese and Japanese, and often one sentence contained some Japanese on a Spanish or Portuguese base, such as in the following example I overheard as four Peruvians were talking while sharing some *empanadas*:

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<sup>1</sup> Aaaah, how did I miss it!

-Quieres *hanbun*?  
– Ay, sí, arigatō.<sup>2</sup>  
(May 2009)

Once I witnessed a short conversation between a little girl and his mother, the girl wanting to use the restroom:

Daughter: “*Mama, toire iku!*”  
Mother: “*No! Adónde tú vas?!? Eso es para hombres. Tú eres una niña!*”<sup>3</sup>  
(April 2008)

Yet another time, I was talking to a man who, after some minutes, excused himself by saying in Portuguese:

*Tenho que ir pro shigoto.*<sup>4</sup>  
(September 2008)

Over time, this happened many times which suggests that many people spoke this way on a regular basis and probably did not think a great deal about it.

While I browsed through the variety of food, cosmetics and magazines, I thought about how I could possibly engage someone in a conversation. However, nothing occurred to me until an elderly man approached me and invited me to sit with him. While our conversation did not prove to be very constructive, apparently I had reminded him of a Rumanian hostess in a club he used to frequent, he did help me when I told him that I was looking for people who might want to talk to me and show me some places where Latin Americans in Tokyo could meet. Down the street, there was another shop, similar to the one I had just visited. The man took me up a narrow staircase and into the shop where a young woman was looking bored for there was not a single customer in sight. Carolina, as I will call her here, seemed reluctant at first, but after a couple of minutes she warmed up to me and

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<sup>2</sup> D’you want half (of it)?  
– Oh, yes, thank you.)

<sup>3</sup> Daughter: “Mom, I’m going restroom!”  
Mother: “No! Where are you going?!? This is the gents’. You are a girl!”

<sup>4</sup> I have to go to work.”

proceeded right to telling me her life story. The old man who had introduced me disappeared and I was left with would be one of my future interview partners and participants.

So my very first day of fieldwork turned out to be quite successful, but many others were not, especially when there were no customers in the shops and I did not have to chance to listen to people, let alone hope to be approached by someone I could have a conversation with. After I discovered different research locations I met some extremely nice and helpful people who were ready to share a part of their lives with me and to whom I am extremely thankful.

This said, during the first months of my fieldwork I sometimes felt quite limited in my possibilities for I did not know exactly where else I could conduct my observations. For as much as I visited the ethnic supermarket and the surroundings of the consulates, I could not get into touch with people as easily as I had hoped. Customers were different every time and did not know each other, and so there was nobody who could have introduced me to the group – because there was none. I went to see Carolina a couple of times, sometimes helped her unpack newly arrived merchandise or with whatever would come up, but, as she told me, her few Latin American friends had to work long hours, many outside Tokyo, and would thus not be able to meet me. After about two months she disappeared, and when I once came to the shop and did not find her, her successor, another girl from Colombia, told me that she had gone to work in the cafeteria of a university in Tokyo, but was currently in Colombia. I did not see her until the late summer. In the next weeks I met a few people by accident, among which a former member of the Cuban marine who was now selling sunglasses in one of Tokyo's hip and young quarters. While we had numerous and very interesting conversations, he never agreed to do a formal interview and thus be taped, which is understandable considering the social circumstances in his home country. I therefore summarized most of our conversations and cited directly whenever I was sure to remember the exact words.

My luck changed for the better when I received an invitation to a conference for Spanish-speaking researchers in Tokyo. The group was quite small, for the presentations were exclusively in Spanish, and apart from researchers there were also other people who had come out of personal interest. After the conference I managed to talk to several of them and could arrange some meetings right away.

These contacts led to new contacts which helped my research a lot since the people I talked to confirmed that, indeed, there was no “Latin American community” in Tokyo, no place people would meet and “hang out”. Apart from their information and my subsequent experiences, different scholars have confirmed this claim (Córdoba Quero 2007, Del Castillo 1999, De Carvalho 2001). In the following months I met some more future participants, some of them by chance. One day, I went for a manicure and at some point the manicurist and I discovered that we both spoke Spanish. Another time, I talked to the waiter of a Mexican restaurant and he agreed to meet me after work for an interview. Of course I also met people at different conferences, but since I was aiming for variety and a sample as different and multi-faceted as possible I looked for participants from different social and academic backgrounds.

In short, the lack of institutionalization and organization which had been one of my main motives to conduct research in Tokyo and not in an already well-known and established community also turned out to be the greatest challenge. There were weeks where I literally did not meet anyone who might have been of interest for my research which made me very frustrated at times, but also pushed me harder to go on and keep my eyes and ears open. Meeting an interesting person, on the other hand, reinforced my ambition and the feeling that, after all, I was on the right track. Despite the fact that developing a relationship built on mutual trust takes time (Brotherton and Salazar-Atias 2003:189) the effort paid off in terms of sincerity during informal conversations and the actual interviews which I could have never achieved by relying on, say, interviews conducted via email, another possible method (Silverman 2001: 83).

While I was out in the field doing participant observation and looking for potential interview partners I worked on the questionnaire I was going to use. Since qualitative research requires a variety of perspectives and stories in order to capture a valid piece of the research objects’ reality (Kleining 1995a: 236), my questions had to be equally varied and tackle different areas including participants’ social and academic background, ethnicity, etc.

By having informal conversations at first with the people I met during the next months, I tested the usability of my questionnaire and, after numerous changes and rewriting, finally settled for version I would later use for the actual interviews.

Over the next months, I noticed that the way people perceived me changed according to where I was researching. In the direct surroundings of the two consulates I was usually thought of as Brazilian and often approached in Portuguese since the percentage of Brazilians of Caucasian descent is higher than, in this case, Peru. The fact that I repeatedly browsed through and quite often bought magazines in both Spanish and Portuguese, however, seemed to confuse the shop staff. On more than one occasion did she point out that I was about to purchase a book or magazine written in Spanish; another time a different employee asked:

*¿Está bien en portugués?*<sup>5</sup>

at the cash register. However, she never directly asked me where I actually came from. In other contexts, mostly in contact with Japanese, I was mostly perceived as Russian, but not once as US-American. As I have pointed out earlier, this can mean a loss of the privilege Caucasians are said to benefit from, especially in areas with a high concentration of amusement spots and night clubs. As one Japanese girl once explained to me:

普通あなたみたい白人のお姉さんがロシアから来てああ言う変な所で働いてるじゃん<sup>6</sup>

so I should not be astonished if I was thought of as a hostess or a prostitute occasionally. Apart from the quite doubtful political correctness of this statement, it was, at least partly, interesting to be perceived as white, yet not as part of the “privileged”. In short, my identity remained ambiguous to most people until they got to know me better (if we proceeded up to this point). Tsuda reports similar experiences during his fieldwork in a factory in Toyama (2003: 20). Reflecting one’s own participant observation has become a common practice in anthropology. Fieldwork is almost always a combination of the researcher’s particular personal qualities and the particular social environment he researches. The researcher’s

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<sup>5</sup> Is it ok in Portuguese?

<sup>6</sup> (*Futsū, anata mitai hakujin no onēsan ga rosia kara kite āiu henna tokoro de hataraiteru jan*)  
(Most white girls like you come from Russia and work in those strange places, don’t they.)

experiences thus provide a helpful and necessary insight into his relationship with the participants, the data-obtaining process as well as reliability and limitations of ethnographic studies. According to Tsuda,

*an ethnography that completely ignores the anthropologist's own in the field in favor of a sanitized and depersonalized account can be considered problematic on methodological grounds despite the resulting aura of scientific objectivity.*

(Tsuda 2003: 8).

Tsuda further pointed out that

*the purpose of anthropological self-reflexivity should not be self-exploration but methodological clarification and a better understanding of how the participants' lives were observed and interpreted.*

(Tsuda 2003: 9).

He further examined how fieldwork entails a negotiation of identity between the researcher and his participants. Tsuda distinguished between self and social identity, the further referring to an individual's own perceptions of the social environment, thus an internal development. On the other hand, social identity is constructed externally, i.e. by cultural and social norms. However, these two concepts are flexible and tend to blur meaning an individual's identity is a combination of both self and social identity which requires constant negotiation (Ota 2002: 71).

## **Constructive Changes**

My initial research goal had been to find out children of Latin American migrants in Tokyo got on in the school system and how their and their parents' level of Japanese, parents' attitude toward formal education and their own academic level influenced their children's academic forthcoming. As I had already experienced back in Germany, I hoped to find collaborative teachers and public schools with a certain degree of foreign students, particularly from Latin America. However, I had not taken into account the considerable difficulties and bureaucratic hurdles, and finally had to admit that for me, a Ph.D. candidate on a scholarship with no

official teaching position, it would be impossible to be granted access to possible schools, let alone be allowed into classrooms to observe how the few foreign students got along or get permission to talk to them and their parents. On one occasion, a Japanese professor kindly let me accompany him on a visit of an English lesson in a local primary school. Even with him being present, however, it took a great deal of phone calls and formalities until I got the permission to join in. I thus thought about how I could remodel my research question so that I would still be doing the research I wanted, but within realistic limits and within a reasonable time frame. After a great deal of thinking and talking to people, I decided to still research the relationship between a person's proficiency in the local language, in this case Japanese, his or her level of formal education and his or her feeling accepted or not by the Japanese host society. However, I changed my sample to adults who, so I hoped, would be easier to contact and also have a more mature, i.e. articulated opinion on life in Japan, education and language acquisition.

I further decided to include both *nikkeijin* and migrants with no Japanese roots into my sample. The great and varied group of Latin Americans in Japan is generally seen as one homogeneous whole, namely *burajirujin* (Brazilians), *nikkeijin*, regardless of the actual ethnic background, or simply *nihon de hataraku burajiru nikkeijin* (Brazilian *nikkeijin* working in Japan) (De Carvalho 2003: 127, 28). I thus wanted to show the actual heterogeneity against the background of perceived ethnic and linguistic homogeneity. For the same reason I have chosen Tokyo as my field of research and not one of the well-researched factory towns inhabited by a large population of Brazilians working in the local manufacturing industries. In qualitative studies, these changes are justifiable and even desirable for the actual pattern, thus the final "shape" of the study emerges over time (Beuchling 2003; Kleining 1995a; Silverman 2001, 2011).

In fact, I found that two persons of the same social stratum could feel very different about who they were and about life in Japan if, for instance, one of them had Japanese ancestors and the other did not. Also, two persons with the same ethnic roots could feel different about their respective identities if one of them was highly educated and the other was not. This confirmed my initial claim that ethnicity should be one part of my sample, but not a decisive parameter.

Apart from these external conditions, there were other unlucky factors considering the supervision but I have opted not to discuss them here.

In terms of variety and validity, this study wants to be exploratory rather than definitive which means that it does not claim to have found a universal truth valid for all Latin Americans in Japan. It attempts to show a group of individuals coming from different social and ethnic backgrounds and their perceived social integration into Japanese society.

## **Validity**

To ensure validity, I combined different research methods, namely participant and receptive observation, and semi-structured interviews. Referred to as triangulation in Anglophone contexts (Silverman 2001: 233), the same concept is known as Variation or Triangulation in German-speaking research (Kleining 1995a, Beuchling 2003, Friebsthäuser 1997). I added a further element, respondent validation, by discussing my findings with some of the participants who had provided the information in the first place. If the research subject confirms the researcher's findings one can be more certain of their validity (Silverman 2001: 233). The same is claimed by Kleining (1995a: 250) who advocates a permanent dialogue between researcher and research subject. In fact, this is one of the reasons why I chose semi-structured interviews for they allow for questions which, in turn, make the subject specify a certain point or make the researcher ensure that he has "got it the right way". I tried to stay in contact with many of my participants and our informal conversations before and after the actual interviews further helped ensure validity.

Another measure to ensure validity is Kleining's third rule of making sure that every single case is taken into account during analysis (Kleining 1995a: 242). In English-speaking context, this is known as deviant-case analysis (Silverman 2001: 239, 11: 378).



## **(Participant) Observation**

As discussed above, one of the rules the researcher should follow during his or her research is the variation of methods, or triangulating (Kleining 1995a, Beuchling 2003, Silverman 2001, 11). Variation of research methods shall ensure as wide a perspective as possible and thus validity. I therefore combined receptive and participant observation with semi-structured interviews and tried to keep my sample as varied as possible, varying in gender, age, ethnicity, occupation, among others. The first phase of my field research involved a great deal of both receptive and participant observation in sites such as ethnic stores, cafes and other institutions, but also participants' homes. Receptive observation is considered non-invasive and non-provocative (Kleining 1995a: 258). Unlike participant observation, the researcher does not actively influence social action within the group but remains in the back. In none of the cases does observation occur hidden for the researcher does not mind to be perceived as such. The main purpose of this phase was to gain access to the Latin American community; however, as I have pointed out earlier, the „Latin American community“ as such, i.e. in a somehow institutionalized form, did not exist. Unlike, for instance, the city of Hamamatsu, where the mostly Brazilian residents have organized themselves into different social, educational and business-oriented institutions, including own ethnic stores and schools, Latin Americans in Tokyo live relatively unstructured and with no major contact among each other. Even though I informed all participants about my research some of them seemed to not quite to understand the abstract concept of research. On one occasion, a man from Colombia asked me after a rather long conversation in which I had mentioned my research on several occasions whether I did not have to “go to work”<sup>7</sup>.

I then proceeded to briefly explaining that I wanted to “see how Latin Americans live in Tokyo and learn about their experiences”. Basically, however, people responded positively to my study; a Cuban informant uttered the hope that it might help improve communication between Latin Americans in Japan and Japanese society.

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<sup>7</sup> ¿No tienes que ir a trabajar?

Tsuda (2003: 20) described similar problems in conveying what he was actually doing to mostly uneducated Japanese factory workers. Like Tsuda, I did not dwell on my being a researcher more than strictly necessary in order not to strengthen existing boundaries and prejudice against college-educated persons.

The information gained by participant observation served as a basic guide line for the actual interviews conducted in the following phase of my research.

### **Semi-structured Interviews**

The center of this study is semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is conducted within a formal frame, upon making an appointment with participants. I asked them to answer previously constructed open questions, possibly in various sentences. Open questions do not suggest any possible answer nor do they point in a certain direction. They do not include any form of scales, often used in quantitative research, but aim at the open discussion of the previously selected different topics and social aspects (Friebertshäuser 1997: 375; Kleining 1995a: 259). If we vary the participants and the questions (see rule 3), 10-12 questions and a sample of 15-20 people are sufficient (Kleining 1995a: 260). My questionnaire contained 15 questions; my sample 28 persons. Both variables were thus a little larger. The questions I asked my participants were based on previously created questionnaires which contained a total of 15 questions concerning different aspects of the participants' process of integration and education, but also on experiences in daily life, participants' social background and their reasons for coming to Japan. Questions were open, which gave the participants the possibility to not only answer the immediate question, but to add own opinions, reflections or doubts. At the same time, the previously formulated questions guaranteed a structured sequence and thus systematic transcription and analysis. Of course I have to rely on what my participants told me during the interviews and other conversations and do not have the possibility of verifying their stories. However, this is a risk all research, not only qualitative, has to take. One can lie in an interview as he can in a large-scale questionnaire. Also, I had no reason to doubt what my participants told me about their educational background :

everything seemed as consistent as one can observe over several months or, in some cases, years.

I recorded the interviews in most cases. A few participants were willing to talk about life and their experiences in Japan, and also agreed to their stories being published anonymously in this study, but they did not want to be recorded. One reason can be found, as some participants confirmed without me asking them for their reasons, in the fact that some had lived under totalitarian regimes and were thus extremely reluctant toward anything that, if only vaguely, reminded them of being spied on.

In these cases I wrote down the main points during the interviews and completed them immediately after finishing. Since I was in stable contact with most participants, I was able to ask directly in case of questions or need for clarification.

### **Qualitative research – Counteracting Criticism**

Critics of qualitative research argue that it lacks quantification and is thus less “scientific” than its quantitative counterpart. Being a sociological phenomenon, it can indeed be understood only in sociological, not in economic terms (Schwingel 1995: 93). Social capital consists of multiple layers made of social contacts, memberships in different organizations, the feeling about society, among others (Keeley 2007: 116). It is true that social capital is hard to measure or to quantify. I am aware of this potential weakness. From a methodological point of view I want to try to contrast this point of criticism by arguing that all attempts to “measure” social capital imply some form of quantification. While a quantitative approach is of course a valuable research method it lacks one crucial point when dealing with human beings: depth. Social spheres are far too complex to capture with a quantitative approach alone. While quantitative research has the advantage of covering much larger segments of a population than qualitative research, it tends to remain two-dimensional. Depth, however, is indispensable when we want to investigate human beings and the social spheres they act in (Silverman 2011: 8, 12, 13, 14). This claim is in line with Putnam (2000: 26) who argued that social life is uneven and not single-dimensioned. As I have argued before and more extensively in my methodology chapter, a qualitative approach is not any less scientific than a quantitative one. Quantitative research does not guarantee validity;

official statistics, pre-defined variables and questionnaires, and the likes, are often not suited to a qualitative approach. Rather, it is the priorities of the study in question that determine which kind of methodological and theoretic approach is more suitable in a particular research situation. Quantification can be appropriate; however, in a qualitative research design it bears the danger of concealing social mobility and, ultimately reality, for social spheres do not obey laws of quantification nor can we fit them into pre-established categories. Quoting from Silverman,

*[...] it is to suggest that there are areas of social reality which such statistics cannot measure.*

Silverman (2011: 16).

It is true that pure induction can produce a list of facts that is little more than a list of trivia. On the other hand, if the assumptions are invalid, pure deduction can be sterile and useless. Deduction produces hypotheses to be tested but can never replace data. A quantitative approach can yield information on social phenomena, yet on an operational basis which tends to lack depth (Reed 1993: 43; Silverman 2011: 17). Qualitative research, on the other hand, takes into account the “whats” and “hows” of social phenomena, crucial questions when we are concerned with social reality. Silverman argued that it takes indeed “contextual sensitivity” to explore social spheres, something a quantitative approach, based on pre-established definitions and measurements, cannot provide (Silverman 2011: 17). I agree with this viewpoint, yet want to make clear again that none of the different approaches is more or less scientific or valuable than the other. Rather, it depends on what we are trying to find out. In the case of a social group in constant motion, made of human beings and determined by context and social reality, a quantitative approach would not be suitable, especially if the researcher aims at an in-depth view at his sample. I am aware that in the social sciences mixed-method approaches are most popular. Nevertheless, I have chosen a qualitative approach because I wanted to focus on people’s perceptions and their feeling toward social integration in Japan.

## IV Historical Context, Legal Premises and Motives to Move

*Barth's recent discussions of the routine cultural pluralism of complex societies emphasize the importance of history, as well as the transactional immediacy of everyday life and its negotiations (Barth 1984, 1989). History is invoked in two different senses: as the ongoing process of events which constitutes the context and content of the here-and-now, and as 'streams' of 'tradition' [...] within which people are to differing degrees located and of which they differentially partake. Stressing history has produced a shift of emphasis away from the individualistic voluntarism of his earlier writings [...] Further, recognizing the centrality of history entails a search for pattern, influence and effect within a wide social and geographic arena; attention must be given to factors both within and without the social setting, local community or region which is the object of analytical interest.*

Jenkins (1997: 52)

Based on this statement, I briefly want to outline the historical context in which emigration from Japan occurred. Migration is always embedded in a social and in a historical context, and only as a consequence do people leave their homes and look for a life elsewhere. Recognizing the centrality of history entails a search for pattern, influence and effect within a wide social and geographic arena; attention must be given to factors both within and without the social setting, local community or region which is the object of analytical interest (Jenkins 1997: 52).

Modernization theory still names economic-based push and pull-factors as a central point of migration. Lately, there has been a shift of attention toward the macro level of migration, namely the broader events that ultimately lead to population movements. This historical-structuralist approach places migration in a context of economic inequalities and, as Brettell puts it, “the development of underdevelopment” (Brettell 2008: 119) or, in other words, the creation of push factors that led to emigration from Japan (Woortmann 1995: 2). This, I argue, happened in Japan after the Meiji Restoration. I therefore start this chapter by giving an account of the historical events that led to the Meiji Restoration and finally to Japanese migration to the Americas. (Hérail 1990; Pohl 2008).

After Japan had been united by Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and finally Tokugawa Ieyasu, after centuries of civil wars and revolutions at the end of the 16th century, the last of the warlords founded the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603. It would exist until 1867.

Despite its isolated geographical position, Japan was increasingly approached by foreign traders. As early as 1792, Russian traders asked the *bakufu* to grant them the permission to trade in Japan; Tokugawa denied them access. In 1808 a British

warship threatened to attack the Dutch residents near Nagasaki; ten years later another British ship approached Edo and again was refused trading permission.

Gordon (2003: 48) argued that the *bakufu* reacted to this increasing foreign influx by issuing a severe seclusion policy in 1825 which included expelling foreigners by using arms if necessary. Nevertheless, in 1844 the Dutch based in Nagasaki submitted an entreaty from King William II explaining that Japan could no longer keep on isolating itself from the Western powers. The Japanese, witnessing the ongoing Opium War in China and Britain's forceful imposing of her will upon the country, felt threatened, yet loosened their regulations. According to Gordon, this attitude ultimately weakened the *bakufu* for it had to impose itself while avoiding war (Gordon 2003: 48). One could speculate at length whether or not Japan could have carried on with its policy; there are different viewpoints and approaches and it is not the aim of this study to further examine them all. As Hall (1968: 229) put it, by 1830 Japan was aware of the increasing pressure from Western powers.

In 1853, Commodore Matthew Perry landed in Japan for the first time and warned the Japanese that they would have to go to war should they not accept US trading. When he came back in 1854, this time with quite a large fleet, the *bakufu* gave in to letting American ships land in Hokkaidō, the northernmost of the Japanese islands, and to establish a consul in the city of Shimoda (Treaty of Kanagawa). Britain, France, the Netherlands and Russia were granted the same rights. The American consul insisted on more rights and argued that other trading partners would be even more demanding than the US. After two centuries of *sakoku*, Perry and his "black ships" thus managed to make Japan open its shores and in 1858 the *bakufu* signed a treaty which opened eight Japanese ports to trade (Del Castillo 1999: 156; De Vos and Wagatsuma 1995: 120; Gordon 2003: 50; Pohl 2008: 59). One of the consequences of this policy was inflation followed by protests and upheavals among the population. Imported goods were cheap compared to those made in Japan and business owners feared for their existence. Anti-Tokugawa sentiment was growing steadily, especially in the outer domains of Satsuma, Chōshū and Tosa (nowadays the prefectures of Kagoshima, Yamaguchi, and Kōchi) (Gordon 2003: 52).

Finally, in late 1867, armies from Satsuma and Chōshū overtook Kyōto and the emperor's palace. In 1868 Meiji Tennō was enthroned and an imperial "restoration" was announced (De Vos and Wagatsuma 1995: 124; Gordon 2003:

58). The Tokugawa *bakufu* was to be replaced by a government obeying the emperor. After the Meiji Restoration Japan underwent a radical change from feudalism toward becoming an industrialized nation at a tremendous pace (De Vos and Wagatsuma 1995: 119; Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Japonesa 1992: 28; Tataki 1990: 43). This implied the strengthening and expanding of Japanese military power. The Meiji leaders witnessed the important role trade and military power played in the Western world. The slogan *fukoku kyōhei* (rich country, strong army) sums up the spirit of this era (De Vos and Wagatsuma 1995: 124; Gordon 2003: 50, 70; Hérail 1990: 385; Takaki 1989: 48). The Meiji government imposed a severe tax system upon its citizens which collected revenues from individuals rather than from villages, as had been customary in the Tokugawa era, an unbearable burden for most of the already poor farmers from Kyushu and Okinawa, especially for those who had not been born as *chōnan*, meaning the oldest son, who traditionally inherited the parents' land in order to keep the *ie* alive<sup>8</sup>. These social and economic circumstances acted as push factors (Handa 1980: 99; Tsuda 2003: 56). For many Japanese during this time, emigration became the logical consequence as well as the only possible solution:

*Por trás da política de emigração para esses paupérrimos habitantes dos campos e das cidades, e que chegou a ser executada como um empreendimento nacional, houve razões sociais e econômicas que exigiram promovesse o Japão a emigração [...] Na fase de transição da era feudal para a capitalista, a economia mercadológica e monetária trouxe reflexos de vária ordem para a comunidade rural [...] Uns perderam terras, outros ficaram desempregados, e quando a estrutura da sociedade até então vigente começou a desmoronar, passou a aumentar o número dos que saíam para tentar ganhar dinheiro em outras localidades ou se afastavam das regiões em que moravam em busca de novos empregos [...]*

(There were social and economic reasons behind the emigration policy that demanded from Japan to promote emigration. Carried out like a national task, it addressed the extremely poor inhabitants of the rural areas and the cities...In the phase of transition from the feudal to the capitalist era, market and monetary economy had various impacts on the rural community...Some lost real estate, others ended up unemployed, and when the existing social structure crumbled, the number of those who went abroad to make money elsewhere or left their region looking for new work increased...)  
Handa (1980: 99).

### *Dekasegi*

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<sup>8</sup> *Ie*: house, household, family. Concept of quasi-kinship, can include adoption in order to maintain the social structure. Emphasizes hierarchy of siblings and obeying the head of the household (Befu 2001: 25; Woortmann 1995: 3, 14).

In order to understand the wider notion of migration for the Japanese it is necessary to briefly illustrate the concept of *dekasegi*, fundamental part of Japanese labor history. In anthropology, modernization theory opposes life in the country and in the city and thus two different ways of life, traditional and modern (Brettell 2008: 118). According to this theoretical framework, migrants are motivated to leave their place of origin out of economic reasons, thus out of a rational choice. The social phenomenon of *dekasegi* corresponds to this theory despite originally describing internal migration from poor rural areas to the cities within Japan. *Dekasegi* (出稼ぎ) literally means “to go out and earn money” (Del Castillo 1999: 190; Ishi 2003: 479; Laumonier 1998: 193, 94; Tsuda 2003: Preface XII). I argue, however, that the theoretical framework can be applied to this national form of migration for the push- and pull-factors do not differ from those in international migration. Both cases are centered around a discrepancy between economic resources, land, and economic wellbeing. In short, and as I argue throughout this study, migration is about perceived life chances.

*E se a industrialização[...] se mostrava insuficiente, incapaz de absorver os trabalhadores saídos do meio rural, então era imperioso deixar a família no interior e tentar ganhar dinheiro em outras localidades. Quando se ia para o exterior, a emigração se caracterizava pelo objetivo de ganhar dinheiro.*

[And when industrialization [...] proved insufficient, incapable to absorb the workers who had left the rural areas, it became mandatory to leave the family and try to earn money elsewhere. When people moved abroad, emigration was characterized by the objective of making money.]  
Handa (1980: 100)

As we have seen from these definitions, migration was intended to be temporary, not permanent. Migrants behaved accordingly, as the following passages will try to show.

### **Early Migration to Latin America**

The end of the 19th century was thus marked by a substantial wave of emigration from Japan, initially to Hawaii, later to the US mainland and Canada. Later still, migration was directed toward Latin America, mainly to Mexico and Peru. Brazil, the land with the largest number of Japanese residents outside Japan, was the last



aim of migration and not approached until 1908 (Ichioka 1988: 42). The main reason for migration being diverted toward Latin America was the political climate in the US and Canada that had turned particularly hostile toward migrants from Asia and especially from Japan (Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Japonesa 1992: 19). The '*Gentlemen's Agreement*' between Japan and the United States was signed in 1908; in 1924, the US-*Immigration Act*, an even stricter set of restrictions against migration from Asia, was enacted (Córdova Quero 2007: 26; Del Castillo 1999: 276; Tsuda 2003: 56; Woortmann 1995: 4).

Between 1899 and 1908, 18.203 Japanese migrated to Latin America (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 27); before 1945, Japan sent 244.334 migrants to Latin America (Befu 2002: 6). Compared to the huge wave of migration to Hawaii until the amendment of the *Immigration Act* of 1924 (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004: 11; Ueunten 2008: 161), this number is small. In Mexico, the first receiving country in Latin America, the Japanese could not establish themselves due to a deficient infrastructure, political instability and a very class conscious, xenophobe society. Different scholars named class consciousness in this context as a central motive of social inequality in Latin America (Allen 2002: 32; Del Castillo 1999: 260; Yamawaki 2003; Sansone 2000: 153). In fact, the problem remained the same in the following countries to receive the Japanese. I will now give a brief account on migration to the two main receiving countries of Japanese in Latin America: Peru and Brazil.

## **Migration to Peru**

*Si el indio es un problema, el japonés es un peligro*

(If the indios are a problem the Japanese are a danger)  
(Anti-japanese slogan in 1930, Del Castillo 1999: 279)

Peru was in need of cheap labor. After the abolition of slavery in 1854 the country was not able anymore to cover its need with African slaves. Former slaves were now available as free workers; however, they were not considered trustworthy. Consequently, the demand of European and Asian migrants started to rise significantly. The imported Chinese contract workers were fleeing from the sugar plantations and from the guano fields into the bigger cities or left upon completing

their contracts (Del Castillo 1999: 142; Fenton 1999: 141). In order to spare the Japanese from a similar fate the Meiji government made an agreement with the Peruvian government in 1899 in which the exact working conditions were established. The conditions, however, were only seldom respected.

The Japanese worked in sugar and coffee plantations; however, problems and discussions with the supervisors happened almost on a daily basis for the plantation owners did not respect the accorded working conditions and often did not pay and wages. An increasing number of workers fled the plantations, mostly to Lima, and opened small shops, often barber shops (Del Castillo 1999: 273, 78). Especially in Lima, riots against Japanese were common. Peruvian society was closed and class conscious. Additionally the unfavorable political and structural situation the first Japanese migrants had experienced in Mexico turned out to be not much different (Tsuda 2003: 56). Since the first generation of migrants, those who had emigrated before 1908, were almost exclusively male, the question of suitable wives had to come up eventually. Young women from Japan were married to often much older men through pictures. This picture-bride system was common until the 1920s when the Peruvian government finally prohibited it (Del Castillo 1999: 277; Masterson and Funada-Classon 2004: 70; Woortmann 1995: 5). The Japanese community grew strong and largely autonomous with own stores, schools, newspapers, etc.

As in modern migration studies, it is difficult to prove whether a closed receiving society leads to ethnic communities and exclusion of others or, on the other hand, a closed immigrant community with few social bridges and scarce will to build them results in the receiving society disapproving of the migrants. I will briefly discuss this problematic in the chapter on cultural capital.

Del Castillo (1999: 275; 278) saw the Japanese community in Peru as a way of surviving in xenophobic Peru. Their living largely separated from Peruvian society facilitated daily life but aggravated already existing conflicts and anti-Japanese sentiments (Del Castillo 1999: 275, 278). The Japan-born *issei* did rarely speak Spanish and their children were kept within the Japanese community.

During Japan's militarization before World War II anti-Japanese tendencies increased further as did the Japanese pride which led to further discrepancies and did not encourage Japanese integration into Peruvian society. In the late 1930s Peruvian society treated the Japanese with increasing rejection. The press accused

them of not trying to integrate into Peruvian society and reproached them for their alleged unwillingness of marrying Peruvians of other ethnic descent. At the same time Peruvian right-wing activists called the Japanese an inferior race Peruvians should avoid and meet with disdain. Main newspapers such as *La Prensa* held the Japanese responsible for Peru's bad economic conditions. Headlines such as “La inmigración amarilla y los intereses nacionales”<sup>9</sup> or “Para eliminar el elemento asiático”<sup>10</sup> increased concern and prejudice among the Peruvian population (Del Castillo 1999: 279). The media further spread the rumor that Japanese males in Peru were undercover soldiers about to take over the country. Behind these attacks was without a doubt fear of the rising Japanese militarism but also envy of a minority who had managed to become economically successful despite unfavorable economic conditions. According to Del Castillo (1999: 280), this hostile climate further strengthened the Japanese nationalist feelings and made them rely on ethnic ties as a common ground to build on.

The pressure from the outside increased the Japanese attitude of *uchi muke* (inward movement, directed toward one's own social or ethnic group; direct opposition to *soto*, or outside) made intra-Japanese animosities fade, or at least lose importance, and gave room to what we can call pan-Japanese identity (Davis and Ikeno 2002: 219; Makino 2002: 29).

Events in another Latin American country had further influence on the events in Peru. In 1934 the Brazilian government under Getúlio Vargas implemented a law which severely limited Japanese immigration into Brazil (Demartini 2000: 46, 67; De Carvalho 2003: 19; Handa 1980: 107). It was important for Japanese in Peru for the Peruvian political right claimed that now all Japanese rejected by Brazil would migrate to Peru. In 1934 there were 20.385 Japanese officially living in Peru, most of them around Lima (Masterson and Funada Classen 2004: 70).

Peru's answer to this perceived threat was an anti-Japanese migration law similar to the US-immigration Act of 1924. It made Japanese migration to Peru practically impossible (Del Castillo 1999: 278). This implementation largely ended Japanese migration to Peru 40 years after the first workers had set foot into the sugar plantations of the Peruvian coastal region.

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<sup>9</sup> Yellow immigration and national interests

<sup>10</sup> To eliminate the Asian element

The end of World War II did not bring much of a change in this aspect. General Manuel A. Odría (1948-56) and his successor did not change the legislation that did not allow Japanese nationals into Peru, due to their alleged incapacity to integrate. Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay, on the other hand, became increasingly popular with the Japanese. Between 1951 and 1970 only 800 Japanese moved to and were registered in Peru. Those Japanese who had resided in Peru before World War II were not allowed to re-enter Peru. Some managed to settle in Brazil or Bolivia and then migrate to Peru illegally.

While the Japanese kept on being an unpopular minority in Peru, diplomatic relations between the two countries improved. It was not until the 1960s and 70s, when the Japanese economy started booming, that this improvement began to reflect in improved relations between Japanese Peruvians and Peruvians of other ethnic descent. In 1960 the Peruvian government allowed family members of Japanese Peruvians into the country.

The Peruvian Immigration Act of 1936 largely stopped Japanese migration (Del Castillo 1999: 278). One significant change occurred after the end of World War II. Those Japanese who were born and studied after the war had to attend Peruvian schools with an according curriculum and in Spanish; many forgot how to properly speak Japanese; many Japanese parents found that there was no chance of going back to Japan, so their children would have to live in Peru anyway because Japan was defeated and poor; thus their vision and cultural values changed and became more Peruvian; only what was taught inside the family remained Japanese (Del Castillo 1999: 302). Newborn babies had to register with the Peruvian authorities, not the Japanese consulate. On the other hand, those born before the war and raised by Japanese moral and educational standards continued to defend Japan's values and principles. Most of them had been registered with the Japanese consulate in Lima and thus held Japanese nationality. Also, many of those who had been dreaming of going back to Japan understood that under the given circumstances, a lost war, an impoverished home country, they would be better off settling definitely in their host countries. As I have pointed out above, however, Latin American economy was very underdeveloped compared to US-economy. The Japanese had to realize that under the given conditions it would be impossible to save enough money to return to Japan wealthy. Many of them thus began to arrange themselves with the foreign environment and decided to settle

(Del Castillo 1999: 278). In-group solidarity facilitated this process of adaptation. This solidarity combined with the re-establishment of Japanese schools, media and small family business greatly helped find Japanese identity, almost swiped out due to the war. The new print media, however, were mostly printed in Spanish for the immigrants' children and grandchildren had already lost proficiency in Japanese. At this point I ask how this could be possible if they grew up in Japanese-only communities and their parents, the *issei*, did not speak Spanish. The Japanese government reacted to this decreasing contact with Japan with more Japanese language classes in Peru. Regular schooling in Peruvian schools, and thus in Spanish, was now mandatory. Most *nisei* opted for Peruvian citizenship despite of remaining largely within their own ethnic community and not mixing with Peruvian society (Del Castillo 1999: 282; 303). According to Del Castillo (1999: 281) these measures represented, however hard, a first step toward Japanese integration in Peru. Hostility against Japanese, however, continued and Del Castillo (1999: 283) considered this the main reason why many Japanese still don't mingle with Peruvians. De Carvalho (2003: 65) saw the reason for the same phenomenon the *nikkeijin* in Brazil who, she argued, hesitate to fully mix with Brazilian society. Most Japanese migrants were of humble peasant origin and therefore conservative and poorly educated. Their children, the *nisei*, kept the old values and traditions, partly out of convenience, partly for sentimental reasons, but soon ignored the original meaning of cultural manifestations and linguistic differences. Subsequent generations have gradually come to ignore the differences between mainland Japan and Okinawa. Up to present, the two groups tend to be lumped together (Arakaki 2002: 305; Del Castillo 1999: 290). The above-explained factors finally made the Japanese look for other options. Argentina Bolivia, and Paraguay, if to a much lesser extent, became new destinations for potential migrants. Between 1951 and 1970 less than 800 Japanese migrated to Peru. The main recipient of Japanese migration, however, was still another nation: Brazil.

## **Migration to Brazil**

*Whoever said that Brazil was good, lied*

*The emigration company lied.  
I arrived on the other side of the Earth,  
Believing in Paradise, I found Hell*  
(De Carvalho 2003: 11).

Brazil started looking for foreign workers when the African slaves and mostly Italian immigrants used until this point did not cover the need of workforce anymore (Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Japonesa 1992: 26). After the signing of the *Tratado de Amizade, de Comércio e de Navegação Japão-Brasil* (Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation Japan-Brazil) in 1895, (Córdova Quero 2007: 26; De Carvalho 2003: 4; Del Castillo 1999: 275), Brazil was to become the largest Japanese community of the Western world. If, as illustrated above, poverty, impossible tax burden, and a strict *ie* system acted as push factors out of Japan, Brazil's demand for workforce, especially in coffee plantations, served as a powerful pull factor. Slavery had been abolished in 1888; in the same period migration from Europe, especially from Italy, had been decreasing significantly (Fenton 1999: 74; Handa 1980: Tsuda 2003: 56). Workers from Europe and Asia were especially popular for the now free former slaves from Africa were met with disdain and mistrust. Between 1908 and 1938 182.268 Japanese migrated to Brazil, accounting for approximately 75 per cent of all migrants in Latin America before World War II. The first ship from Japan, the *Kasato Maru* brought 781 Japanese migrants to Santos, Brazil (Linger 2001: 20; Woortmann 1995: 4). Most of them settled in the states of São Paulo and Paraná (Córdova Quero 2007: 26; Linger 2001: 21; Tsuda 2003: 57). Like migrants before them, most were poor peasants from rural areas (Handa 1980: 99; Tsuda 2003: 55). Many of them settled, not unlike Mexico, Peru and other Latin American countries, in *colônias*, ethnic enclaves, in which they lived quite isolated from Brazilian main society (Demartini 2000: 45). Migrating to Hawaii and North American first and to Latin America later was thought of as a temporary measure to improve one's own financial condition: *dekasegi*. As Sakurai (1993: 41) describes, earning money and returning home as soon as possible kept the Japanese in Latin America working and saving. This attitude, combined with their above-illustrated tendency to remain within their own ethnic enclave, earned them the reputation of being committed and hardworking, but also reserved and materialistic. What I have described for the case of Peru can be said to hold true for Brazil and other Latin

American countries as well. In the 1920s, Japanese in Brazil were perceived as inferior and even as a threat to national safety (Lesser 1995: 116; Tsuda 2003: 69). As time passed most migrants had to realize that becoming wealthy in the short term they had envisioned was going to be very difficult, if not impossible. Much like Del Castillo (1999: 303) related how most Japanese in Peru had to give up the hope of returning to Japan after Japan's defeat, studies on Brazil paint a similar picture (De Carvalho 2003; Demartini 2000; Tsuda 2003). However, staying in Brazil, like in other Latin American countries, meant dealing with the negative image Japan had after it lost the war. This led to a conflict in interests: on the one hand the Japanese tried to maintain their "Japaneseness" and kept seeing themselves as mere sojourners in a foreign land while, on the other, they made efforts to adapt to Brazilian society (De Carvalho 2003: 64; Demartini 2000: 8, 61, 65). However, discrimination, not least because of their Asian features, was a common phenomenon. Pejorative expressions such as "Olho Puxado"<sup>11</sup> (Tsuda 2006: 213) or simply "Japonês"<sup>12</sup> or even "Japão"<sup>13</sup> were frequently used to (pejoratively) refer to Brazilians of Japanese descent. The Brazilian concept of nation-founding ethnicities did not include Asian but was limited to white, black and various shades in between (De Carvalho 2003; Sansone 2000).

The post-war *nikkeijin* grew up with different values and a different mentality for the curriculum was this of their receiving countries and the language not Japanese, but Spanish or Portuguese (Demartini 2000). Inside the home, most Japanese continued to speak Japanese and live according to Japanese standards; however, these efforts did not make up for the life outside, led in another language and around other moral and cultural values. Just like had happened in Peru before, the Japanese in Brazil started to perceive themselves as residents more than temporary workers; this process, however, did not finish overnight and it took several decades to achieve something even close to social integration. Despite *nisei* and *sansei* now growing up with Portuguese at school and outside the home, the feeling of belonging to the Japanese community was strong (Del Castillo 1999: 294; Demartini 2000: 61; Linger 2001: 21), not unlike the situation in Peru. Despite the late start, Brazil would turn into the country with the largest Japanese community in the Western world.

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<sup>11</sup> slant eye

<sup>12</sup> Japanese

<sup>13</sup> Japan

## *Imingaisha*

Migration constituted the third largest source of income after tea and silk business in Japan (Gordon 2003: 95). The wave of emigration, tolerated, if not encouraged, by the Japanese government led to an increasing number of so-called *immigration companies, or imingaisha*,<sup>14</sup> all in search of profitable business with potential emigrants (Del Castillo 1999: 190; Handa 1980: 103; Moriyama 1985: 83; Laumonier 1998: 194; Tsuda 2003: 56). Largely private businesses, they shipped workers not only to Hawaii but through the whole Pacific area. The first immigration company was founded in November 1891 under the name of *Nihon Yoshisa Emigration Company*<sup>15</sup> and shipped Japanese workers to New Caledonia, Australia and to the Fiji islands (Ichioka 1988: 47).

When the Japanese government stopped business with the *dekasegi* in 1894, the number of private immigration companies increased further, among them *Meiji Emigration Company* and *Yokohama Emigration Company*.<sup>16</sup>

Moriyama (1985: 83) stated that:

移民会社の数は、一八九四年の移民保護規則以前には四社だけだったのが、以後は激増した。

(Considering the number of *Immigration Companies*, before the law to protect the migrants there were only four such companies; however, in the following their number increased rapidly. )

Since shipping workers overseas was not a government-controlled business many companies tried to take advantage of their potential customers by picturing an easy, well-paid life abroad and deceived the workers in terms of wages and

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<sup>14</sup>移民会社

<sup>15</sup> Moriyama 1985: 83:

“...移民たちのために旅券を取得したり、必要書類を整えたりした人々がいた。横浜や神戸旅館業者である。彼らは“非公認の代理人“としてハワイの仕事を紹介し、船会社と繋がりがあるから渡航費を安くできると称して、移民希望者を勧誘した。” (There were people who bought passports for the emigrants and prepared the documents necessary. They were ryokan owners from Yokohama and Kobe. As “unofficial agents” they provided employment in Hawaii and, having connections to shipping companies, they claimed that they could keep transport cost low. They so looked for potential migrants. )

<sup>16</sup> Kawakami, S.S. „By this time, however, many agencies had sprung into life in Japan for the purpose of promoting emigration to Hawaii. They...made much profit by squeezing emigrants.”



working conditions (Del Castillo 1999: 276, 77; Ichioka 1988: 47). As it had happened before in Hawaii and on the mainland of the United States (Lange 2006), the first Japanese in Brazil were to experience considerable difficulties.

While the Japanese government attempted to counteract this practice, the main goal was control of the companies, not protection of the workers. The main responsible for organized migration to Peru were the Japanese Tanaka Teikichi, employed by *Morioka Company*, and the Peruvian Augusto B. Leguía, sugar planter and future president of Peru (Del Castillo 1999: 276). Negotiations between the two governments led to an agreement which permitted Japanese males between the ages of 20 and 45 to work in Peru for a three-month period. While there were written contracts clearly listing wages, costs for lodging, medication, and travelling back and forth, most plantation owners did not respect them.

The first migrants were thus exclusively male and came mostly from South-west Japan and from Okinawa. Like in other destinations before, these *dekasegi* planned to save as much money in as little time as possible and return to Japan (Tsuda 2003: 56). Due to unfavorable working conditions and low wages, however, they had to realize that this would be impossible. Finally, World War II destroyed all hopes of returning to Japan any time soon (Tsuda 2003: 56), much like Del Castillo (1999: 276, 77) has illustrated in the Peruvian case.

### **Intra-Japanese Differences**

The Japanese in the Americas found themselves in a foreign environment, among a class- and race-conscious society in which their place had yet to be defined and where the descendants of the Spanish and Portuguese conquistadores played a leading role (Del Castillo 1999: 281, 87).

On a larger scale, they identified as Japanese as opposed to the natives or migrants from Europe. Regional differences are strongly emphasized even in present-day Japan and despite the same ethnic background. Consequently, the first migrants in Latin America brought their linguistic and cultural peculiarities with them (De Carvalho 2003: 69; Del Castillo 1999: 290). Within their own group, there was a more subtle differentiation based on their respective prefecture (De Carvalho 2003:

70; Del Castillo 1999: 292; Rocha Nogueira 1984: 142). This feeling was especially developed among the Okinawans who constituted the largest group among the Japanese migrants. For centuries, the Ryukyu Islands had been subject to pressure from and tribute paying to both China and Japan (Kerr 2000: 166; Norman 2000: 16; Refsing 2003: 54). In the Tokugawa era, the islands had served as a trading base for trading with China. In 1879 Japan had incorporated the Ryukyu islands as the prefecture of Okinawa (Gordon 2003: 75; Hanazaki 2004: 217; Kerr 2000: 381). While the Meiji leaders were focused on modernizing Japan, the newly acquired prefecture Okinawa was not part of it. As the main reason Kerr named the conservatism of the Okinawan leaders and a strong anti-Japanese sentiment supported by the Chinese government on whose expense Japan had annexed the Ryukyus (Kerr 2000: 392). Therefore, the differences between Okinawa and the other prefectures were enhanced rather than evened out. Kerr further argued that Okinawans were subject to severe discrimination by the mainland Japanese who had started to move to the islands and occupied the most favorable social and professional positions. The old order had positioned the inhabitants of the main island above those from the outer islands; these boundaries, however, were blurred increasingly by the discriminatory policy pushed forward by the Japanese (Kerr 2000: 393; Ueunten 2008: 159). Kerr further argued that many Okinawans preferred migrating to South America instead of one of the Ryūkyūs' outer islands, Yaeyama, where cheap labor was urgently needed (Kerr 2000: 437). Most of the workers expected to improve their and their families' living conditions by working abroad rather than on one of the more remote islands where poverty was as bound to exist as it did on the main island. In 1899 the first Okinawan workers landed in Hawaii where they were to work on the local sugar plantations. In 1902 they entered the United States. By the 1930s, about 54,000 Okinawans had emigrated, more than half to Latin America. Social solidarity among the *uchinanchū* (Okinawans) in opposition to the *naichijin* (mainland Japanese) was strong (Arakaki 2002: 305; Kerr 2000: 437). According to De Carvalho (2003: 70), the Okinawans in Latin America referred to themselves as "cheerful and relaxed" while characterizing the other Japanese as "sad and tense". By attributing themselves positive qualities commonly associated with Latino characteristics, the Okinawans set themselves closer to Latin American society while turning away from the other Japanese. Those, on the other hand, called the

Okinawans “dark, hairy and unreliable”, characteristic also often associated with Latin populations, but of course with a negative connotation. Different language, eating and clothing habits deepened the differences between the two groups (De Carvalho 2003: 70, 71; Del Castillo 1999: 290, 91; Kerr 2000: 454; Tsuda 2006: 222).

### **Pre- and Postwar Immigrants**

Another substantial difference was marked by World War II. De Carvalho (2003: 62, 70, 72) argued that prewar immigrants considered themselves to be true Japanese who represented the traditional Japanese virtues such as diligence, patriotism and trustworthiness. In comparison with the newcomers, however, they had lost the characteristics that had qualified them as “Japanese” while the new immigrants still corresponded to the image they had preserved of their homeland, including lighter skin and correct speech. On the other hand, those who had migrated to Latin America after the war came from a different Japan and did not share the prewar immigrants’ pride to be Japanese. The newcomers perceived the old immigrants as already “brazilianized”, with different behavior and different attitudes and speaking a variety of Japanese full of unknown, for Japanized Portuguese, terms (De Carvalho 2003: 62; Lesser 1999: 168, 169). Reactions were similar in other Latin American countries. Faced with this dilemma, the *issei* had to re-invent a common identity. While they did not see themselves as Latin Americans they could not identify with the Japanese newcomers either (Del Castillo 1999: 284, 85).

These differences in thinking and attitude hold true for pre- and post-war *nisei*, too, for the historical and cultural circumstances they grew up in were fundamentally different. Most *nikkeijin* who were born before the war attended Japanese schools with a curriculum based on the Japanese original. Apart from language, Japanese moral and cultural values were an important part of the curriculum. Also, most of them were Japanese nationals as their parents had registered them with the Japanese consulates of their respective places of residency (Del Castillo 1999: 302). *Nisei* born and educated after World War II attended local schools for the local governments had had the Japanese schools

closed. Being Japanese was not desirable anymore the result being a huge wave of what De Carvalho called “Brazilianization” (De Carvalho 2003: 64). This “attitudinal gap” led to differences within the group and continued among the next generation.

## **The Legal Context of Migration**

Legal scholar Peter H. Schuck argued that few migrants would consider legal circumstances when they decide to migrate (Schuck 2008: 241).

In 2011 there were 2.078.480 foreign residents in Japan which corresponds to a percentage of 1.74

([http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukokukanri04\\_00015.html](http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukokukanri04_00015.html); last access 2012-11-07). Chinese and Koreans still represent the largest minorities with 674,871, 32.5% and 545,397, 26.2%. The third largest minority are Brazilians (210.032; 10.1%); the fifth Peruvians (52.842; 2.5%). Paraguayans, Argentinians, Bolivians, and other Latin Americans make for much smaller figures in Japan’s migration (Tajima 2003: 498; Tsuda 2003: Preface X). In comparison, in 2011 the German Bundesamt für Statistik registered a total of 7.409.754 foreign residents, or 9.1 % of the population ([http://www.statistik-portal.de/Statistik-Portal/de\\_jb01\\_jahrta2.asp](http://www.statistik-portal.de/Statistik-Portal/de_jb01_jahrta2.asp); last access 2012-11-07).

Schuck (2008: 244) argued that law and policy makers tend to create ambiguous laws that leave some room for interpretation. Especially low-level decision makers, for instance immigration inspectors or teachers, are flexible to some extent when making dealing with migrants and migration on a daily basis. Since these migration decisions occur mostly hidden from the eyes of the higher authorities, according to Schuck (2008: 244), they are to be considered bottom-up rather than top-down. A case of this ambiguity, I argue, can be found in the case of Japan. Due to Japan’s growing economic strength and the unfavorable situation in most Latin American countries (Laumonier 1998: 194; Tsuda 2003: 84; Woortmann 1995: 14), migration to Japan began in the 1970s. Japan’s economy was booming and the country was affected by labor shortage which led to an increasing number of foreign workers, mostly from other Asian countries. Since Japan’s immigration policy, as immigration policies of other Asian countries, was

strict in terms of settling conditions and migrants' rights, many of them came and worked illegally (Castles and Miller 2009: 68, 126; Tsuda 2003: Preface XI, 85, 90, 91; Tsuda 2004: 95; Tsuda 2006: 208). The Japanese government was thus under pressure for labor shortage could not be filled with Japanese workers and the country did not allow unskilled foreign workers (Brody 2002: 3; Tsuda 2003: 92). Due to an amendment of the Japanese immigration act in 1990, foreign workers were allowed into the country if they could prove Japanese ancestry up to the third generation with at least one grandparent who had had to be a Japanese national (Brody 2002: 1; Del Castillo 1999: 108; Morita and Sassen 2004: 90; Tsuda 2003: 86, 93). Being of Japanese ancestry and holding Japanese passports, they were not "foreign" strictly speaking so that the Japanese government, as Tsuda put it, did not have to break its own rule of no foreign workers (Tsuda 2003: 92). The staying permission extended to their spouses and children as well. Japan did thus focus on ethnicity or descent rather than on skills, as do other industrialized countries such as Canada, Australia, or the United States (Schuck 2008: 242). The Japanese government assumed that the *nikkeijin* ("Japanese descendants born and raised outside of Japan": Tsuda 2003: 2; Del Castillo 1999: 298), being at least in part ethnic Japanese, would adapt very quickly to their new environment (Castles and Miller 2009: 136; Ishi 2008: 118; Sekiguchi 2002: 201; Tsuda 2003: 91, 92). In reality, quite a few still looked Japanese, but could not speak it nor did they master the cultural norms (De Vos and Wagatsuma 1995: 129; Linger 2001: 6; Toma Carignato 2002: 189; Tsuda 2003: Preface XII). Tsuda (2003: Preface XII) problematized the concept of homeland: according to him, remigration from Brazil, which is valid for other Latin American countries as well, is remigration only in the sense of the *nikkeijin* migrating to their ancestors' homeland. I agree with his view and argue that it is not remigration but migration. This is because remigration means that the same person migrates and then returns to his homeland. In the case of the *nikkeijin*, however, it is the children and grandchildren who migrate to Japan, often with a very limited knowledge of the country, its customs and language.

On the other hand, sanctions on illegal workers and their employers were intensified (Morimoto and Sassen 2004: 92; Tsuda 2003: 93). The result of this legislative was a considerable increase of Latin American migrants who could prove that they were of Japanese ancestry. While in 1991 the number of registered

Latin Americans was estimated at 88.201, only six years later it had risen to 248.780 (De Carvalho 2003:80). As stated above, in 2011 the number accounted to 210.032 Brazilians and 52.842 Peruvians; Hōmushō 2011).

### **Output and Outcome: Discrepancies**

*Para mí, la disparidad que hay entre los distintos ministerios del gobierno, que afirman cosas contradictorias todo el tiempo, solo se puede explicar con que no saben lo que pasa en su propio país. Porque si tuvieron un mínimo grado de comprensión de los procesos globales, en las que Japón se ha involucrado hace 50 años, entonces entenderían que para formar a sus ciudadanos ya no los pueden formar como hace 100 años. Entonces, yo, a mí me parece que el tema es, este, una falta de educación a nivel humano que, que es muy grave. Es muy grave. Y creo que, en este sentido, también afecta a la segunda generación de los inmigrantes. Porque si tú envías a tu hijo a un colegio japonés esta es la ideología que va a beber. Entonces él va a ver el mundo con esta ideología que es una ideología que quizás era importante hace 100 años pero en el siglo 21 ya no es importante. No es una ideología que te ayuda a vivir plenamente los procesos que Japón está viviendo.*

(For me, the existing disparity between the various ministries, which make contradictory statements all the time, can only mean that they don't know what is going on in their own country. Because if they had the faintest idea of global processes, in which Japan got involved 50 years ago, they would understand that they cannot educate their citizens the way they used to 100 years ago. So I, I think that this topic is, like, a lack of education on a human level that is very bad. It's very bad. I think that in this sense it also affects the second generation of immigrants. Because if you send your child to a Japanese school this is the ideology he will be brought up with. So he will see the world based on this ideology that was important maybe a hundred years ago, but in the 21<sup>st</sup> century it's not important anymore. It's not an ideology that helps you live through the processes Japan is going through.)

11

The biggest challenge the Japanese government had to face in the years after the amendment of the immigration act was the discrepancy between initial expectations and reality. Due to their ethnic roots it had been commonly assumed that the *nikkeijin* would blend smoothly into Japanese society. Reality showed that the vast majority had been socialized within a completely different cultural and linguistic context and that many of them hardly spoke any Japanese. Thus conflicts were bound to arise (De Carvalho 2003; Del Castillo 1999; Linger 2001; Tsuda 2003; Woortmann 1995). Already severely affected by demographic change, Japan needed, and still needs, foreign workforce, especially in the service sector. As mentioned above, the Japanese government hoped to deal with both

issues at the same time by hiring workers of Japanese ancestry and thus maintaining ethnic homogeneity (De Carvalho 2003: 82; Córdova Quero 2007: 27).

The number of foreigners in Japan is still small compared to other industrial countries. However, the number of both legal and illegal residents is steadily increasing. As opponents of gradual internationalization argue, Japan has historically been free of foreign presence and influence. Ethnic, cultural and linguistic influences from China and Korea were almost completely assimilated so that in present Japan the vast majority does not perceive them as “foreign”. According to those against internationalization, foreigners would not understand the unique Japanese culture and could thus not be easily accommodated into Japanese society. An argument in favor of foreign workers is that Japan is already suffering from demographic change and will have to address its growing problem of labor shortage (Brody 2002: 3).

### **Clandestine Migrants and Other *Malandros***

There tends to be a difference in how different actors in the immigration system see the same legal circumstances or different aspects of the system. Legal immigrants, for instance, are likely to have a different opinion compared to their illegal fellow nationals. Schuck (2008: 242, 43) calls this phenomenon “law in their minds”. He further argued that in times of global migration most immigrants do not possess the documents necessary to reside legally in their new country (Schuck 2008: 246). Governments, on the other hand, are unable to keep up with the speed that immigration processes are developing and, as ethnic communities are growing, they cannot enforce strict migration policy as effectively as some decades ago. Finally, local governments of sending and receiving countries, not unlike individuals, are likely to have different views on immigration laws depending on national goals in terms of economic prosperity and security. Despite not to the extent that it tends to claim, Japan is a comparably homogeneous nation. By allowing *nikkeijin* into Japan the Japanese government hoped to tackle the problem of undocumented workers. However, the number of people who had overstayed their visa did not diminish significantly. Since the

economic, social and political situation in most Latin American countries is still problematic, the falsification and sales of Japanese-ancestry proving documents has evolved into a profitable business; extreme cases can lead to prospective migrants undergoing cosmetic surgery to acquire Japanese traits and thus facilitate immigration (De Carvalho 2003: 89; Del Castillo 1999: 123; Lesser 1999: 170).

*[...] la gente quiere trabajar. ¿Por qué no les dan la visa? Si aquí necesitan mano de obra extranjera, o sea no todos vienen a delinquir. Vienen a buscar, o sea, yo me acuerdo que cuando mi suegro preguntaba por qué me vine a Japón yo sentía vergüenza. ¿Sí? Yo le decía: “Pero es que yo no me vine a delinquir. Me vine porque yo quería ofrecerle a mi familia algo mejor.” Pero yo no sabía que después de tres meses yo me quedaba sin visa, y sino yo no renuncio a todo en Colombia para venirme y que por eso me iban a discriminar frente a eso, al visa, ¿no? O sea gente que quiere trabajar y, y aquí hay la oportunidad de trabajar, ¿por qué no se le dan esa visa de trabajo? Como hay otros que vienen a delinquir pero hay otros que vienen a trabajar! [...] Yo me acuerdo que cuando me paró la policía eran cuatro. Dos delante y dos atrás. Como si yo fuera una ladrona cuando yo trabajaba en una casa de familia encerrada. ¿Sí? Entonces yo: “¿Qué es esto? –¿Pero la señora que te trajo no sabía eso?*

*–No, no me dijo. O sea es eso, ella no me lo dijo, yo vine tan inocente, es eso yo vine taaan ingenua, que no sabía, ¿no? Después de un año yo vine a saber todo lo que se maneja aquí [...] que la visa, que la persecución y todo, que nos ven a nosotros como ilegales y yo no sabía, no sabía. Entonces yo pienso que eso se debería cambiar. O sea no todo el extranjero es malo. No todo el extranjero es malo.*

*C: [...] Me parece que por lo menos en cuestión de, de un seguro médico. Que no tenga nada que ver una visa. Porque la gente que no tiene visa no tiene derecho a un seguro. Entonces me parece eso como injusto porque somos seres humanos. Si tiene el dinero como para pagar un seguro qué lo pague! No tiene nada que ver si tiene o no tiene visa.*

([...] People want to work. Why don't they give them a visa? If they need foreign workforce here, like, not everybody comes to commit crime. They come to, like, I remember that when my father in law asked me why I had come to Japan I felt ashamed. Right? I told him: “But it's not that I came here to be a criminal. I came because I wanted to offer my family a better life.” But I didn't know that after three months my visa would expire, otherwise I don't give up everything in Colombia to come here and that because of that I would be discriminated because of the, this, the visa, right? Like, people want to work and here you have the opportunity to work, why don't they give the working visas? Like there are others who come to commit crimes but others who come to work [...] I remember that when the police stopped me there were four of them. Two in front and two behind me. Like I was a bad criminal, when I really was working locked up in a family home. Yes? So I, what's this?

– But the lady who, who brought you here, didn't she know this?

– No, she didn't tell me. Or I mean, it's like this, she didn't tell me. I came here so innocent, that's it, I came here sooooo naïve, what did I know, no? After a year I got to know everything you have to put up with here, about changing documents, the visa, persecution and everything, that they consider us illegal and I, I didn't know, I didn't know. So I think this ought to change. Not all foreigners are bad. Not all foreigners are bad.

C: [...] I think that at least the question of, of health insurance. It shouldn't be linked to a visa. Because people without visa aren't eligible for insurance. So I think this is, like, unfair because we're human beings. If someone has money to pay for health insurance he should be allowed to. It doesn't have to do anything with the visa status.)

21 and 22



*Una vez una amiga me dijo, cuando no tenía la visa, me dijo: “Usted no hable. Solo no hable. Que usted pasa por japonesa. Pero no hable español, no conteste el teléfono, nada.” Siempre me decía eso. “Usted pasa por japonesa”, me decía.*

(When I didn't have a visa, a friend once said: “Don't speak. Just don't speak. Because you pass as Japanese. But don't you speak Spanish, don't answer the phone, nothing.” She'd always tell me that. “You pass as Japanese”, she'd say.)

21

*Al principio yo no tenía visa y trabajaba ilegal. Ahora ya pero...*

(At first I didn't have a working visa and was working illegally. Now I do (have a visa), but...)

6

Migrants are vulnerable to both exploitation through the leading society, but also through their own kin who take advantage of the “trust” factor as confirm findings on Brazilian *nikkeijin* suggesting that they are indeed often subject to fraud and deceit within their own ethnic community (Brettell 2008: 134; De Carvalho 2003: 140). I am not going to enter this problematic more in depth for this study is not about the legal context of migration to Japan. Also, I cannot, nor do I want to, answer the question of whether or not illegal migrants are to be seen as committing “victimless offense”, or a crime which is against the law but does not directly harm anybody (Schuck 2008: 251). Taxpayers in a welfare state might have a different opinion from those living in a country that does not grant much social assistance and thus does not create much social cost which is imposed on the taxpaying population – or maybe not. I therefore want to leave this delicate issue to another study.

### **Crime and *Malandragem***

Criminal offense committed by immigrants is a hotly debated topic. As I have illustrated, there is the criminal offense of residing illegally in a country (Schuck 2008: 246, 53). This, according to some, victimless crime is a criminal offense per

se, no matter if the culprit in question leads an otherwise impeccable life. At this point, it should be noted that blaming foreigners for taking away working places and being criminals is not a phenomenon limited to Japan. However, considering the comparatively still very low rate of foreigners in Japan, the Japanese public is quite sensitive toward foreigners (De Carvalho 2003: 86; Tajima 2003: 514).

The number of crimes in Japan involving Latin Americans has been increasing in the last years. Crimes range from minor offenses such as shoplifting over more serious crimes such as robberies and rape up to fraud, falsification of documents and drug abuse. Japanese scholar in the field of Latin American studies, Tajima Hisatoshi, argued that the main responsible in the case of Brazilian residents in Japan is the difference between law and common sense (Tajima 2003: 502, 03). According to his viewpoint, what he calls „minor“ acts of delinquency like theft or breaking open vending machines, etc., are not punished in Brazil as strictly as they would be in Japan. According to this view, authorities in Brazil tend to overlook them due to the Brazilian *cultura de malandragem*, or culture of cunning/ swindle. This discrepancy, according to Tajima, can lead to misunderstandings and a lack of understanding from the side of the Brazilian delinquents (Tajima 2003: 503). Especially endangered and prone to become criminals at some point would be individuals whose Japanese language ability is low or not existent. Tajima did not refer to migrants from Spanish-speaking Latin America. Whether this is because of the much higher number of Brazilians compared to other migrants from Latin America or because the crimes mentioned earlier are sanctioned differently in countries other than Brazil is not clear. According to this view, one, in this case Japan, must recognize that certain behavioral patterns are the result of being socialized in a different place:

*Es necesario comprender que dicha conducta se basa en los valores ético-morales adquiridas en el Brasil durante su proceso de socialización*  
(Tajima 2003: 504)

This makes it difficult for the migrants to adjust to the rigid Japanese system. As I will argue throughout this study, social reality does indeed influence people's behavior. The question of whether Brazilian, or Latin American, common sense really is that different from the Japanese, however, remains. This would imply that in Latin America „borrowing“ cars and stealing when in need of cash is not a

criminal offense. Of course social reality in Japan is different from Brazil and most other Latin American countries. Nevertheless, I question Tajima's assumption that *jeitinho* in Brazil can solve issues such as not wanting to pay one's taxi fare or destroying vending machines and that Brazilian society does not sanction this type of offense (Tajima 2003: 503, 04, 06). In line with what Reed called the "fundamental attribution error" (Reed 1993: 25), I argue that behavior and social actions are based on context rather than on actually different values. While social structure in most Latin American countries show a wider range of flexibility than in Japan, this does not imply that the above-mentioned criminal offenses in these countries remain unpunished (Ishi 2008: 125). Despite different cultural values and law systems Tajima pointed out that many Brazilian delinquents had already been in conflict with the law back home (2003: 507, 08). With this claim he negated his own hypothesis of different perception of what is common sense.

Another factor is the image many Japanese have of Brazil, often synonym for Latin America as a whole. As opposed to North America and Western Europe, Latin America is generally associated with violence, misery, drugs and a largely indigenous, thus less "civilized" culture (Córdova Quero 2008: 29; De Carvalho 2003: 124, 37; Forero Montoya 2003: 13; Ishi 2008: 130). While it counts as one of the most dangerous and most violent regions in the world (Moser and McIlwaine 2004) Japan is commonly associated with utter safety and social harmony. Machado da Silva and Pereira Leite (2008: 50) explained how the mechanism of perceived complicity, i.e. how mere proximity can soon degenerate into complicity, even if not objectively existent but perceived as such by the surrounding society. However, living close to delinquency does not have to automatically make one a delinquent (Curtis 2003: 47). My participants, regardless of social class, did not agree that theft and robbery were acceptable ways of making money in their countries. Much on the contrary, they lamented the fact that their countries, as they perceived it, were mainly associated with delinquency and violence:

*Eu não posso generalizar, porque eu não conheço muitos japoneses mas quando eles, por exemplo, pensam no Brasil eles pensam carnaval, samba, né, futebol e violência. Favela. Não sei, eu não concordo com isso, eles deveriam de conhecer um pouco mais pra falar.*

(I can't generalize because I don't know many Japanese, but, for example, when they think of Brazil they think of carnaval, samba, you know, soccer and violence. Slums. I don't know I don't think that's right, they should know a little more to be able to talk).  
24

*Hice un curso en una fundación que da cursos, pero dejé de asistir porque la profesora hizo un comentario muy racista y no me gustó.*

*-¿Qué te dijo?*

*-Estaba explicando esta expresión, eh, ki wo tsukete (pronounced very strangely, I don't understand)*

*-¿Qué, perdón?*

*-Ki wo tukete (me still looking puzzled), eh, qué te vaya bien, cuídate.*

*-Ah!*

*-Entonces dice en su clase, ¿no? Era una clase para latinos. Entonces ella dice: "Las principales razones en Japón para decir ki wo tukete es, este, una es el tráfico. Porque en Japón es muy difícil cruzar una calle, la gente es muy irresponsable. Y la segunda son los robos. En ese momento se para, agarra la cartera de una de mis classmates y abre y dice: "Robo." Y mete la mano y saca la mano de la bolsa como si nosotros no entendíamos la palabra "robo". Entonces nosotros le decimos: "¿Robos en Tokyo?!?" Y ella. "Sí, sobretudo sudamericanos." Y todos los que estábamos en la clase, éramos todos sudamericanos. Entonces me pareció muy insensible ese comentario, ¿no? Y muy racista porque me parece que no es una cuestión de cultura sino de, de, de calidad humana. Hay japoneses que roban y hay latinos que roban y japoneses que son muy trabajadores y latinos que son muy trabajadores y no me parece que es una cuestión de cultura pero de condición humana. Al cabo de esa clase nos invita, para cerrar el curso, a ir a comer a su casa. Digo: "Yo no voy." Porque se dice que los sudamericanos somos la segunda razón para decir "cuídate", si algo de su casa se mueve de su lugar y no lo encuentra, va pensar que nosotros se lo robamos. Y al año siguiente, cuando lo encuentre, se va a dar cuenta de que se equivocó pero durante todo ese año los culpables vamos a ser nosotros así que yo no voy a su casa. Y después dije: "No tiene sentido seguir tomando clase con esta mujer que es racista. Porque entonces yo siento que no me está tratando como estudiante sino como, para mí me está tratando de una manera paternalista.*

(I took a (Japanese) class in a foundation that offers classes, but I stopped going because the teacher made a very racist comment and I didn't like it.

– What did she say?

– She was explaining this expression, eh, ki wo tukete (very strange pronunciation, I do not understand).

– I beg your pardon?

– *Ki wo tukete* (I must still look confused), eh, "look after yourself, take care".

– Ah!

– So she is saying that in her class, right? It was a class for latinos. So she says: "The main reasons in Japan for saying ki wo tukete is, like, the first one is traffic. Because in Japan it's very hard to cross a street, people are very irresponsible. And the second are robberies. In this moment she stops, grabs one of classmate's bag, opens it and says: "Robbery." And she puts her hand in and takes it out like we don't understand the word robbery. So we tell her: "Robberies in Tokyo?!?" And she goes like: "Yes, mainly South Americans." And all the people in the class, we were all South Americans. So I felt this comment was very unsensitive, wasn't it? And very racist because I think that it's not a question of culture but of, of, of human quality. There are Japanese who steal and Latinos who steal and Japanese who work very hard and Latinos who work very hard and I don't think that it's a question of culture but of human quality. At the end of the course she invites us to close the course and have dinner at her place. I say: "I'm not going."

Because if she says that we South Americans are the second reason to say “take care”, if anything goes missing in her house and she doesn’t find it she’s going to think that we stole it. And next year, when she finds it, she’ll see that she was wrong, but for this whole year we’re going to be the culprits, so I don’t go to her place. And then I said: “It’s no use to keep taking lessons with this woman who is a racist. Because there I feel that she is not treating me like a student but, for me she is treating me in a paternalistic way.)

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*[...] muchas veces el tema de la criminalidad, por ejemplo en Tokyo, que comparado con las ciudades latinoamericanas por supuesto, no hay crimen en Tokyo, pero cuando hay algun crimen en Tokyo siempre es un imbécil como, como el alcalde de Tokyo, como se llama, dice cosas sobre los extranjeros y cuando se refiere a extranjeros, claro se refiere a una gama pero claro, la gente, la gente tiene en mente, cuando piensa en peruanos piensa, los japoneses cuando piensan en un peruano piensan, a ver, muchas veces piensan en crimen. Eso es un problema, ¿no? Me imagino que para muchos latinoamericanos que vienen acá, no? Peruanos, brasileiros, entonces bueno, esas cosas limitan la posibilidad de integración de, de los latinoamericanos, ¿no? Pero como cambiar esta cosa pues no sé. Son cosas culturales tan, tan enraizadas en la sociedad que yo no sé como se podrían cambiar [...]*

([...]) many times the topic of criminality, for example in Tokyo, compared to Latin American cities, of course there is no crime in Tokyo, but when there is, there is always some idiot like, like the mayor of Tokyo, what’s his name, he says things about foreigners and when he refers to foreigners, of course he is referring to a group, but of course people, the people have in mind, when they think about Peruvians they think, the Japanese, when they think of a Peruvian they think, let’s see, many times they think of crime. That’s a problem, isn’t it? I imagine that for many Latin Americans who come here, right? Peruvians, Brazilians, so, well, these things limit the possibility to integrate the, the Latin Americans, doesn’t it? But how to change this, well, I don’t know. These are cultural things and they are so, so deeply rooted in society that I don’t know how this could change [...]

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Tajima further drew a connection between a lack of formal education, scarce proficiency in Japanese and a tendency to be involved in acts of delinquency (Tajima 2003: 507). Sekiguchi (2002: 198) had similar findings in her study on young *nikkeijin* from Brazil. Those migrants who managed to integrate successfully into Japanese society are also those with higher education. Less educated workers, on the other hand, tend to confirm the classic *dekasegi* image and are mainly interested in making money and returning to their home country as possible as soon while showing little or no interest in Japanese culture or language (Tajima 2003: 510).

*Eles ficam sonhando, né, gastam tudo e já passaram dez anos e a coisa não mudou [...] eles ( os dekasseguis) não se informam, são ignorantes, não sabem.*

(They keep on dreaming, you see, spend everything, and then ten years have passed and nothing's changed [...] they (the *dekasegi*) don't look for information, they're ignorant, they don't know.)

24

*Eu acho que a imagem dos japoneses no Brasil é por causa dos dekassegui porque os dekassegui ocupam uma posição muito inferior na hierarquia. Eu aqui, vindo como bolsista, não sinto, talvez se viesse aqui como dekassegui a minha impressão do Japão seria outra.*

(I think that the image of the Japanese in Brazil is because of the *dekasegi* because the *dekasegi* hold a much inferior position in the hierarchy. Coming here on a scholarship I don't feel it, maybe if I came here as a *dekasegi* my impression of Japan would be different).

13

Again, a (perceived) difference in cultural norms and social realities is held responsible for deviant behavior. I concur with Reed and what he called “fundamental attribution error”, namely the “tendency to attribute behavior exclusively to the actor's dispositions and to ignore powerful situational determinants of the behavior” (Reed 1993: 25). He further pointed out that we tend to overestimate differences in norms and values while not giving enough importance to context (Reed 1993: 26, 27). He named the example of American employees working for a Japanese company and, vice versa, Japanese working within an American structure. He argued that they will adapt to their environment and that the determinant force behind behavior is thus surroundings, and often choice or a lack of it, rather than values (Reed 1993: 28, 29). Common sense is taught through socialization and through personal experience (Reed 1993: 30). However, differences can be subtle. While Japanese and Americans are likely to have a different concept of a chair, for in Japan it is common to sit on the floor, they both know what function it serves. The conceptual difference is there; structural implications, however, are neglectable (Reed 1993: 32).

Applying these premises to the problematic outlined above, I argue that common sense is indeed linked with a determined culture for the latter determines what is appropriate, thus the further. It is true that in Latin America norms tend to be handled with a higher degree of flexibility than in Japan. Nevertheless, criminal actions such as theft or robbery are sanctioned in either country, the practical implications are thus not of fundamental difference.

## Motives for Coming to Japan

According to the literature about 90% of migration worldwide is economic migration; in the case of Japan it lies approximately between 61% and 84% (Tsuda 2003: 85). People try to make the most of their resources, be it money or human capital, and maximise possible benefit (Borjas 1989: 461, in Castles and Miller 2009: 22; Chiswick 2009: 63). If a given country has to offer more in terms of working opportunities and wages than the home country, migration is likely to occur. This combination of push- and pull-factors has long been an economic domain but is also used in sociology, geography and demography (Castles and Miller 2009: 22). However, economic factors alone cannot be held responsible for migration on an individual scale or on the macro level. Other factors such as humanitarian, human-rights motivated, and ethical criteria play a role, but neither is to be seen as decisive by itself. As I have pointed out in my theory chapter, the (perceived) disparity between living chances in the home country and in the potential receiving country is crucial. Once a limit has been reached and overstepped, the decision to actually migrate is not only made but carried out (Beuchling 2003: 275; Schuck 2008: 241).

There is a difference between migrants who plan to move permanently and those whose stay is meant to be merely temporary. The latter characterizes a phenomenon known in different parts of the world (Brettell 2008: 116, 117), *dekasegi* in Japan. In this case the migrant intends to eventually return to his home country from the very start of his moving abroad. However, intention does not always match reality or, as a political science approach might put it, output does not always match outcome. Many migrants intend to stay in the new country for only a few years, but end up staying longer, if not forever (Del Castillo 1999: 151; Tsuda 2003: 86). There has been a shift, however, from neoclassical theory that assumes migrants are able to rationally consider their options, consciously invest in migration and then make their move and migrate to their country of choice. Despite the literature commonly naming acute emergency situations of political or economic nature, and a general lack of future perspective (Del Castillo 1999: 147), Brettell (2008: 118) argued that typologies used to classify migrants often fail to paint a picture that includes all the relevant nuances.

In this chapter I hope to give a multi-perspective insight into migrants' decisions to leave their countries of origin. During analysis it became clear that usually there is not *the* reason to make people migrate; the decision-making process is rather composed by a variety of factors which can overlap each other or change over time. Also, the terminus 'reason' is one-dimensional and fails to express the depth and the layers inside the subject. "The reason why I am eating is because I was hungry". Migration, as already said, is not one-dimensional. Therefore I find 'motives' or even 'intentions' more appropriate since they hint at something more varied. A migrant's intention might well be a higher income in another country. If the actual situation matches his intention is a different story. A political-science parallel could be output versus outcome which is also much more varied than one reason leading to one particular action. My participants came to Japan through very different channels, some as students or on scholarships, others to work in factories. Over time motives could change, and during the interviews many participants named other reasons in addition to what they had already named. One participant, for instance, had come to Japan because she had been granted a scholarship. This gave her the opportunity to get to know her grandparents' home country. After graduating from university in Japan she found employment and ended up staying. In this case we can find three reasons for actually being in Japan, two for coming, and one being perceived as main. The thought of working had not crossed the participant's mind before it actually "happened". While taking these possible developments into account, I do so from the respective categories based on the respective main reasons. In this case, the participant falls into the category 'academic reasons' rather than 'familiar' or 'economic' reasons'.

### **Academic Motives**

In many Latin American countries studying abroad yields strong social prestige. While the United States and some European countries are among the most coveted destinations, Japan also enjoys popularity (Del Castillo 1999: 146). Academic studies were a powerful main motive for coming to Japan, in most cases thanks to scholarships granted by the Japanese government. This economic help that enabled part of my participants to spend time in Japan, or even to graduate from a



Japanese university, was the main incentive to move to Japan. As I have argued above, economically and otherwise motivated decisions, in this case the possibility to develop academically, are linked. Japan as such had not been on the agenda; had the participants in question received the possibility to study in another country, they would have taken up on it just as promptly, regardless of ethnic descent or academic field:

*Bueno, muy fácil porque yo vine con la beca de monbusho y [...] yo fui con esa beca y por eso que vine. Ahora, motivos antes de aplicar a la beca, específicos para venir a Japón, pues no tenía. La motivación para venir al Japón fue porque vi la beca anunciada en el periódico. En ese momento yo estaba trabajando en la universidad, pero la beca me pareció una buena oportunidad y por no dejar apliqué. Y, bueno, después de pasar la selección [...] bueno, me dieron la beca. Fue así como, como sabes, no tenía una motivación fuerte de venir a Japón [...] nunca tuve interés académico específico en el Japón. Hasta el momento en que vi la oportunidad de la beca. Bueno, y entonces estaba trabajando en la embaj-, en la universidad pero me pareció interesante venir a Japón. Así que yo vine originariamente con la idea de pasar año y medio en Japón y regresar a la universidad. Feliz la vida, ¿no? (laughs). Pero acá, bueno, es difícil no enamorarse del Japón, ¿no? Y me fue muy bien en este primer año de investigación, apliqué a la maestría [...] ahora estoy en el doctorado. Entonces, por eso he decidido quedarme en Japón. Llevo casi cuatro años acá. Bueno por eso fue que vine, ¿no? No fue por interés previo en el Japón [...] niquiera en el idioma japonés que todavía me cuesta un trabajo enorme.*

(Well, that's very easy because I came with the *monbusho* scholarship and [...] I went with this scholarship and that's why I came. Now, I didn't have any specific reasons for going to Japan before I applied. The motivation to come to Japan was because I saw the scholarship announced in the newspaper. At that time I was working at university, but the scholarship seemed like a good opportunity and so I applied. And well, after passing the selection [...] well, they gave me the scholarship. It was like, like, you know, I didn't have a strong motivation to go to Japan [...] I never had a specific academic interest in Japan. Until I saw the scholarship. Well, at the moment I was working at the embas-, at university, but I thought going to Japan would be interesting. So I came with the idea of spending a year and a half in Japan and go back to university. Happy life, isn't it? (laughs). But here, well, it's hard not to fall in love with Japan, right? And my first year of investigation went very well, I applied for a master's degree [...] now I am working on my Ph.D. Well, this is why I decided to stay in Japan. I've been here for almost four years. Well, that's why I came, right? It wasn't out of previous interest in Japan [...] not even in the Japanese language which is still very hard for me.)

12

*Na verdade nunca pensei ir pro Japão mas aí descobri a bolsa de monbusho. Aí eu vim pra cá, mas eu nunca pensei no Japão porque a pesar de eu ser descendente, eu sou mestiça, né, assim não tenho tanto da influência da cultura japonesa, eu nunca aprendi japonês na minha vida. Então tô aqui pela minha pesquisa.*

(Actually, I never thought of going to Japan...but then I found out about the Monbusho scholarship. So then I came here, but I never thought of Japan because...despite being a descendant (of Japanese) I am of mixed race, you know, so that I didn't get much

influence from the Japanese culture, I never learned any Japanese in my life. So I'm here for my research.)

13

*Para investigar. Para hacer mi tesis y, bueno, precisamente porque quería hacer algo cualitativo y no cuantitativo, entonces me interesaban las historias de vida, quería conocer a alguien [...] No me vine enamorado ni de la cultura ni del idioma japonés. No sé si alguien se viene enamorado pero hay gente que se dedica a estudiar la cultura y el idioma japonés.*

(To do research. To write my thesis and, well, because I wanted to do something qualitative and not quantitative, so I was interested in biographies, I wanted to get to know people [...] I didn't come here fascinated by the culture or the Japanese language. I don't know if some people come here fascinated but there are people who want to study the Japanese culture and language.)

11

Despite some migrants of Japanese descent speaking good Japanese, most did not want to work in a Japanese company. Asset number one for doing so is of course sound proficiency in Japanese, not only speaking but, maybe most importantly, reading and writing skills. Also, Japanese corporate structure is not perceived as very attractive for many Latin Americans so that many students do not explicitly think of staying to work but rather move on to another country. This could, however, also be interpreted as a protection device: by claiming that one does not want to work in a Japanese company anyway, possible deficiencies in language and cultural knowledge are disguised before they even have the possibility to emerge and prove the applicant that his skills are not enough for the Japanese corporate market. On the other hand, not including the possibility of actually taking up employment can have a surprisingly positive outcome:

*Naci no Brasil, creci no Brasil, filha de japoneses. Terminei a faculdade, ganhei a bolsa de monbusho e vim pra cá. Ai eu fiquei três anos e meio em Sendai. Aí em Sendai o pessoal começou procurar emprego (laughs) [...] Eu não estava pensando muito em ficar, mas aqui no laboratório so tinha japoneses, era a única estrangeira, e no Japão é como um ano antes de você se formar você procura emprego, não? Aí o pessoal estava procurando emprego e eu decidi fazer a mesma coisa pra ver se conseguia alguma coisa. Aí consegui emprego em Tóquio, mudei pra cá e desde então tô aqui (laughs) [...] O primeiro motivo foi a bolsa, motivo de, de eu conseguir vir pro Japão, patrocinada pela bolsa, conhecer outro país e, ao mesmo tempo, conhecer as raízes dos meus pais. Isso foi um incentivo também.*

(I was born and raised in Brasil, the daughter of Japanese. I graduated, got the *monbusho* scholarship and came here. I spent three and a half years in Sendai. In Sendai everybody

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started to look for work (laughs) [...] I wasn't particularly keen on staying, but there in the lab it was only Japanese, I was the only foreigner, and in Japan you start looking for work like a year before you graduate, see? So everyone was looking for a job and I decided to do the same, to see whether I could find anything. So I got the job in Tokyo, I moved here and I've been here ever since (laughs) [...] The main reason was the scholarship, reason for me, for me to be able to come to Japan courtesy of the scholarship, get to know a different country and, at the same time, get to know my parents' roots. That was also an incentive.)

8

## Economic Motives

The term *dekasegi* has been used since the Tokugawa period (1600-1867) and means literally 'to go out and earn' (composed of *deru*, to go out, and *kaesgu*, to earn). While *dekasegi* originally designates internal migration, mostly from the countryside to the bigger cities of Japan (Handa 1980: 100), the problematic financial situation Japan found itself in after the Meiji restoration was hugely responsible for numerous Japanese workers leaving their homes and being sent overseas by the new government (Ichioka 1998: 42; Laumonier 1998: 193). It is also referred to as *dekasegi* movement (出稼ぎ(*dekasegi*) – "to leave/go away and earn money". As I have pointed out previously, the *dekasegi*-movement inside Japan originally refers to the period between 1885 and 1907. The vast majority of the Japanese in Latin America had planned to act according to the typical definition of a *dekasegi*, meaning to earn as much money in as little time as possible and go back to Japan (Handa 1980: 76; Laumonier 1998: 193, 194). Similarly to the migration companies (*imingaisha*) that sent the Japanese abroad, nowadays recruitment companies work at sending workers to Japan or other destinations (Van Hear 1998: 257, 258). Prospective *dekasegi* can visit the agencies where they are given information on their potential work place and on life in Japan in general. The information is often inaccurate, however, with no clear statements on salary, working hours, and other conditions. The recruitment process has thus not changed much despite a hundred years having passed. If the workers agree to move to Japan the recruitment company will provide flight tickets and help with the needed documentation. Sometimes brokers also help the workers to find an accommodation for a Japanese guarantor is usually required to

rent a flat. Most times, however, the workers live in dormitories or in company accommodations (Laumonier 1998: 195; Tsuda 2003: 5). As I have argued above, however, the decision to take the final step and actually migrate is often motivated more by the fact that family members or friends are already living and working in Japan rather than through recruitment agencies alone. Many researchers have emphasized the importance of social networks, especially when based on family ties that make the transition from one country to another smoother for the newcomers and thus encourage migration (Higuchi 2003: 380; Van Hear 1998: 14, 15).

Just like other foreign workers, migrants from Latin America are sometimes referred to as the “Three K” or “K Cycle” people, from the Japanese *kiken* (dangerous), *kitanai* (dirty) and *kitsui* (tiring) (Córdova Quero 2007: 28, De Carvalho 2003: 95). Some workers have more than one job in order to make as much money as possible in a short period of time. The Portuguese term *dekassegui*, developed from the Japanese original *dekasegi*, carries a negative connotation while the Japanese expression does not. In fact, most young Japanese-Brazilians ignore the actual meaning (Ishi 2008: 117, 18). Those of my participants who had come to Japan as part of an exchange program or on a scholarship were well aware of the fact that their experiences in Japan might be different if their status were that of a worker, or had first-hand experiences from earlier sojourns in Japan.

*Eu gosto muito de japoneses, eles são muito educados, muito educados. Mas assim, eu acho que a imagem dos japoneses no Brasil é por causa dos dekassegus porque os dekassegus ocupam uma posição muito inferior na hierarquia. Eu aqui vindo como bolsista não sinto, talvez se viesse aqui como..dekassegui a minha impressão do Japão seria outra.*

(I like the Japanese very much, they are very polite, very polite. But, like I think that the image the Japanese have in Brazil is because of the *dekasegi* because the *dekasegi* have a very low social position. Since I came here on a scholarship I don't feel it ; maybe, if I came here as a *dekasegi* my impression would be different.)

13

*[...] A parte de [...] de que soy [...] estudiante universitario, entonces eso me, me cura de muchísimas cosas, ¿no? Pero yo me imagino que si yo viniera a trabajar acá y, en una fábrica o en cualquier cosa de servicio, de cosa, pues que puede ser complicado [...]tú sabes como es, cuando uno dice que uno es estudiante [...] ya es otro, otra cosa pues no,*

*no, y si, si, ya sabes, uno pero también me imagino el trabajo que debe pasar la gente que no, que no viene como estudiante y eso. Debe ser difícilísimo. Difícilísimo.*

([...] Apart from [...] the fact that I am [...] a student, so this is, it helps me in many ways, you see? But I try to imagine if I came here to work and, in a factory or in whatever kind of service, of things, well, that can be complicated [...] you know how it is, when you say that you're a student [...] it's already a different, a different thing, right, right, and, yes, yes, you know, one but I also imagine the trouble people must go through when they, when they don't come as a student like I did and stuff. It must be very hard. Very hard.)

12

*Quando eu vim como funcionária de fábrica eu não falava japonês, eu não sabia nada do Japão. Foi difícil. Eu tive de aprender tudo do, do nada [...] Então, foi um período muito difícil. Quando eu voltei a segunda vez eu já falava japonês pois tinha aprendido aqui, voltei como jornalista então as pessoas me vêem diferente: "Ah, ela é jornalista, não trabalha em fábrica". Nunca mais precisei ouvir: "Ah, você trabalha aqui em fábrica, desse jeito pesado". Agora eu tenho a minha especialização.*

(When I came as a factory worker I didn't speak Japanese, I didn't know anything about Japan. It was...difficult. I had to learn everything from, from scratch [...] So, that was a very hard time. When I came here the for the second time I already spoke Japanese because I had learned, I came back as a journalist, so people see me differently: "Ah, she's a journalist, she doesn't work in a factory". Never again did I have to hear: "Ah, you work here in a factory, doing this hard work". Now I have my specialization.)

24

From these excerpts emerges my participants' being content with their living conditions in Japan; however, they were also aware of the fact that their experience might have been, and indeed had been, different working in Japanese factories. As I will explain further on, Latin American factory workers in Japan are by far not exclusively unskilled workers; there are different reasons for working in positions below one's skill level. Migrants tend to think of Japan as of a country with extremely high wages. This might be true compared to Latin America; equally true, however, are the much higher prices and living costs. The consequence is that many migrants have to either work more or spend less and end up descending the social ladder instead of ascending it (Del Castillo 1999: 145). This, in turn, compromises their initial plans to save money and return home after a few years. Many end up desisting and spend all their earnings (Del Castillo 1999: 149).

As I have stated above, economic reasons are among the classic motives for migration and have initiated worldwide migration flows. The one aspect

commonly accentuated in literature and research is indeed economic hardship. People leave their country or their region in order to improve their living standard, or even to escape from hunger and misery (Bracamonte Sierra et al. 2011: 24, 25; Brettell 2000: 99; Del Castillo 1999: 147; Moser and McIlwaine 2004: 92; Santiago Cruz 2011: 63; Tsuda 2003: 86; Valdéz Gardea 2011: 12; Van Hear 1998: 1, 16). While this was not the case in my sample, apart from one case, my participants did come hoping to improve their living standard.

*Yo vine a trabajar. Una amiga me trajo para trabajar, cuidándole las niñas. Por eso vine. Pues esperando, para brindar algo mejor a mi familia que quedaba allá, no.*

(I came to work. A friend brought me here to work, to look after her children. That's why I came. Well, hoping to offer my family over there something better, right).

21

*Eu vim a primeira vez no '99. Tinha 19 anos. Então vim e, na verdade eu vim porque eu queria ir pra Europa (laughs), morar na Europa um tempo, então vim pra cá, pra trabalhar, pra conseguir dinheiro, pra ir pra Londres depois. Então tava no primeiro ano da faculdade, tranquei a faculdade, e vim pra cá, pra Gifu-ken, pra trabalhar numa fábrica de Gifu. E aí trabalhei por seis meses nessa fábrica, aí juntei um dinheiro que achei que era suficiente e fui embora. Fui pro Brasil, fiz mais um ano de faculdade, e aí fui pra Europa. Fiquei um tempo lá e aí vim de novo pro Japão e fiquei três meses em Shizuoka. Trabalhando em outra fábrica. Daí voltei pro Brasil, acabei a faculdade, eu fiz relações internacionais. Aí terminei o curso, me formei, aí prestei a bolsa de monbusho, passei em 2005 e vim pra cá em 2006.*

(I came for the first time in '99. I was 19. So I came and, actually I came because I wanted to go to Europe (laughs), live in Europe for some time, so I came here, to work, to make money, to go to London afterwards. I was a freshman in college, I left and I came here, to Gifu-ken, to work in a factory in Gifu. I worked in that factory for six months, got the money that I found was enough, and left again. I went to Brazil, went to college for another year and then I went to Europe. I spent some time over there and then I came to Japan again and stayed for three months in Shizuoka. Working in another factory. Then I went back to Brazil, graduated from college, I studied international relations. Then I graduated and applied for the *monbusho* scholarship, was accepted in 2005 and came here in 2006.)

2

*Na verdade eu vim pra cá muitos anos atrás e vim para trabalhar em fábrica, como trabalhadora de fábrica. É que eu queria guardar um dinheiro, como muitos brasileiros fazem hoje, pra comprar uma casa no Brasil. Mas eu fiquei aqui oito anos trabalhando em fábrica. Oito. Eu acho que isso acontece com muita gente que vem pra cá. Você planeja em ficar um tempo, logo pensa que precisa de dinheiro pra, além da casa: “Ah, vou guardar mais um dinheiro pra fazer outra coisa, pra ter uma reserva no banco caso aconteça algum problema”, e isso aconteceu conmigo.*

(I actually came here many years ago to work in a factory as a factory worker. I wanted to save some money, like many Brazilians are doing today, to buy a house in Brazil. But I stayed working in the factory for eight years. Eight. I think that happens to many people who come here. You plan to stay for some time, and then you think that you need money apart from the money for the house: “Ah, I’ll save some more for something else, so I’ll have some money in the bank, in case there is some problem”, and that’s what happened to me).

24

While working and saving money was part of the concept of living in Japan, covering existential needs was not. My participants rather wanted to create a more comfortable life for themselves and their families, buy a home or travel, that is have access to what falls into the category of luxury items.

### **Familial Motives**

Re-migration has been increasingly researched during the past decades (Tsuda 2003: Preface XI). Just like push- and pull-factors can influence migration, when economic circumstances in the receiving country become tough they can operate in reverse. During the Meiji era, Japan was poor and became a great exporter of human work force, mainly to the Americas. After it became a global power it attracted many former migrants from Latin America where, on the other hand, economic and political circumstances very unstable. Re-time migration, per definitionem, regards an individual who migrates to the same country more than once. A person born in a country his parents, or even grandparents, once migrated to, on the other hand, does not classify as re-migrant. It does thus not apply to my participants, even though some were of Japanese ethnic descent.

Family ties have been increasingly recognized to play a major role in the decision-making process especially when no direct financial or political threat hangs upon the migrant (Del Castillo 1999: 109; Brettell 1979, 2008; Del Castillo 1999; Kawamura 2003). It can thus substitute economic aspects or the two can be combined and result in the migrant staying in Japan and working. On the other hand, family ties can influence the decision of whether or not migrate and where to go when one is actually considering migration (Bracamonte Sierra et al. 2001: 36; Castles and Miller 2009: 22). Economic pull factors combined with relatively

easy access to staying and working permission, as in the case of the *nikkeijin*, become a powerful combination for decision making. Again, of my *nikkeijin* participants none were in a position where they were forced to leave their home countries out of economic hardship: most belonged to their countries' middle class. The vast majority of *nikkeijin* are the children, more often even the grandchildren, of Japanese migrants to Latin America. What these "returnees" (*kikokusha* in Japanese) know about Japan is more often than not a diffuse feeling of what the Portuguese language calls *saudade*. Brettell translates this concept as 'nostalgia for the homeland' (Brettell 2008: 117). In fact, *saudade* can mean many other things, a general feeling of longing, not necessarily for a certain place, but for persons, situations, times passed. The *nikkeijin* who come to Japan, despite of not having experienced life as Japanese in Japan, often describe a feeling of longing, of wanting to live in Japan. Interestingly, the desire to first-hand experience the country of one's ancestors did not outweigh financial aspects which, however, was the case for those who had no blood ties to Japan but had nevertheless wanted to come and experience the country. Some of the latter had indeed left behind secure employment as I will show in the last category. Not surprisingly, many of my *nikkei* participants stated that they came to Japan in order to revive, or in some cases initiate, their relationship with Japan. Family ties are further named in the literature in the context of so-called chain migration meaning that at first one family member goes abroad, works and saves some money. He then calls for another member to join him, the two combine their workforce and revenue, eventually make a third member come to work, and so forth (Brettell 2008: 124; Del Castillo 1999: 150). This form of migration was not common among my participants. In fact, none had come to Japan as part of a "work chain". Those who had come to work had done so by themselves, independently from their families. Where family did play an important role in decision making was my participants' desire to deepen existing, or in fact create, contacts with Japan:

*Porque soy nikkei. Me lo pedía la sangre, ¿no? (laughs) No, no, es broma. Bueno, en parte será porque mi madre es japonesa. Te dije, no, que ya había vivido aquí de pequeño. De los dos a los cuatro años En realidad ya no me acuerdo de casi nada. Y bueno, en casa hablábamos japonés, de modo que pudiera mantener bien el idioma, ¿no? Pero por el hecho que me faltaba vivir en Japón y más que hasta hace poco no había internet, esas cosas así, no, solo tenía los mangas para tener un poco de, para estar en*



*contacto con la cultura japonesa. Pues, tenía ganas de vivirlo, simplemente vivir. Y luego ya, antes de empezar la carrera, fui a la embajada a ver si había una posibilidad de, de estudiar en Japón y me enteré de lo de las becas de monbusho pero me dijeron que primero tenía que terminar la carrera. Pero ya estaba con la idea de venir, sabes [...] Al principio mi idea era simplemente vivir en Japón, tener la experiencia de vivir y ya volverme. Pero luego ya, la maestría, el doctorado y, ya uno tiene su ritmo de vida y al final pues, y han pasado casi ocho años.*

(Because I am *nikkei*. My blood was asking for it, right (laughs)? No, no, just kidding. Well, in part probably because my mother is Japanese. I told you, didn't I, that I lived here when I was little. From age two to four. The truth is that I don't remember hardly anything. And well, at home we used to speak Japanese, so that we could maintain the language, right? But because I missed living in Japan and stuff, especially because until not long ago there was no internet, these things, right, I only had *mangas* to have a little, to be in contact with the Japanese culture. Well, I wanted to live it, just live it. And then, before I started university, I went to the embassy to see if there was a chance to, to study in Japan and I found the scholarship thing from *monbusho* but they told me that I had to graduate first. But I already had the idea, to come here, you know [...] At first the idea was just to live in Japan, to make the experience of living here and leave again. But then, the master, the PhD, you already have your lifestyle, and in the end, well, eight years have already passed).

1

*Vine porque quería conocer el país de mis padres [...] Ambos, mi padre y mi madre, ellos son japoneses. Mi madre ya falleció hace 15 años en Uruguay pero bueno, ambos son japoneses y sobretodo porque estaba muy en contacto por el lado de mi padre, entonces pues decidí, decidí venirme. Mi primer año estuve en la casa de mis tíos. Ahí aprendí un poco de japonés, ¿no? Ese fue mi principal motivo. Conocer el país de mis padres, la cultura y, y lógico, después conseguir algún trabajo porque, qué se yo, en Uruguay la situación tampoco era muy, muy buena, entonces dije: "Bueno, voy a probar un poco a ver qué pasa en Japón", y bueno, en principio vine por, quise quedarme solo un poco, así un tiempo muy corto pero esto se fue extendiendo, extendiendo, extendiendo y bueno, ya hace doce años que vivo acá. Así es.*

(I came because I wanted to get to know my parents' homeland [...] Both, my father and my mother, they are Japanese. My mother already passed away 15 years ago in Uruguay, but well, both are Japanese and most of all because I always was in contact (with my relatives) from my father's side, so I decided, I decided to come here. During the first year I stayed in my uncle's house. There I learned some Japanese, right. That was my main reason (to come to Japan). To get to know my parents' homeland, the culture, and, and obviously, find some job afterwards because, oh, well, in Uruguay the situation wasn't very, very good either, so I said: "Ok, I'm gonna try and see what happens in Japan", and well, at first I came to, I wanted to stay just for a while, like, a really short period of time, but it got longer, and longer, and longer, and well, it's already been 12 years now that I live here. That's it.)

14

*Yo vine a conocer la tierra de mis abuelos. Mis abuelos son japoneses. Entonces dije : "Bueno, me voy a venir." Terminé la secundaria y dije: "Voy a venir un año para conocer donde nacieron ellos". Entonces me quedé un año y ahí conocí a, a mi novio. Entoces después ya me quedé acá. Por amor (laughs), sí. Me gustó mucho cuando vine*

*acá la primera vez y yo [...] y ese año que estuve lo pasé bárbaro porque pude conocer todo lo que sea Japón, me fui a Kyoto, Hiroshima, todos los lugares así para ver, ¿no? Y bueno, dije: “No voy a volver más” pero bueno. Después me quedé y ya, ya hice mi vida acá y, sí, extraño a mi familia todo, ¿no? Tán todos allá. Vine acá sola y me quedé acá (laughs).*

(I came here to get to know my grandparent’s homeland. My grandparents are Japanese. So I said: “Well, I’ll give it a go.” I graduated from high school and said: “I’ll go for a year, to get to know the place where they were born.” So I stayed for a year and there I met my, my boyfriend. So after that I, I stayed. For love (laughs), yes. When I came here for the first time I liked it very much and I [...] and this year I spent here, I had a great time because I could see all of Japan, I went to Kyoto, Hiroshima, all the places, like, to see, right? And well, I said: “I won’t be back, but ok. Then I stayed here and that’s it, I already have my life here and yes, I miss my family, everything, no? They’re all over there. I came here alone and I stayed here (laughs).

23

In the context of family ties, marrying a Japanese national is another possibility to qualify for a visa. Finally, accompanying an expat spouse could constitute another reason for coming to Japan.

*Por mi esposo (japones)*  
For my (Japanese) husband

4

*Vine al Japón porque mi esposo es, que es headmaster de una escuela y él recibió el trabajo, entonces vine al Japón por eso y ya estando aquí conseguí trabajo [...] Soy profesora, sí.*

(I came to Japan because my husband is, he is headmaster in a school and he got this job, so that is why I came to Japan and while I was here I found a job [...] I’m a teacher, yes.)

5

*Meu marido trabalha numa empresa, e um dia ofereceram pra ele trabalhar na Coreia do Sul. Então na Coreia do Sul fomos também. Depois de um tempo fomos para a China. E depois vimos aqui pro Japão. Da China pro Japão.*

(My husband works for a company, and one day they offered him to go and work in south Korea. So we also stayed in South Korea. After some time we went to China. And after that we came here to Japan. From China to Japan.)

19

*Eh, vine casada.*

–¿Y le conociste a tu esposo en Colombia?

–Sí.

(Eh, I came here married.

– Did you meet your husband in Colombia?

–Yes.)

22

*Ya la niña tenía tres años y medio y era la hora de entrar en la escuela. Entonces yo y mi esposa pensamos en dónde sería mejor. En Cuba no podía ser porque, usted sabe. Entonces teníamos dos opciones, América o Japón. A mi me hubiera gustado irme a E.U., se gana bien, hay mucho trabajo para marineros, pero bueno, mi esposa, toda su familia esta aquí así que bueno, nos venimos pa'ca.'*

(Our daughter was already three and a half and she had to go to school. So me and my wife thought of what was the best place. Cuba was impossible because, you know. So we had two options, The US or Japan. I would have liked to go to the US, you make good money, there is much work for sailors, but well, my wife, her whole family is here, so, well, we came here.)

9

### **Personal Motives**

Virtually non-existing in the literature as one of the reasons to migrate to another country, yet existing among my participants was what one might call personal motives. Neither financial hardship or political reasons, nor family ties made participants leave their countries of origin and come to Japan. Rather, curiosity and the desire to get to know a new culture and a new social environment constituted a motive valid enough to leave their countries of origin and move to Japan. As I have pointed out above, participants in this category even left secure, fairly well-paid jobs behind in order to live in Tokyo, something no participant with Japanese ancestors had claimed he had done. Again, the final decision to actually migrate was made by a combination of factors rather than just one reason. The common factor here was an overall desire to leave. This desire could be so strong that participants “just went for it”, meaning that they came to Japan on a tourist visa and then started to evaluate what they could actually do. Others took a more rationalist approach and found out beforehand what possibilities they might have in Japan. This also shows a difference in personality. Further personal circumstances such as preference toward Japanese martial arts or food added up to the blend of motives in this category. Again, none in this category was forced to leave his home country. Leaving employment and stepping into the big unknown could be mitigated by the prospective of a scholarship. Thus, most participants in this category were able to indulge their adventurous side while still counting on a stable income and the chance to progress academically.

*Eu tinha vontade de morar fora. Eu tinha muita vontade de morar fora do Brasil por um tempo, né, e logo que terminei a faculdade no Brasil eu pensei muito em procurar emprego fora. Só que eu não tinha muito interesse nos Estados Unidos, né, poderia ser em Europa, eu comecei a ter interesse pelo Japão por causa da língua, né. Eu, navegando na Internet eu achei uma página escrita em japonês, aí eu fiquei interessado e fui estudando um poquinho. Daí eu fui est-, eu entrei numa escola de japonês [...] por pouco tempo, só que lá eu vi um pamfletto, falando sobre a oportunidade de estudar aqui. Sobre a bolsa, né, do ministério da educação. Aí eu apliquei, fiz as provas, passei, larguei o meu emprego e vim pra cá. E tô até hoje [...] Eu gostava da, eu comecei a gostar da língua na verdade. Eu não conhecia profundamente, mas eu ficava estudando sozinho, né, aí tudo o que fui descobrindo da língua, do Japão, então eu tinha mais interesse, por que não, né, no Japão.*

(I wanted to get out. I really felt like living outside Brazil for some time, you know, and right after I graduated in Brazil I thought a lot about looking for work abroad. But I wasn't very interested in the United States, you see, maybe Europe, I started being interested in Japan because of the language, you see. I, in internet I found a page written in Japanese, that's where I became interested and began to study a little. From there, I went to st-, I went to a Japanese language school [...] for a short period of time, but there I found a pamphlet talking about the opportunity to study here. About the scholarship, you know, from the ministry of education. So I applied, took the exams, passed, quit my job and came here. And here I am until today [...] I liked the, I started to like the language actually. I didn't know much, but I'd study by myself, you know, so everything I discovered of the language, of Japan, so I became more interested, why not, you see, in Japan.)

10

*Para mi fue todo un reto. Una nueva cultura y bueno, dije: “¿Por qué no?” En México estudié turismo y trabajaba en comunidades haciendo proyectos de ecoturismo, entonces dije: “Vamos a ver, vamos a probar algo diferente.” Además pensando que podría aprender cosas aquí y después aplicarlas en México. Llegando aquí obviamente no podía trabajar en cosas que, porque no sabía japonés. Pero afortunadamente mi novio me ayudó a encontrar un trabajo y casi a una semana de que yo llegué a Japón empecé a trabajar en su empresa apyando [...] y de ahí una persona me vio y dijo: “Ay, en un kinder necesitan una persona que sea extranjera.” Entonces fui a la entrevista y empecé a trabajar ahí. Y ya dije: “Ay, qué padre”, el director es muy abierto, es una persona que decía: “Sí, yo quiero que un extranjero venga porque quiero que los niños aprendan a tratar con otro tipo de gente que no sea japonés. Por eso no es un problema si no sabes japonés.” Entonces ahí dije: “Venga, ellos son superabiertos, pues adelante”, ¿no? Pero sí me ha costado mucho el idioma. Por suerte ahora ya estoy mejor.*

(For me it was a challenge. A new culture and well, I said: “Why not?” I had studied tourism in Mexico and was working in communities on eco-tourism projects, so I said to myself: “Let's see and try something different.” I was also thinking that I could learn some things here and later apply them back in Mexico. Obviously I couldn't work in something that, because I didn't speak Japanese. But luckily my boyfriend helped me find a job and after one week upon arriving in Japan I was working in his company helping with [...] and there someone saw me and said: “Hey, in the kindergarten they are looking for a foreigner.” So I did the interview and started working there. And was like: “Hey, how cool”, the principle is very open-minded, he said: “Yes, I want a foreigner to work here because I want the children to learn how to get along with different kinds of people,

not Japanese. Therefore it's not a problem if you don't speak Japanese." But the language was really hard for me. Luckily I'm feeling better now.)

6

*Bueno, yo en Colombia trabajaba en una universidad pero al mismo tiempo estuve buscando trabajar en cualquier otro lugar del mundo. Entonces me ofrecieron el trabajo acá y, pues vi como muchas posibilidades y una de esas es que estoy al otro lado del mundo y, entonces geográficamente es completamente distinto lo que se vive acá y, y el lenguaje, verdad, lo hace todo completamente distinto. Y la manera de ver las cosas, quería como ver eso, como se construye la vida y la educación de este lado. Y bueno la idea era también como conocer un poco de la geografía asiática y, y aprender un poco de japonés.*

(Well, in Colombia I was working in university but I was also trying to find a job in some other part of the world. There they offered me this job here and, well, I imagined, like, many opportunities one being at the other side of the world and, so what you experience here is totally different geographically speaking and, and the language, right, it makes it all completely different. And the way of seeing things, I wanted to see how this, how they build life and education over here. And well, my idea was also to get to know a little bit of Asia and, and learn some Japanese.)

17

*¿Por qué vine al Japón? Creo que mi forma natural de aceptar los desafíos. Lo que más me interesaba de Japón cuando supe por primera vez que tenía, podía venir al Japón era la curiosidad, ¿no? La forma de, tan lejos del país que yo vengo, Chile. Eh, desafío, una nueva vida, un empezar nuevo. Muchas cosas se hablan de Japón, un país muy correcto, muy organizado, y esas cosas me llamaron la atención, y buscar una vida mejor. Esta es la raíz de todo. Pero podía haber sido Estados Unidos, en cambio Estados Unidos no me llama la atención. China tampoco me llama la atención. España tampoco me llama la atención como país organizado. Entonces, cuando escuché hablar de Japón [...] en ese momento podía haber elegido a España. Pero hablo español, entonces no es tan interesante para mi personalidad. Hay otra gente que al revés elegiría España porque hablan español pero soy una persona que me gustan los desafíos y elegí el más difícil.*

(Why I came to Japan? I think that it's my natural way of accepting challenges. When I knew for the first time that I had to, could come to Japan it was mostly curiosity, you see? The way of, so far away from the country I'm from, Chile. Eh, challenge, a new life, a fresh start. You hear many things about Japan, a very correct country, very organized, and these things caught my attention, and to look for a better life. This is at the root of everything. But it could have been the United States, but I was never interested. Neither in China. Neither was I interested in Spain as an organized country. So when I heard talking about Japan [...] in this moment I could have chosen Spain. But I speak Spanish, so it's not that interesting for my personality. There are other people who, on the contrary, would choose Spain because they speak Spanish but I'm a person who likes challenges and I chose the most difficult.)

20

*Bueno, las razones son varias. La principal que, bueno hace un tiempo, en el 2006, vine aquí de vacaciones. Entonces me gustó mucho el país, vi muchas cosas que no creí alguna vez que existieran, como mucha organización, mucha precisión, en todos los*

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*aspectos de la vida diaria, no. Eso me gustó mucho y después pensé en venirme a este país para estudiar. Y en parte también, estudiando aquí podría yo conocer, conocer como hacen los ciudadanos de este país para tener un país tan organizado. Y entonces yo, aprendiendo eso, podría yo enseñarlo en mi país, no, porque en mi país faltan muchas cosas en ese tipo de aspecto. Esa es la principal razón por la que vine.*

(Well, there are different reasons. The main reason is that, well, some time ago, in 2006, I came here on holidays. I really liked the country, I saw many things that I would never have thought existed like so much organization, precision in, in all aspects of daily life, right. I liked it very much and so I thought of coming to this country to study. And in some way, if I studied here, I could get to know, know how the citizens of this country manage to have such an organized country. So if I could learn (from them) I could teach it in my country, you know, because in my country there is a great lack of those things. This is the main reason why I came here.)

16

*Primeiro, o Aikido. Um amigo meu, ele veio pra bolsa de monbusho e quando ele veio eu comecei a estudar japonês. Aí, quando eu me formei consegui a bolsa e vim. As universidades são muito boas também.*

(First of all, *aikido*. A friend of mine...he came on the monbusho scholarship and...when he came, I started to learn Japanese. Then...after I graduated I got the scholarship and moved here. Universities here are also very good.)

15

*Foi por acaso na verdade. Porque é assim: na verdade eu tenho bolsa aqui, do governo japonês. Isso [...] e namoro uma nikkei, uma descendente de japoneses. “Ah, talvez interesse”, um amigo me mostrou a bolsa. E eu pois: “Ah, bem, de repente eu vou tentar.” Sou aceito, aí foi que eu fui aceito, assim [...] eu, eu pensei: “Vou, não vou, vou perder o emprego se eu for.” Mas aí pensei, naquela época já não namorava mais (laughs), então pensei: “Se eu não fizer agora não faço mais”, entende? Tinha vinte e seis anos, se eu não sair pra morar fora do país, ver como é que é, receber uma bolsa ainda, se Deus quisesse mestrado e doutorado, então eu acho que é uma oportunidade que não dá pra perder. O emprego, eu vou perder agora, mas talvez, quem sabe, vou poder encontrar outro, mesmo que acho que eles não, não trabalham com a minha pesquisa, então não tem muito a ver, mas foi bem pois se eu não fizer naquela época eu não faria mais.*

(Actually, it was a coincidence. Because like this: actually I had a scholarship here, from the Japanese government. This [...] and I had a nikkei girlfriend, a descendent of Japanese. “Ah, maybe you’re interested”, a friend of mine showed me the scholarship. And I’m like: “Oh, well, I might as well give it a try.” I’m accepted, there, I was accepted, like [...] and I, I thought: “I go, I don’t go, I’ll lose my job if I go.” But then I thought, at this time I didn’t have this girlfriend anymore (laughs), so I thought: “If I don’t do it now I will never do it”, you see? I was 26, if I don’t leave to live in another country, see how things work there, even getting a scholarship and, possibly, a master and a Ph.D., so I think it’s an opportunity that I can’t lose. I will lose my job now, but maybe, who knows, I’ll be able to find another one, even though I think that they don’t, don’t work with my research, so, it doesn’t have a lot to do with it but it was good because if I hadn’t done it back then I wouldn’t have done it at all.)

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Participants in this category disposed of a high amount of human capital under the form of completed tertiary education. This correlated with their interest in different cultures and social realities. At the same time, it was only the combination of academic requisites, and according employment which ultimately delivered the financial possibility to move to, and live in, Japan. As I argue throughout this study, social reality thus plays a fundamental role in decision making of any kind. A person might well have owned a degree and be interested in foreign cultures. If the economic part is deficient, however, he will not be able to act upon his wish.

As I have argued previously, motives were not one dimensional but consisted of different layers. None of my participants stated that he had come to Japan because he had no other choice, or that life back home had been unbearable. A complete lack of perspective, one of the most commonly cited reasons for migration did thus not correspond to my sample (Toma Carignato 2002:190, 260). Rather, my participants had acted upon the – if perceived – differences in life chances between Japan and their countries of origin.

### **Abstract Findings**

Motives for migration tend to be multi-layered. Different motives combined finally make people take the decision to actually migrate. Also, motives that were decisive in the first place, for instance a scholarship, can lose importance over time or be substituted by other motives. My findings combine migration theory according to which social networks are often decisive for migration. This meso level of migration acts as a push factor, that is social networks facilitate the final step of actually leaving one's country by virtually pulling the migrant into the receiving country (Brettell 2000: 102, Del Castillo 1999: 145, 55; Higuchi 2004: 380; Kawamura 2003: 416, 17).

It can be family members already residing in the receiving country who make migration look more attractive to those who stayed behind (Beuchling 2003; Del Castillo 1999: 147). Also, they serve as help for the newcomers, help with the

authorities, with looking for housing and employment and can facilitate the process of adaption to the new life. Also, friends and acquaintances can be part of a social network as can be colleagues from work.

Another perspective focuses on social capital at the group level: (1) how certain groups develop and maintain social capital as a collective asset and (2) how such a collective asset enhances group members' life chances.

Well known sociologists such as Bourdieu (1980, 1983/86), Coleman (1988, 1990) and Putnam (1993, 1995a) have discussed this perspective. The central interest is to explore the elements and processes in the production and maintenance of the collective asset.

Analyzing the motives of migration there is one common denominator: perceived life chances.

According to German sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf (1979), life chances are not attributed to individuals. Rather, individuals have life chances within their social existence and in a given social structure. Life chances constitute possibilities of individual growth, the realization of capabilities and hopes, provided by social conditions. Dahrendorf distinguished between options and ligatures. The further define choices, alternatives for actions within a social structure. They thus designate individual choices conditioned by structural choices. Ligatures are links, or connections, again within a given social structure. Social roles and positions place the individual into ligatures. Life chances combine options and ligatures. Social links without the possibility to choose mean oppression; the opposite does not make much sense. While modernization has brought a vaster choice of possible social action, at the same time it has achieved this goal by destroying social links (Dahrendorf 1979: 49, 50, 51, 107, 108). Perceived for not objective but perceived life chances tend to make migration happen. That means that not the objectively negative balance between options and ligatures is decisive for migration but the perceived discrepancy between subjective status and the actual social situation (Beuchling 2003: 276; Dahrendorf 1979: 28). This helps explain why not all Latin Americans emigrate and why not all *nikkeijin* act upon the legal possibility of migrating to Japan. I argue that two points are decisive here:

a) Potential migrants notice that some of their social relations have improved their (social) status through migration or at least pretend they have



b) At the same time they feel that their own living standard has deteriorated

If both circumstances combine, actual migration becomes realistic and probable.

As I have argued, perceived life chances are crucial: whether or not the desired improvement will actually happen, remains uncertain.

The improvement of life chances does not have to be exclusively financial despite this aspect being mentioned often as the main incentive for migration. Better education, life in the own cultural sphere, or reunification with family members often play a role. Also, certain institutions and organizations can act as social networks the migrant uses to migrate.

## **V Human Capital: Educational Background and Working Situation**

*Eu acho que no Japão tem dois tipos de brasileiros. Os brasileiros altamente educados, estudantes, bolsistas, que são pagos pelo estado japonês, gente com bons empregos, e tem o extremo oposto, que são brasileiros que não têm educação, que vêm pro Japão com 16 anos, trabalham em fábrica sem muita perspectiva de futuro e acabam nessa coisa de ganhar dinheiro e gastar. E ficar fazendo bagunça também. Dificilmente encontrei brasileiro que esteja assim nesse meio termo.*

(I think that in Japan there are two types of Brazilians. Highly educated Brazilians, students, research fellows, who are being paid for by the Japanese state, people with good jobs, and then there is the other extreme, Brazilians without any education, who come to Japan at the age of 16, work in factories without any future perspective, and end up in this circle of earning and spending money. And also making trouble. I hardly ever met a Brazilian who was, like in between.)

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Beginning this chapter in medias res, this interview excerpt sums up quite provocatively the -perceived - situation of not only Brazilians but Latin Americans in Japan. In the last decades formal education has become an increasingly globalized good everybody seems to want a piece of, regardless of the country of origin. As any social good, the importance of education is defined by the surrounding society; individuals cannot generate social goods by themselves. The term knowledge economy defines the ever-increasing importance

of education and knowledge in the developed world, not least for world economy. In the 1960s the economists Schultz and Becker pointed out the importance of people for the economic growth of nations. The term knowledge economy is also closely linked to technology and new forms of communication (Spring 2009: 38). Information, or better the access to it, has largely replaced manpower, physical strength or even location. In the age of internet, Skype, and so forth, location has lost importance: a client or a business partner can be located virtually anywhere in the world thanks to video calls, phone conferences, and the like (Keeley 2007: 23). Information itself is of course nothing new. Crucial are the possibility and the capacity to make use of the new sources and tools of information in order to process large quantities of information, possibly at the same time. While sectors such as agriculture or industry are not likely to disappear anytime soon, all sales activity or exchange of knowledge requires people able to work with the required tools (Keeley 2007: 26).

### **Defining Human Capital**

*Puede el trabajo contribuir a la expansión del espíritu mediante la riqueza material que produce: pero esa expansión [...] no significa verdadera libertad; libertad interior, libertad moral o estética; la libertad que constituye el fin y el contenido de la educación [...] El destino del hombre es la creación. Y el trabajo es creación, vale decir liberación. El hombre se realiza en su trabajo.*

(Work can contribute to the expansion of the spirit through the material wealth it produces: but this expansion [...] does not mean true freedom; inner freedom, moral, or esthetic freedom; the freedom that is the aim and the content of education [...] Man's destiny is creation. And work is creation, liberation even. Man is fulfilled through his work.)

José Carlos Mariátegui 1979: 100).

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu used the economic concept of “capital” to indicate resources that can be acquired over time and classify social strata. He divided capital into three aspects: volume, composition and trajectory. Volume refers to the mere quantity of capital, while composition designates the prevailing form of capital in a particular case: economic, cultural, and social capital.

I will discuss this form of capital more in detail in the following chapter. A large amount of cultural capital is often accompanied by an equally large amount of

economic capital, the further permitting the individual to acquire the latter (Hall et al. 2003: 47). If we see this cultural capital as formal education I would like to argue that it is indeed human rather than cultural capital that is acquired through financial means. The boundaries, however, are not fixed and tend to be osmotic. A relatively recent form of capital, coined in the 1960s by economists, human capital is considered indispensable for economic and personal growth and has been promoted as such by national governments and global institutions. Human capital requires both time and money in largely equal amounts for its acquisition is characterized through a process of formal education in respective institutions and with according costs. Skills and human capital are keywords that bring up images of well-trained and well-integrated individuals. They have steadily gained in importance over the last decades. Since the early 1960s economists have been placing more and more attention on people to define economic growth, namely on their abilities and their knowledge. In 1961 the US-economist Theodore Schultz remarked that people constituted an important part of global wealth. People willing to accumulate human capital constantly invest time and money in their education, not only for education's sake but hoping that their efforts will translate into higher salaries and professional credibility as well as social prestige. According to Nussbaum (2003: 33) human capital is made of capabilities, meaning "what people are able to do or to be". Lin defined human capital as the value added to a laborer when he acquires knowledge, skills, and other assets useful to the employer (2001: 9).

The OECD defines human capital as "the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being" (in Keeley 2007: 29). A competency, in turn, is composed of knowledge, skills and the correct attitude. Keeley takes the example of a person wanting to send a message to a person in another country. In order to complete the process of sending and communicating successfully the individual needs of course knowledge, in this case of either his partner's language or of a *lingua franca*, in most cases English. He will also need the skills necessary to technically send the message. However, if the individual wants to communicate successfully he will also need the right attitude, in this case the attempt to understand the other's cultural peculiarities (Keeley 2007: 61). I strongly agree with Keeley on this point; there is still much need for the further investigating of

cultural aspects in communication. While they might often be dismissed as trivial, they play just as an important role as the so-called hard skills, in this case language and technical ability. Language and culture are inseparable: a child acquires not only his mother tongue(s) but also the culture(s) that go(es) with it or with them (Toren 2002: 107). A good translator cannot merely translate words from one language into another. Ideally he will be familiar with both cultural frames these languages are embedded in. This is particularly evident in the case of poems where atmosphere plays an important role. Often poems translated by somebody who does speak the target language but is not deeply familiar with the respective culture sound strange, wrong even, despite being syntactically and grammatically correct. Cultural concepts are expressed through language, just as certain expressions reveal these concepts. In the age of globalization and worldwide migration it has become increasingly important to recognize and deal with cultural differences. Dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds has become the norm for many of us; being at least aware of existing differences can have a great impact on the macro level, namely policy making, as well as on the micro level, people's everyday lives. OECD recommended three categories of competencies for successful learning and the education of global citizens:

- a) The ability to make successful use of hard skills such as language or computer skills
- b) The ability to interact with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- c) The ability to manage our own lives (Keeley 2007: 62, [http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oced/education/human-capital\\_9789264029095-en](http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oced/education/human-capital_9789264029095-en), last access: 2013-01-30).

This study does not focus on aspect c) for I take so-called soft skills such as the ability to 'manage our own lives' and common sense as a given. Aspects a) and b), however, play a fundamental role for I consider the combination of skills and intercultural competence extremely important. I have to admit that I am not particularly fond of the term "intercultural competence" per se: too often has it been used and misused and become the plaything of policy making and election

promises. The ability to participate in an intercultural discourse provides a frame not only for life in different cultures but for critical thinking which, in turn, is likely to translate into the successful acquisition of human capital. In the age of increasing global migration an equally increasing number of workers, professionals and academics aim to work or study in a different country. While English is commonly assumed to work as lingua franca and in virtually all cases, everyone who has spent some time in Japan not speaking Japanese will probably think twice and reconsider. Cultural differences add a third dimension even though this dimension is hard to quantify. Quoting from Einstein, however,

*Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted.*  
(in Keeley 2007: 118).

It is easy for the foreigner to misunderstand or even offend local sensibilities when he is not aware of cultural peculiarities; no matter how well-trained or educated he might be (Estermann 2006: 316). Intercultural competence is thus linked with what we commonly refer to as hard skills, an assumption that my participants, in this chapter as overall, have largely confirmed.

### **Human Capital and Migration – Human Capital *for* Migration?**

As I have pointed out earlier, formal education has gained in importance in the wake of globalization and ever increasing competition on the global labor market. National governments have been reformulating agendas to promote education and investing large amounts of money into schools and universities. Accordingly, there has been a focus on highly-skilled migration and governments' desire to increase the influx of highly educated workers, in other words those who dispose of a high level of human capital. There has been an ongoing debate in policy on the importance of highly-skilled migration for national economies and academic development. According to this view, a lack of formal education, i.e. of human capital, greatly limits migrants' life chances in the new country. Apart from the obvious benefit for national economies, a frequent claim is that highly skilled migrants are likely to integrate more smoothly into their receiving society and will

cause less social friction. There are different models to illustrate this point, mainly drawn from economic theory, but applicable to other areas of migration studies as well.

### **The Human Capital Migration Model**

The Human Capital Migration Model was developed by economists but can be transferred to other areas of migration studies to explain migration flows and the impact they can have on policy making. According to this model, migration is initiated if the return rate from the initial investment in migration ( $r$ ) is greater than or equal to the interest cost of funds for investment in human capital ( $i$ ), which can be translated in the costs of formal education. Lower cost, in turn, implies greater individual wealth and facilitated access to the capital market (Chiswick 2008: 66).

The model assumes further that there are two categories of workers, high- and low-skilled. Higher skills can derive from either higher innate ability or merely from a longer time spent in formal education. Increased intelligence, ambition, and learning speed all manifest high skills. If both types of potential migrants, high and low-skilled, have the same interest cost of funds, the individual with a higher rate of return from migration is more likely to actually take the decisive step and migrate,  $r_h$  being the rate of return to a highly skilled individual and  $r_l$  to a low-skilled worker. As long as earnings increase with ability a highly skilled individual will have more economic benefit from migration than his low-skilled counterpart. On the other hand, ability does not play a role in countries which do not put a premium on high skills in terms of economic retribution. In these cases migration based on skills is less likely to occur for the incentive is lacking (Chiswick 2008: 67).

According to this model high ability positively influences efficiency on the labor market. In line with this argumentation we can assume that it also leads to more efficient investment in human capital, an example being more efficient time or cost management. A high-skilled individual might well be able to find cheaper airfares or organize the migration process more efficiently. This model expresses efficiency as the ability to accomplish the same task in less time. This implies less costs for the more able and therefore supports the argument that  $r_h$  is greater than

rl. A human capital model assuming skill differentials in both the origin and the destination creates favorable selection among migrants if the process includes direct costs not proportional to wages. If, on the other hand, there is no difference in wages based on skill selectivity in migration is not likely to occur (Chiswick 2008: 68). Highly skilled migrants might even shy away from such country and rather go work in one which puts a greater emphasis on skill. If the ratio of wages is greater for low-skilled migrants the opposite is bound to occur, namely increased immigration of low-skilled individuals. Favorable selectivity is directly proportional to wage differentials in the origin and the destination: the greater the wage difference for the highly skilled the more likely they will be motivated to migrate. A proportionally smaller wage differential, on the other hand, will lead to less migration of high-skilled individuals (Chiswick 2008: 69). Empirical studies about migration to the US and Canada have shown that migrants tend to have higher levels of education than non-migrants (Chiswick 2008: 73). Part of this equation can be explained by migration policy.

### **Asymmetric Information**

This model was coined by US-economists Eliakim Katz and Oded Stark in the 1980s and assumes biased information on workers' actual productivity. According to this approach workers in their country of origin are conscious of their actual rate of productivity, as are their employers. Employers in the destination, however, cannot differentiate between high- and low-skilled migrants and rather pay them based on perceived, or expected, productivity. As a consequence, highly skilled migrants will experience a smaller wage differential and at the same time deal with higher foregone earnings which translates in a smaller incentive to migrate. As this process intensifies, highly-skilled individuals will be further discouraged to migrate, the ultimate consequence being adverse migration, or migration of low-ability workers. As a countermeasure to asymmetric information, this model proposes trial periods, often badly paid, but which highly-skilled migrants would nevertheless accept hoping that time will reveal their true skills. For the same reason lowly skilled workers would be likely to avoid these constellations (Chiswick 2008: 70).

One point about this model I fail to understand, probably in my position as a non-economist, is the assumption that every worker is conscious of his 'true productivity'. While self-assessment is all well in some circumstances I find the assumption that a worker is always conscious of and willing to reveal his true productivity to his employer somewhat problematic. While high ability includes high cognitive ability, i.e. the ability to critically reflect and assess own achievements, it is not said that this ability will always translate into accurate self-assessment. On the other hand, I do not understand why an employer should not recognize a worker's 'true productivity'. In the case of white-collar work the potential employee is most probably going to apply by presenting his curriculum and educational credentials, all of which should provide at least an overview on his ability. While there are cases in which true productivity is not recognized, due to a lack of certification for instance, this does not apply exclusively to migrants but happens to locals who might dispose of the skills but lack the formal requisites to work in a certain position.

### **Short-term Migrants**

While the previous model implicitly assumes that migrants will remain in their destination for a long period of time, this approach parts from expected voluntary return migration. In this case, migrants who invested in destination-specific human capital would experience considerable loss of capital upon returning to their country of origin. At the same time origin-specific human capital would be likely to have depreciated over time resulting in a double loss of capital. The result of this policy would be an avoidance of country-specific human capital, for instance country-specific certifications or professional licenses. Highly skilled workers would probably opt for internationally transferrable human capital while those with low ability to begin with would invest little or not at all in the development of further skills. The overall impression would be that of more favorable selectivity among legal permanent migrants as opposed to mere sojourners or illegal aliens. US-surveys have backed up these findings (Chiswick 2008: 71).



The question here is whether highly skilled migrants would not have the possibility to work legally in their aspired destination, their professional and academic level making illegal entrance unnecessary. Also, one has to calculate the ratio between risk and benefit: especially before the first financial crisis in 2008, a university-trained person from a Latin American country would have earned more as a factory worker in Japan than in a white-collar position in his origin. As I am going to illustrate more in detail in the following parts, cultural circumstances can contribute substantially to the individual's perceptions of desirable working and living conditions.

### **The Roy Model**

A third alternative to the Human Capital Model is the Roy Model. The basic assumption of this approach is that all migration costs are a constant proportion, that there are not fixed out-of-pocket costs and that effective migration can occur regardless of ability (Chiswick 2008: 71). If wages of highly-skilled workers are similar regardless of countries a greater relative-skill differential in the origin constitutes a smaller skill-differential and thus a smaller incentive for them to migrate. A smaller relative-skill differential will cause the reverse. Chiswick assumes that a more unequal distribution of income in the country of origin compared to the United States will not lead to increased negative selectivity, namely to increased low-skill migration, but only to 'less favorable (positive)' migration.

Again, at this point I do not quite grasp the difference between negative and less positive selectivity. From a linguistic point of view the two terms describe the same phenomenon, one more euphemistically than the other but nevertheless semantically equal.

### **Human Capital Theory**

Human Capital Theory is supported by national leaders and elites for it promotes economic growth. It mainly aims at educating workers for the global market and

includes large elements of standardization, from national curricula over entrance and exit to mandatory lesson contents and textbooks. The actual value of education is measured by economic growth (Bartlett 2003: 193, 94). On the other hand, there is little incentive to form critical and socially active citizens. Also, the approach has been criticized for assuming that people act based on maximal economic self-interest and with few constraints from the outside (Spring 2009: 16; Stambach 2003: 154).

The last criticism touches my own concern. Just as they are academic disciplines other than economics, there are elements in education that, in my opinion, are difficult to quantify – which is what the term ‘measure’ implies. As I have pointed out previously, quantification is of course a valid research approach in virtually all academic disciplines. Based on discipline and on the research object, however, it might not always be the most favorable. Human beings and social realities, however, are much too complex to be quantified or simply categorized. Thus approaches such as the urn model are not able, for not sufficiently profound, to explain or even depict complex social phenomena. Policy makers often wonder why their measures to improve social conditions seem to be “far from reality”: because the preceding research often is. Anderson-Levitt (2003: 16, 17) pointed out the gap between theoretical models and actual practice, comparable to policy output and outcome. While quantitative studies cover a much wider range of research objects, for example by sending a questionnaire to 5000 individuals or institutions, it cannot provide the in-depth information needed to understand the underlying mechanisms. My second concern is that education is closely linked to culture. We cannot separate the local culture from education. While the possibility to learn from each other thanks to new means of communication and technology is certainly a positive aspect of globalization, I doubt that a standardized curriculum will work for every culture, especially outside the Anglo-Saxon sphere. Theoretical concepts, often centered around North American or Western European viewpoints, need to be handled carefully when we research different social arenas (Anderson-Levitt 2003: 17; Bartlett 2003: 188; Brien 2011: 324). In order to illustrate culture-specific differences I will now give the example of two Latin American intellectuals who recognized the importance of preserving culture while educating people way before the term *knowledge economy* was coined.

## Pioneers of Formal Education in Latin America

*Faz escuro mas eu canto  
Porque a manhã vai chegar  
Vem ver comigo, companheiro,  
A cor do mundo mudar...*

[It is dark but I am singing  
Because morning will come  
Come with me, my comrade, and watch  
The color of the world change...]  
Thiago de Mello: Brazilian poet, 1966

Latin America has been borrowing educational concepts mainly from the US and the remains of Spanish and Portuguese colonization (Bartlett 2003: 185, 86; Spring 2009: 23). Going beyond mere borrowing, however, it has tried to adapt educational models to local realities and living conditions, often with a communist element. Brazilian educator Paulo Freire created his own model based on his concern about global models of education. Born 1921 in Recife, he was exiled in 1964 following a coup d'état in Brazil and moved to Chile (Bartlett 2003: 183). From there he addressed the challenge of educating peasants and indigenous peoples without destroying their cultures. In his eyes, education and consciousness were the primary tools for social justice and improvement (Bartlett 2003: 190; Freire 1981; Spring 2009: 164). Freire's reflections were influenced by another progressive educator and convinced communist in Latin America, the Peruvian José Carlos Mariátegui who fought for the education of the indigenous population and peasants in Peru. He became increasingly politically involved and was active in communist movements and even linked to *sendero luminoso*, Shining Path, the organization largely based on Maoist thoughts and ideologies and mainly consisting of underprivileged indigenous Peruvians (Strong 1992: 71). For Mariátegui the increasing globalization of educational ideas and models was mainly responsible for the destruction of indigenous cultures. Even after the conquistadores were gone, their ideological heritage remained. Education was still largely reserved to the elite, meaning a mainly white ruling class (Brienen 2001: 321; Mariátegui 1979: 101; Strong 1992: 62). The indigenous population, on the other hand, continued to live in poverty with virtually no access to education, let alone economic development:

*Cuando en sus programas de instrucción pública el Estado se refiere a los indios, no se refiere a ellos como a peruanos iguales a todos los demás. Los considera como una raza inferior [...] la cultura era un privilegio de casta. El pueblo no tenía derecho a la instrucción.*

(When the State refers to indios in his programs of public instruction, he does not refer to them as to Peruvians like all the others. He considers them an inferior race [...] culture was a caste privilege. Common people did not have the right to be educated.)  
Mariátegui (1979): 68, 69.

Still far away from today's *knowledge society*, Mariátegui already recognized and pointed out the importance of education for economic development and social justice. While he referred to Latin America, the same concept is being applied throughout the world at present. A convinced Marxist, he was exiled by Peruvian government in 1919 and moved to Europe. In 1920, the US Organic Law of Education went into effect in Peru, adapting local schools and curricula to the North American model (Mariátegui 1979: 76). Again, Mariátegui argued that this did not limit the predominant position the descendants of the Spanish colonizers still withheld. He advocated the development of an educational model that should consider Peruvian reality and needs. The underlying thought was that people's subjective viewpoints and beliefs influenced their attitude toward the surrounding world. This world, in turn, had an impact on people's subjective views.

Mariátegui further argued that education should not only form intellectuals but prepare people for the labor market in order to strengthen Peruvian economy and, ultimately, power as a state (Mariátegui 1979: 76, 102; Noriega Bernuy 2012: 91; Spring 2009: 25, 162, 63).

The situation was not very different in Bolivia where until the 1930 indigenous schools did not even share a common name, nor was the Bolivian state able, or willing, to keep track of their existence; in the 1940s half of all schools had been built by the indigenous population, virtually with no official support (Brienen 2011: 316, 17).

## **Human Capital Equal Better Life Chances? The Importance of Social Reality**

According to the above-mentioned assumptions investing in education will result in personal and professional improvement. Different empirical studies found that third-level graduates are more likely to find employment than second-level graduates and of course those who have not completed second-level education, and that college-educated migrants tend to make less errors in initial migration and act more efficiently (Chiswick 2008: 74; Keeley 2007: 33). These findings are consistent with the Human Capital Migration Model which considers efficiency a fundamental skill on the labor market. Keeley (2007: 33) further emphasized that an individual who has completed at least upper secondary education is more likely to find employment than someone who left school upon lower secondary education, i.e. at the age of 15 or 16. A largely uneducated workforce is not likely to increase a nation's economy and will thus negatively influence the macro level of human capital acquisition (Keeley 2007: 33). In the economic sense, productivity represents the value of what a worker produces and what ultimately builds a bridge between individual and national economic growth (Lin 2001). I have addressed this topic more in detail in my theory chapter. While the link between education and economic growth is not clear-cut and has been debated not only by economists, there is consensus that a connection does indeed exist, even though there are other factors influencing economic growth (Keeley 2007: 34). The question whether education promotes economic growth or economic growth promotes the consumption of more education, however, is ambiguous and can be interpreted both ways. There are factors apart from formal education which are a part of the equation of economic growth on the macro level, for instance land, economic resources, and workforce. This study focuses on the meso- and micro levels; I will thus not follow this debate.

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu criticized post-war philosophy because of its supposed ignorance regarding the "practical world" (Barlösius 2011: 15), the term practical world including not only the habitual side of life but the connection between actual social conditions and a certain world view. One of Bourdieu's main concerns was the overestimation of philosophy because of its

incompatibility with actual conditions and constraints in daily life. Terms and categories created by philosophy can result problematic, for too far from social reality, when applied outside the field of philosophy (Barlösius 2011: 17).

Bourdieu further stated that most occurrences in the social world were empirical, i.e. happened along practical circumstances and not after long reflections upon possible reasons and theoretical connections (Barlösius 2001: 18). Peruvian educator José Carlos Mariátegui shared this view (Mariátegui 1979: 101, 02). US-professor of philosophy John Searle and on his view that social reality is man-made and therefore only facts by human agreement, in other words, because we choose to see things a certain way based on our social environment (Searle 1995: 1, 2).

Differences in social reality can influence people's perception of social life and priorities. Especially in times of globalization and overcrowded labor markets, I consider the equation more formal education = more desirable employment problematic. Nobody will deny that human capital has the power to open doors which would otherwise remain closed, no matter how hardworking or dedicated a person may be. Formal education provides people with knowledge and skills and enables them to function in professional positions in which they could otherwise not perform. Teachers, lawyers or engineers all dispose of specified forms of skills indispensable for their work, thus of a high amount of human capital.

Taking a closer look at our present reality, however, one cannot deny that there is an increasing number of young, well-educated professionals, equipped with all the tools seemingly leading to adequate employment and yet unable to find a suitable position. One can thus argue that investing in human capital through formal education alone does not guarantee, as entire generations have been told by parents and teachers, adequate employment; the assumption that higher education automatically leads to better employment and better life chances needs to be questioned. According to this concept, a Ph.D. holder would automatically earn the most in the working hierarchy; we know that this is often far from reality. Expectations thus clash with social reality; output and outcome do not always match. Going further, one could even argue that the discussion on human capital has been led *ad absurdum* by its very cause: globalization. In order to survive on the global labor market young people are pushed harder and harder to achieve as good an education as they possibly can, often convinced that their efforts will pay

off in terms of better employment and higher salaries. On the other hand, this growing number of highly-skilled individuals leads to an over-saturation of the global labor market which simply does not hold the capability to accommodate all of the well-trained, highly-skilled workers flowing in regardless of their human capital. The outcome leaves people unemployed or in positions they could have worked in with a much smaller amount of human capital. In this case the cause is not a deficiency in the individual's education but a "merely" numeric problem: too many potential candidates and not enough open positions. I want to go as far as referring to this constellation as to a "global myth of education" or of human capital.

On the other hand, professions on the lower end of the educational scale, such as manufacturing or agriculture, are not likely to disappear because of *knowledge society* (Keeley: 2007: 24). Rather, these areas are going to expand and experience further growth in line with growing population especially in the developing countries. Professions in the care-giving sector are also in great demand and are very likely to be in the future. In the wake of demographic change and childless societies an ever-increasing number of elderly people are in need of being taken care of (Keeley 2007: 12). Despite the obvious importance of these professions few people would probably argue that a farmer or a care giver needs a particularly high amount of formal education.

Following, I am going to examine and analyze my participants' educational background and to investigate how their educational level translates into adequate employment in Japan. I am also going to focus on the role motivation plays in the acquisition of human capital and how motivation can differ according to a person's social reality and the cultural frame of reference he was socialized in. Again, I argue that cultural knowledge of the research object is indispensable not merely to understand but to explain behavioral patterns based on cultural and social frames. Especially in qualitative studies, which aim at grasping a piece of people's lives and social realities, this skill, and indeed part of human capital, are crucial: the researcher deals with human beings and social environments which he will hardly be able to understand without according knowledge. In this context, Keeley (2007: 116) remarked that a combination of different factors is crucial for even beginning to understand the mechanisms of human capital. I agree with him and the methodology used in this study hopes to reflect this conviction.

## Social Reality in Latin America and Japan

As I have shown with the help of the Human Capital Migration Model migration can work both ways, largely based on whether or not there is a valid incentive to move for either high- or low-ability individuals. According to Dahrendorf social existence and a given social structure both influence life chances. They enable individual growth, the realization of capabilities and hopes, within certain social conditions (Dahrendorf 1979: 49, 50). Macedo argued that formal education is indispensable to form critical and conscious citizens (Macedo 2009: 176).

Especially in Latin American countries, albeit not only, white-collar employment is often not well remunerated; in fact, it may not be sufficient to cover living expenses. Against common assumptions, Brazil, to name just one, is not a cheap country, particularly in terms of health care, education and housing.

*O Rio é lindo, porém para mim, só de passagem. Qualidade de vida não presta. Caro, péssima estrutura. Um simples colégio para uma criança custa 3000 Reais por mês (ca. 1100). Um bom colégio internacional 6000 (ca. 2300). Uma loucura completa. Um centro de fitness, de boa qualidade, custa 450 a 600 Reais (200). Um absurdo total [...] Um disparate quando um salário é de 650 Reais. Tudo é muito extremo.*

(Rio de Janeiro is beautiful but for me only from afar. Life quality is no good. Expensive, horrible structure. A regular school for a child costs 3000 Reais per month. A good international school 6000. Totally crazy. A decent gym costs 450 to 600 Reais. Completely absurd [...] Nonsense when salaries are about 650 Reais. Everything is very extreme.)

Personal conversation, 2010.

Similarly, living costs in Peru have been increasing constantly over the years (Del Castillo 1999: 311). Governments do not invest much into the lower strata of society; social inequality is incomparably greater than in most European countries. It is up to the individual to take care of himself and cover all expenses, be it health care, nutrition or education. The level of public instruction in most Latin American countries is still very deficient compared to private institutions which can have a negative impact on the acquisition of human capital and, consequently, on later employment:



*[...] a educação pública brasileira, da forma qualitativamente deficitária como está estruturada, não capacita os educandos em igualdade de condições, tampouco leva em consideração suas diferenças, seja em âmbito econômico, social ou cultural. Sendo assim, o ensino público, por sua qualidade deficitária, torna-se incapaz de reverter, ou pelo menos minorar, o quadro das desigualdades sociais existentes, fazendo com que os mais acometidos por essas desigualdades tenham os piores desempenhos no sistema escolar, as maiores dificuldades para conclusão do ensino básico e, como consequência, tornem-se menos habilitados a competir em igualdade de condições por uma vaga no mercado de trabalho e a exercer seus direitos de cidadania.*

[...] public education in Brazil, being structured in a qualitatively deficient way, does not enable students equally, nor does it consider economic, social or cultural differences. Public education thus becomes incapable of reversing, or at least diminishing, the picture of existing social inequality. This leads to those most affected by these inequalities performing worst in the school system, having most difficulties to conclude primary education and, as a consequence, becoming less capable to compete for a position on the labor market and to exercise their citizen rights.  
(Macedo 2009: 176, 177).

(Macedo 2009: 176). Also, working conditions are not stable and can be ambiguous which does not help make plans for one's future. Japan, on the other hand, provides more financial stability which is why degree holders from Latin America are willing to work in Japanese factories. As I have shown in *Motives for coming to Japan*, migrants from Latin America assume that Japan offers greater life chances than their home countries. Thus, despite not being poor or forced to emigrate, the perceived discrepancy in life chances at home and in Japan constitutes the incentive that makes people leave their countries of origin:

*Na verdade, eu vim pra cá muitos anos atras para trabalhar em fábrica, como trabalhadora de fábrica [...] Ainda era bem jovem, tinha acabado de me formar na universidade, eu penso: "Vou pro Japão, fico dois anos, guardo dinheiro e volto pro Brasil, compro uma casa." Mas eu fiquei aqui oito anos trabalhando em fábrica. Oito. Eu acho que isso acontece com muita gente que vem pra cá. Você planeja em ficar um tempo, logo pensa que precisa de dinheiro pra, além da casa: "Ah, vou guardar mais um dinheiro pra fazer outra coisa, pra ter uma reserva no banco caso aconteça algum problema", e isso aconteceu conmigo [...] Bom. Passados os oito, anos resolvi voltar pro Brasil, achei que já era hora de voltar. Eu voltei pro Brasil, retornei na vida profissional, eu sou jornalista [...] Aí vem a segunda parte do Japão. Quando trabalho em rádio, eh, o meu don de rádio avisou que tinha testo da televisão. Eu pensei que era uma televisão no Brasil, então liguei [...] e me avisaram a TV no Japão [...] Eu vim pra cá pra trabalhar como apresentadora de telejornal [...] A experiência foi boa, fiquei dois anos fazendo esse trabalho e aí voltei pro Brasil [...] voltei pro Brasil pra descansar quatro meses e aí voltei pro Japão.*

(Actually, I came here many years ago to work in a factory, as a factory worker [...] I was still really young, just graduated from university, and I think: I go to Japan, stay for two years, save money, go back to Brazil and buy a house. But I ended up working in the factory for eight years. Eight. I think that happens to many people who come here. You

plan to stay some time, then you think that you need money for, apart from the house: “Ah, I’ll save some more to do something else, to have a financial cushion just in case something happens”, and that’s what happened to me [...]Well. Eight years passed, eight, I managed to get back to Brazil, I resumed my professional life, I’m a journalist [...]There comes the second part of Japan. When I was working on the radio, eh, my radio boss told me that there was aTV test shoot. I thought it was for Brazilian television, so I called [...] and they told me it was TV in Japan [...] I came here to work as a newsreader [...] It was a good experience, I worked for two years in this place and then I went back to Brazil [...] I went back to Brazil to relax for four months and then I came back to Japan.)

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*Eh, eu fiz faculdade na Federal de Espírito Santo, fiz engenharia de computação. Me formei lá, logo depois de me formar eu trabalhei [...]por dois anos, e foi quando eu, eh, larguei pra vir pro Japão. Vim pro Japão, eh, pra fazer mestrado, entrei no mestrado na Nōkōdai, que é o instituto de agricultura e tecnologia. Terminei o mestrado, agora estou no segundo ano de doutorado.*

(Well, I studied at the university of Espiritu Santo, I studied system engineering. I graduated, right after graduating I worked [...] for two years, and that was when I, hm, quit to go to Japan. I came to Japan, hm, to do a master’s degree, in Nōkōdai which is the institute of agriculture and technology. I finished the master, and now I’m in the second year of the doctoral program.)

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*No Brasil eu fiz arquitetura e urbanismo na universidade catolica de Santos. E no Japão eu fui pra Miyagi daigaku, ou Miyagi university, e a minha tese era sobre web design (laughs). Aí, depois eu, de arquitetura fui para webdesign, de webdesign eu fui para análise de sistemas.*

(In Brazil I studied architecture and urbanism in the catholic university of Santos. And in Japan I went to Miyagi daigaku, or Miyagi university, and my thesis was on web design (laughs). Then, after that I, from architecture I moved to web design, from web design I went to system analysis.)

8

While global associations, nation states, and individuals demand for more and better education for everyone, it remains unclear whether or not this improved education actually translates into more economic and human capital. Spring (2009: 189) critically remarked that individuals tend to be “swept up in the rhetoric of human capital”. Despite high academic and qualification one might be unable to find according employment simply because it does not exist. Especially in the case of migrants, I want to argue, other factors are decisive when it comes

to the question of whether or not an individual can find employment in the receiving country:

- a) Is there demand for the profession the individual was trained in?
- b) Does the person speak the local language?
- c) How open is the labor market?

As I hope to have made clear above, this does not mean that formal education is not important. According to anthropologist John Ogbu, minorities must be aware that

*their participation depends and will depend on their acquisition of appropriate language, knowledge, skills, and credentials to compete successfully for positions in complex economic and technological systems.*

Ogbu (1995: 191)

As we have seen above, human capital in form of formal education is considered the key to professional success and social prestige by both organizations such as OECD as by individuals. Education has become the highest good of mankind. Beuchling (2012, personal conversation) defines ‘good’ as something people think of as valuable and worth of investing time and money in. In short, a ‘good is what people perceive as good’. People hope to be rewarded in terms of better employment and higher salaries.

There are, however, conditions attached to the acquisition of human capital. Even countries such as Finland, commonly cited as a model country in terms of education and social structure, approximately 12% of men in their 20s leave school without having completed secondary education (Keeley 2007: 62).

According to sociological studies children from low social strata are more likely to end education early and benefit less from academic possibilities, one reason being parental *habitus*: where there is no role model the child will have a hard time acquiring the necessary social and cognitive skills to successfully manoeuvre his way through the educational system (Bourdieu 1974, 84, 87; Schwingel 1995: 95). Economic resources constitute another factor for, in most countries, education does not come cheap. According to this view, economic and human capital are linked; social class thus has an impact on the acquisition of human capital (Hall et al. 2003: 47). Influenced by Marx’s Capital Theory, class

membership is determined by the individual's position in the production process. Similar social positions and interests arise from a person's position in either the worker or the entrepreneurial sphere. While there has been an ongoing discourse on poverty among children and the discrimination of working-class children in European schools, it is also true that in most European countries every child has the right and the duty to attend school, relatively cheap compared to, for example, Brazil or other Latin American countries. Empirical studies on migrant children in Germany and the Netherlands have shown differences in academic achievement among different ethnic groups; however, unfavorable economic conditions alone did not hinder some minority groups to perform above-average in school (Beuchling 2003, 2010; Lindo 2000: 206, 207). I do not want to argue about the quality of schools here nor do I want to take any political position. Nevertheless, I argue that in most European welfare states the connection between parents' wealth and children's access to education is less pronounced than in most Latin American countries where the lower social classes have hardly any possibilities to improve their condition for there is no welfare state providing support (Sansone 2000: 152). Thieme (2008: 198) defined (social) class as a group of people whose members share determined economic characteristics. Most Latin American societies are characterized by great social differences and contradictions (Allen 2002; Del Castillo 1999; Yamawaki 2003). There are few possibilities to ascend to a higher social class; the danger of descending into a lower class, on the other hand, is high. In these societies, sound education very often translates to expensive private institutions (Bortoni-Ricardo 2005: 156). My participants confirmed this claim. They labeled public institutions in Latin America as scarce, the educational level as deficient. Those whose parents disposed of the financial means had attended and graduated from private schools and universities.

*La primaria y el colegio los hice en [...] un colegio jesuita. Mis abuelos, mi papá, todos mis tíos estudiaban en ese colegio. Y excepto por dos años de la escuela primaria que los hice en E.U [...] hice todo mi bachillerato en Venezuela [...] Y después estudié en la Universidad Católica en Caracas. Que también es de los jesuitas [...] Terminé sociología y me fui a la universidad de Miami a estudiar una maestría en sociología [...] pero me fastidí y me regresé a Venezuela [...] Regresé a Venezuela en el '98, después de hacer la maestría [...] Entre el 2002 y el 2004 estuve dando clases [...] Y en el 2004 en octubre fue cuando me vine a Japón [...] y ahora, ahora estoy en el doctorado.*

(I went to [...]a Jesuite school. My grandparents, my dad, all of my uncles studied in this school. And except for two years of primary school which I did in the U.S [...] I did the

whole of high school in Venezuela [...] And then I studied in the Catholic University of Caracas. Which is also run by the Jesuits [...] I graduated from sociology and went to Miami for a master's degree in sociology [...] but I got fed up and went back to Venezuela [...] I went back to Venezuela in '98, after doing the M.A [...] between 2002 and 2004 I was teaching [...] And in October in 2004 I came to Japan [...] and now, now I'm in the PhD program.)

12

*Eu sempre estudei em colégio particular no Brasil. Acho que as famílias que têm condições de colocar os filhos em uma escola particular vão os colocar. Porque o ensino público ainda é muito deficiente no Brasil. A diferença de uma escola particular e uma escola pública ainda é muito grande.*

(I've always studied in private schools in Brazil. I think all the families who can afford it send their children to private schools. For public schools are still very deficient in Brazil. There's still a big difference between private and public schools.)

2

*O meu ensino básico, era uma escola estatal no Brasil porque a minha família não tinha muito dinheiro. Aí, do colegial, eu consegui uma bolsa de estudos, aí fiz o colegial numa escola particular porque no Brasil o ensino público é muito ruim. Aí do colégio particular eu entrei na universidade de São Paulo e fiz duas faculdades [...] Depois disso fiz mestrado, no Brasil ainda, aí depois eu vim pro Japão [...] É diferente. Aqui tem a facilidade. Eu trabalho no laboratório, então trabalho muito com reagentes. Aqui eu mando: "Ah, eu preciso de tal reagente", o dia seguinte tá na minha mesa. Isso no Brasil é impensável. Isso pra mim faz a diferença, por isso vale a pena sair do Brasil. A facilidade que você tem aqui pra trabalhar, pra fazer os seus experimentos, é muito maior do que eu tenho no meu país.*

(In elementary school I went to a public school because my parents didn't have much money. Then, in high school, I got a scholarship and went on to a private school because in Brazil public education is really bad. I then entered the university of São Paulo and studied two careers [...] After that I did a master's degree, still in Brazil, then I came to Japan [...] It's different. Here it's easier. I work in the lab, so I often work with reagents. Over here I order "Ah, I need this reagent", the next day it's on my desk. In Brazil this would be unthinkable. For me, this makes the difference, therefore it's worth leaving Brazil. The facility you have here to work, to do your experiments, it's much greater compared to what I have in my own country.)

13

*Eu sou formada em comunicação social, especializada em jornalismo, sou graduada em jornalismo [...] É uma universidade privada, não é uma universidade pública. Tive que pagar.*

(I was trained in social communication, specialized in journalism, I graduated from (the faculty of) journalism [...] It's a private university, it's not a public university. I had to pay.)

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*Bueno, la principal diferencia que he notado, que es más difícil, los profesores son más dedicados a los alumnos, este, tenemos más exigencia por parte de los profesores. De hecho yo sabía que eso pasaba porque les pregunté a las personas que habían estudiado aquí en Japón y me dijeron que aquí es mucho más difícil que en México. En México tenemos mucha mediocridad en el estudio, hay muchos profesores igualmente mediocres que no se interesan por el alumno, por hacerle una buena educación al alumno, cosa que aquí no pasa, por ejemplo. He notado que los maestros les dedican mucho tiempo a los alumnos y de verdad se esfuerzan para que los alumnos aprendan.*

(Well, the first difference I have noticed is that it is more difficult here, the teachers are more dedicated to their students, like, there is greater demand coming from the teachers. In fact I already knew that it was going to be like that because I asked people who had studied in Japan and they told me that over here it is much more difficult than in Mexico. In Mexico there is much mediocrity in studies, there are many just as mediocre professors who aren't interested in their students, who don't care about giving their students a good education, you don't have this here, for example. I've noticed that teachers here dedicate much time to their students and they really make an effort so that students learn something.)

16

Another reason, I argue, lies in social realities which can differ greatly from one country to another; this is where intercultural competence and knowledge of these differences are crucial. Different social realities result in different interpretations of the same concept which is no doubt what the above. Introduced Latin American educators had in mind when they aimed at a different approach to education.

While the importance of formal education is widely recognized and promoted in Latin America as elsewhere, the existence of human capital does not automatically translate into well-remunerated employment. In other words, people must first think of making a living before they can either choose a job reflecting their professional abilities or migrate for the income in their home country does not provide them with the necessary economic sources. As the following excerpts want to show, social reality can have a great impact on the outcome of all plans, in this case educational.

*A los ocho años ya estaba trabajando. Tengo medio año de escuela na' más. Mi padre era labrador, trabajaba en el campo, en el cortijo y nunca había mucho dinero así que los niños todos trabajando, cuidandoles a otros niños. A los ocho años, yo era una cría, ¿no te parece?*

(When I was eight years old I was already working. I only have half a year of schooling. My father was a worker, he worked in the fields, and we never had much money so that

all the children were working, taking care of other children. At the age of eight, I was still a baby, don't you think?)

25, Bolivia

*Para mí era, a mí me gustaba estudiar. Cuando mi mamá se murió yo estaba en quinto de primaria. Entonces tuve que cuidarles a mis hermanos, ¿sí? [...] Mi papá dice: "Ah no, no más". Pero yo le dije que me dejara estudiar, que no iba a descuidar a la familia, la casa pero que me dejara estudiar. Entonces terminé el quinto [...] pero como éramos muy pobres, entonces yo dije: "Si no paso el examen", pero igual yo no podía descuidar mi casa. Yo me levantaba a las tres, cuatro de la mañana [...] Me iba a estudiar y ahí llegaba a lavar, a planchar, a cocinar y a cuidar a mi familia, ¿no? Pero yo quería seguir estudiando. Cuando mi papá murió tenía yo 17 y dije: "Ay, otra vez, ¿ahora cómo le voy a hacer?" Entonces el colegio dijo: "Nosotros le pagamos pero sigue estudiando" [...] Ellos me ayudaron mucho, mucho, mucho, mucho. Cuando ya pasé al décimo me conseguí una beca [...] mi sueño siempre fue estudiar psicología porque quería ayudar a mis hermanos. Para ellos no era fácil, se quedaron sin papá y sin mamá y que tenían a alguien que no sabía, o sea por mucho que los quisiera pues me costaba. Entonces un día una amiga me dijo: "Preséntese a la universidad!" Cuando había una privada, así semi, como a distancia. Y yo: "Pero es muy caro." Entonces mis amigos me ayudaron. Vendimos empanadas, o sea comida, reunimos la plata y me presente. Y cada semestre era una lucha para recoger la plata pero pero a mí me gustaba. Y interrumpí como tres años pero volvía y empezaba [...] Hice siete semestres de universidad.*

*—¿Pero no te graduaste?*

*—No porque ya vine acá. Igual empecé a estudiar, me tenía que salir, trabajar por mi familia [...] Y entonces debida a, a esa carencia económica cuando me presentaron la oportunidad de venir a Japón pues no lo pensé.*

(For me it was, I liked to study. When my mom died I was in the fifth year of elementary school. There I had to take care of my siblings, you see [...] My dad said: "Ah, enough (studying)". But I asked him to let me study, that I wouldn't neglect my family, the household but that he let me study. I finished the fifth year [...] but since we were very poor, so I said: "If I don't pass the exam" (for secondary education), but I couldn't neglect the household. I would get up at three, four in the morning [...] I'd study and then I'd wash, iron, cook and take care of my family, you see? But I wanted to continue my studies. When my dad died I was 17 and I said: "Ah, again, what am I going to do now?" So there the school said: "We are going to pay for you but keep studying" [...] They helped me a lot, a lot, a lot. When I was promoted to the tenth year I got a scholarship [...] my dream was always to study psychology because I wanted to help my siblings. It wasn't easy for them, they lost their father and their mother and had someone who didn't know, like, for as much as I loved them it was hard for me. So one day a friend said to me: "Go to college!" When there was a private, like semi, like distance education. And I was like: "But it's very expensive". So my friends helped me. We sold empanadas, that is food, gathered the cash and I applied. And every semester it was a fight to collect the fee but I liked it. And I interrupted (my studies), like, for three years but I'd go back and start over [...] I did seven semesters.

*-But you didn't graduate ?*

*-No, because I came here. Even though I had started to study I had to leave, work for my family [...] And so because of this, of this economic deficit, when they offered me the opportunity to go to Japan I didn't think twice.*

21

*Bueno, mis padres se divorciaron antes de que yo naciera...*

*-Ay, perdón.*

*-No, no todo bien. Eh, así que con mi padre no tengo contacto. Sé que se casó y es ministro en una iglesia pero no sé más. Así que me quedé con mi mamá. M mamá terminó su universidad cuando yo ya estaba creciendo. Así que yo desde chico ví que hay que hacer un esfuerzo para educarse, que no es que viene del cielo. Y cuando yo estaba por terminar mi escuela elemental, a los 12 años, mi mamá me sentó y me dice: " Bueno, ahora, a la escuela elemental, es mi obligación mandarte a la escuela elemental. Pero a partir de ahora es tu propia responsabilidad. Entonces tú decides qué vas a hacer con tu vida. Me dice: "¿Quieres estudiar o vas a trabajar ? Y trabajar no va a ser fácil. Si tú quieres estudiar quien va a poner empeño, en hacer todas las cosas, en asistir a clases, en pasar los exámenes, en saber las lecciones, eres tú. Yo no puedo estar aprendiendo eso por tí. Yo puedo estar ahí para acompañarte [...] para darte un consejo pero quien tiene que hacer su parte eres tú. Entonces, este, yo le dije: " Quiero estudiar".*

(Well, my parents divorced before I was born...

-Oh, I'm sorry.

-No, no, everything ok. Eh, so I don't have contact with my father. I know that he remarried and is a minister in some church but I don't know more. So I stayed with my mom. My mom finished university when I was already growing up. So that I since I was little I saw that you have to make an effort to educate yourself, it's not like it falls from the sky. And when I was about to finish primary education, at the age of 12, my mom sat me down and says to me: " Well, now, primary education, it's my duty to send you to primary school. But starting from now it's your responsibility. So you decide what you want to do with your life. She's like: " Do you want to study or are you going to work? And working won't be easy. If you want to study, the one who will have to make the effort, do things, go to class, pass the exams, know your stuff, that's going to be you. I can't learn for you. I can be there and accompany you [...] give advice but you'll have to do your part. So, like, I said to her: " I want to study".)

11

*La primaria estatal, un colegio estatal. En la secundaria fui a un colegio privado. Sí, yo termine la secundaria y enseguida me vine para acá. Quería hacer decoración interior. Me encantaba esto. Me vine acá y después ya, ni empecé porque dije: "Un año vengo acá y despues vuelvo", pero nunca más volví.*

(Primary school, public, a public school. Then I went to a private high school. Yes, I finished high school and then immediately came here. I wanted to study interior design. I loved it. I came here and then, I didn't even start because I said: "One year and I'm going home", but I never went back.)

23

*Estudié la preparatoria, mi enseñanza media, eh, estudié lo que es gastronomía [...] He trabajado en muy buenos lugares en Santiago, eh, he llegado a Japón muy joven. Lo que he más hecho es trabajar muy, en la embajada, he trabajado en hotel [...] Yo soy maiordomo, butler [...] Toda mi vida ha sido de hostelería.*

( I studied junior-, middle school, eh, I studied what is gastronomy [...] I have worked in excellent places in Santiago, eh, I came to Japan very young. I mostly is worked very, in the embassy, I worked in hotels [...] I'm a butler [...] All my life has been about hotel business)

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As the previous interview excerpts have tried to show, my participants' educational background is varied and largely reflects the social environment they were raised in. In most Latin America societies the acquisition of human capital requires considerable amounts of economic capital. Parents can well be aware of the importance of formal education, ideally in a private institution. If the financial means are not there, however, this awareness does not suffice to enroll children in according schools. Social reality can thus generate a discrepancy between output and outcome, in this case the consciousness that human capital is important and the ability, or inability, to act upon this consciousness. My findings are consistent with Reed who remarked that

*We tend to overestimate the effect of others' values and underestimate the effect of their situations ("fundamental attribution error"= "tendency to attribute behavior exclusively to the actor's dispositions and to ignore powerful situational determinants of the behavior") [...] Likewise, we tend to overestimate differences in values and underestimate differences in situations.*

Reed (1993: 25)

In order to see the wider picture one must detach himself from an Euro- or US-centered worldview and be conscious of the fact that in most Latin American countries social reality is different and that the individual's social class and financial means have a far greater impact on people's academic and professional development than in the Western world – for as much as we like to complain about social inequalities even in welfare states like Belgium or Germany. I am now going to analyze the motivation for investing in, and ultimately acquiring, human capital.

Human- and social capital are linked in many different aspects. While the process is complex and not always clear-cut they can either promote or hinder each other. US-sociologist Samuel Coleman found that the length of formal education correlates with the acquisition of social capital, i.e. the amount of time and attention parents dedicated to their children as well as the relation the family had with the outside world. The first aspect is referred to as bonds, namely close relatives, friends and immediate family, all contacts that share common ancestry, culture or social values. The second aspect, the family's relation with the outside world, is referred to as bridges for they constitute just that: a connection to the rest

of the world (see Keeley 2007). According to Coleman's findings, more social capital promoted human capital. Putnam (in Keeley 2007: 107) drew the same conclusion, namely that social capital increases educational performance, which is human capital, and education increases social capital for it makes students realize their social responsibility. This does of course not imply that highly educated individuals are the most socially engaged and integrated members of society. This study wants to shed light on what I perceive as a paradox, just as I want to examine if highly skilled migrants are really better integrated in society than their lowly skilled counterparts. I define integration based on Beuchling (2012: personal conversation) as life chances, meaning structural and social arenas the individual is free to move in. For this purpose I will first define social integration and then look at my participants' educational level and their proficiency in Japanese. I will then try to draw a connection from their human to their social capital and investigate whether higher skills do have to result in participants feeling better integrated.

### **Motivation and Social Prestige**

Integrative motivation largely means that the learner is motivated to learn the language in question out of an interest in the target culture and its people; this attitude is often combined with the desire to become an accepted member of the target group. This type of motivation is thus generated and fuelled by the learner's desire to identify with a certain group, in the case of language learners with native speakers of the target language which makes them try and imitate their linguistic and cultural *habitus* (Edmondson and House 2000: 202) . Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, means that the learner's motivation is mainly utilitarian and consists in a concrete benefit, for instance increased chances on the labor market, or being able to enter a prestigious university.

If integrative motivation is always more promising, however, remains an open question. In second language acquisition, it was long a given that integrative motivated students would be much successful. More recent studies, however, have shown that instrumental motivation can be just as strong (Edmondson and House 2000: 203). Similarly, I want to argue, social reality can be a strong motivation.

Necessity can be a huge factor, meaning that a person who knows he has to achieve a determined goal in order to, crudely but accurately put, eat. Empirical studies (Beuchling 2003; Del Castillo 1999) have shown that this attitude is in part generated when individuals grew up in rather humble conditions and had to work in areas commonly ranked low in the hierarchy of social prestige. In order to spare their children from the same disadvantages, which, they feel, have resulted from their own deficient education, parents strongly insist that their children receive the best education possible. As I have outlined above, in Latin America this often translates to expensive private schools and universities.

Parents' aspirations regarding their children include the hope that doing well in school will help them conquer a secure, well-remunerated position in society and a comfortable lifestyle. The salient feature in this category was participants' parents valuing education because of their own experience. They considered a sound education as fundamental in order to achieve a comfortable financial position and based their hopes in their children, especially if their own human capital was limited (Beuchling 2003; Keeley 2007; Yamawaki 2003). Accordingly, academic titles and corresponding employment were highly valued. Participants in this category reported more direct requests and strategies such as promises and rewards from their parents:

*Mis papás sí, claro, por supuesto, eh, nuestro estrato socio-económico era o es medio-bajo entonces, como decían mi papá y mi mamá la única herencia que nos podían dejar era la educación. Entonces nos tocaba estudiar mucho.*

(My parents, yes, sure, of course, eh, our socio-economic layer was, or is, lower middle, so, like my dad and mom would say, the only heritage they could leave us was education. So we had to study a lot)

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*Meus pais sempre deram. Começou com, na minha família, acho que a importância da escola e tudo isso, começou com minha avó. Que até a geração da minha avó eram todos camponeses, trabalhavam ainda, todos trabalhavam em fazendeiras, no campo e tal e a minha avó quem queria mudar pra cidade e fazer os filhos estudarem. O meu avô era contra, o meu avô não queria sair. Ele queria continuar a plantadora (laughs). Eh, mas a minha avó forçou [...] Os meus pais já eram de outra geração já que o foco nos estudos.*

(My parents always paid great attention. It started with, in my family, I think that the importance of school and stuff, it started with my grandma. Until my mother's generation they all were farmers, they still worked, all of them worked, in haciendas, in the fields

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and so on, and my grandma wanted to move to the city and make her children study. My granddad was against it, he didn't want to leave. He preferred staying in the plantation (laughs). Eh, but my grandma insisted [...] My parents also, they were already of another generation so that, they focus on studying)

10

*Eu acho que se, se eu consegui fazer o que fiz foi graças ao apoio dos meus pais. Porque na verdade, a minha família não é uma família, quando era criança a minha família não era uma família de classe média no Brasil, era de classe baixa. Por isso precisei trabalhar na universidade porque o meu pai não podia pagar minha universidade [...] E, mas o meu pai sempre me incentivou. Me incentivou muito e demonstrava que: “Ai, é difícil, mas você vai conseguir, é importante, a sua vida vai melhorar”, e ele me ajudava financeiramente quando ele podia também, muito, e eu voltava pra casa todos os dias de madrugada porque era longe, né, a universidade, chegava a uma hora de manhã em casa, de ônibus. Meu pai, até a parada de ônibus me buscava, estava me esperando todos os dias, durante quatro anos ele fez isso.*

(I think that what I have achieved is thanks to my parents' support. It surely was thanks to their support. Because actually, my family isn't, when I was a child, my family wasn't middle class in Brazil, we were low class. So I had to work during university for my father couldn't pay for my fees [...] And, but my father always supported me. He supported me a lot and he showed that “Oh, it's hard, but you can do it, this is important, your life will improve”, and he also helped financially when he could, a lot, and I would come home late at night because it was far, you know, the university, I'd get home at one in the morning, by bus. My father, he'd come to the bus stop, he waited for me every day, he did this for four years.)

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Participants who were not part of the upper segment of their home society were strongly motivated to acquire as much human capital as possible and hopefully be employed accordingly. While parents from a low-income background were not always able to finance their children's higher education, they still attributed great value to formal education in order to be able to afford a secure, comfortable lifestyle. Studying in Japan was seen as one crucial factor to realize these hopes. Another aspect that could lead to increased studying and working was the perceived discrimination in daily life and at work. The assumption that as a foreigner one had to achieve considerably more than a member of the leading society, in short work twice as much as a native, can push migrants to double their efforts in order to be accepted and respected by the leading society (Ogbu and Simons 1998: 172). In a primarily school context, Ogbu called this dualism a “cultural-ecological theory” (Ogbu and Simons 1998: 158). While Ogbu focused on the school context, I find his theory can be applied to a more generic setting for

it involves what Ogbu called the “system”, i.e. the way minorities are seen and treated by the outside, as well as “community forces”, i.e. the way minorities act and react in a given setting. It considered both the environment minorities live in (“ecology”) as well as the way they perceive this world (“culture”) (Ogbu and Simons 1998: 158). In fact, Ogbu made clear that, while having educational value, his is not a theory of pedagogy (Ogbu and Simons 1998: 183).

As we have seen, human capital is expected to translate into more attractive and better remunerated employment. Academic titles and achievements raise the individual’s as well as his family’s social prestige. Latin American societies are still characterized by strong social division and class consciousness; also, social and economic recognition are often linked to the individual’s capacity (Allen 2002: 32; Del Castillo 1999: 260; Yamawaki 2003; Sansone 2000: 153, 157). They create social prestige in the eyes of other family members, friends and acquaintances and thus connect ambitions inside a family with social appreciation within the community. Similarly, working or studying abroad is viewed as something prestigious by many people in Latin America (Del Castillo 1999: 143, 44). The tendency to accumulate human capital out of social rather than economic reasons was prevalent among participants whose parents and, in some cases, grandparents had completed secondary or even tertiary education themselves. Participants from a middle-class or higher-middle class background tended to see education as a way of increasing social prestige. Underscoring their parent’s academic achievements was seen as embarrassing and therefore out of the question.

Children were expected to achieve as least much academically speaking while the financial part was a given and nothing one had to worry about. Accordingly, participants who had grown up in highly educated families reported less direct incentives from their parents. Studying and doing well in school was a given rather than an option.

*Sempre prioridade nos estudos. Tanto que eles nem, eles nunca deixaram passar pela cabeça de ninguém de parar de estudar pra trabalhar ou coisa assim. Podia trabalhar se quisesse. Mas tinha que ser junto com a escola, né, estudar e trabalhar, assim.*

(Studies were always the priority. To the degree that they, they never let anybody think of quitting his studies to get a job or stuff like that. We could work if we wanted to. But it had to be together with school, you know, study and work, like this.)

*Meu pai é orgulhoso. Ele fala: “Minha filha vai fazer o doutorado dela no Japão”. Mas a minha mãe, minha irmã, a família inteira da minha mãe - totalmente contra.*

*–Porque eles não gostam ou porque não entendem?*

*– Eu acho as duas coisas. Primeiro porque ninguém da minha família tem estudos.*

*Minha mãe é a primeira filha a ter graduação, ter faculdade. Meu avô é analfabeto. “A Jú tá estudando até agora, mas quando vai começar a trabalhar??” (laughs).*

(My father is proud. He says:” My daughter is getting her Ph.D. in Japan”. But my mother, my sister, my mother’s whole family - totally against (me studying in Japan).

–Because they don’t like the idea or because they don’t know better?

–Both, I think. First of all because no one of my family has any studies. My mother is the first daughter to hold a degree. My grandfather is illiterate. ‘Jú is still studying, when on earth is she going to work??’ (laughs).

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*Sí, claro, mi familia, mi papá es ingeniero [...] mi abuelo fue ingeniero, mi bisabuelo fue ingeniero y todos los tíos por parte de mi papá por la mayoría son ingenieros. Por lado de mi mamá, eh, son mas humanistas y [...] digamos que en mi casa siempre fue como un dado que, que uno tenía que ir a la universidad.*

(Yeah, sure, my familiy, my Dad’s an engineer [...] my grandfather, my great-grandfather, and all the uncles from my father’s side, most of them are engineers. From my mother’s side, eh, there are more humanists and [...] let’s say that at home it was like a given that one had to go to university.)

12

*Era importante sim. A pesar, os meus pais são separados. Mas os dois se formaram na universidade e desde criança a gente tinha, os dois são engenheiros, né.*

(It was important, yes. Despite my parents being separated. But both of them graduated from university and since we were little we had to, both of them are engineers, you know.)

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*Sim, sim. Muito importante. Isso vem principalmente do meu avô. O pai da minha mãe [...] Minha mãe é médica e ela sempre deu ênfase. Tem que, tem que estudar. Sempre foi muito importante [...] Lá em casa, a minha mãe sempre foi muito liberal e foi muito, como é que se fala, muito crua. Quando eu era pequeno o meu pai sempre fazia, falava assim: “Se passar de ano vai ganhar um presente, alguma coisa”. A minha mãe nao fazia isso. Ela fazia: “Se tú não passar, o problema é teu” (laughs). Então, estudo.*

(Yes, yes. Very important. That come mainly from my grandfather. My mother’s father [...] My mother is a doctor and she always gave much importance. You need to, you need to study. That was always very important [...] My mother was always very liberal at home and very, how you say, very crude. When I was little, my dad always did, he’d talk like this: “If you’re promoted to the next year you’re gonna get a present or something”.

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My mom wouldn't do this. She'd be like: "If you don't get promoted, that's your problem" (laughs). So I study.)

18

*Eu acho que os meus pais sempre falavam pra mim, eu tenho um irmão mais velho. E sempre, na escola, eles nunca foram de cobrar tanto da gente, sabe, deixa ver o boletim, as notas, então nunca foram de cobrar tanto, sempre, acho que deixaram claro pra gente que a única responsabilidade que eu e o meu irmão, que a gente tinha era de estudar realmente, então foi: "Vocês se cuidem aí, a única coisa que têm de fazer e estudar direito", né.*

(I think my parents always told me, I have an older brother. And in school they never expected much from us, you know, let me see your grades, they never expected much, always, I think they made it clear that our, me and my brother's, only responsibility was to study really, so it was like: "You watch out there, the only thing you have to do is to study", you see.)

2

*Eles só falaram que a minha obrigação era estudar. Eu tinha que estudar. Tinha, eh (laughs), não tinha outra opção. Eles não me davam outra opção. Mesmo que estivesse desmotivado, eh, tipo, eu nunca, nem, eu nunca tive essa opção de: "Ah, vou parar". Impossível (laughs).*

(They'd just say that it was my obligation to study. I had to study. Had to, eh (laughs), no other option. They wouldn't give me another option. Even if I was not motivated, ahem, like, I never, not even, I never had this option: "Ah, I'm gonna quit". Impossible (laughs).)

10

*No sé si había motivación directa en el sentido de, claro, sí, después me regañaban en el bachillerato si no estudiaba o no sé qué pero creo que también es más en el sentido de que todo lo que me rodeaba, mi familia pues, eh, era como un estímulo positivo hacia el estudio, o sea crecí en una casa donde hay una biblioteca, donde todo el mundo lee [...] donde todos los tíos tienen algo que ver o bien con las ciencias o bien con las humanidades, los abuelos de uno también, todo eso, todo eso, no sé, como todo el ambiente que le rodea a uno que le motiva a uno a eventualmente a, a ser así. Pero la motivación directa [...] digamos, yo no me recuerdo ningún discurso de mi papá diciéndome: "Es importante estudiar para la vida y para el futuro, este, cultivarse", no recuerdo ningún discurso así pero seguramente el ambiente sí.*

(I don't know if there was any direct motivation in the sense of, sure, in high school they would tell me off if I didn't study, or things like that, but I think it's more in the sense that everything that surrounded me, I mean my family, eh, it was like a positive stimulus toward studying, I mean I grew up in a home where there is a library, where everybody reads [...] where all the uncles have a connection either with sciences or with humanities, my grandparents also, all that, all that, I don't know, like the whole environment motivates you to gradually, to be like this. But direct motivation [...] let's say that I don't remember my dad telling me 'studying is important for life and for the future', I don't remember any speech like this, but certainly the environment, yes.)

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As I have pointed out earlier, however, we have to be careful when talking about social class for there are substantial differences between cultures (Ogbu 1995: 193). Sociology still recognizes two main criteria to distinguish different groups in a given society: biological and social inequalities. Biological inequalities are largely attributed to the individual, not acquired. Among them are characteristics such as gender, height, or skin color. They are – within certain limits – objective and objectively measurable, i.e. independent from the subjective thinking of an outside observer. Other characteristics such as personal or intellectual, on the other hand, are already more complicated to group for the human being is dependent on culture and his socialization conditioned mainly by environment, not biology. While a basis may exist, it needs to be developed and created, something unachievable without a social group where the individual belongs and where he acquires personal traits as moral or cultural values.

The second group of inequalities is social, meaning the uneven distribution of the chance to participate in society. This social participation includes social status, privileges and economic power (Thieme 2008: 186). What exactly constitutes social prestige and power, however, can vary greatly depending on the country in question. Modern societies tend to include knowledge, formal education and money, i.e. human and economic capital. In premodern societies, i.e. in many developing countries, these boundaries tend to be even more blurred. Owning land or cattle is strongly linked with power and thus social prestige (Thieme 2008: 187). This form of capital can make a person very wealthy and socially esteemed without him having actually completed superior education. Low education, on the other hand, does thus not necessarily mean low income and prestige (Yamawaki 2003 and Sansone 2000). More recent social studies have also been focusing on status inconsistencies, increasingly manifest in the age of *brain waste* and globalization (Bourdieu 2001: 291). A Ph.D. holder who has to work as a taxi driver, for instance, is a clear example of status inconsistency: he has a large amount of human capital, i.e. a high educational level, yet his occupation is not prestigious and neither is his income (Hradil 2008: 217). The crucial point is that



social inequalities are man-made, not created by nature or by the Gods (Bourdieu 1987, 2001). In the case of most Latin American countries, the colonizers and their offspring were – and still are – at the top of the social order (Bortoni-Ricardo 2005: 72; Del Castillo 1999: 140, 260; De Carvalho 2003: 47; Gracia 2000: 18; Sansone 2000: 152). The most cunning aspect here, I argue, is that they combine social with biological inequalities for being of Caucasian descent still constitutes a large advantage compared to the descendants of the native populations. However, this study does not focus on racial inequality in Latin America which is why I cannot follow this point much further. As I have pointed out before, intercultural competence as form of human capital is crucial to understand these different social realities and the behavioral patterns that emerge from them. Just as an individual being poorly educated could still mean wanting the children to have a more successful career through formal education the opposite was also possible. Wealthy and professionally successful parents did not always retain an education necessary in order to be successful for they saw themselves as a successful role model. The acquisition of economic, not human, capital was considered important in these cases. The equation human capital = economic success = social prestige does thus not apply for all cultural frames of reference.

*[...] Mi papá es un hombre de negocios que solo estudió la primaria. Él es, tiene negocios, él le da poca importancia a la educación porque él piensa que, que las universidades y las escuelas no sirven sino que en la calle se aprende. Porque eso es como él hizo y la mayoría de mis tíos, o sea la familia de mi papá son igual. Este, la familia de mi papá son personas que tienen mucho dinero, tienen hecho negocios muy buenos, y que ninguno ha ido a la escuela. Estudiaron hasta, su educación fue muy, tercera de primaria, quinta de primaria, alguno que estudió hasta la segunda nada más. Por parte de mi familia académicamente no exigen por esa, por esa razón.*

([...] My dad is a businessman who completed only elementary school. He is, he does business, he gives few importance to education for he thinks that, that universities and schools are no use and that one rather learns in the streets. Because that's how he did it and most of my uncles, like, in my dad's family they are all the same. Like, my dad's family are people with a lot of money, they did very good business, and nobody ever went to school. They studied until, their education was very, third grade fifth, one who just studied up to second grade. Academically speaking, my family doesn't demand because of, because of this.)

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Deficient public education in Latin America made the acquisition of human capital considerably harder. Nevertheless, the acquisition of human capital was regarded as fundamental and indispensable by all participants. The difference lay

in the perceived utility of human capital, or, put more simply, what purpose human capital could serve.

### **Working in Japan**

In the age of globalization borders have become increasingly blurred and workers aim at finding employment abroad for a variety of reasons (Keeley 2007: 13). The myth, partly created by fellow nationals, of wealth and a much more comfortable life actively encourages migration: people want to take part in their lifestyle and be part of consumer society. Unlike political or ideological migration, economic migration is motivated by the perceived improvement of an individual's life chances. Perceived, for reality in the receiving country does not always match this conception. Based on this perceived possibility of economic improvement, however, migration literature tends to depict economic migrants as particularly motivated and well-educated – as Chiswick (2008: 64) puts it, favorably self-selected. Chiswick argued further that favorably selected migrants are likely to adjust to life in the receiving society and have a positive impact on its economic and social spheres (Chiswick 2008: 65). Favorably selected in terms of education, motivation and knowledge is a synonym of skills. We have seen that the so-called hard skills play an increasingly important role in the globalized arenas of professional forthcoming. As I have pointed out above, however, the question of whether more human capital automatically has to translate into better employment and higher salaries remains open.

As I have related before, the concept of *dekasegi* originally entails working abroad for a certain period of time, then return (Handa 1980: 75; Tsuda 2003: 110).

Brazilian Japanese who migrate to Japan for work call themselves *dekasegui*, a lusonized version of the Japanese original *dekasegi* (Handa 1980: 75; Lesser 1999: 170; Linger 2001: 26). In Japan, as in other East-Asian countries, social order is based on, and still largely influenced by, Confucian teaching which spread from China over Korea to Japan in the 6th century. Mainly rooted in Confucian ideals and the conviction that human beings are teachable and can continuously improve through self-creation and commitment to learning education enjoys very high social prestige, (Beuchling 2003; Reid 1999: 143, 52).

Confucianism, however, is not a religion; Confucius himself was not a spiritual leader. Rather, he focused on ethical behavior and the meaning of human existence (Befu 2001: 130; De Vos and Wagatsuma 1995: 146; Reid 2008: 92). Among the central points of his teachings is education, yet characterized through a strong moral connotation: the individual must try constantly to dedicate himself to studying and to obeying the rules of society through committed learning. Confucian ideals reflect up until today in Japanese social and order and in moral values.

In Latin America, other factors can be as, or even more, important, for instance owning land or a successful business. Social prestige can thus be generated through tangible economic results, not merely through the acquisition of human capital. This difference in perception can lead to a bias which is partly responsible for the Japanese public often depicting Latin Americans in Japan as uneducated factory workers who have to work in positions shunned by the locals because of their scarce education. During the first years of migration, and especially during the bubble economy, this assumption was generally accurate as empirical studies have confirmed, especially in areas with a high concentration of both factories and foreign workers (Del Castillo 1999: 108; Linger 2001: 50; Tsuda 2003: 114).

According to different scholars, however, (Tsuda 2003: 16; 115) many Japanese are not aware of the fact that among the “unskilled foreign workers” there is a not insignificant number of highly-educated professionals. Latin Americans in Japan are generally perceived as 日系ブラジル人出稼ぎ労働者 (*nikkei burajirujin deka-segi rōdōsha*, Brazilian *deka-segi* workers of Japanese descent), even though not all Latin Americans living in Japan are of Japanese descent. For many Japanese today, as Tsuda critically remarks, the term *nikkeijin* brings to mind a poor, poorly educated peasant whose ancestors, were forced to leave Japan because they could not make a living there (Tsuda 2003: 28, 109).

More recently there has been an increase in variety including not only blue-collar workers but students, and employees in white-collar positions, both male and female. Also, the socio-economic situation in most Latin American countries made white-collar occupations unattractive because of extremely low wages (De Vos and Wagatsuma 1995; Linger 2001; Tsuda 2003). While the global economic crisis of 2008 did not spare Japan, working in a Japanese factory still provided a better source of income, translating into higher living standard, than most white-

collar positions in Latin America (De Vos and Wagatsuma 1995: 129; Ishi 2008: 119; Yamawaki 2003: 463). Del Castillo (1999: 185) remarks that only few Latin Americans in Japan have access to employment reflecting their educational skills, the main reason being deficient Japanese language ability paired with a lack of cultural knowledge. It is true that many Latin Americans in Japan work so-called “3-K jobs” (*kiken, kitsui, kitanai*: dangerous, exhausting, dirty), meaning unprestigious blue-collar jobs many are overqualified for (Castles and Miller 2009: 133; Del Castillo 1999: 260; Kawamura 2003: 408; Laumonier 1998: 195). Considering these circumstances, mastering Japanese is essential for both the feeling of being socially integrated and professional success. According to Esser (2003, 2006) the two are connected. I have argued before that it depends on how we define “professional success” and “good social position”. If it means a position according to one’s educational background I agree. A permanently underchallenged individual is not likely to feel like a valuable, integrated part of society. If it means a white-collar position in general and for everyone, however, I have my doubts for, as I have argued before, a person with scarce education is not likely to find such a position neither at home and much less in a foreign country. Accordingly, a “good social position” much depends on a person’s educational level: a person with very limited human capital is not likely to acquire a good social position in his own country which is of course one reason for migration. In the receiving country, however, the amount of human capital will not magically increase; on the contrary, the person will have to face the additional challenge of not mastering the local language. I do certainly not mean to be cynical. Nevertheless, the requisites necessary to acquire a “good social position” must be there and a receiving society cannot be held responsible if this is not the case. Also, status inconsistency has been increasing due to the global economic crisis.

*Siempre quería seguir en mi trabajo (marinero) pero allá en Odaiba se te ríen en la cara. Tendría que volver a dar todos los exámenes en japonés apesar de haberme graduado de la marina cubana. Yo trabajé en todos lados, en E.U., México, Europa, nunca he tenido problema pero aquí sí. Por suerte encontré el trabajo este, ellos confiaron en mí. Pero aquí uno siempre vive solo.*

(I always wanted to keep working in my profession (sailor) but in Odaiba they just laugh in your face. I would have to repeat all examinations in Japanese even though I graduated from Cuban marine. I’ve worked everywhere, in the US, Mexico, Europe, I never had problems but here, I do. Luckily I found this job (selling sunglasses), they trusted me. But over here you’re always alone.)

*Eu fiz os primeiros oito anos numa escola pública e escola privada. Depois eu fui para a escola técnica e depois eu fui para esse tipo de high school, preparatória, pra faculdade. Me formei em engenharia de computação que são cinco anos. Depois eu trabalhei por quase um ano como engenheiro e aí eu vim pra cá.*

(For the first eight years, I studied in a public and in a private school. After that, I went to a technical institute and then I went to this kind of high school that prepares you for uni. I graduating from the faculty of system engineering which is five years. After that I worked almost a year as an engineer and then I came here.)

18

*O que eu vejo é que os pais já não falam bem o português porque não tiveram a oportunidade de estudar. E os filhos também acabam não indo à escola direto. Aí não falam nem bem o japonês nem bem o português.*

(What I see is that the parents already don't speak good Portuguese because they didn't have a chance to study. And the children end up not really going to school either. In the end they can speak neither Japanese nor Portuguese.)

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*En Colombia estudié la licenciatura. Eso fue de cuatro anos. Cuatro y medio en realidad porque siempre había paros, retrasos en los semestres porque era una institución pública. Luego comencé a enseñar a adultos en el centro de lenguas de la universidad. Después enseñé tres años en Estados Unidos y luego un año acá.*

(In Colombia I studied for four-years. Four and a half, actually, because there were always strikes, delays in the semesters because it was a public institution. Then I started teaching adults in the language center of the university. Then I taught for three years in the United States and now one year here.)

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*Yo me formé en diseño gráfico que en realidad es una carrera universitaria pero no es una carrera seria, como, hm, senmongakkō. Una carrera técnica. Y después, más que nada experiencia [...] Aquí no hice ningún estudio [...] El tema digamos de que los latinos tengan trabajos más dignos sí me preocupa. Pero uno tiene que aprender japonés y todo eso, será porque es un idioma muy complicado. Cuando yo trabajaba en la fábrica claro uno trabajo como doce horas. El problema es que no hay muchas otras opciones para los latinos.*

(I studied graphic design which actually is, it's university but it's not a serious faculty like, hm, senmongakkō. A technical career. And then, mainly experience [...] Here, I didn't study anything [...] The topic of, let's say, that Latinos have more dignified jobs makes me worry. But one has to learn Japanese and all this, maybe because it is a very difficult language. When I was working in the factory, sure, you work like twelve hours. The problem is that there aren't many other options for Latinos.)

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*Eu fiz a escola primária numa escola pública, o ensino superior num colegio militar e universidade fiz no estado de Brasília [...] Logo o instituto de tecnologia de Nagoya. Arquitetura aqui no Japão é dentro da engenharia, né. No Brasil é separado.*

(I went to a public primary school, to a military high school and to university in Brasília [...] Then the technological institute in Nagoya. Architecture here in Japan is within the faculty of engineering, you know. In Brazil it's separated.)

15

The majority of my sample had completed tertiary education in their home countries and was employed accordingly in Japan. The same held true for participants who had lower levels of education. My sample does thus not confirm the assumption that workers from Latin America are generally uneducated and employed in the lowest positions. Del Castillo further notes that it is especially hard for highly educated individuals to adjust to the role of a factory worker (Del Castillo 1999: 260). I want to argue that the dreaded 'downward spiral' is a social phenomenon that does affect not only migrants; many highly qualified graduates are not able to find employment that reflects their professional training and their skills in their own country. Migrants, however, have to face the additional challenge that they might have the professional skills but lack the linguistic ones it takes to convey the further. I will discuss this aspect further in the following chapter.

Table 1: Participants' academic qualification and professional situation

Participant	Place of origin	Age	Sex	Years in Japan	Occupation	Education
1	Peru	32	m	8	Spanish teacher	Ph.D.
2	Brazil	28	m	9	Ph. D. student	M.A.
3	Peru	29	f	1	esthetician	Vocational

						school
4	Brazil	47	m	18	carpenter	High school
5	Colombia	28	f	7	sales assistant	High school
6	El Salvador	46	f	4	teacher	B.A.
7	Mexico	28	f	2	kindergarten teacher	B.A.
8	Brazil	29	m	5	architect	B.A.
9	Bolivia	55	f	24	housewife	incomplete
10	Argentina	36	m	17	physician	M.D.
11	Brazil	27	f	6	web designer	B.A.
12	Cuba	38	m	6	sales assistant	Naval academy
13	Brazil	32	m	5	Ph.D. student	M.A.
14	Argentina	38	m	3	Ph.D. student	M.A.
15	Venezuela	37	m	4	Ph.D. student	M.A.
16	Brazil	27	f	2	Ph.D. student	M.A.
17	Uruguay	38	m	12	graphic designer	Technical school
18	Mexico	26	m	1	waiter	High school
19	Colombia	28	f	1	teacher	B.A.
20	Brazil	26	m	3	student	B.A.
21	Brazil	52	f	2	housewife	B.A.
22	Brazil	17	m	2	high school student	Currently in high school
23	Brazil	15	m	2	high school student	Currently in high school
24	Chile	37	m	8	catering (own business)	Vocational school
25	Colombia	37	f	10	kitchen aid	High school
26	Argentina	36	f	9	waitress	High school
27	Brazil	39	f	11	journalist	B.A.

28	Mexico	33	m	4	waiter	incomplete
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Despite the Brazilians accounting for the largest group of Latin Americans in Japan there are considerable differences between the various countries, the first and most obvious difference of course being nationality (DeI Castillo 1999: 295; Ikegami 2003: 522). My sample reflects this very clearly. Doing field research in metropolitan Tokyo, I found a quite different setting and considerable variation in nationality, profession, and educational level. My participants did by far not all correspond to the image most Japanese have of the *dekasegi* or, as migrants from Latin America are often called, “*burajirujin*” (Brazilians), or “*nikkeijin*” regardless of their actual nationality. Most were indeed considered middle class in their countries of origin, meaning that they were not forced to come and work in Japanese factories due to unbearable economic hardship. Rather, the perceived discrepancy between life chances in their home countries, in opposition to Japan finally made them take the decision to leave and then carry it out, i.e. actually migrate.

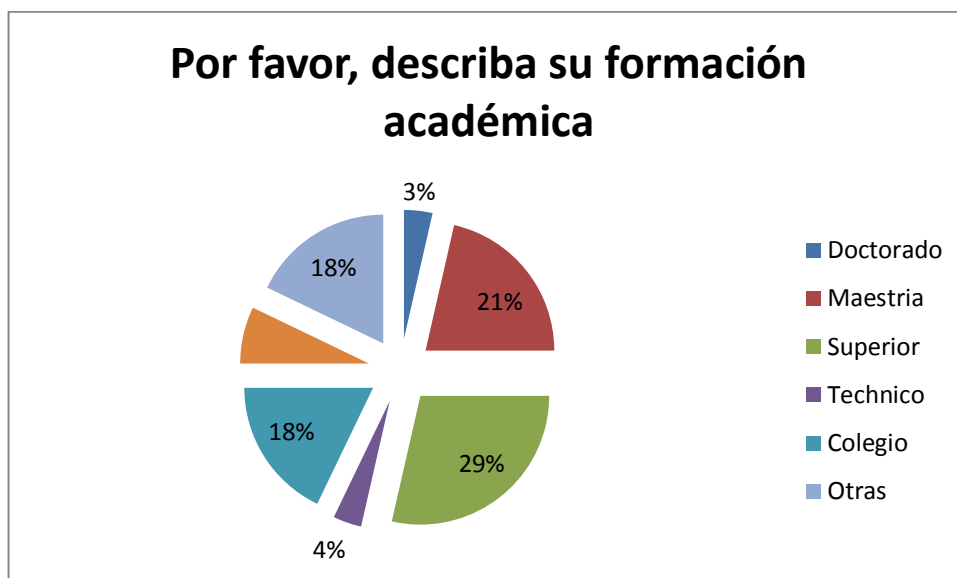


Figure 1: Educational level



S: *Pues aquí uno vive para trabajar. Una vida social es muy difícil de llevar [...] Porque el objetivo es trabajar.*

C: *Es hacer dinero.*

S: *[...] Y en la noche uno ya no está con ganas como para salir o tomarse un café con una amiga o un amigo, es como complicado, el cambio es tremendo, ¿sí? [...] (En Colombia) yo trabajaba, estudiaba y atendía a mi familia, había como ese espacio del campo social, ¿no? [...] Distribuía a forma el tiempo que pudiera, compartir con los demás, no. Pero había espacio para mi trabajo, mi estudio y mi familia. Aquí no se puede.*

C: *Para mí lo mas difícil es el estrés que se maneja. Yo manejo muchísimo estrés. Solamente venir ahora y todo el mundo corriendo [...] Y tanto así que me siento ya contagiada con eso. Siempre estoy corriendo. Entonces, no sé. Y cuando voy a Colombia veo como la gente en cámara lenta. Entonces, no sé, es raro.*

(S: Well, over here you live to work. It's very difficult to have a social life [...] Because the objective is to work.

C: It's to make money

S: [...] And at night you don't feel like going out or have a coffee with a friend, it's, like, complicated, the change is tremendous, you see? [...] (In Colombia) I used to work, to study, and to take care of my family, there was this social space, right? [...] I would divide my time so that I could, like, share it with others, you know. But there was room for my work, for my studies and my family. Here it's impossible.

C: For me, the most difficult aspect is stress. I am so stressed. Just getting here now, and everybody's running [...] To a degree that I feel contagious. I'm always running. So I don't know. And when I go to Colombia I see people, like in slow motion. So I don't know, it's strange.)

5 and 25

*Eu gosto do Brasil, mas pra trabalhar eu acho que o Japão, eh, oferece mais oportunidades do que o Brasil [...] Eu posso dizer que a principal motivação de estar no Japão é o trabalho e o crescimento que este trabalho me oferece. Eu acho que o ambiente de trabalho no Japão, principalmente quando você está no início de carreira, eles querem te criar. Então eles te educam pra que você se torne um profissional. Eles te ensinam e [...] quem é mais experiente, não importa se é um ou dois anos experiente, protege aquele que é mais novo e ensina a esse que é mais novo. Então nesse sentido acho que o Japão te oferece uma educação. Dentro do ambiente de trabalho. No Brasil há mais competição.*

(I like Brazil, but for work I think that Japan, eh, offers better opportunities than Brazil [...] I think that the working environment in Japan, especially when you start your career, they want to form you. So they, they educate you so that you become a professional. They teach you and [...] who has more experience, it doesn't matter if only one or two years more, protects the newcomer and teaches him. So in this sense I think that Japan offers you an education. Inside the working environment. In Brazil, there is more competition.)

11

*Aquí la gente es muy, es mucho más organizada. Es muy organizada y creo que en lo que tiene que ver con el trabajo y eso son muy, muy dedicados. En Uruguay eso es algo que, que no es muy común, la gente quiere ir a trabajar y quiere salir enseguida, dejar de trabajar y no sé, ir a pasear o ir a beber o lo que sea, no [...] Entonces a mí un poco, como que no me adaptaba mucho, cuando tenía que trabajar con los uruguayos y ellos eran muy lentos o muy despreocupados. Eso creo que es una diferencia muy grande [...]*

*Bueno, yo tengo una profesión. Soy diseñador gráfico y, por ejemplo, lo que más me ha hecho quedarme aquí en Japón es por mi trabajo. Creo que, que mi profesión aquí en Japón es, sería así una de las mecas así del, en el mundo. Lo que tiene que ver con diseño, con ese tipo de cosas. Creo que eso lo que más, sí, digamos que me, no sé, me atrae, que más, creo que el trabajo que hago es lo que más me hace quedarme aquí. Si estuviera haciendo un trabajo diferente que no me gustara probablemente no me quedaría mucho.*

(People here are very are much more organized. Very organized, and I think that, when it comes to work, they are very, very dedicated. In Uruguay this is not very common, people want to go to work and leave again at once, quit working and, I don't know, go for a walk or for a drink or whatever, you see [...] So for me it's a bit, like I, like I didn't adapt much, when I had to work with Uruguayans and they were very slow or very careless. I think that's a big difference [...] Well, I have a profession. I'm a graphic designer and, for example, what is keeping me here in Japan the most is my job. I think that, that my profession here in Japan, it's, like the world-wide mecca (of graphic design). Everything that has to do with design, with this kind of things. I think this is what, let's say that, I don't know, it attracts me the most. If I was working in something that I don't like I probably wouldn't stay long.)

17

*Bueno, yo quise salir de mis país pues allá cada día era igual, siempre seguía en lo mismo, sin posibilidades de avanzar ni en el trabajo ni en nada. Así que cuando la mandaron aquí a mi hermana yo agarro y me voy con ella.*

(Well, I wanted to get out of my country because every day was the same, I was always doing the same things, no chance to get ahead neither at work nor elsewhere. So when my sister was sent here I packed my stuff and went with her.)

3

*Nosotros, los inmigrantes, no tenemos choice. Yo hago lo que sea, aunque fuera recoger basura.*

(We, the immigrants, we don't have a choice. I'll do whatever, even if it's picking up garbage.)

12

## **Abstract Findings**

Studies on migrants in different countries (for instance Beuchling 2003; De Carvalho 2001; Del Castillo 2003; Ogbu 1995) have shown that migrants who have completed at least secondary education have better chances to be employed and feel generally more integrated into the receiving country's society. The last point, I want to argue does not have to be related necessarily and exclusively to human capital: one can lead a content life, both at home or abroad, despite not

being highly educated. The level of education did not play a significant role in my participants' feeling of being socially integrated. Participants working rather unprestigious jobs actively took part in society, had contact with people from different ethnic backgrounds and felt socially integrated.

Of course the acquisition of human capital through formal education plays an important role in an individual's socialization processes regardless of his actual educational situation. However, social realities in different countries can create a bias between this consciousness and the possibility to act upon it and actually acquire human capital through formal education.

Second language acquisition distinguishes between integrative and instrumental motivation (Gardner). My interviews have shown that integrative motivation was a relevant factor for my participants feeling socially integrated. Integrative motivation largely means that the learner is motivated to learn the language in question out of an interest in the target culture and its people; this attitude is often combined with the desire to become an accepted member of the target group.

Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, means that the learner's motivation is mainly utilitarian and consists in a concrete benefit, for instance increased chances on the labor market, or being able to enter a prestigious university.

The interviews show that improved Japanese proficiency can lead to a feeling of social integration through promoting social interaction, not only verbally but also culturally. Accepting cultural differences and the desire to be, to different degrees, part of Japanese society promotes integrative motivation. And this is the third factor: the individual's attitude toward Japan and the Japanese culture.

As I have argued before, migrants move to other countries in order to improve their life chances based on the comparison with the structural and social chances offered in their home countries. Likewise, the perceived current living circumstances both in the home and the receiving country influence academic ambitions. I argue further that human capital carries a different connotation depending on the cultural frame of reference the individual was brought up in. I have argued that social class can have an impact on motivation. People of the lower-income scale tend to exert more direct, or external, motivation toward their children. This includes explicitly demanding that they study, negotiating small rewards for completed homework or, on the other hand, sanctions and reproaches when this was not the case. People from upper- or middle-class families tend to

have a more liberal approach, at least apparently, mostly conditioned by an intellectually stimulating environment. Also, comments and references to one's parents' academic achievements tend to act as further motivation. Under these circumstances, human capital serves as a guarantor of stability.

Despite of long working hours and the risk of being overqualified for the current position, stable employment and an according revenue translated into a stable, widely secure, life. In other words, one can accept a position abroad he is overqualified for but that provides stable income when this translates into a more favorable position compared to one's home country. However, this does not mean that the person in question must feel socially integrated in the receiving society.

In short, we can say that:

- a) The feeling of social integration is not exclusively dependent on the academic level, i.e. the amount of human capital
- b) Depending on social stratum, human capital can be regarded as either a tool for social prestige or for economic forthcoming
- c) Social reality and cultural frame influences the acquisition of human capital consciousness of its importance does not equal acting upon it

People whose current position does not reflect their academic level lack one common denominator: Japanese language proficiency. In the following chapter I am going to investigate language proficiency as a fundamental skill and part of the three capitals and try to show how it can influence social and professional integration.

## VI Cultural Capital: Language Acquisition

*[...] a língua acho que é a principal barreira. Eu acho [...] os estrangeiros não falarem japonês contra os japoneses não entenderem outra língua. Quando o japonês fala inglês, relativamente bem, já muda completamente, eh, já consegue se aproximar muito mais fácil. Eu acho que o que da essa distância assim acho que é mais a língua.*

[...] I think language is the main barrier. I think [...] the fact that foreigners don't speak Japanese and the Japanese don't understand other languages. When a Japanese person speaks reasonably good English it's a totally different story, you see, it's much easier to make contact. I think that what creates this distance is mostly language.)

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Globalization and worldwide migration flows result in linguistic and cultural challenge for both sending and receiving countries (Spring 2009: 177). Whenever individuals or entire households leave their homes and migrate they take with them a set of cultural and linguistic assets and values which will set them apart from the receiving society (Fenton 1999: 30). In the previous chapter, I have focused on human capital in the form of formal education and professional achievement. I have argued that human capital does not necessarily lead to social integration and that a person in a blue-collar position can feel socially integrated. In this chapter I want to focus on the importance of language proficiency for social integration.

Language can fall into the group of vertically counted capital, or as important for social placement and the acquisition of vertically judged resources – as cultural capital. So language is part of cultural variety on the one hand, a vertically judged resource on the other. According to Esser (2006) these factors are strongly interconnected and determine whether or not migrants become an active part of the receiving society. The social position they finally achieve is proportional to the extent to which they have managed to acquire crucial skills, the most important being language and education. Language, Esser (2006: argued further, is the first and most decisive step toward social integration. From there, the individual can gradually ascend the social ladder, create social bonds and increase contact with the locals. In line with this claim, anthropologist John Ogbu has argued that the analysis of a minority's language situation extends to other areas and reflects more general challenges (Ogbu 1995b: 279). OECD emphasizes its importance for successful education and subsequent employment (in Keeley 2007: 62) while scholars from various disciplines have pointed out the importance of

speaking the local language as a key to both professional success and social integration (for example Beuchling 2003, 2010; Del Castillo 1999; Esser 2006; Michalowski and Sneer 2005; Ogbu 1995b; Tsuda 2003).

I have grouped language and cultural skills as a part of cultural capital, as I am now going to elaborate.

### **Culture and cultural capital**

Bourdieu defines culture as a unifying force with the state as executive agent. The state unifies all rules, such as law, language and official measurements. The state conditions its citizens' mental structures through the educational system, autocratic procedures and social rituals, the latter being especially pronounced in England and Japan (Bourdieu 1985: 106). Culture can be defined as the sum of behavioral patterns, thoughts and language among a group of people. It ranges from everyday common sense such as eating or clothing habits over personal and professional relationships to ideas and ways of explaining one's surroundings. For the individual it acquires the meaning of social order which enables people to communicate and function within given parameters. Cultural understanding creates a framework in which certain behavioral patterns are acceptable or even welcome, while others are sanctioned (Bourgois 1993: 176; Del Castillo 1999: 142; Ekstrand 1997: 349; Hidasi 2005: 160; Kreitz-Sandberg 2003: 156; Ogbu 1995: 195; Ogbu 1995a: 271; Rocha Nogueira 1984: 151). Anthropology reverses the concept and argues that

*[...] la cultura comienza cuando termina la naturaleza. La naturaleza no impone reglas, sino actúa espontáneamente; la cultura, por el contrario, impone reglas sobre lo que no es necesario, sobre lo que puede ser de otra manera: la cultura es la irrupción de lo arbitrario en la naturaleza.*

[...]culture begins where nature ends. Nature does not impose rules but acts spontaneously; culture, on the other hand, imposes rules where it is not necessary, on what could be in a different form: culture is the irruption of the arbitrary in nature]. Varela 2005: 76.

Anthropology approaches further emphasize the concept of cultural relativism, meaning that every culture is embedded in a context and follows an internal logic.

Rather than being a fixed parameter, culture can, and does undergo changes, especially when individuals or entire groups are exposed to different influences over an extended period of time (Bourgois 1995: 15; Fenton 1999: 8).

Understanding these mechanisms is especially important for this study because a salient point is the importance I attribute to social reality, another construct largely based on context (Reed 1993: 29, 30).

There is a connection between culture and language when the latter becomes an expression of the further:

*Cada ser humano é fruto de uma cultura. Nos contatos humanos entre elementos pertencentes a grupos culturais diversos pode-se observar diferentes processos de interação social [...]*

[All human beings are the product of culture. We can observe different processes of social interaction in contact between members of different cultural groups [...]]  
Rocha Nogueira 1984: 151.

Gardner has pointed out that language is always linked to a particular culture, in case of one's first language to one's own. Learning a foreign language involves opening up to new elements, to change. A child acquires not only his mother tongue(s) but also the culture(s) that go(es) with it or with them. A good translator cannot merely translate words from one language into another. Ideally he will be familiar with both cultural frames these languages are embedded in. Poems, for instance, translated by somebody who does speak the target language but is not familiar with the respective culture sound strange, wrong even, despite being syntactically and grammatically correct. Language stretches over different nations, ethnic groups, and cultural frames. English, for instance, is spoken in a variety of countries all over the world; ethnic and cultural peculiarities, however, persist, for example, among US-Americans of different ethnic backgrounds (Fenton 1999: 9). Similarly, Spanish and Portuguese are spoken both in Europe and Latin America, but not only do the European varieties differ in vocabulary, intonation and grammar from their European counterparts. In the Latin American varieties, terms of Indian and African origin are a matter of course, while most European speakers of Spanish or Portuguese are not familiar with them. Within the Latin American varieties, there are considerable differences between the various countries. In the Japanese context, empirical studies have emphasized the importance of language proficiency for social contacts, and ultimately integration, and have blamed

deficient proficiency in Japanese on lacking social contact between Latin American migrants and the Japanese (Ikegami 2003: 525; Tajima 2003). Cultural concepts are expressed through language, just as certain expressions reveal these concepts. As Hidasi (2005: 79) pointed out, it is the intent, not the literal meaning that must be translated. For exactly this reason, this study sees language as cultural, not human, capital. I will elaborate this point in the following section.

### **Cultural Capital and Socialization**

As I have pointed out in the previous chapter language can be part of both human and cultural capital. The term cultural capital was made famous by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. It is largely defined by the result of upbringing in a particular social environment and according education. It can share common ground with economic capital for objects of cultural value such as paintings or technical instruments also possess an economic value and economic capital is necessary to acquire them (Bourdieu 1987, 1993, 1998; Schwingel 1995: 88). Cultural capital, however, most often assumes, and is understood as, the shape of knowledge and cultural abilities the individual acquires not primarily through formal education but through socialization. Accumulating cultural capital is more complicated than accumulating economic capital for the further is not transferable from one person to another, the individual cannot rely on others to pass it on to carry out the acquisition for them. The price is time: the process of learning about culture, being socialized and acquire cultural capital is time-consuming, an individual willing to learn must personally invest this time (Schwingel 1995: 89). Differently from human capital, which means largely the acquisition of knowledge and skills through formal education, cultural capital is primarily influenced by education and socialization by family and the social environment (Bourdieu 1987: 145; Schwingel 1995: 90). The following excerpts want to illustrate how my participants acquired cultural capital inside the informal context of family life.

*Eu lembro quando era pequenino [...] eu fui no nihongakkō no Brasil [...] Daí, desse tempo aprendi já o hiragana, katakana, já sabia fazer. Mas dentro da minha casa, entre os pais e a gente, nunca se falava japonês, sempre e só português. Claro que sempre*



*tinha uma ou outra palavra, dentro da casa, que falava em nihongo, „gohan”, “benjo”, “oyasuminasai”, “itadakimasu” toka - essas palavras se usavam.*

(I remember when I was little [...] I went to nihongakkō in Brazil [...] From there, during this time I already learned hiragana, katakana, I could do this. But at home, between my parents and us, we never spoke Japanese, always and only Portuguese. Of course there were some words at home, that we'd say in Japanese, “gohan”, “benjo” “oyasuminasai”, “itadakimasu” toka - we'd use these words.)

2

*La diferencia cultural no me afectó tanto porque ya conocía Japón. En casa la vida era medio japonesa también [...] La comida, cosas así [...] no y bueno, porque mi madre siempre hablaba en japonés[...] entonces en casa todos adoptamos la costumbre de quitarnos los zapatos dentro de la casa y comíamos mucha comida japonesa, no sé, cosas así. En este sentido, ¿no? No nos ha sido nunca algo ajeno [...] Mis padres siempre me decían, como que era normal que, lo lógico es que seamos bilingües. Pero yo veía que no, obviamente o sea te comparabas con un japonés normal digamos, o sea me había criado en el Perú, no podía, y me daba rabia a mí mismo. Yo creo que la gente entiende o sea, lo que me dicen continuamente es: “Ah, nihongo jōzu, nihongo jōzu desu”<sup>17</sup>, ¿cómo haces para hablar tan bien japonés?”. Pero es curioso porque me lo llevan diciendo toda la vida y obviamente mi nivel de japonés ha cambiado. O sea que, o antes mentían, pero no sé. Imagino que a la gente de alguna manera le, le parece que tengo suficiente nivel de japonés para no haberme criado en Japón, sabes.*

(The cultural difference didn't affect me much because I already knew Japan. Life at home was also kind of Japanese [...] Food, things like that [...] ah, well, and because my mother always used to speak in Japanese [...] so at home we all adopted the custom of taking off one's shoes inside the house and we used to eat much Japanese food, I don't know, things like that. In this sense, you know? It was nothing foreign to us [...] My parents always used to say, like it was normal that, it's only logical that we're bilingual. But I saw that no, obviously, when you compared yourself to a normal Japanese, let's say, I mean, I grew up in Peru, I couldn't, and I was angry at myself. I think that people understand, like, they constantly tell me: “Ah, nihongo jozu, nihongo jozu desu, how can you speak such good Japanese?” But it's strange because they have been telling me all my life and obviously my level of Japanese has changed. So they either used to lie, but, I don't know. I imagine that for the people, they think that my level of Japanese is sufficient for not having grown up in Japan, you know.)

1

*[...] todo lo que me rodeaba...mi familia pues, eh, era como un estímulo positivo hacia el estudio, o sea crecí en una casa donde hay una biblioteca, donde todo el mundo lee, donde todo el mundo hace cosas así, donde todos los tíos tienen algo que ver o bien con las ciencias o bien con las humanidades, los abuelos de uno también, todo eso, todo eso, no sé, como todo el ambiente que le rodea a uno que le motiva a uno a, eventualmente a, a ser así.*

([...] the whole surroundings, my family, eh, it was like a positive stimulus toward studying, like, I grew up in a household with a library, where everybody reads, where everyone does things like this, where all my uncles have something to do with science or

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<sup>17</sup> „Your Japanese is good“

with the humanities, my grandparents too, all this, all this, I don't know, like your whole surroundings motivate you to, at some point to, to be like this.)

15

*Minha mãe sempre me obrigava a falar japonês dentro de casa. Se a gente não falasse japonês minha mãe dava castigo (laughs) [...] A gente não podia falar português.*

*–E como foi que você aprendeu português então?*

*–Na escola. Fora de casa a gente falava português. Com os amigos. E na escola também porque eu sempre estudei em escola brasileira. Dentro de casa só se podia falar japonês [...] Eu tinha poucos amigos quando era pequena porque eu não falava português [...] Hoje eu falo os dois.*

*–[...] Como que você fez para aprender a escrever japonês?*

*–Em casa. Tudo em casa (laughs). Os kanjis principais, básicos, né, a gente aprendeu em casa, aí tem os mangas. Minha mãe assinava manga e fazia a gente ler aquilo. Livro, manga, revista, video também [...] A gente assistia a programmas brasileiros e japoneses ao mesmo tempo. A gente, a gente se acostumou a ter, a ter estes dois idiomas ao mesmo tempo em casa.*

(My mother always forced me to speak Japanese inside the house. If we didn't speak Japanese my mother would punish us (laughs) [...] We weren't allowed to speak Portuguese.

–So how did you learn Portuguese?

–At school. Outside the house we's speak Portuguese. With our friends. And also at school because I always went to Brazilian schools. At home we were only allowed to speak Japanese [...] I had few friends when I was little because I couldn't speak Portuguese [...] Today I can speak both.

–[...] How did you manage to write in Japanese?

–At home. Everything at home (laughs). The first kanji, the basics, you know, we learned them at home, we had manga. My mother handed out manga and made us read. Books, manga, magazines, videos, too [...] We'd watch both Brazilian and Japanese TV programs at the same time. We, we got used to, to having these two languages at home.)

11

Since it is up to the individual to acquire cultural capital it becomes part of a person, part of the *habitus*. Bourdieu defines the *habitus*, quite poetically and borrowing from linguistics, as the generative grammar of action (Bourdieu 1974: 150). He further describes the *habitus* as a habitual, unconscious way, acquired through socialization in a particular social environment, manifest in the small, insignificant actions of daily life, and not determined by biological factors such as height or skin color:

*[...] les choix de l'habitus [...] sont accomplis, sans conscience ni contrainte, en vertu de dispositions qui, bien qu'elles soient indiscutablement le produit des déterminismes sociaux, se sont aussi constituées au dehors de la conscience et de la contrainte [...] Tout permet de supposer que les instructions les plus déterminantes pour la construction de l'habitus se transmettent [...] au travers des suggestions qui sont inscrites dans les*

*aspects les plus insignifiants en apparence des choses, des situations ou des pratiques de l'existence ordinaire [...]*  
Bourdieu 1984: 29, 1991: 79).

It produces collectivist behavior of social actors and determines class-specific structures, preferences, manners, and taste. At the same time, *habitus* is determined by the socio-economic structures of the very class it influences (Bourdieu 1984: 75, 1993: 101; Schwingel 1995: 63). *Habitus* is thus acquired through and conditioned by a certain social environment, a dualism that Bourdieu denominates structuring and structured (Bourdieu 1984: 134, 1987: 281, 1991: 203; Barlösius 2011: 48; Klein 2008: 250; Liebsch 2008: 76). Searle calls background what Bourdieu calls *habitus*. He defines background as a set of non-intentional or pre-intentional capacities that enable intentional states of function. The meaning of any sentence radically underdetermines its truth conditions because the literal meaning of the sentence only fixes a set of truth conditions given certain background capacities (Searle 1995: 129, 32).

I argue that *habitus* and cultural capital tend to go hand in hand: for example, a person who was raised and socialized in a higher class environment often disposes of a large amount of cultural capital. To Bourdieu (1987: 145), social reproduction is the imposition of “symbolic violence” by the dominant class on the dominated class. The values of the dominant class are legitimated as the “objective” culture and values of the society through educational institutions. In other words, through pedagogic action, the culture and values of the dominant class are “misrecognized” as the culture and values of the entire society. The result, according to Lin (2001: 15) is an internalized, permanent training, or the creation of *habitus*. The acquisition and misrecognition of the dominant culture and its values is called cultural capital.

Similarly, Bourdieu argued that education, or indeed any capital that can be taken as human capital by some, can in fact be seen as cultural capital by others. The different viewpoints are more than different perceptions of the same empirical phenomenon (e.g. education); they represent a fundamental divide in theoretical explanations. Bourdieu’s symbolic violence and social reproduction are consistent with Marx’s theoretical stance. Unlike Marx, however, Bourdieu leaves open the possibility of social ascent (Lin 2001: 17). According to Bourdieu, this is due to his individual and structural advantages for the ruling class tends to “make the

rules” and impose them on members of lower classes. In a Latin American context, Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, whom I have mentioned in the previous chapter, not only fought for the education of indios but argued that children of lower social strata should not be reprimanded for using their vernacular, i.e. their “nonstandard” Portuguese, regarded as deficient by the ruling class (Bortoni-Ricardo 2005: 13). A person’s upbringing is thus likely to show in the *habitus*; it makes that the person in question is part of a certain social circle. This combination of cultural capital and *habitus*, in turn, enables the individual to maintain a certain standard of living and education, in an environment that requires a certain form of behavior, etiquette even. This *habitus* facilitates social transactions within one’s social environment. On the other hand, a person who lacks this internalized knowledge and behavioral codes is not likely to become a part of the same social group. His amount of cultural capital as well as his level of education might be dismissed as insufficient.

Cultural identity is shaped by actions carried out in daily life on a regular basis, without much conscious reflection. Quoting from Allen

*[...] worldview informs these routine practices*

while at the same time

*[...] worldview [...] is informed by this activity [...] Through routine activities, habitually carried out, a cultural identity takes shape [...]*

Allen (2002: 18)

Similarly, the connection between language and culture can be exemplified by routines. Routines are those elements of a language that are acquired first for they do not require an advanced level of language proficiency. Nevertheless they are crucial for communication, much more so in a foreign environment. Short utterances, they can save the not yet proficient migrant for they enable him to make the most basic transactions, in his own and in the receiving society (Bortoni-Ricardo 2005: 160; Lüger 1993: 7). Greetings or polite enquiries after the other’s well-being are common routines which can save the migrant’s face, make him look polite in the eyes of the locals (Rehbein and Fienemann 2004: 227; Yáñez Cossío 2007: 16), as well as convey him a feeling of empowerment in an otherwise still unfamiliar social setting. Routines also convey a certain respect for

the local culture because even though a migrant may not be very proficient in the language of the receiving country, knowing frequently-used routines are likely to provoke a benevolent reaction for they show that he is making an effort and that he disposes of knowledge on how the local structure of society works. It is thus about cultural competence rather than mere fluency and the technical aspects of a language. Knowledge of a common language is necessary for communication but not sufficient (Hidasi 2005: 162). Language cannot be examined separated from culture, much less if we consider it what Keeley refers to as an attitude, namely the attempt to understand another person's cultural background. In Tajima's (2003: 494) study on Brazilians in Japan participants uttered astonishment about fellow Brazilians who did not make any effort to learn Japanese and communicate with the locals:

*Fico impressionado com brasileiros que já encontrei, que sequer se interessam em aprender a língua local. Desta forma, como podem se socializar? Como podem entender o que é certo ou errado nos padrões locais?*

[I'm impressed with the Brazilians I've met here, who aren't even interested in learning the local language. How can they socialize like this? How can they understand what is right or wrong in the local customs?]

As the interview excerpt at the beginning of this chapter has summarized, the common denominator among my participants was the language barrier. Not speaking Japanese, or not enough Japanese, was the main reason for having few, or no, social contacts with Japanese.

Table 2: Participants' level of Japanese language proficiency

Participant	Place of origin	Age	Sex	Years in Japan	Occupation	Japanese language skills
1	Peru	32	m	8	Spanish teacher	advanced
2	Brazil	28	m	9	Ph. D.student	conversational

3	Peru	29	f	1	esthetician	basic
4	Brazil	47	m	18	Carpenter	advanced
5	Colombia	28	f	7	sales assistant	conversational
6	El Salvador	46	f	4	Teacher	basic
7	Mexico	28	f	2	kindergarten teacher	basic
8	Brazil	29	m	5	Architect	advanced
9	Bolivia	55	f	24	housewife	basic
10	Argentina	36	m	17	Physician	advanced
11	Brazil	27	f	6	web designer	advanced
12	Cuba	38	m	6	sales assistant	conversational
13	Brazil	32	m	5	Ph.D student	conversational
14	Argentina	38	m	3	Ph.D student	basic
15	Venezuela	37	m	4	Ph.D student	basic
16	Brazil	27	f	2	Ph.D student	basic
17	Uruguay	38	m	12	graphic designer	advanced
18	Mexico	26	m	1	Waiter	basic
19	Colombia	28	f	1	Teacher	basic
20	Brazil	26	m	3	Student	conversational
21	Brazil	52	f	2	housewife	basic
22	Brazil	17	m	2	high school student	basic
23	Brazil	15	m	2	high school student	basic
24	Chile	37	m	8	catering (own business)	conversational
25	Colombia	37	f	10	kitchen aid	basic
26	Argentina	36	f	9	Waitress	conversational
27	Brazil	39	f	11	Journalist	conversational

28	Mexico	33	m	4	Waiter	basic
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### **Language – More Than a Tool**

In the previous chapter we have seen the example of a person sending a message to someone in a foreign country. Language was named as the first requisite the person needs to successfully convey his message. However, language was also linked to attitude, i.e. the conscious attempt to understand the cultural differences and peculiarities of the person we want to contact (Clammer 1995: 105; Hidasi 2005: 79; Keeley 2007: 61). As I have argued above, a literal translation of the syntactic units of a phrase without capturing the encoded meaning is not enough. Based on this line of argumentation, I want to include language in the sphere of cultural, rather than human, capital, being well aware of the fact that it touches the areas of human and social capital as well. Someone who learns a foreign language for the sake of professional forthcoming, thus as a mere instrument or tool, will not necessarily be interested in understanding the cultural mechanisms behind the language in question. In this case, language is indeed more part of human than of cultural capital. Nevertheless, it is language in the concept of cultural capital that makes the individual understand the local culture and ultimately facilitates social integration. As I have pointed out above, Esser named language as the first and most crucial step toward a migrant's social integration into a new society. He argued that language acquisition is one of the fundamental mechanisms of social integration (Esser 2006: 53). While he includes language primarily in the sphere of human capital, I want to include it in this chapter as cultural capital. Tajima (2003: 507) pointed out that many Brazilian migrants in Japan did not make much of an effort to learn Japanese despite of living in Japan for many years. He linked this lack of language proficiency with a lack of interest in Japanese culture and social norms.

*[...] durante a universidade tinha muito estrangeiro que chega aqui no Japão, que não sabia nada de japonês. E porque tem muitos que não se esforçam mesmo pra aprender japonês, né. O que eu vejo aqui por exemplo é que muitos estrangeiros, por exemplo só vão em lugares onde estrangeiros vão. Eu acho bem mais limitado, né. E a maioria deles*

*que não falam japones, é muito mais fácil pra eles acabar não gostando do Japão. Vejo muito estudante, por exemplo, chega aqui, de intercâmbio de um ano, e que não aprende a falar japonês. Muitos deles acabam indo embora pro país não gostando do Japão. Acho que é muito fácil você começar a criticar, né, sem saber nada. Eu cada vez estou gostando mais do Japão, quando mais consigo interagir com as pessoas, rir com elas, eu tô gostando mais.*

([...] in university there were many foreigners coming to Japan who didn't know any Japanese. And because many don't even make an effort to learn, you see. What I am seeing here, for example, is that many foreigners, for example, they only frequent places where other foreigners go. I find this very limiting, you know. And most of them don't speak Japanese, it's much easier for them to not like Japan. I see many students, for example, they come here, for one year, but they don't learn to speak Japanese. Many of them end up going back home not liking Japan. I think it's much easier to start criticizing, you know, without knowing anything. I am liking Japan more and more, the more I can interact with the people, laugh with them, I'm liking it more.)

2

*[...] estudiaba, de chiquita estudiaba japonés, iba a un colegio japonés a la mañana y a la tarde iba a un colegio normal. Pero era como que, eramos chiquitos, no estudiabamos bien bien, ¿no? Estudias lo que es hiragana y katakana y los saludos y es lo único que me quedó pero vine acá y la verdad que me sirvió un montón porque me acordaba, el hiragana y el katakana me lo acordaba y pues así los carteles y así, te ayuda un montón. Hablar nunca porque mis abuelos fallecieron.*

([...] I studied, when I was little I studied Japanese, I went to a Japanese school in the morning and in the afternoon I went to a...regular school. But it was like...we were young, we didn't study...well, right? You learn...like...hiragana and katakana and...the greetings and that's all I remember, but I came here and actually it helped a lot because I remembered...hiragana and katakana, I remembered them and...like signs and stuff...it helped a lot. No speaking because my grandparents passed away.)

26

*Os estrangeiros, como a gente, têm de fazer o esforço mais grande. コミュニケーションを取ろうとしないとだめだよ。彼らも, como que se diz, ポルトガル語を覚えるわけねからさ。 Então, se eu não gostar do sistema japonês vou embora. O japonês, né, não é que seja mais frio, ele tem outra maneira de se expressar. Isso é tudo. Tem muito brasileiro que fala sempre: “Os japoneses são frios, nunca se abraçam, são chatos”, mais você antes de falar tem que conhecer. 日本人がいいか、悪いかと話す前に経験しないとだめだ。俺の日本のイメージが来る前に違ってたよ。だから来て良かったと思う。*

(Foreigners, like you and me, have to make the bigger effort. We must try to communicate. They also, how do you say, they're not supposed to learn Portuguese (for us), are they. So, if I don't like the Japanese system I go back. The Japanese, you see, it's not that they're colder, they have a different way of expressing themselves. That's all. There are many Brazilians who say all the time : » The Japanese are cold, they never hug each other, they're annoying », but you have to know before you can judge. Before you



say that the Japanese are good or bad you must experience them. My image of Japan has changed since I came here ! That's why I think it's good that I came.)

4

*Y el tema del idioma es algo que no se puede cambiar. La única solución al tema del idioma es aprender el idioma. Y, y, y digamos, o sea, si tienes el tiempo y de verdad quieres hacerlo aquí hay cantidad de oportunidades de aprender el idioma, ¿no? Claro, es un idioma complicadísimo, difícilísimo y, y todo esto es verdad. ¿No? Pero bueno.*

(And the language issue is something you cannot change. The only solution is to learn the language. And, and, and, let's say, like, if you have the time and you really want to do it, you have a lot of opportunities to learn the language, don't you? Sure, it's a very complicated language, very difficult, and, and that's true. Isn't it? But ok.)

15

Godenzzi (2005: 181) pointed out that

*estudios recientes revelan los múltiples beneficios del bilingüismo, sobre todo en los planos cognitivo, afectivo y sociocultural.*

[Recent studies have revealed the multiple benefits of bilingualism, especially in cognitive, affective and sociocultural areas].

Without this knowledge, on the other hand, the same wording can be interpreted very differently because of cultural filters (Hidasi 2005: 162; Rehbein and Fienemann 2004: 223). Successfully conveying a message to a foreign business partner, for instance, takes both language and technical skills. We have to be able to somehow communicate with the other person and need to know how to send the message. However, since this person belongs to a culture different from our own we will also need the sensitivity to understand the other's cultural peculiarities. If he does not, the message is likely to come across in an undesired way, if it is understood at all Keeley (2007: 61). This is because one has to know the culture-specific level that lies behind the semantic dimension (Hidasi 2005: 162). It is easy for the foreigner to misunderstand or even offend local sensibilities when he is not aware of cultural peculiarities, no matter how well-trained or educated he might be. In the age of globalization we are increasingly confronted with, and exposed to, contact with people from different cultural backgrounds. Globalized economy and information will not make cultural differences disappear

(Estermann 2006: 317). I argue that intercultural competence is far from being trivial or unnecessary if not misused or watered down for dubious political purposes. Worldwide migration is increasing, not least due to this very globalization. Cultural differences are accentuated and regularly culminate in more or less violent conflicts around the world.

French philosopher Michel Foucault treated the subject of language and culture and pointed out that the object of humanities is not language per se, but rather what happens inside a language for words carry different connotations depending on how individuals or groups perceive them (Foucault 1966: 458). *Kūki wo yomeru* (空気を読める), literally “being able to read from the air”, is a much praised character trait in Japan. Another concept is named *ishin denshin* (以心伝心), tacit understanding or telepathy (Kowner 2003: 137). According to these concepts, the Japanese would be able to communicate with non-verbal devices. Foreigners, on the other hand, lack this innate gift and are thus considered unable to capture the special nuances of communication which makes empathetic behavior impossible. The special empathy, in turn, is possible because of the same ethnic background. Davis and Ikeno questioned this claim and argued that this ambiguity (*aimai*) can cause a good deal of confusion, not only in international communication but also among the Japanese (Davis and Ikeno 2002: 9, 13; Kowner 2003: 127).

For example, the Japanese “muzukashii desu ne”, literally “this will be difficult indeed” means rejection. The Japanese language does not make as much use of direct phrases as, for instance, English or German. The result can be seeming carelessness or impoliteness on the side of the foreigner where none was intended (Hohenstein 2004: 303; Kameyama 2004: 298; Rehbein and Fienemann 2004: 238). On the other hand, rejection in Brazilian Portuguese does not imply that nothing can be done about a certain issue. As Barbosa (1992: 2) pointed out

*[...] ‘não’ ou qualquer outro tipo de negativa, no Brasil, não significava o que semanticamente pretendia denotar. Mais simplesmente, descobri que o ‘não’ não era o limite. Da mesma forma que a lei, a norma, a constituição também não implicam barreiras definitivas e irrevogáveis para o comportamento e o desejo das pessoas”.*

([...] in Brazil, ‘no’, or any other type of negation, didn’t mean what it semantically denoted. Put more easily, I discovered that ‘no’ wasn’t the limit. Just as laws, norms, the constitution, don’t imply definitive and irrevocable barriers to people’s behavior.

In this case the information can be successfully conveyed on a cognitive level. The attitude behind it, however, modifies it to the extent of producing a different meaning. This, in turn, the speaker will know only if he disposes of the cultural knowledge linked to language, if he masters the codes of behavior encoded in wording and semantics (Kameyama 2004: 281; Rehbein and Fienemann 2004: 224). According to Davis and Ikeno, for instance, it is considered a virtue not to directly express one's real feelings and intentions. Life is rather formulaic which can result in confusion and frustration for who is not familiar with it (Davis and Ikeno 2002: 116). This is contrary to the norm in Latin America and indeed a major source of misunderstanding and frustration (Linger 2001: 88). My sample reflects this clearly. The common denominator on an abstract level was human warmth, communication, not necessarily on a verbal level. This confirms the claims I have made above, consistent with the respective literature, that it is not only language as a tool, but the encoded message behind words and behavioral patterns.

*Yo creo que las diferencias culturales y de organización social son extremas. Japón es un lugar, por ejemplo, donde tú no puedes expresar tu opinión [...] Entonces por una cuestión de filosofía de vida tú tienes que reprimir tus pensamientos, tus sentimientos, no los puedes expresar abiertamente. Y si lo haces estás rompiendo la armonía del grupo. En Argentina es todo lo contrario. Tú no puedes convivir con alguien en un grupo si le ocultas cosas que piensas o que sientes. Porque eso, lo único que haces es, robar a la persona de la confianza que la persona está creando para tí. Entonces, las perspectivas son extremas [...] es todo lo contrario. Entonces, para mí Japón siempre representa todo lo que me han enseñado que no se debe hacer.*

(I think that the cultural and the organizational differences are extreme. Japan, for instance, is a place where you can't express your opinion [...] So for some life philosophy you have to reprim your thoughts, your feelings, you can't show them openly. And if you do you're going to break the group harmony. In Argentina it's the other way round. You can't live with someone in a group if you hide from him what you think or feel. Because, see, the only thing you're doing there is stealing the trust that this person is creating for you. So perspectives are extreme [...] it's the exact opposite. So for me Japan always represents all the things I was taught not to do.)

14

*Hum, acho que tudo o que eu não gosto do Japão tá ligado muito à cultura rígida, por exemplo, deixa eu pensar, a forma de se conversar entre as pessoas. Eu acho que seja cultural. Quando você vai a um banco o funcionário tem de conversar com o cliente num certo nível de linguagem [...] e por mais que você peça: "Por favor, eu sou estrangeiro, você pode falar mais fácil, eu não tô entendendo" - não, eles repetem tudo de novo*

*porque eles estão seguindo a regra do banco [...] Então por que você não abre uma exceção se você vê que não consegue se comunicar com a pessoa? E eles não abrem essa exceção. Então eu acho que isso tá ligado à cultura.*

Hm, I think everything I don't like about Japan has to do with the rigid culture, for example, let me think, the way people talk. I think it's cultural. When I go to a bank the employee has to talk to the client in a certain way [...] and no matter how much you beg him : » Please, I'm a foreigner, you can speak more easily, I'm not understanding you » - no, they repeat everything from top because they are following the rules of the bank [...] So why don't you make an exception when you see that you can't communicate with a person? But they won't make this exception. So I think this is linked to their culture.)

27

Being able to act according to these patterns translates into social capital in the form of different social networks. I will focus on social capital in the next chapter. Being able to speak in one's native language conveys a sense of belonging and of security that goes beyond practical aspects. As long as the individual moves within his own cultural and linguistic sphere this assumption sounds quite matter of fact, neglectable even. Once a person leaves the comfort of this space, however, a central difficulty becomes language proficiency, or a lack of it. For language fulfills another function: communication. Beyond syntax and semantics, language encodes a whole set of ideas, beliefs and what a member of a cultural group perceives as common sense. Moral and religious values as well as parameters of a common social environment are expressed through language. Hidasi pointed out that losing these familiar, comforting parameters can result in what is commonly referred to as culture shock (Hidasi 2005: 160). Living in a foreign country, in an unknown social environment, and not being able to express oneself can indeed lead to a variety of negative feelings: confusion for the migrant cannot apply known cultural standards to the new social environment, not least because he does not know how to express his own cultural capital in a foreign language. Semantic meanings vary from one language to another as do the various nuances embedded in a single phrase (Bortoni-Ricardo 2005: 161; Hidasi 2005: 77; 162; Laumonier 1998: 206). This is likely to lead to frustration and can culminate in a sense of loss, of being lost, in translation and otherwise. The following excerpts want to illustrate this state of (perceived) isolation generated by a lack of language proficiency, in the case of my sample in Japanese:

*[...] me ha costado mucho el idioma [...] Ya ahorita empiezo a entender un poco más japonés y empiezo a tranquilizarme [...] me cuesta mucho hablarlo [...] siempre digo como palabras. Como gohan (arroz), gomi (basura), palabras sueltas [...] no como grandes conversaciones, no [...]*

*-¿Qué crees que cambiaría si hablaras más japonés?*

*-[...] mi principal problema es la comunicación. Yo sé que ya una vez que yo pueda hablar más..entonces podré ir rompiendo poco a poco esas barreras [...] Y podría más entender la cultura japonesa. No crearme ideas un poco absurdas o pensar que la gente no me quiere o, no sé, malentender las cosas, no, como decir: " Ah bueno. Si esto pasa es porque ellos han crecido de esta manera". Más que nada eso. Entender su cultura, saber qué puedo hacer, qué es lo que no puedo hacer.*

*[...] it has been hard to learn the language [...] Now I'm beginning to understand a little more Japanese and I start calming down...I'm having a hard time [...] I always say, like, words. Like gohan (cooked rice), gomi (trash), single words, not like real conversations, you know [...]*

*-What do you think would be different if you spoke more Japanese ?*

*-My biggest problem is communication. I know that once one can speak more then I'll be able to break down these barriers little by little [...] And I could understand the Japanese culture better. Not have ideas absurd ideas, or think that people don't like me or, I don't know, misunderstand things, you know, like say : » Ah, ok. If this happens it's because they were raised like this ». Mainly this. Understand their culture, know what I can do, what I can't do.]*

7

*No meu laboratório [...] As técnicas, né, não falam muito bem inglês. Aí eu converso japonês com elas. Aí é muito bonitinho, elas falam: "Nossa, você fala bem japonês!" E falo: "Nossa! Perfeito !"(laughs). Porque o meu japonês é muito ruim [...] No Brasil eu [...]. estudei um pouquinho, né [...] Eu tinha aprendido as perguntas básicas mas chegando aqui, nossa, é muito diferente! O japonês é muito rápido, eu não consigo entender nada, nada, nada, tanto que chego a chorar (laughs). Você só ouve coisas que não entende, você pensa: "Nossa, tem tanta gente aqui em Shibuya, tão movimentado", e eu me senti tão sozinha. Por isso que queria aprender japonês. Eu gosto do laboratório, gosto das pessoas, é importante pra mim estudar japonês pra conseguir me comunicar.*

*(In the lab [...] The technicians, you know, they don't speak much English. So I speak Japanese with them. That's very nice, they say:" My God, you speak so well Japanese!" And I'm like:"My God! Perfect!" (laughs). Because my Japanese is really bad [...]In Brazil, I [...] studied a little, you know [...] I had learned basic questions but once I came here, God, it's so different! Japanese is very fast, I can't understand anything, nothing, nothing, it's so bad that I even cry (laughs). You only hear things that you don't understand, you think:" My God, there are so many people here in Shibuya, it's so lively", and I felt so lonely. That's why I wanted to learn Japanese. I like the lab, I like the people, it's important for me to study Japanese to be able to communicate.)*

16

*[...] puedo ir a sitios y comprar cosas y, sabes, esas cosas y todo eso, ¿verdad ? Pero si en el principio hubiera hablado japonés la cosa habría sido distinta, ¿no? [...] Sin duda que uno disfruta muchísimo más de la cultura si puede hablar el idioma fluidamente. Puede hacer muchos más amigos y ese tipo de cosas, ¿no? Y entender la televisión, ir a la librería y comprar libros, esas cosas, leer en japonés. Si en el principio hubiera podido hacer eso hubiera sido mucho más agradable. Que fue muy agradable, no es que*

*sufrió mucho por no saber japonés, no. La verdad que los japoneses son tan educados y tan, tan amables que siempre hacen el esfuerzo para entenderte aunque no te entiendan nada. Así que bueno. Habría cambiado en el sentido de que me habría permitido disfrutar mucho más de la cultura.*

[...] I can go places and buy things and, you know, these things and everything, right? But if I had been speaking (Japanese) right from the start everything would have been different, wouldn't it? [...] Without a doubt one enjoys much more the culture if he can speak the language fluently. You can have more friends and this kind of thing, no? And understand what they say on TV, go to the library and buy books, these things, read in Japanese. If I had been able to do this in the beginning it would have been much more enjoyable. It was enjoyable, it's not that I suffered a lot because I didn't speak Japanese, no. The truth is that the Japanese are so polite and so, so friendly that they always make an effort to understand you even though they don't understand a thing. Oh, well. It would have been different in the sense that I would have been able to enjoy the culture more.]

15

*Creo que con el tiempo de alguna manera me, me he hecho un poco más japonés que al principio. Y sobretodo porque uno va aprendiendo ciertos códigos de como actuar, como hablar, como interactuar [...] uno va aprendiendo eso y, y claro, si yo me veo doce años atrás y ahora sé que soy otra persona. Pero claro, tengo [...] no sé, mi genio que es diferente.*

(I think that with time passing I somehow have, have become a little more Japanese than in the beginning. And mainly because you learn certain codes of how to behave, how to speak, how to interact [...] you learn this and, and, sure, when I look at myself twelve years ago and now I know I'm a different person. But of course I have [...] I don't know, my temper that is different.)

17

*Ainda erro muito, fico, kinchō suru ne, ainda fico muito tenso quando tenho de usar sonkeigo, mas acho que estrangeiro ainda tem uma, uma desculpa, eles ainda deixam passar, né, muitos erros porque os, os próprios japoneses sabem que é difícil. Que é uma língua que tem algumas características bem difíceis. Mas tô cada vez mais tentando me comportar direito, né, assim.*

(I still make many mistakes, I get, kinchō suru ne, I still feel very tense when I have to use sonkeigo, but I think that foreigners also have a, an excuse, they let it pass, you know, many mistakes because the, the Japanese themselves know it's difficult. That it's a language with some very difficult characteristics. But I'm trying more and more to behave properly, you know)

2

As I have argued above, successful communication also involves cultural knowledge. Being fairly proficient in Japanese did still not lead to contact with the Japanese if the accompanying codes of behavior were lacking. Not only the desire

to communicate but also the desire to show respect for the Japanese culture served as an incentive to learn at least some Japanese.

*Eu pessoalmente acho que é uma falta de educação não tentar aprender. Claro, isso também depende da rotina da pessoa. Mas pessoalmente acho que se a pessoa tá morando no país tem de tentar de aprender a falar a língua do país [...] Eu não preciso falar igual que o japonês. Mas eu preciso fazer me entender e entender [...] Não é só uma questão de praticidade, no dia a dia, mas é uma questão de boa educação [...] É uma questão de educação e de praticidade. Tentar se esforçar. Não vai vir de graça.*

(Personally I think that not trying to learn is a sign of bad manners. Of course it also depends on a person's routine. But personally I think that if a person lives in this country she has to try to learn the (country's) language [...] I don't have to speak like a Japanese. But I have to make myself understand and understand [...] It's not only a matter of commodity in everyday life, but it's a question of good manners [...] It's a question of good manners and commodity. Try and make an effort. I won't come to you for free.)

20

As I have argued in the previous chapter, proficiency in the local language promotes the feeling of social integration and helps promote an overall positive attitude toward the receiving society. Social contact is not possible without language, if not English as a *lingua franca*, the language of the receiving country. Empirical studies have emphasized the importance of language proficiency for social contacts, and ultimately integration, and have blamed deficient proficiency in Japanese on lacking social contact between Latin American migrants and the Japanese (Ikegami 2003: 525; Tajima 2003). In line with these findings, proficiency in Japanese was an important factor in my sample in terms of contact with the Japanese. Insufficient command of the Japanese language, on the other hand, was the main motive for lacking social contact with the Japanese as the following excerpts want to illustrate:

*Não (tenho amigos japoneses) [...] No meu laboratório eu considero as pessoas lá, minhas amigas mas eu acho que mais colega, né, alguma coisa assim. Assim, eu me dou muito bem com eles, faço brincadeira [...] Mas amigos [...] Eu vivo num ambiente mais internacional. E é muito mais fácil pra mim porque a gente fala inglês. Assim às vezes eu penso que não tenho amigos japoneses por causa disso [...] por causa da língua.*

(I don't (have Japanese friends [...] ] In the lab, I consider the people there my friends, but I think they're more colleagues, you know, something like that. So I get along with them very well, I joke with them [...] ] But friends [...] ] I live in a more international environment. It's a lot easier for me because we speak English. So sometimes I think that I don't have any Japanese friends because of that [...] ] because of the language.)

16

*Tengo varios, tengo varios amigos japoneses. Claro, muchos hablan inglés y tal, otros no pero, pero bueno sí, tengo varios amigos japoneses [...] Bueno, te digo acá en Tokyo tengo muy pocos amigos latinos. Un amigo venezolano, Javier, otro amigo [...] cuando quiero reunirme con alguien para hablar español [...] pues me reúno con Javier [...] cuando estoy con mis amigos japoneses, por ejemplo [...] pues las cosas que puedes hablar son muy, muy limitadas cuando el japonés de uno esta limitado. A parte del clima (laughs), que es un tema muy [...] pues otro tipo de relación, ¿no? Y bueno, y cuál equipo de fútbol me gusta y cuál me gusta menos, no? A partir de ahí ya la conversación empieza a ser difícil [...] El idioma es un obstáculo para poder hacer amistades profundas. Puedes hablar de ciertas cosas cuando tu vocabulario es limitado. Pero bueno, poco a poco.*

(I have several, several Japanese friends. Of course many of them speak English and stuff, others don't but, but well, I have several Japanese friends [...] Well, here in Tokyo I have only a few Latino friends. One from Venezuela, Javier, another friend [...] when I want to meet with someone to speak Spanish [...] well, then I meet up with Javier [...] when I'm with my Japanese friends, for example [...] well, the things you can talk about are very, very limited when your Japanese is limited. Apart from the weather (laughs), which is very [...] well, another type of relationship, isn't it? From there, conversation starts to become difficult [...] Language is a, an obstacle when you want to have deeper friendships. You can talk about some things when your vocabulary is limited. But ok, step by step.)

15

*Eu tenho muitos amigos estrangeiros (laughs). Japoneses, eles são muito, é do laboratório mais. E a gente não sai muito da rotina do laboratório [...] A diferença é assim, primeiro acho que pela língua é meio complicado. A não ser que o japonês fale muito bem o inglês ele, ele, ele fica meio isolado, né. E o mesmo acontece quando eu saio com amigos brasileiros e levo amigos estrangeiros. Porque a maioria a gente fala em português, obviamente é mais confortável, e às vezes o estrangeiro pode, pode ficar isolado [...] Não sei definir, mas às vezes é porque as pessoas do mesmo país têm mais ou menos algumas piadas conhecida e às vezes nem todo mundo explica. Então o estrangeiro não entende e fica isolado. Os japoneses muito raramente entendem por exemplo, fazes piadinha e o japonês não sabe o que esta acontecendo, tens de explicar para ele. Esse tipo de coisa [...] Da língua e também do background eu acho. Ou às vezes os dois juntos.*

(I have many foreign friends (laughs). The Japanese, they are very, it's most of all in the lab. And we don't go much beyond this routine [...] The difference is, like, first of all, I think that it's somewhat complicated because of the language. If the Japanese doesn't speak English very well, he, he'll end up somewhat isolated, you see. And the same thing happens when I go out with Brazilian friends and bring some foreign friends. Because we mostly speak Portuguese, obviously that's the most comfortable, and sometimes foreigners can, can end up isolated [...] I can't define it, but sometimes it's because people from the same country have more or less some jokes everybody knows and sometimes you don't explain them. There, foreigners don't understand and end up feeling isolated. The Japanese understand very rarely, for example, you make a joke and the Japanese don't know what's going on, you have to explain to them. This kind of thing [...] Language and also the background, I think. Or sometimes a combination of both.)

20



*Sí, (tengo amigas japonesas). Pero son bilingües.*

*–¿Por qué son bilingües?*

*–Porque yo no hablo japonés (laughs). Entonces sería la única manera de conversar con ellos.*

*–¿Y amigas latinas?*

*–Sí, claro. La mayoría [...] mis amigas japonesas me permitirían entender lo que no logro entender cuando estoy sola. Por la barrera del idioma. Y..digamos, les puedo preguntar libremente: „¿Qué significa esto?“ todo el tiempo y entonces ellas me pueden dar como orientación, eh, sobre esas cosas. Y con mis amigas latinas igualmente porque hay en particular una que ha vivido en Japón muchísimo tiempo, entonces también digamos, entiende Japón desde su perspectiva japonesa-latina. Y, y bueno pues, esa es como la gran diferencia, nos la pasamos muy bien, me la paso muy bien con mis amigas japonesas y con mis amigas latinas.*

(Yes, (I have Japanese friends). But they're bilingual.

-Why are they bilingual?

-Because I don't speak Japanese (laughs). So this is the only way how we can communicate.

-And Latin American friends?

-Yes, of course. Mostly [...] my Japanese friends allow me to understand what I can't understand when I'm alone. Because of the language barrier. And, let's say, I can ask them openly: "What does this mean?" all the time, and so they give me an orientation, eh, about these things. And also with my Latina friends, there is one who has been living in Japan for a very long time, so, let's say, she knows Japan from a Latin-Japanese perspective. And, and well, we have a lot of fun, I have a lot of fun with my Japanese friends and with my Latina friends.)

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*A primeira diferença, óbvio, é a língua. Além disso, normalmente os japoneses, pra você sair com japonês você tem que combinar com eles com precedência. Com brasileiro não tem importância.*

*–E as atividades ?*

*–As mesmas. Saio para comer tanto com brasileiros quanto com japoneses ou pra festa, atividades idênticas.*

(The first difference is of course the language. Apart from this, normally you have to make plans beforehand in order to go out with Japanese. With Brazilians, it doesn't matter.

-What about the activities?

-The same. I go out to eat with Brazilians as well as with Japanese or to parties, the same activities.)

8

*Por lo menos las dos veces que he ido a una fiesta [...]ah, como me gusta cocinar yo me meto en la cocina [...] Pero una vez fuimos a una degustación de vinos a un restaurante. Yo era incomoda, iba con mi esposo. Pero igual él era incomodo porque, como nos casamos y yo no hablo japonés y él no habla fluido español, ¿no? Entonces qué pereza, ¿por qué están cuestionando nuestra relación? Pero dije: "Si mi relación es transparente, así nos manejamos" [...] me reí y todo eso, y le dicen a Carolina que ellos quieren que yo vuelva. Porque yo transmito una energía muy buena. Así no hablo el idioma pero a ellos les agrada mucho la compañía mía. Y yo:" Ah, bueno, al menos"(laughs). Pero igual a*

*veces me siento como incomoda cuando estoy con japonesas porque ellas empiezan a preguntar y yo, yo entiendo mucho pero para contestar me limito. Pero cuando ya me toca porque digo que no puedo ser egoista porque mi esposo disfruta esas reuniones y pues vamos, ¿no? [...] Nosotros, o sea, nosotros nos entendemos a lo índio (laughs). Él no sabía explicarme lo de la mamá y con un diccionario me explicó que “mi mamá sufre de esto, por esto y esto”. Entonces yo: “Ah, ya está”. Igual si él no me entiende algo a mi yo trato.*

(At least the two times that I went to a party [...] ah, since I like to cook I'll get into the kitchen [...] But once we went to a wine tasting in a restaurant. I was feeling uncomfortable, I was with my husband. But he was also feeling uncomfortable because, since we got married and I don't speak Japanese and he doesn't speak fluent Spanish, you know? So, how annoying, why are they questioning our relationship? But I said: "If my relationship is transparent, we get along like this" [...] I was laughing and everything, and they tell Carolina that they want me to come back. Because I transmit very good energy. So I don't speak the language but they really like my company. And I'm like: "Ah, well, at least" (laughs). But still at times I feel, like, uncomfortable when I'm with Japanese because they'll start asking and I, I understand a lot but I'm limited when it comes to answering. But sometimes I have to and I tell myself that I can't be selfish because my husband enjoys these events and so we go, right? [...] We, like, we somehow understand each other (laughs). He didn't know how to explain to me what was going on with his mom and with a dictionary he explained to me that "my mom suffers from this, because of this and that". So I'm like: "Ah, I see". Same thing when he doesn't understand me, I'll try.)

25

I have argued before that language proficiency has a positive impact on the feeling of being socially integrated for it helps overall communicative competence. Also, language proficiency promotes cultural understanding and major tolerance toward cultural differences. This is in line with different scholars and their research (Beuchling 2003, Esser 2003, Keeley 2007). Limited language proficiency could lead to a more negative perception of the Japanese. While my participants tried to socially interact with the Japanese they reported that limited proficiency in Japanese made social contact more difficult and at times frustrating.

### ***Nihon no seikatsu - Life in Japan***

*Nihon no seikatsu ha dō desu ka?*

(How is life in Japan?)

Polite inquiry by an elderly Japanese lady in late 2008

Earlier in this chapter I have advocated the importance of language in order to understand the local culture and communicate with the local people. A little more

profane, yet not any less important, is language use in everyday life. Based on Esser's definition of social integration (see above) language is the most crucial and first step toward the social integration of migrants into a new society. A lack of language proficiency, on the other hand, makes even the most basic interaction difficult (Laumonier 1998: 210; Michalowski and Sneer 2005:5).

While Latin Americans residing in areas with a large Brazilian population can benefit from a wide range of Spanish- or Portuguese-speaking facilities (Del Castillo 1999: 186; Kawamura 2003: 409; Linger 2001: 28), the situation in Tokyo is different. As I have been confirmed by my informants, and experienced myself, there is no institutionalized Brazilian, Peruvian, or even pan-Latino community in Tokyo as one can find in Japanese towns with a high percentage of Latin Americans. A Latin American living in Tokyo will certainly be able to find fellow nationals and some stores selling food and different products from Latin America. It is unlikely, however, that he will be able to manoeuvre himself through daily life without any, or hardly any, knowledge of Japanese.

Among my informants being able to function independently from others, not having to rely on other people to help them through basic actions any ordinary citizen can manage without problems, was a major concern. Not being able to live up to these standards was perceived as frustrating, shameful and disempowering.

*Tengo que hacer un montón de tramites. Que me costó un montón por el idioma, entonces qué feo porque yo les digo así: "Sumimasen. Nihongo wakarimasen" (Disculpen. No entiendo japonés). Me siento mal. Porque no la puedo ayudar a Cami pero, como que, quiero ayudarla pero no la puedo ayudar porque quiero ir a las reuniones y no entiendo nada. Me mandan las notas y no entiendo nada. Y, vistas, y eso sí me duele. Me frustra mucho. A veces le digo a Cami: "Por favor, decile a la profesora qué, bueno, qué lo que vos tenga que traer o lo que mami tenga que comprar", le digo, "avísame" le digo. "Pero preguntale y escucha bien", le digo "porque mami no sabe leer", le digo. Me gustaría saber perfecto el, el nihongo para, vistas, para ayudarla. Hablar, sí, hablar, sí, normal, ¿no? Pero ya cuando pones el noticiero hay miles de palabras que yo no entiendo y en el colegio lo que pasa es que te mandan todo, todo en japonés y yo no me entero de nada porque no sé, no, no. No puedo estar tampoco llamando a la profesora y decirle: "¿Qué mandaron?" (laughs)*

(I have to run so many errands. Which used to be so hard because of the language, and that's so bad because I tell them: "Sumimasen. Nihongo wakarimasen". I feel bad. Because I can't help Cami but, like, I want to help her but I can't help her because I want to attend the school reunions and don't understand a thing. They send me notes and I don't understand. And, you see, and it hurts. It's very frustrating for me. Sometimes I tell Cami: "Please, ask the teacher what, well, what you need to bring to school or what mom has to buy", I tell her, "let me know", I tell her. "But ask and pay attention", I tell her, "because mommy can't read", I tell her. I'd like to speak perfect nihongo to, you see, to help her. To speak, yes, to speak, yes, normally, you see? But already when you turn on

the news on TV there are thousands of words that I don't understand and what they send you from school, everything is in Japanese and I don't get a thing because I don't know, I don't, I don't. But neither can I be calling the teacher all the time and ask: "What did you want?" (laughs.)

26

*Yo me siento bien impotente cuando yo no, cuando me llega algun papel y no entiendo y tengo que buscarle ayuda a alguien.*

(I feel so powerless when I, you know, when I receive some letter and I don't understand it and have to ask someone to help me.)

5

*Quando eu vim como funcionária de fábrica eu não falava japonês, eu não sabia nada do Japão. Foi difícil. Eu tive de aprender tudo do, do nada. Tive de aprender como os japoneses lidam com os estrangeiros, como os japoneses de fábrica, que são menos instruídos, que estudaram menos, lidam com as pessoas, e não conseguia nem me comunicar. Então, foi um período muito difícil.*

(When I came for the first time as a factory worker I didn't speak Japanese, I didn't know anything about Japan. It was difficult. I had to learn everything from, from scratch. I had to learn how the Japanese treat foreigners, how the Japanese who work in factories, who are less educated, who studied less, treat people, and I couldn't even communicate. So that was a very difficult time.)

27

*Claro, si hubiera estudiado más y hubiera aprendido a escribir, pues ahora estaría mucho mejor. O por lo menos entendería mucho más. Podría controlar un montón de cosas más que ahora, sí, hay muchas, muchísimas cosas que no entiendo. Entonces sí, puedo hablar, normalmente quizás, pero no puedo leer todo lo que hay a mi alrededor. Tampoco puedo escribir todo lo que, pues algo que yo piense y lo pueda escribir. Entonces, pues, sí, creo que mis estudios de japonés no sean muy buenos (laughs).*

(Sure, if I had studied more and I had learned how to write, for example, well, now I'd feel much better. Or at least I'd understand much more. I could control so many more things which now, yes, there are many, so many, things that I don't understand. So yes, I can speak, normally maybe, but I can't read everything around me. Neither can I write everything that, well, something that I think and then just write it down. So, well, yeah, I think that my knowledge of Japanese isn't very good (laughs).

17

Being able to communicate in Japanese greatly aided my participants in everyday life. The feeling of being in control led to a feeling of ease and of being accepted by the Japanese. The final result was thus a feeling of being socially integrated:

*Se eu não falasse japonês eu acho que seria muito mais difícil. Porque eu encontro dificuldades, mesmo com o meu nível de conversação. Se eu não falasse nada eu ia*

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*depende de muita pessoa pra qualquer coisa. Ia sempre precisar que alguém fosse comigo ao médico, então eu acho que a vida seria horrível. Porque eu detesto depender das pessoas, eu gosto da minha independência.*

(If I didn't speak any Japanese I think that things would be much more complicated. Because I am having difficulties even at my level of Japanese. If I didn't speak anything I'd be depending on many people for everything. I'd always need someone to go with me to the doctor, so I think that my life would be horrible. Because I hate depending on others, I like my independence.)

27

*En mi caso siento que les gusta cuando lo hablo. Cuando me expreso con ellos en japonés. No sé, que me ven la cara de extranjera, se tocan la cabeza: "Y ahora, ¿cómo que, en que idioma le tengo que hablar?" Pero ya cuando les hablo yo, "tranquilos que hablo japonés, no muy bien pero que lo entiendo", entonces ya como que "Ah, qué bien!"*

(In my case, I feel that they like it when I talk to them. When I speak with them in Japanese. I don't know, that they see my foreign face they go like: "And now, in what language should I talk to her?" But when I talk to them, "Relax, I speak Japanese, not very well but I understand", then it's like "Ah, ok!"

5

*He estudiado un poco japonés. Es que me ayudó mucho para viajar. Para saber todas las preguntas que tienes que hacer para los horarios de los trenes, a la hora de comprar boletos, a qué hora tenía que salir al tren, hasta dónde iba el tren. Todo eso me ayudó muchísimo y gracias a Dios nunca me perdí, nunca me pasó nada (laughs).*

(I studied a little bit of Japanese. It has helped me a lot for travelling. In order to know all the questions you need to ask for the time tables, when you buy tickets, at what time the train is going to leave, the final destination. All this helped me a lot and thanks God I never got lost, nothing ever happened to me (laughs).)

14

*No dia a dia não tenho problema. Até no trabalho consigo fazer entrevistas em japonês em quanto que não seja um tema muito específico, por exemplo economia. É muito difícil, eu não domino o vocabulário. Mas se for entrevista no senso de coisas do dia a dia, coisas mais simples, eu consigo, faço entrevista em japonês também.*

(In everyday life I don't have any problems. Even at work I can do interviews in Japanese as long as it's not a very specific subject, for example, business. That's very difficult, I don't know the vocabulary. But if it was an interview, like, daily issues, easier things, I can do it, I also conduct interviews in Japanese.)

27

*Eu acho que se eu não falasse japonês direito a minha vida seria muito diferente. Na vida privada não, não seria difícil. Se eu não falasse japonês acho que o meu dia a dia seria*

*difícil, mas em relação à amizade não seria tão difícil porque tem muitos estrangeiros em Tóquio, não? Mas acho que não conseguiria trabalhar se não falasse japonês.*

(I think that if I didn't speak Japanese well my life would be very different. In my private life it wouldn't be a problem. If I didn't speak Japanese I think that veryday life would be complicated, but in terms of friendship it wouldn't be much of a problem because there are many foreigners in Tokyo, aren't they? But I think I couldn't work if I didn't speak Japanese.)

11

*Bueno, si no sabes japonés yo creo que estás perdido, ¿no? Ultimamente (está más fácil) porque ahí hay cosas escritas en rōmaji (Latin characters) pero yo siempre lo he pensado, debe ser una ciudad difícilísima de, para un occidental, no, desenvolverse. Para alguien que sepa chino, al revés, debe ser fácil, ¿no? Pero para un occidental...*

(Well, if you don't speak Japanese I think you're lost, aren't you? Lately (it's been easier) because there are things written in rōmaji, but I've always thought, it must be a very hard place to, for a Westerner, you know, to get by. For someone who knows Chinese, on the other hand it must be easy, no? But for a Westerner...)

1

Esser (2006) argued that language proficiency is the first and most important step toward becoming a full member of the receiving society placed in a favorable social and professional position. I agree partly with this viewpoint but argue further that such a position can only be achieved if the requisites in form of human capital exist: I can be quite proficient in the local language but will still not be able to work as a teacher or an engineer if I lack the formal education and the required training. My participants confirmed that their professional success, or lack of it, in Japan was greatly linked to their level of proficiency in Japanese. By success I mean a position according to one's formal training, not necessarily a white-collar position. In this case, the motivation to learn Japanese would be primarily instrumental for the person knows that he will increase his chances to work in the area he was trained for if he masters the local language. There, however, lies the crucial point: the person needs to have completed formal training of some kind in order to work. It is thus not language alone, as I have pointed out in the last chapter. The following excerpts want to illustrate this point further:

*No trabalho eu consigo me comunicar, consigo ler japonês, escrever, um pouco errado de vez em quando (laughs). No trabalho eu aprendi muito também.*

*-O que seria diferente se você não falasse japonês?*

*-Eu não teria trabalho pra começar. Aqui ninguém fala inglês. Além de ser importante pra entender as coisas, eh, ajuda, por exemplo, a ter contato com as pessoas, expressar*

*ou entender o que as pessoas estão falando. E isso é muito importante no dia a dia, na sua vida.*

(At work I can communicate, I can read Japanese, write, a little wrong sometimes (laughs). I've also learned a lot at work.

-What would be different if you didn't speak Japanese?

-For a start, I wouldn't have a job. Nobody here speaks English. Apart from being important for understanding things, ahem, it helps, for instance, to have contact with people, to express oneself or understand what people are talking about. And this is very important for everyday life, for your life.)

8

*Si tuviera un estudio más alto de japonés podría trabajar en una empresa japonesa y no tendría que trabajar con extranjeros. Pero también me he acostumbrado a trabajar con extranjeros, o sea que no tengo que trabajar muchas horas, no hago zangyō<sup>18</sup>, los sábados y domingos los tengo libres. Pero si uno tuviera que escribir en japonés, mandar cartas en japonés, hablar por teléfono en japonés, visitar a clientes en japonés pues ahí yo estaría perdido (laughs).*

(If my level of Japanese were higher I could work in a Japanese company and wouldn't have to work with foreigners. But I've also got used to be working with foreigners, that means that, that I don't have to work long hours, I don't do zangyō, I have Saturday and Sunday off. But if I had to write in Japanese, send letters in Japanese, speak on the phone in Japanese, visit clients in Japanese, there, I'd be lost (laughs.))

17

*Quando eu voltei a segunda vez eu já falava japonês pois tinha aprendido aqui [...] Aos olhos dos japoneses agora sou uma pessoa melhor. Mas, de qualquer forma, ainda tive dificuldades na vida porque, porque não importa se você trabalha em fábrica, se trabalha como jornalista – os japoneses vêem os estrangeiros de outra forma. Eles nos isolam de alguma forma. Eles nos colocam numa, como numa categoria aparte, infelizmente [...] Eles falam e falam que já vão voltar pro Brasil, que não precisam aprender japonês porque não vão ficar, acabam não mandando os filhos na escola e já passaram dez anos e a coisa não mudou.*

(When I came for the second time (to Japan), I already spoke Japanese because I had learned it [...] In the eyes of the Japanese I am now a better person. But somehow I still have problems in my life (here) because, because the Japanese see foreigners differently, no matter if you work in a factory or as a journalist. They somehow isolate us. They put us into a, like, a different category, unfortunately [...] They keep saying that they will go back to Brazil soon, that they don't need to learn Japanese because anyway they are not going to stay, they end up not sending their children to school...and then ten years have passed and nothing's changed.)

27

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<sup>18</sup> overtime

*Trabajé, vistas, es así, haciendo los bentō<sup>19</sup>. Bueno, eran todas filipinas y chinas. Y era, la verdad que salía de trabajar llorando. No sé, ellas tienen un vocabulario así muy, muy especial. No sé si alguna vez te tocó así, vistas, como las palabras, te dicen ní sumimasen<sup>20</sup>, kono yarō<sup>21</sup>. Así, vistas, es una linea, no, que vienen todos los platos, vos tenés que poner algo. Y claro, se agarraron todos los mejores trabajos si a mí me hacían trabajar el peor trabajo. Y así todos los días. Una boca sucia tenían. Ahí sí que sufrí. No hablaba con nadie. Lo único que hablaban, sexo. Filipinas que vienen y se casan con cualquier japonés. Y si tienen que casar o casar y con gente mayor y, y se burlan de los, de la gente y, pero ellas no sabían que yo hablaba, ellas pensaban que yo era argentina y hablaban mal y hablaban en japonés. Hablaban mal de mí pero en japonés y ellas pensando que yo no hablaba japonés. Pero yo escuchaba todo. Escribir, saber bien bien el idioma, me ayudaría un montón eso porque también hay un montón de trabajos que necesitas leer.*

(I used to work...you see, it's like...making bentō. Well, they were all Filipinas and Chinese. And actually I'd leave from work crying. I don't know, their vocabulary is very, very special. I don't know if you ever had to experience something like this, like, you know, the words, they don't even say *sumimasen*, *kono yarō*. Like, you see, it's an assembly line, you know, where all the plates are coming, you have to put something. And of course they'd get themselves the easiest work and make me do the worst. Like this every day. And they had such a dirty mouth. There, I really suffered. I didn't talk to anyone. They'd only talk about sex. Filipinas who come and get married to the first available Japanese. And they want to get married at all costs and, with older men and they make fun of, of people and, but they didn't know that I speak (Japanese), they thought that I was from Argentina and would speak ill and in Japanese. They'd speak ill of me but in Japanese and they thought that I didn't speak Japanese. But I'd hear everything. Being able to) write, know the language well, that would help me a lot because there are so many jobs where you have to read.)

27

*-O que seria diferente se você falasse mais japonês?*

*-Eu acho, eh, provavelmente, eh, as oportunidades melhorariam, né, para, pra conseguir algo. Porque hoje, eh, a minha especialidade é programação. Mas boas posições hoje em dia requerem que você lide ou com o cliente, né, ou com a equipe. E pra isso a língua, pra, pelo menos ao nível de trabalho, né, que é mais importante, né. Eu não tenho, então não adianta. Eu não poderia representar uma empresa pra falar com outra empresa. Né. Com o meu nível de japonês hoje é impossível.*

*- E ao contrário, se você não falasse nada de japonês o que seria diferente?*

*-Não só, o problema da língua gera os problemas no dia a dia em geral, eu acho. Eh, por exemplo, quando bate à minha porta pra, pra perguntar por alguma coisa. Se eu não souber falar japonês, dificilmente a pessoa sabe falar inglês ou outra língua, né. Então é muito complicado. E trabalho nem falar que pra trabalhar, eh, com exceção dos trabalhos de dekasagui em fábrica, igual que você não precisa da língua, a maioria precisa, né. Mesmo tendo alguma qualificação, sem falar japonês é muito difícil.*

*(-What would be different if you spoke more Japanese?*

*-I think, hm, probably, hm, better opportunities, you know, to, to get ahead. Because today, eh, my specialization is programming. But nowadays good positions require that you deal with the client, you know, or with the team. And therefore language, to, at least at working level, you know, which is most important, you know. I don't have (these*

<sup>19</sup> Traditional Japanese lunch box

<sup>20</sup> Excuse me

<sup>21</sup> Approx. „Hey, you!“ . Rude expression



skills), so it's no use. I couldn't represent a company talking to another company. You know. With my current level of Japanese it's impossible.

-And if, on the other hand, you didn't speak any Japanese at all?

- Not only this, the language problem creates problems in everyday life, I think. Hm, for example, when someone knocks on my door to ask something. If I couldn't speak Japanese, it's unlikely that the other person can speak English, you know. So it's very complicated. And let's not even talk about work because to work, hm, except *dekasegi* jobs in factories, even if you don't need the language there, for most jobs you do, you see. Even if you have some qualification, without speaking Japanese it's very difficult.)

13

In a professional environment Japanese was a requirement for an adequate working position. Lacking proficiency in Japanese compromised professional credibility and hindered not only professional advancement but employment itself. For highly skilled persons this need was especially pronounced: sound proficiency in Japanese was indispensable for working in an adequate position. Blue-collar occupations did not require the same proficiency level in Japanese, but proportionally to their formal education they still had to be able to communicate. Working as a waitress, for instance, required a much lower level of Japanese than working as a system engineer.

The above-shown excerpts are examples of primarily instrumental motivation. Japanese was a needed tool for surviving in Tokyo and in absence of an institutionalized Latino community or for advancing professionally. Feeling integrated into the Japanese society was not the primary motivation in this case.

### **The desire to communicate**

The desire to communicate with members of the local society led to a conscious effort to gain fluency in Japanese even if from a purely instrumental point of view it would not be necessary. My participants frequently pointed out the importance of speaking Japanese in order to have contact with Japanese people, gain a major understanding of the Japanese culture and feel ultimately better integrated into Japanese society:

*-Me dijiste que con tu esposo se entienden muy bien, ¿no?*

*-Muy bien no pero nos entendemos (laughs). Pero por ejemplo a mí me gustaría hablar más con mi suegra por ejemplo. El problema de ella es depresivo. Yo quisiera ayudarle, o sea, quisiera poderle hablar, saber que yo le puedo ayudar. Porque yo sé que si ella pudiera hablar con alguien distinto al esposo, todo eso quisiera comunicarle pero como no hablo...*

(-You've told me that you and your husband understand each other very well, haven't you?

-S.: Not very well, but we understand each other (laughs). But, for example, I'd like to talk more to my mother in law, for example. The problem is that she has depression. I'd like to help her, like, I'd like to be able to talk to her, know that I can help her. Because I know that, if she could speak to someone who is not her husband, I'd like to tell her all this but since I don't speak...)

25

*-O que seria diferente se você falasse mais japonês?*

*-Eu poderia me comunicar muito mais facilmente. No laboratório todo mundo fala inglês, mas nos cafés, nos restaurantes eles conversam com os clientes em japonês. Eu fico assim, né. Fico sozinha, fico fora da conversa. Se eu soubesse falar bem acho que seria melhor a minha vida aqui. Você pode se comunicar, a comunicação é tudo.*

(-What would be different if you spoke more Japanese?

-I could communicate more easily. In the lab everyone speaks English, but in coffee shops, in restaurants, they speak Japanese with the customers. I'm like, I'm lonely, I stay outside the conversation. If I could speak better I think that my life here would be better. You can communicate, communication is everything.)

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*Se eu não falasse nada de japonês seria muito complicado porque eu acho que tudo fica mais complicado, né. Se você não fala japonês a primeira complicação, pelo menos do meu ponto de vista, é, você não consegue fazer amizade de verdade com japoneses. Você vai conseguir fazer amizade com aqueles japoneses que são mais abertos, que estudaram fora, eh, japonês que tem interesse no Brasil, mas não são japoneses, não é o japonês padrão, né (laughs), não é o japonês normal. E se você não tem esse tipo de amizade dificilmente você entende o país de verdade. Não vai entender como eles pensam, como eles falam e só gera mais dificuldade, né, dificuldade pra tudo, né. A pessoa que não fala japonês, ela demonstra claramente que ela entende muito pouco do Japão, né, que não entende muito como o japonês pensa. Especialmente aqui no Japão a cultura esta muito misturada com a língua, então se você entende a língua você entende como eles pensam, entende mais, né, você consegue entender melhor. Se você não sabe nada da língua provavelmente vai ter choque, vai ter problema.*

(If I didn't speak any Japanese at all it would be very complicated because I think everything gets complicated, you know. If you don't speak Japanese the first complication, at least from my point of view, is, you can't become real friends with Japanese. You will be able to be friends with the more open Japanese, who studied abroad, eh, Japanese who are interested in Brazil, but they're not, that's not your standard Japanese, you know (laughs), not the normal Japanese. And if you don't have this kind of friendship it's unlikely that you will really understand the country. You won't understand how they think, how they talk and, this only creates more difficulties, you know, difficulties with everything, you know. A person who doesn't speak Japanese clearly shows that he knows very little of Japan, you know, that he doesn't really understand how the Japanese think. Especially here in Japan culture is very much mixed with language, so if you understand the language you'll understand how they think, you understand more, you know, you can understand better. If you don't know anything of the language, then probably you'll be shocked, you'll have problems.)

13

The tendency to combine the two forms of motivation prevailed throughout my sample, emphasis being shifted according to participants' individual experiences and goals. However, integrative motivation was a stronger compellent toward an effort to learn Japanese. This resulted in increased communication with the Japanese and a better understanding of the Japanese culture.

### **Looking Back: Differences between Japan and Home**

Cultural capital is not made exclusively of language. As I have argued before, the ability to recognize and tolerate cultural distinctions is also part of the cultural capital a person starts building throughout life starting from early socialization. Over time and through routinized actions cultural capital becomes part of a person's *habitus*, thus an inherent feature within the individual (Allen 2005: 18). When people migrate they take their cultural capital with them. What they leave behind is social networks, human connections – in short social capital (I will focus on social capital in the following chapter). At the same time, their values encounter those of the native population. As I have argued in the previous chapters, social reality has a great impact on the acquisition of cultural and human capital. Human life and thinking is influenced by what Bourdieu called “practical life” (Barlösius 2011: 17). World view and values are shaped by the social environment a person was raised in. Context is crucial for understanding social action (Reed 1993: 25). Human behavior is often a matter of choices available rather than personal preference and human beings act under circumstances they do not always control (Dahrendorf 2008: 354; Reed 1993: 29). This is in line with my argumentation in the previous chapter that it is indeed context more than a different perception of priorities that lead to social actions. For instance, we do not have control over our birthplace and the surrounding social and structural implications. Differences in social actions and attitudes are commonly referred to as cultural differences. I have defined culture the sum of behavioral patterns, thoughts, and ideas among a group of people expressed through food, clothes, or language. These shared values create a framework in which the member of the group knows how to act (Del Castillo 1999: 142; Ekstrand (1997): 349; Kreitz-

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Sandberg 2003): 156; Ogbu 1995: 195; Ogbu 1995a: 271; Ogbu 1995a: 195)  
names three possible constellations of cultural frames:

- a) Similar (for example white mainstream Americans from Los Angeles interacting with mainstream white Americans from San Francisco)
- b) Different (for example Americans interacting with Russians)
- c) Oppositional (for example mainstream white Americans interacting with hippies in the 1960s)

Cultural frames which are different but not oppositional have generally existed long before the cultures in question first come into contact. On the other hand, oppositional cultural frames tend to develop after the oppositional groups have already established contact and co-existed for some time. Ogbu (1995a: 195) saw this phenomenon as a result of status problems within the minority group. In order to solve at least part of their problem collectively, the group members create a codex which determines who is an actual member of the group. Criteria can range from speech devices over clothing to general behavioral patterns. It is the group as a collective, not the individual member, who determines these factors. These patterns adopted by the minority group are often despised or stigmatized by the majority resulting in a cultural frame of reference which is not only different from, but directly oppositional to the majority's cultural frame. Clothing, speech and general behavior can, and often do, express opposition, non-belonging and disaffiliation (Brettell 2008: 132; Brotherton and Salazar-Atias 2003: 194; Del Castillo 1999: 298; Jenkins 1997; Linger 2001: 39; 88; Ogbu 1995: 196). Despite these differences co-existence is usually possible and unproblematic as long as the two opposed populations inhabit separate worlds, divided either by law or by custom. Such a form of co-existence requires no cultural boundary crossing and is thus unlikely to cause much friction (Del Castillo 1999: 294; Ikegami 2003: 525, 526; Ogbu 1995:197). Group-intern values are often very emotional and become a matter of self-identification (Brotherton and Salazar-Atias 2003: 186; Curtis 2003: 52; Rocha Nogueira 1984: 152). Especially in oppositional cultural contexts proving that the own culture is "better" or worthier than the other can become a central point of focus and mutual resentment. Making a point of "showing" one's cultural belonging can end up provoking the other

group; social friction is inevitable. The idea that one's own culture is more complex and hence superior to that of others can lead to ideas of specialness or even chosenness, most fundamentally, arising from the unspoken logic of cosmology (Clammer 2001: 16).

I argue that there must not be an explicit need to distance oneself from 'the other': distance can be created by the mere difference between one cultural frame and another. Hidasi (2005: 160) has named the example of a US-American in the UK versus a Brazilian in Tibet: in the first case, the physical environment is different but language is not. In the second case the migrant will encounter not only a fundamentally different language but also the culture that goes with it. His frame of cultural reference is likely to be oppositional even though he does not make a conscious effort to 'be different'. The "degree of change" (Hidasi 2005: 160) is much larger than in the first case.

### **Social Reality and Positive Differences**

Bearing in mind the above-mentioned premises, crossing cultural borders should be easier for minorities whose cultural frames of reference are maybe different, but not opposed, to the majority, for instance French in the US (Ogbu 1995: 197). There are considerable differences in mentality and culture between Japan and Latin America. Cultural, apart from linguistic, misunderstandings are bound to arise because of the different meanings and values different groups attach to different actions and expressions (Del Castillo 1999: 294; Ogbu 1995b: 271, 76). Lacking Japanese proficiency aggravates this problem and makes people stay inside their own ethnic community (Del Castillo 1999: 118). There are also considerable differences between the different Latin American countries (Del Castillo 1999: 295; Linger 2001: 228) the most obvious being language. While I am aware of this problematic, this study focuses on Latin Americans as a group rather than on intra-Latino differences. Also, there is a tendency among migrants to create a common identity in the receiving society despite belonging to different ethnic groups or even nationalities, even though this feeling was not prevalent back home (Canizares 2001: 80). My participants have largely confirmed that in the context of living in Japan they see themselves as Latinos first and as nationals

of the various Latin American countries second. I could observe the same phenomenon among my participants who, while living in Japan, gave preference to a pan-Latino identity, something they had not done in their home countries. The literature has extensively described how identity is created not within a certain group, but against a different group or a different (social) environment (Clammer 1995; Jenkins 1997). During my fieldwork I have heard from informants, as well as found from the analysis of the interviews I conducted, numerous times that once in Japan a “pan-Latino” identity takes precedence over national identities as, say, Peruvian or Mexican. One reason is certainly affirming oneself against the other, and in many ways perceived as oppositional, in this case Japan and the Japanese. A Bolivian will have more in common with a Colombian than with an Iranian, starting from a common language. While their cultural frames of references are still different they are not oppositional. Since this study was conducted in the Tokyo metropolitan area and does not involve typical Latino communities, parameters valid for the life of a Latin American factory worker within a close-knit community of a substantial size, do not apply to the same degree. Apart from location, the consistency of my sample tries to leave the known path of Brazilian factory workers in Japanese industrial towns. Accordingly, my sample spreads across different educational and professional patterns. Friction between Brazilian and Spanish-speaking factory workers was therefore not a main concern among my participants. Finally, Latin Americans in Japan are generally perceived as one large group by the Japanese (Del Castillo 1999: 188; Forero Montoya 2003: 4).

Much like identity, cultural peculiarities are constructed against “the other” (Jenkins 1997). For instance, in some cultures exaggerating is good manners while in others understatement is crucial (Hidasi 2005: 79). This exemplifies two oppositional frames of cultural reference and is indeed a commonly cited example of “difference” between Latin Americans and the Japanese in the literature. Physical contact or the lack of it and trying or not to fit the group at all costs, speaking more or less loudly, about more or less private issues, and different dress codes are frequent topics when it comes to differences between the two cultures (De Carvalho 2003; Del Castillo 1999: 287; De Vos and Wagatsuma 1995: 123; Linger 2001; Tsuda 2006: 223). According to Linger

*[...] the manner of the Brazilians – effusive, playful, at times raucous – seems strange, even threatening, to many. Most Japanese [...] are unused to such exuberance, accompanied by bodily touching [...] and loud talk in a thoroughly unfamiliar language. Linger (2001: 39, 88)*

The Japanese proverb “the out sticking nail needs to be hammered down” (*deru kui ha utareru*) illustrates appropriate behavior in a Japanese-only context namely subordinating oneself to the group for the sake of group harmony (Aoki 2005: 159; Clammer 1995: 102, 103; Davis and Ikeno 2002: 53; Seginer 1998: 184). All these perceived differences between Japanese and Latin American culture are subject to selectivity. People are likely to focus on the most obvious cultural differences and construct or reinforce existing stereotypes. Qualitative studies on Latin Americans in Japan find participants to value positively structural aspects of life in Japan such as organization, cleanliness, safety in public and infrastructure. Being able to walk alone at night, to rely on time tables, finding the streets clean and uncluttered – these are all aspects empirical studies have remarked as positive about Japan (De Carvalho 2003; Del Castillo 1999; Forero Montoya 2003; Linger 2001; Tsuda 2003). In my analysis, structural aspects such as public safety, namely being able to walk around at night without having to fear being mugged or worse, was indeed a crucial point for my informants. Also, infrastructure, such as public transportation being on time or public employees actually doing work, was named as something extraordinary compared to Latin America. My participants were further amazed at how organized and clean Japan is and how smoothly everything works, in other words social organization. These points boil down to structural aspects of living in Japan and are consistent with the literature and empirical studies in other areas of Japan (Del Castillo 1999; Linger 2001).

*La cosa que me gusta de Japón es, este, la seguridad. ¿No? Este, mi pareja va a volver en el último tren y al 99.9% va a volver seguro, ¿no? Mientras que en Argentina tú no sabes [...] En Argentina tú tienes que salir dos horas antes que no sabes si llegas. Porque un accidente, porque un paro [...] porque el colectivo se peleó con alguien [...] Aquí sí llegas a horario, esta es una ventaja, ¿no?*

(What I like about Japan is, like, safety. You know ? Like, my partner will come home on the last train and he'll get home safe 99.9%, you know? While in Argentina, you don't know [...] In Argentina you have to leave two hours early because you don't know if you're going to arrive. Because of an accident, a strike [...] because the driver had a fight with someone [...] Here you arrive on time, that's an advantage, isn't it ?)

14

*Eu não tenho o risco de ser assaltada. À noite eu caminho aqui sem ter medo [...] E aqui não se sentem tanto os problemas sociais como no Brasil.*

(I don't run the risk of being assaulted. At night I walk around without being scared [...] And here you don't feel social problems as strongly as you do in Brazil.)

16

*Oh, pa' mí la fundamental [...] es el tema de la seguridad [...] En Tokyo puedes caminar de noche, puedes [...] en cualquier callecita que te metas hay un restaurante chiquitico, hay un barcito donde te puedes sentar y tomarte algo, y eso es una calidad de vida que no hay en Caracas [...] Y en Caracas es difícil desplazarse, el transporte es difícil. En Tokio los metros están en todas partes, es facilísimo.*

(Oh, what's most important for me [...] is the safety issue [...] In Tokyo you can walk around at night, you can [...] in every little backstreet there's some small restaurant, a little bar where you can sit down and have a drink, and that's a quality of life which doesn't exist in Caracas [...] And in Caracas it's difficult to move, public transport is complicated. In Tokyo, the subway is everywhere, it's very easy.)

15

*Outra coisa que a gente gosta aqui, e que é muito diferente no Brasil, é a segurança [...] A segurança é muito importante. Porque a gente vem de um lugar que não tem guerra mas é uma guerra. A nossa sociedade é muito complicada. Então a segurança é importantíssima. No Brasil há criminalidade muito grande, a gente se sente muito inseguro.*

(Another thing that we like here, and that is very different from Brazil, is safety [...] Safety is most important. Because we come from a place where there is no war but it's a war. Our society is very complicated. So safety is very important. There is a lot of crime in Brazil, we feel very unsafe.)

21

*Me gusta vivir en Japón porque es bien segura. El Salvador es muy violento. No me interesa regresar a mi país por eso y si fuera mi opción de quedarme a vivir para siempre aquí yo me quedaría.*

(I like living in Japan because it is very safe. El Salvador is very violent. That's why I have no interest in moving back to my country and if I had the option of staying here forever I'd stay.)

6

*Como brasileira, o primeiro aspecto que eu gosto vindo pro Japão é a segurança que não dá pra negar que no Brasil a violência é muito maior do que em vários países [...] (Aqui) se pode caminhar na rua de madrugada sozinha e nunca fui parada, nunca fui assaltada no Japão...*



(As a Brazilian, the first thing I like about Japan is safety because you can't deny that in Brazil there is much more violence than in many other countries [...] (here) I can walk alone at dawn and nobody ever stopped me, I was never assaulted in Japan...)

27

S: *Me encanta la forma de reciclar la basura, por ejemplo. Eso me gusta.*

C: *Y la seguridad.*

S: *La seguridad. El respeto por el horario también me gusta.*

C: *A mí no (laughs)!*

S: *No porque tú no lo respetas, exactamente! ¿No?! Me encanta eso [...] En mi país no se da. No. O sea ese orden, ese respeto me encanta. O en la parada del bus. Yo me acuerdo, pues, como he tenido siempre este problema de pierna me siento. Y me acuerdo, nunca se me olvidará eso, la gente hizo cola detrás de mí! Como yo estaba esperando yo decía: "Eso es respeto", ¿no?*

(S: I love how they recycle the garbage, for example. I like that.

C: And safety.

S: Safety. I also like their sense of being on time.

C: I don't (laughs).

S: No, because you don't respect it, that's why! Or not?! I love it [...] In my country, no way. No. Or, like, this organization, this respect, I love it. Or at the bus stop. I remember once that I sat down for I've always had a problem with my leg. And I remember, I will never forget it, people were queuing behind me! Since I was waiting there I said: "That's respect", isn't it?)

5 and 25

*[...] comparando com o Brasil é muito mais seguro. Eu voltei pro São Paulo pro casamento do meu irmão e fiquei com medo na rua! Sempre tem que ter cuidado porque é perigoso. Então isso no Japão é muito bom, né. A segurança, gosto muito do transporte, comparado com o Brasil também o transporte aqui é muito melhor [...] Aqui o trânsito é muito lotado também (laughs), é muito cheio, mas você chega em todos os lugares.*

([...] compared to Brazil it's much safer. I went back to Sao Paulo for my brother's wedding and I was scared on the street ! You always have to watch out because it's dangerous. So that's very good in Japan, isn't it. Safety, I like public transportation very much, compared to Brazil, public transportation is also much better here [...] Here it's also very crowded (laughs), it's very full but you can get anywhere.)

2

*Bueno el tópico de que aquí está todo muy ordenado y que puedes, no sé, las cosas funcionan bien, los servicios, puedes hacer planes, planear a qué hora vas a llegar a los sitios, a qué hora van a llegar los paquetes que envías. Te facilita mucho la vida. Eso lo valoro mucho. Y la seguridad también. Y bueno, la ética de trabajo también. Y luego [...] la gente intenta facilitar las cosas [...] la gente a veces se ríe [...] Ahí tú dices se pasan un poco pero gracias a eso no, no dejan huecos, ¿sabes lo que te digo? Que cuando hay obras te dicen, a mí me llegan cartas: "El día tal de tal hora a tal hora vamos a hacer ruido, lo siento". O sea todo, te intentan facilitar las cosas.*

(Well, the fact that everything here is very organized and you can, I don't know, things work, public service, you can make plans, plan at what time you'll arrive, at what time the package you've sent will arrive. It makes life much easier. I appreciate this very much. And safety And, well, their work ethics. And also [...] people try to make things easier [...] sometimes people laugh [...] There, you say, they exaggerate a little but thanks to this they, they don't leave a blank, you know what I'm saying? When there is construction work they'll tell you, I get letters: "On this day from this to that time we will make noise, we apologize". Like, everything, they try to make things easier for you.)

1

*Ah, a ver, la organización, la disciplina [...] esa es una de las cosas, la organización y la disciplina [...] El entendimiento del concepto del tiempo es muy distinto, entonces la gente respeta el tiempo, establecen metas y las cumplen.*

(Ok, let's see, organization, discipline [...] that's one of the things, organization and discipline [...] The understanding of the concept of time is very different, people respect time frames, they set goals and accomplish them.)

19

*Muchas (las cosas positivas del Japón). Muchas porque allá no te ayudan, allá no tienes ayuda para nada. Acá me dieron departamento por madre soltera, me ayudan eh, para mantener a mi hija, el colegio me sale gratis, el servicio médico también, son muchos beneficios que te dan [...] Así que sí, estos años que estuve sola, menos mal que estoy acá en este país porque en Argentina no te ayudan para nada [...] La última vez que fui a Argentina me robaron y, ay, volví tan indignada [...] La seguridad, sí, y después [...] vos va a hacer un trámite y acá te atienden en seguida, te atienden. En nuestro país si tú vas a la ventanilla y están tomando mate y están hablando y, y no les importa que esten, respetan mucho acá, lo que es trabajo, el cliente, es lo primero, no es un país así muy corrupto [...] Así que [...] menos mal que estoy acá en este país porque en Argentina no te ayudan para nada.*

(Many (good things about Japan). Many because over there (in Argentina) they don't help you, there you have no help whatsoever. Here there gave me an apartment for being a single mother, they help me, eh, maintain my daughter, tuition is free, health care also, they give you many benefits [...] So that, these years that I spent alone, I was lucky to be in this country because in Argentina they don't help you at all [...] Last time I went to Argentina I was robbed and, oh, I came back so angry [...] Safety, yes, and also [...] you have to run errands and here they attend you immediately, they attend you. In our country, when you go to the counter they are drinking *mate* and chatting and, and they don't care that they, they respect that very much here, everything that is work, the client, that comes first, it's not, like, a very corrupt country [...] So that [...] luckily I'm in this country because in Argentina they don't help you with anything.)

26

*La seguridad por ejemplo, la seguridad en Chile..la integridad de las personas porque en cualquier parte te pueden robar. Afectar físicamente [...] Eso aquí en Japón no pasa. Eso es una de las cosas que me interesan mucho. Que aquí tengo esa seguridad. Puedo caminar tranquilo por la calle, ocupo menos energía en, en..estar alerta [...] Estando, estando en Chile, en Chile uno tiene que estar alerta. Esa es la diferencia [...] Otra gran*

*diferencia que hay: la organización. Eh, la simpleza porque es un país muy simple [...]eh, se disfruta menos. Pero tiene mucho más efecto la vida. Se hacen mucho más cosas.*

(Safety in Chile...people's integrity because you can get mugged anywhere. Be physically harmed...that doesn't exist in Japan...that's one of the things I'm interested in. I can walk around relaxed, I spend less energy in, in...being alert...being, being in Chile, in Chile you have to be alert. That's the difference...Another big difference: organization. Eh...simplicity because this is a very simple country...eh...you have less fun. But life's more effective. You do a lot more things.)

24

Apart from structural differences, cultural differences are likely to catch the migrant's attention. Different frames of cultural reference lead to different conceptions of the world. The same semantic meaning can have different connotations and thus different effects on the interlocutors (Hidasi 2005: 78). One cultural difference participants of different case studies have repeatedly pointed out when talking about Japan is honesty. As I have pointed out before, I do by no means intend to generalize. However, the following passages and interview excerpts were generated from my data and thus uttered by my participants. When every member of a community can relax a bit, what economists call transaction costs are reduced; according to this view, trusting communities have an economic advantage since worrying about daily issues such as getting back the right change or having locked the door are less which saves energy for more productive things. One substantial point is that societies which rely mostly on public authorities to sort things out tend to be less efficient, more costly and less pleasant than those where trust is maintained by other means (Putnam 2000: 136). This, I argue, is one point that can cause confusion and frustration among Latin Americans in Japan for the concept of "dar um jeito" does not apply.

We can thus say that honesty and trust smooth over the edges of daily life. Nevertheless, social relations must be reciprocated in order to work. Members of a tightly-knit community tend to be more honest to each other because of internal social control. Social trust is the decision to give others the benefit of the doubt: thin trust for those whom we don't know well yet; thick trust for those whom we have known for years and built a relationship with. Trust in other people is different from trust in authorities or institutions. Weaker social trust and control, on the other hand, also means more freedom for the individual to live. As I have argued above, not all migrants prefer to remain inside their own ethnic community

for precisely this reason. Life in Tokyo without a close-knit Latin American community can thus bear the advantage of leading a life outside social control. Rating of own trustworthiness influences trust towards others (Putnam 2000: 134). Empirical studies confirm this argument (Del Castillo 1999: 158; Tsuda 2006: 219). My sample was consistent with these findings as the following interview excerpts want to show.

*[...] las personas no tienen el hábito de la dishonestidad. Por ejemplo, donde yo trabajo. Es un restaurante y las personas que abastecen al lugar de todos los productos, pues acostumbran llevarlos por las mañanas. Entonces los dejan, dejan todo fuera de la puerta. Y nadie se los lleva. Entonces yo he platicado eso con los compañeros japoneses [...] Ellos entonces se quedan pensando: “¿Qué tiene de malo, por qué es impresionante?” Y yo les digo: “Pues que no se lo llevan”. Y luego me dicen: “Bueno, ¿por qué me lo voy a llevar si no es mío ? [...] Mientras que en mi país por ejemplo, pues hay mucho. Eso es lo que más me gusta de los japoneses. La honestidad.*

([...] people (in Japan) are usually not dishonest. For example, my working place. It's a restaurant and the people who deliver all the products, well, they normally bring them in the morning. So they leave them, they leave everything in front of the door. And nobody takes them away. I commented this with my Japanese colleagues [...] And they end up thinking: “What's wrong, why is it so unusual?” And I tell them: “Well, that nobody steals them”. And they'll say: “Ok, why would I take it if it's not mine?” [...] In my country, for example, this would be common. That's what I like about the Japanese. Their honesty.)

18

*No Brasil, você não pode confiar. Não pode confiar em ninguém. Isso é muito ruim.)*

(In Brazil you cannot trust. You cannot trust anybody. That's very bad.)  
Personal conversation, September 2008

*Eu gosto muito da organização. E também da honestidade. Eu perdi a minha carteira aqui, toda a bolsa, eu deixei no trem, com todo o dinheiro, eu achei. No Brasil a gente não tem isso.*

(I like the organization very much. And the honesty. I once lost my wallet here, the whole purse, on the train, with all my money, I found it. In Brazil, we don't have this.)

16

This form of trust implies a high level of social capital. Putnam argued that a society characterized by generalized reciprocity is more effective than a distrustful one and that trustworthiness is important for social life (Putnam 2000: 21).

According to a survey in selected OECD countries 46% of the questioned

Japanese stated that they generally trusted other people. In Brazil, this percentage was as low as 3% (Keeley 2007: 117). Quantifying complex social realities can be problematic, more so when we want to apply the same concept to different cultural frameworks. As Hidasi has pointed out, the concept of “far”, for instance, can carry a very different meaning depending on the speaker’s cultural frame of reference as can the concept of time (Hidasi 2005: 78; 136, 38). Similarly, trust can mean one thing in Japan and something entirely different in another country. Previous knowledge of these differences is thus crucial if we do not merely collect and quantify superficial statements such as ‘I trust my fellow citizens’ versus ‘I do not trust them’. The previously outlined concept of attitudes as a form of human capital comes to mind here: the researcher must make a conscious effort to understand these differences; mere language proficiency and the ability to record and transcribe an interview will most likely not suffice to fully grasp the social reality he is researching. People’s honesty in Japan was a point of amazement among my participants. Being able to leave one’s purse when entering a coffee shop or in a public place was a concept that would be, according to my participants, virtually impossible in their home countries. Being polite, friendly and respectful are other features often found throughout the literature and in empirical studies. The latter includes being on time, maintaining promises, and so forth (e.g. Linger 2001: 301).

*Acho que as pessoas no Japão são bem, como que eu posso falar, elas são, elas cumprem aquilo que prometem. Que o brasileiro, fala, fala, fala, mas ao final não faz, né. “Ah, pode deixar que eu faça isso pra você”, você fica esperando uma, duas semanas, a pessoa não tá fazendo nada (laughs). Aqui no Japão não, se a pessoa fala que vai fazer uma coisa a pessoa cumpre.*

(I think that people in Japan are very, how can I say, they are, they keep their promises. Brazilians talk, talk, talk, but in the end they don’t do anything, you know. “Ah, leave it to me, I’ll do it for you”, there you wait one, two weeks, the person isn’t doing anything (laughs). Here in Japan it’s different, when someone says that he’s going to do something he’ll keep his word.)

11

*O respeito aos mais velhos eu acho interessante. Aqui os mais velhos são tão importantes que em uma conversa entre uma pessoa nova e uma mais velha a pessoa nova só fala “Hai”, o pessoa velha fala o que ela quiser.*

(I find the respect toward the elderly interesting. Here the elderly are so important that in a conversation between a young and an older person the younger one only says “Hai”; the older one says whatever he wants.)

8

*Eles são muito educados, são muito honestos, isso pra mim e tão bom [...]e também tem, os japoneses não jogam nada na rua. Nenhuma sujeira na rua! No Brasil as pessoas jogam o lixo na rua, jogam, assim, o comportamento é diferente mesmo [...] os japoneses são muito gentis, muito prestativos. As vezes, em meio da rua, se eu peço informação, não sei falar japonês muito bem. Falo: “Ah, eu quero chegar em tal lugar”. Eles me levam àquele lugar! Uma vez tava no meio da rua, tava sem guarda-chuva, tava chovendo muito, tava toda molhada, aí um japonês vem pra mim, um senhor já, me ofereceu o guarda-chuva dele! Nossa, que fofo! Eu acho os japoneses muito gentis. Eles são muito educados. No banheiro tinha uma menininha que tinha uns oito anos, ela estava na minha frente na fila, ela se virou assim e me falou: “Osaki ni dōzo” (“After you”). Que fofo! “Não”, falei, “você pode primeiro” (laughs)!*

(They’re very polite, they’re very honest, that’s very good for me [...] and also, the Japanese don’t throw anything on the streets. Not one piece of garbage on the streets! In Brazil, people throw their garbage on the street, they throw, like, behavior is very different [...] the Japanese are very friendly, very helpful. Sometimes on the street, when I ask for an indication, I don’t speak Japanese very well. I’ll say:”Ah, I want to go to this place”. And they’ll take me there! One day, I was on the street, without an umbrella, it was raining very much, I was all wet, there, a Japanese approached me, an elderly man, and he gave me his umbrella! God, how cute! I find the Japanese very friendly. They are very polite. Once in the public restroom there was a little girl, about eight years old, she was in front of me in the line, she turned around and said:”Osaki ni dōzo”. How cute! “No”, I said, “you go first” (laughs)!)

16

*O japonês é muito educado. Que as vezes o brasileiro não é. Os japoneses não falam muito inglês [...]Mas mesmo assim eles tentam te entender, tentam resolver com um sorriso nos rostos, tentando ser agradáveis. Essa é uma coisa boa.*

(The Japanese are very polite. Which sometimes Brazilians are not. The Japanese don’t speak much English [...] But they still try to help, they try to solve things with a smile, trying to be pleasant. That’s a good thing.)

20

## **Social Reality and Negative Differences**

Ogbu (1995a:197) has argued that social friction is likely to occur when two cultures with oppositional cultural frames of reference meet. Proving that the own culture is “worthier” or “better” than the other can become a central issue, inside the community and between the receiving society and the minority. Ogbu has pointed out further that the definition of what is “better” is often very emotional and devoid of any rationalism or, indeed, facts.

Japanese work life, for instance, is viewed as extremely negative throughout the literature and in different case studies. “Japanese people live to work” is a

frequent complaint. This included alleged Japanese inability to deal with free time (Davis and Ikeno 2002: 85; Del Castillo 1999: 161). Also, working in a factory is described as extremely hard, time- and health consuming and often frustrating (Del Castillo 1999; De Carvalho 2003; Linger 2001; Tsuda 2003). My own interview partners have largely been consistent with these findings. Due to the structure of my sample, however, factory work was not a priority; the professions in my sample varied as I have tried to show in the previous chapter. Differences perceived as negative regarded structure on the one hand and culture on the other.

*Por exemplo o descanso. Você trabalha, trabalha tanto, aqui trabalham mais do que está na lei, do que está permitido. E se você for diferente dos outros, se quer trabalhar no seu ritmo eles, eles não deixam. É complicado.*

[For example, breaks at work. You work, you work so much, more than what is consented by law, what is allowed. And if you're different from the others, if you want to work at your pace, they won't let you.]

8

S1: *Os preços aqui são altos [...] O Japão é um país muito caro.*

–M: *Muito caro. Eu também acho.*

–S1: *O Japão é caro demais.*

–M: *Algumas coisas são muito caras. Fruta, a gente se assusta, né. E no Brasil é muito barata. Então a gente fala assim: „Nooossa!“, né. O turismo aqui é caro, né. Se você fizer uma viagem pra Okinawa acho que você vai gastar um mês de trabalho. Então o turismo é caro, a alimentação, essa é uma coisa um pouco difícil e diferente.*

–S1: *Mas tem bastante coisas pra fazer por aqui, sempre tem eventos. Mas aí tem o problema do dinheiro que pra fazer uma coisa aqui...*

–S2: *Custa bastante.*

(–S1: Prices here are high [...] Japan is a very expensive country.

–M: Very expensive. I think so, too.

–S1: Japan is too expensive.

–M: Some things are really expensive. Fruit, we're shocked, you know. In Brazil it's very cheap. So we're like: "Myyyyyy!", you see. Tourism here is expensive, you see. If you travel to Okinawa I think you'll spend a month's salary. So tourism is expensive, food, this is a little, a little difficult and different.

S1: But there are many things you can do around here, there are always some events. But there's the financial problem because if you want to do something over here...

S2: Quite expensive.)

21, 22, 23

*Ah, mira pues, una diferencia. Lo que sí veo es que las cosas están más, se especifican mas, están más institucionalizadas, digamos, por ejemplo, hm, cuando vas a tomar algo, una cerveza, pues llamas a alguien: "Tomas una cerveza? Te vienes un momento?" Y tal [...] Pero en Japón, se lo llaman no sé qué –kai (suffix to designate any kind of social or*

professional meeting). *¿No? Nantokakai, nomikai, o sea a las reuniones tienes que darles un nombre ! [...] Eso me parece muy, muy curioso [...] Claro, le cuentas eso a alguien y dice: " Ay, los japoneses, ¡qué formales son! Les gustan las ceremonias". Eso es un tópico que hasta a los propios japoneses les gusta decir, no: "Es que somos muy ceremoniosos" [...] Eso sí es una diferencia muy importante.*

(Ah, look, one difference. I've noticed that things are more, they are more specified, they are more institutionalized, let's say, for example, hm, when you for a drink, a beer, well, you call someone: "Wanna go for a beer? You come for a moment?" Like this. But in Japan, they call this some *-kai* or the other. Don't they? *Nantokakai, nomikai*, like, you have to give these reunions a name! [...] I find this very, very strange [...] Sure, you tell someone and he'll say: "Oh, but how formal the Japanese are! They like ceremonies". That's a topic, even the Japanese like to say, you know: "We are very ceremonious" [...] That really is a very important difference.)

1

*O tamanho da casa. Nossa, esse quarto é menor do que o meu banheiro! Aqui, por exemplo, as pessoas do laboratório fizeram um churrasco, né, na margem de um rio perto do laboratório, né. Ai eu falei: "Nossa, que estranho, vão fazer na margem do rio, uma coisa esquisita". Ai me falaram: Por que, onde você faz o seu churrasco?" Eu faço: "Na minha casa". Nossa, aqui não tem espaço para isso.*

(The size of the houses. My God, this (my) room is smaller than my bathroom (in Brazil)! Here, for example, the people from the lab made a barbecue, you know, on the bank of a river close to the lab, you know. There I said: "Jesus, how strange, they are going to make (their barbecue) on the bank of the river, funny thing". And they asked me: "Why, where do you make barbecue?" And I'm like: "At home". Jesus, over here there's no space for such things.)

16

*Creo que lo de la comida es todo un tema [...] La comida es parte de quién tú eres culturalmente, de quién tú eres como persona. Y la carencia de ciertos elementos [...] es como que, que te afecta, no ? Los inmigrantes brasileiros o los inmigrantes peruanos, o los otros inmigrantes, cuando recién llegaron, en la década del 90, no tenían muchas de las redes sociales o muchas de las cosas que hoy existen. Yo me beneficio de los supermercados brasileiros porque hay muchas cosas en Brasil que nosotros en Argentina también tenemos, así que me parece que la comida es todo un tema que, para una persona que ha dejado toda su, todo, todo lo que le es familiar, no ? O sea tu casa, tu trabajo, tus amigos, tu familia, tu perro, tu gato, tu auto, tu, tu lo que sea [...] cuando has dejado a todo esto para ir a un lugar que es totalmente distinto, porque Japón es totalmente distinto, en muchos aspectos [...]*

(I think that food is quite a big topic [...] Food is who you are culturally, who you are as a person. And a lack of certain elements [...] like, like, it affects you, see ? The Brazilian immigrants, or the Peruvian immigrants, or other immigrants, when they had just got here, during the 90s, they didn't have as many networks or as many things that there are now. I benefit from the Brazilian supermarkets because there are many things in Brazil that we eat in Argentine, too, so I think food is quite a topic for someone who has left all his, everything, everything he is familiar with, right ? Like, your home, your work, your friends, your family, your dog, your cat, your car, your, your whatever [...] when you



have left all this to go to a totally different place because Japan is totally different in many aspects [...]

14

Private or emotional aspects of life in Japan are often viewed as negative by participants and criticized throughout the main literature. Japanese people are considered cold by many Latin Americans, Japanese society as closed (Del Castillo 1999: 184; Linger 2001: 88, 301). Labeling the Japanese as “cold” also includes the absence of physical contact. Touch is a sensitive issue and varies greatly from one culture to another (Hidasi 2005: 125; Tsuda 2006: 223). In Latin American cultures touching, hugging and kissing is considered essential and a normal part of non-verbal communication. For most Japanese, however, it can comport a sexual innuendo where in fact no is intended. The Japanese, on the other hand, tend to avoid displays of affection in public and will bow rather than hug for open display of emotion is not considered appropriate (Davis and Ikeno 2002: 116; Hidasi 2005: 126). Linger (2001: 88) pointed out that

*Differences in interaction style and etiquette [...] feed this Brazilian irritation. Japanese courtesy discourages direct personal inquiries, unless one knows the other well; Brazilians take personal inquiries as evidence of interest and desire for approximation. What may be respect from a Japanese perspective feels like rejection to a Brazilian.*

He further notes that this, perceived, excessive respect from the Japanese side can be very disturbing to Brazilians who, in doubt, prefer human warmth over respect. My sample confirmed these findings from the literature. One informant did not agree but pointed out that he did not consider himself very “Latino”; he thus confirmed the findings from the literature through negation. This is in line with my methodology: according to Kleining (1995; 1995a) affirmation can be reached through negation.

*Lo único malo son, sí, los japoneses que son, sí, a mí me gustaría que sean más, más como nosotros, no, que sean, más cálidos, más cariñosos pero [...] la gente es fría, fría, fría, fría.*

*—¿Fría en qué sentido?*

*—En amistad, no sé. Yo tuve amigas japonesas y no sé [...] No dan esa amistad que, que nosotros sabemos que es una amistad, que no importa lo que vos tengas, no importa si vos sós lindo, no importa si vos sós fea, no te importa [...] Yo veo a los padres que vienen a casa a buscar a las nenas, no le prestan atención a sus hijos. Puro trabajar, trabajar, trabajar, no se ocupan de los hijos. No les dan cariño. Entonces ellos se crían así, sin cariño, por eso será que son fríos, no saben lo que es, no tienes que tener contacto, como nosotros que nos abrazamos [...] Yo a mi hija la como a besos y ella está acostumbrada a eso! Ella viene y cuando sale del colegio me abraza y los chicos japoneses, no, nada, se quedan mirando.*

(The only bad thing are the Japanese who are, yes, I'd like them to be more, more like us, I don't know, more, warmer, more affectionate, but [...] people (here) are cold, cold, cold. -Cold in terms of what ?

-In terms of friendship, I don't know. I had friends, Japanese and I don't know [...] They don't give that friendship that, that we know is a friendship, where it doesn't matter what you own, whether you're beautiful or ugly [...] I see the parents who come to pick up the girls, they don't pay attention to their daughters. Only work, work, work, they don't take care of their kids. They're not affectionate. So they grow up like this, with no affection, that's probably why they're cold, they don't know what it is, you're not supposed to have contact, like us when we hug each other [...] I kiss my daughter all the time and she's used to it ! When she comes out of school she gives me a hug and the Japanese kids, no, nothing, they're just looking.)

26

*Como comportamento, eles são muito separados, não se abraçam, não se beijam. Eles são muito distantes.*

(In terms of behavior, they are very separated, they don't hug each other, they don't kiss. They are very distant.)

16

*Una cosa que me costó trabajo acostumbrarme es la falta de contacto físico con las personas aquí, por ejemplo cuando las personas se encuentran, eh, el contacto físico es muy poco [...] que me ha costado trabajo acostumbrarme.*

*-¿Cómo se comporta la gente acá comparado con México?*

*-Bueno, son muy, por ejemplo, en uno de los equipos de fútbol en que estoy hay dos peruanos y si alguien no está haciendo un buen trabajo nos enojamos entre nosotros [...] porque ese es el ambiente latino para el deporte [...] En cambio los japoneses no tanto. Yo cuando juego con los japoneses no, no se enojan, no reclaman y no se pelean. Una vez fui a un torneo, exclusivamente de latinos [...] bueno al final se pelearon [...] eran puros latinos, bolivianos, colombianos, peruano, algunos brasileños también. Nos peleamos [...] Entonces la agresión física es algo muy común, por lo menos en México.*

(One thing that has been hard for me to get used to is the absence of physical contact with people here, for example when people meet, eh, there's very little physical contact [...] which has been hard for me to get used to.

-How do people here behave compared to Mexico?

-Well, they're very...for example, for example, in one of the soccer teams I'm in there are two Peruvians and when one of us isn't playing well we get annoyed with each other [...] because that's the Latino sports environment [...] The Japanese, on the other hand, not very much. When I play with the Japanese they, they don't get angry, they don't complain and they don't fight. Once I went to a tournament with only Latinos there [...] well, they ended up fighting [...] only latinos, Bolivians, Colombians, Peruvians, some Brazilians as well. We got into a fight [...] So physical aggressiveness is very common, at least in Mexico.)

18

*Nossa, como é que eles nunca se abraçam, nunca mostram calor [...] No dia a dia os brasileiros são mais abertos, fazem mais amizades, conversam mais sobre qualquer tipo de assunto e, agora, já na cultura japonesa, não, os japoneses, eles não falam sobre tudo, eles não deixam com que você se aproxime com facilidade, não. E quando você conseguir a amizade de um japonês, a mentalidade daquele japonês não é como a mentalidade dos restantes japoneses, eles pensam um pouquinho diferente, geralmente um pouco mais aberto. Agora o japonês tradicional, na minha visão, ele é muito mais ligado à própria cultura. Eles se fecham pras outras pessoas. Então isso me dificulta.*

(Jeeze, why is it that they never hug each other, never show any human warmth [...] In daily life Brazilians are more open, make more friends, talk more about anything and in Japanese culture you don't, the Japanese, they don't speak about everything, they don't let you get close easily, you see. And when you do become friends with a Japanese his mentality is not like the mentality of the other Japanese, they think a little differently, generally a little more open. Now, a traditional Japanese, from my point of view, he's much more attached to his own culture. They close themselves to other people. So this causes me problems.)

27

*S: Que sean tñ solos. Tñ individualistas, ¿no?*

*C: Tñ fríos.*

*S: Sí. Tñ individualistas. Es que se niegan a expresarse. En mi vida ví a un japonés que se reía con esas ganas, con la novia y todo el mundo que los miraba. Yo decía: "Qué rico!", porque normalmente que (chuckles behind her hand). ¡Y les da pena! Esta mañana cuando venía ví a una japonesa y el esposo le dio un beso. Y yo: "¡Oh!" Y todo el mundo, claro (laughs), todo el mundo mirando.*

*C: Algo que yo no entiendo es, cuando decían de, de, de respeto [...] En Colombia por lo menos si un tipo manosea a alguna mujer o algo gente que no tiene nada que ver ayuda. Pero aquí no [...] A mí me tocó, un japonés me pegó en el tren. Hace dos años. Porque venía hablando de por el celular. Dentro del tren. Me pegó, me pegó un puño en el estómago. Que tenía que colgar el celular, que dentro de los trenes no se hablaba. Nadie me ayudó, nadie se me activó, nada, nada. Lo único que hice fue llevar un tarro de agua y me eché agua en la boca y luego se la tiré en la cara. Pero antes de bajarse [...] me pateó [...] Y ninguno. Todo el mundo leyendo su libro, todo el mundo como si nadie hubiera visto nada.*

*S: Lo que sí me pasó una vez, yo me caí. En la estación. Yo no me podía parar. Y nadie me ayudó, yo tuve que llamar a una persona que fuera por mí, yo no me podía parar, sí? Entonces muy patético pues no hay, todo el mundo pasa como al lado pero también les han enseñado que, que no acepten ayuda porque yo varias veces he visto a gente como mareada y yo voy y les compro agua igual pero como ellos son desconfiados.*

*C: Sí.*

*S: Ellos no reciben. No reciben. Igual yo no hablo en japonés pero quiero ayudar.*

*C: No están acostumbrados ni a recibir ni a dar. Que empezando que aquí en Japón no sea costumbre pedir favores porque el pensar de ellos es que un favor se paga toda la vida. Y siempre me lo dijo mi esposo y la familia de él que a nadie se molesta para favores ni nada. Todo el mundo en lo suyo y usted se defiende como usted puede [...] Porque me decía que cuando uno pedía un favor luego la gente se estaba aprovechando de ese favor que le había hecho a uno. Y siempre le tocaba a uno pagarlo infinidad de veces. Entonces el me decía: "Por eso no, no se molesta a nadie".*

*S: Sí, las personas son como desconfiadas así. Y más cuando ya ven que uno no habla el idioma, pues si es extranjero peor. La desconfianza crece, ¿no? [...] ese miedo al contacto.*

(S : They're so alone. Such individualists, you know ?

C.: So cold.

S.: Yes. So individualist, they refuse to express themselves. I only ever saw one Japanese who was laughing, having a good time, with his girlfriend, and everyone was watching them. I Said: "How nice", because normally like (chuckles behind her hand). And they are so embarrassed! This morning on my way here I saw a Japanese woman and her husband kissed her. And I was like: "Oh!" And everybody, of course (laughs), everybody watching.

C.: One thing I don't get is talking about, about, about respect [...] At least in Colombia, when some guy is groping a woman or something people who don't have anything to do with it will help. But here they don't [...] I had to experience it, a Japanese hit me on the train. Two years ago. Because I was talking on the phone. Inside the train. He hit me, he hit me in the stomach. Told me to hang up, that you weren't supposed to talk on the train. Nobody helped me, nobody did anything for me, nothing, nothing. The only thing I could do was to take my water bottle and put water into my mouth and then I spat it into his face. But when he got off the train [...] he kicked me [...] And no one. Everyone reading their books, everybody like they didn't see anything.

S.: What happened to me once, I fell. Inside the station. And I couldn't get up. And nobody helped me, I had to call for someone to help me, I couldn't get up, you see? So that was very pathetic because there isn't, everybody passing by, but they were also taught to, not to accept help because many times I saw people like dizzy and I'll go and buy water for them but since they're suspicious...

C.: Yes.

S.: They don't accept. They don't accept. I don't speak Japanese but I want to help.

C.: They aren't used to neither receiving nor giving. Starting from the fact that here in Japan it's not customary to ask favors because in their mentality you have to pay your whole life for one favor. My husband and his family would always tell me that nobody wanted to do favors or anything. Everyone for himself and you get on as you can [...] Because he told me that when you ask a favor people will make profit out of this favor they did you. And you'd always have to pay it back uncountable times. So he'd say to me: "That's why you don't, you don't bother anyone".

S.: Yes, people are like suspicious. And also, when they see that you don't speak the language, well, when you're a foreigner it's worse. Suspicion increases, you see ? [...] this fear of contact.

5 and 25

*Uma a gente já falou, né. Que aqui é bem, é bem mais fechado, né, e, o brasileiro é mais aberto, gosta de juntar as pessoas. Qualquer pessoa. O japonês tem aquela distância. Se precisa ir aos poucos, né. E demora até você conseguir, eh, aprender o jeito de lidar com japoneses, não espantar as pessoas, né.*

(We've already talked about one, haven't we? That over here it's very, much more closed, you know, and Brazilians are more open, they like to join people. Anyone. The Japanese have this distance. You have to take it slow, you know. And it takes time until you can, eh, learn how to treat the Japanese, not to scare people away, you see.)

13

*La forma de relacionarse creo que es muy diferente. O sea, en Uruguay es muy fácil hacerse amigos o hablar con cualquier persona. Aquí eso no sucede [...] Justamente por la forma de ser del japonés que es muy diferente.*

(I think that the way of building relationships is very different. Like, in Uruguay it's very easy to make friends or talk to people. Over here this doesn't happen [...] Because of the Japanese way of being which is very different.)

17

*[...] en México, cuando llegó un extranjero siempre le invitaban a su casa, ¿no? [...] si no entendían nada le explicaban con señas, no, es que aquí [...] no. Es como que no te invitan a su casa. No sé, son como cerrados, no te involucran, como que nunca vas a ser parte de una familia, de un grupo.*

([...]When a foreigner arrived in Mexico, people would invite him to their homes, you know [...] if they didn't understand anything they'd explain with signs, you know, but here [...] they don't. It's like they don't invite you to their homes. I don't know, they're, like, closed, they don't let you be a part, like, you're never going to be part of a family, of a group.

7

*Aaaah, gaijin urusai na...*

(Aaaah, foreigners are so noisy...)

(Elderly woman on the Keihin Touhoku line in Tokyo when listening to the animate conversation of three Brazilian girls; summer 2008)

Excessive group and status orientation were frequently-named negative social phenomena in the literature (Davis and Ikeno 2002: 77, 130; Del Castillo 1999: 157, 264; De Vos and Wagatsuma 1995: 123). According to Clammer (2001: 40) Japan is actually characterized by low levels of individualization, indicated by low levels of divorce, relatively little social mobility, a rigid labour market and low income differentials. Davis and Ikeno (2002: 10) argued that the social structure of Japan vertically organized with an emphasis on the individual's place within the group, with a clearly distinguishable rank or status, often based on seniority within the group. Similarly, the Japanese employment system is largely influenced by groupism and a mutual identification between employer and employees (Befu 2001: 26, 27).

*Even today, if a person's language, skin color, habits or appearance are different, many Japanese will regard them as soto, or outsiders, and will ignore them in order to live more easily in harmony among members of their own uchi groups [...] Because such distinctions, which can be deeply hurtful to outsiders, are often unconscious among the Japanese, in order to truly internationalize and become effective members of the world community, it is most important...to become conscious and aware of such elements [...]*  
Davis and Ikeno (2002: 219)

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Status orientation can be expressed as being overtly materialistic and excessively subordinated. Being shallow, two-faced (especially in the case of women), and generally not interested in a deeper friendship represent other points of criticism (Linger 2001: 72). My sample reflected these findings as the following excerpts will try to illustrate:

*Acá es muy materialista todo. Si vos no tenés algo, hm, no te puedes acercar a esa persona. Camila se llama mi hija, ¿no? Camila va al colegio y tiene amiguitas, ¿no? Y yo les digo a las amiguitas: “¡Vienen acá a la casa! Pero a Cami no le invitan a la casa. A jugar [...] No sé pero en Japón tienes que tener una casa [...] como para mostrarla. Ellos si viven en un departamento normal no te invitan porque dicen que les da vergüenza [...] Yo vivo en un departamento de la municipalidad, nada de lujo, nada, eh. Y yo las invito a casa a las nenas y vienen.*

(Here, everything is very materialistic. If you don't own something, hm, you can't get close to a person, My daughter's name is Camila, right ? Camila goes to school and has friends, you see ? And I tell her friends: “Come to my house!” But they never invite Cami. To play [...] I don't know, but in Japan you need to have a house [...] like, to show it. If they live in a regular apartment they don't invite you because they say they feel ashamed [...] I live in a welfare apartment, no luxury at all, eh. And I invite the girls home and they come.)

26

*Y lo que no me gusta es, en parte yo he visto mucho que tienen como una vida muy, por ejemplo en el caso de las mujeres, yo pienso, he visto que la vida es como muy superficial. Que lo baséan mucho en, no sé, por ejemplo en el dinero. Por ejemplo las novias que he tenido, la mayoría tienen novios nada más para que les den regalos. O para tener sexo. O para salir. Claro que también he tenido novias más sanas. Pero en gran parte es por el otro lado. También hay en mi país, no. Pero eso existe menos.*

(And what I don't like, that's partly, I've often seen that they lead a very, for example, the women, I think, I've seen that their life is very superficial. That they base everything on, I don't know, for example, on money. For instance, the (Japanese) girlfriends I've had, most of them have boyfriends just so they give them gifts. Or to have sex. Or to go out. Of course I've also had girlfriends who were saner. But mostly it's the other way round. This exists in my country, too, you see. But it's less.)

18

*Se visten de traje, todo elegante, y se creen, como dicen los mexicanos, la gran caca, pero luego viven en unos rabbit huts. Y ponen todo en cajitas, cajitas de plástico, y yo odio cajitas de plástico [...] Digo yo, en Argentina, si tienes tu ropa fuera del armario eres pobre. ¿Por que no se compran otro armario más? [...] Ellos comen y duermen en el mismo cuarto y luego los pedazos se caen en el tatami y, ay, qué asco, pero a ellos no les importa [...] Y son tán, tán hipócritas las japonesas. Cuando llega el cliente ponen toda su sonrisa falsa y to' pero si la miras después está toda (pone cara de malhumorado).*

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(They wear suits, all elegant, and they think that they are, how the Mexicans say, big shots (lit. “the great shit”), but then they live in rabbit huts. And they put everything into plastic boxes and I hate plastic boxes [...] In Argentina you are considered poor when you keep your clothes outside the closet. Why don’t they buy another one? [...] They eat and sleep in the same room and the pieces fall onto the tatami and, argh, how disgusting, but they don’t care [...] And Japanese women are so two-faced. When the client enters they put on their false smile and everything, but if you look at them afterwards they’re all (makes a very unfriendly face).)

14

*A primeira coisa que quando cheguei aqui me assustei foi quanto as japonesas se maqueiam. Elas usam muita maquiagem, assim pesada, sabe. No Brasil a gente não usa tanta maquiagem. Me assustei também com a roupa das japonesas, elas usam umas saias muito curtas. No Brasil não é comum usar umas saias assim. Outra coisa, as japonesas se protegem muito do sol, sempre com chapéu. No Brasil o sol é uma maravilha, quando tá o sol eu vou pra praia. Ah, os homens. Eles são muito femininos, o cabelo todo tirado pra cima, isso pra mim é muito vaidoso. Acho que o japonês liga muito pra aparência.*

(When I came here, the first thing I found astonishing was how much make-up Japanese women use. They use a lot of make-up, like, heavy, you know. In Brazil we don’t use that much make-up. I was also astonished about the way Japanese women dress, they wear really short skirts. In Brazil, it’s not common to use this kind of skirts. Another thing, Japanese women protect themselves very much from the sun, always with a hat. In Brazil, we love the sun, when there’s sun I’m off to the beach. Ah, men. They’re very feminine, with their spiky hair, to me that’s very vain. I think that the Japanese pay much attention to appearance.)

16

*[...] En México [...] tienes más comunicación, si te sientes solo, si te sientes triste tú sabes que cuentas con la familia. Pero aquí es como, son ellos solos, no [...] Eso es como que lo que más me ha impactado. Que menos me ha gustado. Porque es como una sociedad muy vacía. Aquí el único afecto que tengo es por parte de mi novio [...] otros japoneses, como que no es fácil que te inviten [...] son muy reservados, ¿no? Es como, no te hacen parte del grupo, no te hacen parte de una familia [...] Si algo les sale del control, ¡Dios mío se estresan (laughs)! Son como, como muy cuadrados. Muy cuadrados.*

([...] In Mexico [...] there is more communication, when you’re feeling lonely you know you can count on your family. But here it’s like, it’s just them, you know [...] That’s, like, what has affected me the most. What I like least. Because it’s like a very empty society. Here the only affection I get is from my boyfriend [...] other Japanese, like, it’s not easy that they invite you [...] they are very reserved, aren’t they? It’s like, they don’t integrate you in the group, they don’t make you part of a family [...] When something gets out of hand, my God, do they stress themselves (laughs)! They’re like, like very square-minded. Very square-minded.)

7

*[...] O grupismo. Você age em grupo. Eu acho que não é bom. No Brasil também tem grupos. Só que aqui no Japão isso é muito mais forte [...] Encontrei, por exemplo, no tren um colega de um kohai meu. Eu cumprimentei ele e ele fingiu que não tinha visto.*

-Por quê?

-Porque eu não tô no grupo dele.

([...] Groupism. You move as a group. I don't think it's good. There are also groups in Brazil. It's just that here in Japan it's a lot more pronounced [...] One day, for example, I met a mate of a *kōhai* on the train. I greeted him and he pretended that he hadn't seen me.

-Why?

-Because I'm not in his group.)

8

*El afecto, la comunicación entre las personas, ¿no? [...] porque el japonés está educado para agradar. En Chile estamos educados para vivir. No para agradar. Porque nosotros no decimos lo que el otro quiere escuchar por ejemplo. Nosotros decimos lo que nosotros pensamos. Esa es una gran diferencia. Que no hay que olvidar. El japonés está educado para agradar [...] A veces me cuesta y a muchas personas les molesta [...] Y a los japoneses les cuesta aceptar eso. Les cuesta aceptar que somos y pensamos diferente. El japonés es uniforme.*

(Affection, communication between people, you know [...] because the Japanese were brought up to please. In Chile we're brought up to live. Not to please. Because we don't say what the other person wants to hear, for example. We say what we think. That's a big difference. Which one shouldn't forget. The Japanese were brought up to please [...] Sometimes it's hard for me and many people don't like it [...] And the Japanese have a hard time accepting this. They have a hard time accepting that we are different and think differently. The Japanese are uniform.)

24

*Aqui, você precisa ter nascido aqui, morado aqui a vida inteira, tem que ser 100% de sangue japonês, se você não tiver as pessoas vão falar que você é half, né. Eu [...] tenho um amigo que a mãe é da Indonésia, o pai é japonês. Tenho um amigo que o pai é, eh, americano e a mãe é japonesa. Eles nunca saíram do Japão [...] mas sempre que os japoneses vão falar deles: "Ah, esse é o meu amigo, ele é half americano". Eles precisam identificar que a pessoa não é 100% japonesa [...] Então é, é um país complicado com esse tipo de pensamento de "nos e os outros". Isso não tem nada de bom, acho, esse tipo de, de pensamento. Só só pode trazer problema, né. Pra quem é diferente, pra quem tá de fora desse grupo que eles fizeram.*

(Over here, you have to be born here, lived here your whole life, be a 100% of Japanese blood, otherwise people will say that you are "half", you see. I [...] have a friend, his father is American and his mother Japanese. They never left Japan [...] but every time the Japanese talk about them: "Ah, this is my friend. He's half American." They have to make it clear that the person in question is not a 100% Japanese [...] So it's, it's a complicated country with this thinking of "we and the others". This isn't good at all, I think, this kind of thinking. It can only lead to problems, you see. For who is different, for who remains outside this group they created).

13

*[...] não importa se você trabalha em fábrica, se trabalha como jornalista, os japoneses vêm os estrangeiros de outra forma. Eles nos isolam de alguma forma. Eles nos colocam numa, como numa categoria aparte, infelizmente. Eu só me sinto parte dos, dum grupo de japoneses quando eles têm uma visão muito aberta [...] Mas dentro dum grupo de*

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*japoneses que tem a mentalidade bem tradicional, eu não me sinto aceita, não sei se sou aceita, né.*

[...] it doesn't matter if you work in a factory or as a journalist – the Japanese see foreigners differently. They somehow isolate us. Sadly, they put us into a, like a different category. I only feel like part of a group of Japanese when they have a very open vision [...] But inside a group of very traditional Japanese I don't feel accepted, I don't know if I'm accepted, you know.)

27

*Los tópicos para mí no tienen ningún sentido a veces. La preocupación del tiempo, te traduciría una conversación en un tren: Son las cinco. A las cinco y diez me tengo que bajar del tren. A las cinco y quinze tengo que estar en la tienda. A las cinco y veintidos tengo que estar en, eh, saliendo de la tienda.*

(For me, the topics have no sense sometimes. Worrying about the time, I'll translate a conversation in a train for you: "It's five o'clock. At ten past five I'll to get off the train. At five fifteen I have to be in the shop. At five twenty I have to be, eh, leaving the shop".)

24

*En realidad lo de ser puntuales pienso que es para trabajar. Todo está pensado para el trabajo, ¿no?*

(Actually I think that being on time here is for work. Everything is for work, isn't it?)

1

*Por ejemplo si estoy en Colombia es fiesta y tal cosa y, y aquí uno vive muy calma en ese aspecto, ¿no? Que se respeta eso. La privacidad se puede decir [...] La vida es muy distinta. Pero, por ejemplo, a mí no me gusta correr. Me encanta llegar puntual, entonces me levanto temprano, sí? Para no correr. Todo el mundo que pasa corriendo y se empuja y yo digo: "No, yo voy con tiempo" (laughs).*

(For example, when I'm in Colombia it's party and stuff and, and here you lead a very calm life in this sense, don't you? You respect this. Privacy, you can call it [...] Life is very different. But, for example, I don't like to run. I love to be on time, so I get up early, yes. In order not to run. Everybody passes by running and pushing each other and I say: "No, I take my time" (laughs).)

25

*Nossa, tem tanta diferença [...] O da regra. A regra é demais [...] É complicado porque, por exemplo, eu gosto de usar regata, né. As japonesas não usam aqui. Então eu fico na dúvida: respeitar as regras da sociedade e ser eu mesma? Quando cheguei aqui eu trabalhei resfriada e aqui eles usam máscara. Ai eu tentei usar máscara, falei vou respeitar a cultura, mas é ridículo, eu tirei. Não uso isso! Ai eu não sei, fico com a dúvida.*

– Por que tem problema com a regata?

*Porque tem muitas japonesas que usam uma blusa encima. Ai eu fico, sei lá, "É roupa de baixo", me falaram. É vulgar eu ouvi falar, que é vulgar. Sei lá (laughs)! [...] Ou, por*

*exemplo, quando eu usei uma roupa uma vez a minha professora de japonês falou que estava muito chique no, no Japão. Eu falei mas não é chique, é a roupa que eu uso pra trabalhar. Então ela apontou pra mim e perguntou pra cada um na sala se eu tava adequada no país deles. Isso foi muito horrível. Porque é uma exposição da minha pessoa que não precisava, sabe, como se eu fosse um bicho. Não gostei. Não gostei.*

(Jesus, there are many differences [...] The thing with the rules. Too many rules [...] It's complicated because, for example, I like to wear tank tops, you know. The Japanese here don't wear them. So there I wonder: respect the rules of this society or be myself? When I first came here I went to work with a cold, and here they use masks. So I tried to use one, I said: "I'm going to respect the culture", but it's ridiculous, I took it off. I don't use that! So there I don't know, I keep wondering.

-Why is wearing a tank top a problem?

-Because many Japanese women wear a blouse on top. There, I'm like, dunno, "It's underwear", they told me. It's vulgar, I heard people say, that it's vulgar. I don't know (laughs)! [...] Or, for example, when once I used a dress my Japanese teacher said that it was overdressed for, for Japan. I said: "But it's not too chique, it's what I wear to work". Then she pointed at me and asked everyone in the room if I was properly dressed in their countries. That was very horrible, because it's an unnecessary exposure of my person, you know, like I'm some kind of freak. I didn't like it. I didn't.)

16

*[...]Alguna otra diferencia que, por ejemplo, bueno aquí es necesario saber la edad de las personas al encontrarse, al conocerse. Porque de acuerdo a la edad pues se utilizaría un cierto vocabulario. Entonces los japoneses siempre preguntan pero yo quisiera le quiero preguntar a una persona primero: "¿Cuántos años tienes?" Cosa que, por ejemplo, en México no es un problema. Nos encontramos y podemos, conversamos por mucho tiempo y no saber la edad [...]Alguna otra diferencia [...]la forma de reírse, la forma de contar chistes. Como los cuentan, no, el estilo para, para contar algo que haga reír a todos. No sé cómo explicar.*

([...] Another difference which, for example... well, when you meet or get to know people here you have to know their age. Because based on their age you use a certain vocabulary. So the Japanese always ask but I don't want to ask a person first thing: "How old are you?" Which in Mexico isn't an issue. We meet and we can, we talk for a long time and don't know (each other's) age [...] Another difference [...] the way of laughing, of telling jokes. How they tell them, you know, their style of, of telling something that is supposed to make everybody laugh. I don't know how to explain.)

18

*O que eu não gosto, são muito rígidos [...] Onde não é necessário, a rigidez demais, né, que não tem razão de ser. Não faz sentido [...] Por exemplo, no laboratório, algumas vezes eles marcam determinadas, determinadas tarefas pra serem feitas e não precisam. Né, ou então não precisam de tanta gente pra fazer uma tarefa tão simples, só que o japonês, se é um grupo, todos têm de fazer um pouco. Vinte pessoas montam um armário, por exemplo, atrapalham (laughs). Né, duas ou três montariam muito mais rápido, só que tem que ser as vinte, entendeu? E todos têm de fazer um pouco, nem que seja só segurar um parafuso [...] Né, não adianta.*

(What I don't like, they're very rigid [...] Where it's not necessary, too rigid, you know, where there's no reason. It doesn't make sense [...] For example, in the lab they sometimes set dates to do some tasks and they wouldn't need to. You see, or they wouldn't need so many people to do such an easy task, just that the Japanese, if they're a

group, they all have to do a little. Twenty people build up a closet, for example, they just make confusion (laughs). You know, two or three would build it much quicker, it's just that it needs to be all twenty, you understand? And all of them have to do a little bit, even if it's just holding a screw [...] You know, it's no use.)

13

*Eles são muito, falando sinceramente, são muito rígidos. Pra nós é uma rigidez muito grande. Tem um jeito só de fazer [...] pra nós brasileiros é chocante (laughs). Porque a gente tem um jeito, muitos jeitos de fazer uma coisa. Então a gente se ajuda muito no Brasil, eu acho que em nosso país o vizinho ajuda muito, as pessoas são solidárias, são companheiras. Eu acho que o japonês é mais individualista, ele tem as coisas organizadas, tem de funcionar, ninguém precisa ajudar (laughs). Isso é difícil pra gente.*

(They are very, honestly speaking, they're very rigid. To us, they are extremely rigid. There's just one way of doing things [...] to us Brazilians it's shocking (laughs). Because we have, a way, many ways to do things. So we help each other a lot in Brazil, I think that in our country the neighbors help a lot, people stick together, they like companionship. I think the Japanese are more individualistic, everything is organized, has to work, nobody needs to help (laughs). That's difficult for us.)

21

*[...] não concordo com essa coisa da linguagem, dessa diferença de quando você fala com o seu superior, né, essa coisa de kohai, senpai, é esquisito. Eu acho que tem de ter respeito quando alguém tá em cima de você ou no trabalho ou numa universidade quando o seu professor fala, ele tem mais conhecimento do que você, mas até uma linguagem diferente pra conversar, né, você tem de se, eh, como e que se diz, não tenho a palavra, se rebaixar, você tem de mostrar que tá muito por baixo daquela pessoa. Então isso me incomoda. Eu acho, não acho certo.*

(I [...] don't agree with this language thing, this difference, when you talk to your superior, you know, this kohai, senpai thing, that's strange. I think you must have respect when a superior is speaking at work or your professor in university, he has more knowledge than you do, but even a different language to talk in, you know, you have to, how do say, I don't find the word, humble yourself, you have to show that you are way below this person. So this makes me feel uncomfortable. I think, I don't think it's right.)

27

## **Two Sides of The Same Social Phenomenon**

Everything in life usually has two or more facets. Social life and culture are no exception. According to Reed (1993: 25) different behavior in a given situation can be caused by three motives: the Japanese really are different; they are not but we don't fully understand the situation in which we would actually display similar reaction; we don't understand our own cultural conventions. Similarly, Befu argued that cultural differences are accentuated by selecting the most obvious in order to drive home the point of perceived difference. Perceived Japanese

groupism, for instance, would be an often named phenomenon, despite being contrasted and labeled as too simplifying (Clammer 1995: 113) because it “conveniently contrasts with the individualism of the West” (Befu 2001: 5). Linger (2001: 301) pointed out, Brazil is full of “human warmth” and mutual understanding. On the other hand, as my Brazilian participants repeatedly pointed out, promises are often not kept and organizational things do not work properly. Forero Montoya (2003: 17) argued that cultural associations can have two sides. My participants were critical and tried not to praise or to condemn one culture or the other. Instead, they often judged the same cultural, social or structural phenomenon as biased or two-sided.

*A mí sinceramente el tópico de que el latino como se da abrazos es más emocional y el japonés, pues, me parece un poco absurdo sinceramente. También puede ser porque yo no soy muy latino talvez. No me gusta.*

(Honestly, this topic that Latinos, since they hug each other, are more emotional, and the Japanese, well, I find it a bit absurd, honestly speaking. Maybe it's also because I'm not very Latino maybe. I don't like it.)

1

*A relação entre pessoas aqui é muito diferente. Eles são, eles são mais reservados, brasileiro não é [...] O comportamento do japonês é bem peculiar. Em varios aspectos. Eh, eh, não que seja ruim, eh, as vezes é ruim mas às vezes é bom [...] Em alguns aspectos é bom, em outros não. A mesma característica. Eles se esforçam em tudo. Tudo o que eles fazem é perfeito. O problema é que às vezes essa paranóia de fazer tudo tão certinho é ruim. Que tem certas coisas que não precisa ser certinhos. Eu já ouvi falar: o ambiente de trabalho é muito estressante porque eles acabam se estressando! E isso acaba estragando até a saúde, ou a pessoa se mata ou tem ataco cardíaco ou, e as vezes eles trazem isso ate pra vida pessoal [...] Uma coisa boa, por exemplo, que o brasileiro não tem e que o japonês tem é que o japonês planeja tudo com muito anteceder. Isso é bom. Só que às vezes é ruim porque não tem flexibilidade nenhuma. O brasileiro não planeja quase nada, em compensação às vezes consegue fazer tudo e não se estressa. O japonês se estressa por qualquer coisa. Então [...] tem o lado bom e o lado ruim.*

(Relationships are very different. They are, they are more reserved, Brazilians aren't [...] Japanese behavior is very peculiar. In various aspects. Eh, eh, it's not that this is bad, eh, sometimes it's bad but sometimes it's good [...] In some aspects it's good, in others not. The same characteristic. They make an effort in everything. Everything they do is perfect. The problem is that sometimes this paranoia to do everything so perfectly is bad. For in some cases you don't have to be so perfect. I've already heard: the working environment is very stressful because they end up stressing themselves! And this ends up affecting their health, too, either the person kills himself or he has a heart attack or, and sometimes they even bring this into their personal lives [...] A good thing, for example, which Brazilians don't have but the Japanese do, is that the Japanese plan everything beforehand. That's good. Only that sometimes it's bad because there is no flexibility. Brazilians hardly plan anything; on the other hand, sometimes they manage to do everything and don't stress themselves. The Japanese stress themselves for anything. So [...] there's a good and a bad side.)

*Cuando estoy aquí veo todas las cosas que digo: "No, no está como bien". Pero llego a Colombia y quiero estar aquí. Me hace falta el estrés.*

(When I'm here I see all the things where I say: "No, it's not, like, ok". But I arrive in Colombia and want to be here. I miss the stress.)

5

*Y a veces me ha pasado que, lo que me gusta también de Japón es que la gente es amable. Siempre te ayudan. Y yo como: "Ay, y quiero darle como un abrazo de agradecimiento", no. Porque, no sé, me brindaron 40 minutos para que yo pueda encontrar un sitio [...] Creo que pensaron: "¿Y a esa loca que le pasa?!" (laughs), como que soy muy escandalosa, emotiva (laughs). Tengo que aprender a controlar esa parte.*

(And sometimes it happened that, what I also like about Japan is that the people are friendly. They always help you. And I'm like: "Ah, and I want to hug him to say thank you", you know. Because, I don't know, they offered me 40 minutes of their time so that I could find a place [...] I think they thought: "What's wrong with this crazy one?!" (laughs), like, I'm very loud, emotional (laughs). I have to learn to control this part.)

7

*[...]o jeito de pensar deles, tudo tem o seu lugar preciso, bonitinho [...]Então eles estendem isso pra pessoa. Tu és de tal país, tu és de tal país, então eles não entendem que as coisas não precisam ser de uma caixinha certinha, entendeu. Então, como eu sei que eles pensam assim até entendo esse lado meio xenófobo de japonês: "Não, tu não és de aqui, és de outro lugar." Eu entendo isso. É assim, eh, eles gostam muito da previsibilidade das coisas. Quando eles conversam eles sabem como aquela pessoa vai se comportar. Um japonês, claro. Uma pessoa estrangeira, eles não sabem. Essa falta de previsibilidade, eles não gostam. Eu acho. Eles não se sentem tão confortáveis. Então, isso é uma coisa que eles poderiam melhorar. Eu acho. Tipo, saber que as coisas não são perfeitinhas sempre. Uma coisa técnica, de engenharia, uma estrutura realmente tem que ter. Tipo um parâmetro pra definir. Mas entre pessoas tu não precisa [...] Do lado do estrangeiro, a minha opinião pessoal é, se tu estar num país pelo menos a língua deveria falar. Ou me esforçar. Por exemplo, no meu caso, eu vim pra morar. Devo aprender a língua. Eu não preciso falar igual que o japonês. Mas eu preciso fazer me entender e entender. Então do lado do estrangeiro é uma boa entender, seria uma boa. Tu tá fora da tua casa, tá fora do teu país. E aprender a língua, tem de aprender, eu acho. Não é só uma questão de praticidade, no dia a dia, mas é uma questão de boa educação. Quando os japoneses foram pro Brasil, eu conheço japonês de 60, 70 anos que não fala português. Porque não quis aprender. Japonês reclama pro brasileiro, mas japonês quando foi pra lá fez a mesma coisa. Se a pessoa vai para outro país tem de assimilar os costumes do país porque não é o teu país, e aprender a língua. É uma questão de educação e de praticidade. Tentar se esforçar. Não vai vir de graça.*

([...] their way of thinking, everything has to be in its place, in order [...] They extend this to people. You're from this country, you're from that country, they don't understand that things don't have to be in fixed categories, you know. So, since I know that they think like this I even understand their kind of xenophob side: "No, you're not from here, you're from somewhere else." I understand. It's, like, they like things to be predictable. When they talk to someone they know how this person is going to behave. A Japanese,

that is. With a foreigner, they don't know. They don't like this lack of predictability. I think. They don't feel comfortable. So that's a thing they could improve. I think. Like, know that things aren't always perfect. A technical thing, in engineering, really has to have a structure. Like, a parameter to define. But with people you don't need this [...]

From the foreigners' side, my personal opinion is that that when you're in y country you should at least speak the language. Or make an effort. For example, my case, I came to live here. I have to learn the language. I don't have to speak like a Japanese. But I need to make myself understood and understand. So from the foreigners' side understanding is a good thing, would be a good thing. You're outside home, outside your country. And I think you have to learn the language. It's not just a matter of practicality, for everyday life, but it's a question of manners. When the Japanese went to Brazil, I know Japanese who are 60, 70 years and don't speak Portuguese. Because they didn't want to learn. The Japanese criticize the Brazilians but when the Japanese went there, they did the same thing. When a person moves to another country he has to assimilate the customs of this country because it's not your country, and learn the language. It's a question of manners and of practicality. Try to make an effort. It won't come for free.)

20

*La ética de trabajo a veces se pasa un poco, ¿no? En parte porque en mi país no hay, está la ética al revés, no, cuanto menos trabajes mejor [...]o sea por lo menos hasta que yo vine aquí el trabajo no era considerado bueno, cosa que aquí, o sea lo normal es que la gente se esfuerce y eche horas y, pero lo que pasa es que a veces es demasiado. Yo no porque si estoy cansado descanso y ya pero hay gente muy cercana que he visto que pues que acaban mal de la salud,¿ no? Eso me parece un poco triste [...]Entonces no sé, lo veo un poco, si lo sabes llevar bien está bien. Pero hay gente que se deja llevar por esa dinámica y bueno la pasan mal. Eso, pero eso también está cambiando. De una parte, pues, la crisis está viniendo bien (laughs). Para cambiar de mentalidad [...] Yo pienso que me adapto bien a los sitios. Intento no juzgar las cosas simplemente por, por la superficie. Cuando vuelvo a mi país siempre es que la primera semana estoy deprimido diciendo: "Ui, yo he venido al país del caos." Pero luego te acostumbras y ya sabes.*

(Work ethic is too much sometimes, isn't it? Partly because in my country there isn't, ethic works the other way round, you see, the less you work the better [...]like, at least until I came here, work wasn't considered something good, something that here, like, it's normal that people work hard and put in the hours and, but sometimes it's too much. For me it's different because when I'm tired I sleep and end of story but I've seen people close to me who, well, who end up being sick, you see? I find this a little sad [...] So, I don't know, I find this a bit, if you can deal with it, no problem. But some people get carried away by this dynamics and, well, they have a hard time. Well, but this is also changing. On the one hand...like, the crisis is serving a purpose (laughs). To change mentality [...] I think that I adapt well to places. I try not to judge simply on, on the surface. When I go back to my country, the first week I'm always depressed and say: "Ah, I've come to the land of chaos." But then you get used to it, you know.)

1

*[...] eu acho que os japoneses ainda são muito fechados, eles, têm uma certa resistência ainda com estrangeiros. Mas é engraçado: eu era assim também. Porque nunca tinha saído do Brasil na minha vida. E quando eu encontrava um estrangeiro no laboratório eu não ia conversar com ele. Tinha medo! Eu não achava o meu inglês suficiente pra conversar. Por isso eu não julgo os japoneses porque eu sei, entendo o comportamento. E pela primeira vez eu senti assim, a gente é muito parecido. Eu falei isso a minha mãe: "Mãe, a gente é tudo parecido, tudo humano. Tudo filho de Deus!"*

([...] I think that the Japanese are still very closed, they still have a certain resistance against foreigners. But it's funny: I used to be like this. Because I had never left Brazil in my life. And when I met a foreigner in the lab I wouldn't talk to him. I was scared! I didn't find my English good enough to have a conversation. That's why I don't judge the Japanese because I know, I understand their behavior. And for the first time I felt, like, we are very similar. I told this my mother: "Mother, we're all the same, all human. All God's children!")

16

As I have pointed out earlier, fundamentally oppositional cultural frames of reference hinder communication (Linger 2001; Ogbu 1995, 1995a): while for most Latin Americans the Japanese are cold or uptight, many Japanese find the newcomers noisy, disrespectful and potentially threatening. The way of talking more loudly and effusively than the Japanese, often attributed to Latin Americans, is part of the *habitus* and thus happens largely unconsciously. Nevertheless, it can be used as a marker to distinguish oneself from the negatively perceived leading society under certain circumstances. In this case it serves the purpose of emphasizing one's sense of belonging to a minority group and the identification with a cultural frame of reference, oppositional to the majority.

According to Esser (2006: 24, 26) the successful social integration of migrants is characterized by their being incorporated into the established system of the receiving society. This, I argue, is a two-sided argument. Just as the locals will have to make an effort to accommodate the newcomers, migrants are required a certain amount of tolerance toward the receiving society.

In any case, however, the ability to recognize social peculiarities and not judge them straight away as either right or wrong shows that my sample does not correspond to the picture of the uneducated *dekasegi* worker commonly drawn by media and literature. The capacity of critically reflecting extended from life in Japan to participants themselves as well as on fellow Latin Americans criticizing everything Japanese.

Language is thus a fundamental part of cultural capital. Speaking the language of the receiving society allows people to actively participate in social life and not be confined to their own ethnic community. Correct wording alone is not sufficient to successfully communicate with members of the receiving society (Hidasi 2005: 162). Language in the context of cultural capital promotes the understanding of social rituals and thus minimizes the migrant's feeling of being excluded from the

receiving society. Insufficient language proficiency, in this case in Japanese, leads to frustration on two levels: on a practical level for people are not able to function independently and even basic interactions can turn into insurmountable difficulties. Resentment toward the receiving society can be one consequence; self-hatred and a feeling of shame another. Being able to control one's own life is something people tend to take as a given until they find themselves in a situation where this control flees them for whichever reason. This feeling of disempowerment can lead to frustration on a psychological level and thus be the direct result from frustration concerning the practical aspects of daily life (Hidasi 2005: 159). This is in line with Bourdieu (1984: 103) who argued that the essence of communication is not to be found in the wording but rather in the social conditions that enable communication in the first place. A little more concrete perhaps, but pointing in the same direction, is Esser's (2003) claim that proficiency in the local language helps migrants feel accepted by the receiving society.

### **Abstract Findings**

I measured my participants' language ability through a combination of self-assessment, commonly used in second language studies (for instance Edmondson). I do not define language as such because in this study the most important point is general communicative competence. Proficiency in Japanese gave my participants the possibility to interact verbally, to communicate. This had practical implications on the one hand, for instance getting by in daily life without having another person translate. More important, proficiency in Japanese correlated with the feeling of social integration, active participation in Japanese society. Deficient Japanese proficiency had a negative impact on daily life, not least because my participants did not live in a place with a high concentration of Latin Americans. Practical aspects such as not being able to move independently led to a feeling of frustration. Ultimately, this frustration could turn into a feeling of shame for not being able to live up to local standards, but also into resentment against the Japanese. Participants whose Japanese was very rudimentary tended to have a more negative view of Japan and the Japanese. They either viewed everything Japanese as unintelligible and potentially hostile, or noted that this feeling was



likely to result, at least partly, from their own lack of linguistic and cultural knowledge.

Communication is a crucial and direct advantage resulting from language proficiency. However, the most important factor here was general communicative competence rather than linguistic perfection. As their proficiency in Japanese increased my participants grew more familiar with cultural peculiarities and gradually felt more secure and understood by the Japanese, not only in purely linguistic terms but also on an affective level. It conveyed a feeling of being socially integrated in Japan.

In both cases, my sample confirms the literature and sees eye to eye with Esser's view that language proficiency is the first and most crucial step toward successful social integration. I would like to add control as an abstract value linked to language proficiency. Control on both levels: the practical one, which involves getting by in daily life and not depending on others to run errands or perpetually translate for them. On a more abstract level language proficiency means having control over how and when to express one's feelings, wishes or criticism. In short, it means control over communication and a feeling of being part of society. Finally, language as cultural capital enables the accumulation of social capital in the form of social networks, an issue I will address in the following chapter.

Summarizing these findings we can say that

- a) Language proficiency is linked with the understanding of encoded markers of culture; i.e. cultural capital
- b) Cultural capital in the form of language facilitates communication and thus the accumulation of social capital
- c) Language proficiency conveys a feeling of being in control and part of society and thus contributes to social integration

On the other hand, deficient language proficiency

- a) hinders the understanding of encoded markers of culture and ultimately the acquisition of cultural capital
- b) a lack of cultural capital in the form of language results in deficient communication and thus hinders the acquisition of social capital

- c) leads to a sense of having lost control which ultimately hinders social integration

Following Esser's initial claim that language proficiency promotes professional success and ultimately social integration my findings are consistent. Nevertheless, I would like to modify the claim that a "good social position" is indispensable for the migrant in order to succeed and feel socially integrated. As I have pointed out before, other factors such as human capital play a role when achieving a "good social position". Also, not all members of the majority hold these positions. Especially in times of global economic crises and general instability status inconsistency has become common and is not limited to migrants as I have elaborated in the last chapter. I would thus modify "good social position" into "position according to a person's academic requisites, i.e. human capital". In this context, language is a tool. However, in this study I argue that social integration is not limited to people holding a "good social position". Put very simply, I can be a waitress and still feel accepted by society and lead a content life. Language proficiency will still be crucial but not so much for my professional forthcoming but for communication, for feeling part of the receiving society – for social integration.

I have argued that language influences thinking and is more than a mere tool (Hidasi 2005: 83). Concurring with Reed (1993) I have argued further that social reality and circumstances have a great impact on how we perceive things. This claim is generated by, and confirms, my empirical findings that cultural understanding is linked to language proficiency. As different concepts are expressed differently depending on the language they are perceived differently depending on the speaker which results in what is called cultural differences. I have argued further that structural and cultural aspects are interconnected or, in other words, culture is likely to have an impact on structure. Safety in Japan, to name just one, is certainly thanks to an extraordinary infrastructure; just as important, however, is the cultural context out of which the primary need for such structure arises. The Japanese tendency to organize society and everyday life can be said to lie at the root of functioning infrastructure for existing financial means do not automatically imply government to spend money on these things. Most

probable, I want to argue, is the combination of both: priority and financial means create the very-well functioning Japanese infrastructure.

Just as cultural differences can be perceived as either positive or negative, contrasts such as “open” versus “closed”, “multi-“ versus “mono -”, “warm” versus “cold”, “flexible” versus “inflexible”, can be interpreted both ways depending on the surrounding context. For example, “inflexible” can be perceived as negative in the context of somebody’s perceived inability to improvise, to be spontaneous. Inflexible timetables, on the other hand, are likely to be considered positive. Behind the admiration of organization lies a more profound need of stability. Most Latin American countries are quite unstable in terms of economic and social security, safety and politics (Alvito 2001; Méndez 2011; Moser and McIlwaine 2004; Pereira Leite 2008; Sánchez 2010; Strong 1992). This kind of environment puts considerable stress on the individual. Never knowing when or if one will reach either a physical destination or an abstract goal, not being sure whether the beloved ones will get home safely, whether tomorrow one will still be able to support himself and his family, whether one can trust not only politicians but also fellow citizens, all these factors create emotional strain (Tajima 2003; Linger 2001; Moser and McIlwaine 2004). Values such as punctuality, reliability, even school uniforms can be thus seen as an abstract need to cling to something stable, some sort of safety. Similarly, positive rating of cultural values such as honesty, politeness, and trustworthiness reveal a more abstract need of being able to rely on other people but also on the social environment one lives in – ultimately a further desire of stability. Stability it is what the following chapter is about, in form of social contacts and interaction with both Japanese and fellow Latin Americans.

## VII Social Capital: Beyond Marketability

Social capital can be considered the most recent form of capital in research. It started to emerge and gain in importance in the 1980s. Before, scholars had merely acknowledged the possibility to create capital through social relations, without, however, exploring the concept more in detail (Lin 2001: 21). French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu coined the terms of *habitus*, i.e. socially acquired qualities, and *social room*. Lin, professor of sociology, has investigated social capital and social networks. He rejects Robert Putnam's hypothesis that social capital in the United States is decreasing. According to his view, online networking helps increase social capital. US-sociologist Samuel Coleman used the term in the late 1980s to highlight the social context of education. For him, social capital carries the aspect of a social structure which facilitates the actions of and the interaction between individuals inside a group. Whether every structural aspect is a capital, according to Coleman, depends on whether it serves a function for individuals engaged in particular activities. For this reason, social capital is not fungible across individuals or activities. Social capital is thus the resources obtained from social relations fostered for the sake of future gains from the outcome of an event. Social actors engage in exchanges and transfers of these resources (Lin 2001: 23; Putnam 2000: 19).

Sociologist Bourdieu defined social capital simply as "relations", pointing out that ordinary language often described important social facts very poignantly. The construction and maintenance of social capital takes time and energy. Further, it can be converted into, or arise from, economic capital, in other words, social capital carries an economic innuendo as a production of the group's members (Bourdieu 1984: 55).

Sociologist Lin defined social capital as capital that is captured primarily through social relations, thanks to actors' connections and their access to resources in the social network they are part of. Potentially useful resources are embedded in social networks and can be accessed and used by actors for actions (Lin 2001: 19, 25).

Migration scholar Brian Keeley (2007: 102, 16) defines social capital as shared values and views that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and collaborate in a given society. Social capital consists of multiple layers made of

social contacts, memberships in different organizations, the feeling about society, among others.

The common factor all definitions share is the concept of social actors who are a part of social groups. These groups, in turn, constitute the resource called social capital. Social capital consists of resources embedded in social networks, accessible through direct and indirect ties or social relations. Lin (2001: 25) argued that access to these resources is temporary and borrowed in the sense that the actor does not possess them. They exist only as long as social relations exist. Building and keeping social networks requires constant work and effort but the individual is rewarded by greater chances to multiply cultural and economic capital (Putnam 2000: 19).

Lin (2001: 21) distinguishes two perspectives. The first focuses on individuals creating and using social capital, in other words resources embedded in social networks in order to gain or to preserve gains. An accumulation of individual returns can result in benefits for the collective, the social group. In his analysis Lin concentrates on how individuals invest in social relations and how they capture the embedded resources in the relations to generate a return.

The second perspective focuses on social capital at the group level, namely on how certain groups develop and maintain social capital as a collective asset and how such a collective asset enhances group members' life chances. The central interest of this perspective is to explore the elements and processes in the production and maintenance of the collective asset. The group provides members with collectivity-owned capital, which allows them credit. Capital in this form is represented by size of group and volume of capital.

In short, social capital possesses both a private, or individual, and a public, or collective, side (Lin 2001: 21; Putnam 2000: 20). In this study, I focus on the further, namely on the social relations Latin Americans in Tokyo maintain, if they do, with the Japanese.

## **Social and Human Capital**

Family and social ties can facilitate the accumulation of human capital through education, skills and knowledge. On the other hand, human capital induces social capital. Better-educated individuals tend to move in social circles rich in resources. According to this perspective, social capital can help put human capital into use (Lin 2001: 97; Putnam 2000: 20). Similarly, Keeley (2007: 105) argued that human capital and social capital are linked and that an absence of the former often coincides with an absence of the latter. I agree on the first point. If we define social capital as “knowing the right people” this assumption holds probably true for economically valuable contacts tend to be made within academic contexts or in the working place. However, if we define social capital as social ties that support the individual in his individual life sphere I propose a wider viewpoint. Putnam (2000: 18, 20) pointed out that social networks have value and that social capital creates companionship and support. He also warned that the concept of social capital should not be belittled or “interpreted as something sweet and cuddly for it can engender and sustain criminal activities as well as legal ones” (Putnam 2000: 21). Social capital has more effects on people’s lives than just a warm, friendly feeling: all forms of social connections, from schools to cultural centers, work better when surrounded by a feeling of togetherness (Putnam 2000: 27).

While I distance myself from the “cuddly”, idealistic side of social capital, I argue that social networks are important for everybody, regardless of his status as a migrant or a local. Migrants may benefit even more from informal structures and networks for these provide valuable information they would otherwise not always have access to. I argue, however, that the definition of “valuable” does not necessarily have to coincide with the economic connotation, thus measurable in financial terms. Depending on the researcher’s approach, social ties can be considered primarily social or human capital depending on whether or not the researcher considers social relations mainly valuable means to increase economic capital or facilitate professional forthcoming. Social capital can well translate into

information not necessarily valuable for strictly professional forthcoming but for everyday life (Brotherton and Salazar-Atias 2003: 200, 01; Faist 2000: 118). Social networks often provide more information than official ways. For example, the concept of “dar um jeito”, approximately “fix things” or “make things happen”, in Brazil implies that one has to rely on oneself and on others where official ways are blocked or hard to access. This can be linked to the working place, but in Brazilian Portuguese the expression is used various times per day which is an indicator for all the things that can be fixed thanks to social ties, thus for their importance. Similarly, official surveys found that more people secured employment through personal contact, i.e. social networks, than through official advertisement (Keeley 2007: 105; Putnam 2000: 20). The general consent among researchers of social capital is that it is the actors who make the production and maintenance of social capital possible. Like human capital, it is an investment on the part of the actors to increase the likelihood of success in purposive actions. Human capital requires investment useful in certain markets, for instance the labor market. Unlike human capital, which means investing in degrees, education, and certificates, social capital is an investment in social relationships and contacts through which resources of other actors can be accessed and borrowed. It can thus be seen as an investment in social relations useful in certain markets. Meeting after work, engaging in social activities such as attending dinners or having coffee together, and other informal forms of interaction can all be considered little investments in social capital (Bourdieu 1984: 194; Lin 2001: 25; Putnam 2000: 19, 93).

As I have pointed out before, the three forms of capital cannot be strictly separated. They are bound to overlap in some points. Lin (2001: 20) drew a parallel between social and human capital arguing that such investments could be made by the individual with an expected return. He named four crucial elements: information, influence, social credentials, and reinforcement.

According to this argumentation, social relations located in certain strategic or hierarchical positions can provide an individual with useful information about opportunities and choices otherwise not available. These relations, in turn, may inform an organization or a social community about the availability and interest of an otherwise unrecognized individual. Such information would reduce the transaction cost for the organization to recruit more qualified (be it in skill, or

technical or cultural knowledge) individuals, and for individuals to find organizations that can use and appreciate their capital and provide appropriate rewards.

Secondly, these social ties may exert influence on the agents (e.g. recruiters) who play a critical role in decisions (e.g. hiring) involving the actor. Thus, “putting a word” carries a certain weight in the decision-making process regarding the individual.

Thirdly, social ties, and their acknowledged relationship to the individual, may be conceived by the organization or its agents as certifications of the individual’s social credentials, in other words his social capital. “Standing behind” the individual by these ties reassures the organization that the individual can provide added resources beyond the individual’s personal capital, some of which may be useful to the organization.

Finally, social relations are expected to reinforce identity and recognition. Being assured of and recognized for one’s worthiness as an individual and a member of a social group sharing similar interests and resources not only provided emotional support but also public acknowledgement of one’s claim to certain resources. These reinforcements are essential for the maintenance of mental health and the entitlement to resources.

In this study, I focus on the social aspect of integration, that is social networks and spheres the individual moves in; they can, but do not have to be, linked to the work place. Accordingly, this chapter wants to emphasize social capital for the social integration of migrants, rather than social capital aimed at using social resources for professional purposes such as finding employment. For my research, Lin’s third and fourth points, social credentials and reinforcement, are thus the most important. Meeting for coffee or attending social events without potential economic or professional advantages is, I argue, just as valuable and important for the individual. Contact with the locals is considered a crucial indicator for social integration (Esser 2006); therefore I concentrate primarily on the presence or absence of social relations between Latin Americans and Japanese as an indicator for perceived social integration.

Putnam argued that a well-connected individual in a poorly connected community is not as productive as it could be; on the other hand, a poorly connected individual in a well-connected community can still benefit from collective social



capital. This, I argue is the case with Latin Americans living in Tokyo. Individuals are scattered all over the metropolis and the surrounding areas, one can find a higher concentration of Brazilians in Akabane, but there is no established community as, for instance, in Aichi or Gunma. The setting in Tokyo is therefore not comparable to large Latin American communities where individuals have the opportunity to foster close-knit intra-ethnic relations, but also carry the risk of losing potential ties with the Japanese. While social relations among Latin Americans of course exist, they are more random and individual-based than institutionalized, one exception being the Catholic mass in St. Ignatius, Yotsuya, for Spanish speakers. However, my own attendance as well as contact with Catholic participants has shown that social relations within this religious structure were also not institutionalized.

The following interview excerpts want to illustrate how social ties can facilitate an individual's adaptation to a new environment and his feeling of social integration despite of not being profitable from an economic point of view. While I am aware of the fact that it is difficult to connect a quote from an individual to a line of theoretic thoughts I argue that, depending on the culture an individual was socialized in, rituals of social bonding form an important part of daily life, even though they might not generate any immediate economic gain. I partly base my claim on Searle (1995) and on his view that social reality is man-made and therefore only facts by human agreement, in other words, because we choose to see things a certain way based on our social environment (Searle 1995: 1). Searle distinguished between institutional and non-institutional, or brute, facts (Searle 1995: 2). A different social reality can thus create different institutional facts and thus influence people's perception of social life and priorities:

*Aí quando eu vim a primeira vez a trabalhar aqui no Japão eu vim também pra conhecer o Japão, né. Saber o que era, então me esforcei pra aprender japonês. A vida na fábrica é muito difícil, se trabalha muito e depois do trabalho é difícil estudar. Então estudei um pouco mais acho que o quem mais me ajudou foi ter feito amizade com japoneses que trabalhavam comigo. Aí comecei a sair com eles, a conhecer os amigos deles, a frequentar as casas deles, né. Então vi um pouco como é a vida da família japonesa e aí aprendi um pouco, mas pouco também.*

(So when I came to work in Japan for the first time, I also came to get to know Japan, you know. Know what it was like, so I made an effort to learn Japanese. Factory life is very hard, you work a lot and after work it's difficult to study. So I studied a little but I think that what helped me the most was becoming friends with Japanese co-workers. So I

started going out with them, going to their homes, you know. So I got to know Japanese family life a little and I learned a bit, but just a bit.)

2

*Los latinos siempre tendemos como a, a contar siempre que es lo que sentimos, como nos sentimos, cualquier cosa siempre decimos lo que sentimos. Los japoneses no, ellos siempre encuentran algo como, no sé, el clima, el tráfico, la ropa, la comida pero hasta ahí. No es esa parte de “Bueno, ¿tú cómo te sientes?”, no, esa parte no la hablan. Su familia, su vida, es de ellos, ¿no? Y por una parte está bien pues finalmente es su vida, ¿no? Tal vez, eh, como latina esa parte que uno siempre necesita, ¿no? Para crear sus lazos o incluso para irse identificando, sola, triste, alegre, son momentos que tú siempre quieres compartir que sean malos o buenos [...] Por ejemplo yo me he sentido muy sola[...] sí, me he sentido sola lo que nunca en mi vida, no, no sé si eso sienta la demás gente. Ah, es como, es tan extraño, incluso yo no era de las personas que me deprimía, a veces siento como, como una extraña sensación de, de ansiedad y pero ¿por qué? [...] Lo estoy sintiendo, como, ay no quiero quedar sola, no, o sea es, qué me pasa? Me parece tan triste, tan frío [...] Es como [...] Como que también es mi personalidad. Yo necesito mucho apapacho.*

(Latinos always tend to, we always tell how we are feeling, what we are feeling, no matter what, we always say how we feel. The Japanese don't, they always find something like, dunno, the weather, traffic, clothes, food, but not any further. It's not like "Well, how are you feeling?", no, they don't tell this part. Their families, their lives, it's only theirs, you know? And in one way that's fine because, after all, it's their life, isn't it. Maybe, hm, as a latina, this is a part that you always need, you see. To build relations or even to identify yourself, lonely, sad, happy, these are moments that you always want to share, no matter if they're good or bad, you know? [...] For example, I have been very lonely [...] yes, I have been feeling lonely like never before, you see, I don't know if other people feel it. Ah, it's like, it's so strange, even, I wasn't a person who gets depressed easily, sometimes I feel like, like a strange feeling of, of anxiety, but why? [...] I'm feeling it like: "Ah, no, I don't want to be alone", you know, like, it's, what's wrong with me? I find it so sad, so cold [...] It's like [...] Like, it's also my personality. I need much human warmth.)

7

## **The Influence of Attitude on Social Relations**

In the previous chapter I have discussed cultural differences. I have also argued that it can depend on the person how these differences are perceived or interpreted, and that knowledge, or at least consciousness, of different social realities is necessary to understand people's motives and their actions. Consequently, the reaction to perceived cultural differences is likely to vary. To spend time together and share personal aspects of one's life with others is a fundamental concept of Latin American culture as a whole. These informal gatherings may generate

valuable information and connections, social capital, even though they might not always result in tangible assets such as higher income.

Perceiving the Japanese as “different” could indeed hinder the creation of social ties. How far this perception influenced social relations largely depended on the degree my participants disapproved of certain behavioral discrepancies. It was thus about judging cultural differences as negative rather than about merely acknowledging them. Among the perceived negative qualities was a different perception of friendship, of leisure, and of communication. However, after investing some time and effort in the acquisition of cultural knowledge, often in combination with language acquisition, my participants also reported improved understanding of, and major tolerance toward Japanese cultural peculiarities:

*Tenho pouquíssimos amigos “japoneses japoneses”. Acho que com os estrangeiros posso ser mais sincera, eh, brasileiro faz muita brincadeira, né. Não só brasileiro mas estrangeiro em geral. Com japoneses essa brincadeira às vezes pode não ser entendida. Podem ficar ofendidos, podem simplesmente não gostar. Por isso (com japoneses) deixei de fazer brincadeira. Especialmente brincadeira sexual. No Brasil se faz muito brincadeira assim. No Japão, eles levam essa parte muito a sério.*

(I have very few “real Japanese” friends. I feel that I can be more honest with foreigners, hm, Brazilians like to joke, you see? Not only Brazilians but foreigners in general. Japanese sometimes don’t understand these jokes...they can feel offended, or not like it. That’s why I stopped joking with Japanese. Especially sexual jokes. In Brazil you make many jokes like that. In Japan, they take this part very seriously.)

11

*Sí, tengo amigas japonesas. Pero como que no puede eso ser una amistad, no sé, no me siento como que, si nunca te van a decir las cosas de frente. No van a ser sinceras. Tengo un montón de conocidas, digo conocidas porque para mi no son amigas. Las amigas están en Argentina. Y conoces a una persona y, y te está preguntando así de tu vida personal para después contárselo a otro y y otro y para mi eso no, no me sirve. Me paso un montón de veces con japonesas así, como que no, vistas, no sé, se meten en tu vida o quieren acercarse a vos para sacarte de, no sé, para hablar mal después de vos. Entonces, no [...]Amigas latinas, sí [...]Salir con, con los japoneses a mi no me gusta porque vaya donde vaya siempre tienen que tomar, fumar y [...]A mi me molesta eso [...]pero así es. Y salir con latinos, sí, para mi es mucho más divertido [...]Los japoneses, ir a tomar, ir a un karaoke. Los que yo conocí me parece que sí, terminó así.*

–¿Y con los latinos ?

– Salimos a comer, vamos así a un restaurante, familiar, no a los iya..

–¿Izakaya?

–Ajá. A mi no me gustan mucho. No comes casi nada (laughs) y fuman y toman y es un ambiente que yo: “¡Argh!” [...]Y encima, si tenés que pagar por todos los que tomaban (laughs). ¡Y yo no tomaba nada ! [...]Sí, me parece que hay una gran diferencia entre los, salir con los japoneses y salir con, hm, mucho no salgo pero lo poco que salgo, sí.

(Yes, I have Japanese friends. But, like, this can't be a friendship, I don't know, I feel like, if they will never tell you things straightforward. They are not going to be honest. I have a ton of acquaintances, I say acquaintances because to me they aren't friends. My friends are in Argentina. And you meet somebody and, and this person asks you about your personal life in order to tell all the others and, not for me, I don't need that. It happened many times with Japanese women, like, you know, dunno, they get into your life or want to get close in order to, dunno, to speak ill of you later. So, no [...] Latina friends, yes [...] Going out with, with the Japanese, I don't like it because no matter where you go, they always have to drink, smoke and [...] I don't like it [...] but it's like that, and. And going out with Latinos, yes, for me it's much more fun [...] The Japanese, go out to drink, to a karaoke. I think that with the ones I know, it ended up being was like this.

-And with Latinos?

-We go out to eat, like, to a restaurant, not to the iya...

-Izakaya?

-Uhum. I don't like them very much. You hardly eat anything (laughs) and they smoke and drink and it's an environment that I'm like: "Argh!" [...] And apart from this...you have to pay for everything they had (laughs). And I didn't drink anything! [...] Yeah, I think that there is a big difference between the, going out with Japanese and going out with, hm, I don't get out much but the few times I do go out, yes.)

26

*—O quê é diferente quando você sai com japoneses?*

*—Eles são mais fechados. Eu acho que assim, conseguir amizade com um japonês não é fácil. Eles demoram para poder confiar em você, né. Você precisa, acho que é um tempo maior [...] Eu senti isso também, no laboratório [...] A gente fala, mas é o círculo do trabalho, são os amigos do trabalho [...] Não sei. No Brasil os meus amigos do laboratório são os meus amigos mesmo, sabe. Aqui somos colegas do trabalho, colegas da faculdade. É diferente.*

(-What's different when you go out with Japanese?

-They are more closed. I think that, like, becoming friends with a Japanese isn't easy. They need time until they trust you, you see. You need, I think, more time [...] I've felt this also in the lab [...] We talk, but it's work, they're friends from work [...] I don't know. In Brazil, my friends from the lab are my real friends, you know. Here, we are colleagues from work, from university. It's different.)

16

*Tengo contacto con mi familia que son japoneses, tengo contacto con algunos amigos japoneses pero muy poco. Porque también he estado siempre trabajando con extranjeros [...] Japoneses muy pocos, tengo pocos amigos [...] Yo creo que ellos son [...] son un poco especiales porque ellos tienen interés por otras culturas, o porque les gusta la música latina entonces hay un tópico, hay un tema de conversación pero [...] después mantener un contacto es muy difícil. Conocí a mucha gente pero normalmente es una vez que los conozco y nunca más. Sobre todo japoneses. Creo que [...] claro con los japoneses [...] ellos conocen más lugares entonces quizás hay mucho más, más margen de diversión que con los latinos. Ellos conocen muy pocos lugares y normalmente vamos siempre a los mismos lugares, entonces quizás esa sea la única diferencia. Después lo que es la diversión me parece que no hay grandes diferencias.*

(I am in contact with my family who is Japanese, with some Japanese friends, but very seldom. Also because I've always worked with foreigners [...] very few Japanese, I have

only a few friends [...] I think they are [...] they're a bit special because they are interested in other cultures, or because they like Latin music, so we have a topic, a subject to talk about but [...] keeping in touch is difficult. I've met many people but, but normally I meet them once and never again. Especially Japanese. I think that [...] of course with the Japanese [...] they know more places, so there are more, more options than with Latinos. They know only a few places and usually we go to the same places, so maybe that's the only difference. In terms of amusement, I think that there are no big differences.)

17

*Olha [...]no início, não, era difícil [...]Então eu freqüentava alguns lugares aqui no Japão que têm relação com o Brasil. Bares brasileiros ou então capoeira, essas coisas. E [...]nesses lugares sempre encontro japoneses que, que gostam do Brasil, que querem falar português [...]se consegue lidar mais facilmente e daí fui fazendo amizade, né, fui aumentando o número de amigos [...]E vai crescendo, vai crescendo assim, né. Se conhece um, essa pessoa te apresenta mais três e aí vai [...]Brasileiro, sei lá, brasileiro gosta de coisa mais agitada, eh, a maioria dos brasileiros não curte as coisas que o japonês gosta, tipo japonês gosta de sair, beber alguma coisa e karaoke [...]Brasileiro prefere sair pra dançar ou então sair para, né, por exemplo cinema, eu acho que só fui ao cinema aqui com, com, com brasileiro, com latino [...]Brasileiro gosta de juntar, sei lá, oito pessoas e todos pro cinema, ver um filme e depois ir pra um restaurante. Mas acho diferente, né, o tipo de coisa. Brasileiro gosta de coisa mais agitada, mais barulhenta, né, o japonês daquela coisa mais quetinha [...]Quando cheguei aqui eu queria muito fazer amizades, só que eu não conseguia. Era impossível porque eu não falava muito bem japonês e o meu jeito de ser com os japoneses também espantava eles, era muito aberto, sabes, muito, muito rápido pra eles (laughs). Mas hoje, hoje é fácil [...] o meu jeito já mudou, né, já consigo, já comunico, não é comunicar a nível verbal, mas o jeito de ser mesmo, né, não se espantam, têm interesse e acabam querendo, né, conversar. É bem diferente, hoje é fácil.*

(Look [...] at first, you see, it was difficult [...] So I went to some places here in Japan that have a relation with Brazil. Brazilian bars or capoeira, things like that. And [...] there I always meet Japanese who like Brazil, who want to speak Portuguese [...] you get into contact more easily and from there I started making friends, you see, I started to have more friends [...] And it increases, that's how it increases, you see. You get to know one person, this person introduces you to three others and there goes [...] Brazilians, dunno, Brazilians like more lively things, eh, most Brazilians don't like the things the Japanese like, like, Japanese like to go out, have a few drinks and karaoke [...] Brazilians prefer to go out dancing, or go, you know, for example to the movies, I think that I went to the movies only with, with, with Brazilians, with Latinos [...] Brazilians like to round up, dunno, seven, eight people, and all go to the movies, watch a movie and then go to a restaurant. But I think it's different, you see, a different kind of thing. Brazilians like more more lively, more noisy things, you see, Japanese like quieter things [...] When I first came here I wanted to make many friends, but I couldn't. It was impossible because I didn't speak much Japanese and my way of treating the Japanese also scared them, I was very open, you know, very, very fast for them (laughs). But nowadays, nowadays it's easy [...] I've changed my ways, you know, now I can, now I communicate, it's not communication on a verbal level but the way of being, you know, they don't get scared, they are interested and end up wanting, you know, to talk. It's very different, today it's easy.)

13

*En general no salgo mucho pero si salgo quedo con Julio. Bueno, es japonés pero es uruguayo (laughs). Gente así. Y luego ya alguna vez con alumnos, alumnos ya mayores y tal pero eso muy, muy, muy ocasionalmente [...] Pues el japonés medio, imagino, es más ir al karaoke, y el gaijin más, más de ir a discotecas, o kurabu como dicen aquí.*

(Generally I don't go out, but when I do I meet with Julio. Well, he's Japanese but he's Uruguayan (laughs). People like this. And sometimes with students, older students and stuff, but very, very, very seldom [...] Well, the average Japanese, I guess, prefers karaoke and foreigners clubs, or *kurabu*, how they call it over here.)

1

*Tenho, bastante. Da universidade [...] Mesmo fora da universidade tenho bastante contato mas [...] ultimamente mais com estrangeiros. Nos dois primeiros anos principalmente tinha bastante amigos japoneses.*

*-O que você acha diferente quando sai com japoneses?*

*- Acho que as conversas são diferentes, acho que os estrangeiros, depende do grupo, mas fica muito na questão de ser estrangeiro no Japão. E as coisas que gosta, ou não gosta. Com japoneses, é os pais deles e os meus amigos da universidade falam muito sobre a universidade. O estrangeiro não, tem uma vida mais de estudo e festa. Então as conversas são diferentes.*

(I have several friends. From university [...] I also have contact outside uni but [...] lately more with foreigners. During the first two years I had mostly Japanese friends.

*-What do you think is different when you go out with Japanese?*

*- I think the conversations are different, I think that foreigners, it depends on the group but it's usually about the question of being a foreigner in Japan. And things that you like, or don't like. With Japanese, it's about their parents and my friends from uni talk a lot about university. Foreigners don't, their life is more about studying and partying. So the conversations are different.)*

2

*Mundos a parte porque yo termino mi trabajo y me voy a mi casa. Los japoneses, por más que tengan familia, terminan su trabajo y se van a jugar [...] Existe una palabra para identificar estar con la familia. Es *kazoku sabisu*. Servicio a la familia. Entonces la familia es para el fin de semana. Cuando un japonés tá en la oficina y le dice al otro “¿Qué haces este domingo?” “Ah, este domingo *kazoku sabisu*.” Quiere decir que este domingo se lo hay que dedicar a la familia. Un deber. Un deber. Algo que hay que hacer. –¿Y tienes amigos japoneses?*

*–Muy pocos. La verdad, soy una persona muy directa. Por eso tengo pocos amigos.*

*–¿En general o japoneses?*

*–En general [...] Es una forma de vivir. La vida es muy corta para hacer demasiadas cosas que no quieres hacer [...] entonces no necesito muchos amigos [...] Cuando nos encontramos con japoneses hablamos mirando hacia el futuro, proyectos y cosas nuevas [...] Cuando nos encontramos con latinos, generalmente [...] como es la vida, un poco update de lo que pasa en el día a día de cada uno. Sí, pero me parece que no tengo muchos amigos latinoamericanos [...] Pero [...] cuando veo gente que habla español siempre me acerco, trato de ayudar, trato de tener contacto.*

(Worlds apart for I finish work and go home. The Japanese, even though they have a family, finish work and go out [...] They have a word for saying that they spend time with the family. *Kazoku sabisu*. Family service. So the family is for weekends. When a

Japanese at work says to another: "What are you doing this Sunday?" – "Ah, this Sunday *kazoku sabisu*". That means that he has to dedicate this Sunday to his family. A duty. A duty. Something he must do.

-Do you have Japanese friends ?

-Very few. Actually, I'm a very direct person. Therefore I have few friends.

-In general or Japanese ?

-In general [...] It's a way of life. Life is too short to do things you don't want to do [...] so I don't need many friends [...] When we meet with Japanese we talk much about the future, projects and new things [...] When we meet with Latinos, in general [...] how is life, a little update of what's going on. Yes, but I don't think I have many Latin American friends [...] But [...] when I meet people how speak Spanish I always get close, try to help, try to have contact.)

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*S: Mi esposo es el único porque igual como yo no hablo el idioma, y mis suegros. Pues, lo que hablamos son cositas así, mi suegro, mi suegro. Porque mi suegra no habla. O sea, mi esposo me dice que ella está enferma [...] ]que la vida de antes era muy taihen. Y que ella cayó en un estado depresivo [...]Y que era muy difícil antes, con los hijos. O sea, ¡son dos hijos! [...]Y yo le dije: "Yo levanté a seis hermanos. Me quedé sin papá y sin mamá". Ella se hubiera muerta en una situación de esas, ¿no? Igual me lo explicaba que era así, que antes era muy difícil.*

*C: Es que la sociedad, gorda, que la sociedad los consume! Las leyes, las norma, entre ellos.*

*S : Pero, ¡por Dios!*

*C : Porque yo tengo a muchas amigas japonesas. Que ya cuando están con los japoneses, obviamente son japonesas. Y se tienen que meter en la norma de ellos y [...] que la mujer se tiene que sentar de tal manera, reírse, taparse, ser una señorita. Pues igual en Colombia somos señoritas pero igual no nos cohiben tanto como aquí [...]No sé, porque les dices: "¡Vamos a tal..!" - "Ah sí, está bien." O sea, ellas no opinan. Ellas no dicen: "Yo quiero ir a..."[...]*

*–¿Y eso es diferente con amigas latinas?*

*–Sí. Sí, sisí. Todas decimos: "No pues, no que vamos a ir a Harajuku, vamos a otro lado" [...]Esto y lo otro pero se discute, en cambio ellas no. Donde usted diga está bien (cynical) (laughs).*

*S: [...]Yo he asistido a reuniones con japonesas. Tienen una forma muy particular, la fiesta de ellos por ejemplo, la comida, hablan entre ellos y ya.*

*C: Sí.*

*S: Rumba, trago y baile y, y ríanse pero no, si no se conocen todos...*

*C: No se hablan.*

*S: No se hablan.*

(S : My husband is the only one because since I don't speak the language...And my in-laws. Well, we talk about little things, my father-in-law, my father-in-law. Because my mother-in-law doesn't speak. Like, my husband tells me that she's sick [...] that her life used to be very *taihen*. And that she fell into a state of depression [...] And that it used to be very hard, with the kids. Like, there's two of them ![ ...] And I told her: "I raised six siblings. I lost my dad and my mom": She would have died in a situation like this, wouldn't she ? But nevertheless he explained me that life before used to be very difficult.

C : It's this society, girl (literally "fatty", but used as "girl" for friends), it destroys them ! Laws, norms, among each other.

S : But good Lord !

C: Because I have many Japanese friends. When they are together with Japanese, obviously they're (act like) Japanese. And they have to fit their norm and [...] that a

woman has to sit in a certain way, laugh, cover her mouth, be a lady Well, in Colombia we're ladies as well, but we're not as oppressed as they are here [...] I don't know, because you tell them:" Let's go to...!" –"Ah, ok. It's fine." Like, they don't have opinions. They don't say:" I want to go to..." [...]

-And this is different with Latina friends?

-Yes. Yes, oh, yes. We all say:" Well, no, let's not go to Harajuku, let's go somewhere else" [...] this or that, but you discuss it, but they don't. Whatever you say is fine (cynical) (laughs).

S: [...] I went to gatherings with Japanese. They have a very special way, their parties, for example, the food, they talk a little and that's it.

C: Yeah.

S: Rumba, booze and dancing and, and laughing, but no, if they don't all know each other...

C: They don't talk.

S: They don't talk.)

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*Yo creo también que en Japón la gente no, ni siquiera entienden que la cultura juega un papel muy importante en la vida de las personas y que no es simplemente establecer una ley, que todo el mundo debe conducirse de cierta manera y que a partir de ahí él que no se conduce de cierta manera va a sufrir un castigo. Porque la vida de los seres humanos no funciona de esa manera. Entonces, este, esperar que alguien se comporte como el resto de los japoneses no siendo, no habiendo sido socializado en esta cultura, eso me parece irreal, no es posible. Uno puede incorporarse ciertos elementos de la cultura, pero nunca va a incorporar toda la cultura. Porque al incorporar toda la cultura uno deja de ser uno mismo [...] Entonces me parece que es irreal, yo creo, yo creo que lo que sucede es una negociación donde tú, dónde tú dejas ciertas cosas de tu cultura, este, incorporas cosas de la cultura en la que te estás incorporando y rechazas otras [...] Entonces, yo creo que si tú haces una negociación en todos modos el resultado es siempre un, un tercer lugar, ¿no? [...] Yo negocio cosas aquí, negocio cosas en Estados Unidos y negocio cosas en Argentina también porque hay aspectos de la cultura argentina que tampoco me agradan.*

(I also think that in Japan people don't, even, don't understand that culture plays a very important role in people's lives and that it's not simply about establishing some law, that everybody has to behave a certain way and that, starting from there, who does not behave this way will be punished. Because human life doesn't work like this. So, well, to expect that a person behave like the rest of the Japanese, despite this person not being, not having been socialized in this culture, it seems unreal to me, it's not possible. One can adopt certain elements of this culture, but he or she will never adopt the whole culture. Because by adopting the whole culture one stops being who he or she is [...] So this seems unreal to me, I think, I think what happens is some form of negotiation where you, where you leave some aspects of your culture, like, you adopt aspects of the culture you're adapting to and reject others. So I think that if you negotiate...anyway, the result is always going to be a third place, right? [...] I negotiate things here, I negotiate things in the United States and I also negotiate things in Argentine because there are aspects of the Argentine culture that I don't like either).

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## **Abstract Findings**

I have argued previously that attitude and the acknowledgement of different social realities is crucial for understanding different cultures and putting up with behavioral differences were rooted in different socialization patterns. This is in line with Keeley (2007: 61) who argued that attitude is a crucial part of promoting understanding among members of different cultures. Among my participants social relations were primarily about contact on a private level and about feeling integrated in Japanese society. Transforming these connections into economically valuable resources was not a pressing issue. While contact with Latin Americans constituted an important part of social ties, it was contact with the Japanese that positively influenced the overall attitude toward Japan. In a circular constellation, a positive attitude toward Japan helped create social bonds and increase contact with the Japanese.

Scholars of migration studies and of related fields, such as education or social science, consider contact with members of the receiving society as a crucial factor for social integration (Beuchling 2003, Esser 2003, Ogbu 1995, 1995; Tajima 2003). My findings confirm these studies. I argue that social ties with the locals are influenced by two main motives:

- a) Degree of language proficiency
- b) Attitude toward perceived cultural differences

In the first case, few social contacts with members of the receiving society are caused primarily by insufficient command of the local language. People might not lack the interest or the desire to interact and enter into social relations with the local people. Rather, their lacking proficiency in the local language impairs the construction of deeper-running social ties. These findings confirm the findings from my previous chapter, namely the importance of language proficiency for social integration and cultural knowledge which, in turn, leads to a more positive attitude toward the receiving society. My sample has confirmed that it is often a lack of language proficiency, rather than lack of interest, that makes people refrain from searching actively contact with members of the receiving society.

The second case is motivated differently. Despite sufficient command of the local language people do not feel compelled to meet or create social relations with

members of the receiving society because they perceive certain cultural traits as *negatively* different. As I have shown in the previous chapter, cultural differences can be perceived in different ways depending on the individual. People can perceive these differences but do not have to judge them as an obstacle to social relations.

I have argued that attitude and the acknowledgement of different social realities are indispensable for understanding different cultures and dealing with behavioral differences were rooted in different socialization patterns. This is in line with Keeley (2007: 61) and Varela (2005: 79) who argued that attitude is a crucial part of promoting understanding among members of different cultures. As Keeley (2007) argued further, attitude is a crucial factor for intercultural knowledge and understanding. My findings confirm this claim. While language proficiency is important for creating and maintaining social ties with members of the receiving society, it is not the only factor. Attitude plays an important role and can make people actively look for contacts despite of limited command of the local language. This, in turn, positively influences the process of language acquisition. These findings are in line with Esser's (2003) definition of social integration. Different researchers (Bourdieu 1983, 86; Keeley 2007; Lin 2001; Putnam 2000) claimed that human and social capital are interconnected and that an absence of the further often coincides with an absence of the latter. I agree on the first point. If we define social capital as "knowing the right people" this assumption holds probably true for contacts tend to be made within academic contexts or in the working place. However, if we define social capital as mainly social ties which support the individual in his individual life sphere I do not agree. The absence of human capital can still mean a fulfilled life embedded in a satisfying social structure as my sample has shown. For as provocative as it might sound, aspirations in life do not have to be the same for everyone. An individual can live in a given society, be an active part of it and fulfill the criteria for counting as "socially integrated" (see Esser 2003), all without disposing of a large amount of human capital or a high-profile career. According to the same perspective, educated people are more socially engaged because of skills, resources and inclinations. These predispositions, in turn, promote the accumulation of economic capital.

I have argued in this chapter that social capital does not always have to directly result in economic benefits in order to constitute a valuable resource. Improved language proficiency acquired through social ties can facilitate professional forthcoming and ultimately increase economic capital, not considering the possibility of status inconsistency. Thus, not immediately valuable social connections to members of the receiving society can result in ultimate economic improvement. The opposite case occurs when cultural capital in form of language translates into social capital in form of social relationships that would otherwise be impossible or at least greatly impaired, as I have shown in this chapter. I argue that the less “profitable” side of social capital deserves as much attention as its “valuable” counterpart when researching social integration. Especially in the age of globalization, stable employment on a high level is not the norm anymore; status inconsistency has become a wide-spread phenomenon instead, as I have argued in the previous chapter. Economic and emotional instability, resulting from unstable employment and from ever increasing, often imposed, flexibility, make social networks more important than ever before. Talking about the purely financial “value” of these networks bears the risk, I argue, of becoming somewhat cynical apart from being one-dimensional. An important part of feeling at home and socially accepted in a new country is a solid social network. I argue that social networks do not always have to translate into “useful connections” in economic terms. Emotional support in form of social networks, kinship and transnational communities can constitute a very valid and useful resource for the individual, especially for a person living in a foreign country are indeed a form of social capital.

## VIII: Discussion

*Yo creo que todas esas situaciones que te he comentado [...]no tienen que ver con la calidad humana de la gente, sino me parece que tienen que ver con las circunstancias ideológicas del momento. Pero si tu le ofreces otra cosa la gente la gente cambia. Y eso hace que los inmigrantes tambien cambien. En este sentido, lo que yo pienso que es la mejor cosa que le podría pasar a la gente japonesa es poder observar de primera mano otras realidades.*

(I think that all these situations that I have told you about [...] don't have anything to do with the quality of human beings, but with the ideological circumstances of the moment. But when you offer people something different, people change. And that makes the immigrants change, too. In this sense, I think that the best thing that can happen to the Japanese is to observe different realities first hand.)

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This last interview excerpt sums up what I have been arguing throughout this study, what I have encountered in countless situations in both positions, that of the researcher and that of the foreigner in Japan. We are all conditioned by the social circumstances we were brought up in, by cultural, social, economic constraints. Nevertheless, people change over time and under different circumstances as do their (cultural) values and convictions. Or rather, values and convictions might have been the same all along, but circumstances dictate whether or not, and if to what degree, people can act upon them.

This study has investigated the factors that were relevant for my participants to feel socially integrated into Japanese society. The methodological approach has been a qualitative-empirical. My participants' feeling of being socially integrated into Japanese society was conditioned by three factors: language proficiency, attitude, and motivation. I measured my participants' language ability through a combination of self-assessment, commonly used in second language studies (see Edmondson 2001). Language proficiency in the context of this study means primarily overall communicative competence. I therefore have not defined language itself. Japanese proficiency gave my participants the possibility to interact verbally, to communicate. This had practical implications on the one hand, for example not needing an interpreter in daily life. Apart from this, most important, language proficiency correlated with the feeling of being socially integrated, an active part of Japanese society. According to Ogbu (1995a) and Ogbu and Simons (1998), immigrants can overcome cultural and linguistic differences by first defining them as barriers and as a next step try to overcome by

learning about and understanding the differences. This, I argue, requires a high amount of cultural capital as well as a conscious effort. As with many challenging questions in migration studies, it is difficult to tell what comes first: whether a positive attitude toward Japan promotes language learning (integrative motivation) or whether sound language skills promote a positive attitude. I argue that the two are interconnected and cannot be told apart.

In this context emerges the third factor which was generated from the interviews: motivation.

Motivation is considered a crucial component for both social integration and language learning (Beuchling 2003; Edmondson 1999; Edmondson and House 2000; Ogbu 1995, 1995a; Riemer 1997). Hidasi (2005: 160) and Michalowski and Sneer (2005:5) have named motivation along with individual skills as two determining factors for successful language acquisition and resulting social integration. Riemer (1997: 10) has defined motivation as the function of attitudes toward the target language and country.

We can distinguish between integrative and instrumental motivation (Gardner). Three main factors relevant for my participants feeling of being socially integrated in Japan have emerged: motivation, language proficiency, and attitude toward Japan. We have to consider that these three factors are interconnected. We thus have a circular, not a linear, constellation.

The interviews have shown that higher proficiency in Japanese was linked to the feeling of being socially integrated because it promoted social interaction, not only on a verbal but on a cultural level. Accepting cultural differences and the desire to become part of Japanese society, in turn, promoted integrative motivation. Which leads to the third factor: the attitude toward Japan and the Japanese culture.

These three factors influence general communicative competence (or put differently: general communicative competence includes the three factors relevant for the feeling of being socially integrated), much more relevant than high linguistic accuracy for my sample. In other words, language acquisition combined with the desire to understand Japanese culture and its inhabitants were more important in this context. Very advanced speakers of Japanese did not feel better integrated than those whose proficiency was conversational. What both had in common been the desire to communicate with the Japanese, on a practical level,

i.e. in daily life, and in order to understand Japanese cultural values and norms. General communicative competence thus contributes to my participants' feeling of being socially integrated for it opens up the possibility for social interaction. In this context we have to remark that social contacts are hard to measure (Putnam 2000), not least because social reality is not one-dimensional. I agree. What was relevant for this study was the possibility to interact socially with the Japanese. This possibility results from language proficiency. Against the background of the three capitals and Esser's grouping of language as human capital we can say the following:

Factors such as education or profession, which both fall in the sphere of human capital, did not correlate significantly with my participants feeling socially integrated into Japanese society. The absence of human capital can still mean a fulfilled life embedded in a satisfying social structure. Cultural capital and social capital were more important for the feeling of social integration. As we have seen, a high amount of human capital does not necessarily lead to the acceptance of cultural differences while and thus lead to social friction. A person with limited academic education on the other hand, can still be socially integrated.

I have grouped language primarily under cultural capital for the learning and speaking of a different language always bears cultural implications (Gardner). This newly acquired cultural capital, i.e. the ability to interact verbally and to act according to cultural norms (culture) results in social capital. This, in turn, is manifest through social contacts and the possibility to interact socially and gain access to social networks which would have remained closed otherwise.

Going back to Esser's definition of social integration I share two points, namely language proficiency and social contacts with the receiving society. I question, however, the favorable social placement in terms of housing, occupation, and so forth. In the age of status inconsistency these are not phenomena regarding exclusively migrants; they rather occur in every stratum of a given society.

Finally, I want to remark once more that a qualitative study does not claim to be universally representative. Qualitative research questions the criteria valid in quantitative research, namely reliability, validity, and representativity, because according to Flick the understanding of reality of the two directions is too different. Triangulation, or according to Kleining variation of methods, in this case participant observation combined with qualitative interviews, shall contribute

to broaden understanding. On the other hand, a deductive approach would miss the different spectra within the research object (Flick 2006). Putnam argued that for gaining insights within social context small empirical studies are necessary in order to get an overview over a complex social situation through their combination. The area of the social integration of migrants is complex and not easy to research. Relatively objective and measurable criteria such as income, education, or social prestige surely help define integration into the system: whether or not an individual pays taxes, has what Esser called a favorable social position, etc. However, these criteria do not define the feeling of individual social integration. Social context influences the individual and his behavior; empirical research looking for omnivalid causalities does not consider this. According to Flick, Kleining and Silverman the research of social contexts and realities requires a high degree of sensitivity (Silverman: "it is to suggest that there are areas of social reality which such statistics cannot measure"), in combination with theoretical knowledge.

I have aimed at painting a different picture from what is known as "*nanbei rōdōsha*", namely a poorly educated person from Brazil and of Japanese ancestry. In this study I have tried to document social reality and living conditions of a much stereotyped and homogenized migrant group and show the actual variety in nationality, educational and professional status and private situation. This study is relevant for it tries to broaden the horizon in the field of migration, with the case of Latin Americans in Japan, and possibly contribute to understanding the deeper mechanisms that ultimately trigger migration when economic reasons alone are not sufficient to explain for not all people under the same conditions choose to leave. Therefore, this study hopes to raise sensitivity toward the thematic and investigate an already known topic from a so far little considered perspective.

As I have tried to show in **Motives to Come to Japan**, the motives my participants named for migrating were more varied than the literature would suggest. Most participants were considered middle class in their countries of origin, meaning that they were not forced to come and work in Japanese factories due to unbearable economic hardship.

Not the classical *dekasegi*, the variation in educational background and professional situation reflected the variation in their motives to come to Japan.

Apart from the variety of nationalities, the educational level was heterogeneous and did not correspond to the stereotype of the poorly educated factory worker.

I have chosen Tokyo for my fieldwork, not one of the well-explored places centered around factories. Tokyo as the locus of research is a quite unique location. Unique in the sense that in Japan Latin Americans tend to cluster in factory towns, one of the reasons they are perceived as uneducated blue-collar workers. Comparing empirical research on Latin Americans in two such towns, with a similar percentage of Latin Americans living there, we could find parallels or rule them out. Also, there being no Latin American community, people in Tokyo are forced to learn Japanese at least to a certain degree. We have seen that successful language acquisition and a positive attitude toward the receiving society correlate.

The question that arises from this analysis is: what does my sample of Latin Americans in Tokyo tell us about social integration, not only in Japan but also in a broader, non-Japanese, context? This study hopes to help understand the mechanisms of feeling socially integrated, not only in the Japanese frame. Following, I want to briefly summarize my findings and try to put them into a structure.

I have first given an overview on migration theory throughout different academic fields and tried to give an overview on relevant theoretical concepts not necessarily linked to migration studies. The theoretical frame work is not connected to any specific country for migration is a global phenomenon. Concepts such as cultural frames of reference or life chances (Dahrendorf 1979; Ogbu 1995, 1995a) are not connected to a determined ethnic group, either. Differences in social reality are also manifest in theoretical models, mostly centered around North American or Western Europe viewpoints. The researcher has to be aware of this conceptional difference when applying theoretical concepts to different social arenas.

The same holds true for the methodology employed in this study. Being a qualitative approach, this methodology aims at discovering new connections and social realities rather than interpreting well-known facts and situations. My research does not commence with a hypothesis that is confirmed or ruled out during the investigation process. Since this study has an ethnographic focus, interviews are at the core of my research. While a qualitative study may not be



overly relevant in terms of size, smaller studies with an anthropological or an ethnographic focus are necessary to understand whom it actually concerns: the very people we research. I am aware of the fact that a qualitative study cannot claim universality; yet, it can help deepen understanding of the underlying mechanisms of migration, as Putnam (2000: 23) suggested.

### **Human Capital**

Human capital is an expression of both the social environment the individual was raised in and the chances he has to acquire and apply human capital in his social and cultural sphere (Spring 2009: 38). Formal education is without a doubt the key which opens many doors on the labor market, not only for migrants. I have argued, however, that a less than prestigious professional position does not have to be an impediment to social integration.

My participants' academic ambitions and the motivation to acquire human capital were strongly influenced by the perceived current living circumstances both in the home countries and in Japan. Prevalent was the desire to improve life and life chances based on the comparison with the structural and social chances offered in their home countries. Other (empirical) studies in different social contexts show similar results (Beuchling 2003; Linger 2001; Margolis 1994; San Miguel 1997).

In the case of my participants there was no correlation between the level of education and the feeling of social integration, that is participants with an unprivileged background did not feel more or less integrated than their highly educated counterparts. These findings do thus not correspond to Esser's claim that a prestigious social position is crucial for social integration, at least not in terms of people feeling accepted by the receiving society. On the other hand, nowadays a member of the receiving society can just as well not fulfill this criterium, for example working in an unstable position he is overqualified for and being forced to live in a less than prestigious neighborhood.

### **Cultural Capital and Differences**

I have further emphasized the importance of language proficiency for successful social integration. According to Esser's definition of social integration migrants' final position in the receiving society is defined by their acquisition of skills such as language and education. Esser focused especially on language as the most

decisive step toward social integration. Similarly, Ogbu argued that a minority's language situation lets the researcher deduct more general information (Ogbu 1995a: 279). Speaking the language of the receiving society allows people to actively participate in social life and not be confined to their own ethnic community. I have argued that learning a foreign language for professional forthcoming, thus as a mere instrument or tool, does not have to go hand in hand with understanding the cultural mechanisms behind the language in question. This is why in this study I have included language in the sphere of cultural, rather than human, capital. Mastering the language of the receiving society promotes independent life and, ultimately, leads to a feeling of ease and of being accepted by the receiving society. This dualism shows the connection between a fulfilled life and communication. In fact, this study is concerned not with linguistic accuracy but with general communicative competence. Whether we include language proficiency in the sphere of human or cultural capital, it is likely to increase chances on the labor market *and* in everyday life. On the other hand, sound language proficiency can increase social ties and thus generate more social capital. I have argued that social ties with the locals are influenced by two main motives, language proficiency and the attitude toward perceived cultural differences.

Insufficient language proficiency is likely to impair the construction of deeper-running social ties and resulting aversion against the receiving society. My sample has confirmed that it is often a lack of language proficiency, rather than lack of interest, that makes people refrain from searching actively contact with members of the receiving society. Again, it is important to notice that the possibility to interact socially plays a greater role than linguistic accuracy. The most proficient participants in this study were not the ones who felt most integrated into Japanese society.

As I have tried to show, cultural differences can be perceived in different ways depending on the individual. People can perceive these differences but do not have to judge them as an obstacle to social relations. In this context, I have argued that attitude and the acknowledgement of different social realities are indispensable for understanding different cultures and dealing with behavioral differences were rooted in different socialization patterns. I concur with Keeley (2007: 61) who argued that attitude is a crucial part of promoting understanding

among members of different cultures. As Keeley (2007) argued further, attitude is a crucial factor for intercultural knowledge and understanding. My findings concur. While language proficiency is important for creating and maintaining social ties with members of the receiving society, there is still another factor. Attitude plays an important role and can make people actively look for contacts despite of limited command of the local language. This, in turn, positively influences the process of language acquisition.

Despite the existence of oppositional cultural frames (Ogbu 1995a), where the values and behavioral patterns of the minority are directly oppositional to the majority's cultural frame and often the two groups criticize, or even despise, each other (Del Castillo 1999: 298; Jenkins 1997; Linger 2001: 39, 88; Ogbu 1995: 196), attitude and culture do are not immutable factors but can, and often do, change when the individual is exposed to different social reality (Reed 1993: 30, 32). The receiving society has to make concessions in the accommodation process, just as migrants are required tolerance toward the receiving society.

Especially in the age of globalization; I argue, we need this capacity, I would call it a skill even, which can be marketable and fit the category of human capital but not only. Cultural differences are being more and more accentuated often resulting in conflict, sometimes violent (Estermann 2006: 317). In the case of my sample, the ability to recognize social peculiarities and not judge them straight away as either right or wrong shows a capacity of critical reflection which does not correspond to the picture of the uneducated Latin American *dekasegi* worker. My participants, migrants and thus drops in the worldwide migration flow, were able to differentiate, to accept cultural difference and co-exist with it.

Finally, I have questioned the claim that social capital has to be related to human capital and that the presence of one necessarily enables, or hinders, the other. Different researchers (Bourdieu 1983, 1986; Keeley 2007; Lin 2001; Putnam 2000) claimed that human and social capital are interconnected and that an absence of the further often coincides with an absence of the latter. I agree on the first point. If we define social capital as "knowing the right people" and take social capital as a synonym for potentially beneficial contacts in terms of economic capital and influence this assumption holds probably true for contacts tend to be made within academic contexts or in the working place. I argue, however, that social capital as a provider of emotional stability and security in

daily life, made of networks and social ties which support the individual in his individual life sphere, bears an important value despite not being measurable in financial terms. A person can be part of various social networks and dispose of a number of contacts independently from his amount of human capital. I argue that there are factors other than “marketability” which determine a satisfying social structure and provide a place in society. For as provocative as it might sound, aspirations in life do not have to be the same for everyone. An individual can live in a given society, be an active part of it and fulfill the criteria for counting as “socially integrated” (see Esser 2003), all without disposing of a large amount of human capital or a high-profile career. Also, human, and ultimately economic capital, can arise from apparently “unmarketable” social ties.

Improved language proficiency acquired through social ties can facilitate professional forthcoming and ultimately increase economic capital, not considering the possibility of status inconsistency. Thus, not immediately valuable social connections to members of the receiving society can result in ultimate economic improvement. Similarly, cultural capital in form of language can become social capital in form of social contact. I argue that the less “profitable” side of social capital deserves as much attention as its “valuable” counterpart when researching social integration. Stable employment on a high level is not the norm anymore; status inconsistency has become a wide-spread phenomenon. Economic and emotional instability, resulting from unstable employment and from ever increasing, often imposed, flexibility, make social networks more important than ever before. Talking about the purely financial “value” of these networks bears the risk, I argue, of becoming somewhat cynical apart from being one-dimensional. Apart from measurable factors such as a privileged social position and high income, there are more subtle, subjective factors to social integration which is why I have addressed to it as to the feeling of being socially integrated. An important part of feeling at home and socially accepted in a new country is indeed a solid social network. This, as this study has tried to show, can be positively influenced by general communicative competence, integrative motivation, and a positive attitude toward the receiving society and its cultural and social values.

## Glossary

### Japanese – English

曖昧 – *aimai* - ambiguous, vague

ありがとう *arigatō* - thanks

幕府 – *bakufu* – shogunate

便所 – *benjo* – colloquial for toilet, approx. “loo”

長男 – *chōnan* – first-born son of a family

駐在員 – *chūzaiin* – expatriate, person sent abroad mostly through his employer, with according visa arrangements

出稼ぎ – *dekasegi* – “to leave home and make money”, refers to temporary workers who move to a different region of Japan or to a another country

出る釘は打たれる – *deru kui ha utareru* – the outsticking nail will be hammered down – Japanese proverb

富国強兵 – *fukoku kyōhei* – rich country, strong army

外人, 外国人 – *gaijin, gaikokujin* – foreigner, „person from outside“ ; the colloquial *gaijin* can be used with a despective edge

ご飯 – *gohan*

家 – *ie* – house, home, household ; central concept in Japanese social order

いじめ – *ijime* – severe form of bullying, mostly in schools

一攫千金 – *ikkaku senkin* – become wealthy fast

行く – *iku* – to go

移民会社 – *imingaisha* – immigration company

以心伝心 – *ishin denshin* – tacit understanding, has a slightly telepathic, mystified touch

一世 – *issei* – first-generation Japanese

いただきます – *itadakimasu* – “I help myself”, used before eating

居酒屋 – *izakaya* – Japanese-style bar where not only drink but food is served ; popular after-work meeting point

-会 – *-kai* – denominates events or reunions of different kinds, i.e. *nomikai* (see below), *undōkai* (sports meeting), *sōbetsukai* (farwell party)

家族サービス – *kazokusābisu* – “service to the family”, used by salarymen referring to dedicating time to the family on weekends  
 危険 – *iken* – danger, dangerous  
 帰国者 – *kikokusha* – returnee  
 緊張する – *kinchō suru* – to be excited, anxious  
 汚い – *kitanai* – dirty, filthy  
 きつい – *kitsui* – exhausting, tough, tiresome  
 後輩 – *kōhai*  
 この野郎 – *kono yarō* – aprox. “Hey, you!”  
 空気を読める – *kūki wo yomeru* – “to be able to read the air”, often used in Japanese to denote a sensitive person who knows when to speak and what to say without being told or explained anything  
 明治維新 – *Meiji ishin* – Meiji Restoration, 1868  
 難しいです – *muzukashii desu* – “this is difficult”, can imply rejection  
 内地人 – *naichijin* – mainland Japanese as opposed to *uchinanchu*, or Okinawans  
 南米労働者 – *nanbei rōdōsha* – worker from Latin America  
 何とか会 – *nantoka-kai* – some kind of social reunion or event  
 飲み会 – *nomikai* – “drinking event”, often semi-formal after-work reunions held in *izakaya*  
 懐かしい – *natsukashii* – dear, missed  
 日本で働くブラジル日系人 – *nihon de hataraku burajiru nikkeijin* – Brazilians of Japanese descent working in Japan  
 日本人論 – *nihonjinron* – body of theories and treatise on the Japanese and their alleged uniqueness ; the concept is alimented by both Japanese and foreign, mostly Western scholars, alike. *Nihonjinron* exists in two versions nowadays, an academic and one dedicated to the main public and largely available in book stores throughout Japan (Befu 2001).  
 二階 – *nikai* – first floor  
 日系人 – *nikkeijin* – Japanese or of Japanese descent, born outside Japan  
 二世 – *nisei* – second-generation Japanese

お弁当 – *o-bentō* – traditional Japanese lunch box  
お先にどうぞ! *O-saki ni dōzo!* – After you!  
お休みなさい – *Oyasumi nasai!* – Good night!  
六階 – *rokkai* – fifth floor  
旅館 – *ryokan* – Japanese-style inn, often family-owned  
三世 – *sansei* – third-generation Japanese, the last generation to be eligible for a visa based on Japanese ethnicity  
専門学校 – *senmongakkō* – technical or vocational school  
先輩 – *senpai* – one's senior at work, in school, university, in a sports circle, or in any kinda of formal or semi-formal arrangement (see *kōhai*)  
渋い – *shibui* – dark, gloomy  
将軍 – *shōgun* – commander  
少々お待ち下さい – *Shōshō o-machi kudasai* – please wait a second  
すみません、日本語分かりません – *sumimasen, nihongo wakarimasen* – I'm sorry, I don't speak Japanese  
立ち食いそば – *tachigui soba*  
大変 – *taihen* – terrible, hard, tough  
トイレ – *toire* – restroom  
とか – *toka* – and so forth  
うち向け – *uchi muke* – inward tendency  
うちなんちゅ – *uchinanchu* – person from Okinawa as opposed to naichijin, mainland Japanese  
四世 – *yonsei* – fourth-generation Japanese  
残業 – *zangyō* – overtime

## Spanish – English

Quieres *hanbun*? – Do you want half?  
Ay sí, *arigatō* – Oh, yes, thanks  
Tú eres una niña – You are a girl

### **Portuguese – English**

*Colônia* – ethnic enclave

*Cultura de malandragem* – culture of cunning/ swindle

*Dar um jeito* – “make things happen”, arrange things,

*Dekassegui* – lusophonized version of dekasegi

*Japão*– Japan

*Japonês* – Japanese – used to denominate Brazilians of Japanese descent

*Jeitinho* – inventive, cunning way of doing things, not always strictly legal

*Malandro* – hedonistic petty criminal, often black and of lower social class, who manages to avoid heavy work thanks to living life with *jeitinho* and within *cultura de malandragem*. The *malandro* is widely mentioned and often celebrated in samba lyrics and popular music; however, not as black person but as the personification of Brazilian national character (Sansone 2000: 179).

*Olho puxado* – “slant eye” – used to denominate Brazilians of Asian descent

*Saudade* – Feeling of longing, missing, can refer to people, places, situations

*Senso comum* – common sense



## **Cuestionario/Questionário/Questionnaire**

1. Por cuáles motivos vino usted al Japón? / Por quais motivos você veio ao Japão?  
/ Why did you come to Japan?
2. Cuáles son las diferencias entre la vida en su país y la vida en Japón ? / Quais são as diferenças entre a vida no Brasil e a vida no Japão ? / Which are the differences between life in your country and life in Japan ?
3. Cuáles son los aspectos de la vida en Japón que le gustan? / Quais são os aspectos que você gosta da vida no Japão ? / Which aspects do you like ?
4. Y cuáles no? / E quais não? / And which not?
5. Por favor, describa un día típico aquí, desde la mañana hasta la noche. / Por favor, descreva um dia típico aqui, de manhã até a noite. / Please describe a typical day here, from morning until night.
6. Cuáles son sus contactos con japoneses? / Quais são seus contactos com japoneses? / Which are your contacts with the Japanese ?
7. Cuáles son las diferencias entre salir con latinos y salir con japoneses? / Quais são as diferenças entre sair com latino e sair com japonês? / What is different when you go out with latinos and with Japanese ?
6. Por favor, describa su formación académica. / Por favor, descreva sua formação acadêmica. / Please describe your academic career.
7. Cómo fue su vida de estudiante ? / Como foi sua vida de estudante? / How was life as a student ?
8. Qué importancia le daban sus padres a la educación escolar? / Que importância deram seus pais à educação escolar? / How important was formal education for your parents ?
9. Qué hacían ellos para motivarle a seguir estudiando? / Eles faziam o quê para motivar você? / What did they do to motivate you to study ?
10. Cómo y dónde aprendió usted el japonés ? / Foi como e onde que você aprendeu japonês ? / How and where did you learn Japanese ?
11. Ahora una pregunta hipotética: Cómo sería su vida si hablara japonés fluidamente? (Para quien habla: Cómo sería su vida si no hablara japonés?) / Agora, uma pergunta hipotética: Como seria sua vida se você falasse japonês fluentemente? (Para quem fala: Como seria se você não falasse?) / A hypothetical question: how would life be for you if you spoke Japanese? (For whom speaks: How would life be if you didn't?)
12. En cuáles momentos se ha sentido discriminado por no ser japonés? / En quais momentos você se sentiu já discriminado por não ser japonês? / When have you felt discriminated against for not being Japanese?

13. Qué es lo que tendría que cambiar en la sociedad japonesa para que los migrantes se sientan más aceptados y se puedan integrar mejor? / O quê que teria que mudar na sociedade japonesa para os migrantes se sentirem mais aceitos e para eles se integrarem melhor? / What ought to change in Japanese society so that foreigners feel more accepted and integrated themselves better?

14. Dónde se ve usted en diez años? / Onde você se vê em dez anos? / Where do you see yourself in ten years?

15. Qué más me quiere contar ? / Mais alguma coisa que você quer me contar? / Anything else you would like to tell me?

Datos estadísticos (lugar de nacimiento, nacionalidad, edad, profesión, años en Japón, manera de hablar...)

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