

# **Japanese-Brazilians in Globalizing Organizations:**

## **A Consideration about the Necessity for Cultural, Professional, and Superior Education**

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### **Abstract**

This paper illustrates Japanese-Brazilians as agents for the globalization of organizations in the areas of capital and human resources. Issues related to the history of Japanese immigration in Brazil and its evolution are discussed, including investments of Japanese capital in Brazil, prominent Brazilian personalities in the world-wide scene, and the inversion of the immigration flow between Brazil and Japan and its consequences. This paper especially details the challenges faced by the dekasegis (Japanese-Brazilian migrant workers traveling to Japan) upon their return to Brazil, implying the necessity for the implementation of projects that aim to minimize their current social-financial problems. These projects will impact the productivity of the human capital that contributes to the development of Japanese-Brazilian organizations. Finally, suggestions are made for improving relations between Brazil and Japan for the purpose of incorporating the dekasegis in the development of existing Japanese organizations and creating new investments in Brazilian territory. The dekasegis can be involved in this process by using professional abilities that they obtained in Japan and by training others how to adapt to the Japanese culture.

**Key Words:** Japanese immigration, Japanese capital organizations in Brazil, Brazilian residents in Japan, Brazilian projects in Japan, Japanese-Brazilians in the globalization of organization

### **Introduction**

Globalization existed in past times, but with characteristics specific to the interests of each country. In mercantilism, globalization is revealed largely in the circulation of merchandise. Later, with the Industrial Revolution and the advance of manufacturing, countries began to meet shortages in supply by trading with other countries. In these exchange relations generated by globalization, countries had the objective of increasing national income through the exchange of human resources, technology, capital, and natural resources. This paper intends to present a view about globalization that involves Japan and Brazil, focusing on the flow of manpower during the last few decades, and identify problems that have developed, their causes, and possible solutions.

The lack of support for professional and advanced courses of study is considered to be one of the basic causes of social problems and failures of the Brazilians working today in

Japan, called *dekasegis*. Related to this, a delegation formed by Ataíde M. Ferrazza, Michitoshi Oishi and Antônio Ueno, president and professor of the Electronic University of Brazil and president of the Brazil-Japan Paraná Chamber of Commerce and Industries, visited Japan at the beginning of the March 2002 with the objective to prove the necessity of education courses for *dekasegis*. A plan was developed in order to decrease the number of Brazilians who fail in Brazil after investing all the money that they accumulated while living in Japan.

This paper initially presents a brief description of the movement of workers and Japanese capital to and from Brazil, describing some factors and consequences of the transfer of resources between the two countries. The main accomplishments and challenges of Brazilians in the international scene will also be presented as an illustration to show that the potential contribution of humanity in the worldwide scope is not limited to nationality. After that, the potential contribution of Japanese-Brazilians for contribution in projects of globalization of Japanese organizations in Latin America, specifically Brazil, will be discussed. Also, suggestions for possible solutions to attenuate the problems arising from the migratory flow will be discussed, aiming to assist the *dekasegis* to establish themselves financially and professionally in more satisfactory way either in Brazil or in Japan.

## **History of Japanese Immigration**

### ***Origin and History of Japanese Immigrants in Brazil***

Official contact between Brazil and Japan was initiated through the Agreement of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation, established in Paris on November 5, 1895. The agreement was made in the interests of Brazil for the necessity to alleviate the lack of manpower on the coffee farms. For the Japanese side, it accommodated the politics of emigration adopted since the beginning of the Meiji Period (1868), with the intent to attenuate social tension caused by a high demographic index. The first contingent of Japanese immigrants disembarked on June 18, 1908 at the port of Santos in the State of Sao Paulo.

The majority of the Japanese who dwelled in Brazil tended not to leave their houses due to the difficulty of communicating with Brazilians and also due to a high workload. Because the Japanese had not become accustomed to the Brazilian diet, families brought seeds from Japan and started gardens close to the houses, having enriched their diet with vegetables such as radishes, turnips, carrots, and Swiss beet-*chard*. The Japanese established partnerships and cooperatives among themselves to protect common interests. Moreover, they bought land in order to develop farming techniques. Some began to develop an independent life in the country, having bought land from colonists to be leaseholders on cotton plantations. Others returned to the country and dedicated themselves to agriculture. Gradually, the Japanese immigrants in the cities started small businesses in commerce and services that did not demand fluency in the local language, Portuguese. They also were involved in horticulture, fruit orchards, and poultry raising in the suburbs of the large cities. From 1928 to 1935, 108,258 Japanese immigrants entered the country. The number corresponds to approximately 57% of those who arrived in the period before World War II (Museu Histórico da Imigracao Japonesa, 2003).

### ***Situation Affected by the Second World War***

The outbreak of the Pacific War resulted in the disruption of diplomatic relations between

Japan and countries in the Americas, with exception of Argentina, beginning on January 29, 1942. This provoked the closing of all the embassies and consulates of Japan and the return of the respective employees. Japanese companies discontinued commercial activities in the country. The immigrants, however, were not able to leave and were left in the country, consequently suffering a series of official wartime restrictions, such as laws freezing assets and prohibiting them from speaking their own language in public. With the signing of the Agreement of the Peace in San Francisco in April 1952, diplomatic relations were re-established and discussion about restarting immigration began. Immigration to Brazil resumed in December 1952.

### ***Final Phase of Japanese Immigration***

The last ship of immigrants, the Nippon Maru, arrived at the port of Santos in 1973. After this, the immigrants used airlines. By the 1980s, the number of the immigrants had diminished to just a few people. In 1993, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) announced the closing of official emigration. According to statistics, about 55,000 Japanese immigrants had come to Brazil in the postwar period, making a total of 250,000 Japanese immigrants, including the ones that had come before the war. Including descendants born in Brazil (up to the 5<sup>th</sup> generation), the Japanese-Brazilian community has approximately 1.4 million people, which is the largest concentration of Japanese and their descendants outside of the Japanese archipelago (NINOMIYA, 2003). (<http://www.rio.br.emb-japan.go.jp>).

In accordance with research done by the Center of Studies of Japanese-Brazilians (1998), the population of Brazilians of Japanese origin was estimated to be 1,280,000 in 1988. Of this total, approximately 80% were geographically concentrated in southeastern region, 11.7% in the southern region, with the rest spread in other regions of the country. According to the same source, 90% were concentrated in urban areas with 10% in agricultural areas. Considering occupations, 64.27% of the residents of Japanese origin in Brazil occupy positions in scientific, administrative, and commercial activities and 21.13% are in farming. Comparing the income levels of Japanese descendants in relation to other Brazilians, Japanese-Brazilians range from higher than average to average. While about 49.9% of the Brazilians get remuneration in the band from 1 to 5 minimum wages, only 19.85% of the Japanese descendants belong to this band, according to the same research (1998).

## **Foreigner Investment and Japanese Organizations in Brazil**

At the end of the 1950s, the Brazil-Japan trade route started to diversify itself. The first Japanese organizations arrived and the commerce of primary products increased. In 1957, the Usiminas-siderurgical plants of Minas Gerais in the State of Minas Gerais began operations, having been constructed by Brazilian and Japanese through government and private investments. Associated with this was the start of the Ishibrás-Ishikawajima of Brasil Estaleiros S.A., in Rio de Janeiro.

In the 1970s, when Brazil increased its annual tax to 10% due to external indebtedness, more than 500 Japanese organizations of different sectors opened subsidiaries or offices in Brazil (UENO, 1999). It was still a very productive decade with the accomplishment of great national projects bringing together Brazilian and Japanese public and private investments. From the 1970s to the 1980s, many plants were constructed, such as the Siderurgical Plants of Tubarao (for manufacturing steel plates), Albrás-Alunorte Complex (for manufacturing aluminum and alumina), and CENIBRA (for manufacturing cellulose).

**Table 1 Facts of Japanese Investment in Brazil**

(as of November 2002)

Items	Worldwide	In Brazil
Number of Companies	19,433	280 (Manufacturing: 126/ Commerce: 90 Securities: 15)
Number of Employees	3,394,452	51,808
Number of Expatriates	48,299	591
Number of Jap.-Brazilians Presidents	Unknown	19 (6.8% of J companies in B)

Source: *Organizations Installed in the Exterior per Country*, pp.14, 1566, 1622, Tokyo: Toyo Keizai Shinpo, 2003

In the 1980s, the Japanese economy grew rapidly, but with a phenomenon of apparent wealth exhibited by the bubble effect. There was an expansion without precedent in the stock exchange and the real estate markets.

As shown in Table 1, currently 19,433 organizations with Japanese capital exist in the world. Of these, 280 are located in Brazil, with 19 having Japanese-Brazilians as presidents, according to *Organizations Installed in the Exterior per Country* (2003, p.14). Japanese organizations have 51,808 employees in Brazil and 3,394,452 in the world, with 591 employees for Brazil and 48,299 for the world sent from Japan, according to same reference (2003, p.1622). Sixty-five organizations withdrew from Brazil before 1993, and from 1994 to 2002, 4, 9, 10, 7, 18, 13, 9, 12, and 4 companies, respectively, withdrew according to the same reference (2003, p.1590). With relation to the number of Japanese organizations in activities in Brazil (2003, p.1566), 126 are in the manufacturing industry, 90 are in commerce, and 15 are in the financial and security sectors. According to United Nations (2001), Brazil is in 1<sup>st</sup> place among the countries of Central America and South America for the value of direct investment received from outside, occupying 11<sup>th</sup> place in the world with the value of 33.5 billion dollars (Mexico comes in the 2<sup>nd</sup> among Latin American countries and 15<sup>th</sup> place in the world with a value of 13.2 billion dollars). Investment in Brazil grew significantly during the 1990s. However, it fell 17% in the year 2000 compared with the previous year. Japanese investment in Brazil has remained roughly constant without fluctuations during the same period.

## Japanese-Brazilians Participating in Globalization

Japanese organizations can benefit from the contributions of residents of Japanese descent in the development of business activities in foreign countries, perhaps with the residents sharing their knowledge of the Japanese language and ancestral culture. According to the "Population of Nikkeis in the Exterior in 2002", the Japanese diaspora (including descendants up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation) in the world at present is located in Central and South America (57.2%), Brazil (51.2%), Peru (3.1%), Argentina (1.3%), Mexico (0.6%), the United States (39.4%), and Canada (2.7%). Although not a Japanese-Brazilian, Carlos Ghosn can be an illustration of a Brazilian personality who has contributed or continues to contribute prominently to global organizations. Carlos Ghosn, born in Brazil and the ex-president of Michelin Tires in U.S.A., was invited by Renault to manage its reorganization. In 1999 he was nominated to the presidency of Nissan to solve the accumulated debt of US\$ 36 billion with participation of capital by Renault. This value was accumulated at the time of the "bubble economy" in Japan during the 1980s and was "burst" during the 1990s without

recovery (ITOH, 2001). The fact that Carlos Ghosn, born in Brazil, has experience in diverse countries, such as France, the U.S.A., and now Japan, helping companies in precarious situations recover, suggests that national origin is not very relevant to skill in leadership today. Though vestiges of the Cold War period remain politically, in the business world borders have been eradicated and high worldwide competitiveness is observed.

Another example is Sergio Vieira de Mello (Folha de Sao Paulo, 2003), born on March 15, 1948. He graduated from Liceu Franco-Brazileiro in Rio De Janeiro with a degree in human sciences and received his doctorate in philosophy and human sciences by University of the Sorbonne. In addition, he dedicated his life to peace and the work of the United Nations. In 2002, he was acclaimed by the general assembly as a high commissioner for Human Rights, becoming a worldwide authority in human rights. He died on August 19, 2003 during a U.N. mission in Bagdá. He is an example of how people of any nationality can contribute in diverse ways in various organizations.

So far there are no notable Japanese-Brazilians in a similar situation, but the possibility exists that they would rise up through connections with Japanese organizations, either businesses or other organizations. The 19 Japanese-Brazilian presidents in subsidiaries of Japanese companies in Brazil could be candidates.

### ***Notable Efforts of Japanese-Brazilians in Japan***

The accumulation of wealth has demanded sacrifices. The dekasegis, when arriving in Japan, could hardly speak Japanese. Moreover, they had only a limited knowledge of Japanese culture transmitted by their ancestors, so this generated a great cultural shock for them. The majority of the Brazilians currently living in Japan work in organizations sub-contracted by larger organizations. They are contracted by intermediates even before leaving Brazil. The majority of these intermediates are not approved by the Ministry of Work, and they evade taxes and social welfare. In June 1990, the reform of the Law to Control Immigration and Recognition of Refugees created a special status of long term resident. This gives the dekasegis the right to receive a visa valid for 3 years if they present evidence that they are children or grandchildren of Japanese. This visa is also available to spouses of residents with this status (the Japan Immigration Association, 2002, pp. 96 and 97). According to data from the Japan Immigration Association (Edition 2002), the Brazilian population is the third major segment among foreign residents in Japan, numbering 254,395 registered in the country in 2000 (which is only fewer than Koreans and Chinese with 635,269 and 335,575 residents, respectively).

### ***The Flow of Japanese-Brazilians between Japan and Brazil***

Many Brazilians remain in Japan for years, trying to save money to buy property in Brazil, which cannot be purchased with the average wages of workers in Brazil. What happens with the dekasegis is that they endure drudgery for about 3 years in Japan and bring back their savings to purchase houses, apartments, and automobiles in Brazil, depleting all their savings and being in worse situation than previous one. If they look for a compatible job with a wage at a level they were accustomed to receiving in Japan, they find that such a job does not exist. So, they decide to return to Japan to work for three years or more with the intention of saving more money. These people are called “repeaters”, or ones that go and come back without having a definite way of life, and their numbers are increasing.

### ***The Influence of Marriage with Japanese Spouses in Japan***

Uncertainty has been reflected with ominous form in the structure of the families, mainly

in the education of the children. Couples decide to go together to Japan with their children, even though they will face difficulties. Many single Brazilians do not return to Brazil, instead marrying with Japanese. Among emigrants who marry with Japanese, the Brazilians lead (followed by the Chinese), with 101,623 married with Japanese according to a 2000 census published by the Japan Immigration Association (2002, pp.78 & 79). This situation causes problems in the adaptation of children of school age.

## **Flow Inversion of the Japanese-Brazilians for Japan and Their Contribution for the Brazilian Economy**

Japanese industries started to enlist manpower outside the country to fill shortages. By middle of the 1980s, a total of 250,000 dekasegis workers had generated an amount over US\$ 2.5 billion per year for Brazil, corresponding to US\$ 10,000 per dekasegi per year. This amount is below only less than soy exports, around US\$ 4 billion a year according to data of the SEBRAE (Service of Support to the Micro and Small Companies) in the ranking of the Brazilian trade balance (FRANCO, 2003).

What it has been verified is that the majority of the people seem to accept the situation, and in the 3 year duration of the visa, they save on the order of 4 to 5 million yen, approximately equivalent to US\$ 40,000 to US\$ 50,000. In the golden times of the bubble economy, the total income of all dekasegis reached US\$ 3 to 4 billion a year (NINOMIYA, 2003).

## **Educational Problems**

There are different adaptation types between children younger than 10 years old and children. The younger the children arrive in Japan, easier their adaptation. On the basis of the number of publications in the Portuguese language in Japan in 1999, only 7500 Brazilian children were studying at Japanese schools despite the fact that 40,000 Brazilian children under the age of 15 years old entered the country. In Japan, education through middle school is obligatory, but it is not for foreigners (NINOMIYA, 2003). The foreign children are admitted in the public schools without any discrimination, but no requirement for their permanent attendance. In the Japanese school system, the distribution of the pupils in the classrooms is made according to with age. Thus, for foreigners who don't speak Japanese, being given an understanding for 1 year due to a lack of understanding the language is important. Education in the Portuguese language is a constant concern for the Brazilian residents, as well as for diplomatic authorities in Japan.

### ***Precautions Taken to Alleviate Educational Problems***

In view of emergent necessities, the formation of the first nuclei of education in Portuguese occurred organically, through the work of people who already dedicated to education in Brazil and qualified in the area in Japan. The objective was not only the preservation of the language, but also satisfying the requirements of the school curriculum, thus preventing difficulties the returnees from Japan could face. In this context, distant learning projects with correspondence education have appeared to help students prepare for supplementary examinations in order to obtain completion certificates for elementary education for people of 18 years or older and middle school education for people older than 21 years of age, satisfying the regulations of Brazilian Ministry of Education.

## **Causes of Crimes**

Only 1/5 of Japanese-Brazilian children attend schools in Japan. Many drop out of school due to difficulties in understanding the lessons. The idleness of these young has become worrisome to all since such school truancy is directly related to the high possibility of the children becoming criminals. According to information from the Brazilian consular authorities in Japan, there are some Brazilian adolescents in the reformatory of Kurihara, in Kanagawa Prefecture, near Tokyo. There are also about 100 adults serving sentences in prisons in Japan (NINOMIYA, 2003).

## **Decision Making: To Remain in Japan or to Return to Brazil**

The majority of Japanese-Brazilians who work in Japan have the intention of saving as much money as possible and then returning to Brazil. They want to return to the culture of the country where they used to live, have their children attend school in Brazil, and continue courses of study interrupted in Brazil when they went to Japan. Today it is relatively easy to travel between Japan and Brazil, whereas the first immigrants took 40 days by ship to arrive in Brazil. Many Japanese-Brazilians working in Japan intend to settle in Japan as they have integrated into the Japanese society and created a permanent life in Japan. Some have found success through marriage with Japanese. Another type is seen in those who return to Brazil with the accumulated income received through in order to establish businesses. While some have been successful, many others have lost all their money through business failures and return again to Japan. They go back to Japan to work harder with the goal of saving more money. Unfortunately, the economic situation in Japan has changed and it has become more difficult to save money. Therefore, it is necessary that they are prepared so that when they return to Brazil they will be able to manage a business successfully.

### ***Causes of Failures***

There are many causes of failures in Japan as well as in Brazil. The main difficulty of Japanese-Brazilians for integration in the Japanese society is that there is no structured way to learn the Japanese language, and this results in difficulties in social interaction and establishing friendships with Japanese people.

It would be desirable if they could assimilate the culture of Japan in order to become culturally enriched during the time they spend in the country of their ancestors. The difficulty foreigners have learning Japanese language is well-known. Since the time they dedicate to their work is very long, and since it takes a long time to master Japanese, it becomes almost impossible for these workers to acquire knowledge of the Japanese culture.

### ***Role of the Universities***

Therefore, it is necessary to encourage the learning of Japanese and promote integration within Japanese society in the regions where the Brazilians live. This would become easier if the universities of the region could participate with this initiative, because they have in place professors and the necessary structures of education. However, it is important to consider that the times to provide lessons for the Japanese-Brazilians workers would have to be flexible, preferably during the weekends. Financial aid should also be provided.

It would be desirable if the local government could appropriate funds for such classes. On

the other hand, the government could encourage workplaces to make contributions for Japanese-Brazilians to learn the Japanese language in universities for the purpose of better integration in the local community where they work and consequently for better social relations in the workplace. Moreover, universities could cooperate not only for teaching Japanese language but also for other courses that could improve work performance. On the other hand, the participation of Brazilian professors in the universities would be fundamental, aiming to assist in the project contributing to the Brazilian community in Japan. For the same purpose, the participation of some Brazilian institutions which Japanese-Brazilian residents use frequently, such as The Bank of Brazil, Banespa (ex-Bank of the State of São Paulo, now incorporated as The Bank Santander), Brazilian consulates, and the Association of Japanese-Brazilians, would strengthen this type of initiative.

### **Education as a Way to Better Prepare the Dekasegis to Meet Their Personal Goals**

In the case of the curriculum designed for the dekasegis, there would be an effort to fill gaps in the official high school curriculum since important subjects such as the history and culture of Japan should not be neglected. With this adaptation, the students could appreciate the country where they are living and therefore become a real link between the two cultures. This could reduce the crimes previously mentioned. Unfortunately, the official Brazilian curriculum does not take enough time to present Japanese History in school. An introductory course about Japanese History and Culture could be offered in Portuguese. For this purpose, it would also be necessary to make a partnership agreement with Japanese institutions offering these subjects.

In addition, many dekasegis who could not complete their higher education in Brazil would not only want to finish their studies but also prepare themselves for the ever-competitive Brazilian society when they return.

Jornal Tudo Bem (12/03/2002) and International Press (09/03/2002), both news papers edited in Portuguese in Japan for the dekasegis, have reported about a delegation that came to Japan at the beginning of March 2002, comprised of Ataíde M. Ferrazza, Michitoshi Oishi, and António Ueno, president and professor of the Electronic University of Brazil and president of the Brazil-Japan Paraná Chamber of Commerce and Industries. The delegation's intent was to investigate and prove the necessity of professional and advanced courses for dekasegis. Ferrazza explained, "This project appeared because of the great number of Brazilians who fail in Brazil after investing all the money that they had accumulated during years in Japan".

Statistics indicate that 70% of the dekasegis have finished high school. "It is also a common belief that Japan is the place to save money and Brazil is the place to live" (ROSSINI, 1995 p. 31). Also, "the impact of education on the per capita income is significant." Leal and Costa Werlang of Getúlio Vargas Foundation-FGV demonstrate that in Brazil, for each year spent in school beyond basic education, there is a corresponding salary increase of 16.4%. The average salary of a college graduate is sixteen times the minimum wage." (WAHRHAFTIG, 2001, p.43). All these factors need to be urgently acted upon by the authorities.

### **Future Perspectives**

With the intention to be successful in the future, Japanese-Brazilians desire to have the



opportunity to receive appropriate courses. Some should study in graduate school and others should take specific courses of a short duration. Preferentially, both would like to study entrepreneurship, business administration, and business management with the goal of leading a professional life either in Japan or in Brazil. The courses will be able to supply the knowledge necessary to function professionally in any organization. The dekasegi who participate in the courses could be capable in entrepreneurship and business management. Instead of being interested only in administration itself, the student could creatively overcome the challenges of the new environment. For those who return to Brazil, it would be a great aid in getting a different perspective of life. Everybody has to find his or her own way to survive. So, they will have to obtain competence in business and develop administrative sense and innovative management skills. In this context, the proposed program should be able to encompass, in addition to education in Japanese language and history, the courses related the following topics that coincide with officially recognized headings for the Ministry of Education:

1. Social studies, scientific investigation and its methodologies
2. Management methods: financial, organizational, and strategic management and related methodologies
3. Economics, marketing, and international relations
4. Quantitative studies and related methodologies
5. Studies of economic and technique viability and studies for opening and managing businesses
6. Courses for graduation, including cross-disciplinary subjects and Japanese Culture.

These courses would be offered under the authorization by the Brazilian Ministry of Education.

In the preliminary plan, the period of study is divided into 4 semesters and the disciplines to be covered are:

Administration, Mathematics, IT, Organizational Sociology, Human Behaviour in Organizations, Basic Accounting, Communications, Economics, Statistics, Financial Administration, Products Administration, Marketing Administration, Strategic Administration of Human Resources, Budgeting, Enterprise Logistics, Management Information, Consumer Rights, Financial Markets, Introduction to Foreign Markets, Social Law, Taxes, Project Elaboration and Analysis, Business Relations.

The methodology for development of the disciplines is not currently in detailed form, though a contents summary could be presented when necessary.

## Conclusions

This paper verified the necessity of the implementation of projects that aim to improve the current social-economic problems created by the flow of human resources between Brazil and Japan. The execution of these above projects intends to provide courses that facilitate the adaptation of the dekasegis in Japan. These courses must first address the learning of the Japanese language and culture in order to facilitate cultural adaptation. Later, training of the Brazilian workers in Japan must be given in order to improve their productivity in organizations. Also, the standards of the Ministry of Education of Brazil need to make it possible for the dekasegis to take advanced courses in Japan, establishing reciprocity between Brazilian and Japanese universities.

The professionals who teach the advanced courses and the professional courses of short duration must be able to speak in the same language of the students. It is necessary to provide

other courses in other areas, such as entrepreneurship, in order to make it possible for the dekasegis to open businesses in Japan or Brazil. The accomplishment of these projects is necessary so that the dekasegis can establish their professional lives either in Japan or Brazil and have a definite future. Through this, the “come and go” flow of Japanese descendants between Brazil and Japan can be reduced. With this, crimes caused much of the time by the idleness of dekasegis or of their families can be prevented. The maturation of projects of this nature will help realize the participation of Japanese Brazilians in the globalization of Japanese organizations.

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