ADAPTING TO EAT, EATING TO ADAPT:

FOOD, CLASS, AND IDENTITY OF NIKKEI BRAZILIANS IN JAPAN

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ABSTRACT

This study uses food as a medium through which to explore the nuanced lives and experiences of ethnically Japanese Brazilian nationals who currently live in Japan. Japan and Brazil have been intimately linked since the late-nineteenth century, when manual labor shortages in Brazil coincided with Japan's rapid industrialization, prompting some 248,000 Japanese to emigrate to Brazil between the 1880s and the 1970s. Roughly a century later after this migration began, in the early 1990s, Japan's own manual labor shortage prompted the provision of preferential employment visas to Japanese descendants living abroad. Thereafter, Japan's number of Brazilian nationals of Japanese ancestry [known as Nikkei Brazilians] drastically increased, with most working in factories located in Japan's industrial centers. Today, there are about 207,000 Brazilian nationals residing in Japan, comprising the fifth-largest non-Japanese resident population in Japan.

This dissertation examines social, cultural, and economic aspects of life for Nikkei Brazilians in Japan, who have been mostly characterized in academic literature as *dekasegi*, or temporary factory workers. Qualitative, in-depth interviews with over 70 Nikkei Brazilians of widely varying social and cultural backgrounds reveal that they come to Japan not only to work in manual labor, but for education, career opportunities, professional development, and family ties. By focusing on food choices and taste, the dissertation explores the sociological concepts of habitus, capital, social class, and taste, and challenges how they apply to a transnational population such as Japan's Nikkei Brazilians.

Food and foodways are particularly useful avenues for exploring values, upbringing, culture, family, work, and identity within Nikkei Brazilians' everyday lives, which have not been discussed in existing scholarship. Food-focused interviews centered on notions of taste reveal

that Nikkei-Brazilian food preferences are shaped by their social class, geographic location, and social and cultural environment. Specifically, the relation between class and taste is more nuanced among Nikkei Brazilians who have experienced class shifts and occupational changes in moving between Japan and Brazil. The interview data also show that eating evokes personal and shared memories and feelings of nostalgia that facilitate sociocultural ties and a sense of belonging when in unfamiliar spaces. Moreover, "Brazilian food," as it relates to "food from home" cited by Nikkei Brazilian interviewees, is drastically different from the mainstream Japanese imagination of Brazilian food that is appropriated and capitalized by Japan's restaurant industry. Lastly, the study shows that contemporary Nikkei Brazilians navigate an "in-betweenness," as being both Japanese and Brazilian, which ultimately helps them cope with their treatment as "foreigners" in Japan and "Japanese" in Brazil.

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Chapter 1. Food, Class, and Capital: From Japan to Brazil, and back to Japan

The literature on Brazilian nationals of Japanese ancestry has grown rapidly since the 1990s in Japanese and international migration studies. In 1990, an immigration reform in Japan granted *Nisei* (second) and *Sansei* (third) generations of Japanese descendants "long-term resident" status and visas, allowing descendants of Japanese nationals living in other countries (called Nikkei in Japanese) to live in Japan with minimal restrictions, while exploring their ethnic homeland (Kingsberg 2014; Sasaki 2013). Initially, they filled the Japanese need for unskilled factory labor, regardless of what their occupation had been in Brazil. The 1990 immigration reform was the catalyst for a *dekasegi* boom in Japan. The word dekasegi usually indicates Nikkei Brazilians in manual labor. The word itself existed long before the 1990s, and originally indicated seasonal migrant workers or migrants from rural Japan moving to cities for work. Japanese who emigrated to Brazil after the1868 Meiji Restoration, the pioneers of Nikkei Brazilian history, were called *dekasegi,* but in today's context the word almost exclusively suggests Nikkei Brazilians who are employed in manual labor. In Brazil, *dekasegi* is spelled *dekassegui* and is understood as the Nikkei Brazilians' return migration to Japan since the 1990s. (Nishida 2017). Scholars have examined these linguistically and culturally foreign Japanese descendants with great interest.

Over the last three decades, scholars across disciplinary boundaries have examined Nikkei Brazilians living in both Brazil and Japan. Earlier works adopted large-scale economic "push-pull" models and identified historical turning points that gave way to Japan's so-called '*dekasegi* boom' in the 1990's (Massey et.al. 1993; Todaro 1969; Todaro and Maruszko 1987; Tsuda 1999). Subsequently, scholars like Green (2010), Morita (2017) and Yamanaka (2000) began to explore the multifaceted backgrounds, contexts, and motivations of individual Nikkei

Brazilians that led them to migrate to Japan over other options. Nikkei Brazilians were not simply 'Japanese living in Brazil' as Japanese authorities assumed. They could well have lost their cultural affinities with Japan as a consequent of the coerced cultural assimilation their ancestors endured under the *brasilidade* (Brazilianization) campaign in the 1930s (Kingsberg 2015; Negawa 2020). Hence, despite growing up speaking Portuguese and operating within Brazilian society, their ties to Japanese language and culture thus became an open question.

In recent years, the subfields of literature on Nikkei Brazilians have proliferated. Industrial cities known for their large *dekasegi* communities, where the classic in-depth work on Nikkei Brazilians employed in factories was produced, have become hotspots of ethnography, interview, and participant observation research (De Carvalho 2003; Ishi 2003; LeBaron von Baeyer 2019; Lesser 2003; Linger, 2001; Roth 2002; Tsuda, 2003; Yamanaka 2000). The development of commercial infrastructure within Brazilian communities sheds light on the everyday life activities and occupations of Nikkei Brazilians outside the factory workspace, which has revealed the problems and challenges of Nikkei Brazilians as they settle in Japan permanently and aspire to upward social mobility (Iida 2006; Ishi 2009a; Kataoka 2012; Yamanaka 2000).

This dissertation delves into an underexplored sphere of research on Nikkei Brazilians: food. Few contemporary researchers have examined Nikkei Brazilians' foodways as central to their analysis (Chino et al. 2005; Ishi 1995; Naganuma et al. 2006; Yasui 2010, 2012). In this dissertation, the word foodway is employed in a broad sense. First and foremost, foodway represents everyday activities in relation to food, including "behaviors and beliefs surrounding the production, distribution, and consumption of food" (Counihan 1999:6). Thus, foodways are not merely the ways in which substances are procured and consumed, but they are also seen as

"the sites of cultural production" and "sophisticated ideological signifiers" in the analytical sense (LeBesco and Naccarato 2008a:3,5).

Various Nikkei Brazilian groups engage with food in very different ways, and these variations are linked to socioeconomic status, suggesting that their food practices have cultural capital implications as well. It is also reasonable to argue that food spaces reveal the social marginality of ethnic minority/migrant groups within the local populations. Additionally, scholars have widely acknowledged food as not only a social code, but also an expression of power, class, and social structure (Goody 1982; Bourdieu 1984; Mintz 1986; Symons 1994). Thus, this dissertation decodes divergent dietary practices and analyzes what the preferences of Nikkei Brazilians in Japan can tell us about class dynamics within Japan and how cultural, social, and economic capital affect their access to food and their everyday dietary practices. It also shows that Nikkei Brazilian return migrants' food engagement serves as a means of simultaneously maintaining their class identity from Brazil while providing a perspective on their new cultural identity in Japan.

With the aim of unfolding the intertwined lifestyles of food and social class among Nikkei Brazilians, I ask three primary research questions: (1) How do variations in Nikkei Brazilians' food engagement (procurement, preparation, and consumption) relate to economic and social variations within Nikkei Brazilian groups more broadly? (2) How is food linked with nostalgia, memory, and longing among Nikkei Brazilians, how does this vary within differing Nikkei Brazilian groups, and what role do these feelings play in helping or hurting Nikkei Brazilian efforts to maintain Brazilian cultural practices? (3) How do Nikkei Brazilians utilize their cultural capital, specifically in relation to food, for socioeconomic gain?

By focusing on food, food choices, and taste, this dissertation explores the sociological concepts of habitus, capital, class, and taste, and challenges their assumed applicability to a transnational population such as Japan's Nikkei Brazilians. Sociologists have been aware that different cuisines and culinary manners reflect the code of a social hierarchy (Goody 1982; Bourdieu 1984; Guptill et al. 2017). As Bourdieu famously examined in his work *Distinction*, food preferences have long been associated with displays of social class and cultural capital (1984). However, post-Bourdieu debates in more recent scholarship point out that Bourdieu's posited homology between culture and class is too simplistic, lacking the nuanced and complicated view of studies of class and consumption (Bennett et al. 2009; Johnston et al. 2012). While I found coherent sets of taste and class in the interviewees' narratives to some extent, exploring their social and cultural capital revealed that the relation between class and taste is more nuanced among Nikkei Brazilians who have undergone class shift and occupational changes in different cultural environments in Japan and Brazil. Therefore, the answer to the first question makes a contribution to the post-Bourdieu debates on taste and class.

Having lived in the United States as a migrant myself for over a decade, the topic of food and migration was something I was naturally gravitated towards. I know that a simple and mundane question like "how do the diets of migrants change when they locate themselves in a host country?" is not sufficiently nuanced for a sociological inquiry. However, I also believe that everyday food practice is not merely about what is on a plate, but gives one a window into intimate details about people's everyday lives: everything from socioeconomic status, values, upbringing, and culture, to identity. In the context of migrants and their foodways outside their homelands, food preparation, procurement, and consumption entail the process of uprooting, adaptation, and estrangement. Although several migrant groups of Japanese descendants have

moved from abroad back to Japan, Nikkei Brazilians in Japan have intrigued me from the early stage of my academic career because of their long history of migration between Japan and Brazil and such distinctive cultural differences.

Manzenreiter (2017) frames the contemporary Nikkei Brazilian diasporic experience as a kind of "squared diaspora." In the introduction to a special issue of the journal *Contemporary Japan,* he argues that Nikkei Brazilians should be understood "in terms of dynamic relationships between space, time and identity, which are realized in discourses and forms of practice" (2017:106). According to Manzenreiter, Nikkei Brazilians must therefore be understood through rich qualitative studies that capture their diverse and unique experiences across time and space, which are otherwise lost in macro-structural approaches. Global financial crises, unprecedented flows of economic activity, and diplomatic changes all form the contextual backdrop that envelops the multi-faceted experiences of contemporary Nikkei Brazilians.

Echoing Manzenreiter's contention, I believe that it is the kind of micro approach that Nikkei Brazilian researchers can benefit from more, as has been gracefully shown by recent studies that look closely at intimate aspects of Nikkei Brazilians' lives such as religious practices (Ikeuchi 2020) and transnational family dynamics (LeBaron von Baeyer 2019). In delving into such overlooked spheres of life and untraditional Nikkei Brazilian demographics, this dissertation also explores the multitudes of emotional journeys that Nikkei Brazilians have been through; some of them grew up in Japan since they were teenagers, and others underwent identity shifts and culture shock in their early adulthood. Since these Nikkei Brazilians often live outside the 'Brazilian towns' in Japan, their voices are left unnoticed in contemporary Nikkei Brazilian studies. Thus, their stories deserve closer attention and a broader audience to challenge the stereotype deeming Nikkei Brazilians in Japan as *dekasegi* and provide proper recognition

that, in today's global age, it is erroneous to assume that most Nikkei Brazilians are socially marginalized working-class residents of Japan.

By using food as the medium, this dissertation highlights the diversity of class demographics of Nikkei Brazilians in Japan, updating the existing literature that has framed Nikkei Brazilians in Japan as largely a working class population. It is an undeniable truth that the vast majority of Brazilians in Japan did come to Japan as *dekasegi* with a short-term economic goal; hence there has been a consistent presence of Nikkei Brazilian communities around the industrial belt of Japan. However, it is also important to recognize Nikkei Brazilians as urban global citizens who have developed their lives and careers in Brazil and Japan transnationally, who were drawn to Japan for different reasons than traditional *dekasegi*. In a similar vein, this dissertation takes note of former *dekasegi* who climbed up the social ladder, and the children of *dekasegi* parents, who have attained higher socioeconomic status than their parents by utilizing their cultural capital. The different varieties of cultural capital among Nikkei Brazilians provide a sociological lens through which to understand how migrants utilize their cultural capital to build up their social status in a host country or to maintain the same social class from their country of origin.

Japan and Brazil – the Origin of Transnational Ties

According to Ministry of Justice data from June 2022, there are about 207,081 Brazilian nationals residing in Japan, constituting Japan's fifth-largest foreign resident population (Ministry of Justice 2022). Among these Brazilians, those who are Japanese emigrants or descendants of Japanese are called Nikkei, the term that is used to indicate Japanese descendants who were born in the U.S. and Latin America. To understand what made it possible for such a

large number of Brazilian nationals to move to and live in Japan, one needs to look back to the historical migration flow between Japan and Brazil begun by the Meiji government. From the late 1880s, the Meiji government took drastic measures to accelerate the nation's modernization by enforcing rapid industrialization and heavy taxation, resulting in the severe economic crisis that devastated the agrarian population in the countryside (Adachi 2014; Lesser 2013). During this significant societal change, rural farmers were particularly encouraged to participate in the government-arranged overseas emigration to alleviate the overcrowding, and also because poor, countryside farmers were deemed the antithesis of the image that Japan endeavored to establish as a developed, globally progressive nation (Kingsberg 2014; Sharpe 2014). Rural farmers in Kyushu and Okinawa largely took part in this movement, and their destinations included Hawaii, the continental United States, Peru, Canada, and Manchuria, as well as Brazil (Takenaka 2004).

Brazil was the last country to declare the abolition of slavery in the Americas in 1888, but the country was in dire need of labor to supplement the shortage of slaves and European immigrant laborers on farms and coffee fields. This is when Brazil arranged the immigration channel with Japan, with their travel costs subsidized by São Paulo state (Negawa 2020). Seeing the benefits of resolving each other's domestic problems mutually, Japan and Brazil signed the commerce and navigation treaty in Paris in 1895, establishing official diplomatic relations between the two countries (Ishikawa 1970; Lesser 2013). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was initially hesitant about the immigration treaty with Brazil because the inspectors in Brazil reported that Japanese would be placed in the worst working and living conditions, thus Brazil should not be the ideal destination for the Japanese people aspiring to a new and better life (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1895). Despite this ominous sign, immigration to Brazil flourished from the 1910s to the 1940s because the U.S. was no longer a desirable destination due to the

increasing anti-Asian sentiment in the country (Lesser 2013). The Gentleman's Agreement of 1907 and Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 prohibited the settlement of Japanese and Asian immigrants in the U.S. and much of their territories, which eventually led to the forced mass relocation of Japanese Americans in the 1940s (Kingsberg 2014). Thus, South America became the primary alternative to carry on overseas immigration, primarily due to the lack of more desirable options.

In 1908, Kasato-maru, the first ever emigration ship departed from Kobe city to transport Japanese migrants to Santos port. The massive move to Brazil was facilitated by *Kokoku Shokumin Kaisha*, the Imperial Emigration Company, which set up the precedent for the standard practice for Japanese migrants to establish their employment and itinerary upon their labor migration (Ishikawa 1970). Japanese passengers on the ship conceived their move as tantamount to the urban-rural seasonal migration, *dekasegi*, with the intention of coming home as soon as they made good earnings to bring home and to afford the return trip to Japan. However, after they began intensive labor at the plantation they realized that the work barely paid enough to sustain their livelihood, and coming back to Japan became a dream rather than a plan (Handa 1986; Sasaki 2013). They were also forced to live in shacks with no floors and furniture, under the surveillance of employers who treated these Japanese workers no different from slaves. Consequently, the complaints of workers begun mounting and some even instigated strikes (Handa 1970; Kōyama 1949).

When the Japanese government inspector visited Brazil seven months after the departure of the Kasato-maru, only 359 out of the original 781 Japanese remained at the plantations to which they were originally assigned. The rest of the Japanese had fled the plantation at night, moved to different farms, or sought different employment on their own (NDLJ 2009). Wages, living condition, and work at coffee plantation gradually improved a few years after the

settlement of the first emigrant group, and Japanese communities in Brazil steadily spread and grew in numbers. With the active role played by private migration brokers and subsidy support by the government, over 180,000 Japanese arrived at Santos Port in Brazil, and about 99% of them were plantation laborers in the subprefectures of São Paulo in nearly three decades since the first journey of Kasato-maru (Sato 1964:288). Despite their initial intention to return to Brazil once they make enough earnings, the majority of such Japanese settled in Brazil permanently. Instead of return, they participated in the economic development and urbanization of Brazil and São Paulo, which later happened in Japan when Nikkei Brazilian migrants contributed to the economic development before the collapse of Lehman Brothers. As such, migration driven by economic motives and significant development contributions to host countries happened in parallel between Japan and Brazil.

New Dekasegi Movement from Brazil to Japan

While Japan stabilized its national economic strength and grew its industrial power by the 1980s, Brazil was struggling to recover from the economic crisis in the 80s "Lost Decade", which prompted a large number of Brazilians to seek work abroad (Sasaki 2013). The low economic prospect prompted many Brazilians to work abroad, which coincided with the labor shortage of factory workers in Japan induced by a post-war industrial boom in which Japanese businesses began outsourcing factory labor abroad (Higuchi and Tanno 2003; Okubo 2005; Tsuda 2003). According to Kajita, Tanno, and Higuchi, the Japanese emigrants in Brazil and their children (*Nisei*) began returning to the homeland during this period, which marked the beginning of Nikkei Brazilians' postwar history in Japan (2005:6). Although the earlier migrants left Japan with intentions of return, the postwar migrants moved to Brazil understanding that

their move to Brazil might be permanent, due to the new characterization of the emigration policy discouraging emigrants to return to Japan (Sasaki 2013). *Dekasegi* workers, including those who from Brazil and Peru, became essential labor bolstering Japanese manufacturing industries and businesses that used contract-based, flexible and disposable labor supplied by third-party recruitment agencies (see Kojima 2013). Their indirect employment status and 'just-in-time' labor supply were, ironically, exactly what made Brazilian and Peruvian workers valuable to Japanese companies, who sometimes needed to supplement their workforce with temporary employees by a quick and easy arrangement through the recruitment agencies (Higuchi and Tanno 2003; Okubo 2005).

Two major events happened in the 1990s that changed Japan from being a "closed nation" to a host society opening its doors to migrant workers with special conditions. The first was the 1990 revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law (*Shutsu nyūkoku kanri oyobi nanmin ninteihō*). Ideologically, this reform stressed reinforcing transnational ties between Japan and Brazil based on common ancestry, providing Nikkei descendants the opportunities to visit the homeland to meet their relatives and to learn Japanese culture (Tsuda 2003). But in reality, this reform was a huge breakthrough for Nikkei descendants from Brazil and Peru to come and work in Japan, who otherwise entered Japan on a tourist visa intending to overstay to work. An unprecedented number of migrants came to Japan as temporary workers, and the immigration reform was a great solution for Japan, which struggled with labor scarcity in manufacturing sectors and declining fertility rates combined with an aging population in the 1980s (Cornelius et al. 2004; Douglass and Roberts 2000). The reform granted overseas Japanese descendants up to third generation and their family members "Long-term resident" and "Spouse of Japanese" visa categories without restrictions on their activities, thus

enabling them to seek job opportunities (Douglass and Roberts 2000; Kataoka 2014). The long-term resident status is effective for two years, but the visa holders can request extensions before the expiration date and there are usually no issues with this extension process.

The second change of the 1990s was the global outsourcing of labor, which was mobilized by the globalization of capital and the development of wealthier countries. The global exodus of labor power became more ubiquitous, influenced by the ideological and cultural networks forged between the Global South and developed countries as the result of their foreign direct investment (Sassen 1990). In the case of Japan and Brazil, their social ties had existed since the prewar migration of Japanese to Brazil, and immigration law revision fortified the weak political and economic tunnels between them.

Characteristics of Nikkei Brazilian Migration

Unlike other migrants who come to Japan through trainee programs or their networks of family and friends (Cornelius et al. 2004; Higuchi and Tanno 2003; Kajita et al. 2005; Mori 1996), most Nikkei Brazilians pre-arranged their work contracts through broker agencies in Brazil, which prepared the whole package to Japan including a one-way air ticket, job training, and living arrangements (usually at dormitories with other *dekasegi* workers). Such an initial settlement cost in Japan itself could easily cost over $3,000 US (Nishida 2017:37), so *dekasegi* had to work hard to pay their debt before earning money for themselves. While such labor dispatching agencies met the demand of employers and prospective migrants who could not find jobs in Japan on their own, the intervention of such an industry also limited the flexibility of migrant workers to choose their living and working conditions in Japan on their own (Kajita et al. 2005).

Nevertheless, Nikkei workers saw a quick and short money-earning path in the newly opened temporary job market in Japan. Japan's GDP per one Japanese national was approximately ten times higher than that of Brazil, and the drastic wage difference was a primary attraction to workers from Brazil (Mita 2009; Sellek 1997). Utilizing their youth and vitality, typical *dekasegi* workers worked about twelve hours a day including overtime pay. Their assigned workplaces were often characterized as 3K jobs (*kitanai* as dirty, *kiken* as dangerous, and *kitsui* as intense and demanding) in factory and construction industries, the least desirable workplaces and thus left unfulfilled by Japanese workers (Brody 2012; Kajita et al. 2005). As the result, in 1995, more than a half of the total Brazilian population in Japan worked as machine operators in factories, the most common occupation for both male and female Brazilians in that year (Yamanaka 2000:134).

Overall, the *dekasegi* boom induced 312,582 Brazilian nationals to move to Japan by December 2008, mostly by relying on broker agencies. This peak number is more than five times the pre-reform year 1990, which recorded 56,429 (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau 2008). Due to the general locations of factories and assembling facilities which had high demand for unskilled workers, Nikkei *dekasegi* workers became a visible presence in Japan's industrial cities such as Toyota in Aichi prefecture, Hamamatsu in Shizuoka prefecture, and Oizumi in Gunma prefecture, making such places "Brazilian towns" in Japan (Nishida 2017).

Nikkei Brazilians and Social Integration

Although most Nikkei Brazilians already had some level of familiarity with Japanese culture and social cues, coming to the home of their ancestors did not mean that Nikkei

Brazilians were positively embraced and welcomed back. First, second, and third generation Nikkei Brazilians were treated as foreigners at work despite their ancestral ties to Japan (Sasaki 2013). Whether they are Nikkei, Brazilian, or Peruvian workers, all Latin American workers fell in the same categorical umbrella at the workplace (Kajita et al. 2005). Immigrants who came to Japan to work were also stigmatized. Japanese people viewed them as the descendants of poor farmers from rural areas, who still could not get out of poverty so they had to come to Japan to make a living (Tsuda 2003). Second or third generation Nikkei Brazilians often do not speak Japanese, but the fact that they have some physical Japanese features, yet are unable to speak Japanese, made their presence even more foreign to some Japanese people. Additionally, many Nikkei Brazilians, who had believed that they are Japanese during their whole life in Brazil, had an identity crisis realizing that their spirit is close to Brazilians in terms of the culture and communication styles they grew up with, which was drastically different from Japan (Lesser 2013; Nishida 2017; Tsuda 2003; Yamanaka 2000).

While Nikkei Brazilians are socially connected with other foreign workers in Japan, they remain rather isolated from local Japanese (Linger 2001; Takenoshita 2013, 2015b; Tsuda 2012). Specifically, Nikkei Brazilians living in Brazilian residential areas fostered networks from the extensions of work and neighborhood, the kinds of relationships facilitated by geographical proximity. Many Nikkei Brazilians knew their relatives living in Japan, but they rarely fostered close relationship with them because (a) *dekasegi* worked in a prefecture that is different from the one their ancestors came from, and (b) *dekasegi* and Japanese relatives mutually felt estranged since they had cultivated relationships. As such, Nikkei Brazilians usually do not utilize their family connections as a social safety net to get help with finding jobs or housing arrangements (Mori 1994).

Dekasegi and Financial Crisis

In addition to everyday struggles navigating their new life in Japan, many Nikkei Brazilians could not settle into a stable livelihood due to the fluctuating economy. The 2008 global financial crisis (known in Japan as the "Lehman shock") following a burst of the bubble economy, hit Japanese manufacturing industries hard and the lessened demand for production meant the need to cut labor costs, which meant that temporary workers were quickly let go. *Dekasegi* whose primary purpose was to save money as quickly as they could, frequently changed jobs when they got information about new jobs with better salaries (De Carvalho 2003; Shimada 2000). According to the lifestyle survey conducted by Hamamatsu City in 1999, 114 *dekasegi* respondents from South America (27.3%, N=418) answered that they have changed jobs at least three times, which was the most popular response to the question "how many times have you changed jobs in Japan?" (2000:13). Although they might have a secure legal status because of the Nikkei visa, without employment many *dekasegi* contract workers lost housing support, insurance, and other benefits and were left with a low prospect of finding a new job through recruiting agencies during the recession (Sasaki 2013).

A the peak of the *dekasegi* boom there were about 317,000 Brazilians living in Japan in 2007, which dropped to about 180,000 in 2013 due to the alarming social events such as the 2008 Lehman shock and the 2011's Great East Japan earthquake which prompted a number of (Nikkei) Brazilians to leave Japan (Furusawa 2015; Kajita et al. 2005). The COVID-19 pandemic also counts as one of these events. During my fieldwork, I heard several people talking about some Nikkei Brazilians, their friends, customers, and workers, had recently headed back to Brazil due to the change in work situation and concerns for their family in Brazil.

Two programs were set up in order to provide support for foreign workers in response to the financial crisis. The first one is that the Japanese government launched a support program for unemployed Japanese descendants wishing to return to their home country [*Nikkeijin Rishokusha no Tame no Kikoku Shien Igyo]*, which provided return airfare to their Latin American homelands subsidized by Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare between April 2009 and March 2010 (Onai 2011; Kataoka 2013; Sasaki 2013). This political move was globally criticized for its unethical requirement, because it stipulated that once they received these benefits, Nikkei applicants could not seek future employment in Japan. This prerequisite was later modified, providing financial assistance to return to Brazil on the conditional understanding that those Nikki descendants utilizing the program benefits would not return to Japan with the same visa type (Onai 2011). Contrary to the ideological assumptions in the immigration reform, which stressed embracing Nikkei descendants based on ethnic commonalities, this government subsidy return program offers the tangible example highlighting Japan's true attitude regarding Nikkei descendants as temporary foreign workers. Eventually, 21,675 Nikkei migrants returned to their homelands by utilizing the Japanese government subsidies. The vast majority of beneficiaries were Nikkei Brazilians, who comprised 92.5 percent of the total number of returners (MHLW 2010).

A second option is the integration program for unemployed immigrants such as Japanese language class and vocational training, mainly offered by local municipal governments where non-Japanese workers' populations were highly concentrated. Oizumi city was the first district that took progressive action once they recognized the increasing problems foreign workers were dealing with. Oizumi city office was the first municipal government which made foreign residents eligible to join the national health care program, and they also hired Portuguese

and Spanish speaking clerks at city hall and elementary schools (Onai 2011). Following Oizumi city, multicultural programs became prevalent and were offered in cities with large numbers of foreign residents, which include not only Japanese classes for foreign workers, but Portuguese language and cultural lessons for Japanese employees (De Carvalho 2003:101). The opposite language issue emerged as some Brazilian parents experienced language barrier issues with their children who were born in Japan and had limited exposures to Portuguese. As the result, the educational board and private schools in Hamamatsu offered weekend Portuguese classes for Nikkei children (Yamanaka 2000:139). The effectiveness and sufficiency of such integration programs, especially regarding the proposed goal of 'multicultural' community and its relation to the discourse of Japan's national identity, were questioned and scrutinized by scholars (Flowers 2012; Pak 2000; Takenoshita 2015a), but the unprecedented grassroots efforts took place as some Nikkei and non-Japanese workers settled in Japan for the long-term and Japanese officials took their problems into consideration seriously for the first time.

From Temporary Stay to Long-term Settlement

Although *dekasegi* often deemed their move to Japan temporarily and planned to go back to Brazil once they made enough money, scholars have found an increasing number of Brazilian permanent residents within the Brazilian resident population (Furusawa 2012; Kajita et al. 2005; Onai and Sakai 2001). As shown in Table 1.1, the number of Brazilian permanent residents skyrocketed to 9,062 in 2000 from 474 in 1990 within just a decade. About another decade later in 2009, the population of permanent residents outnumbered that of long-term residents for the first time. The highest number of permanent residents were recorded in 2011 (119,748), but growth has stagnated since 2013 (Ministry of Justice 2021).

In contrast to the original meaning of *dekasegi* that indicates seasonal workers who leave their home temporarily to engage in high-earning work, Table 1.1. shows that a significant number of Nikkei Brazilians actually settled in Japan for a much longer term, which raises further questions to understand what changed their minds. According to Kajita, Tanno, and Higuchi's study (2005), long-term *dekasegi* stayers often plan to stay in Japan for more than five years, and they often have positive prospects for settling in Japan due to safer neighborhoods, better quality of life, and better education compared to Brazil as they start family in Japan. They also found that such long-term stayers have better command of Japanese than those who stay in Japan less than five years, but they did not find a correlation between their educational background and the prospect of long term stay in Japan.

Furthermore, as was the case when pre-war Japanese began occupying middle class status and jobs from their original backgrounds as farmers in Brazil, Nikkei Brazilians' occupations in Japan are no longer just manual factory labor. What is more, their initial purpose of coming to Japan is not solely driven by economic factors, and their post-reform demographics reveals diversified reasons which shows changing circumstances of the Nikkei Brazilian population in Japan.

Demographics of Nikkei Brazilians

The early influx of Nikkei Brazilian return migrants in the 1980s was primarily characterized by male first-generation in Brazil, Japanese adults, who were relatively fluent in Japanese and preferred by the factory employers for their ethnic commonalities and hard-working attitudes (Cornelius et al. 2004; Higuchi and Tanno 2003). The demographic gradually changed after the 1990 immigration reform, and the incoming Brazilian population became

feminized and younger. Yamanaka Keiko (2000: 132-133) found that the percentage of zero to twenty-four and fifty-five to seventy year old Nikkei Brazilian women outnumbered the same age groups of Nikkei Brazilian men in 1994, which shows a significant increase from 1988 when two-thirds of Nikkei Brazilian arrivals were fifteen to forty-four years old males.

Table 1.1 Brazilian populations and their legal status in Japan.

Year	1990	2000	2008	2009	2010	2011
Brazilians	176,440	254,394	312,582	267,456	230,552	210,032
Spouses of	99,803	101,623	58,445	43,443	30,003	23,921
Long-term residents	69,946	137,649	137,005	101,250	77,359	62,007
Permanent	474	9,062	110,267	116,228	117,760	119,748
Total foreigners	1,362,371	1,686,444	2,217,426	2,186,121	2,134,151	2,078,508

Year	2012	2013	2017	2018	2019	2020
Brazilians	190,609	181,317	191,362	201,865	211,677	211,178
Spouses of	19,519	17,266	16,631	17,688	18,427	21,132
Long-term residents	53,058	47,903	56,475	65,021	73,536	88,251
Permanent	114,641	112,428	112,876	112,934	112,440	153,646
Total foreigners	2,033,656	2,066,445	2,561,848	2,731,093	2,933,137	2,885,904

Source: (Ministry of Justice 2021)

In terms of occupations, according to Ike (1995:62-63), the majority of male and female workers engaged in manufacturing work, but a higher percentage of females worked in the service industry compared to male workers, because women's wages on assembly lines were generally lower than those of men. For example, female workers were paid between 900 to 1000 yen hourly, while male workers were paid 1,100 to 1,400 yen (De Carvalho 2003:96). Within the service industry, *dekasegi* women worked as golf caddies, attendant nurses, and housekeepers pending on their Japanese proficiency. In some cases, the children of *dekasegi* parents also worked off the books in factories as minors. Such cases happened when the children of *dekasegi*

were having a hard time at schools in Japan, or they were recruited by their relatives or companies which were in need of more workers (De Carvalho 2003).

This changing demographic also indicates that more Nikkei Brazilians moved to Japan with their spouses and dependents during the *dekasegi* boom, based on the increasing percentages of minors and female arrivals. Unlike other migrant groups who came to Japan solely for the purpose of work, Nikkei *dekasegi* had the advantage of being able to move to Japan with their family legally, which also contributed to the increase of younger Brazilians. Between 1991 and 1997, more than 13,000 Brazilian children were born in Japan, and 4,056 Brazilian children registered in primary and secondary education in 1994 (Japanese Ministry of Education, quoted in De Carvalho 2003).

Social Class of Nikkei Brazilians

Although Ishi (2017) has pointed out the relative advantage of *dekasegi* workers compared to other migrant workers who have a harder time securing their legal statuses in Japan, it is still important to understand that *dekasegi* had little social safety net and they occupied the lowest social hierarchy in the Japanese labor market. Besides the wage difference between male and female workers, most *dekasegi* workers were indirectly employed through labor contractors, meaning that they had a weak social security net because the employers were not obligated to provide insurances and welfare programs to contract workers, or *dekasegi* workers were simply uninformed (De Carvalho 2003; Okubo 2005). Through a structural analysis, Higuchi and Tanno (2003) argued that Brazilian workers were structurally excluded from the primary labor market that is reserved for Japanese workers, thus they were socially vulnerable and marginalized in the

stratified dual labor market where they were constantly in competition with the Japanese labor force.

Although the vast majority of *dekasegi* workers took blue-collar work in Japan, it is important here to underline that even second- and third generations of Nikkei Brazilians, who had professional careers or white-collar jobs in Brazil, entered the blue-collar work labor market in Japan (Kingsberg 2014; Tsuda 2003; Yamanaka 2000). In the beginning of *dekasegi* movement in the 1980s, first- and some second-generation Nikkei Brazilians were farmers or small-business owners in Brazil, and their motivation to come to Japan was for social mobility (Onai 2009, 2011). When Brazil's economy seemed to stay stagnant for the long haul in the 1990s, Nikkei Brazilians who had white-collar or professional jobs decided to come to Japan as *dekasegi*, even if it meant that they had to leave their former career and pride and start climbing the social ladder from blue-collar work in Japan (Ishi 2003; Yamanaka 2000). For example, Mori reported that 25% of Nikkei Brazilian arrivals in 1992 had high educational credentials (1996:32). Indeed, scholars argued that this shift to downward social mobility is one of the salient characteristics about Nikkei Brazilian *dekasegi*, who are often university graduates who worked as engineers, business associates, lawyers, and medical professionals in Brazil, yet chose to engage in contract-based manual labor in Japan for short-term economic profit (De Carvalho 2003; Ishi 2003; Furusawa 2012, 2015).

In regard to how Nikkei Brazilian themselves perceive their social class consciousness, existing surveys suggest that *dekasegi* who had higher education in Brazil before coming the Japan continued to see themselves as middle-class when they took *dekasegi* work in Japan, (Miyao 2002) and their perception did not change very much after their return to Brazil. In other words, *dekasegi* was a band-aid strategy to maintain their socioeconomic status and prevent

further retraction of their current financial status (Ishi 2009b:249). Meanwhile, some *dekasegi* left their homes in Brazil with the clear purpose of rebuilding their industry and lifestyles by making money in Japan. In the rural part of Pará state, Tomé-Açu, middle-aged first-generation Nikkei women were the primary *dekasegi* group in 1990s, since men needed to stay in charge of their property and Brazilian employees. These Nikkei women worked as nurses during the graveyard shift, so they were able to earn much more than manual labor day jobs. After coming back to their homes in Brazil with ample savings, return *dekasegi* women gained more authority within the family, and approximately 40% of Tomé-Açu households obtained better socioeconomic status after coming back from *dekasegi* work in Japan (Onai 2011).

Nevertheless, it is important to clarify that it was not always the case that *dekasegi* obtained better socioeconomic status upon their return to Brazil. It was often rather difficult for returned Nikkei Brazilians to maintain their social class by finding a new good-paying job or starting business in Brazil, and they ended up using their savings from Japan to pay bills and to improve their life conditions for immediate purposes such as buying a house or a new car, without making more effective use of the savings they made in Japan (Iida 2006; Ishi 2009b; Onai 2009). Because of the low promotion prospect and low wages in Brazil, some return *dekasegi* aspired to start their own business, but only a small fraction of them succeeded with such initial plans (Ishi 2009b; Yamanaka 2000). Such post-return situations left return *dekasegi* unable to stretch the wealth that they made in Japan and to re-adjust to the lifestyle in Brazil. This sequence created the mechanism of *dekasegi* 'repeater' pattern, meaning a person who goes back and forth between Japan and Brazil as *dekasegi* frequently (Nishida 2017; Onai 2011).

Although approximately 75 percent of Nikkei Brazilians worked in manufacturing industries in the early 1990s, Tsuda underscores that not all Nikkei Brazilian migrants had uniform

socioeconomic backgrounds, even at his time of research in the early 2000s (2003). According to his survey data, over 20 percent of Nikkei Brazilian migrants were university-educated, and close to 65 percent of them had middle-class occupations in Brazil (2003). The literature points out that this economic integration of *dekasegi* as manual workers in Japan has projected images of Nikkei Brazilians as poor, and such stigmatization is a major reason why Nikkei Brazilian migrants face serious issues with adapting to life in Japan and getting acquainted with Japanese people (Green 2010; Linger, 2001; Oda, 2010; Takenoshita, 2015b).

However, studies conducted since the early 2000s have gradually begun to consider cultural and economic factors that drive present-day migration in an effort to accurately nuance the motivations of Nikkei Brazilians in migrating to Japan, revealing that not all Nikkei Brazilians are necessarily *dekasegi*, nor is becoming *dekasegi* their sole aim in migrating to Japan (Tsuda 2003). The present study will take note of diversified sociocultural backgrounds of Nikkei Brazilians that have been left unexplored, and how they affect their relationships with their families remaining in Brazil and the expansion of their social capital in Japan.

Although social science researchers acknowledge this decline of Nikkei Brazilians' socioeconomic status upon their *dekasegi* journey in Japan (De Carvalho 2003; Linger 2001; Ishi 1995, 2003; Mita 2009; Tsuda 2005), only a small portion of studies has delved into the diversity of careers and occupations of Nikkei Brazilians and explored their sociocultural aspects outside of *dekasegi* employment (Furusawa 2012, 2015; Hamamatsu City 2000; Kitagawa 1997).

To provide a few examples, Furusawa (2015) found that only the small fraction of upper middle-class Nikkei Brazilians, the white-collar workers and business owners, successfully retained and transferred their social status to Japan. Based on Ministry of Justice statistics on the foreign resident populations in 2013, only 290 Brazilians resided in Japan with a visa related to

white-collar work including ‘professor,’ ‘journalist,’ ‘business manager,’ ‘legal/accounting services,’ ‘medical services,’ ‘engineer/specialist in humanities/international services,’ ‘intra-company transferee,’ which constitutes 0.1% of the total 181,317 Brazilians (2015:3). The statistic does not distinguish Nikkei Brazilians from the broad category of Brazilians, and perhaps a certain number of Nikkei Brazilians came to Japan with long-term resident or spousal visas regardless of their jobs. Still, the small percentage of white-collar workers shows the dominant pattern of *dekasegi* movement characterizing the overall Brazilian population in Japan.

However, in 2020, the same Ministry of Justice statistics indicated that 879 Brazilians came to Japan with white-collar work-related visa categories, accounting for 0.4% of the total Brazilian stayers in Japan. This shows that more skilled Brazilian workers came to Japan compared to Furusawa’s earlier data in 2012. The growth of this demographic is slow and gradual, but the number signifies the tangible change in the demographics of Brazilians in the Japanese society.

Changing Trends in Nikkei Brazilian Studies

The early studies of international migration have employed economic push and pull factors to explain the global migrant flow (Massey et.al. 1993; Todaro 1969; Todaro and Maruszko 1987; Tsuda 1999). But in terms of the recent Brazil-Japan migration, scholars have argued the significance of sociocultural aspects and individual backgrounds within the context of the large global economic movements which promoted Nikkei Brazilians’ exodus to Japan (Negawa 2020; Shimada 2000; Tsuda 2003). In fact, Japan was not the only destination for Brazilians to seek jobs abroad. Brazil’s Ministry of Justice estimated that more than 4 million Brazilians who emigrated by 2010, found their new homes in United States, Paraguay, United

Kingdom, Italy, Portugal, Germany, Angola, and Switzerland (Lesser 2013). It is tempting to assume Japan as the reasonable option for Nikkei Brazilians to return to their ancestral 'home', but the unique 'pull' factors that drew Nikkei Brazilians to bear 20-hour air travel to live and work in Japan deserves further investigation.

To regard Brazil's economic crisis as a generic explanation of *dekasegi* phenomena overlooks societal background information that affected Nikkei Brazilians' livelihoods at that time. For example, Onai raises a public safety issue in the residential areas of Nikkei farmers such as Fukuhaku village in Suzano, a suburb of São Paulo (2011). Due to the increasing crime rate, Nikkei residents in the Fukuhaku area have left agricultural work and become *dekasegi* since 1988, which reduced the village's population, and prolonged *dekasegi* led to a decline of farming in the area. Similar phenomena to Fukuhaku village were observed in different Nikkei agricultural regions, and even the Brazilian newspaper reported the depletion of fresh produce distributed to the city of São Paulo due to Nikkei Brazilian farmers' move to Japan (Miyao 2002).

As the result of shifting to such transnational lifestyles, Nikkei Brazilians also faced new issues threatening family intimacy that are cross-cultural, which have been observed in newly emerging transnational families since the1990s (Francisco 2015b; Parreñas 2005). For instance, some made deliberate choices to repeat *dekasegi* trips in order to afford living for their family in Brazil, but the prolonged absence from home unfortunately resulted in divorce and weak family ties (Hillyer 2021; Miyao 2002). As effective as this short-term *dekasegi* strategy might be, such frequent moves prevent *dekasegi* from developing solid skills and pursuing a career with promotions by settling in one job with continuous experiences and benefits, rendering them vagabonds belonging to neither Japan nor Brazil. On the other hand, *dekasegi* who came to Japan

with a spouse and dependents or made a family in Japan tended to settle in Japan for the long-term, and gained more skills and Japanese proficiency. In so doing, long term *dekasegi* gradually climbed the social ladder to the point that they could afford a family house in Japan and were able to achieve a new social status (Onai 2011).

Studies conducted since the early 2000s have gradually begun to consider cultural and economic factors that drive present-day migration to accurately nuance the motivations of Nikkei Brazilians in migrating to Japan, revealing that not all Nikkei Brazilians are necessarily *dekasegi*, nor is becoming *dekasegi* their sole aim in migrating to Japan (Tsuda 2003). This dissertation will take note of diversified sociocultural backgrounds of Nikkei Brazilians that have been left unexplored, and how this affects their relationships with their separated families and the expansion of their social capital.

As such, one of this study's main objectives is to identify and articulate ongoing changes in the demographics of Nikkei Brazilians in Japan and to widen readers' understandings of who Nikkei Brazilians are today, as well as their different reasons and circumstances for coming to Japan, aside from manual labor opportunities that have, to this point, received the bulk of academic attention. The sample of this study includes multiple generations of contemporary Nikkei Brazilians, helping the dissertation to further nuance Nikkei Brazilian stories, experiences, and identities. For example, some Nikkei Brazilians interviewed for this study have gone back and forth between Japan and Brazil since their childhood, while others only recently came to Japan independently for career track or manual labor jobs. Among other things, this multigenerational sample helps show how Nikkei Brazilian family dynamics have changed over time, more recently including multiethnic and multinational peoples moving to Japan, as contemporary Nikkei Brazilian families include non-Nikkei, Japanese, Brazilian, or other

nationalities and ethnic groups. Moreover, while existing literature introduced the primary economic incentive of *dekasegi* as providing for their families in Brazil—and the primary "kind" of *dekasegi* as a "head of the household" (Green 2010; Miyao 2002; Yano 2007), this study engaged single interviewees who did not have obligations to their families as breadwinners, but who rather had more flexibility, affording them more autonomy to explore multiple career options in Japan. Regardless of their backgrounds, food is a common thread in this dissertation, showing that how food brings new opportunities, challenges, resilience, relationships, and self-reflections that Nikkei Brazilians experience at different stages over the course of their lives.

Overview of the Dissertation Chapters

With the background of Nikkei Brazilians in Japan explained, the following chapter explains the methodological approach and research process of this dissertation, in which I also explain how the pandemic brought about both unforeseen hurdles and unexpected opportunities for my fieldwork in Japan. Also in Chapter 2, I describe the limitations and weaknesses of my methodology—including its potential effects on my sample and findings—despite my best efforts.

Chapter 3 presents a pre-war history of Japanese emigrants in Brazil with a specific focus on their social class and food practices. The literature on social class and food practices of early Japanese emigrants in Brazil is limited in academic writings in English. As such, Chapter 3 draws from extensive research consisting of Japanese primary and secondary sources. Chapter 3 also provides readers context for Nikkei Brazilians' food-related experiences and challenges in Japan, which will be elaborated upon in Chapter 4, by describing typical diets in Brazil and how

some interviewees were (or were not) prepared for food-related lifestyle changes in Japan due to their cultural backgrounds from Brazil.

With these historical backgrounds established, the rest of the dissertation explores food, social class, and identity amongst a diverse sample size of Nikkei Brazilians in Japan. Chapter 5 presents homologies between interviewees' class and taste—a concept illuminated by Pierre Bourdieu in his seminal work, *Distinction*—and discusses the social ascension of Nikkei Brazilians whose life experiences do not necessarily fit into widely disseminated stereotypes about them as *dekasegi*). The data show delicate connections between social, cultural, and embodied capital and Nikkei Brazilians' foodways and livelihoods in Japan.

The dissertation takes a slight turn in Chapter 6, which discusses Brazilian ethnic entrepreneurship, the representation and interpretation of Brazilian food in Japan, and how Brazilian food and culture are exoticized and commodified in Japan's restaurant business. By extending interviews to individuals working in Brazilian food related industries, this chapter explores the challenges and opportunities of Brazilian ethnic entrepreneurship and the symbolic meanings of Brazilian food in Japan.

Then the last substantive chapter of this study, Chapter 7, sheds further light on Nikkei Brazilian identity and the emotive power of food, showing how sentimental values, social elements, and memories related to food make some interviewees long for their home, friends, and family in Brazil. This chapter also underscores the non-static nature of cultural and culinary identities for transnational residents like Nikkei Brazilians, who accept being 'in-between' Japanese and Brazilian rather than trying to conform to one or the other. Finally, in its conclusion, this dissertation reflects on its findings and offers thoughts on their implications for future studies of capital, social class, and food studies. Although this study specifically examined

Nikkei Brazilians in Japan, future studies will benefit by investigating class implications steeped in foodways of other migrant groups in Japan or elsewhere.

Chapter 2. Research Methods

In-Depth Interviews (N=63)

My primary data were collected through in-depth online interviews. From September 2020 to July 2021, I conducted 63 interviews with Nikkei Brazilian individuals living in Japan and 20 interviews with the people who work in Brazilian food related industries, yielding a total of 83 in-depth interviews. Follow-up interviews and subsequent internet correspondence with interviewees took place when necessary. Any Nikkei Brazilian individuals who have lived in Brazil and were currently living in Japan at the time of research period were eligible interview candidates, regardless of their gender, age, and the duration of living in Japan. One interviewee participated in this project from Brazil. He had just moved back to Brazil at the time of interview for COVID-19 related circumstances after living in Japan for four years.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the University of Hawaii at Manoa was obtained in July, 2020, but it was promptly modified in August, 2020 given the risk of traveling and interacting with people in-person in the midst of a pandemic. As a result of ruling out my initial in-person research plan, my modified fieldwork plan heavily depended on virtual platforms utilizing ICT (Information and Communication Technology, hereafter) and social media to execute online recruitment and interviews. Specifically, I utilized InterNations, Facebook, WhatsApp, LINE, Zoom, and Google Meet.

Semi-structured interview questions aimed to delve into Nikkei Brazilian individuals' diet-related lifestyles before and after coming to Japan. Specific questions include social and cultural aspects of food related procurement, preparation, and consumption, how their dietary practices have evolved over time, and the meanings and emotional attachment related to their engagement with food. The interview guide (see Appendix A) consisted of four major sections,

focused on diet, capital, consumption habits, and emotions. Questions related to diet and consumption habits were inspired by Ray's (2004) seminal texts investigating Bengali-American individual's culinary culture and class in the U.S. From Ray's work, I learned possible ways of sociological inquiry into interviewees' dietary practice and social class by asking comparative questions about their homes and host countries such as: "What do you eat for breakfast typically in Japan?," "What was your typical breakfast when you were in Brazil?," "How much do you spend for grocery shopping in Japan?," and "Did you spend more or less on grocery shopping when you were in Brazil?" Despite the interview guide, interviews were flexible and open-ended, allowing interviewees to take the lead in conversational flows and to elaborate on certain topics more than others. All interviewees received the interview guide and a consent form prior to the interview date. When I could not a get an e-signed or signed-and-scanned consent form prior to the interview session, I obtained the consent verbally at the beginning of the interview, recorded on my device.

Interview recordings were manually transcribed and anonymized to ensure confidentiality. The coding process employed the grounded theory strategy conceived by Schatzman and Strauss (1973). After coding the transcripts by classes (frequently mentioned topics and events) and properties (characteristics of classes), codes were generated from frequently recurring classes and the line of inquiry within the structured interview guide. Based on this analytic strategy, I found 65 "key linkages," which suggests the significance of classes in relations to interviewees' life journeys with changing food habits (Schatzman and Strauss 1973). Critical themes that are integral to coherent discussions of food, class, capital, and identity are discussed in this dissertation. The following section introduces each online platform used in my recruitment process and its details and utilities.

InterNations

While widely used social networking sites like Facebook and Instagram can be very useful in online recruitment, I was afraid that using such sites for initial contacts may violate the sense of privacy and personal space of future interviewees, as a result of skipping the step of building trust and rapport. It also appeared difficult to search for Nikkei Brazilians living in Japan systematically on Facebook and Instagram due to the privacy settings of the sites/apps. To engage with Nikkei Brazilians living in Japan specifically, I turned to the social networking website InterNations, which is primarily used by expatriates wishing to expand their social networks and organize or participate in get-togethers for professional networking, scheduling events, and casual meet-and-greets. According to its website at that time, InterNations had 1.5 million registered users from over 390 global cities (InterNations 2018). Since I had found InterNations effective for participant recruitment in my previous research, I used this social networking platform again to connect with Nikkei Brazilian communities in Japan. The design and aim of such websites are important in selecting a platform to network and recruit participants online because it may suggest potential threats and risks to the participant's personal information and privacy. However, InterNations was designed to bridge off-line social lives and online communities, thus the members use the site with their real names with open profiles for fellow members.

Another critical reason I chose InterNations for my research is due to its efficient search engine and a messaging feature. First, InterNations allows fellow users to find each other by filtering registered members by name, nationality, locations of birth and current residency, language, interests, and other information. This search engine allowed me to find specific individuals who were born in Brazil and currently living in Japan at the time of the research.

Second, I was able to send a message to any fellow users without prior approval of a contact request, unlike other social networking website like Facebook in which it is perceived odd to get a message from a stranger that you do not know in real life. In InterNations, you are expected to meet new people, so a message exchange between strangers was normal and happened frequently.

I sent greeting messages and recruitment statements to about 70 Nikkei Brazilian users ranging widely regarding gender, age, and occupation. While this method only yielded five online interviews, those initial five assisted with snowball recruitment that ultimately yielded over 60 future interviews from diverse backgrounds. The return to my original recruitment messages was small and discouraging, especially considering that there were also situations where I heard back from some users, only for the communication to fall off before I could schedule interviews. However, for those respondents with whom I was able to establish a quick rapport, I was able to use the InterNations messaging feature to ask interviewees about their preferred online platforms so that we could pivot into their ICT comfort zones for deeper discussions over video and audio formats.

LINE and WhatsApp

I utilized LINE and WhatsApp to correspond with potential interviewees and to conduct online interviews. LINE is essentially the Japanese version of Facebook Messenger in terms of its functionality and purpose and is easily the most popular messaging app in Japan, so much so that it has found its way into everyday Japanese speech. For example, texting via LINE has so firmly supplanted SMS (short message service) texting that rather than saying the Japanese equivalent of "text me," Japanese people generally say "LINE *shite,*" or "message me on LINE"

when referring to texting. Though I discovered that many Nikkei Brazilians had not heard of LINE until they came to Japan, I also learned that most gained quick fluency in the app due to both social pressures and workplace requirements, as new acquaintances in Japan only used LINE to communicate, and most workplaces required employees to download it for work related correspondence (Hillyer 2021). As such, the incorporation of LINE into my communication with interviewees was essential, as many interviewees who have settled in Japan for the long term were so accustomed to using it that they preferred it over other apps like WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger.

Because my previous research explored WhatsApp usage amongst Nikkei Brazilians (Hillyer 2021), for this dissertation, I was sure to create a WhatsApp account specifically for the purpose of networking. WhatsApp is widely used amongst Brazilians of all ethnic groups and backgrounds, who use its audio, video, and textual features for both casual and professional communication (Baulch et al. 2020). Even though WhatsApp is not as common as LINE and other ICTs in Japan, many Nikkei Brazilians in Japan still use WhatsApp frequently to communicate with friends and family in Japan and Brazil (Hillyer 2021). Therefore, the incorporation of WhatsApp in this study was important to accommodate potential interviewees' preferences and their ICT comfort zones. Providing for different ICT options outside of those that meet the interests of the researcher, alone, helped increase an interviewee's inclination to respond and facilitates further correspondence. Interviews via LINE and WhatsApp were conducted within the apps' voice call or video call function. I asked each interviewee which interface they preferred prior to interview dates. When they did not have particular preferences, I opted to video call with my camera on, but interviewees were able to choose whether to turn their cameras on or off.

Facebook Messenger, Zoom, and Google Meet

For the more specific sample of food business owners and workers, I opted to use Facebook and its associated, albeit distinct app Facebook Messenger, primarily because restaurants utilize these sites and apps to advertise their business and respond to inquiries, making it much easier to identify restaurants and gather their contact information. Of the 20 total interviews I conducted with Brazilian restaurant owners, seven interviews were arranged from an initial inquiry to a restaurant's Facebook Messenger that was identified through that restaurant's Facebook page. Generally speaking, the restaurant Facebook pages are often managed by someone on the restaurant's business end, such as an owner or manager. Once introductions were made and information exchanged, I requested the owner or manager's help with interviewing and/or referring me to employees who might be interested in interviewing with me.

Contacting businesses via Facebook Messenger was a highly efficient approach for two reasons. First, restaurant Facebook pages provided timely information, such as current operation status and operating business hours. This was especially useful as the Japanese government enforced several varying state of emergency orders that prompted some to close their doors while others remained opened, and still others drastically changed their operating hours and days. Second, as noted in a prior study by James (2016) that discusses how asynchronous communication provides potential interviewees ample time to contemplate requests, the asynchronous nature of Facebook Messenger allowed restaurants businesses to respond on their own time, which was especially advantageous given the difficulties of managing day-to-day operations during the pandemic.

Additionally, I conducted online interviews via Facebook Messenger when someone introduced me to a potential interviewee by forwarding me a Facebook link or contact. When

that was the case, I contacted a potential interviewee via Facebook Messenger and the interview subsequently took place within the same app's voice call or video call function, unless a potential interviewee preferred a different platform.

Zoom and Google Meet were generally the preferred means of interviewing for those who did not want to be contacted from their personal ICT platforms. For Zoom and Google Meet interviews, I generally corresponded with interviewees only by email and then sent them a one-time link for our interview. Such video conference platforms allowed interviewees to conceal their identities if they wish by choosing not to turn on their cameras. However, many preferred using the video and audio functions embedded within the app, along with Facebook Messenger, LINE, and WhatsApp. These apps were also utilized when an interviewee introduced me to a friend for a potential interview given the ease of connecting within the app that gave it an advantage over apps like Zoom. Furthermore, unlike the aforementioned ICTs, Zoom and Google Meet allowed interviewees to connect with me via only email and link to the meeting. In other words, interviewees did not need to connect with me in more personal and intimate ICT platforms.

Online recruitment and interviews

Ultimately, by utilizing these ICT platforms flexibly, I was able to exceed my minimal goal of 50 interviews through online networking and snowball recruitment. For both Nikkei Brazilian and Brazilian food-related workers' interviews, my primary networking process began with sending the recruitment statements through online platforms. This allowed me to introduce myself properly and to state my research interest and objective clearly through a carefully crafted message. Brazilian food-related workers are obviously a more specific group, so I first identified

the social media platforms of Brazilian food related business and sent an interview request message from the social media's messaging feature. When the business did not seem to have an active social media platform, I called or emailed the business directly.

An often-cited disadvantage of online interviews in the literature concerns technological issues such as familiarity with digital platform, technological competence, and the access to Internet (Deakin and Wakefield 2014; Jowett et al. 2011; Lobe et al. 2020). However, there were virtually no major technological issues with my interviewees, from the initial communications via apps to the actual interview sessions via ICT of their preference. For most of my interviewees, it was their first time being interviewed for academic research. Nevertheless, they did not seem anxious or nervous about the nature of online conversations with a stranger, which clearly stemmed from their experience using ICT at their work and/or in their regular life when talking to their friends or families back in Brazil (Baulch et al. 2020; Diniz 2017; Hillyer 2021). The obvious lack of technical problems taught me how virtual interactions had become part of everyday communication among interviewees, and was therefore not necessarily an 'alternative' to in-person meetings to them.

Additionally, my interviewees seemed relaxed or noticeably comfortable during the interview session. This was demonstrated by their locations in their home such as a living room and a kitchen, or even their self-presentations (e.g., outfits, hair styles, with-or-without makeup). Interviewees had more agency and power in our exchanges (Fujii 2017) as they were given control in deciding where they wanted to 'meet' and talked to me to when and on whichever platform they wanted to use. Furthermore, while the traditional notion of fieldwork rests on the one-way premise that researchers enter the personal lives of participants but not the other way around (Knott 2019), my interviewees saw me from my studio apartment, my online activities,

and my personal life through social media platforms. Thus, the relationship cultivated through online interview is not a top-down approach in which researchers reserve the power to enter the personal lives of participants, but rather they were working relationships (Fujii 2017) in which interviewees also learn about me as a researcher and a person with whom trust and intimacy are nurtured.

The added level of intimacy resulted from being 'present' in one another's home also contributed to rapport-building. With every unexpected phone chime or holler of their family members, interviewees shared little details about themselves and their everyday lives, possibly more than they would do with in-person conversations (Jenner and Myers 2019), such as what packages they were expecting or that their spouse or children were calling them and for what reason. In some cases, this intimacy prompted subject-specific questions. For example, one interviewee answered questions while preparing dinner for their family, which opened the door to several segue questions about food and diet, such as what they were making for dinner and whether it was something they made regularly.

Advantages and salience of online interview during the pandemic

COVID-19 has caused drastic changes in qualitative research approaches and a temporary pause in research plans of scholars around the globe. In my case, I (miraculously) made it to my research site Japan with many restrictions on what I could do and little guidance and hope to accomplish my research goal, which was to interview at least 50 Nikkei Brazilians living in Japan. Despite having spent the previous year outlining an in-person research plan entailing ethnographic participant observation, in-person interviews, and site visits, I had to give up my 'dissertation fieldwork dream' and move my fieldwork site to a virtual space.

However, unexpectedly, online interviews have provided angles of the field that would not be observed in participant observations or in-person interviews. One of the greatest advantages of online interviewing is the instant and enhanced visual communication by utilizing the video function. During my conversations with interviewees, there were several occasions in which interviewees got up and showed me physical items around their house that had relevance to our conversation, such as Brazilian foodstuffs that I was not familiar with. Many times, if I asked how to spell the name of a given foodstuff, asked questions about it, or gave any indication that I was unfamiliar with it or curious about it, interviewees would go into their kitchen or refrigerator and show me the item using the camera on their computer, tablet, or phone. In a similar vein, when I talked to interviewees about Brazilian restaurants in Japan, they often sent me a link to photos, articles, and other online information via the chat functions embedded within video-conferencing ICT. This kind of copy-and-paste feature is not as natural or readily available in in-person interviews, and it provided an added layer of show and tell that might otherwise be lacking.

Some interviewees also sent me personal pictures of food items that they mentioned after our interview sessions ended. Such cooperative actions from interviewees were voluntary, and they sent me the photos and links even without my requests. Getting such exact visual information directly from interviewees infinitely enhanced my understanding about the cultural contexts and common themes from interviews, which also helped me to gain tangible insight into their diet-related lifestyles both in Japanese and Brazilian contexts. Though this kind of subsequent communication can come with in-person interviewing too, it is worth noting that it was not at all awkward or untoward to continue the researcher-interviewee relationship even after the formal interview ended, by establishing a relationship that takes place solely in the

digital realm of ICT. In a way, by keeping the interviewer-interviewee relationship entirely digital, the relationship is not cut off by simply exiting the interview, just as "returning from the field does not mean leaving the field in an absolute sense" (Knott 2019:148).

Due to interviewees' outfit choices (e.g., sweatpants, t-shirt) and the locations where interviews took place, the interview sessions proceeded with a lesser degree of formality, and it usually drove our interactions to more open, casual conversations. Even when some conversations started with a rather formal tone, it was noticeable when interviewees' voices and facial expressions became more relaxed as interviewees learned more about me as a person and why I study Nikkei Brazilian topics. Although all interviewees were debriefed about the purpose of research and brief introductions about me through pre-interview communications and consent forms, many interviewees still asked me why I am interested in learning about the foodways of Nikkei Brazilians, or if I am also Nikkei. Questions like these reminded me that interviewees should feel encouraged to ask any questions at any time (Jowett et al. 2011). Moreover, a researcher should not assume that interviewees show up at sessions with full understandings about research objectives and a researcher's basic information because interviewees can overlook such information in pre-interview communication and a consent form if they are too busy or when there is a considerable time interval between initial correspondence and a scheduled time of interview.

Furthermore, as far as participant's degree of engagement is concerned, I was often surprised by my interviewees' preparedness. Some interviewees promptly responded to my emails with their e-signed consent forms. Although I did not request this, some interviewees responded with a short response to each question in the interview guide, and some had the interview guides printed out in their hands at the time of our interview. Because the average

duration of my interview was about an hour long, I started asking my interviewees for written responses to the basic demographic questions prior to the interview date to save time. I was pleasantly surprised by how some of them emailed me their responses in detail, which also helped me to prepare better for the actual interview session (e.g., developing probing questions based on their responses, eliminating the irrelevant questions beforehand). These outcomes further show that online interview does not weaken the rapport-building process with participants.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that pre-interview communication before establishing rapport can be tenuous. There were a few incidents in which the communication fell off before I could schedule meetings with potential interviewees. Understandably, some potential interviewees felt less committed to make our meeting happen because I was a stranger who was introduced by their friends or reached out from Facebook or InterNations.

As a researcher, I felt slightly nervous when the interview surpassed more than an hour for the sake of interviewees' time, but many of my participants seemed less concerned about time, perhaps owning to the fact that they were already at home and comfortable (Lo Iacono et al. 2016). Thus, my interview result disagrees with the prior literature purporting that in-person conversations yield longer and richer information than phone or video calls (Johnston et al. 2019). Similar to Howlett's observation from her online focus group conducted during the peak of the pandemic (2021), my interviewees were willing and happy to talk about a subject that is not related to their work or COVID-19, as well as to meet someone new in the middle of the pandemic when the opportunities to socialize were largely restricted. For example, the interviewees were interested to know if I was in Hawaii, or what it was like to live in Hawaii and how the pandemic had affected the lives and tourism industry for people in Hawaii. Hearing

genuine interest or spontaneous questions from the interviewees made me feel that I was able to establish more meaningful relationships with my interviewees than the usual pragmatic researcher-participant dynamics. This point was further ensured by some instances when the interviewees messaged me back to my thank you note after the interview session, to which, unexpectedly, the interviewees thanked me for the opportunity to participate in my research because they have not talked to anyone outside their work for a while or they have not talked about Brazil in a while, and the interviewee reminded them of their family and food in Brazil and heartwarming memories from their childhoods.

As such, the online interviews that I conducted were detail-oriented and conversational, allowing me to obtain in-depth information about interviewees' lifestyles and backgrounds in a way that meeting with interviewees at physical co-locations might not have been (Beaulieu 2010). Overall, the tone and context of my online interviews were more informal than in-person interviews (Howlett 2021; Jowett et al. 2011; Madge and O'Connor 2002). Due to common and timely topics like COVID-19 and remote work and pre-interview communications, an artificial attempt to establish rapport seemed almost unnecessary, as most interview conversations arose naturally as if I was speaking with someone I knew rather than a complete stranger. More importantly, online interview settings shifted power imbalances and harnessed more autonomy for interviewees such as choosing time and space of the meeting, as well as requesting to reschedule due to pressing demands (Rahman et al. 2021; Tremblay et al. 2021). As such, the quality of data gained through online interviews is not significantly different from that yielded by more 'traditional' methods like in-person interviews, despite the obvious difference between the two (Deakin and Wakefield 2014; Denscombe 2017; Howlett 2021).

Overall, disadvantages of not being able to conduct traditional in-person meetings were supplemented by the advantages brought by online interviews. Working online provided me and my interviewees with the utmost flexibility in scheduling our interview times, which was particularly advantageous when I needed to interview *dekasegi* individuals who had manual labor jobs with long shifts and short breaks. The earliest interview appointment I had was at 7 AM and my latest was at 9 PM, which concluded around 10:30 PM. Interviewing in-person would have truncated scheduling possibilities, which likely would have meant fewer interviews and specifically fewer interviews with more economically marginalized peoples working irregular hours. I was also able to conduct many more interviews than would have otherwise been possible working exclusively in-person, conducting as many as three interviews in one day.

The demographic of interviewees

For the most part, interviewees were *Nisei* (second generations) or *Sansei* (third generations of the original immigrants from Japan to Brazil) of Nikkei Brazilians, with a variety of occupations and durations of living in Japan. Among 63 Nikkei Brazilian individuals I interviewed, their average age was 37 years old. Female interviewees (38) outnumbered the male interviewees (25). The youngest interviewee was 20 years old and oldest was 59 years old. The age group of 30-39 was the largest age group (32) in the sample, consistent with the national age distribution of Brazilians in Japan, which shows that Brazilians in their 30s are the largest age demographic in Japan (Immigration Services Agency of Japan 2016:23).

The average interview duration was an hour and a half. The shortest interview session lasted for 40 minutes, and the longest interview went slightly over two hours. While 34 interviewees lived in the greater Tokyo or Osaka areas, the two biggest cities in Japan, 27

interviewees lived in cities and prefectures known for a large presence of working class and blue-collar Nikkei Brazilians. The remaining two interviewees lived in other prefectures. Finally, 34 interviews were conducted in English, 27 in Japanese, and two in Portuguese with the co-present interviewee's help translating Portuguese to English and Japanese. All interviews were audio recorded and research notes were taken on the observations of non-verbal clues and the informal chats that took place before and after recording. Most interviewees were neither native English nor Japanese speakers, thus minor grammatical corrections were added in the selected quotes. The table below provides a descriptive profile of interviewees:

Table 2.1 Primary Interviewee Profile

		Total (n=63)
Categorical variables		N (%)
Gender	Male	25 (39.6%)
	Female	38 (60.3%)
Age	20-29	9 (14.2%)
	30-39	32 (50.8%)
	40-49	19 (30.2%)
	50-59	3 (4.7%)
Dekasegi Experience	Yes	31 (49.2%)
	No	32 (50.8%)
Relationship Status	Single	27 (42.8%)
	In-relationship	7 (11.1%)
	Married	11 (17.5%)
	Married with dependents	10 (15.9%)
	Single parent	3 (4.8%)
	Divorced/separated	5 (7.9%)

Despite my snowball sampling method, the demographic distribution of my interviewees somehow resembled the national distribution of Nikkei Brazilians in Japan. According to Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare statistics, 52.8% (71,268) of Japan's Brazilian workers (134,977) engaged in manual labor through dispatching or contracting agencies (2021). The same MHLW statistic shows that approximately 50% of Brazilian population do not fit the

typical *dekasegi* profile in Japan, which is reflected in my sample that was split almost evenly between *dekasegi* and others. However, it should be clarified here that the table combines current *dekasegi* and former *dekasegi* in the same general category. The following table provides more information about the interviewees with *dekasegi* experiences:

Table 2.2 Interviewees with dekasegi experiences

	Currently dekasegi (n, percentage of sample)		**Former *dekasegi* (promoted, found a better job, married to non-*dekasegi*)**	
Gender	2 Men (3% sample)	8 Women (12.7% sample)	8 Men (12.7% sample)	13 Women (20.6% sample)
Total	10 (15.9% sample)		21 (33.3% sample)	

Although their duration engaging in *dekasegi* work varies, this study loosely defined a respondent's status as *dekasegi* when: (1) interviewees referred themselves as dekasegi, (2) interviewees' current and past occupations involved manual labor, (3) interviewees made their work and living arrangement through broker agencies prior to their travel to Japan. Technically, anyone who works in Japan and supports family in Brazil financially is '*dekasegi*' regardless of their occupation and pay grade, but the literature has perpetuated *dekasegi* as the term specifically referring to working class Nikkei Brazilians in Japan, so this study follows the usage of *dekasegi* consistent with the research literature on Nikkei Brazilians.

Former *dekasegi* category connotes various circumstances, but the most common cases are interviewees who worked with their *dekasegi* parents in factories when they were minors (9). Others include the cases in which interviewees started as factory workers and gained promotions over time, married a non-*dekasegi* partner, and/or shifted to the skilled labor market by utilizing their skills (more details discussed in Chapter 5). In both current and former experience categories, female *dekasegi* outnumbered male *dekasegi*.

Although the duration of living in Japan is important in investigating the acculturation process of foodways, I omitted this category from the table because at least 10 interviewees moved between Brazil and Japan frequently from a young age, thus their adjustment in Japan (or Brazil for that matter) was disrupted by their transnational lifestyles. Relationship status is indicated in the table because such status influences the social lives of interviewees, bringing tremendous impact on their foodways. The following table presents demographic details of each interviewee:

Table 2.3 Primary interview group's specific details

	Gender	Age	Class	Interview Language
Maya	F	32	Blue-collar	JPN
Luiz	M	31	Blue-collar	JPN
Alice	F	32	Blue-collar	ENG
Francisca	F	32	Blue-collar	JPN
Yoko	F	43	Blue-collar	JPN
Regina	F	31	Blue-collar	ENG
Jennifer	F	34	Blue-collar	ENG
Yuri	F	42	Blue-collar	JPN
Gabriel	M	36	Blue-collar	ENG
Margarete	F	55	Blue-collar	POR
Rita	F	31	Blue-collar	POR
Daniel	M	45	Blue-collar (managerial, promoted)	JPN
Taketo	M	43	Blue-collar (managerial, promoted)	JPN
Geraldo	M	30	Blue-collar (managerial, promoted)	JPN
Noah	M	34	Blue-collar (managerial, promoted)	JPN
Daniela	F	30	Blue-collar (managerial, promoted)	JPN
Sayaka	F	40	Blue-collar (managerial, promoted), housewife	JPN
Lia	F	34	Blue-collar (managerial)	ENG
Amanda	F	29	Blue-collar (managerial)	ENG
Rika	F	29	Blue-collar (managerial)	ENG
Davi	M	30	Blue-collar (managerial)	ENG
Maki	F	34	Business owner	ENG
Sofia	F	28	Business owner	ENG
Paula	F	37	Business owner	ENG
Adriana	F	36	Business owner	ENG
Juan	M	49	Business owner	JPN

Sabrina	F	29	Graduate student	ENG
Zach	M	26	Graduate student	ENG
Camila	F	45	Housewife (former blue-collar)	JPN
Kumi	F	40	Housewife with full-time work	JPN
Mayumi	F	47	Housewife with full-time work	JPN
Olivia	F	31	Housewife with part-time work	JPN
Keila	F	40	Housewife with part-time work	JPN
Liz	F	30	PhD Candidate	ENG
Bruno	M	33	PhD Candidate	ENG
Koichi	M	39	PhD Candidate	ENG
Edson	M	42	PhD Candidate	ENG
Orlando	M	44	Service work	ENG
Mami	F	50	Service work	JPN
Takuya	M	38	Service work	JPN
Oscar	M	39	Service work	JPN
Carlos	M	32	Transitioning period (formerly graduate student)	ENG
Asami	F	32	Transitioning period (formerly white-collar)	JPN
Misato	F	27	Transitioning period (recent university graduate)	JPN
Ayaka	F	19	University student	JPN
Sam	M	48	White-collar	ENG
Jean	M	57	White-collar	JPN
Ivan	M	34	White-collar	ENG
Fabio	M	32	White-collar	ENG
Kento	M	34	White-collar	ENG
Takashi	M	33	White-collar	ENG
Paulo	M	40	White-collar	ENG
Elsa	F	40	White-collar	JPN
Elaine	F	35	White-collar	ENG
Kelly	F	37	White-collar	ENG
Ian	M	42	White-collar	ENG
Bianca	F	40	White-collar	ENG
Maya	F	41	White-collar	JPN
Juliana	F	25	White-collar	ENG
Elena	F	38	White-collar	ENG
Rosa	F	35	White-collar	ENG
Roberto	M	43	White-collar	ENG
Katia	F	27	White-collar	JPN

* All names are pseudonyms, and these names are used consistently throughout the dissertation.

Interviews with Brazilian food related business owners and workers (N=20)

Though the original ethnographic fieldwork plan had to be modified due to the pandemic, I was still able to interview individuals who owned or worked in Brazilian food-related businesses, who could speak about their work and relationships with Brazilian communities in Japan, as well as their biographic stories about how they came to work with Brazilian food in Japan. I searched for Brazilian restaurants, grocery stores, and cooking instructors online (Google, Google Map, and Tabelog) to reach out to them and to make interview appointments (specific recruiting methods are described in later sections below). I prepared a different set of questions separately from the main interview guide for Nikkei Brazilian individuals. Unlike the primary interviewee group, this subset of interviewees was more diverse, including (Nikkei) Brazilians (13), Japanese (6), and an American (1). Despite their backgrounds, all non-Brazilian interviewees had strong ties to Brazil due to their familial connections and interests in Brazilian culture and food. In the end, I was able to interview 15 individuals working, managing, or owning Brazilian restaurants, two Brazilian cooking instructors, two Brazilian grocery store owners, and one farm owner whose business specialized in niche vegetables that are common in Brazilian food. Four interviewees in this category volunteered to answer primary food-related questions as well. Within this group of food industry owners and workers, male interviewees (12) slightly outnumbered female interviewees (8). The following table presents descriptive summary of each interviewee:

Table 2.4 Secondary interview group's specific details

Job titles of interviewee	**Types of business**	**Job start month/year**	**Locations of business**	**Nationality & gender**
A: Mami, Food Chef (Part-time)	*Churrasco* restaurant	March 2015	Central Tokyo	Female Nikkei Brazilian
A: Orlando, Food Chef (Part-time)	*Churrasco* restaurant	November 2018	Central Tokyo	Male Nikkei Brazilian
B: Hisayo, Owner/Manager	*Churrasco* restaurant	2006	Hamamatsu, Shizuoka	Female Japanese
C: Shizuka Owner/Manager	*Churrasco* restaurant	2010	Kawasaki, Kanagawa	Female Japanese
C: Mauricio, Owner/Food Chief	*Churrasco* restaurant	2010	Kawasaki, Kanagawa	Male Nikkei Brazilian
D: Ohno, Owner	Bar restaurant	2007	Central Tokyo	Male Japanese
E: Tanaka, Owner	Bar restaurant	2007	Central Tokyo	Male Japanese
F: John, Owner & *Churrasco* Chef	Bar restaurant	October 2020	Central Tokyo	Male American
G: Takuya, Food and service worker (Full-time)	*Churrasco* restaurant	2015	Central Tokyo	Male Nikkei Brazilian
G: Oscar, Manager (Full-time)	*Churrasco* restaurant	2007	Central Tokyo	Male Nikkei Brazilian
H: Isaka, Manager (Full-time)	*Churrasco* restaurant	June 2006	Central Tokyo	Male Japanese
I: Sasaki, Manager (Full-time)	Brazilian light-meal eatery (formerly import food grocery store)	2018	Nagoya, Aichi	Female Japanese
J: Isabella, Food Chief (Part-time)	*Churrasco* restaurant	February 2014	Central Tokyo	Female Nikkei Brazilian
K: Patrick, Farm owner	Vegetable farm	2007	Hamamatsu, Shizuoka	Male Nikkei Brazilian
L: Eri, Owner	Brazilian grocery store		Hamamatsu, Shizuoka	Female Nikkei Brazilian
L: Theo, Owner/Food chef	Brazilian pizzeria	October 2007	Shizuoka Prefecture	Male Nikkei Brazilian
L: Vanessa, Owner/Food chef	Brazilian pizzeria	October 2007	Shizuoka Prefecture	Female Nikkei Brazilian
M: Lucio, Owner	Brazilian grocery store	1991	Hamamatsu, Shizuoka	Male Nikkei Brazilian
N: Bella, Cooking instructor (Full-time)	Brazilian cooking instructor	2017	Central Tokyo	Female Nikkei Brazilian
O: Cristiano, Cooking instructor (Part-time)	Brazilian Cooking instructor	2017	Aichi Prefecture	Male Nikkei Brazilian

* All names are pseudonyms, and these names are used consistently throughout the dissertation.

Limitations

Before my travel to Japan, I relied heavily on existing literature that analyzed online qualitative research approaches with the hope that it could inform my reinvented research plan. Though these works were indeed helpful, I quickly found that I would have to figure a good deal out on my own. Thus, as a study that was quickly adapted to the unprecedented state of the pandemic without much guidance, my study contains flaws and limitations. Interviewees were found through unique online communities and their personal networks, so the findings may come from a certain angle of looking into Nikkei Brazilian communities in Japan.

Despite aiming for a balance in interviewees' demographics, the sample of this study skewed towards the early 20s to late 50s Nikkei Brazilian individuals who had the technological competence required to participate, which resulted in the lack of older adults' participation. Nearly a half of my interviewees were in their 30s, and a large representation of this group probably resulted from snowball sampling. With a study sample of diverse age groups, this study would have benefited from a comparative analysis of foodways between older and younger generations, but most interviewees elaborated on their contemporary foodways along with supplemental accounts of their parents and grandparent generations' diets in Brazil. Such earlier (second generation and older) generations' foodways are fully investigated from the records and documents found through archival research, which will be elaborated in Chapter 3.

In my heavily qualitative approach, I must acknowledge the language issue potentially affecting sample collection process. Due to my own language proficiency limitations, this study relied on Nikkei Brazilians who could speak either Japanese or English, or sometimes both. There was one exceptional case where I could interview two women who only spoke Portuguese, which was facilitated by another interviewee who was trilingual. In one way, my English and

Japanese centered recruitment allowed me to find an understudied elite Nikkei Brazilian population in urban areas, but my intermediate Portuguese fluency prevented me from connecting with Portuguese-speaking Nikkei Brazilians, specifically *dekasegi* who are often not proficient Japanese speakers. Nearly the half of this study's participants were current and former *dekasegi*, but there is no doubt that my sample size and interview possibilities would have expanded significantly if I could speak Portuguese well enough to conduct interviews.

In the end, only five interviewees were InterNations users, and the remaining 58 interviewees were found through snowball sampling. Social media platforms and ICT tools discussed in this chapter are widely available to anyone with internet access, but this it does not mean that a qualitative researcher would necessarily have success when working with such ICT tools. Online fieldwork outcomes depend on the timing, location, and availability of interviewees and interviewer, and my study offers but one researcher's example for future reference. Thus, I hope that this study encourages other researchers to try to experiment with different ICT and social media outlets to engage with other communities and locales of interest.

Although my snowball sampling allowed me to reach out to individuals beyond online platforms, I must accept that such specific and convenient recruitment tactics could pose issues for selection biases and the quality of data. I also understand that the nature of my research topics did not involve controversial topics or traumatic experiences of interviewees, and thus it was perhaps easier for my interviewees to engage with my research online. As many found my food-related questions rather 'fun' to talk about, I did not run into issues of trauma or extreme difficulty that other researchers may encounter during their work (Hubbard et al. 2001; Jenner and Myers 2019), which may drastically alter the online interview experience. To avoid finding themselves in unsafe or uncomfortable situations, researchers should not be afraid of drawing

necessary boundaries while maintaining transparent and professional communications with interviewees, and should consult their own universities and research institutions for protocol suggestions.

Chapter 3. Historical Overview: Food and Social Class of Japanese in Brazil

This chapter provides the background about the earliest migration from Japan to Brazil, the Japanese immigrants' eating habits and food adjustments in Brazil, and the trajectories of their social mobility starting from the bottom of the social ladder as immigrant plantation workers to occupying middle- and upper-middle class in the 1960s due to the urbanization in São Paulo city. In exploring different facets of early Japanese immigrants' lives, food-centered approaches show not only the cultural analysis of Japanese immigrants' foodways, but they also present career opportunities and emerging social inequalities between Nikkei Brazilians in the cities and countryside of São Paulo. It shows that early Japanese utilized the lack of Japanese food as an opportunity to become business entrepreneurs and ultimately to contribute to agricultural development and Brazilian culinary scenes broadly. This examination also sheds light on overlooked contributions of Japanese women, whose work created new food habits with Brazilian ingredients, and later used food to keep Nikkei Brazilian communities vibrant by preserving Japanese-style recipes and cooking over many generations.

Archival Research

The motive of conducting archival research in Japan was to gain understandings of historical changes in Nikkei Brazilians' tastes and culinary activities because this dissertation assesses the desired and developed 'taste' of Nikkei Brazilian communities and how this might change due to life events, exposure to Brazilian, Japanese, and other cuisines, and availability of food goods in one's life environment. I conducted most of my archival research at the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum in Yokohama, which preserves documents, pertinent articles, and

books related to dietary patterns and culinary culture in Brazil and among Nikkei Brazilian people that are published in Japanese or English. During my fellowship year, the museum had a limited-time exhibition on Nikkei food culture, and I was able to analyze these as well, not only learning from them, but also better understanding how Nikkei Brazilian history was represented and consumed for Japanese and overseas audiences.

I also had access to both English and Japanese literature from the libraries of Waseda University, my host institution for my Japan Foundation Doctoral Fellowship. The rich volume of primary sources was found through the website of the Center for Japanese-Brazilian Studies, a Brazil-based independent research institution providing essential materials in subjects related to Nikkei Brazilians. Access to primary and secondary sources were granted through the following libraries and their websites: Hokkaido University Collection of Scholarly and Academic Papers (HUSCAP), Kobe University Digital Library Archive, Meguro City Library, and National Diet Library.

Food along the journey to Brazil

Various records about the early twentieth century journeys of Japanese emigrants to Brazil describe everyday scenes of these emigrants' lives and experiences on the ship. It is important to note here that "emigrants" did not intend to settle in Brazil permanently. They essentially came to Brazil as *dekasegi* whose ultimate goal was *kinikikoku* (錦衣帰国), which is to earn and make good savings and return to Japan wealthy. In order to avoid confusion, I employ the term "emigrants" here and reserve the term *dekasegi* for the later Nikkei Brazilians who have moved to Japan to work in blue-collar jobs since the 1990s.

Handa (1986) has left vivid narratives of his 55-day journey on the ship from Kobe in 1918. Handa left Japan during the second wave of emigrants, whose travels to Brazil were subsidized by the Japanese government and who were employed by Japanese-owned agricultural colonies developed by the first wave of Japanese emigrants. According to Handa, there were about 1200 Japanese occupying the third-class cabin, and each family was given a three-tatami space separated from its neighbors by wooden dividers (1986:7). For food, one person from a family went to the deck with a ticket to pick up the meal for the whole family. A server filled a tin bowl with rice with strong smells of seawater. The side dish was thin-sliced beef stew with potatoes and carrots, followed by a few slices of *takuan* daikon pickles. Miso soup was served in a smaller tin bowl. One person brought back meals on a tray to their spot, and a woman in a family usually did the dishes afterwards. On the other hand, upper-rank officers, medical staff, and first-class passengers in the first cabin seemed to have better quality meals. Handa recalled the time that his family got excited when they received a meal with rice and greasy beacon, which was quickly retrieved by the kitchen staff who admitted that they made a mistake and the meal was prepared for the first-class cabin (1986).

After a long ocean journey and a rail trip from Santos Port where the ship docked, Japanese emigrants experienced their first encounter with Brazilian-style meals at São Paulo Immigrant Camp. Needless to say, Japanese food and food in Brazil are extremely different. Early Japanese scholars in Brazil described the contrast of the two as "*ochazuke* (a bowl of rice with a hot pot of tea or water poured on top) and *feijoada*," (a thick bean stew with beef or pork intestines). Both dishes are representative meals of home-cooked comfort food in Japan and Brazil (Handa 1986; Saitō 1984:220). As discussed by Saitō, popular Brazilian food including *feijoada,* and turtle dishes in the Amazonas area is oily and very rich in taste, and it does not

have any resemblance to the familiar tastes in Japanese food (1984). Ochazuke is a beloved Japanese staple for its simple taste, but it is rather too simple for non-Japanese Brazilians to appreciate (Saitō 1984). Both are also foods that were missed by Japanese and Brazilians when they left their homelands. The two dishes demonstrate what appetizing food ought to be like for Brazilians and Japanese, which underscores fundamental differences in culture and culinary tastes in Brazil and Japan.

Rokuro Kōyama, the one of very first emigrants who traveled on the first Kasato-maru voyage, wrote in his memoir that his first meal in Brazil was "fun":

> The cafeteria was large. There were about thirty tables, three feet long and one and a half feet wide, surrounded by four benches, placed evenly in the room. The kitchen was in the corner of the cafeteria, separated by a small table. ...The oily porridge had thumb-sized pieces of dried cod and a few little finger-sized potato pieces stewed together. Because we were hungry, everyone ate the food with glee, and some of us asked for a second and made the custodian delighted. According to Suzuki, the Immigration Bureau prepared the big feast and deemed that Japanese immigrants would prefer seafood to beef. The food was delicious, but I would not call the meal feast. (Kōyama 1976:232-233)

Here, Kōyama is referring to Teijirō Suzuki, one of the founding fathers who paved the immigration pathways between Japan and Brazil. Born in 1879 in Yamagata prefecture, Suzuki negotiated the establishment of immigration with Japan the state of Sao Paulo. See Uchiyama's work (1958:36).

In contrast, Handa recounted that oily food provided at the camp was unbearable (1986). Even the regular menu for European emigrants, such as bread and beef soup, was too greasy for Japanese arrivals to swallow. Handa also described his first encounter with coffee disappointing, and found the black bitter drink made from "the fruits of money" distasteful. Some emigrants had a fantasy about coffee, since coffee plantation work was alluded to as harvesting "the tree that fruits money." In reality, coffee harvesting was labor-intensive work and yielded very little

profit. Additionally, the plantation workers suffered during bad seasons due to the inclement weather. See the work of Handa (1986), Kōyama (1949), Uchiyama (1958).

Handa wrote: "even if I could have only salt as a side dish, I badly wished I could have white rice. Even the saltwater-smelling rice on the ship sounded appetizing" (1986:10). Nevertheless, the local newspaper in Brazil appraised that Japanese at the camp ate the Brazilian-style food 'happily' without leaving any mess, not even a grain of rice on the floor, and made no leftovers at the cafeteria (Uchiyama 1958). After about a week in the camp recovering from the long sailing voyage and acclimatizing to Brazil, Japanese arrivals were dispersed to several plantations in the suburbs of São Paulo as family groups and began working as *colonos*, or contract laborers.

Early Japanese diets at the plantation

It is important to note here that the early Japanese immigrants' lifestyles did not indicate the beginning of the assimilation to Brazilian food, which began after the first Japanese emigrants started families in Brazil. Regarding their diet, scholars echo Handa's observations in which he stated the salience of diet among the early Japanese immigrants in Brazil lay in how they utilized Brazilian ingredients to cook food in Japanese style (Handa 1970:123; Mori 2007; Kojima 2013). From the language of writings and records, Japanese laborers draw a clear boundary between what <u>they</u> (Brazilians) ate and what <u>we</u> (Japanese) ate. This is most clearly indicated by Handa (1970) in which he wrote that "I'm going to elaborate on 'food Japanese eat, but Brazilians don't' and 'food with Brazilian ingredients cooked in Japanese styles' in our diet-related lifestyles" (p.538). In the beginning, Japanese laborers strived to avoid the taste of Brazilian food that they did not get accustomed to and made creative arrangements to make

strange foreign food familiar to their Japanese tastes (Handa 1970). As Beagan et al. wrote, "[t]hrough daily food practices and attempts to re-create certain tastes, migrants perform their ethnocultural identities in efforts to transcend geographically distinct spaces" (2015:193), food was one of very few ways that early Japanese could enact their cultural and culinary identity in a foreign land.

As argued by numerous scholars, rice was a lifesaver in the new lifestyles of Japanese immigrants and the big factor that made the long settlement of Japanese possible in Brazil (Handa 1986; Mori 1998). Japanese laborers gradually got used to the taste of *arroz agulha,* long-grain rice that was common in Brazil. Rice was the only food that was familiar to Japanese at the *armazen* or *venda,* the grocery stand located on a plantation. For the side dish, they often had dried beef and dried cod. However, Japanese at that time did not know a proper way to cook dried cod so they ate as it was (Handa 1970).

For lunch, Japanese laborers had cooked long-grain rice in water with grilled dry cod as a side dish and washed the rice-water down their throat with a spoon. Women in the family usually finished up work early to prepare dinner for the family, which was not too different from their lunch menu: long-grain rice, dried cod, and 'salt' soup with weeds found on the plantation which was the substitute for miso soup (Mori 2007). Japanese laborers only thought about grilling the chewy dried cod to eat with rice, and later learned to cook dried cod soup with salt, onions and potatoes (Handa 1970, 1986; Mori 1998). It was much later when Japanese laborers finally learned a proper way of cooking dried cod by being taught by Brazilians and other European laborers, and they gradually diversified their cooking. Although Japanese laborers had meals four times a day during their weekdays, they frequently became sick due to malnutritional diets and

laborious everyday work until they started diversifying meals and consuming more meat (Handa 1970; Kōyama 1991).

The gap of dream and reality

Japanese farmers and plantation workers had to endure the bare minimum lifestyle with limited food and poorly built farmhouses to build a new life as successful plantation farmers. Meanwhile, coffee beans were already harvested by Italian laborers and the best harvesting season was already over, so the first wave of Japanese laborers had to work with the coffee plantation that was no longer fruitful (Handa 1970:44). As soon as Japanese laborers were assigned to their fields and began working, they suffered from crop failure and very little earnings, which was only 10% of the earnings promised in the broker agency ads (Handa 1970:44). Their anger and complaints were directed to Shuhei Uetsuka, Japan's migration broker representative who visited each plantation to check up on the plantation and Japanese laborers' living situations. Rokurō Kōyama, Uetsuka's secretary, who documented the work of the inspectors, wrote that "they took bites of bread which was hard as stones, ate porridge with salt as a side dish, and went to bed literally on the hard ground" (Centro de Estudos Nipo-Brasileiros 2013). Naturally, Japanese laborers felt that they were deceived by the broker agency, and their grievances and resentment mounted quickly.

As soon as Uetsuka's group arrived at the plantation field, laborers were about to attack them with flaxes, hoes, and spears, demanding the broker agency to arrange their return to Japan as soon as possible (Centro de Estudos Nipo-Brasileiros 2013; Handa 1970). However, even Uetsuka with a superior title as a broker agency representative lived a poor life, and his other face as an ethnic business entrepreneur was no different from the life of the contract laborers.

Uetsuka's early memoir recorded that he depended on inexpensive Brazilian staples to avoid starvation, recounting the early time of his toy manufacturing and sales business in 1909 as "the life with only bananas and *fubá* (cornmeal) dumplings" (Handa 1970:173). As a result, among 733 Japanese laborers who arrived in Brazil on the first Kasato-maru trip in 1908 (Aoyagi 1941), 430 of them abandoned contracts and left their plantation field after six months (Handa 1970:62).

Colonia Food: Adaption and acceptance of non-Japanese food items

Initially, because the European immigrant groups shared common cultural ground and Latin-Catholic faith, non-Catholic Japanese laborers were alienated as a culturally estranged group (De Carvalho 2003). However, Japanese began learning foreign culinary techniques from their neighboring laborers, which improved their simple and undernourished diets and helped them perform labor-intensive work in the fields. From the 1930s, Japanese laborers began interacting with Italian, Spanish, German, and African immigrants in their local communities. Through contacts with non-Japanese groups, Japanese laborers gradually learned different cooking techniques, knowledge, and tips for cooking new kinds of food, and Brazilian dishes were gradually incorporated into their everyday food (Mori 1998:53).

According to Mori, an important backdrop that facilitated Japanese laborers' food-related acculturation was that more than 95% of laborers were agricultural workers in Japan, and they had the skills to raise Japan-grown vegetables on their own. Additionally, unlike the single emigrants headed to North America or Hawaii, Brazil admitted immigrants only as a family unit with no less than three family members twelve years and older. Wives and female family members played pivotal roles in recreating Japanese-style everyday meals by their hard work and creativity (Mori 1998:48).

Female family members learned baking from Italian and Spanish laborers, and they were in charge of baking bread at the large ovens that were attached to some households. The bread-baking became women's Saturday afternoon ritual after their work at the plantation was finished for the week (Handa 1970:119). Thus, bread was not something that laborers bought at the local store, but represented a communal event that women from different laborers' communities did together.

Bread became an easy and quick repertoire for breakfast and afternoon coffee break (Mori 1998, 2007). Eventually, by the 1980s, most Japanese households adopted the Brazilian-style breakfast, and more than 50% of Japanese usually consumed bread and coffee with sugar as their everyday breakfast (Kimira et al. 1983). Although Japanese laborers were astonished by the unpleasant taste of coffee in the beginning, they acquired the taste by taking it with affordable black sugar, *mascado*. Of course, coffee beans that they could prepare for themselves were broken, uneven, and small beans that could not be sold in markets (Handa 1986). They even made fried dumplings with coffee grounds, flour, and cornmeal dumplings for afternoon snacks and breakfast (Handa 1970:124). Since the earlier laborers attempted to earn as much as they could in a short term to return to Japan, they thought that it was too much indulgence to eat rice everyday, which was relatively expensive at that time. They were stingy with rice to save money, and meals with white rice were saved for a special occasion (Handa 1970:533). Deep-fried dumplings with inexpensive flours such as cornmeal and cassava flour was invented as the result. When they cooked rice, they often mixed it with beans, cassava, or sweet potatoes to give it more volume even with little rice (Mori 2007). Such food habits did not perpetuate for a long time because Japanese food items increased and rice became more available and affordable after the

end of World War I, thus Handa called the early diet style of Japanese immigrants (the Nikkei society food) (1970:122).

Still, rice was the main carbohydrate for Japanese laborers, but they also acquired the skill to cook Brazilian-style long-grain rice in a typical Brazilian way, which Japanese called *abura gohan* (rice with oil) or *Brazil gohan* (Brazilian style rice). Abura gohan is cooked with pork fat, garlic, and some herb seasonings, so some Japanese laborers disliked it because of the strong smell from pork and garlic (Mori 1998). *Abura gohan* became their new repertoire and paired well with Brazilian dishes, but simply cooked rice with water was a standard way for the most part.

Weekend was the important time for Japanese laborers to intercrop the vegetable gardens for their own consumption. Meanwhile, one of men's' big jobs was to slaughter pigs, which they accomplished with the help of African-descendant Brazilian laborers neighbors. Hanada recounted that all Japanese male laborers became apprentices for slaughtering pigs in the beginning, and they learned the procedures while pinning down the pig's legs and watching a Brazilian man cutting its stomach open with a large knife (1970). Brazilian men were usually willing to slaughter a pig to do Japanese a favor, but they asked for the head and guts in exchange for their labor. It usually took a few times until Japanese men felt confident that they could do everything from slaughtering to cleaning on their own, so the experienced Brazilian men's help was crucial in the beginning.

However, Japanese men gradually learned the value of pig guts. They could use the fat for cooking oil (cooking oil was still precious at that time) and for making soap, and they began bargaining with Brazilian laborers, instead of giving them all the guts and head. By the time all the slaughtering work was done, they got ready for the dinner feast and invited whoever helped

with slaughtering, but some Japanese men were no longer hungry after seeing the insides of the pig so much and hearing its agony. They preferred the Japanese style of seasoning and cooking, so they took the meat pieces that were not too oily and stewed them with vegetables and salt. It took the earlier Japanese laborers about 10 years to master Brazilian-style seasoning of meat and stewing the guts and pieces of pork to make the famous Brazilian dish, *feijoada* (Handa 1970:120-121).

In so doing, Japanese also learned the Brazilian seasoning technique, *tempero*. *Tempero* is the step to marinate raw meat with salt, vinegar, black pepper, cut parsley leaves, garlic (or onions), wine, and olive oil for a couple pf hours before frying or stewing the meat (Kimira et al. 1978; Mori 2007). Japan's traditional view deeming meat consumption as taboo began dissolving in the beginning of Meiji period (1868-1912) due to the influence of Western food, and in turn, meat was regarded as the centerpiece of the Meiji leadership's new slogan of *fukoku kyōhei* (rich country, strong army) by imitating the Western fashions of 'modern' eating (Cwiertka 2006:59). However, Japan's modernization project started in the capital, Tokyo, thus slaughtering animals and cooking meat as everyday food was the new habit for many Japanese laborers, who were poor and marginalized farmers in the countryside of Japan. There is also an essay describing how Spanish laborers came to Japanese plantation neighborhood to sell reasonably-priced pork, chicken, and beef from a cart in 1934 (Numata 1996).

Another breakthrough for enriching a variety of nutritious meals was to learn how to cook beans. Japanese laborers used to cook carioca beans with sugar as the substitute for *azuki* (red beans) in Japan (Handa 1970), but in Brazil beans were cooked in a savory way that people ate for any meal of the day. The common Brazilian dish *feijão*, which literally means 'beans' in Portuguese, is typically eaten together with Brazilian-style rice, and it also became the everyday

food for Japanese. *Feijão* is the icon of Brazilian national food, which is cooked differently from North to South under the umbrella category of cooked beans. As such, just as a combination of rice and miso soup is essential to Japanese people's everyday food, a combination of rice and beans is the counterpart in Brazil. After rice and beans became the new custom, some long-term Japanese started commenting that "In Brazil, you run out of energy quickly without *feijão*" (Handa 1970:482).

Social class and customs in plantation life

It is important to remember that the majority of Japanese laborers were poor and marginalized agrarian workers in countryside of Japan, who had been excluded from Meiji regime's modernization project (Aoyagi 1941; Sasaki 2013; Sharpe 2014). Most of them embarked on the journey to Brazil with few belongings. Because all of them were given the same tasks and worked as plantation laborers every day, the questions such as what they did in Japan, how much money they made, and their social class position were never openly discussed with each other. Occasionally, some were more respected than others or being ostracized based on their backgrounds, according to Handa (1970:559). There was a collective unity within each Japanese laborers community, and unspoken but agreed principle of egalitarianism emerged organically. Because they were all poor and had barely any valuable possessions, Japanese community members helped and consulted to each other when they faced problems without deception or heated arguments.

In fostering communal customs and culture, they followed majority votes when deciding something as a whole, which meant that each laborer's character reflected Japan's regionalism, as Handa explained that "the *colono* (contract laborer) bore Tohoku-minded (Japan's northeast)

thinking if the community is occupied by more former Tohoku-origin individuals, and if the *colono* had more Kyushu individuals, the *colono* had Kyushu characteristics" (1970:559). In Brazil, there was an old social system of mutual aid called: *muchiron*, in which people aimed to help each other and were sociable, but the social aspect of mutual help had disappeared with the universalization of wage system. The counterpart idea of *muchiron* for Japanese was called *kasei* (voluntary back-up help), which was seen anytime when someone needed help for rather large projects such as building a house, planting season, and large-scale cooking for weddings and special occasions that required extra hands outside the family members. All such collective decisions and discussions were made by male members, but female members had more authority when it came to planning the cooking for big events (Handa 1970).

As explained earlier, Japanese on plantations had friendly interactions with non-Japanese neighbors. With both Japanese and non-Japanese, bartering was common social exchange. Mutual help was unspoken agreement and a survival strategy for first-generation immigrants. As mentioned earlier, if someone did a favor of slaughtering pig for somebody, the person was rewarded with a part of the meat or something in exchange. When someone succeeded in harvesting rare kinds of vegetables, they shared with neighbors. When someone had a bountiful amount of fish or meat, the family hosted a feast or shared with other families (Handa 1970). However, it was noted that Japanese had a higher sense of obligation to give back when they were given something, but not all Brazilians shared the same sense. With Brazilians, Harada noted that Japanese had the attitude of "*negocio e negocio*" (business is business), and Brazilians did not contest with the principle (Handa 1970:560). Whether they were Japanese, Brazilians, or others, the egalitarian principles of plantation communities disappeared and the relationships

with neighbors and outsiders became pragmatic as Japanese migrants settled in Brazil permanently and some of them archived higher social status.

From the generic image of hard-working farmers, two factors contributed to the rise of Nikkei social status in Brazil: (1) the urbanization of Nikkei populations; (2) the diversification of Nikkei occupations since the 1940s.

Despite the original plan of returning to Japan, among all immigrant groups in São Paulo who immigrated to Brazil from 1908 to 1933, Japanese immigrants held the highest permanent settlement rate of 93.21%. Among 129,754 Japanese, 91.7 % of Japanese residents lived in agricultural area in the subprefectures of São Paulo, and the remaining 8.3% lived in the metropolitan area (Sato 1964:288). As shown in these overwhelming numbers, Japanese were essentially seen as farmers in Brazilian society by the end of World War II (Maeyama 2001:24). Nikkei residential areas initially concentrated around the outskirts of urban São Paulo in the late 1920s, where Japanese first were brought there as contract laborers and grew their agricultural Nikkei districts. Within such areas, the growth of businesses essential for everyday life, such as Japanese grocers, restaurants, and service industries, created central Japanese districts in such rural parts of São Paulo. The growth of some Nikkei districts was promoted strategically on a large scale by Japanese government immigration policy, which gave Japanese residents priority for the sale of land (Negawa 2020:27).

According to Maeyama (1979), only eight percent of Japanese residents in the entire state of São Paulo lived in the city center in the 1930s. However, Japanese presence increased in urban São Paulo concurrently with the development of the Japanese district; the Nikkei Brazil census data in 1958 showed that 44.9 % of Japanese resided in the São Paulo city center area (Maeyama 2001:24). Within two decades of the first Kasato-maru arrival, Japanese farmers were no longer

just contract laborers, and some of them gained social prestige by owning property. In 1932, 54.2% of Nikkei farmers were independent farmers, 25.7% tenant farmers, 11.1% shared-crop farmers, and contract labor was the smallest farming population group (9%) (Comissão de Recenseamento da Colônia Japonesa 1964:118). In 1988, the number of Nikkei Brazilians living in cities (89.9 %) surpassed the entire Brazilian population living in cities (67.8 %). These numbers demonstrate a new pattern of Nikkei Brazilian domestic migration from the agricultural areas to urban centers in Brazil.

Naturally, such changes in population distribution at the national level were correlated with occupational patterns of Nikkei Brazilians. First, the social ascendance of Nikkei communities was achieved by increased Nikkei Brazilian university enrollment (Maeyama 2001). In their survey, Miyao and his colleagues found that 44.8 % of their Nikkei respondents graduated from college or university, while the graduation rate in 1980 was much smaller among Brazilians of Caucasian (5.15%) and African American descent (1.86%). Also, the same survey by Miyao showed an equal university or graduate school completion rate among Nikkei Brazilian female (44%) and male (46.3%) respondents (Miyao 2002). Such higher educational attainment reflects Nikkei Brazilians' increased participation in the white-collar workforce.

According to the 1987-1988 survey conducted by Centro de Estudos Nipo-Brasileiros, only 11.8 % of Nikkei Brazilians worked in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries industries in 1988, a significant drop from 55.9 % observed in 1958. Meanwhile, technical specialists increased from 8.1 % to 15.5 %, and management and clerical workers increased from 9.6 % to 27.8 % during the same interval.

Japanese's contribution to Brazilian culinary culture

In seeking substitutes for *tsukemono* pickles, the Japanese staple side dish eaten with rice, Japanese immigrants invented pickles with different vegetables, flowers, and plants that they found in Brazil. Papaya, watermelon, and peach were harvested before they were ripe to make *tsukemono* in miso or pickle juice with salt and vinegar. When they could not obtain miso as the basis for *tsukemono*, cornmeal was used as the substitute (Saitō 1984). Much later, quintessential Japan *tsukemono* were imported and produced in Brazil, but some Nikkei still preferred papaya *tsukemono* over the traditional kinds like daikon *takuan* (Kojima 2013; Saitō 1984). Even in today's grocery aisle in Nikkei supermarkets in Japan, you can find jars of pickled bright red sepals from *Roselle* hibiscus flowers, called *hana ume* (flower plum) as a substitute for *umeboshi* (pickled salty plums) (Kojima 2013:7). It is unknown who invented making pickled plums from the flower sepals, but *hana ume* became widely beloved as Brazilian plum and alleviated Nikkei nostalgia for the taste of home (Handa 1970:540).

Of course, Japanese in the early period knew nothing about salad, so they could not believe that their fellow plantation neighbors ate raw vegetables. Because of the lack of vegetables in their diets, the earlier Japanese immigrants got sick due to a combination of poor diet, hot weather, and highly labor-intensive work at the plantation (Handa 1970:125). Prior to the nineteenth century, there were only twenty kinds of vegetables and fruits grown as agricultural crops in Brazil, but the variety expanded due to the influx of immigrants, especially Italian and Japanese made a significant difference (Kōyama 1991).

The first Japanese vegetable farming began in July, 1908 by Seiichi Kurayasu, who started growing *daikon* and other Japanese vegetables on a leased farm in Mooka, a subprefecture of São Paulo (Kōyama 1976). In the Eastern part of São Paulo, the city of Mogi

das Cruzes was more populated by Japanese from the 1920s, and potatoes and vegetable farming became the major industry in the city. Accordingly, Mogi das Cruzes became the largest source supplying vegetables to major markets in Rio de Janeiro due to the development of the railroad. By 1933, there were more than 2,000 farmers in São Paulo state, and Japanese merchants started gaining more power and influence in the wholesale market. In São Paulo's largest fresh produce market Mercado Grande, there were more than twenty Japanese merchants out of approximately fifty merchants in total, and the number of Japanese merchants surpassed thirty in 1939 (Nakano 2017).

From the late 1920s, Japanese farmers started growing non-Japanese vegetables after noticing the popularity and high demand for tomato, kale, beets, and lettuce among European consumers. The Japanese community contributed to Brazilian agriculture by inventing efficient and improved methods of farming and establishing unions of agricultural workers (Kojima 2013, 2018; Nakano 2017). Japanese agricultural workers also imported new seeds and crops to experiment with new scents, colors, and flavors of common vegetables and fruits in Brazil, and marketed them as Japanese hybrids. As for fruits that did not exist in Brazil prior to the arrival of Japanese, persimmons were initially grown for their own consumption as "fruits of nostalgia," but the consumption of persimmon among Brazilians became widespread after 1950, so much so that the Portuguese word for persimmon, *caqui* came from the Japanese name *kaki* (Kōyama 1991:776). Additionally, a new breed of tomato, *tomate caqui* was engineered as a type of tomato as sweet and fruity as persimmons. Such hybrid types of vegetables and fruits were also engineered by Nikkei Brazilian farmers (Kōyama 1991). In addition to the well-known Japanese Fuji apple, some supermarkets today carry both Brazilian and Japanese kinds of cucumbers and eggplant, and the latter is known to be tastier and smaller than regular Brazilian ones with the

label of "*japones*" on the sign. In so doing, Nikkei famers were applauded as "the gods of agriculture in Brazil" for enriching the variety of fresh produce that prompted non-Japanese to incorporate more vegetables and fruits into their diets (Kojima 2018:140).

Double meal structure: Nikkei food

By 1940, more than 200,000 Japanese had made Brazil their new home, making it the largest Japanese population outside Japan (Yamada 1998:69). Although Japanese cooking essentials became more widely available in Brazil through the development of Nikkei food related business, it did not mean that Japanese entirely switched back to their traditional Japanese customs of eating. As Japanese immigrants acquired new cooking techniques in Brazil, their meal tables created crossovers of Japanese and Brazilian food, which is the very origin of *Nikkei food*. Throughout the rest of my dissertation, I use the word Nikkei food to refer to foods that are common and familiar to Nikkei Brazilian communities, which are a mix of Brazilian and Japanese food culture. This is the most common term that I heard from my interviewees and also is the literal translation of work by Japanese scholars discussing this type of food. There is also a different food movement called Nikkei cuisine (*comida Nikkei)*, a fusion cuisine of Japanese and Peruvian food, which is often marketed as a sophisticated and high-end hybrid cuisine. Nikkei cuisine sparked the interests of the media, consumers, and food critics. This Nikkei cuisine rarely includes the hybrid cuisine of Japanese and Brazilian food in the gastronomic sense. As Takenaka (2017) wrote: "The emergence of Nikkei cuisine in Peru – as Peruvian, rather than as Brazilian, Mexican, or American – also has to do with the gastronomic boom in Peru and initiatives by the Peruvian government, the Nikkei community, and prominent chefs to promote

their food" (p.127). Thus, I draw a clear distinction between Nikkei *food* and Nikkei *cuisine* in this dissertation to avoid conflating Japanese and Peruvian food in the latter term.

Scholars argue that early Japanese family meals consisted of Japanese and Brazilian double structures, which essentially means that both Brazilian and Japanese staples were present on the table concurrently (Handa 1970; Mori 2007; Saitō 1984). The double structure was observed within one meal, or meant to indicate the specific meal, for example, Brazilian-style lunch and Japanese dinner. Nikkei Brazilians' typical everyday meal consisted of Japanese or Brazilian-style rice, miso soup, *feijão*, *tsukemono*, and some kind of grilled meat cooked with typical Brazilian seasonings of oil, salt, and garlic. There is, however, a generational difference of what they preferred to eat. Saitō described this hybrid meal structure as follows:

> Whether they eat Japanese or Brazilian food more often, Nikkei family's meal comprised of the double structure. *Tsukemono* is placed next to the salad, and miso soup is served with the bowl of *feijão*. Japan-born older parents eat with chopsticks and rice bowls, and their kids next to them eat on a big plate of rice and side dishes with knives and folks. Small vials of *fukujinzuke* (pickled vegetables in soy sauce) and *shiokara* (salted fermented seafood) were, of course, placed in front of the parents (Saitō 1984:196).

Consuming cross-cultural meals within a household did not necessarily mean that the culinary difference between Japanese and Brazilian food was embraced with little distinction among Nikkei Brazilians. At least until 1950s, they maintained the clear boundary of what is considered to be Japanese food or Brazilian food. When it comes to seasoning, Handa wrote that "the key seasonings of the food that are cooked in Japanese ways are miso and shoyu. If the food is seasoned with salt, garlic, peppers, and tomatoes, that is no longer Japanese food" (1970:542).

As Saitō wrote, "It seems that how much Japanese food culture is preserved in each family is parallel to how much Japanese proficiency is maintained in each family," the level of cultural assimilation to Brazilian styles of living and eating were differentiated in each family (1984:196). However, it is reasonable to assume that cultural assimilation to Brazil served as part

of their survival method. During his first Presidential term, Getúlio Vargas and his administration led the dictatorial regime called "Estado Novo" from 1937 until 1946, which instigated nationalism and dictatorship by promoting Brazilianization of immigrants (Negawa 2000:142; Sasaki 2013). As the result, Brazilian policymakers upheld the nationalist propaganda to develop modern Europe-American national identity, which required "whitening" of the Asian, African, and indigenous populations by banning foreign language schools, the use of non-Portuguese native languages in public, and non-Portuguese media (Negawa 2000; Kingsberg 2014). As Ikebuchi and Ketchell argued, "food tastes and preferences are part of social capital," so performing and internalizing the taste and preference of a dominant, powerful group was "one way of borrowing social capital" to assimilate to Brazilian society while refraining from practicing Japanese cultural identity openly (2020:24).

Commercializing Japanese taste in a foreign land

Early Japanese laborers struggled to make the best use of long-grain rice which was enjoyable as abura gohan with Brazilian dishes, but different from the short-grain rice that Japanese were used to. When Japanese climbed the social ladder and stated their own business, regular Japanese rice, (also called as Rio Grande rice) became widely available as Japanese communities started growing in São Paulo. Japanese living in the city started living with the double structure of meals here too, since they ate Brazilian food at work during the day and ate Japanese style dinner at home (Handa 1970:535).

In order to diversify their food practices, the first agenda of Japanese immigrants to recreate Japanese staple foods was creating miso and shoyu from scratch. Although soybeans were introduced to Brazil in 1822 for cattle breeding, they were not available to Japanese

consumers because the production was small and the distribution lines were undeveloped. The lack of familiar ingredients prompted Japanese immigrants to begin making substitutes for Japanese staples on their own. For miso, they carried soybeans and seed malt with them from Japan, mixed seed malt with long-grain rice to make malted rice (the base of miso), and finally mixed the malted rice with salt and soybeans that they planted and grew (Mori 1998). During the fermentation process of miso, the liquid runoff, *tamari*, emerges in the miso tank, which was utilized to make shoyu by mixing tamari with granulated sugar or brown sugar to generate the dark color of shoyu. "*Colonos* didn't have many options when they were poor and trying to become independent farmers, so miso-made-*tamari* shoyu was used widely, and it did enough jobs as shoyu," Mori found (1998:52).

Because soybeans were not widely available yet, another substitute that the Japanese immigrants successfully experimented with was *feijão,* the cooked carioca beans that are indispensable in Brazilian meals. The *feijão* shoyu was called Okinawa shoyu, and the recipe was circulated through the Japanese-Brazilian newspaper in 1928 (Mori 1998:52). The *feijão* shoyu did not become widespread because the commercialization of shoyu in Brazil became prevalent shortly after, and Nikkei-made shoyu became a preferred option over the expensive imported shoyu from Japan.

Development of shoyu business

The first commercial production of miso and shoyu began around 1915-1916 in Santos state led by Eitarō Kanda, who is from Niigata prefecture and emigrated to Brazil on the first Kasato-maru voyage (Mori 2007:277). In the 1920s, independent Japanese farmers who climbed the social ladder starting from contract laborers, tenant farmers, and crop-sharing farmers began

producing and marketing miso and shoyu. The miso and shoyu companies grew in the areas populated by Japanese and eventually spread to São Paulo, where the Japanese embassy was located, which was also a main transit point for immigrants. Five shoyu companies emerged along the Noroeste railroad and became the pipeline distributing miso and shoyu to Japanese households in Japanese communities before World War II (Mori 1998:60).

Even for commercial production, it was too expensive to recreate Japanese-style shoyu with the typical ingredients of wheat and soybeans. In the early 1900s, wheat was produced in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, the southern edge of Brazil which was too far from Japanese colonies and it was impossible to order wheat for shoyu production (Nossos 40 anos 2004). After experimenting with beans and long-grain rice, an adapted shoyu recipe mixing corn and soybeans was invented by Suekichi Nakaya, the founder of today's top shoyu brand in Brazil, Sakura Nakaya Alimentos (Nossos 40 anos 2004). By the 1970s, there were about thirty shoyu brands in Brazil (which decreased to seven in 2013 (Kojima). All of the Brazilian shoyu brands employed the corn-and-soybeans recipe which standardized the taste of shoyu not only for Japanese but also Brazilian and other immigrant consumers in Brazil.

Compared to regular shoyu in Japan, Nikkei shoyu is known to be sweeter, thicker, darker, and saltier because of its unique recipe using whole soybeans and corn instead of wheat. Once getting used to this Nikkei shoyu, people in Brazil, even including Nikkei Brazilians, often found the Japanese soy sauce too light or smelly with too much distinctive smell of soy. Indeed, in the 1980s, Japan's top shoyu brand Kikkoman expanded their business to Brazil, but it was pulled back from the Brazilian market after ten years because Nikkei shoyu, especially Sakura brand, maintained its solid popularity (Nossos 40 anos 2004). Another advantage of Nikkei shoyu is that it is gluten-free by default because corn is used in place of wheat, which is another

reason that Nikkei shoyu is sought after by European consumers with gluten allergies. Sakura shoyu became so ubiquitous on every dining table of Brazilian families to the point that school children in Japanese language school in Brazil thought Sakura literally means soy sauce, not Japan's national flower of Japan cherry blossom, which the brand was named after (Kojima 2013).

Mori argues that the distinctive taste of Nikkei shoyu also represents the cooking styles of the West side of Japan, given the fact that all shoyu founders in Brazil were from the Western half of Japan such as Okayama, Ehime, Kagawa, and Aichi prefectures (1998:61). Nikkei shoyu is one of many examples that Japanese diets in Brazil are not merely the simple application of Japanese food to Brazil, but the creations of Nikkei food fusing Brazilian and Japanese elements.

Female Nikkei Contributions to Food in Brazil: Recipe Books

Once Nikkei women settled in Brazil, they organized local women's associations (*fujinkai*) seeking opportunities for a break from work and opportunities to exchange information with fellow homemakers. The earliest association of Nikkei women emerged in 1921. The first one on record is called "the association of Registro's mothers," which began in Registro, the Southeast subprefecture of São Paulo (Kōyama 1991:313). More were established throughout Nikkei communities in the 1940s (Kōyama 1991). Kōyama argues that the major contributions of these organizations were to raise donations for Department of Defense and military aircraft and to send gifts for Imperial Army soldiers by collaborating with other organizations during the war. However, their contributions to domestic work and Nikkei culinary culture are often overlooked.

There were about a hundred active *fujinkai* groups in Brazil in 2010, some of which are subgroups of local cultural associations or farmer's co-ops. They played pivotal roles in

organizing cultural festivals and Japanese events hosted by local district and cultural association groups. To raise funds and attract attendees for such events, the women's group volunteers organized food booths, cooking and selling Japanese food that is popular across different age and racial groups such as yakisoba and curry (Nakata and Takayama 2010). Additionally, some women's groups self-published recipe books, primarily for a fundraising purpose for the co-ops and local districts. For example, ADESC (*Associação dos Departamentos de Senhoras Cooperativistas*), the wives of Brazilian farmers co-op, is now disbanded, but they published four recipe books from 1994 to 2010, and their aim was to preserve simple and useful recipes for their children and grandchildren's generations to remember and learn the taste of home, thus their recipe book was titled *Delicias da Mamãe* (Mom's Delights) (Kojima 2017).

The most well-known, and perhaps the oldest recipe book by Nikkei women was first published in 1934 by Hatsue Sato. Sato was born in Ehime prefecture, Japan and moved to Brazil in 1924 when she was 23 years old. Since Sato was prone to poor health, she discontinued working as a farm laborer and moved to the urban São Paulo, where she began working as a house maid for Brazilian families. There, her interest in Brazilian cooking grew and she kept records of cooking and baking recipes that she learned from different families that she worked for.

As a petite woman in poor health, Sato was one of the earliest people who realized the nutritional value of Brazilian food. She once wrote in her recipe book that:

> The western food in Japan often seems to follow either French or American style, but Brazilian food combines the diverse elements from French, Italian, British, American, German, and Portuguese cuisines. Even a simple and ordinary dish presents a rare ingredient and a unique taste from homeland… Not only that Brazilian food is not inferior to the western food in Japan, but they are also very presentable to guests from any countries. Their dishes are enlightening in terms of hygienic, nutrition, and economy… Although it (Brazilian food) is western food, it is neither too oily nor salty,

> nor it costs time and preparation processes as you may imagine… (Nakata and Takayama 2010:417).

Sato gained tangible support from intellectual leaders such as Sentaro Takaoka, a medical doctor who opened his clinic in São Paulo. Takaoka had serious concerns about undernourished Japanese who lived in the countryside, thus he took a significant role in editorial supervision of Sato's recipe book (Nakata and Takayama 2010:417). Eventually, Sato opened *Escola de Arte Culinária Santa Cecília* in Liberdade in 1936, the first culinary school in Brazil opened by a Japanese immigrant, let alone a woman. After Sato passed the cooking instructor certificate exam in May, 1938, the school was officially recognized by the Brazilian government in May 1938 (Mori 2010). By the end of 1948, it was estimated that about 700 students graduated from Sato's culinary school (Kōyama 1949).

Sato's recipe book, *Jitsuyotekina Brazil-shiki Nippaku Ryori to Seika no Tomo* (A Guide to Practical Japanese-Brazilian Dishes and Confectioneries) was edited and reprinted fourteen times. All editions are mostly published in Japanese, but some editions are Japanese and Portuguese bilingual editions (the 4th and the 10th), and the 8th printing was a Portuguese edition (Kojima 2017:4). Unlike general recipe books, Sato's book hardly included pictures and illustrations. Nevertheless, the fact that the book was reprinted several times for over a half century demonstrates that Sato's book has been utilized as "the bible" among Nikkei women in the Brazilian society. The book became a popular wedding gift to a bride at that time, and even *dekasegi* Nikkei women took the book along their journey back to Japan in the mid-1980s (Nakata and Takayama 2010). The following section analyzes and discusses Sato's recipes from the seventh edition published in 1963 that are written in Japanese, which was digitized by Acervo Literário da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil and is available online.

Emerging class structure through the recipe book

The first half of the book (p. 68 - 401) features 398 food and baking recipes of non-Japanese food, which are broadly categorized as Brazilian, Italian, British, Latin American, and French cuisines. The second half of the book (p. 401 - 530) features 198 Japanese food and confectionary recipes with a few exceptions of Chinese and Japanese-adapted foreign food such as curry and pirozhki. The book does not discuss or explain about the dish itself, and it is unknown how and when Nikkei women became familiar with such non-Brazilian origin food. Cwiertka (2006) points out that foreign cuisine-serving restaurants began from the late 1870s in Japan, and Western-style dishes like curry became popular during the 1890s. Thus, it can reasonably be assumed that some Japanese women who moved to Brazil after the 1920s had some knowledge about non-Japanese cuisines. The remainder of the book features miscellaneous, yet essential culinary knowledge such as how to prepare tea and coffee (p. 530), special table and food arrangement for Brazilian style weddings (p. 540), and basics of food canning (p. 545) and how to prepare *tsukemono* (p. 586). Another remarkable point about this seventh edition is that it discusses nutrition and calories extensively, and Sato stresses that "nutrition-rich food is produced everywhere on farms, so it is important to learn how to utilize such ingredients in everyday cooking rather than eating expensive and luxurious food to supplement nutrition" (1963:57).

Even from the index of Sato's book, it is obvious that Nikkei women were interested and immersed in more than just the binary of Japanese or Brazilian food. Sato echoed scholars' observations about Nikkei families' double structure of meals. However, according to her observations of students' diets at the culinary school, Sato deemed that Nikkei dietary lifestyle was moving towards Brazilian style rather than the mix of Japanese and Brazilian style, as Sato

herself wrote that: "For example, lunch is Brazilian food; dinner is Japanese food or the blending of Japanese and Western styles, but it is more common to have Brazilian food for both meals today… It is in old days that there was no Brazilian dish on the menu; therefore, Japanese-centered meal is considered as the meal for a special occasion or even, when food and ingredients are available" (1963:539).

Sato also wrote about the table manners and desirable menu for a Brazilian-style banquet for non-Japanese guests, which further highlighted the Japanese and Nikkei Brazilians' progress in assimilation to the Brazilian society. It demonstrated the new change that Nikkei women began adjusting to Brazilian-style social settings through foods that were structured upon the Brazilian cultural norm, which is opposite of the previous othering perspective on food that drew a clear boundary of what we (Japanese) eat and what they (Brazilians) eat.

What is more, Sato wrote that she was surprised that:

> "Some Japanese do not know how to use Western utensils, so they are not equipped to eat comfortably outside their home because they only know how to eat in the Japanese style. Perhaps, agrarian women have less opportunities to learn Brazilian-style table manners compared to those who live in the city. It is even better to learn proper table manners at a young age, such as washing hands before meals and having table napkins at home" (Sato 1963:540).

Here, Sato distinguished Nikkeis who lived and worked in the city from agrarian Nikkei who were not socialized with the Brazilian cultural norms around food settings, although Sato herself was originally a contract laborer when she first arrived at Brazil. This remark is a short segment of the long book, but it demonstrates that urbanized Nikkei who had non-agricultural work further acquired sociocultural knowledge by living in the city, which helped them ascend the social ladder in Brazil.

As Sato wrote that "there is no need to afford expensive ingredients… and there is nothing better than skills to be able to arrange everyday ingredients for different dishes

competently and economically" (1963:2), the book called for affordable and accessible ingredients, and even a seemingly intricate recipe such as new year's special meal is feasible to make at home. However, it is questionable if all ingredients in the book, such as fresh fish from the open-air market in São Paulo city were literally available to agrarian Japanese who lived in subprefectures of São Paulo. Regarding the price for Japanese goods imported from Japan, it is also uncertain if they were affordable to Nikkei Brazilians of any social class. As such, Sato's book is not a mere collection of recipes of Japanese and Brazilian food, but it also demonstrates the urbanization of Nikkei Brazilians, which induced a new class division between Japanese in the city and rural parts of Brazil and the dual cultural norms of Japan and Brazil that Nikkei women acquired through their life experience.

Colonia language in the recipe book

Another distinctive point about the book is that, although the book was written by a Japanese woman, today's native Japanese reader could barely follow the recipes because the book heavily employs the *colonia* language, which is the mix of Japanese and Portuguese-loan words that local Japanese in Brazil spoke at that time. For example:

> 当国のメーザ、主にメーザ・フランセーザ（フランス式）と心
> 得て差支ありません。先ずグワルダ・ナッポ（ナフキン） を胸に
> あてまた膝にのせる。(Sato 1963:39)
>
> Translation
> It should be no problem to assume that this country's (Brazil) dining table <*mesa*> mainly follows the French style table manner. First, place the table napkin <*guardanapo*> on your chest or lap.

Instead of using Japanese words for dining table and table napkins, *colonia* words are used here, which are probably easier for second-generation Nikkei readers to understand, who are more familiar with everyday local use of mixed language of Japanese and Portuguese. It is also

reasonable to assume that the first-generation Japanese acquired new culinary knowledge in Portuguese vocabularies as they learned new cooking methods in the Brazilian society. It appears that the use of Portuguese loanwords was ubiquitous whether cooking Japanese or Brazilian food. In fact, the Japanese recipes in the book include a plethora of Portuguese loan words as well. Thus, neither Brazilians nor Japanese in Japan can fully comprehend Sato's recipe book, which goes to show that knowledge and living experiences of Nikkei *colonia* food was uniquely shaped by the sociocultural contexts of Nikkei women living in Brazil to the point that they created and shared a culinary lexicon that only made sense among themselves.

Nikkei women at the bedrock of Japanese food boom

Although Japanese food has become popular and localized in Brazil even among non-Japanese groups (Kojima 2013, 2019; Mori 1995), the Japanese food boom did not happen until the 1980s. Prior to the Japanese food boom in restaurants, Nikkei women from local Japanese women's organizations were the primary fund of knowledge about Japanese food. As Sato was invited as a guest lecturer at governmental and local organizations and schools in her late career, the professionalization of Japanese food industries began after Japanese immigrants had permanently settled in Brazil in the post-war period (Mori 2010). Even prior to this movement, there were women's collective efforts to recreate Japanese food with different ingredients and resources in Brazil until the distribution routes and Japanese food businesses were developed by Japanese merchants and farmers. Thus, it is important to recognize that mundane, yet essential everyday procurement and preparation of food played a significant role for Japanese women learning about and transitioning to the Brazilian society. Through dietary lifestyles, as Sato wrote in her recipe book, Nikkei women's' cooking achieved two objectives: (1) helping their Brazil-

born children to get used to food and ingredients in Brazil, and (2) preserving knowledge and recipe of traditional Japanese food for the future generations.

Japanese climbing up the social ladder in São Paulo

By 1915, Japanese who sought work outside agricultural industry migrated to the city center of São Paulo, while European laborers had already seen the demise of coffee plantations and joined the labor force in factories and industrial production lines. The general Brazilian population of São Paulo doubled in the century from 1,384,753 in 1890 to 2,282,729 in 1990, due to the industrialization and the development of the city. But the immigrant population grew even faster within the same century, from 75,030 in 1890 to 476,778 in 1990, by which time 20.89% of São Paulo's population was foreign residents (Sato 1964:293). Japanese who left agricultural work first found housing along *Conde de Sarzedas* (Conde Street), which became the first Japanese district in São Paulo in the 1910s. Conde Street is known to be the birthplace of Japanese town and their ethnic businesses such as grocery shops and barbers, and it became a popular destination for Japanese urban migrants because of the cheap rent of the half-basement lodgings of houses along Conde Street (Negawa 2020).

According to Negawa, Conde Street was the sanctuary for Japanese laborers who went through hardships of racism, conflicts with their employers, and poor living arrangements in the plantation. Conde street was the emerging Japanese community "brought by jobs and food" because Japanese migrants were usually able to find jobs in carpentering or domestic work, and while figuring out the next step, they had inexpensive accommodation options adjacent to Japanese style eateries, which were still rare to Japanese people who were fed up with unfamiliar Brazilian food staples (2020:74). Following the booming of São Paulo population, Nikkei Brazilian farmers traveled to the city to sell their harvests. Prior to joining the wholesale produce

market, the wives of Nikkei farmers walked along Conde Street in the early morning calling loudly to sell vegetables from baskets hanging on both sides of a pole that a woman carried over her shoulder, while their Portuguese male counterparts sold theirs from a cart. Nikkei women sold vegetables and learned what produce would sell in their consumer market and reported to their husbands who were in charge of managing the farm (Nakata and Takayama 2010).

The eateries along Conde Street obtained Japanese ingredients and seasonings from the first Japanese grocery store, *Fujisaki Shōten*, which was opened in September, 1906 by the first group of Japanese migrants in Brazil. They were residents of São Paulo who settled in Brazil even before the arrival of Kasato-maru in June 18th 1908 (Negawa 2020:71). The first documented Japanese eatery was owned by Fujikawa Shōten, who rented a house on Conde Street and had a Japanese migrant couple prepare Japanese meals there (Handa 1970:171). It was also on Conde Street where the first Japanese elementary school was opened by Kanshirō Tagashira, who started teaching elementary level Japanese in July, 1915 (Kōyama 1991:213). Around this time, the first Japanese newspaper companies in Brazil, *Nippaku Shinbun* and *Shūkan Nanbei*, were also established in 1916.

Japanese migrants who left the plantation and farming work and moved to São Paulo were called *vagabundo*, which means wanderer in Portuguese, but fellow Japanese used the term with distain and considered such Japanese in São Paulo as dropouts or bums (Negawa 2020). Handa points out that the class hierarchy among Japanese emerged around this period, as São Paulo became populated by Japanese and Japan's consulate general and immigration union office were established in 1910s (1970). Kōyama also distinguished *interi* (the English loanword of intelligentsia) Japanese from the general Japanese migrants (1949). Following the establishment of Japanese banking and the expansion of public service and offices managed by Japanese, the

Japanese population in São Paulo reached 4,875 in 1939 (Japan and Brazil Cultural Association 1991). Although Japanese were still minorities in São Paulo, they gradually become the new middle class by obtaining jobs in the service sector. In so doing, there was a class difference between Japanese laborers and Japanese who obtained higher-earning jobs in São Paulo.

According to the observations made by Japanese journalist Gennosuke Yokoyama, who visited Brazil in 1912, the vast majority of Japanese in São Paulo at that time were working class, the half of whom were carpenters including the experienced and amateurs. The various records of Japanese population have been produced, but Yokoyama estimated that about 400 Japanese lived in São Paulo in 1912 based on the Immigration Statistical Report. It is also important to note that some Japanese were temporary residents who kept working on a farm, came to São Paulo for work during a fallow period and went back to farm for the peak season (the classic pattern of *dekasegi* labor in Meiji Japan). This segment of his observations describes the occupations of Japanese aside from carpentry (translation mine).

> "Other than carpentry, the rest of common occupations were painting, tinsmiths, and other kinds of smithing. There were some men and women working in factories too. Men worked at biscuit or canning factories and got paid three and a half mil-réis (2.5 Japanese yen at that time) for a day. They usually worked for eight hours a day, and some worked for nine hours. The work seemed extremely laid-back compared to some factory labor in Japan. One of the factory workers said nonchalantly that 'I puff a cigarette in the bathroom for more than 30 minutes.' Incidentally, it was common that workmen did night work at home after their day work in Japan, especially in local towns and villages. However, once they finished barely eight-hours of work for the day, most Japanese in São Paulo did not attempt to do night work afterwards, and of course they took Sunday off. Presumably, eight-hour labor was enough for living, or life in Brazil changed their minds. Japanese in São Paulo must have forgotten their life in Japan that was three or four years ago, and they seemed to become Brazilians completely…
> More than half of Japanese immigrant women entered domestic service or factories. A servant's wage was thirty or forty mills (21 to 28 Japanese yen at that time) for a month and the employer also provided food and clothing. The women living near *Mooka* went to a cotton mill operated by Italians. The base wage was one and a half mills (one yen), but they would earn two or two and a half mills (1.5 to 2 yen) after a few months. One woman from the first Kasato-maru trip got paid five mills (3.5 yen) for a day" (Yokoyama 1912).

From an outsider perspective like Yokoyama's, Japanese in São Paulo appeared to be assimilated to Brazilian society based on their livelihoods and work ethic. However, his observation highlights a unique contrast with the food culture, in which Handa and others underscore how Japanese attempted to maintain Japanese culinary habits by modifying Brazilian ingredients and utilizing their creativity. In the labor market, Japanese became part of Brazilians or other immigrants who benefited from rapid urbanization of São Paulo to make living. In a way, Japanese finally started learning the local lifestyle and blended in the mainstream Brazilian society by working directly under Brazilian employers and operating in Portuguese-speaking workplaces.

Handa elaborated further in his book on how Japanese women, who did not speak Portuguese, entered the domestic workforce in Brazil. Although an outsider like Yokoyama was convinced that Japanese ostensibly blended in the Brazilian society, it required tremendous efforts and perseverance by Japanese women to endure humiliating treatment by Brazilian families, who merely saw their domestic workers as substitutes for slaves. Slavery had been abolished only recently in Brazil in 1888, and this did not stop aristocratic Brazilians from treating their domestic workers imperatively.

According to Handa, Japanese servants had to organize dining tables, serve meals from the head of family to the wife and to their children, and clean the house and do dishes in-between other work (1970). Japanese servants were yelled at for making mistakes that simply stemmed from the lack of experiences and language barrier (Handa 1970).

Another anecdote about domestic labor was left by Takano Nakamura in *Sixty years since Kasato-maru*. After leaving her first work as plantation laborer when she was fifteen, Nakamura took a house maid job and worked for free for the first six months, and she was given 5 mils per

month in the next five months, and 10 mils in another five months. In order to save money to return to Japan as soon as possible, she changed her patron to one of the wealthiest families in São Paulo, who paid her 20 mils per month. There, she was able to get promoted because she learned how to cook Brazilian food, and her monthly wage increased to 70 mils. Nakamura remarked how demanding her work was because upper-class Brazilians at that time held banquets almost every night, and her patron hosted guests very often (NBKA 1969).

It is important to note here that domestic work was not a gendered occupation in Brazil at that time, and some Japanese men, even educated intellectual men gave up finding a carpentry job and left with no choice but to enter to the labor market as domestic workers. Whether they were men or women, families often tasked domestic workers to do their laundry. Japanese were hired for much cheaper wages compared to Brazilians, yet Japanese earned good reputations and became highly desirable domestic workers. They were clean and trustworthy workers who worked hard and never stole from the family. Handa remarked that domestic workers' accomplishment at this time was a significant step for Japanese immigrants to assimilate to the Brazilian society, where they had no choice but to learn Portuguese to survive in the part of society dominated by upper-class Brazilians (1970).

Japanese joined the boom of industrial development in São Paulo slightly after other modern migrant groups, and the Italian immigrants had already taken the lead in the booming industrial market. Hence, in addition to establishing an economic foothold in the agricultural sector, Japanese chose to start their own businesses in the commercial sector, providing services to urban populations as they became a part of them. In the 1940s, there were over a thousand laundry businesses owned by Japanese immigrants, which was a suitable business to mobilize their children as unpaid labor when they had limited economic resources. The unions Japanese

laundries had established would later become the earliest career of the Nikkei city councilors (Maeyama 2001:27). By the 1950s, after the decline of the laundry industry, Japanese occupations became more diversified including fruit stores, toyshops, barbers, and carpenters (Handa 1986; Negawa 2020). Through rapid urbanization and pioneering new business fields in São Paulo city, most Nikkei Brazilians occupied the middle class in the Brazilian society (52%), while working class shrank to 23% by the 1960s (Comissão de Recenseamento da Colônia Japonesa 1964:124-125).

Meanwhile, the second generation of farmers in the rural parts of Brazil moved to cities to receive higher education and to improve their socioeconomic status. Since the 1960s, Nikkei Brazilians have comprised about 10% of the student body in prominent universities, while they are barely 1% of the total population in Brazil (Maeyama 2001:27). It was a Nikkei characteristic that class division began emerging within a family. Older siblings bore responsibilities of family business and saved money, so that their younger siblings could attend universities to get high-paying jobs such as in government offices and engineering (Miyao 2002:45). According to Maeyama, it was not unusual that Nikkei Brazilians comprised about one third of students in a university's engineering department, and non-Japanese examinees joked that "kill Nikkei and you can pass the university entrance exams" (Maeyama 2001:27). Although they came from agrarian communities in the countryside, Nikkei college graduates made new careers as doctors, engineers, and attorneys and earned particularly good reputations as Nikkei professionals (Handa 1986). Through their rising social status, Japanese colonial society in Brazil gradually grew distant from their ancestral Japanese culture.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the historical origin of transnational connections between Japan and Brazil since the Meiji era, and how early Japanese emigrants adapted to foods in Brazil. This overview also presented the class trajectory of Nikkei Brazilians, starting from impoverished farmers in the countryside to working class serving Brazilian aristocrats, and moving up to middle and upper-middle class by climbing the social ladder through business ownership and higher education. This chapter also presented the historical process in which Nikkei Brazilian women and farmers impacted and made tremendous contributions to the culinary scene and agricultural development in Brazil. Finally, this chapter also clarified and reiterated existing studies' premise that many Nikkei Brazilians had middle class or professional careers in Brazil and obtained a comfortable living, but the subsequent economic decline in Brazil in the 80s was a catalyst that prompted many middle- and working-class Nikkei Brazilians to move to Japan for better economic prospects.

We also see psychological changes of the first emigrants, who legitimately maintained Japanese mindsets especially in diet, and how their 'us and them' boundaries became blurred in later generations. Some Nikkei Brazilians felt that it was necessary to assimilate to Brazilian social settings through food, and to the Brazilian society broadly. As observed in Sato's cookbook, the class division gradually emerged initially between Nikkei who lived and worked in the city and agrarian Nikkei who were not socialized with Brazilian cultural norms. It is telling that Sato remarked about the importance of acquiring sociocultural knowledge in Brazilian society, considering that Sato herself came from plantation laborer upbringing when she first arrived in Brazil. The sign of acculturation in the city's labor market was later observed by

Japanese journalist Yokoyama, who saw Brazilian demeanor and attitudes in Nikkei Brazilian factory workers.

Regarding foodways, *Nisei* and *Sansei* learned about Japanese food through family meals and community events in Brazil. Such patterns of migration and food, the foodway spread from the first-generation to their descendants, have also been noted in studies of Japanese Canadians in Canada (Ikebuchi and Ketchell 2020; Omori 2017). As such, certain Japanese food practices were crystalized through recipe books like Sato's and those produced by Japanese women's organization, and private recipe notes written by Nikkei Brazilians during the initial process of recreating Japanese food with Brazilian ingredients. Such food-related documents not only show their continuous interest in making Japanese food even after Brazilian cooking and use of Brazilian ingredients became common, but also the development of a new Nikkei Brazilian identity (Funabashi 2021).

Recipe books and community events also functioned to preserve certain Japanese dishes as traditional, "grandparents' generation style" Japanese food or calling such dishes by old names. This is important because some interviewees in this study find a gap between the Japanese food they ate growing up in Brazil at home and newer or different kinds of Japanese food that they were exposed upon their arrival in Japan. Such a generational gap could render a cultural shock to interviewees who thought they were familiar with Japanese food, and in the worse case, discourage them eating Japanese food in Japan. Finally, upon their arrival in Japan, Nikkei Brazilians' diet practices begin diverging due to their social and cultural capital, socioeconomic status, and sociocultural environments, each of which will be explored in the following chapters.

Chapter 4. Cultural and Social Capital – Navigating Food in the Ethnic Homeland

This chapter explores different cultural patterns of present-day Nikkei Brazilians' foodways in Japan. Specifically, this chapter focuses on how the sociocultural environment impacted interviewees' foodways and personal values about food. Food space can indicate lack of social integration and signify the social distance between local populations and ethnic minority/migrant groups. For example, in his ethnographic study on Nikkei Brazilians at workplaces in Japan, Tsuda observed that Nikkei Brazilian workers had lunch in a separate room or sat at different tables from Japanese workers in the factory cafeteria, highlighting how thickly sociocultural demarcation was drawn, even when Japanese and Brazilian workers occupied the communal food space (2003). While the first part of this chapter illustrates how 'new' sociocultural environments in Japan inspired Nikkei Brazilians with cultural capital to explore different foodways from Brazil, the latter part shows why it was easier for some interviewees to maintain Brazilian diets in Japan, largely due to the nature of their employment as factory workers and lifestyle in communities with a lot of Brazilian returnees, which created similar social networks and sociocultural environment from Brazil.

Finally, education is a common thread of this chapter, that impacted interviewees' dietary practices. On one hand, individual educational attainment was a parameter indicating their intellectual curiosity and attitudes toward "healthy" diets. On the other hand, this chapter shows that home economics and food education in Japan imposed ideological forces overriding personal food preferences, particularly effecting young Nikkei Brazilians in secondary education.

In theoretical terms, the interview data demonstrate that interviewees' foodways changed according to their changes of habitus. Concurring with what previous works have shown, this study also found that educational attainment is a major form of cultural capital that is connected

to people's moral and aesthetic feelings about food. (Kennedy et al. 2019). The change of habitus occurred when interviewees' occupation or education level shifted, meaning that their socioeconomic status changed. Conversely, interviewees who maintained their foodways from Brazil did not undergo major social mobility change. To illustrate this point, I describe my ethnographic observation of a Nikkei Brazilian family that has been living in a Japanese apartment complex (danchi) for over a decade while employed in a factory and maintaining Brazilian diets rather entirely.

My data also suggested that Nikkei Brazilians' social environments have a tremendous impact on their everyday diets, from disregarding their old beliefs and customs to introducing them to new values with Japanese and international friends. Factory workers who spoke little Japanese had the least active social networks with Japanese, while other interviewees with Japanese or English proficiency, especially college undergraduate or graduate students, had more opportunities to expand their social networks and to socialize with others over food. Thus, I argue that the expansion of economic and social capital signifies Nikkei Brazilian's social mobility and their acculturation to Japanese society.

Healthy diet as emerging social norm

Across the data, from factory workers to upper-middle class interviewees, concern about healthy diet was mentioned frequently, which prompted some interviewees to change their diet habits from Brazil for better health. Echoing existing studies, it is not surprising that an increasing interest in healthy eating became a common cultural thread in developed countries, and scholars have found the link between social class and the neoliberal value of healthy eating that is created and perpetuated by the public discourse and ideological forces, which underscore the individual responsibility of modern citizens to eat healthy food (Biltekoff 2013; Johnston et

al. 2012; Guthman 2011; Kimura 2011; LeBesco and Naccarato 2008a; Oleschuk 2020; Pearson 2015; Takeda 2008).

Higher levels of engagement with healthism, a neoliberal norm encouraging healthy lifestyles while making individuals responsible for it using the rhetoric of society's common good (Crawford 2006), seem to be induced by various factors, such as interviewees' educational background, age, their own health history and that of family members, and among female interviewees, experiencing pregnancy and childbirth. For the interviewees who lived in urban centers without their family members from Brazil, their life transitions to Japan brought a shift in cultural habitus and the emergence of a new habitus as they encountered new values and tastes in Japan. In so doing, their attitudes towards healthy food reflected the contemporary middle-class dietary norms which emphasize home-cooked meals and consistent vegetable intake.

Meanwhile, some interviewees expressed indifferent or negative attitudes toward categorically 'unhealthy' foods such as fast food, instant food, and processed ready-to-eat meals. Existing studies have found a plethora of evidence that such unhealthy food has been stigmatized by being associated with lower class status (Brownell et al. 2005), unethical dietary choices (Johnston et al. 2012), obesity, and other health problems attributed to diet (Guthman 2011) in the contemporary consumption culture. In today's society where self-surveillance constitutes a normalized modern technology of care and moralism (Foucault 1988), individuals are steered toward embracing a responsibility to eat well and to provide healthy food for family members, in order to legitimize foodways that correspond to contemporary sociocultural values. The following sections demonstrate the ways in which interviewees began incorporating healthier foods into their diet.

Education, class, and healthism

Six interviewees who attained Bachelor or higher degrees in Brazil or Japan, made dietary changes based on the information they learned from books and research. In so doing, they revisited their dietary practices from Brazil and developed more informed views on healthy eating. Such interviewees have higher cultural capital in terms of education, but health related information is something they acquired on their own. Juliana, 25-year-old third generation Nikkei Brazilian working in a university, came to Japan in 2015 for an undergraduate program. As Juliana started living abroad by herself for the first time when she was nineteen, her diet and food philosophy have changed drastically through the course of education and socialization in Japan.

Juliana grew up eating a quintessential Brazilian-style diet in Brazil, a meal composed of rice, *feijão*, grilled meat, and salad. When she first came to Japan, Juliana said she gained weight by frequenting convenient fast food stores and eating rice balls as snacks to make up for the portion difference between her Brazilian diet and the foods in Japan. Juliana did not know how to cook at that time, but she learned cooking after she moved from the campus dormitory to her own apartment. For her, the pandemic became the catalyst to eat healthier and to cook more frequently as she spent more time at home, compared to the pre-pandemic time when she was always on the move and ate out most of the time. However, the biggest influence that led her to "eat fresh" and to become a vegetarian was the new cultural value that she was exposed to through education and her international friends from the university. When asked a question about what food meant to her, Juliana immediately made a clear connection between eating and her volunteering experience in Nepal.

> Over the past years, I changed the ways I see food. I think that part of it is because of my friends' influence, like the talks we have, and even the things we study. One day, one of

> my friends from India talked about how people eat with hands to use five senses in India, so I learn different cultures of food from my friends from different parts of world. I just appreciate food a lot. When I volunteered in this small village in Nepal, I had food that was all sourced from the community. Vegetables were planted by family and brought to school, and everything was sourced locally. I learned a lot about appreciating food, just how much you have, cooking the food people harvested, and how food makes you feel. I do pay attention to my body and how I react to food too, so that also influences what I want to eat. If I need to feel like calming down, then I'd go to lighter food. When I'm stressed, I eat some spicy food… I really pay attention to body and food.

The educational environment in Japan had a tremendous influence in changing Juliana's diet and her sense of the meaning of food. From the time when she was a student and consumed food as a source of comfort and energy, her moral compass became the way she weighed her decisions as a consumer, which was expressed when I asked about why she became a vegetarian.

> Two big reasons are because of environments. As meat production created lots of impacts on nature, and also animal protection, I didn't want to harm animals. And to think what they go through because of the mass production of meat. Even dairy related products, I can't eat them anyway because of my lactose intolerance, but I also try to avoid because it comes from the mass production system.

As seen in the excerpt, Juliana conflates the self-care of her body with eating vegetables as the inflection of healthism, self-validating that her decisions contribute to goodness against the unjust food system that sacrifices animals and the environment (Guthman 2011:161). After graduation, Juliana was employed by the same university as an administrative department staff. Advancing from student status to a full-time employee, the upward social mobility enabled her to engage in more desirable choices of vegetarian meals. For example, Juliana talked to me about how when she was a student, she chose her meal based on her budget when she went out to eat. At the campus cafeteria, Juliana always went with the cheapest plate of the day (which usually costs three USD) at the campus cafeteria, but now she can choose a vegetarian plate which is 200-yen more expensive (roughly two USD difference) without worrying about spending. It is revealing that Juliana developed such ethical awareness in food and consumption to the point of

switching to vegetarianism, as her socioeconomic status rose from a student to a full-time university employee. As Kennedy et al. (2019) found, ethical consumers signaled high socioeconomic status based on educational attainment, occupation, and income. Juliana also exhibited her moral ideals through consumption patterns as she gained more economic resources. As much as Juliana probably had a genuine intention to be a better consumer and eater for environment, the new value that she acquired from her new social environment, including her peers and volunteering in Nepal, her engagement with healthism is not entirely exempt from its relation to her new social class and privilege.

Some other interviewees also became more engaged with healthy diet as their educational level increased. For example, Ivan, a young professional in his early 30s who now works in an urban design company in Tokyo, told me about his thoughts on diet, as someone who lived by himself and managed his diet solely on his own. Growing up in a middle-class household, his parents were not overtly conscious about heathy eating when Ivan was young. Ivan did not learn cooking at home, but he began figuring out kitchen know-how as he started living abroad by himself. Ivan grew up with Brazilian food and had fewer occasions to eat Japanese food at home, but he was exposed to Japanese food when he lived in a dormitory during his master's program at the university in Japan. As a result, Japanese food became his primary cooking repertoire, so much so that he fixed a weekday dinner of hotpot for one regularly as he got his current job in Tokyo. Additionally, Ivan stopped drinking after he moved to Japan.

> I stopped drinking last year [2021], and it's been six months. I used to drink a lot when I was in college in Brazil. I stopped mostly for health reasons. I have been reading a lot to learn about good night sleep, and apparently alcohol impacts the quality of sleep. And I could actually realize that every time I drank at night, I didn't have a very steady night. So, I decided to give a try and stopped [drinking]. Also, because of the pandemic, it was very hard to meet someone for a while. So, I was not going out to drink, so it was easy for me to stop…

> I do care a lot about the things that I eat. I don't eat too much junk food like potato chips [laugh]. I do like those stuff, of course, but I don't eat that very often. From college, I started caring more about the things I eat. Now especially, since I live by myself, I do like to know what I'm eating and where my food comes from. I avoid processed food, go to *yaoya* [greengrocer] more than supermarket, and buy lots of grains as well. You know those industrialized packaged curry and seasonings? I do buy them sometimes of course, when I'm in hurry or lazy to cook, but I prefer to eat things that are more natural. I wish I could do more, but cooking every day is too much work sometimes. If I could, I'd have fresh food every day, but I do a few meals that's ready-made sometimes.

Here, Ivan's dietary lifestyle was sprinkled with health-related words with a little bit of guilt and hesitance that he had to rely on the packaged, ready-made food when his work got too busy to cook fresh food. Even for single-living Ivan who is not a homemaker and not responsible to cook for family members, guilt and anxiety are the two sides of the same coin with his ideal image of home cooking practices (Oleschuk 2020). From his account, Ivan held a high standard when it came to food related decision-making processes, from where he bought his food and the types of food he preferred and avoided. By employing the word 'natural,' Ivan insinuated that food should be wholesome, made with transparently sourced ingredients. There is a clear transition of developing a heightened consumer consciousness from eating whatever his mother made at home, until now he tries to pay reasonably close attention to food, balancing out how much time he can spend grocery shopping and cooking while he works from home.

Although being aided by the pandemic circumstance, Ivan's intellectual curiosity also led him to investigate more about the quality of sleep, which prompted him to stop drinking. His decisions signal cultural and symbolic capital, the ability to choose the health outcome that he desired by quitting drinking, over the hedonistic rationale behind the consumption of alcohol with his friends. As such, Ivan actively engaged with healthism to feel good about his dietary lifestyle, and what he got in exchange was the common result of those who engaged in

healthism, which is "affirmation that their investments in their own embodiments and self-practices" paid off (Guthman 2011:160).

Some interviewees, like Ivan, choose food for the pleasure of body sensation rather than comfort, while exhibiting the ability to interweave the ideal healthy eating into actual everyday practices. Fabio is another interviewee who accumulated cultural capital about healthy eating over the course of years. Fabio, a third-generation Nikkei Brazilian who is a researcher at a prestigious university in Tokyo, came to Japan in 2015 to start his PhD program in genomics. His wife Asami, also a third generation Nikkei, moved from Brazil to Tokyo in 2020. Asami has a master's degree, and she was a paraprofessional veterinary worker in Brazil. Before Asami was able to reunite with Fabio amid the pandemic disruption, Fabio underwent a major transformation of his diet.

> As you may know, staple foods in Brazil are rice and beans with meat and salad, so basically it was like that in my family. My father had high blood pressure, so at home, we used little salt not so much strong seasoning, so I was more adapted for that [low-sodium diet]. My diet changed a lot when I started the university, I started eating more meat at the cafeteria and did a lot of barbeque with my university friends. When I came to Japan, in the beginning, I was trying to adapt to the Japanese culture and local food. At that time, even though I had scholarship, I wanted to save money, so I didn't want to make Brazilian food because it's very expensive. So, I wanted to find what is in local grocery store and tried to cook what Japanese people eat. I also started exercising more by commuting to my work by bicycle every day. So, diet changed and the activities made me lose 10 kg (22 pounds) in three months. [laugh] After adapting to that change and earning more money from my part time job, I decided to change my diet little by little. I started cooking by myself more, and I was more curious about different kinds of diets, so I did my own research about diets like insulin resistance, energy boost diet, apoptotic process, such kind of things. I started to focus my diet more on protein, fat, and fibers and less of carbs, and that was my diet until Asami came to Japan. So, I did almost two years of that kind of more restricted diet. I was really amazed, because back in Brazil, I tried to lose weight and exercise, but my weight didn't change. And I was a little bit overweight. I couldn't lose weight in Brazil, but it was so easy in Japan to change so I got interested in diets… of course exercise too, but changing and learning about food definitely helped.

It is revealing that Fabio was not successful with weight loss in Brazil, but he found it much easier in Japan. He employed the life transition to Japan as the opportunity to explore new

dietary habits, despite the relative financial and work hours setbacks. As an accomplished biologist, it makes sense that the complex mechanism of diets happened to be both personal and professional interests of Fabio, which facilitated his dietary journey. As such, there was a coherent homology between Fabio's occupation and lifestyle, and his education as cultural capital functioned effectively to structure Fabio's dietary lifestyle more than just his individual commitment.

In fact, scholars have found the link between education and healthy lifestyle, contending that education enables individuals to have increased control over their lives (Mirowsky and Ross 2017; Ross and Wu 1995). Moreover, Cockerham (2005) has found a strong correlation between healthy lifestyles and the social environment, arguing that "[i]t is through both socialization and experience that the actor acquires reflexive awareness and the capacity to perform agency, but experience— with respect to life choices—provides the essential basis for agency's practical and evaluative dimensions to evolve over time" (p. 60). This perspective seems to explain that Fabio's willing immersion into the Japanese sociocultural environment enacted his new lifestyle and increased awareness of health and diet. The gradual changes and observation on his weight encouraged him to maintain practical weight-loss tactics, in addition to the overlap of interests he had from his research at work.

In a way, the fact that Fabio could not replicate the same dietary habits from Brazil because of the budget concern pushed him out of his culinary comfort zone "to cook what Japanese people eat." As seen in the quote, Fabio did not elaborate too much on sensational and hedonistic pleasures from trying different cooking and eating, such as discovering new flavors and experimenting with different ingredients. Rather, he was driven by intellectual curiosity and achieving his health goal by learning and executing new weight-loss dietary methods in the new

life environment. Fabio's aesthetic pursuit in his new diet management connotes a sense of "freedom from convention," which contrasts with the Bourdieusian working-class notion of consuming food for "tastes of necessity" or "unrefined" need for instant gratification (1984:177).

Both Ivan and Fabio's explanations of their diets in Brazil show how their dietary lives in Brazil were socially-oriented, making it hard for them to focus on the health aspect of consumption. Having fewer friends or family members in Japan meant that they had fewer social occasions involving food like Brazilian barbeque. Combined with their professional livelihoods and knowledge which shifted their perspectives on diets and consumption, Ivan and Fabio demonstrate cases in which the interviewees with more cultural capital utilized their transition to Japan to enhance their nutritional knowledge and dietary habits.

It is important to note here that Fabio and Asami did not come from a rich background of cultural or economic capital. Although Fabio's father came to Japan as a factory worker when his business underwent bankruptcy, Fabio and his sisters completed their education. Fabio was able to complete his master's degree in Brazil and earned a Japanese government scholarship to pursue his Ph.D. in Japan. His wife Asami was born to *dekasegi* parents in Japan, but she moved to Brazil when she was 12 as her mother remarried. Asami's mother stayed in Japan to continue working in a factory, and Asami and her sister were raised by her aunt in Brazil. Despite their socioeconomic origins, both Fabio and Asami achieved higher social mobility than their parents and began eating healthier on their own. Again, unlike Bourdieu's argument which overemphasized the inherited nature of cultural capital, especially when it comes to education (1986), Fabio attained the upper-middle class lifestyle founded on his own cultural capital of education.

Interestingly, even though Fabio and Asami had higher economic and cultural capital than their parents, they maintained the frugal economic values as their everyday lifestyle. For example, frugality was one of main threads running through Asami and Fabio's consumption habits, as exemplified by the following excerpts.

> Asami: I'm into meal prepping lately, cooking side dishes plenty for a week or to keep in a freezer, so I like to go shopping with a list to buy only the items that I need for cooking. When I go to grocery shopping with him [Fabio], the bill always gets more expensive because he finds something new and wants to try it [laugh], so we end up buying something I didn't plan to buy …
> We've used the food delivery service app once since I got here. We ordered pizza, but it wasn't that good. So, we said to each other that let's make pizza at home next time, instead of buying. After all, it's better to cook at home considering the situation [of the pandemic] and what you pay for food at the restaurants and the transportation cost to get there. If we go out to eat, I rather eat something I can't cook at home.

> Fabio: I usually don't go to a Brazilian grocery store. Even when I went, it was expensive, so I bought only few stuff there. I'm preventing myself from buying certain goods, so thinking to myself that 'oh, it's still expensive here, I'll buy lots of this when I go back to Brazil.'

Both Fabio and Asami demonstrated mature, patient, and responsible postures of shopping. Although Fabio and Asami attained the solid middle-class status in Japan, the status change did not seem to change their expenditure patterns drastically. Asami's principle in grocery shopping was to minimize the cost and cut off abundance to prevent waste. Besides, Asami utilized the messaging app to collect coupons for drug stores and supermarkets and collected information about inexpensive cooking recipes on social media.

The incongruent social class itself is merely a new phenomenon among younger generations. Although newer studies have found class and social identity dissonance among the new poor, many young people have lower economic capital and higher sociocultural capital with middle-class identity that is reproduced through their background (Chen and Nelson 2020).

Asami and Fabio's cases show the persistent power of the class structure that they grew up with, which affects their spending behaviors and rationales into their young adulthood lifestyles.

At the same time, Asami and Fabio's stable socioeconomic conditions shed light on the privilege that many *dekasegi* returnees to Japan did not have. Since Fabio worked from home at the time of interview, Asami usually cooked lunch and they ate together. Due to Fabio's diet preference, they both avoided carbs for dinner and ate lighter at night than lunch. When asked how often they go to convenience stores to buy snacks or ready-made bento box or deli, Asami responded:

> Convenience stores… we seldomly go there. We go to a supermarket every week, but we don't buy deli or meal sets. Occasionally on the weekend, I buy a small package of *otsumami* [finger food eaten alongside alcohol] when we drink. But I complement the table with home-cooked side dishes besides the ready-made otsumami. How should I say this… I've eaten deli and convenience store bento, but it didn't taste worthy for the money. If I spend 400 or 500 yen for the bento at a convenience store, I rather spend the money to buy and cook ingredients to eat my own food.

Asami's comment is telling about her frugality and hesitance towards the foods that are made in an industrial process. Asami is one of several interviewees who had negative bias against packaged food that are sold at convenience store and supermarkets in Japan, while some interviewees enjoy some snacks and deli from convenience stores for its accessibility and affordable price. When I was wondering how come so many interviewees, even a single guy who has little time to cook at home, does not frequent such stores at all, I was able to hear one interviewee's insight, Edson's observation.

> I guess Brazilian people are biased or maybe have some sort of prejudice against industrialized food, especially there is no convenience store like Japan in Brazil. Industrialized food in Brazil is similar to the ones in the U.S. They are full of salt and fat, and they are usually frozen food that is ready to eat. So, I believe it does have an image of unhealthy food, and also quite expensive as well…
> I think Brazilians do not tend to think much about "convenience" because price and taste might come first, especially those who do not like the sweet taste in Japanese food. They might not spend money to buy something that they do not like the taste or made in

factories. And they probably hear from other Brazilians that it is cheaper to make their own food.

Since the concept of packaged food like *bento* (a prepackaged meal of rice with a variety of vegetables and proteins that is available everywhere from train stations to convenience stores to school and factory lunch rooms) is culturally foreign in Brazil and seen as no different from precooked frozen or instant food, it makes sense that some interviewees like Asami saw food from convenience stores or supermarkets as a less desirable option. Edson's insight will appear in subsequent stories and has connections with those of Luiz and Juan (whose stories will be explored in Chapter 5), who could not eat *bento* provided by their factories because they found the flavor too weird. Besides, as 25 interviewees mentioned that they did not like the soy sauce and sugar or mirin flavored sweet taste in savory food, it makes sense that some interviewees were wary of paying for packaged foods that might contain sweet-savory items from places like convenience stores and supermarkets.

On the other hand, her strong preference for home-made food shows that Asami could afford the time and labor that go into making food from scratch without the constraints of time and money, as a stay-at-home wife for the time being. Her perspective on convenience stores contrasted with some interviewees who choose convenience store *bento* as a last resort option because they lived by themselves and often did not have time to cook or go grocery shopping during their busy workdays. To clarify, this study found no interviewees who buy convenience store food because they like the taste of it (except snacks), but such stores literally served as a convenient option to make their life easier when their options were limited. Even compared to Ivan, who found it almost impossible to cook and to eat healthy for every meal on his own, Asami held more middle-class opportunities to make her ideal healthy dietary lifestyle come true. Additionally, Asami was free from the time and money limitations and the sense of guilt

that some homemakers feel for not having enough time and resources to put healthy, home-made meals on the table for their loved ones (Johnston et al. 2012; Parsons 2016; Oleschuk 2019). As such, some interviewees obtained higher forms of cultural capital after starting a new life chapter in Japan.

Food ideology and a Nikkei group

Studies have found that mothers are under tremendous pressure of the neoliberal norm to cook and provide fresh, wholesome, healthy food for their family members (Bowen et al. 2014; Johnston et al. 2012; Oleschuk 2019; Parsons 2016). Some female interviewees identified the time when they were pregnant or started cooking for their family and children as turning points that they became more conscious about healthy eating. When asked what food meant to her, Elena, an engineer working in Fukuoka Prefecture, talked about food becoming more than just food when she became pregnant with her first son.

> Before I got pregnant, food was more like the thing I eat and that's all. No nutritional concern or values. But after I got pregnant, I became more aware that anything I eat is feeding my son somehow, so I started cooking more often. And I'm more concerned about the quality and nutritional value of food. It doesn't mean that I can't eat sweets or things that I like to eat at all. But before [getting pregnant], I didn't buy fruit because it's more expensive in Japan, but I started eating more vegetables and fruits. I try to balance more, but my diet used to be based on meat and rice."

Japan's food politics were not immune from the global hegemony of healthy eating as a normative lifestyle, and it affected the culture of mothers and caregivers in Japan and how they provided food for their family members as well. Rika, who moved to Japan when she was fifteen and was raised by her Nikkei Brazilian aunt, remembered how her aunt's cooking was influenced by the health discourse, and so was Rika's diet. When asked about her breakfast in Japan after talking about bread-based breakfast in Brazil, she made the following response:

> My aunt also did bread too, but I think she heard somewhere that eating rice is better than bread, especially when you are student because of lots of things? I don't know if it's accurate, but that was the reason that made her [aunt] change the breakfast menu. But eating rice in the morning was surprising for me, because it's kind of heavy. But I didn't have too much say in it, so I just ate that because I had to eat. But I don't know, it was hard to accept.

What Rika talked about here, her aunt's belief in rice for better nutrition, was the outcome of Japanese food and nutrition education legislation, which institutionalized healthy eating as a political agenda in 2005 in response to emerging food related issues such as the rise of obesity and chronic diseases, decline of traditional Japanese culinary cultures, increasing dependency on imported food resources, and food safety issues concerning consumers (Suzuki 2020). The campaign usually took a top-down approach, meaning that the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries issued the basic guidelines outlining the aims and concept of food education but execution of the campaign depended on existing resources, such as local governments, school teachers, and community dietitians. Scholars have found that the food and nutrition campaign and the emerging rhetoric of 'healthy eating' obscured the gradual ideological displacement of responsibilities from the governmental institutions to individuals. For example, in scrutinizing government-led food and nutrition movements, Kimura (2011) argues that such food reforms are the revivals of traditional Japanese values such as patriarchy, reinforcing the classic roles of Japanese women being responsible for domestic work and dedicated to taking care of family members' health.

Specifically, Rika's aunt seemed to get the inspiration for Japanese style breakfast from rice-centered diet public relations documents and advertisements that were prevalent at that time, which was even incorporated into elementary school curriculum for students and their parents to learn about health benefits of rice-centered breakfast, especially in comparison to bread as a breakfast (Takeda 2008). Here, we see how the discourse affected mothers and caregivers in

Japan, wiping out the innocent preference of a youth like Rika and ingraining the unwarranted belief that rice is better than other types of carbs like bread.

The bottom-line purpose of the campaign was to raise public interest and appreciation for Japanese food as the government feared non-Japanese cuisine trends may take over the national culinary landscape, so they aimed to ensure that young generations grow up eating Japanese food in some ways. The food and nutrition campaign employed the frame of tradition and emphasized holistic nutritional value to increase awareness and appreciation of traditional Japanese eating (Takeda et al. 2016; Suzuki 2020). Such a Japanese food-centered campaign seemed to accomplish its goals for a student like Rika, who moved to Japan at a young age with little knowledge of Japanese food, let alone cooking itself. When asked about how she learned how to cook, Rika told me her memory of home economics class in high school, when she learned how to cook miso soup from dashi broth for the first time.

> I can't remember specific dishes, but I remember the thing shocked me a lot was dashi. I think it was simple miso soup, but making dashi was something so new. Because you use some ingredients just to add some accent to the whole process. It was very sophisticated process, and it had a care for food. In Brazil, it's more easy, you know. You just put ingredients, mix, stir the food, and cook. So, I just understood that Japanese cooking was so profound, it was not just about the taste of dish, but the whole mix of tastes.

As such, food and nutrition programs that are heavily based on Japanese food prevent educators from employing an alternative approach for non-Japanese students, such as bringing in a Brazilian cooking instructor to educate Nikkei and Brazilian students with healthy Brazilian cooking that students and their parents might be more familiar with. For example, in Hamamatsu city, the health and well-being department within the municipal office hosted a cooking class for Nikkei Brazilian high school students, instructed by Japanese volunteers as a part of the food and nutrition campaign in 2018. The volunteers hosted three cooking classes for juniors in the high school with the theme of healthy and easy-to-replicate-at-home recipes. In their online report,

one of the Japanese volunteers made a following comment when asked about what volunteers hope to teach the students:

> Just like the tasty miso soup made from scratch with the broth, I hope the students cook and savor the Japanese traditional dishes. Recently, there are many students who don't have opportunities to cook, but I want them to know that they can taste the real *umami* even from the simple dish that is not instant food. I want them to learn the real taste of food and carry the torch for the next generation. My hope is that a small bit of my talk about the nutritional balance of carbs, main dish, and side dish will remain in their memory, and it'd be my honor if they remember about it one day.

The organizers also expressed that they wanted students to learn about dashi broth, the foundational element in Japanese cooking. The Hamamatsu city's food and nutrition campaign report showed a clear emphasis to educate the Nikkei students with Japanese dishes and cooking skills. However, in reality, the main concerns of Japanese volunteers and teachers about Nikkei students centered around the nutritional balance in students' diets, frequent intake of instant food, and the lack of opportunities to try cooking at home. Indeed, when I interviewed Michiko, one of cooking class instructors who volunteered in Hamamatsu's food and nutrition campaign who made the comment above, she expressed more nuanced intention and hope for Nikkei and Brazilian students from such campaign.

> When I worked with these [Nikkei] students, to me, the foremost concern was that there were many children who were not eating enough, which was a more serious issue even before wondering if they are eating Japanese food or not. When we saw the initial survey result before starting cooking classes, it was clear that many students had poorly balanced diets. Even Japanese high schoolers have high blood pressure lately. So, as these kids grow up and finish schools in the future, I wanted them to learn basic cooking skills because they are simply important life skills. Of course, because they are in Japan, it'll be great if they learn about *dashi* and Japanese cooking repertoires. But first, I just wanted them to know that home cooking doesn't need to be elaborate, but even easy, basic cooking can be tastier and healthier than instant food or highly-processed food. I've interacted with many students who didn't grow up with home-cooked meal, and I just don't think it is their best interest to consume too much food with additives for their health. We could not host cooking classes in the last couple of years because of the pandemic, but I hope that we can host the class again soon… I just hope that the students find cooking enjoyable and easy, rather than thinking it troublesome.

The online report of Hamamatsu city's food and nutrition campaign evoked nationalistic sentiments emphasizing Japanese traditional food and cooking methods and preserving the legacy for the next generation to counter with an emerging non-Japanese culinary trend. However, when I listened to the less-filtered opinion from Michiko, who worked closely with Nikkei and Brazilian students in Hamamatsu city, her concern was more genuine and urgent. Whether there was a food and nutrition blurb or not, a local volunteer like Michiko cared about whether the students lived close to the poverty level and if they had enough to eat at home. As such, her concerns regarding the poor diet and high sugar intake echo prior studies on Nikkei and Brazilian populations' health status (Chino et al. 2005; Yoshioka and Tashiro 2008).

In "A Report on the Action taken for Food and Nutrition for Foreign Parents and Children in Homi, Toyota City," Noda (2011) conducted a survey with Brazilian, Filipino, and Chinese elementary school students about their everyday diets and hosted three cooking lessons followed by visual presentations on nutrition and health. In accessing their food habits, Noda and her team observed malnutrition, poorly balanced diet, and excessive sugar intake from juice and soda among the participating children. They also found that most of their mothers did not know what a *bento* box is in Japan that students were supposed to bring for their lunch, let alone the knowledge of healthy *bento* lunch. Thus, Noda and her team also hosted a cooking class with a visual presentation for parents about what conventional Japanese *bento* lunch looked like, where the parents could buy *bento* box containers, and how to make *bento*. Noda and her team's goals were not about promoting Japanese style healthy diet, but about helping the children and their parents to adapt to the food environment in Japan and to raise awareness of nutritional values of food, especially countries like Brazil and China that do not offer so-called home economics class in elementary and middle schools to learn about healthy diet and cooking (Noda 2011:160).

Additionally, Noda and her team concluded that the direct community engagement was crucial for non-Japanese students and their parents to increase interest in different kinds of food and to promote the pleasure of eating in a communal space with others, since many children in the study reported that they often ate at home alone while their parents worked in manual labor (2011).

Ultimately, even the practitioners of official food and nutrition campaigns were more focused on the immediate health issues and how their engagement could help break the negative chain of poor diet when they worked with non-Japanese families. By coaching Nikkei and/or Brazilian students with basic cooking skills, the practitioners hoped to educate the students with proper nutrition knowledge so that they are less likely to consume instant or processed food items when they grow up.

It is hard to measure how such local food and nutrition campaigns actually improved the health profiles of Nikkei Brazilians, but it seems that the initiative prompted the local municipal offices to pay closer attention to the diet and health status of Nikkei Brazilian teenagers to identify the potential health problems and to discern an appropriate approach to improve their health status and food habits. In fact, the health survey concerning Nikkei Brazilian community published around this time offered following propositions:

> The majority of Brazilian residents living with their spouses or dependents settle in Japan for work for a long term, but not permanently. To provide the health and dietary guidance for such Brazilian residents who maintain their cultural identities, following considerations are desirable.
>
> - Health practitioners should help develop food culture that is suitable to the Brazilian residents, instead of imposing on them the Japanese culture and culinary style or leaving them alone because they have a different culture from us.
> - Health practitioners are recommended to understand the cultural norms and backgrounds of the Brazilian women, who are in charge of kitchen and feeding their family… (Shibasaki et al. 2008:83)."

Unlike the top-down approach of food and nutrition campaigns reinforcing Japaneseness or the neoliberal ideology in healthism, such realistic insights offered by the scholars who directly engage with the Brazilian population in the field are very important. The study of Shibasaki et al. (2008) underscores the need for the community-first approach, in which the health practitioners identify the cultural difference of eating and the foodways of non-Japanese residents, in order to help improve the health status of Brazilian residents in a feasible and respectful manner.

As such, the ways in which Nikkei Brazilians are introduced to food habits and lifestyles in Japan have tremendous impact in shaping the diet of Nikkei Brazilians, who otherwise might only keep recreating the Brazilian-style foodway and remain unexposed to Japanese food. As Noda (2011) noted, it was evident that some non-Japanese parents and their children lacked a general understanding of the Japanese foodway, simply due to the lack of social interactions with local Japanese and opportunities to learn about cooking and nutrition. Food and nutrition campaigns conducted in schools with a large number of non-Japanese students, therefore, did not uphold the nationalistic agenda of trying to indoctrinate foreign-born students with the traditional and distinct culture of Japanese food. Rather, they turned into a space of cross-group food interactions for non-Japanese students to socialize with other peers and to elicit interest in different foods that they were never exposed to. Because foodways at home are private and left unseen by teachers, it served as the first important step to support the diets of non-Japanese children with inadequate food intake and nutrition, as well as supporting parents who were having a hard time to manage children's nutrition in Japan's sociocultural environment.

Maintaining Brazilian diet with social capital

Only three of my 63 interviewees described that they ate Brazilian food regularly. Despite their long duration of living in Japan, they did not eat Japanese food very often. These three had several things in common. First, one of their parents is a non-Nikkei, European descendant, so they were not familiar with Japanese food because they grew up eating Brazilian and other European cuisine their parent grew up with such as Italian food. Second, they did not need to interact with Japanese and other non-Japanese populations in Japan, because their lifestyles at home, work, and school could be navigated with Portuguese or English.

For the interviewees who moved to Japan as young children, the flavor difference made it hard to adjust to school lunch in Japan. Even today, Nikkei Brazilian students in elementary school and middle school struggle to get used to school lunch (Terashima and Kawada 2003). In Japan, most elementary and middle schools provide lunch. It is usually cooked at school, and the idea is that all students eat the same food together. School lunch was more challenging for the interviewees whose parents cooked Brazilian style meals at home, so school lunch was their first experience eating Japanese food regularly. Among the fourteen interviewees who moved to Japan in their early teens, three of them shared that they had a hard time getting used to Japanese school lunch, while others found no difficulty. For example, Olivia, a third generation Nikkei Brazilian who came to Japan with her family, grew up with little Japanese food and came to Japan when she was eleven. She also remembered her first several months eating school lunch.

> The first thing I thought when I ate school lunch – it was so sweet! I was really surprised. I could only eat bread or rice until I got used to the food.

Another difficulty stemmed from the school system difference in Japan and Brazil. In Brazil, elementary school schedule is only half-day, either in morning or afternoon. Students had snacks or light meal provided from school, but they usually eat lunch at home before or after school.

Thus, Nikkei Brazilian students had to adjust to a new school system, schedule, and the collective culture of elementary school which required students to eat the same meal as everyone else. Amanda, a third generation Nikkei Brazilian who moved to Japan with her family when she was a baby, grew up speaking Portuguese and eating Brazilian and Italian food in Japan. The only time she had no choice but to try Japanese food was during lunch time in her public school, when she found most Japanese school lunch menus challenging even though she tried. Amanda eventually had to get special permission to bring her own lunch due to 'a personal health reason' after several months of trying school lunch.

For Amanda, Japanese food was not her cup of tea until she found a Nikkei Brazilian boyfriend. He was from Aichi prefecture, and his mother cooked both Brazilian and Japanese food. As Amanda started spending time with him, she also started hanging out with his Japanese friends and getting more exposure to Japanese food. She even liked sushi (tuna and salmon) and started making Japanese curry at home. A similar progression also happened to Olivia when she married a Japanese man in Japan. Before her marriage, Olivia was not a big fan of cooking for herself, but she started learning how to cook Japanese food from Japanese cookbooks, and her cooking repertoire as the mother of two little boys aligned with the typical home-meal menus for Japanese children. Social capital, in this way, provides a door to explore different culinary options outside the interviewee's repertoire, turning the unfamiliar into a more familiar taste.

Neither Amanda nor Olivia remembered their teachers being strict and forcing them to finish their school lunch. Rather, they were understanding and did not give them a hard time. Both Amanda and Olivia came to Japan with family who worked in factories, so they had little exposure to Japanese food in the beginning. As they went to school in Japan and expanded their

social networks outside the Brazilian community, they became accustomed to Japanese food in their own time.

Social capital as lifeline to get Brazilian food fix

Once interviewees left the bubble of the Nikkei Brazilian community, they also became somewhat distant from Brazilian food. In other words, their social capital in the Brazilian community become the way Nikkei Brazilians maintained their ties to Brazilian food. As I have shown, some Nikkei Brazilians naturally carried on their Brazilian food habits when they had limited exposure to Japanese people and their food culture. Their relationships with Brazilian foodways changed when they developed relationships with people from different backgrounds, and they learned and adapted to a new foodway.

This tendency among interviewees was observed when (a) interviewees got married, and (b) they moved away from cities with a large Brazilian community. Among the interviewees who got married, some talked about how their cooking practices have changed due to their partner's taste, allergy, or raising their own children. For example, Mayumi came to Japan in 1997 for work when she was 23. She started working as a golf caddy and living with other women from Brazil at the company dorm. At that time, she was not keen on cooking, and with her dorm mates Mayumi cooked something easy and simple like rice, miso soup, and stir-fried dishes. After she married a Japanese man and had a son and a daughter, she became the main chef for the family and started cooking Japanese food regularly.

She commented that her husband and daughter are "picky eaters," so Mayumi sometimes had to make two different main dishes: one main dish was for herself and her son, and another that her husband and daughter could eat. To avoid cooking two different main dishes frequently,

she tended to go through the same menu rotations that would make everyone in the family happy.

Although she cooked Brazilian hot snacks when the kids were young, Brazilian food did not become the center of the family's dietary repertoire because it is more time consuming to make. When I asked her what she would do when she missed Brazilian food, she replied:

> Mayumi: I go to my Nikkei friend's house. I've known her since we were both working at the golf course… When I go visit her, she usually asks me 'So what do you want to eat?' So, I tell her this and that, and she makes them for me.
>
> Rumika: How often do you visit her in a year?
>
> Mayumi: Now, I haven't visited her for a while because of COVID, but I used to visit like once a month when I did it the most often. It is about an hour train ride.
>
> Rumika: So now because you can't visit her, have you gotten any Brazilian food somewhere else instead? Going to restaurants or buying something online?
>
> Mayumi: No, there are Brazilian places in my prefecture, but I haven't been to any of them for food."

When she visits her friend's home she gets her Brazilian appetite satisfied, enjoying her friend's company and homemade *feijoada*, lasagna, and other typical dishes. Because she lives in Aichi prefecture, there are more Brazilian grocery stores and restaurants than other parts of Japan, but she has not taken advantage of such commercial options since she first started working in Aichi. Her idea of home-cooked food is Japanese style, consisting of rice, miso soup, and fish or meat main dish that she grew up eating at home. Brazilian food became her treat that she can eat when she visits her old friend, not everyday food but "providing the happiest moments in life." An interviewee like Mayumi does not seek out Brazilian food on her own or actively get her family involved with Brazilian food, but maintaining her old work connections is one of the few ways

that she keeps her Brazilian dietary practice alive, which otherwise could easily become the food of the past in her current Japanese diet-centered lifestyle.

I heard a similar story from Katia. As she finished college and settled into an office job in Tokyo, she always remained bound to Brazilian food from her family who are also in Japan. Growing up in Japan as a child of a Nikkei Brazilian *Nisei* father and Italian Brazilian mother, she used to live in cities with concentrations of (Nikkei) Brazilians. She described the food she grew up with in her childhood as "60% is Brazilian food, and 40% is something else." Although both of her parents worked for long hours in the factories, her family usually ate dinner together almost every night, and her mother cooked white rice, salad, *feijão*, tomato-based stewed meat, and stir-fried vegetables, for example. When her family went out to eat on the weekend, they went to burger places like McDonalds or family-style chain restaurants, places which do not serve Japanese food exclusively, because her parents cannot eat some Japanese food with acquired taste such as raw fish, salted plums, and natto. Although they live in an area with a large presence of Brazilians, they did not go to Brazilian restaurants very often because the food is not so different from what they eat at home.

Katia started living by herself in Saitama prefecture, about an hour train ride from her parents, for college and work nine years ago. Working in sales, she is usually on the move during lunch time, so she eats out by herself or with her colleagues. While her diet in her private time involved considerable occasions of Brazilian food, Katia assimilated to Japanese urban office worker's style of lunch break, which required quick in-and-out eating in-between work appointments.

Katia usually cooked dinner for herself such as pasta, Japanese meals consisting of rice, miso soup, and a fish or meat main dish, and sometimes *feijão*. Sometimes after a long day at

work, she opted for a *bento* from a convenience store. Although some interviewees raised the lack of proper equipment as the reason they cannot cook Brazilian food at their home, Katia had a pressure cooker to cook *feijão* and to stew meat even though she lives by herself. In her case, her parents gave her a pressure cooker when she started living by herself to go to college, but she also thought that Nikkei friends around her usually had one as well.

While some Nikkei Brazilian families gradually stop *churrasco* rituals once their children grow up and leave the family, Katia's parents are "rare" for being active *churrasco* hosts, and Katia still goes home on weekends frequently and enjoys *churrasco* with her family and friends. According to her, cooking Brazilian food regularly on weekdays was difficult because "many quintessential Brazilian dishes are time consuming because ingredients like beans take a long time to cook." But because there were Brazilian grocery shops in her parents' neighborhood, she sometimes bought meat and canned goods when she went home for the weekend and brought back some groceries to cook Brazilian food occasionally.

Katia's lifestyle offers a rare example of a Nikkei Brazilian in Japan who maintains a dual dietary culture of Brazil and Japanese food, especially for someone who has lived in Japan for the vast majority of her lifetime. Brazilian food is something she eats for her private time, whether it is dinner at home during weekdays or with her family on weekend, and her diet blends into the mainstream of Japan's office worker's lunch style. Her parents came to Japan in their adulthood, so naturally they could not overcome their aversion to some peculiar tastes of Japanese food.

Katia was able to expand her palate beyond her family's foodways, which is "largely because of school lunch during elementary school" as she recalls. Some Japanese food like *natto* was not served at the dinner table at Katia's home, but the school lunch supplemented the

exposure to diversified Japanese food and made Katia someone "who can eat anything for the most part." On the other hand, she observed some Nikkei kids who moved to Japan from middle school struggling with school lunch, because of the belated exposure to different Japanese food.

There is a parallel between Katia's diet patterns and Ray's (2004) observation about Bengali migrants living and working in cities. For example, Ray shows that for breakfast and lunch, Bengali migrants have American-style meals for the sake of convenience and workplace social contexts, representing the modern and cosmopolitan lifestyles of middle-class Bengali migrants in cities. In contrast, dinner at home remains 'traditional,' and thus serves as the "center of re-enactment of ethnicity and their culture," primarily through the consumption of quintessential Bengali meals that generally consist of rice and fish (Ray 2004:52). Thus, Ray argues that food habits differ based on the public and private spheres of Bengali-Americans' lives, and has less to do with their social class. Ray adds that Bengali migrants conform to American social and cultural norms in work-related situations, but that Bengali identity is actively enacted through dietary practices at home. Katia's food-related lifestyles aligned with the Japanese public when she was at work, but her dietary backbone remained unchanged when she went home on weekends, showing that the two distinctive foodways are not mutually exclusive.

But if Katia's parents were not living in Japan or lived far from Katia, it becomes uncertain how much she could retain Brazilian foodways and social life regularly, given that Katia had a career office job working in the city. While some interviewees miss doing *churrasco* with their family and friends after they moved to Japan, interviewees with family networks in Japan have social capital to replicate the same social rituals from Brazil. Thus, having family

members close to their personal life seems to anchor interviewees to Brazilian diet compared to interviewees who live in Japan on their own or have non-Nikkei family members.

The necessary conditions for Brazilian style barbecue also have to be taken into consideration. Despite their housing arrangements in large apartment complexes, both Margarete and Katia who have lived in them were able to make Brazilian barbecue at the park on the apartment complex property. Space is one of the main reasons that some interviewees who live in the city find it difficult to make barbecue because they live in the apartment building and do not have driver's licenses. Even among those doing traditional *dekasegi* work in factories, those who have worked in Japan long enough with modest promotions could afford a house in the countryside (De Carvalho 2003; Onai 2009), as Katia's parents did. Therefore, the proximity to Brazilian community and the access to Brazilian grocery goods made it easy for some Nikkei Brazilians to maintain both Brazilian and Japanese diets in Japan.

Murakami Danchi – Maintaining Brazilian diet as *dekasegi*

Unlike Nikkei Brazilians who were integrated into mainstream Japanese society and obtained careers as middle-class workers in Japan, working class factory workers tend to get more isolated from the mainstream Japanese culture and people due to their limited interactions with local Japanese outside their work context (Momohara 2021; Tsuda 2003). I was able to get a glimpse of what the food-centered lifestyles look like by visiting one working class Nikkei Brazilian family living near manufacturing sites in a neighboring prefecture of Tokyo. Their lifestyle represented the common Nikkei Brazilian lifestyles in cities like Toyota and Ota, where the majority of factory workers are non-Japanese laborers, including Brazilians and Nikkei Brazilians. As anthropologists examined *dekasegi* factory workers and the generalized

representations of their estranged lifestyles (Linger 2001; Tsuda 2003), Margarete and her daughter Rita had a lifestyle that involved few Japanese elements in general. The following ethnographic observation demonstrates how Nikkei Brazilian factory workers maintain their cultural and culinary practices in a suburban city in Japan, creating their own 'little Brazil' community.

Murakami Danchi consists of three apartment complex districts. The second district I visited has 21 five- and eleven-story apartment buildings and a few commercial businesses along the shopping street, which is open to the public but rather exclusively utilized by the residents. When we stepped into the second district of Murakami Danchi on a weekday late afternoon during the pandemic, I did not get the immediate sense that I was entering the mecca of Little Brazil in Chiba prefecture. As we passed the outer area that had a residential park-like atmosphere, I saw a group of elderly Japanese chatting. I also saw multiple adults in the area who appeared to be experiencing homelessness. As I got closer to the cluster of tall apartment buildings, there were elementary school age kids running across the bridge that leads to a big bright orange arch that says "Murakami central shopping street".

Despite the fact that Murakami's second district was the mega home of over 2,000 residents, I did not get the sense of lively human activities by looking around from the beginning of the shopping street. The information panel indicated that there were 25 business tenants along the shopping street, but the most had their shutters closed. When I visited, only eight commercial tenants were open for business, including an old-fashioned barber and hair salon, a 100-yen discount store, and an orthopedic clinic. The first business I found open on my left, a small kiosk with a well-aged orange exterior, had a sign saying *Boulangerie Patisserie Monte Yamazaki*. A bit taken aback by the stark difference between the early 1990's look of the store and what the

sign said it was, I took a closer look at the store and immediately realized that it was not a regular kiosk or a Japanese convenience store: there were Portuguese flyers on the wall and an unfamiliar package of ice candies in the old freezer, which had a Japanese dairy product brand logo on it. Monte Yamazaki was evidently the small Brazilian grocery store.

My informant Mami, who had guided me along Murakami Danchi to another Brazilian resident's apartment, mentioned that Monte Yamazaki has been around since she moved there nearly a decade ago. It was not her go-to grocery shopping destination because she found some items there were overpriced, but she occasionally visited the store for some light snacks and Brazilian style fast food items. Yachiyo city in Chiba is known as the birthplace of Japanese large apartment complexes known as *danchi*. Murakami Danchi was built as a public housing project from the late 1940s through the 1970. During Japan's rapid economic growth in the 1970s, over a thousand three-story and higher concrete apartments complexes were built throughout Japan to solve the postwar housing shortage (Leisure 2021:369).

Once symbolizing the modern lifestyles and the reproduction of the Japanese nuclear family, *danchi* buildings today have become a sanctuary for migrant workers who often struggle to find apartments, as Japanese landlords often refuse to rent to non-Japanese tenants (Mori 1996; Brody et al. 2002). Brazilian and Nikkei Brazilian residents are also considered a source of trouble by the local Japanese residents. Although Japanese residents do not openly voice their complaints about their Brazilian neighbors being loud or not following trash rules, stigma against foreigners and cultural difference has often resulted in tension between local Japanese and Brazilian residents (Tsuzuki 2003). Since local Japanese residents were reluctant to be close neighbors of non-Japanese residents and avoided communication and confrontation, migrant worker residents and their families were socially and spatially alienated in *danchi* buildings

along the industrial belt of Japan. Such migrant concentration in *danchi* buildings did not happen organically; their move was facilitated by broker agencies and company employers who made housing arrangements for incoming migrant workers (Tsuda 2003).

On the store bags of Monte Yamazaki, *lanchonete* was written below the store logo, meaning cafeteria or snack bar in Portuguese. As the name indicates, there is a kitchen in the back of the store where patrons can order hot food over the counter from the menu of home-made hamburger, pizza, sandwiches, and classic Brazilian fast foods. According to the restaurant reviews about Monte Yamazaki, the store used to be a franchised Japanese bakery kiosk selling bread and cakes made from Yamazaki factory, a major wholesale bread brand in Japan. However, as the Japanese resident population started aging and the number of Brazilian and Peruvian residents increased in 2000s, the Japanese owner changed the business direction and started carrying Latin American grocery items such as meat, vegetables, canned goods, seasoning condiments, beverages, and snacks to meet the niche demand for Brazilian and Peruvian clientele (Koocus 2021). Today, due to the shrinking Peruvian population in the city, the store predominantly sells Brazilian hot food and grocery items from Brazil. The overall reviews of Monte Yamazaki raved about this small, former Yamazaki-franchised bakery as "the little Brazil in Murakami" and the authentic Brazilian style burgers that they serve, as one reviewer wrote "the burger is juicy and rich, incomparable to burgers from other nationwide fast-food places. It reminded me of the taste of Brazil from my honeymoon 25 years ago" (cowboy70 2013).

After seeing Monte Yamazaki, I gradually saw how Murakami Danchi was different from the typical apartment complex in Japan. A few stalls left from Monte Yamazaki, there was a sign of Yachiyo Multicultural Center, the city owned social service center for English, Portuguese,

and Spanish speaking residents established in 2010 (Yachiyo city 2021). As we walked by one of the five-story buildings, I heard Latin reggae music from somewhere way above me, probably some residents listening to the music with their windows open.

On the residents' bulletin board, there was a notice written in both Japanese and Portuguese, listing "resident rules that need to be followed as a minimum" which emphasize:

1. No laundry on the balcony. (reason) our balcony does not have drains, and the water can pour onto the downstair residents' balcony and cause them inconvenience.
2. No loud noises, whether indoors or outdoors.
3. No illegal parking at the designated spots for residents.
4. Dispose of garbage on the scheduled date, at the designated disposal spots.

There was the sense of co-existence in the complex, which was gradually cultivated in the last couple of decades, but there also seems to be an estranged tension remaining between Japanese and non-Japanese residents. Yachiyo city's multicultural initiative survey mentioned neighbors' complaints such as noise, the trash rule violations, and the language barrier, which consistently remain relevant issues in *dekasegi* residential areas since the 1990s (2021). The same survey also found that some non-Japanese residents thought that "every Japanese person hates foreigners," indicating that some non-Japanese residents internalized the worst possible case of stigma against foreigners (2021:59). Furthermore, Yachiyo city's survey discussed how they could share community information and help out non-Japanese residents better by utilizing ICTs and social services, but also noted that non-Japanese residents tended to rely on information and advice that they obtained by word-of-mouth within their communities. The city's multicultural committee seemed to understand that non-Japanese residents simply did not have time outside their work to get involved with local communities and events, but they highlighted the feedback from Brazilian residents who mentioned that they sometimes wished

that more Japanese people understood the circumstance and the cultural difference of non-Japanese residents better (2021: 61).

Despite the long passage of time since non-Japanese residents became a large constituent of Murakami Danchi, it seems that each community of Japanese and non-Japanese residents stands alone, and their paths rarely cross in their everyday lives. In fact, there are 326 Brazilians living in Murakami Danchi, indicating that almost 50% of the 677 Brazilians registered in the city reside in Murakami Danchi, according to the statistics recorded in March 2020 (Yachiyo 2021). As shown in Table 4.1, of the 5,946 total registered foreign residents in the city of Yachiyo, Brazilian residents comprise the fourth largest foreign population (677) in the city. However, Brazilian residents have comprised the highest occupancy rate among non-Japanese tenants in Murakami Danchi since 2015, although their total population in the city was outnumbered by Chinese (1,344), Vietnamese (915), and Filipino populations (825) in 2020.

Table 4.1 Number of foreign national residents in Yachiyo City and their occupancy rate in Murakami Danchi in March 2015.

Nationality	Brazil	Peru	Philippines	China	Argentina
Total number of given nationality living in Yachiyo City	586	386	633	904	21
Total number of given nationality living in Murakami danchi	270	156	100	96	14
Percentage of total number of given nationality living in Murakami danchi	46.1%	40.4%	15.8%	10.6%	66.7%

Source: (Yachiyo 2021)

Table 4.2 Number of foreign national residents in Yachiyo City and their occupancy rate in Murakami Danchi in March 2020

Nationality	Brazil	Philippine	Peru	Vietnam	China
Total number of given nationality living in Yachiyo City	677	825	383	915	1,344
Total number of given nationality living in Murakami danchi	326	111	111	56	40
Percentage of total number of given nationality living in Murakami danchi	48.2%	13.5%	29.0%	6.1%	3.0%

Source: (Yachiyo 2021)

Table 4.3 Top five foreign resident populations in Yachiyo by number of residents (with their percentage within the total foreign resident population)

Top five foreign resident populations in Yachiyo by number of residents (with their percentage within the total foreign resident population)	China, 1,344 (22.6%)	Vietnam, 915 (15.4%)	Philippine, 825 (13.9%)	Brazil, 677 (11.4%)	Korea, 439 (7.4%)

The total number of foreign resident population in Yachiyo City is 5,946 in 2020, representing 2.97% of the entire city population (200,275).
Source: (Yachiyo 2021)

It makes sense that living in such an apartment complex is easier for Brazilian migrants, given that it is primarily designed for working-class families. Additionally, due to the complicated housing rental process in Japan, non-Japanese often find it difficult to find housing, especially when they cannot speak Japanese. In fact, Yachiyo city's report found that non-Japanese tenants who arranged housing contracts on their own have better Japanese language facility than non-Japanese tenants on company leases (2021). In the case of Murakami Danchi, several buildings are company-contract housing, meaning that factories near the apartment complex provide subsidized rent for their workers. Such factories include the mega food warehouse company that Margarete and Rita work for, where they work at assembly lines to

manufacture *bento* and light snacks that are sold at nationwide convenience stores in Japan. Since broker agencies in Brazil usually make both work and living arrangements (Higuchi and Tanno 2003; Kajita et al. 2005; Mori 1996), there is a continuous influx of Brazilian residents at Murakami Danchi because the location is close to the sites of manual labor and the package deal of housing and work was prepared by their employers.

As I became more aware of the unique residential dynamic of Murakami Danchi, we were at the doorstep of Margarete's home on the fourth floor. Almost at the second when the elevator arrived on the floor, the entire hallway was filled with the fragrant smell of food. Although I could not identify what food was being cooked, it was undoubtedly something delicious. As soon as we entered Margarete's home, we were greeted by three of her young grandkids. We took our shoes off and proceeded to a kitchen-dining space. Margarete's apartment had a typical floor plan in a Japanese apartment, consisting of two bedrooms and a kitchen-dining space. Margarete was clearly in the middle of cooking, but she greeted me with a warm hug, even though I only came to her home as a guest of Mami and we had never met before. I thanked her for inviting me to her home with the mix of English and my elementary Portuguese, to which Margarete shyly responded "*sem problemas*" (no problem).

There were a tall pot and a pressure cooker occupying two gas stovetops. Their kitchen space was not particularly big or equipped with new appliances. Their home was a typical understated Japanese apartment mostly decorated in white. Mami put her home-made cake on the big dining table to keep it safe from children for the celebration. I pulled out my small contribution, snacks and candies for her grandkids, which I had bought based on Mami's advice.

When the cooking was almost finished, Margarete took a seat with us at the dining table and started talking about the post-surgery pain in her left knee. Margarete was taking days off

from her work at the factory due to her knee surgery, which was why she could host and invite us to the party in the first place. A week earlier, Mami had contacted me about Margarete's son's birthday party and asked me if I wanted to come along. "She is a great chef and makes 'real' Brazilian food." It could not be more convincing to hear that from someone who cooks professionally at a Brazilian restaurant in Tokyo and bakes Brazilian style cakes as her side job. After Margarete could catch a break while pampering her grandkids, I was able to ask some questions with the help of Mami's translation.

Margarete came to Japan in her thirties with her three children and has been living in Japan for over two decades. When her oldest daughter Rita turned sixteen, she started working in the same factory as well. Originally, Margarete thought she would learn to speak Japanese naturally as her new life chapter unfolded in Japan. It turned out, however, that her work in the factory was manageable with little Japanese proficiency and the aid of an on-site Portuguese-Japanese interpreter, so Margarete and her children spoke Portuguese at home.

Margarete's mother is Italian Brazilian, and her father is Japanese. Growing up with three other siblings in Parana, she did not speak Japanese or eat Japanese food often except for plain white rice. Margarete is a self-taught cook and became a chef at a restaurant in Brazil, but decided to take a factory job in Japan due to Brazil's unstable economy. She has been working in the same food manufacturing factory ever since she moved to Japan 24 years ago, and that is how Mami met her when she also went to live in Murakami Danchi.

There were no Brazilian grocery stores nearby when Margarete first came to Murakami Danchi 24 years ago, but commercial trucks selling Brazilian groceries came to the area a couple of times a week. Going grocery shopping in Japan without Google and a smartphone was not easy at that time either. One time, Rita had to go to a Japanese grocery store to buy salad oil, but

she grabbed Japanese sweet sake called *mirin* instead. It became a funny family memory later when Margarete tried to use salad oil for cooking, which turned out to be something else that they had never seen before. Today, the family makes a grocery trip to the chain discount store, Don Quixote, once or twice a month for Brazilian grocery goods. The store is usually much bigger than a regular grocery store, and they often carry international grocery products that you cannot find in regular Japanese supermarkets.

Margarete's diet and food-related lifestyle are much more limited within the Brazilian food repertoire than anyone else I interviewed. When her children were still young, they grilled *churrasco* at a park almost every weekend. While most of my interviewees fell out of touch with this common Brazilian weekend ritual due to the space issue, the lack of family and friends, and the pandemic, *churrasco* is still the main part of Margarete and her family's food practice. Although they do not do it as frequently as they used to, now her grown son, Antônio, has become the main *churrasco* grill guy in the family.

Her factory provided a subsidized box lunch, which was deducted from her salary, but Margarete found the flavor of Japanese food in general too sweet, so she started bringing her own lunch, which mainly consisted of leftovers from the dinner of the night before. Until today, Japanese food is not part of her everyday food repertoire. I named a couple of typical Japanese dishes that seemed to be favored by other interviewees and asked if she ever tried or liked them, but she shook her head at everything. Rita chuckled and said "Saizeriya, a budget Italian chain restaurant, and yakiniku, a restaurant where you grill your own meat," to which Margarete replied that neither of them is really Japanese food, which made all of us laugh.

There was a Japanese-Portuguese interpreter at the factory, but the occasions when Margarete met and interacted with Japanese people are limited. Antônio married a woman from

the Philippines in Japan, and they live in a different apartment in the same building. Antônio did not enjoy his wife's food, so he often stopped by Margarete's apartment for dinner after work. So, Margarete cooked for herself, Rita, her grandkids and occasionally Antônio and his wife almost every day.

Although we showed up at her place in the early evening, we quickly learned that dinner must start late due to Antônio's work. Antônio and his wife started a business together, which is to collect reusable trash and abandoned items like clothes, bicycles, and furniture, ship them via cargo, and sell them in the Philippines. Rather than going out to eat, Margarete's family often celebrates holidays and birthday at home. It was just around 8:30 pm when Antônio and his wife came home, and the birthday party finally began. Margarete heated up big pots on the gas burners and pulled out soft drinks and heart of palm salad from the refrigerator. From the oven, Margarete pulled up rotisserie chicken, grilled pork, and her signature dish, lasagna. I could not believe that such a party food spread came out of the tiny kitchen with two gas burners and a microwave combination oven. Margarete also put a big bowl of short-grain white rice cooked with small pieces of fried spaghetti noodles, which is her original style of cooking rice and even someone like Mami only knew it from Margarete's cooking. And of course, there was *feijão*, the indispensable side for rice. Finally, to top off the spread, Margarete brought her home-made Brazilian style pudding for dessert from the refrigerator.

I imagined all of us were there for the party, but Antônio's wife's mother also showed up and the kitchen-dining space was filled with eight adults, two kids, and one baby. Since Margarete had told me that they have people coming over pretty often, I expected that somebody would pull up an extra chair from somewhere because the table had only six chairs around. But my assumption turned out to be wrong, and the feast was about to start with Rita and Antônio's

mother-in-law leaning against the kitchen counter. I fretted and strongly insisted they take my chair, but I could not defeat Rita's persistence and failed to volunteer my spot. My importance at this intimate family party was clearly lowest in the guest list, and the fact that Rita was eating at the end of the kitchen counter made me feel extremely uncomfortable about sitting at the dining table. Though I tried to help with dishes, Margarete, intent on showing me hospitality, insisted I relax.

It might be true that, as Yachiyo city's report indicated, the Brazilian residents in the community in the complex are a closed network and thus they do not actively interact with Japanese residents. Indeed, there was no way I could have visited Murakami Danchi, let alone one of the residents' home, if I did not know Mami. But once I could get inside the bubble, I found their community welcoming and inviting, even if it was an intimate family birthday party. For example, Antônio came back home late after the long day at work and met me in Margarete's apartment for the first time, but he did not show any confusion about my presence and the fact that a stranger was waiting for him at his mother's home for his birthday celebration. Both Antônio and his wife warmly welcomed me too, and because both of them spoke English, they asked me about my work and did not make me feel awkward to be there. The generous and lively personalities of a Nikkei Brazilian family were certainly alive in Margarete's family in the small apartment home in Japan, despite the language barrier and the difference of where we came from.

It was close to 10 pm when the party was over. I did not think I could thank Margarete enough for everything, but part of me was nervous about whether my researcher presence had spoiled the intimate family space and whether she found my questions weird or annoying. But Margarete hugged me as warmly as she did when we came, and told me to come back anytime.

Antônio's wife, Jess, kindly offered to drive me to the station, while Antônio stayed back with their baby. Jess and Antônio met at the factory where they used to work, and their business of shipping cargo to the Philippines was relatively new. When Jess and Mami started talking about their work, Jess mentioned that their business was going well, but also repeatedly said "it is a man's job." Even after getting out of the factory, her new work was not always easy for her and her new little family. On the one-hour train ride back to the city center of Tokyo, I could not help thinking about them and wondering what their work environment was really like.

Social capital and encounters with new foods

Nikkei Brazilians' proficiency in Japanese also affected the ways in which interviewees consumed food. Seven interviewees mentioned that they felt uncomfortable or nervous about going to local Japanese restaurants or diners that did not have an English menu or a menu with pictures. This was especially true when interviewees had just moved to Japan. Six interviewees reported that they used to go to fast food places like McDonalds where the menu was clear with pictures and the ordering system was simple. The language barrier is another reason that grocery store and convenience store's ready-made foods such as *bento* and sandwiches were preferred by some interviewees because many convenience stores print English subtitles under Japanese as well as in allergy labels.

Some eating establishments in Japan appeared to be rather exclusive and uninviting to non-Japanese speaking patrons, including my interviewees. For example, food establishments with handwritten Japanese menus could make some interviewees nervous or make them confused about what to order. Because they also felt uncomfortable about asking servers questions in Japanese or English, they might end up with disappointing dining experiences by

ordering something if they were unsure what it was. Orlando, the aforementioned *churrasco* chef interviewee, told me about his Nikkei friend in this way:

> I have one friend she lives here in Tokyo about four years, but she's kind of afraid of going to Japanese restaurants because she's not going understand the menu, and she doesn't speak Japanese enough to order things. And she's afraid of getting things that she's not gonna eat. And because of this this fear, she doesn't go to traditional Japanese places. She goes more to pizzerias and cafes where there's a menu with pictures to order.

Some interviewees told me that they tried to use the translation apps such as Google Translate to overcome the language barrier, but they found that the app's translation could be inaccurate or ineffective, especially when they used the image translation function with hand-written Japanese. Even when the food and the order system appeared to be simple, the unwritten customs at some restaurants, even franchised ones, could be nerve-wracking without social cues. For this reason, Gabriel, who came to Japan in 2017, decided to visit certain Japanese places only if he could go with his Japanese friends, and went to other restaurants where he knew how to order food by himself. Gabriel shared with me an episode when he felt perplexed due to visiting a unique Japanese food establishment on his own:

> Eating out, alone, to me, it's a bit uncomfortable. Mostly because of the language barrier. Although I can speak some Japanese, I can't read it that well, so the problem comes even before I enter somewhere to eat. I don't know what the place serves, if it's good or not. So, not knowing what kind of food I'm going to find exactly, it can be challenging. So, when I'm with my buddy I really feel more comfortable eating out. There's also a matter of culture. How should I behave in the establishment or what I can and cannot do. I remember during my first months here in Japan, I went to a restaurant in the Aeon shopping mall near my place. I asked for a fried pork cutlet set from the menu. The server came back and gave me a bowl full of shredded cabbage and said something in Japanese. Then I didn't know much Japanese, and I just nodded. The shredded cabbage serving was clearly not in the menu, so, I was in doubt if he gave me a right or wrong thing. I put some sauce and ate the cabbage anyway. Then, he came back and filled the bowl once again. And I was like, "Oh, crap, I've asked for something more... and if he keeping serving, I guess I'd have to pay even for that each time? What do I do, how do I ask him what's going on? What do I do? What do I do?" Well, it took me years to learn that they refill both water and the cabbage at this pork cutlet restaurant, it's not strange here in Japan, but it's something I never saw in Brazil [laugh].

Language barrier could pose a serious concern when interviewees have food allergies or if they are on special diet. Two interviewees told me that they did not feel comfortable about exploring restaurants in Japan because they could not communicate their allergy issues well yet. For example, Regina, 31-year-old factory worker in Toyohashi city, told me that she stopped getting food from the factory's cafeteria because of her food allergies. Since Regina was still learning Japanese since she came to Japan in the late 2018, it made sense for her to bring her own food for lunch to avoid miscommunication and serious accidents at the work cafeteria.

Some interviewees who had special diets based on their health issues struggled with the different degree of food availability in Japan. For example, Koichi, who had reactive hypoglycemia, was advised by his dietitian to replace white rice, sugar, and bleached flour with wholewheat options. It was easy to commit to whole wheat options when Koichi was in Brazil because most eateries and grocery stores had options. However, he found it much harder to do after he came to Kyoto prefecture as a PhD researcher and started living on campus in 2017. The grocery store options were limited within walking distance from his dorm and campus, and not all Japanese groceries carried whole wheat bread and brown rice products, compared to how accessible and affordable they were in Brazil. As a result, Koichi had to compromise his diet at times, especially when he was busy at work and he could not budget time to go to specific grocery stores that carried the whole wheat items he needed.

Among my interviewees, 31 of them have lived in Japan for over a decade, and most of them have developed better Japanese skills than when they first arrived. For them, going to restaurants and using their Japanese became less intimidating, and they learned how to communicate their allergy issues or questions with Japanese businesses. Most of them also felt comfortable going to different places when they had Japanese partners or friends who could

speak Japanese. Thus, social capital in Japan enriched their dietary varieties and enabled them to develop knowledge about Japanese food and related cultural context. The only outlier cases were Margarete and Rita, who did not go to Japanese restaurants because of their strong preferences for Brazilian food and the language barrier.

For some interviewees, new friends they made at school in Japan opened their door to try and learn about new foods. Among 13 interviewees who were or used to be undergraduate or graduate students at the time of interview, seven of them described that they were socialized to a new genre of food through their Japanese and/or international student peers. A similar situation also occurred in the workplace, where the interviewees were exposed to the new food by their co-workers. However, it was rather rare that interviewees socialized with their colleagues over lunch or dinner, especially interviewees working in factories who did not interact with other workers.

For those who could not read Japanese and thus cannot read the menu, going to restaurants with their Japanese friends helped them with exploring food scenes in Japan and getting used to the local eating establishments. Food related events exposed some interviewees to international cuisines that they had never tried before. For instance, Carlos remembered that he enjoyed the university's food festival as a spectator in his first year and participated in the same festival the following year to cook and sell Brazilian street food with his Japanese and Brazilian friends. Although Carlos did not cook Brazilian food very much when he was a student in Japan, the cooking event at the university provided him a rare opportunity to cook and to introduce his Japanese and international friends to food from his home. After all, student interviewees had advantages with social occasions to spend time with others, and their everyday life settings such

as dorms and cafeterias brought more opportunities to eat and learn about different food than full-time working interviewees or interviewees who lived alone.

Even among the interviewees who were not students, unfamiliar food that they had not eaten in Brazil could be introduced by their partners. For those interviewees who disliked certain Japanese foods, being in relationships provided them opportunities to overcome food that they did not like and expanded their dietary options. For example, Sabrina, a third generation Nikkei graduate student in Tokyo, described herself "not close to Japanese culture" in terms of the language and history before she came to Japan in 2018, but Japanese food was something she always favored and grew up with. When she met her Nikkei Brazilian boyfriend, who had been living in Japan longer than Sabrina, she learned the acquired taste of fermented soybeans (natto) as her boyfriend ate it regularly and told her it is healthy. They also cooked together to try new food and went to farmer's market together to buy groceries. From Sabrina and her boyfriend's lifestyle, it was clear that interviewees had more exposures to different foods outside their repertoire as they spent more time with people who came from different backgrounds.

This acculturation pattern to Japanese food in adulthood was observed when a Nikkei Brazilian interviewee, who was not accustomed to Japanese food, started dating someone who eat Japanese food regularly. Luiz, who moved to Japan when he was 18 with his father as a factory worker, had grown up with his grandmother's Japanese cooking in Brazil, but he also discovered different kinds of Japanese food that he was never exposed to before he moved to Japan. Luiz could only eat rice and side salad in the box lunch provided by the factory before he met his future wife Maya, who is also a Nikkei Brazilian but had grown up with both Japanese and Brazilian food since she was an infant. Maya started introducing him to Japanese food that Luiz had not eaten before, such as sushi and mushrooms, when they went out to eat. Maya

preferred cooking Japanese food because it was more affordable than getting Brazilian groceries and can be healthier than Brazilian food, which she described as "salty and usually involves so much meat." As both of them have spent the majority of their lives in Japan, Brazilian food becomes something they eat occasionally when they gather with their family and relatives in the area. During our interview, Maya even made a following comment:

> I'm sorry that our diets don't sound Brazilian at all… It's not helping your research at all (*laughs*). We're the kind of Brazilian family who go to shrine in New Year's and eat sushi for New Year's celebration. Perhaps, we got used to spend holidays in more Japanese way than Brazilian…

Luiz and Maya's case provides a picture of Nikkei Brazilians who acculturated to Japanese diet as they spent a longer time in Japan than they had in Brazil and became less attached to Brazilian food. Maya's inclination for cooking healthier Japanese food at home and her disassociation from somewhat unhealthy Brazilian food concur with the existing sociological findings, which pointed out how schools have tremendous impacts in shaping immigrant children's health and dietary habits (Masuoka 1945; Van Hook et al. 2018). Maya's mother mostly cooked Brazilian food at home, but Maya also enjoyed Japanese school lunch and was socialized with both cuisines from her early age. Since Maya still cooks Brazilian food at home occasionally, neither of them particularly missed food from Brazil because it did not disappear from their diet repertoires entirely. Additionally, neither Maya nor Luiz was deeply attached to the Brazilian barbeque culture growing up. Because both of them like raw fish (even Luiz, who could not eat raw fish at all before meeting Maya), they do not seek out *churrasco* restaurants unless they are invited by their friends. Still, Luiz and Maya speak to each other in Portuguese and maintain close relationships with their family and friends in Brazil.

Conclusion

Borrowing from cultural sociologists' notions of class and consumption, interviewees who had higher educational attainment and urban lifestyles in large cities of Japan became "omnivorous" eaters, people with high status and aesthetic values who do not discriminate against low-brow foods (Johnston and Bauman 2015; Peterson 2005; Peterson and Kern 1996). Among such omnivorous eaters, there are interviewees who integrated both mainstream Japanese foodways and Brazilian style diet by maintaining social ties with Brazilian communities, such as their family members, and Nikkei Brazilian friends who consume Brazilian food regularly.

This chapter also sheds light on the fact that foodways can be an ideological project with a brief analysis of Japan's food and nutrition education legislation, and how food education affected foodways of non-Japanese young children. It shows that the foodways of migrants like (Nikkei) Brazilians are under the influence of state-led food reformation programs, but at the same time, such a food initiative increased awareness of cultural differences and health problems, and provided opportunities to discern urgent issues among non-Japanese youths' food habits.

Ultimately, this chapter shows that tastes of Nikkei Brazilians are socially learned attributes affected by their connections to collective forces of society, as foodways are fundamentally social and constructed through their social networks and relationships with their family and the new people that they meet in Japan. As a result, interviewee's foodway indicated that their diets were constructed through the conflations of their own interests and relationships with others that change and develop over the course of their lives. The data also found interviewees' values and appreciation for foodways with health benefits and sociocultural values, which mirror middle-class privilege that they did not have in their lives in Brazil.

Chapter 5. Class and Occupations – From Factory Worker to Professionalism

This chapter focuses on social class and mobility of Nikkei Brazilians and how they shift over the course of lives and migration to Japan in accordance with their occupations. Historically speaking, it is fair to say that Nikkei Brazilians in Brazil achieved middle class and better socioeconomic statuses from their humble start as immigrants, as shown in Chapter 3. However, most interviewees underwent temporary or drastic class changes upon their arrival in Japan and adjusted to new consumption habits in Japan.

The main analysis of this chapter concerns cultural capital, and how interviewees' cultural capital made a difference in Japan's social hierarchy. Cultural capital, including education, language, culinary skills, and family-inherited connections to Japan provided more resources and opportunities for some migrants to start lives in Japan than other migrants' pathways in Japan. This chapter also introduces cosmopolitan Nikkei Brazilians, interviewees who possessed types of cultural capital that made them comfortable with both Japanese and Brazilian educational, work, and culinary environments due to their language skills and transnational upbringing. Some of these cosmopolitan interviewees were children of factory workers who obtained higher social class than their parents, which contrasts with existing literature that is primarily concerned about such children following their parents' footprints and engaging in manual labor together (Kojima 2016; Taniguchi 2014; Yano 2007).

Although some interviewees gained more autonomy and fulfillment by leaving the manual labor market and relying on their Brazilian food knowledge and skills, their career changes to the food industry did not mean that they became financially better off, because they had to juggle more responsibilities and precariousness in the food and restaurant market, especially in the wake of COVID-19. Finally, this chapter ends with the introduction of

"embodied capital" from interviewees who obtained new professions that changed their personal values and food practices from Brazil. Their narratives evoke the Bourdieusian sense of "bodily hexis" (Bennett et al. 2009:153; Bourdieu 1986), which resulted from efforts of interviewees who attempted to maintain the consistency between their cultural identity and their achieved class identity.

Historical shift from lower to middle class

Historical records show that most Nikkei Brazilians and Japanese in Brazil had lower social class, mainly as farmers, until the late 1950s (Negawa 2020; Yokoyama 1912). As more Nikkei Brazilians moved to urban São Paulo for jobs other than agricultural work, they also engaged in domestic labor and served Brazilian aristocratic families (Handa 1970, 1986; NBKA 1969). From the generic perception of hard-working Asian farmers, Nikkei Brazilians gradually gained social prestige and higher socioeconomic status.

Today, it is common that Nikkei Brazilian families employ part-time or full-time housekeepers, who are African-descendant Brazilians. 13 interviewees mentioned that they had housekeepers growing up in their family homes, who helped cook family meals and clean houses. Some of them reported that their family had housekeepers every few weeks, while others had them every weekday. Interviewees who had housekeepers came from middle- or upper-middle class background, but they often emphasized that hiring a housekeeper in Brazil is common due to lower labor cost compared to Japan or the U.S. Although a housekeeper might not be a definitive marker of family's affluence, it is clear that Nikkei Brazilians had climbed from the bottom of Brazilian societal hierarchy and had achieved sociocultural and economic success, which sealed their middle-class identity.

Because of their sociocultural backgrounds, the food prepared by such housekeepers was the typical Brazilian home meal, which influenced the foodways of interviewees whose family primarily cooked and ate Japanese food. Because some interviewees like Elsa, a second-generation Nikkei who moved to Tokyo in 1995, spent a significant amount of time with their housekeepers, the interactions with the housekeeper remained as vivid childhood memories.

> My mother was a stay-home mom, and she usually made Japanese food. But we also had a local housekeeper, so she made Brazilian food for lunch. My mother was not the best at cooking *feijão* and Brazilian rice, so we always had her cook them when she came and ate *feijão* and rice every day… In Brazil, people bake cakes casually for snacks or breakfast, and I learned how to bake from watching how our housekeeper baked. Because my mother didn't bake, I got baking inspiration from the housekeeping lady when I was in fifth or sixth grade.

Elsa's recollection hints that her childhood diet was influenced tremendously by her family's Brazilian housekeeper. Elsa's parents left Japan in their 20s and started their family in Brazil, so Elsa's family had a relatively short history living in Brazil. Her family's housekeeper brought the Brazilian food influence that was otherwise absent in her Japanese mother's cooking. By having a housekeeper in charge of family meals, Elsa and her family incorporated Brazilian food as a new family meal repertoire, making themselves more familiar with Brazilian cooking and baking in a rather intimate way. Therefore, the Brazilian housekeeper played a significant role by introducing the Japanese family to typical Brazilian home-cooked meal, and the Japanese family was able to incorporate local Brazilian food within their self-contained culinary environment.

From downward to upward social mobility

Some interviewees experienced falling into a lower socioeconomic status in Japan from the higher socioeconomic status that they had with their career in Brazil. This downward change of social mobility upon their move to Japan has been scrutinized by early scholars in the studies

of Nikkei Brazilians' return migration to Japan as factory workers (Ishi 2003; Tsuda 2003). In my study, three Nikkei Brazilians have experienced such a class shift temporarily, and two of them rebuilt their class status rather promptly after a few years of adjustment period in Japan. Such changes of socioeconomic status were observed among interviewees who came to Japan and started a graduate school program or attended a language school for work, and Carlos was one of them.

Carlos graduated with a B.A. in communication from a university in Brazil and worked as a marketing analyst for six to seven months. Although his career in Brazil had just begun, Carlos did not want to miss the opportunity to pursue a second B.A. in economics in Japan when he received a Japanese government scholarship. However, his campus life did not begin with frills and flowers when he started the university in the outskirt of Tokyo in the spring of 2016. Even with a scholarship that covered his tuition, Carlos had to live on a tight student budget to pay for his rent and food, which cost much more in Japan than Brazil.

> In the first few months, because I was short of money, I had few options to buy food. What I remember is that I used to buy like 10 kg [22 pounds] of rice, some cheese, and chicken, trying to survive that period. On Sunday, I cooked for an entire week, used some Ziploc bags to put some rice and some other stuff in, and kept them in the freezer so that I didn't need to cook [during weekdays]. I always tried to make sure that I have some carbohydrates there and protein there, but didn't consume much vegetables for the sake of convenience, you know. So, pretty much heated up [his own cooked food] every single day. After that, I found some job after my first semester around September, and my routine related to food changed a lot. I consumed more convenience store food and cooked more… I cooked food at home for the most part in my first year because that was the cheapest option compared to buying food at convenience stores. So, I remember going to Don Qui [slang for Don Quixote, a discount grocery store] every single week and bought groceries, vegetables, and meat… but whenever I didn't have time, I pretty much ate convenience store food.

Establishing a cooking routine like Carlos' was very common among the interviewees living by themselves with tight budgets or those who engaged in manual labor during weekdays. While some full-time working interviewees cooked dinner after they came home, seven interviewees

reported that they prepared dinner on the weekend and ate their cooked food during weekdays to save money and to simplify the preparation process. Because meat was very affordable and included in almost every typical lunch and dinner menu in Brazil, some interviewees like Carlos struggled to replicate the same menu because meat, especially beef and pork, is more expensive in Japan. Regardless of different cooking skill sets, interviewees adapted to new schedules and food costs in Japan so that they could avoid spending money on pre-cooked packaged meals and going to restaurants.

Being a student in Japan, Carlos came up with different ways to save money and used the campus resources to stretch out his budget. For example, in his first year, when Carlos did not have time for toast and jam for breakfast at home, he went to the campus cafeteria for 100-yen (one US dollar) breakfast plate which consisted of rice, soup, and the main protein that changed daily such as chicken and eggs. He ordered two breakfast plates and put the second plate in a container that he brought from home for lunch or dinner later. Of course, the cafeteria served lunch too, but in this way, he could apply the breakfast bargain deal to other meals and saved more money.

The interviewees' limited food budget constrained the ways they could allocate money for food. As a result, even the eating-out options that are considered budget-friendly were regarded as 'high-end' places in the eyes of Carlos at that time. Carlos ate out with his friends once or twice a month at affordable places such as family restaurants and cheap Japanese pancake places, and their options were usually limited within the area relatively close to the campus. At that time, even the conveyor-belt, all 100-yen sushi chain place was a rather expensive choice of meal. But after he found a job as an English teacher from the fall semester,

Carlos "acquired Japanese ways of living, culture, and cost," so he ended up not using the cafeteria too often and started exploring different restaurants.

Across all interviewees, change of socioeconomic status seems to bring the most significant impact on food and consumption habits. Four of my interviewees who had white-collar jobs in Brazil reported that they had meal vouchers provided by the company. This meal voucher was granted as part of the Brazilian Workers' Food Program (*Programa de Alimentação do Trabalhador*, WFP hereafter) initiated by the government in 1976, which aimed to improve nutritional and health conditions of workers, especially for low-income employees.

Bezerra et al. (2017) further explain the WFP as "a policy of voluntary adhesion aimed at the formal labor market, which offers to companies opting for the payment of corporate tax according to the actual profit method a tax exemption of the amount invested in workers' nutrition, up to a limit of four percent of all taxable profit in the previous year. Low-income workers… represent the priority range of coverage, but the program does not exclude those whose income exceeds this limit" (p. 2). Thanks to the tax incentive for companies and its extensive implementation, the WFP covers over 21.5 million workers, representing 27% of the Brazilian labor population who work more than 30 hours a week (Pereira 2020:3656). Workers on the WFP must be compensated for their meals, typically lunch, either on site or by off-site outsourced services, which means that workers eat at cafeteria for free on the company property or go out to eat at places that accept the meal voucher.

The WFP's meal voucher is widely accepted at the restaurants, eateries, and grocery stores in cities. The meal voucher, which looks like a credit card, is passcode-protected, and the company automatically stores 200-500 US dollar worth of Brazilian money monthly with no expiration dates. There is also another type of voucher called food voucher which is usable for

grocery shopping in addition to restaurants and eateries. The WFP's food voucher is considered as upgrade from the meal voucher and is usually provided by prestigious, multinational corporations and firms. Generally speaking, there is no limit on the usage of the voucher. You can get drinks, food, and grocery items on the meal voucher even outside workhours. Although the objective of such provision is to ensure that low-income workers have access to healthy meals at work, white-collar workers get more money in their voucher with greater flexibility, while lower-working class workers' meal option is often limited to their company's cafeteria. And most importantly, the companies participating in the WFP deduct a certain amount of meal compensation from workers' salary, which begs the question whether the WFP is an economically fair subsidy program, because workers cannot choose to opt out and have more salary to feed themselves, instead of having some portion of their salaries deducted for their food expense. These meal and food voucher perks are not provided to all workers, but rather only to office workers and some working-class workers. The amount that is provided in the meal voucher by the employer depends on the company, but for some interviewees like Kento, his food voucher provided him more than enough to buy his own lunch at work, so he could even buy dinner and shop for groceries with his voucher.

Before coming to Japan, Kento worked as a lobbyist in a government relations consulting firm, and his status changed to student when he started his M.A. program in law in Japan. When he had a lucrative white-collar career in Brazil, food was something that he did not need to think twice about, and he ate at home only for dinner once or twice a month with his Brazilian mother. Other than that, Kento used his food card for lunch, coffee, bar, and grocery shopping. Kento saw lunch break in Japan as stressful and hasty because time was much shorter, sometimes only 15 minutes when the work was busy. In Brazil, the lunch break lasted for an hour to two hours

including post-lunch coffee time, and people used part of the time to run errands such as going to the bank or even taking a nap. Thus, Kento had to get used to the conceptual difference of lunch break in Japan.

Kento also consumed much less alcohol in Japan compared to his work life in Brazil. With his food voucher, it was easy for Kento to grab one or two beers after work every week at a bar that accepted the food voucher, but it became rare to drink in Japan and in fact, he had drinks only twice in 2020. On his student budget, cutting alcohol was a way to save money, since he paid his own tuition without any sort of scholarship. And because he found that the taste of beer is odd in Japan compared to Brazil, Kento did not drink even after he got a full-time job after completing the graduate program.

Kento is also one of the interviewees who did his own meal preparation and maintained a Brazilian style diet in Japan. For instance, Kento cooked Brazilian style rice with oil and seasonings, while many interviewees grew up with or switched to plain white rice in Japan. And just like Carlos, he cooked something in bulk a few times a week that would last for two or three days. Kento thought that "cooking twice a day every day is the waste of time," and he also did not have a problem eating the same food for lunch and dinner. When he did not have time to cook or the refrigerator was empty, Kento opted for a quick meal place near his apartment such as McDonalds or a beef and rice bowl chain place. Thus, everyday food was something Kento took a practical approach toward rather than leisure or comfort.

Kento spent his first year in Japan learning Japanese, and after completing his M.A program in two years, he got a job in the international student office in the same university he attended. Landing a full-time job after three years of schooling provided him more financial wiggle room to explore different foods in Japan. Because most of the eating establishments in the

area where he lived were franchise chain restaurants, Kento took a train to Shinjuku or Minato-ku, the central wards of Tokyo, once a month to eat international cuisines such as Indian, Mexican, and Korean food with his girlfriend or his brother.

As demonstrated in Kento's case, some interviewees who had careers in Brazil experienced the lower socioeconomic status when they enrolled in a school in Japan. When they came as a student to Japan, their dietary lifestyle was more constrained by cost and time, and their choices of food and drink were made based on money concerns. Someone like Carlos became extremely frugal by utilizing the campus cafeteria which offered a student discount meal set and maximized campus resources to save even more money. Regardless of their cooking skill levels, they organically made choices to cook their own food at their home and had simple meal patterns, and the diet at home during their student time did not have emotional aspects such as comfort or joy, but solely subsistence. However, once they got part-time or full-time jobs, financial stability allowed them to go to different eating establishments and to explore different cuisines, even motivating them to travel outside their areas.

For other interviewees like Paulo, such status change was rather short and temporary, but brought significant changes in diet. Paulo was in finance in Brazil and came to Japan in 2019. Paulo worked with Japanese clients regularly in Brazil, so one day he quit his job and sought an opportunity to learn Japanese in Tokyo. Around the time he completed the program in a Japanese language school, Paulo was scouted by the Japanese branch of the same company he had worked for in Brazil, which led him to his current financial consultant job in Tokyo.

For someone who also had a meal voucher from his work in Brazil, Paulo also became frugal about how he spent money on food in Japan. When he was a financial consultant in Brazil, Paulo usually went out to eat by himself or with his colleagues after work and did not have time

to cook. During his student life in Japan, he could allocate more time to preparing food, such as going grocery shopping and cooking food. Paulo started consuming more chicken, pork, and fish and less beef because beef is more expensive in Japan than Brazil. He saw his dietary change in Japan in a positive light because his meal repertoire became more diversified, and he felt that he was taking advantage of different food availability that is unique to Japan such as fish. However, in terms of affordability, he was also tempted by snacks and sweets like ice cream at convenience stores, the kind of affordable and ubiquitous options you can get anywhere in Japan. From other interviewees' accounts, I knew that ice cream and sweets are affordable and everywhere in Brazil, so I had to ask:

> Rumika: But sweets are common in Brazil too, right? What made you more prone to sweets in Japan?
>
> Paulo: Oh, because it is very convenient. You have convenience stores everywhere and price is super reasonable. And even though chocolates we have here in Japan, it's not that sweet right? So, you can just… for example, I'm Brazilian so I'm used to that sweet, very, very sweet chocolate, so I feel that you know? I like that way that is in Japan. I like the way that I can eat more.

In fact, four of the interviewees, who were middle to upper-middle class, reported that they experienced weight gain after they moved to Japan. One reason is that they become dependent on eating-out and ready-made food from supermarkets and convenience stores, since they could not afford the time to prepare and cook their own meals due to their busy work schedules. Another factor is the affordability and the wide variety of snacks and sweets, as mentioned by Paulo. Second, there is a food portion difference between Japan and Brazil which begs a clear explanation. Food in Brazil is considered as *comida farta* (satisfying and filling), the longstanding idea that Brazilian eaters value quantity over quality (Fajans 2013). To make their diet satisfying and filling, people consume meat in almost every meal: breakfast sandwich is

made from deli meat and cheese, a typical lunch or dinner set in Brazil includes rice*, feijão*, grilled meat, and side of vegetables. Because of this conceptional difference of complete meal between Japan and Brazil, when the interviewees talked about cooking Brazilian style at home, they usually meant that they cooked rice and some kind of meat protein, supplemented by salad or stir-fried vegetables.

Studies across different disciplines have found that Nikkei Brazilians consume meat less frequently when they moved to Japan (Chino et al. 2005; Naganuma et al. 2006). On average, people in Brazil eat 127g of meat per day, and beef is the most consumed kind of meat contributing to 49% of the total meat consumption in Brazil (Carvalho et al. 2016:3). Cooked meat is in almost every meal due to its affordability. Particularly, the consumption rate of red and processed meat altogether is extremely high, accounting for 70% of total meat intake in Brazil, which has sparked conversations in relation to greenhouse gas emission and chronic health issues (Carvalho et al. 2016). Meanwhile, although the meat consumption rate in Japan has been steadily increasing each year since 1960, the average of daily meat intake measured in 2019 was 89.2g, and beef accounted for 13.2g within the total (MHLW 2019:88). Not only do Japanese consumers eat less meat, but the patterns of meat consumption are also clearly different from that of Brazil. Because meat is a centerpiece of their diet in Brazil, a meal without meat is considered a "weak type of meal," meaning that a meal without meat is not filling and does not give you good energy. This seems to explain why some interviewees had snacks frequently or had a second lunch or dinner when they first came to Japan, because their bodies were getting used to the portion and volume difference.

However, these four interviewees recognized issues with their consumption habits after coming to Japan and made dietary changes to eat healthier. Overall, 19 interviewees felt that

their diet in Japan is healthier than when they lived in Brazil because of less drinking, smaller portions, and reduced opportunities to eat heavy Brazilian dishes such as *feijoada.* By the same token, seven interviewees reported weight loss because of the portion difference, unfamiliarity with Japanese cuisine, more active lifestyles such as walking more commute, and fewer opportunities to drink and to consume meat and heavy Brazilian dishes, all the while juggling the intense schedule and work culture in Japan.

Once Paulo was hired by his old financial consulting firm in Japan for the same job that he had in Brazil, his diet changed again. He ate out twice a week with drinks before the pandemic, but Paulo started using a food delivery service for half of his lunches and dinners in a week once he started working remotely from his home in March 2020. When he cooked, Paulo preferred cooking Japanese style because it was healthier and less time-consuming than cooking Brazilian food, so Brazilian food became something he sought out outside. Although he grew up with a mix of Japanese and Brazilian food as a fourth generation Nikkei (because his grandmother on his father's side was *Nisei*), Paulo had strong cravings for Brazilian food and started exploring Brazilian restaurants in Tokyo. In fact, he spent more money on eating out and food delivery service than anyone else I interviewed.

As such, Paulo's background shows the ways in which white-collar Nikkei Brazilians successfully utilized their cultural capital of education and work experience to retain similar socioeconomic status in Japan, despite his short-term experience of student life and concurrent status change in Japan. Paulo increased his Japanese proficiency by attending language school, which is important cultural capital for a career in his field in Japan. Indeed, it helped him to land his current position, combined with fortunate timing and luck, which stemmed from social capital that he had acquired in Brazil through his relationship with the same multinational

company. After Paulo regained his socioeconomic status in Japan within a short period of time, his eating and drinking habits resembled the ways he ate and drank in Brazil, and the fact that he lived in the central area of Tokyo enabled him to explore a wide range of food.

Food expenditure naturally shows the class difference among interviewees. While student interviewees were on a tight budget and blue-collar interviewees mostly cook at home, white-collar interviewees had virtually no cap on how much they could spend on groceries and eating out. Six of the white-collar interviewees were also single with no dependents at the time of interview, which probably contributed to their flexible spending on food as well.

Social mobility of dekasegi children

At least 25 percent (23) of my interviewees acquired higher socioeconomic status than their parents who came to Japan as factory workers; this number excludes eight individuals who had non-*dekasegi* parents and maintained their parents' upper-middle class status. These 23 interviewees, 16 female and seven male interviewees, were considered as possessing higher socioeconomic statuses than their parents based on their cultural capital, including educational credentials, language proficiency, and occupations that did not involve manual labor. These findings add to recent studies that have observed diverse occupations among the newcomer second generation of Nikkei Brazilians with *dekasegi* parents, instead of the second generation following the same path as their parents (Kojima 2016). Their socioeconomic status varied, but what these interviewees have in common is that they all settled into more skilled occupations than their parents who were in manual labor. Seven interviewees out of these 23 were themselves factory workers at one point because they came to Japan with their *dekasegi* parents and joined them as manual laborers as teenagers. Thus, many of them have experienced dual lifestyles, in

which they went to Japanese middle or high school during the day and joined their family members at a factory after school.

Education among the children of Nikkei factory workers has been a serious issue that local Nikkei communities and their municipal governments have been coping with. Rather than accumulating social and cultural capital by being exposed to the Brazilian community and Japanese educational and social settings, the children of (Nikkei) Brazilian parents struggle to achieve social mobility in the Japanese economy. The problem emerges from elementary school age, when *dekasegi* parents do not have a vested interest in overseeing their children's schoolwork or when they cannot cooperate with teachers due to the language barrier and their heavy work schedules (Terashima and Kawada 2003). Ambiguity about whether the family will stay permanently in Japan also affects the educational pathways of (Nikkei) Brazilian children, as some of them go to Brazilian school with plans of eventually returning to Brazil (Shibata 2021). As a result, other scholars have found that children of *dekasegi* join their parents in the factory in their teenage years or struggle to find livelihood in Japan when they grow up, due to the lack of Japanese education and incomplete school history (López-Calvo 2019; Takenoshita et al. 2014).

The divergent educational footprints of my interviewees who moved to Japan at an early age concur with the observations made by other researchers, which is that many young Nikkei Brazilians discontinue their education due to language or financial difficulties and bullying at school (Brody 2012; De Carvalho 2003; Hein 2012; Kojima 2016; Momohara 2021; Takenoshita et al. 2014). Higuchi and Inaba (2018) found that only about 10 percent of the children of Brazilian migrants enrolled in universities in Japan, while the university enrollment rate is nearly 50 percent among the children of Korean and Chinese migrants. Consistent attendance at school

was also made difficult by the transnational nature of their lifestyles, as many of the interviewees moved between Japan and Brazil frequently during their childhoods, mainly depending on their parents' employment situation. According to Morita (2017), college scholarship opportunities for Nikkei children are very competitive, and there are very few of cases of Nikkei students who went to universities with scholarships offered by schools or Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO). In this study, only one interviewee who was born and grew up in Japan received a scholarship to go to a university in Japan, and she was required to repay the full amount when she got a full-time job.

When I talked to a married Nikkei couple who came to Japan as *dekasegi*, it was clear that such issues are still prevalent among *dekasegi* households. Takumi and Sayaka came to Japan in 1992 as factory workers in the Toyohashi area, where a concentration of automobile parts manufacturing factories attracted workers from Brazil from the beginning of the *dekasegi* boom. Takumi's parents are Japanese who moved to Brazil during World War II, so he grew up speaking Japanese and eating Japanese food often. Sayaka, a *Nisei* who grew up with little familiarity with Japanese culture, spoke very little Japanese. The young married couple started out a new life as *dekasegi* contract factory workers, but both of them were later promoted and became full-time employees with benefits.

Their son graduated from a prominent university in Tokyo in spring 2020, and just moved to a different prefecture to start his first career job. His younger sister was a sophomore at a university in Aichi prefecture. Both of their children followed the typical Japanese adolescents' life path, which is to go to college after high school and start a job right after university graduation in spring. But Takumi and Sayaka had to learn the Japanese style of parenting to make sure that their children stayed on the right track in terms of education. As Takumi recalls:

"In Brazil, as long as you study well in the end, you can aim for a good high school and university even when you have bad grades in the beginning or middle of the semester. In Japan, you have to take study seriously from an early age, and there are standardized tests that you have to do well on in order to go to a good university. We didn't know that at first, so once we were informed about it from our kids' teachers, we were in a fluster and made sure that our kids also knew that they have to take school seriously."

Raising their children was new for both Takumi and Sayaka. When they were barely used to the new lifestyle in Japan, they also had to get used to a new cultural norm to lead their children to success in Japanese society.

> I sometimes see other *dekasegi* who can't talk to their kids anymore. Because they speak Portuguese, but their kids grew up with Japanese. It's really sad. *Dekasegi* come to Japan so that they can make better life for themselves and their kids, not for kids to become *dekasegi* when they grow up… It almost makes me tear up that some of my *dekasegi* friends' children who I've known for since they were babies, and they started working in the factory around the same age when their parents came to Japan as *dekasegi.*

Thanks to Takumi's Japanese proficiency, which facilitated smooth communications between their children, teachers, and Japanese parents at school, Takumi and Sayaka's children stayed on the steady career track. The gradual promotions at their work enabled them to buy a house in Shizuoka prefecture, and in so doing, Takumi and Sayaka established an ideal middle-class lifestyle in Japan (Iida 2006). Both of them went through learning curves so that they could parent their children for success and see them flourish in Japanese society.

Later in this chapter, I will discuss how Nikkei Brazilians who completed compulsory education in Brazil have more scholarship options as Nikkei descendants and international students than Nikkei Brazilians who completed compulsory education in Japan. Another noticeable point here is that although there were thirteen interviewees who came to Japan in their

early adulthood with college scholarships; this study only found one Nikkei Brazilian who moved to Japan at a young age and completed higher education in Japan. This interviewee was born in Japan with *dekasegi* parents, moved to Brazil when she was 12, went to graduate school in Brazil for her M.A., and moved to Japan with her husband in 2020.The opportunities and success of Nikkei Brazilians who came to Japan in early adulthood with college scholarships suggest the Japanese government's misplaced effort at controlling immigrants rather than integrating them into the mainstream society. The educational trajectories of sixteen interviewees who moved to Japan during or before their teenage years are more diverse. Ten of these interviewees completed lower secondary education by going to Brazilian and Japanese schools interchangeably, and some of them dropped out of high school or college. Some others completed high school or college courses online, and only one of them graduated from the university in Brazil. Inevitably, the transnational nature of their early life affected their ability to have consistent educational enrollment (Takenoshita et al. 2014).

Although this study was not able to find more Nikkei Brazilians who completed higher education in Japan, there has been progress with grassroots movements supporting young Nikkei Brazilians' education. According to the survey conducted by the Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad, more than three hundred Nikkei Brazilian high school students entered universities in Japan in 2016, which marked the highest university enrollment among the children of Nikkei Brazilians (Ninomiya 2022). Additionally, the first Nikkei Brazilian youth who passed the national bar exam in Japan became a licensed lawyer in Nagoya city in 2018 (Nikkei Shimbun 2019).

While the Nikkei community celebrates the educational achievement of Nikkei Brazilian youth, the obstacles that Nikkei children face in Japan's educational system continue. The

difficulty also stems from the fact that there are few educational pathways in Japan for those who have dropped out high school and/or college to get degrees later in adulthood while working full-time in Japan, while it is more common for older adults to go back to school and rebuild their educational credentials in Brazil (Shibata 2021). As such, it remains difficult for Nikkei Brazilian dropouts to achieve upward social mobility in a society like Japan, where one's educational background is taken into consideration seriously. This is especially since Japan's dual labor market system works in such a way that standard employment is reserved for new university graduates, and systematically separates irregular, temporary workers into the secondary labor market (Higuchi and Tanno 2003; Ninomiya 2022; Takenoshita et al. 2014). However, given such a reality through Takumi and Sayaka's *dekasegi* parents' perspective, the question still stands is: how did some interviewees achieve higher social mobility than their parents? I believe that part of the answer lies in a growing subset of the cosmopolitan Nikkei Brazilian population. The following section investigates the cultural capital that some interviewees accumulated over their life course, which made differences in their lives compared to working-class Nikkei Brazilians. Their stories show that such interviewees naturally acquired cultural capital from their transnational upbringing and obtained education, language, and culinary skills, which helped them to move away from unskilled labor.

Social mobility of Nikkei Brazilians from Brazil – Formal Education and Cultural Capital

The connections to Japan, in fact, play a significant role in advancing interviewees' educational credentials as cultural capital. In total, thirteen interviewees, eight males and five females, developed their professional experiences and educational credentials in Japan via scholarship and internship programs, and three of these thirteen interviewees were still in their

graduate programs at the time of the interview. Despite different degrees of economic capital that their family possessed, these interviewees obtained pathways to higher education through scholarships or internships sponsored by the Japanese government and Japanese prefectural associations, based on where their ancestors came from in Japan.

Each prefectural association *(kenjinkai*) is a member of the Federation of Associations of Prefectures of Japan in Brazil, which was originally established in 1966 to protect the rights and interests of Japanese emigrants in Brazil. Today, one of their most important contributions is to strengthen and to maintain good relationships with Japanese prefectures by coordinating scholarship and trainee programs for Nikkei descendants. According to Sasaki (2020), such Japanese emigrant organizations have revitalized their political connections with Japan and strengthened systematic integration for local Japanese associations dispersed across Brazil. In so doing, they emphasized among active members and organizers of these groups the symbolic significance of representing Japanese emigrants and their ancestral home in Japan (p. 95). This also means that each local prefectural organization (varying in its member size and activities), is organized and operated by the members themselves, and negotiates and coordinates the criteria and the process of scholarship and trainee programs with the local representatives of their prefectural organization in Japan. Normally, such prefecturally-sponsored scholarships and internships have a year long term, whereas the duration of scholarship is usually longer than a year for scholarships supported by the Japanese national government.

Four out the thirteen interviewees enrolled in prefectural trainee/internship programs after finishing undergraduate courses in Brazil. Then, three interviewees earned graduate degrees through prefectural scholarships at a university in the prefecture where their parents or grandparents came from. Finally, six interviewees obtained the national Ministry of Education,

Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) Scholarship for their graduate degree programs, and one of them had a scholarship from a Japanese governmental agency to study Japanese in Japan that is specifically designed for Nikkei descendants in Latin America. There is one interviewee who was awarded both prefectural and MEXT scholarships for his trainee and graduate program respectively.

According to one interviewee, Edson, who worked in a prefectural organization in Brazil and participated in a-year-long prefectural technical internship in 2007, these prefectural associations provide great opportunities for Nikkei descendants to develop their academic and professional credentials along with free airfare to Japan and subsidies. However, there are some logistical obstacles for Nikkei Brazilian youths to access such opportunities. First, these scholarships are only available to the descendants from the prefectures, meaning that applicants need the paperwork (a Japanese birth certificate or old residency record from Japan) to prove their ancestral connection. Regarding this requirement, Edson argues that "[m]any Nikkei know where their parents or grandparents are from, but it's very common that they don't' know which city in the prefecture their ancestors came from. For example, they could lose their paperwork from Japan, the name of small cities in Japan could change sometimes, and it's a long time ago that they were in Japan. So, they can't identify where their family came from exactly."

Second, prefectural association scholarships hold some standards of Japanese proficiency such as a certain level of Japanese-Language Proficiency Test, which many Nikkei descendants do not have, so some applicants feel discouraged to build up their Japanese skills from ground zero. However, such language requirements can be arbitrary and negotiable depending on how many applicants the prefectural association has each year and the overall level of the applicant's Japanese skills. In fact, all of the former prefectural awardees whom I interviewed except one

chose to speak to me in English. Some of these interviewees described their Japanese as being at the intermediary level, or they felt more comfortable hearing and understanding Japanese than speaking with a native speaker.

Theoretically, the fact these prefectural and national Japanese government scholarship awardees obtain educational degrees and skillsets in cross-national settings appear to give them an advantage in the global job market (Igarashi and Saito 2014), but Edson thinks otherwise. As a trainee program graduate and ex-volunteer of his local prefectural office, Edson feels that not all trainee programs offer a pathway for a career-track job opportunities as Nikkei descendants strive to build up their career path from the internship program, including Edson himself, who completed a marketing trainee program. In Edson's case, he received the prefectural intern program completion certificate, which was not a Japanese college diploma or a certificate, so his potential employers in Brazil deemed that his experience in Japan was too specific and did not speak to his marketing skills in the Brazilian context. Edson was also told that he did not learn enough Japanese to work in Japanese firms in Brazil, so he eventually got a job outside the marketing field in Brazil. Edison explained,

> The main objective of nearly all scholarship for Brazilians is that you can go to Japan, learn something and use bring the knowledge back to develop Brazil. So, they don't want scholarship students to come and stay in Japan… But what companies in Brazil want does not fit what programs in Japan offer. And often times, the companies look for someone who had professional experiences in Brazil so that they can start working right away… so it can be difficult, but the scholarship was amazing personally.

In Edson's case, he later enrolled in the PhD program in a U.S. university after working in the marketing company in Brazil for a short period of time. Despite such an incompatibility between Japan and Brazil with trainee programs, the prefectural association is a pivotal resource providing educational opportunities in Japan that some Nikkei Brazilian youths without

economic capital could not otherwise access. Bourdieu addressed the logic of transmission as the notable characteristic of embodied cultural capital, writing that "the scholastic yield from educational action depends on the cultural capital previously invested by the family" (1986:4). Indeed, inherited family cultural capital provided some interviewees crucial institutional support and opportunities in Japan. Three interviewees had one parent who had utilized a prefectural scholarship and was thus able to transmit the knowledge and utility of their family benefit to their children. One of the three, Elena, foresaw the ominous sign of economic and political crisis in Brazil due to the hasty development brought by the Soccer World Cup and Olympic Games, so she quit her engineering job in Brazil and joined Toyama Prefecture's technical internship program in 2017. Two interviewees (including Elena) who completed prefecture-sponsored internship programs obtained full-time positions in engineering from the companies where they interned. Here, their life trajectory reflects Bourdieu's contention that embodied capital inherited from a parent must be invested by an individual themselves, in order to yield economic capital from their embodied cultural capital (1986). Some interviewees, in this way, were able to utilize the unique opportunities presented specifically for Nikkei students or technicians and pioneered different career paths to come to Japan outside traditional *dekasegi* routes. In sum, some young Nikkei Brazilians obtained educational attainment with scholarships derived from cultural capital in the form of their ancestors' prefectural connections. Their unique assets rendered them financially better off than they were in Brazil, and such Nikkei Brazilians succeeded in obtaining upward socioeconomic mobility in Japan.

Cosmopolitan Nikkei Brazilians

Thus far, we have seen Nikkei Brazilians who seamlessly managed transnational careers, education, and food-related transitions. All these interviewees are at least bilingual, speaking Brazilian Portuguese and either English or Japanese. At least half of the interviewees received education in both Brazil and Japan, and some also studied abroad in a country other than Japan. Such non-*dekasegi* interviewees' transnational profiles evoke the notion of cosmopolitanism as cultural capital. Contemporary sociological literature of globalization and culture has played host to ongoing theoretical debates over stratification and cosmopolitanism (Beck and Sznaider 2010; Delanty 2009; Hannerz 1996). Some studies conceive of cosmopolitanism as tolerance and openness to foreign others as displayed by attitudes and worldviews (Kendall et al. 2009), while others conceive it as a matter of competence and lifestyle, having more than one "home" where they possess social memberships (Hannerz 1996:109). While cosmopolitanism may connote innocent notions of openness and omnivorous attitudes to foreign cultures (Lamont and Aksartova 2002; Warde et al. 2007), it may also implicate inequality between haves and have-nots (Chen and Nelson 2020; Lizardo 2005). For example, to have cosmopolitan food taste, one needs to be exposed to different international cuisines at home and restaurants, even traveling internationally to obtain such culinary experiences. As such, the development of cosmopolitanism requires time and money, or economic capital.

So far, this dissertation has observed interviewees' different histories of migration. Some of them came to Japan at a young age and became localized in the Japanese environment, obtaining educational and professional credentials in Japan, but not in Brazil. On the other hand, cosmopolitan Nikkei Brazilians have obtained these credentials in both countries, and their transnational experiences in educational, professional, and culinary fields enabled them to

navigate different settings in Japan and beyond. Education intersects with cosmopolitanism, and it is clear that some Nikkei Brazilians, such as awardees of prefectural or national scholarships have advantages—head starts, so to speak—compared to their counterparts in Japan. Awardees in Brazil therefore have pathways to Japan, not only in the form of money or subsidized airfare to help them reach Japan, but also in the form of subsidized housing once they arrive, thereby helping them gain academic degrees, job-specific skills, and transnational experiences.

This is not to say that such cosmopolitan Nikkei Brazilians are entitled with privilege and easier academic opportunities due to their scholarships—there are challenges to learning and living outside their homeland, and they would have to work and study hard to earn and maintain such competitive awards. Nevertheless, it is also true that some of them could afford such opportunities because of their family's connections to prefectural or institutional networks and support, aside from their individual efforts. Just as Igarashi and Saito (2014) argue that youths pursuing higher education outside their homelands contribute to structuring organized global hierarchies (p. 228), so too does the unequal distribution of cultural capital serve as a disadvantage to Nikkei Brazilian youths in Japan. Igarashi and Saito (2014) also argue that youths who obtained degrees in international schools tend to be favored for global jobs that require cultural competencies and language skills, and this is certainly true of Nikkei Brazilian youths within the scope of this study.

As such, cosmopolitan Nikkei Brazilians seem to comprise a unique subgroup of the Nikkei Brazilian population in Japan, and therefore deserve further examination. In terms of social class analysis, their existence can speak to the fact that there is an emerging social class distinction between themselves and *dekasegi*, which could also impact future generations and other non-Japanese groups in Japan. Regarding the study of food and Nikkei Brazilians,

cosmopolitanism could be a potential variable of Nikkei Brazilian culinary identity elucidating the ways in which incoming Nikkei Brazilians adapt to diet in Japan, as well as potential health ramifications stemming from their global palate.

From dekasegi to food business

Ayumi Takenaka (2009) has shown in her ethnographic study that Peruvian migrants who were not Nikkei were better integrated into Japanese society than Nikkei Peruvians due to their distinct cultural capital. Takenaka contends that some Peruvian migrants were able to find jobs in restaurant and arts and music industries by utilizing their cultural capital related to Peru and Latin America such as Spanish proficiency and the ability to cook Peruvian food, rather than working in factories. For Nikkei Peruvians, who might not speak Spanish or do not have the 'exotic' look of Spanish descent, are not 'Spanish enough' to find a position in the culture-specific job market, even when they have enough credentials. Thus, Nikkei Peruvians without educational credential have a harder time to find a way out from the secondary labor market.

Applying Takenaka's argument to this research context begs a question: does the cultural capital of Nikkei Brazilians, such as education, Portuguese proficiency, and the ability to cook Brazilian food, help Nikkei Brazilians ascend the social ladder when they enter the labor market in Japan? To delve into this aspect of career and life of Nikkei Brazilian workers, I created a separate interview guide and created the second interview group, which specifically looked for Nikkei Brazilians who work, manage, or own restaurants and food related businesses in Japan. Due to the challenge of recruiting a certain pool of Nikkei Brazilian workers in the food industry in the time of pandemic, I could only interview thirteen Nikkei Brazilian individuals, who include restaurant workers (8), Brazilian cooking instructors (2), Brazilian grocery owners (2),

and a farmer (1). However, I also interviewed another nine individuals who are not Nikkei Brazilians, but work in Brazilian food related industry, some of whom work closely with Nikkei Brazilians. I felt that it was important to document the efforts and conflicts that Brazilian restaurant owners, managers, and workers had to go through given the government-ordered state of emergency, which placed restaurants in very difficult positions with operational restrictions including shortened business hours and no serving of alcohol. Six of the Nikkei Brazilian food workers originally came to Japan as *dekasegi*, and none of them intended to pursue careers in the food industry when they first came to Japan. For example, Orlando came to Japan in 1995 when he was 19 to work in the factory where his father was already working and lived in the cities where many (Nikkei) Brazilians migrated for manual labor. He went back to Brazil in 2001 for college and worked in media production until 2006, then he came back to Japan for a one-year contract with the Brazilian television broadcast company in Japan.

When Orlando started getting tired of the media industry, he grew interested in food outside his usual repertoire such as McDonalds and convenience store food. Around the same time, He was offered the position of cook on the production line at the Brazilian sausage factory owned by his brother in-law's father in Hamamatsu city. As he started exploring Brazilian restaurants in the area and got to know Brazilian staff working in restaurants, Orlando started working at an Italian restaurant owned by Japanese, which motivated him to hone his Japanese skills because he did not speak Japanese much at that time. After working as a bartender, a server, and kitchen staff at several different kinds of restaurants and becoming fluent in Japanese, Orlando began envisioning his career in the culinary industry. He moved to Tokyo in 2016 and started working at a Brazilian restaurant as a *churrasco* chef for the first time. For him, working

in the restaurant was not just the matter of wages, but to accumulate his experiences in the industry as he aspires to open his own restaurant one day.

> I never thought about work with food because I have lots of cousins and some uncles in Brazil working with food, and you have to dedicate lots of time of your day to work with food… then I never thought about this work before. Then when I started to work in the factory with food, I started going to lots of different restaurants to eat and to taste food. Then I fell in love with spices and flavors, and at some point, I realized I stopped searching the internet about cameras, illumination, photography, or colors, and instead looking for more things like food, recipes, and the story about how some dishes are made. Because of this, I decided to do some part-time work in different restaurants to see how that lifestyle works for me. Then I like it. Also, every day I'm going out to different restaurants to taste different dishes from different countries. I fell in love with food, then I decided to work just with that.

In the interest of thinking about his career and its connection to his social mobility, a cut-throat question like: in which industry did he make more money, in a factory or a restaurant? needs to be considered carefully here. In terms of overall salary, Orlando worked sixteen hours a day at the factory just like any Brazilian *dekasegi* his age did and earned roughly 400,000 – 450,000 yen (equivalent to 3,650 – 4,100 US dollars) per month. On the average, including regular hourly wage and overtime pay, he earned 2,300 – 2,400 yen per hour at that time. Now, his hourly wage at the Brazilian restaurant in Tokyo is higher, but he does not work for two thirds of a day at a factory anymore. Although Orlando made more money when he worked in factory, he could no longer do the heavy, physically demanding manual labor for the long term, and it became unrealistic to make the same monthly salary that he made in his youth two decades ago.

After he got a college degree and worked in Japan in media, started losing his interest in media industry, his family connection brought his work field closer to the food industry, and his casual interest in working in the restaurant prompted him to learn Japanese. Although he started in Japan as *dekasegi*, Orlando earned different kinds of cultural capital, college degree, Japanese skills, and the professional experience in media production. However, it was his years of

experiences working in restaurants in Japan and his familiarity with *churrasco*, which led him to his current job as a *churrasco* chef in Japan. At his first Brazilian restaurant in Tokyo, Orlando worked as a *churrasco* chef for two years, and moved on to another *churrasco* restaurant in Tokyo.

As someone who has a mother from a Spanish and Portuguese family and a Nikkei Brazilian *Nisei* father, he mainly grew up with food prepared by his mother, who cooked traditional Brazilian food from the Sierra region. He used to live in the South of Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul, where *churrasco*, the Brazilian BBQ culture evolved from ranchers' influence (Fajans 2013). The culture of *churrasco* remains particularly strong in the lives of people in Rio Grande do Sul, and the weekend *churrasco* ritual among Orlando's family was not an exception. Orlando had learned how to keep meat in the oven grill in the perfect condition to feed 30 to 40 family guests by helping his father and uncles since he was seven, and he also enjoyed helping his mother and aunts in the kitchen.

So, Orlando was able to apply his culinary skills to the Brazilian restaurant industry in Japan. In fact, Japanese proprietors of Brazilian restaurants have shown the preference for Brazilian staff to amplify a foreign or 'exotic' atmosphere to invoke authenticity of their food (Zambonelli 2015). Orlando's employer, Aida, the Japanese owner of the *churrasco* restaurant told me that "We try to hire people from Brazil as much as possible, because we are Brazilian restaurant and having Brazilian staff working makes the restaurant more convincing to the food savvy." Aida was fascinated by *churrasco* when he visited Brazil and opened his restaurant in the district of Tokyo that is known for night life entertainment and a large presence of expat workers from the multinational corporations and embassies in the area. Thus, as *churrasco* restaurants often try to do, Aida's restaurant targets upper-middle class Japanese and non-

Japanese clients and offers romantic ambiance and manicured food presentations rather than presenting *churrasco* as the casual, laid-back style of weekend family BBQ food.

Similar to Orlando, Mami also came to Japan as *dekasegi* and worked in a factory for nearly three decades. Mami moved all over Japan whenever she heard from her *dekasegi* friends about a different job with higher salary and better conditions. As the youngest of six siblings, Mami naturally learned how to cook by helping her family. Because her parents owned a farm and they were always in the fields, Mami and her older sister were in charge of cooking for the family. After the older sister got married when Mami was ten, her after school hours were subsumed into all kinds of household chores: hand-washing laundry, cleaning, doing dishes, and making dinner for everyone in family. When she cooked for her parents and her brothers was the first time she encountered the joy of cooking.

> You know, my sister was not good at cooking, always put too much salt in food. So, when I started cooking family dinner, my brothers said 'mmm, you're a better cook than your sister.' And it made me really happy. Everyone gave me praise. From that moment, I always liked cooking.

Mami's family was not affluent, but growing several kinds of vegetables and chickens at their farm, the family always had enough to eat. In the 1970s, there were no Japanese grocery stores in her area, so Mami's mother made all Japanese cooking essentials from scratch, such as miso, tofu, and soy sauce. "If somebody told me to make *miso*, I can make it." Mami chuckled. She also learned how to bake as she watched how her mother made a sponge cake, and she made her first birthday cake for her friend when she was 12. So, according to Mami's perspective, "Everybody in Brazil has a big gas oven, and it's part of our culture to bake cakes. Most household women know how to bake."

Mami believed that being a *dekasegi* was her best chance at making enough money to sustain a living while providing for her son, who remained with Mami's mother in a small town

in Northern São Paulo called Barretos. However, her factory work life took a different turn due to the combination of two causes: her ability to bake and cook and the luck brought by people she got to know in Japan. As it typically happens to *dekasegi* in Japan, she has always lived in the area where (Nikkei) Brazilian workers tend to concentrate and create their little Brazilian community. When Mami lived in Chiba prefecture, a few of her co-workers learned that she likes to bake, and her friends started asking her to bake cakes for their family's birthday or special occasions. It first started as favors from her Brazilian work friends, but she eventually started receiving more requests, not just her Brazilian friends but also Vietnamese and Filipino neighbors who heard about her cakes by word of mouth in her apartment complex. As she started getting multiple requests, so frequently that she was baking five to six cakes in a week, Mami thought to herself: "well, if I'm going to bake then, I had better learn how to bake properly." She started taking her home-baking skills to the next level by watching tutorial videos on professional confectionary on YouTube and started making artisan bakery cakes in her apartment oven. She does not have a website to take orders, but the reputation of her cakes spread by word of mouth and on social media.

Today, she gets messages about cake orders on Facebook or Instagram from her friends and the friend of her friends who find her on social media. On Mami's Instagram page, there are more than 100 photos of decorated whole cakes that she has made, and the series of pictures itself became the great marketing material of her works. It used to be that she made cakes for her friends in her neighborhood, but now she gets orders from all over in Japan. When she gets cake orders from afar, Mami bakes a cake, put it in the freezer overnight, boxes it up and ships the cake from a post office to clients.

One day, a friend of Mami, a Nikkei Brazilian cook in the Brazilian restaurant in Tokyo bought a cake from Mami for her Japanese boss's birthday. And as her friend was leaving the job at the restaurant, her boss, who tasted Mami's cake, was interested in Mami's cooking and baking skills, and contacted Mami to ask if she wanted to become a new cook at the restaurant. By the chance brought from her friend in Tokyo, Mami became a chef at the *churrasco* restaurant and became in charge of all side dishes such as rice, *feijão*, salad, and dessert, and she also bakes cakes when the restaurant gets a special cake order from their customers. She started commuting to Tokyo from Chiba for two years, but from the third year, the restaurant helped facilitate Mami's move to Tokyo from her apartment in Chiba. The owner got the discount rent for the apartment from the owner's friend's real-estate company, which is walking distance from the restaurant. They also allowed her to use their kitchen when Mami needs to bake cakes and baked goods for her personal orders, essentially allowing her to use their facility for her side business. For the first time in the thirty years, Mami found work in the food industry outside a factory and started living in the urban center of Tokyo.

Although Mami's career transition might sound like a Cinderella story, the fact that she left a factory job and got the specialized job which specifically required her skill does not mean that she became financially better off, especially since the beginning of this pandemic.
For Mami, the salary she makes at the current restaurant is not too different from her factory job even before the pandemic. From the spring of 2020, the restaurant cut its labor costs to stay afloat and had Mami work four to five hours, instead of seven to eight hours during weekdays and ten to 11 hours on weekends that she usually worked before the pandemic. In a normal time, the restaurant gets busiest in December for Christmas and the end-of-year company gatherings. However, there were no group reservations in December 2020, especially because the number of

COVID cases skyrocketed in December and companies and firms prohibited their workers from having indoor gatherings and large group dinners. After her working hours were cut nearly in half, Mami got a second job from mid-February so that she could pay her rent. So, during weekday mornings, she goes to the office building in her neighborhood and cleans the office from seven to ten am from Monday to Friday.

Meanwhile, Mami's cake business was too unreliable as a source of income. In some months, Mami got eight cake orders a week around the time for Mother's day and Brazil's holiday season, but the cake orders have also stagnated since the pandemic began, and in some months when she had only one or two orders. Since Mami no longer got local orders from her neighbors in the big apartment complex, her incoming orders were no longer consistent. If she keeps getting 10 to 15 cake orders every month, she does not need the cleaning job as her financial backup. However, due to the unpredictability, Mami knew that she could not always rely on her earnings from the cake business to pay her rent.

Mami told me that she had only two Japanese friends, even though she lived in Japan nearly a half of her lifetime. Still, she learned Japanese from everyday life experiences and watching Japanese TV shows. In fact, we talked in English and Japanese interchangeably during the interview, which did not happen very often when I interviewed *dekasegi* individuals. Despite her Japanese skill, it was eventually her cultural capital, her cooking skill, which brought her a better socioeconomic opportunity, granting Mami a unique opportunity to make a living that she could not have in the beginning of her *dekasegi* life in Japan.

It is hard to say if Mami became financially better off by working as a chef and applying her cultural capital to her livelihood. As Orlando also mentioned, it is hard to secure the same hours as manual labor in a factory when you work at a restaurant, due to shorter operation hours.

Because the restaurant industry was impacted by COVID-19 tremendously, it resulted in the drastic reduction of salary for part-time workers like Mami. However, as was also true of Orlando, Mami does not need to work on an extreme shift schedule for such long hours to sustain her living.

> I had really stupid parents, so my self-esteem is not high. And I used to think that I was not capable to do things, so I worked in the factory and everything… but on my day off, I used to have my friends over and cooked for them when I lived in Chiba. I love cooking. It's my way to express myself and to give my friends and family some love… When you work at the factory, you're like a machine, repeating the same thing over and over for long hours, everyday… I worked from nine pm to six am for eight years when I worked at the bread factory [before she started working in the restaurant]. My work at the restaurant is easier now."

Mami's remark above also indicates that Mami did not envision herself using her cooking skills to make a living until recently. In reality, her trilingual skill, speaking Portuguese, Japanese, and English fluently is a competitive skill than some *dekasegi* in factories do not have, and her cultural capital should open up to a wider net of potential occupations that she can obtain outside of manual labor. But the way she grew up in a small city outside Sao Paulo, living in the city was not something she thought she could do on her own.

Cultural Capital in Food Industry

Some interviewees had to endure negative experiences being *dekasegi* with weak, vulnerable social statuses. However, such experiences motivated them to obtain new skills and to start their own business so that they no longer need to work under somebody else's orders. Three of my interviewees combined their interests and passion for food with the opportunity to start their own food business in Japan.

Theo and Vanessa met each other in Japan as *dekasegi.* Both of them felt that starting a family in Japan would provide the better future for their children, but they were also tired of

working under the unkind Japanese superior at the factory, who, for example, refused to take responsibility to initiate the paperwork for their health insurance. With the goal of starting their own business in Japan, Theo went back to Sao Paulo alone for one year and a half to get the training to become a pizza chef and learned the hair salon business, which was his family business. After Theo's return and when they first started the pizza parlor in Shizuoka prefecture in 2007, Vanessa was working two jobs: she worked in the factory during the day and helped the pizza place after the factory work.

In the beginning, the business primarily catered towards Brazilian clients in the city, since there were many working-class Nikkei Brazilians working for the automobile industry. Neither Theo nor Vanessa spoke Japanese fluently, so they had a less smooth operation when they had Japanese clients trying to order food over the counter or by phone. As a result, their pizza parlor became seen as a 'Brazilian business' and did not attract many Japanese patrons, although the business was popular among local Brazilians.

The turning point for their business was brought by their daughter, Misato, who was born and raised in Japan and speaks both Japanese and Portuguese. Misato felt that there is still a prevalent stigma against foreigners in a small suburban city in Shizuoka, and local Japanese were scared or suspicious about the unfamiliar business that attracted certain foreigners, especially Brazilians. She became more involved with her parents' business after she graduated from a prominent university in Tokyo and tried to make the business more marketable to Japanese patrons. First, Misato made changes in their social media management. While they maintained posting business news and updates in Portuguese on their Facebook page because the vast majority of their followers were Brazilians, she set up an Instagram account which she primarily operated in Japanese. As a result of new revenue from Japanese marketing, Misato felt that "not

quite fifty-fifty of Japanese and Brazilian clients, but at least 40 percent of client population is Japanese now."

Second, to renew the business's existing design which directly invoked the image of Brazil with a bright yellow and green design, Misato asked her parents to simplify their menu. Misato asked a web designer friend from her university to create a new, neutral website design and business logo that look universally attractive to both Japanese and Brazilian clienteles. To save the cost of outsourcing, Misato did her research and exhausted her connections as much as she could. Since the pandemic, although Misato was living abroad at that time, she remained actively involved with the parents' business, updated social media, and continued to provide input to her parents. Misato looked up the Japanese websites about how restaurants can receive subsidies by complying with the prefecture-mandated state of emergency and did the market research about newly required technologies such as an air purifier machine. Essentially, she did most of the research about new restaurant operation protocol under the COVID-19 safety measures, and communicated what she found and advised her parents on the new strategy in Portuguese, even though she was not physically present with them during the pandemic. Because of Misato's Japanese-consumer perspective input and her parents adapting to a new business direction, their pizza parlor remained successful even during the time of COVID-19.

In fact, partially because they already had their delivery system established, they are the only Brazilian food related business that I encountered in this study that retained a gradual sales growth despite the pandemic. It is important to notice that their business did well because of their daughter. Although pizza is a universally popular food across different ethnic groups even in Japan, their pizza parlor was seen more or less as 'Brazilian food business' previously, primarily because of Portuguese menu, social media, and limited Japanese service because of Theo and

Vanessa' limited Japanese proficiency. Theo went back to Brazil to build cultural capital, knowledge to make pizza and to manage a restaurant, which became the foundation of their independent livelihood. Existing literature has pointed out the difficulties in sustaining Brazilian food related business because such businesses usually attract *dekasegi* Brazilians who move back and forth between Japan and Brazil, and their client base fluctuates (Kataoka 2012; Zambonelli 2015).

However, Misato gained the objective perspective and realized that her parents' business needed to establish a Japanese client base in order to be sustainable in a long run. She was able to utilize her knowledge in social media and connections with local Japanese from her university in Tokyo, and her cultural capital and social capital became a valuable asset to nurture the potential of the family business. The delicate process of nuancing 'Brazilianness' in terms of décor and menu, and marketing the parlor as "Italian and Brazilian fusion pizza" made their business inclusive and unique from other Brazilian related food business and pizza parlors. In other words, Misato and her family's teamwork overcame the common challenge of Brazilian ethnic entrepreneurs regarding how to incorporate Japanese clients.

Despite the lack of a career from Brazil and lifelong cumulated cultural capital as Japanese, some Nikkei Brazilians develop cultural capital and social capital to sustain their business successfully. Bella came to Japan as *dekasegi* in 1998 when she was sixteen, to study Japanese and to work in factories with her father, and graduated from a jewelry design school in Tokyo in 2008. She came back to Japan in 2014 as a single mother with her six-year-old son. To switch her career from jewelry designing to cooking, she went to a culinary school in Tokyo to pursue her passion for cooking. However, as she started working in restaurants as a chef, she

eventually realized that the profession cannot sustain a lifestyle in which she could spend a lot of time with her son.

> I used to work for French and Italian restaurants and a bakery, I liked working there very much. But the problem is, to have a good career, a good position inside the restaurant, you have to be there from 9 am to midnight. Many chefs, they sleep at restaurants because they work late and miss a last train to go home. So, for me, I can only work for lunch time from 10am to 5 or 6pm, and I have to come back home. After a year and a half, I realized that my career was not going anywhere. I can't break into the field and grow. I'm a single mother and I have to be home on weekends and night time.

During the search for different culinary jobs, she stumbled upon a social networking site on the Internet in 2017 and started offering cooking class at her own home. This Japanese social networking website offers users different genres of experiences offered by 'hosts,' who can share their specialized knowledge and skills in cooking, sightseeing, agriculture, and different kinds of artisan work with users. Bella offers a variety of Brazilian cooking and baking classes, including some non-Brazilian food classes like Mexican food or pizza, ranging from 5,300 to 6,400 yen per student (47 to 57 US dollars) for each class, a fraction of which goes to MEET as a service fee. She usually hosted seven students in each class a couple of days during a week, but during the pandemic the class size was reduced to four. Before the pandemic, Bella also offered traditional Japanese style flower arrangement class as a licensed teacher via Airbnb primarily for non-Japanese tourists.

Given the fact that even some Nikkei Brazilians describe Brazilian food as too heavy and salty, I asked Bella if she adjusts the taste and portion for her Japanese students.

> Oh yes, 100%. All recipes are written for a small family, with servings for one or two people. Because in Brazil, every recipe calls for two or four pounds of meat, but in Japan, you use 100 or 50g of something. I have to adjust everything… Brazilian people like very salty and very sweet taste.. too much salt and sugar. In restaurants, you know what dish is selling more and what's not selling well… so you learn the taste of clients.

Her culinary school and professional experiences trained her to know the Japanese people's general taste preference and cook accordingly. By offering her in-person classes through the social networking site, she also learned what Japanese consumers find interesting and attractive. Most of her students are Japanese women in their 30s to late 50s who like to explore different cooking classes offered by non-Japanese hosts on their day off. The students who come to Bella's class are usually not familiar with Brazil and its culture, but they choose her class based on Bella's high rating as a host and rave reviews by fellow users. Thus, Bella usually gets new students and occasional repeat students in each class.

In every class, Bella first talks about the menu and shows images on the Internet and YouTube clips on her iPad to introduce students to Brazilian ingredients and to explain the region where the specific dish came from. Bella finds joy in teaching Brazilian food and also sharing the rich culture of Brazil; "I always get very mad when I talk to foreigners and the only Brazilian food they know is *churrasco*! So, in my class, I like to talk about Brazilian ingredients and food culture, introduce recipes that can be adapted for the local [Japanese'] taste and ingredients."

Just as Theo was motivated to start his own business so that he did not need to work under somebody else's direction, Bella enjoys being a Brazilian cooking instructor because it provides her so much autonomy and flexibility in her schedule, pricing, and how she wants to use her cooking to connect with others. In the earlier period of her career as a chef, Bella hoped to get experience at a Japanese haute cuisine restaurant employing traditional and seasonal Japanese ingredients and cooking methods. Her culinary school mentor worked hard to help Bella find a part-time job at such a restaurant, but no places were willing to accept a foreigner chef, let alone a female chef in the male dominated culinary profession. After serving as the main

chef in a couple of restaurants, she found that the social networking site provides her freedom of expressing her creativity and using her food to make a living, while connecting with people in more meaningful ways than serving food at restaurants.

> I have to admit that I'm very creative, and I don't like to cook same menu every day and do the same preparation for months or sometimes years. It's very repetitive, right? Also, sometimes people go to restaurants because they are hungry. They eat and don't really care about food. Like, 'whatever, I go for the price. It doesn't matter.' Or 'I go there because a chef is famous.' I wanted to cook for someone who come here because they wanted to learn about the food. They want to know about history behind it, the foods, the person who is cooking, ingredients… The interactions are more meaningful to me. Same thing for my natural fermentation class for bread, it's good because people have real interests. If you don't have real interests in learning, you won't pay 5000 – 6000 yen for one bread class, because it's stupid! Right? [laugh]

This site is a relatively a new platform that started around the time Bella was looking for different culinary professions when she happened to discover it. The transition from a restaurant chef to a cooking instructor has been a smooth and suited her lifestyle and professional philosophy.

For Bella's current livelihood, her cultural capital of English and Japanese proficiency and professional skills in cooking, were the essential knowledge to teach Japanese- and English-speaking students. Additionally, as a third-generation Nikkei Brazilian whose mother is of Portuguese and Spanish descent, Bella's 'non-Japaneseness' makes her a unique and different teacher whose Japanese students find interesting. Although Bella feels very close to Japan culturally, it does not make her uncomfortable that her students see her as a foreigner teacher.

> I think some Japanese like to practice English or to have some contacts with foreigners. I think, 60% of them come to my class because they want to spend a few hours with a foreigner and they want to see how my house looks like, how do I live [*laughs*] all the questions they have in mind… Speaking the truth, I think only 10% of my students actually like to cook and replicate my recipes at home. 90% come here to have fun, to talk, and to lean about Brazil and culture for fun.

Bella's acute observations and reflections about her students are thought-provoking. Bella does not find it insulting that her students see Bella as a non-Japanese, foreign cooking teacher, and she generously invites strangers to come into her private home in Tokyo by having her full profile on the online platform. If anything, Bella allows her students to fulfill their curiosity and gratification that they are getting to know a foreigner intimately by letting students take a glimpse of her personal life environment. Thus, in a way, Bella's European-Brazilian appearance and unique Nikkei background become cultural capital which distinguishes her from other cooking instructors in the market.

Bella did not grow up with Japanese food and culture. Bella was born in Brazil when her mother was eighteen. Her mother worked in sales until she graduated from law school and started her own office. Bella's mother "hated Japanese food," and Bella's father was outcast from his Japanese family for "getting married to a foreigner woman." Thus, she grew up mainly with her mother's cooking, which included not just Brazilian food but also Italian and Spanish influenced cuisines. It was after Bella moved to Japan that she started trying different ingredients and dishes to expand her taste buds and to learn about food professionally. While her background was Brazilian culture-oriented, she also gained cultural affinity with Japan as she spent nearly half of her lifetime in Japan and developed appreciation for Japanese culture. Thus, for Bella, coming to Japan with her son was "more like cultural matter than a financial matter."

After the end of interview and as I was leaving her home, Bella talked to me about how she wanted her son to be open-minded and adventurous with different cuisines and cultures. Along the way, she also expressed her perspective on some Brazilians in Japan.

> You know.. some Brazilians do not want to learn Japanese, do not want to learn about Japanese culture, and watch Brazilian TV… They just want everything to be same from Brazil." And she continued: "Just like I always tell my son – even in the middle of

> crowded street, I can always tell if a man walking a few feet ahead of me is Brazilian or not just from the way they walk and dress.

While Bella can accept the fact that she is seen as a foreigner by her Japanese clients, she draws a line between herself and Brazilians who live culturally and socially as Brazilians in Japan. Her opinion on Brazilians in Japan is an embodiment of upper-middle class Brazilian pride based on her own accumulated career success after starting as a *dekasegi* in Japanese society. Although she did not necessarily stress her Nikkei background and what it means to her, Bella is proud to be both a Brazilian and a Nikkei. It was clear from her sentiment and passion for educating her Japanese students about Brazilian culture and food other than *churrasco*. However, Bella is also a former *dekasegi* who has made independent efforts to build up the foundation of her professional career as a single mother in Japanese society. Thus, her slight contempt for Brazilians in Japan is directed towards their attitudes and unwillingness to learn Japanese, their lack of career motivation, and their heavy reliance on Brazilian culture and community within their small bubble in Japan.

Still, it is important to understand that building a business utilizing a service like the social networking site requires foundational capital to make a solid start. Cristiano, a Nikkei Brazilian *Nisei*, joined his Japanese mother and his siblings in Japan after he finished high school in Brazil. In the past nearly two decades, Cristiano spent five to six years working in factories, and switched to the hospitality industry where he spent well over a decade working in a bar and a kitchen interchangeably. In 2017, Cristiano found the same social networking site through its Facebook advertisement while he was working at the bar, and he was casually drawn to it to make a secondary income as a side job. However, due to his current lifestyle, Cristiano did not have all the resources needed to offer classes consistently through the social networking site for the long term.

> I lived in a tiny apartment with one room and one electric burner, so there was no way I could have four or five students there and cook. But at that time [in 2017], I was working at the bar, and I was able to borrow their kitchen space to host a class. Somehow, [the owner of the bar thought that] it was a good way to promote the bar restaurant. After COVID and I lost my sightseeing tour guide job, I have been living with my mom, so I can't host cooking classes now.

In order to take a full advantage of the service like the social networking site, one needs access to a full kitchen to host students, which Cristiano did not have. Bella originally rented a small kitchen studio in the central ward of Tokyo, but she had to commute about an hour to the studio kitchen from her home while paying an expensive rental fee to use the kitchen studio for just a couple of hours. As she determined to make this her full-time job, Bella rented a house and moved to the central part of Tokyo so that she could teach from her home and make her lifestyle durable logistically. Cristiano left Japan for several months to work in a cruise ship, and he was unable to host a class without access to a kitchen afterwards.

When I asked Cristiano if he has faced any challenges with hosting classes through the social networking site, he raised an issue with recipe preparation. "I usually don't follow a recipe, but I had to have the recipe prepared for the class. I never thought about how many grams of meat or beans are needed to cook *feijão,* so that was complicated." Cristiano was passionate about food but he was not a formally trained cook, so the regulation requiring a host to prepare a recipe for a class posed some difficulties for him. Cristiano loved working with people directly through hospitality work and felt comfortable teaching students in Japanese, and his students left him raving reviews as well. However, Cristiano felt that being a host through the social networking site did not provide him the autonomy of cooking and designing the class that he wished to have.

> To host a class, you have to have a full course menu starting with welcome food, drink, appetizer, main dish, and dessert… I didn't like that I couldn't choose what I want to teach. I like to teach what I want without the mandatory minimum four dishes policy per

> lesson… For example, I really like making Brazilian cheese bread. It's actually easy to make. But with their system, it would be hard because it's just one dish, more like snack food, you know? It might be less money, but I'd like it to be more flexible.

From the contrast of Cristiano and Bella, it is clear that capital does make a difference. First, Bella's education in a culinary school has prepared her to teach a class and to sort out technicalities such as calculating how many grams of ingredients are needed per dish and writing out the recipes for her students. Cristiano's lack of professional culinary training added some challenges to prepare a class as a host for the social networking site. Second, Bella's independent financial capital allowed her to rent a house as an investment to use as the site for her classes, whereas Cristiano, who works different part-time jobs, could not do the same, especially after he lost one of his part-time jobs as a tour guide due to COVID-19. Finally, Bella felt that the site provided the flexibility that she needed to make a living with food in a creative way, compared to her previous experiences working at restaurants, whereas Cristiano found the system too formal and not flexible enough as a part-time job. Both Cristiano and Bella speak Japanese and have passions for food, but their educational backgrounds, access to a kitchen, and the difference between doing it as a full-time or part-time job seem to show the significance of capital and its potential to advance social mobility.

Of course, not all Nikkei Brazilians became financially better off as a result of utilizing their knowledge-based cultural capital. Patrick's case is one example. I met Patrick, a second-generation Nikkei Brazilian from São Paulo, at his greenhouse farm in Hamamatsu city, which is home to many Brazilian *dekasegi* because of all its factories. Patrick and his wife came to Hamamatsu and started working in an automobile factory in the late 1990s. Intending to meet his savings goal and return to Brazil as soon as possible, Patrick took a part-time job in the nearby farm as a weekend job. When his wife became pregnant, Patrick determined to take over the

farm and gave up the plan of returning to Brazil. Having worked on his father's farm in Brazil, his career transition in Japan went off relatively smoothly. However, making a career transition from *dekasegi* to a farm owner did not mean that Patrick experienced fewer struggles. His first hurdle was adjusting to Japanese weather to grow kale, arugula, and cilantro, common vegetables that Patrick had known in Brazil. The second hurdle was dealing with natural disasters such as storms, which devastated nearly all of his ready-to-be-picked crops and damaged the sales tremendously. In 2012, an early summer storm hit Patrick's farm in the worst possible way:

> 70% of my greenhouse was destroyed by the storm, so I thought about a lot of things… should I run away? Or continue? We had more employees at that time, so we had to pay their salaries too. The storm came in May, which is the start of season when we start growing the summer vegetables. Without the greenhouse, there is no way to start growing new crops... So, everything was devastating at that time.

(Left)A box full of arugula from Patrick's farm delivered to a Brazilian restaurant in Tokyo, (Right) The Brazilian style sandwiches served in the restaurant. All sandwiches at this Brazilian restaurant use arugula from Patrick's farm. (Both photos from the restaurant's social media)

After Patrick learned the ropes with unavoidable challenges as a farm owner in Japan and the business reached the stable stage, another unpredicted problem emerged: COVID-19. According to Patrick, 30 percent of his business clients are Brazilian food businesses, and the remaining 70 percent are Japanese food corporations which sell fresh vegetable at delis in

metropolitan shopping complexes and Japanese restaurants in Tokyo. Some of his kale crops are sold at franchised grocery stores within the prefecture, but the revenues from grocery stores remained small because, according to Patrick, the greens like kale, arugula, and cilantro are still new and not common for regular Japanese families to eat at home. The demand for his somewhat niche vegetables dropped significantly due to the COVID lockdown and the prefecture-mandated shortened business hours for restaurants, which stagnated his business over time. At the time of our interview, his farm was losing half of its regular profit. As an owner and a fieldworker at the farm, Patrick starts working from 4:30 am to the evening every day including weekends.

From a glance at his profile, Patrick might appear as someone who was able to avoid becoming a lifetime *dekasegi* and became the owner of a family farm in Japan, thanks to his Japanese proficiency and experiences working with fresh produce from his family business in Brazil. However, the profession he chose was not necessarily easier than working in the factory and was vulnerable to changes in the market and weather that he had no control over. Meanwhile, Patrick is caught by two important responsibilities, as the father of two children and an employer of ten farm workers. In this sense, even a great combination of cultural capital does not always guarantee socioeconomic well-being, especially when his specialized profession is not an easy one for anybody.

Embodied capital (dekasegi to professional)

Thus far, this chapter has explored the ways in which some Nikkei Brazilians have transferred their cultural capital (professional experiences, knowledge of Brazilian cuisine and foodways, and educational credentials). Their life stories show different tracks for Nikkei Brazilians with certain capital assets to come to Japan other than being *dekasegi,* or to experience

dekasegi life only temporarily until they find a new career path to pursue in Japan. This following section demonstrates that some interviewees cultivated certain embodied capital as part of their professional development, which also changed their diet from the time they were *dekasegi* or lived in Brazil. Their food-related narratives reveal one of my propositions, that Nikkei Brazilian food-related choices and preferences are not constructed autonomously, but rather are shaped by their social class, location, and social and cultural environments. Teli and Hennion (2004) contended that taste should be understood as "a performing activity" reinforced or adjusted due to its perceptible effects and results, rather than a pre-determined preference. The following interviewees' accounts of their diet show that their food choice rationales do not come from their personal preferred taste, but rather from professional identities that they ascribed to themselves.

Among these five interviewees, healthy food is essential to cultivate and sustain the cultural capital underlying their livelihood in the health and wellness industry in Japan. To fully utilize their knowledge, practices, and training in health and wellness, some interviewees made deliberate choices of healthy food items to embrace their values holistically, which changed their taste for Brazilian food. That is, their new food habits are intrinsic to their work, which brought a conflict with their favorite comfort foods from Brazil, such as *feijoada* and sweets. For instance, Juan, a spa salon owner in Tokyo, remembered his struggles with food when he first came to Japan in 1991 as a typical nineteen-year-old Brazilian youth.

> When I came here right after finishing high school, I was surprised by the small portions of food. In Brazil, my family's typical meal had rice, miso soup, grilled fish or meat and *feijão* – *feijão* was indispensable with rice. We ate *feijão* every day. I ate rice with canned *feijão* in my apartment in Japan at least once or twice in a week, otherwise I wouldn't have energy to work. Since there were no Brazilian stores at that time, I brought back many cans of *feijão* from Brazil…
> At the factory, I could not eat a bento box provided by the company, which usually contained deep-fried seafood or croquet with the side of cabbage – we don't eat raw

> cabbage as salad in Brazil, so I ate curry or ramen at the factory's cafeteria. People in Brazil – I don't know if it's different now – don't usually eat deep-fried fish, shrimp, or croquet. People usually eat meats every day because they are cheaper. Japanese curry was the only thing we could eat, but it's not something your body is used to eat every day, so many of us got hemorrhoids! Food in my first four years was like that.

After four years, the 1995's Great Hanshin Earthquake prompted Juan to think that he should acquire his own professional skills to make a living. Juan quit the factory in Aichi prefecture and became a masseur apprentice in Osaka prefecture. Moving away from the heavily Brazilian-populated area and changing his job, his diet and ideas about food began changing around that time.

> Juan: In Osaka, I started eating more Japanese food. But I moved to Hamamatsu city (in Shizuoka prefecture) after Osaka and lived there eight years, so I started eating Brazilian food mainly. I used to go to Brazilian restaurants twice or three times in a week with my friends. In Tokyo, Brazilian food is more expensive, and if I go, I can't help myself and eat more than I should, so I stopped eating Brazilian food again. Since I work in the beauty industry now, I have to stay in a lean shape, otherwise it's not convincing when I recommend my clients supplements or weight-loss menus. For dinner, I eat two boiled eggs, vegetables, and supplements. I avoid eating carbs at night. I also have boiled eggs for breakfast with some fruits – when I did some research about healthy eating, I read that eggs are the best sources of protein, so eggs became the main source of my nutrition and I complement vitamins and other nutrition from supplements because it's easier than cooking and eating lots of vegetables. For lunch, I usually go out and eat anything I like near my salon. My lifestyles changed, so I no longer eat Brazilian food."
>
> Rumika: Did you notice any changes to your body after moving to Tokyo from Hamamatsu and changing diet?
>
> Juan: I look leaner and younger, and my skin has been great. The typical Brazilian dishes contain so much garlic and onions, right? So, if you eat Brazilian meals twice a day, the odor comes out from sweat and body. I can't have that now because my job includes physical interactions with my clients.

> Rumika: What does food mean to you?
>
> Juan: I think about the nutritional values. I have to ask myself: does eating this food benefit my body and health? For example, ice cream is delicious, right? But I have to think about calories, health, and how it can cause weight gain. So, I think about food in terms of good or bad to my body. Sometimes I give in to temptation and eat something unhealthy, so I have to burn calories by exercising or eat less the following day.

> Rumika: Did you used to eat sweets when you were in Brazil?
>
> Juan: Absolutely. Coffee with sugar always. It's unthinkable to drink sweet coffee anymore. In my mind, ice cream and Coca-Cola are completely out of my diet options. I barely have them anymore… When I was a *dekasegi,* I used to have McDonald's with Coca-Cola all the time because McDonalds in Brazil is expensive. There was always Coca-Cola by my side, but I don't drink that anymore.

Juan's narrative demonstrates the drastic transformation of his taste along with his occupation in the last three decades. His taste preference as *dekasegi* reflects on one of Bourdieu's well-known remarks that the tastes of the lower working class are shaped by economic strain and their lifestyles, constituting "tastes of necessity," which regards food consumption as a means to fulfill biological needs and to nourish bodies for physical labor as promptly as possible to get back to work (1984:374-376). For Juan, *feijão* was indispensable not only because it was the taste from home, but it also compensated the smaller food portion in Japan and provided him more energy for the work at the factory. Juan's choice of diet here also parallels Bourdieu, who argued that working class taste has "negative" connotations because it reveals a proletarian, 'unrefined' need for "filling" food to fuel labor power (1984:177).

From the time Juan chose his profession to avoid becoming what he called "an ordinary Brazilian in Japan" until he opened his salon in Tokyo, his professional philosophy about health, beauty, and body led him to make choices of food from a practical view rather than a hedonistic reason, which he described as "the temptation" according to his rational understanding of body management. His motive for distinguishing himself from *dekasegi* in Japan led him to a professional development path. In so doing, Juan researched and learned about healthy eating, which negated unhealthy food options like Brazilian sweets, soda, and 'heavy' dishes like *feijoada* that became "unthinkable" after his career shift.

Juan's good-or-bad dichotomous view of food evokes a notion of self-surveillance versus indulgence, one of Warde's four anatomies of taste (1997) which dictates his current lifestyle now. Although Juan compromises his controlled diet at lunch time and social occasions, the ultimate reason driving him to maintain his current dietary choices is embedded in his performance and presentation as a salon owner that is a part of his identity and professional pride. In this way, Juan's narratives also show that his presentation of self is driven by managing his social identity in his current social situation (Goffman 2009) in Tokyo, which overcame the cultural identity and food habits that he had when he lived in Brazil.

Juan's process of changing habitus for his health and professional development represents what Bourdieu (1986:5) calls "embodied capital," that is "converted into an integral part of the person, into a habitus" through acquisition and time investment, just like a person commits to work out in order to build muscles. Bennett et al. (2009) identify two main characteristics in Bourdieu's notions of embodied cultural capital. In one sense, Bourdieu describes embodied capital as transferable skills and knowledge such as language and competences. In another sense, and what Bourdieu is more focused on, is "bodily hexis" manifested in lifestyles, such as demeanor, accent, clothing, and bodily component. The latter, the self-representation to others, becomes particularly important in some occupations, which require specific physical attributions dealing with health, physical training, and culinary services (Bennett et al. 2009:153).

The following section presents more examples of how some interviewees' bodily practices consist of their everyday consumption and routines, which also make up their continuous investment and maintenance of their embodied cultural capital. In so doing, such

interviewees strive to earn the symbolic social legitimacy and cultural distinction for their livelihood, which were lacking in their past working-class upbringing.

Sofia is another interviewee using her embodied capital in her professional life, who eats Japanese food to maintain a healthy diet in Japan. Sofia worked in the performance and arts industry in Brazil as a dancer and a circus performer, and she has been teaching yoga classes online while learning Japanese in Japan since 2017. As a third generation Nikkei Brazilian, Sofia grew up with Japanese food and found no difficulties with eating Japanese food every day in Japan, but Brazilian food was also indispensable in her life. When I asked her which one sounds tastier, Japanese or Brazilian food, she struggled to come up with an answer.

> Oh, this question is so hard! I miss Brazilian food so much. Even though Brazilian food is known to be heavy, it can be really healthy and delicious if you know how to cook. But Japanese foods for me is my family root. I eat them since I was a kid. I love both of them. They are so different, and have traditional food… It's so hard, I love them both!

Although Sofia is emotionally attached to Brazilian food and knows that Brazilian food can be healthy too, she had to deny herself her favorite Brazilian foods regularly and avoids drinking in Brazil. For example, Sofia avoided eating *feijão,* pasta, and *churrasco* style meals during weekdays when she teaches yoga or performs at the circus. Sofia had to regulate her diet around the circus schedules and ate healthy during the weekdays, but the weekend meals consisted of her 'family tradition' such as making roast chicken and helping her parents who liked to make *feijoada* and a variety of traditional Brazilian food.

Coming to Japan as a young adult, Sofia's lifestyle was affected by the pandemic, which forced her to move out of her apartment and to move into her friend's house. Sofia used to live with her parents in Brazil, so now she has to plan time and money to feed herself in Japan. Not having her own kitchen affected her everyday flexibility with diet, so she started going out to eat

more regularly to try to give her friend more space. Although her financial situation put strains on her diet in terms of where she could eat, her diet theme is "try to eat cheap and healthy as much as possible," which usually leads her to eat Japanese food over other options.

> When I'm in a hurry, I stop by the convenience store for breakfast. I go to supermarket almost every day to get enough food for the day. So, every day, I go somewhere either the convenience store or supermarket. Grocery shopping was more like once a week when I was in Brazil because it's more practical. In Japan, we don't have too much space to store at my friend's place. We [she and her housemate] share a refrigerator, so we divide up the fridge and freezer space. One corner of the fridge is where I store my *natto*, soymilk, and eggs. That's it [laugh]… I used to cook very often and didn't go out to eat to save money, but I try not to cook at my friend's kitchen because I think I'm already bothering her. So, for lunch, I eat out almost every day to stay out of my friend's way. I find inexpensive Japanese places to dine in like Ōtoya [a Japanese restaurant chain serving everyday meal sets]. You can eat healthy there. I can choose white or multigrain rice, and they serve a meal set of rice, miso soup, and grilled fish. There are also other eateries around my language school, really cheap like 600-yen (5 USD) lunch menu [laugh]. So, I try to eat cheap and healthy as much as possible.

Just like Juan, Sofia plans to eat light for dinner such as salad, eggs, fruits, or skip dinner when she has a photo shoot the next day. Sofia is also one of several interviewees who was seeing a dietitian from Brazil to consult about her diet, which had strong influences on her food intake. In fact, five female interviewees and one male interviewee were seeing a dietitian from Brazil over online platforms at the time of the interview. These interviewees had more structured diet with mindful restrictions (e.g. no caffeine, eat specific kind of carbs on certain days) to live healthy, and some of them get specific advice on their food allergies and digestive issues. Seeing a dietitian prompted interviewees like Sofia to revisit their eating habits and to be mindful about their choices of food. Even outside her time teaching yoga or talking to her dietitian, health and nutrition is a common theme running through her lifestyle.

> Sofia: I study about nutrition because I am an athlete and eating well is really important for my shows and performance. I started to research about athlete's food when I started my job, and I started to see a dietitian from 2017 to get advice and learn more about nutrition on my food intake. My parents did not know anything about health and

> nutrition, so my diet during my teens was bad… I ate so much when we had weekend *churrasco*. Our family really like to drink *Guaraná* (a popular soda brand in Brazil), which is not healthy at all [*laugh*]… But I started eating less red meat, as little as possible, after I became an athlete…
> For grocery shopping, I probably spend like 5000-yen (45 USD) in a week. But I avoid frozen or ready-made food. If I have salad, some rice or rice balls, *natto*, and, eggs, I'd be happy.
>
> Rumika: And you don't buy precooked food like instant noodles, right?
>
> Sofia: No no, I don't think I ever ate instant noodles in Japan. I need to try because there's so much variation and flavors, but I don't think I'll ever eat because I know it has so much sodium in it. Since I started seeing a dietitian, I became a little bit afraid of them (instant noodles) because now I know about sodium. There are many ramen shops in Japan, so I go to eat at ramen places if I'm craving for ramen, but I don't eat cup ramen… I also watch lots of YouTube about nutrition information in Portuguese, like clips by wholesome doctors and nutritionists, just to take some nutritional information.

It is very clear that Sofia cultivated her embodied capital by accumulating proper knowledge about nutrition and incorporating healthy eating in her everyday diet. Her natural inclination for Japanese food also shows that her ideal healthy meal is not very different from her everyday family meal in Brazil and feasible to follow in Japan, as Sofia described her idea of home-cooked meal as "rice and miso soup." Although Sofia has to avoid certain 'heavy' Brazilian dishes to prepare for her performances during weekdays, the adjustment Sofia made for her athlete's diet is not as extreme as Juan. While Juan sees Brazilian food as something he eats rarely because most Brazilian *churrasco* places are all-you-can-eat restaurants, Sofia used to cook Brazilian food at home by adapting ingredients from everyday Japanese grocery stores when she had her own apartment. The formal re-introduction to eating through a dietitian enabled Sofia to find the balance between hedonistic food consumption and extremely controlled diet for the best health result that she desires. Eventually, Sofia's case shows how her food-related habitus has changed with a purpose as she cultivated embodied skills practicing nutritious

diet and avoiding certain unhealthy food to maintain her athletic body and a professional mindset.

> Rumika: You don't go to places like Saizeriya (a budget Italian chain restaurant) or McDonalds at all?
>
> Sofia: No no, I try to go to Japanese restaurants because Saizeriya only serves Italian food. Since I'm in Japan, I want to eat Japanese food.
>
> Rumika: It sounds like from the beginning, if you have choices, you try to go to Japanese food. You don't get tired of eating Japanese food every day?
>
> Sofia: No, no. To me, Japanese food is the most delicious food in the world. There are so many varieties, so I can eat different things every day within Japanese food genre. Even just in the convenience store you can get really delicious *oden* that is low calories and low priced. I want to try different Japanese food as much as possible. I also go to vegetarian or vegan restaurants with my yoga friends.

Like Juan, Sofia reflexively dismissed the general category of fast-food and industrialized meals at the chain family restaurant. For Sofia, Japanese food is the holy grail of healthy diet that validates her professional identity that prerequires healthy eating, while fulfilling her appetite without feeling that it contradicts her dietary principles. As shown here, Sofia has fostered her cultural identity by considering food as the substance which creates her body for work and incorporating the dietitian's advice into her everyday decision-makings about food and diet. Her cultural capital growing up with Japanese food has enabled her to adjust and to maintain her healthy diet in Japan, despite her financial situation and the constraints surrounding her living arrangement.

Another interviewee, Adriana, utilized her knowledge of Japanese food as embodied capital to market her skills in the health and wellness industry. Adriana, a former *dekasegi* third generation Nikkei Brazilian, moved to Tokyo in 2019 after she got her degree to become a registered dietitian in Brazil. After her entire family lived in Japan to work at a factory from 2004 to 2011, Adriana completed high school online and enrolled in an architecture program in

Brazil to stay on track for a stable career. However, Adriana realized that she was not happy in architecture and switched her major to food and nutrition, the topic she was always interested in and passionate about, even though it might not promise her a lucrative future.

Adriana's mother always taught her and her brother to eat well and clean, so healthy diet was her guiding principle of eating since her early age. "Since I was a baby, my mother said that I ate everything. Any kinds of vegetables or fruits, and I was a good eater. When it comes to healthy food, for me it doesn't matter if it's tasty or not. I eat anyway. So that's why I became a dietitian," Adriana said.

At the time of interview, Adriana solely worked online to develop her client base in Japan by using her Instagram account as a marketing platform, which attracted Portuguese-speaking women who were seeking information about healthy food and diet in Japan. In addition to pictures from her everyday life, Adriana also posts stories and informational content about weight-loss tips, healthy snacks, meal recipes, and Q&A about diet and Japanese food from her followers in Portuguese.

> When I had a client who has many followers, they used to tag me in their stories, which amplify my Instagram followers each time. And new followers ask me how I use my work and what I can do for them because most of my followers are women who want to lose weight, but they don't like Japanese food or don't know how to buy and cook Japanese ingredients. So, I used to do Google search for them, figuring out what they should eat or shouldn't based on their diet restriction. And if they like to get more specific advice and want to talk to me regularly, they can book weekly Zoom meetings on my website.

Adriana is not fully fluent in Japanese and often uses Google Translate app to read food labels and to find recipes in Japanese and English. Her bicultural upbringing and accumulated knowledge of Japanese food enables her to help other Brazilian or English-speaking women to navigate a healthy dietary lifestyle in Japan. For example, Adriana's website's 'Resources' page has a long list of food items with pictures of Japanese food products with Portuguese

translations, which have hyperlinks to the Amazon product page. Because of her job, Adriana began learning about Japanese health and food trends in her own time, not so that she can work with Japanese clients, but to research the information that her clients might want to know.

> Rumika: Do you watch Portuguese media contents and social media to learn about health and food trends as well?
>
> Adriana: No... to learn about health trend and lifestyles, I follow American or Australian accounts. Or, I buy Japanese magazines and books. I don't read them, but I take pictures of the items that are featured in the magazines. Like [Adriana pulling up a book] last month, I bought this book *Perfect Protein Data book* [reading the book's title in Japanese] and they teach how much protein we should take and Japanese traditional recipes… And I bought these magazines too [pulling out other magazines to the webcam] because they teach about diet plans and how to cook healthy meals. Because I want to learn what Japanese do to share with my clients. Japanese food habit is very different. Their traditional habit is very healthy, like drinking green tea and eating fermented food… These days, I research about Japanese rice and learned that there are different kinds of grains with different health benefits. So, I want to learn that kind of thing.

For Adriana, there are no boundaries drawn between her everyday diet and her professional work. Food for her is to eat healthy for herself and to enrich her knowledge and experiences as a dietitian. Adriana's approach is expressed in the dialogue below.

> Adriana: When I used to live in Shiga prefecture, I didn't like eels, some seafood, and *natto*. But now, I love it. When I was obsessed with *natto*, I could even eat only natto itself, not with rice or anything.
>
> Rumika: When did you become ok with *natto*? I met many Nikkei people and found that *natto* is not very popular food because of its texture and smell…
>
> Adriana: Because I started leaning about this [nutrition] and saw that it's very good for gut health. And for women, it's very good for their skin. That's why. I started eating and go 'ok, I don't like this too much but I'll try' and I kept giving a try, changing brands and types, and I found my favorite brand. Now I really like eating *natto*.

Adriana's spontaneous reference to *natto* signals two things: she overcame the initial dislike of *natto* on her own, and she is capable of learning the acquired taste of *natto* that is highly recommended among health and nutrition experts and beloved by Japanese eaters. Adriana

exhibits her value and appreciation for healthy food, which prioritizes health benefit over unpleasant look, smell, or texture of food. Adriana also shows her symbolic capital by having the acquired taste for food that is typically avoided by Nikkei Brazilians or even some Japanese, signaling her professionalism and her knowledge to 'know better' to eat healthy.

In fact, Adriana's diet variations were curated by healthy menus and moderation. Her regular food varieties included healthy buzz items such as celery juice, fruits, tofu, and kimchi. Living in the area known as a Korean town in Tokyo, Adriana also became immersed in the non-Japanese food trend and outgrew her Brazilian food repertoires.

Adriana's case shows that she utilizes her current environment in Japan to develop the foundation of her career, branding herself a dietitian who understands Japanese and Brazilian methods of healthy eating, curating her marketing contents on social media to appeal to people who are unfamiliar with Japanese foodways. Although Adriana's educational credentials are from Brazil, she markets her cultural capital to a specific group of individuals in Japan, Brazilians and other non-Japanese populations, who recognize and value her cultural capital due to their common sociocultural background from Brazil or other countries. Unlike Paulo who had to convert his professional experiences from Brazil to the Japanese market by supplementing his Japanese proficiency, Adriana successfully transferred her cultural capital by offering a service that Brazilian women do not have conventional access to in Japan and interacting with them on her social media platform. As such, Adriana utilizes her Instagram presence to showcase her embodied capital – posting pictures of her slender body and healthy brunch photos from the café in Tokyo (curated images of dream lifestyle in Tokyo) – and to market the idea that her followers can attain what she has by following her dietary related advice and lifestyles.

Juan, Sofia, and Adriana are the examples of interviewees who have established more structured food related lifestyles compared to other interviewees. In order to maintain their "bodily hexis," each of them re-educated themselves about food and health and incorporated the knowledge into their everyday food practices, which minimized the emotional and mindless aspects of eating (Bennett et al. 2009:153). Except for Sofia, who experienced somewhat downward social mobility from Brazil due to the pandemic and her student status in Japan, Juan and Adriana reconstructed their habitus from their *dekasegi* period by getting professional experiences and obtaining an educational degree. Their foodways display their professional pride and the efforts that they have accumulated, while also signifying their shift in identity from when they were working class and consumed food for instant gratification (Bourdieu 1987). As Johnston et al. (2012) found, interest and commitment to healthy eating is a status marker of middle and upper-middle class. Hence, although all of them have expressed sentiment and emotional attachment to their family food memories, their dietary choices and rituals are overwritten from their past repertoires: (1) to perpetuate new cultural values of food and to display and to express their cultural capital, and (2) to maintain the consistency between their cultural identity and their achieved class identity.

Conclusion

In this long chapter, we observed magnitudes of social class mobility changes in Brazil and Japan. It was rather rare to meet a Nikkei Brazilian whose social mobility remained static over the long term in this study. Social class standings of interviewees fluctuated as they made career changes, and some of them experienced rather temporary setbacks as a result. All such

changes, of course, also changed their food expenditures and food consumption patterns from Brazil to Japan.

Cultural capital manifested in different forms in this chapter, affecting livelihoods and educational opportunities of interviewees. First, this chapter observed the intergenerational and reproductive nature of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986), which functions to sustain existing social class differences among Nikkei Brazilians in Brazil because family-inherited cultural capital provided interviewees crucial institutional support and opportunities in some cases. Second, Nikkei Brazilians in Japan and Brazil were given different resources to pursue education. Particularly, education helped the children of *dekasegi* parents ascend the social ladder. While academic achievement and juvenile delinquency remain as social issues among children of *dekasegi* who could not acquire Japanese proficiency or high school diplomas (Ishikawa 2015; Kojima 2008; Momohara 2021), this chapter offered examples of children of *dekasegi* who earned higher socioeconomic status than their parents through different means and resources, even when some of the children also began as *dekasegi* laborers. Former *dekasegi* interviewees in this chapter developed specific skillsets when they left manual labor market, but their post *dekasegi* lives flourished and diverged in unique ways. Cultural and embodied capitals helped interviewees distinguish themselves in specific industries, and some of them changed their diet to perfect their bodies and health for their professions.

Ultimately, this chapter has shown that self-investment – whether such means are culinary schools, Japanese language schools, seeing a dietitian, universities, or graduate schools – interviewees who went out of their way to acquire specialized skills seemed to have higher returns in maintaining their upward social mobility and new lifestyles. The next chapter shows how some forms of self-investment, gaining professional skills in Brazilian cooking, supported

their culinary livelihoods in Japan's Brazilian food market, which is primarily dominated by Japanese restaurant corporations.

Chapter 6. Brazilian Food Entrepreneurship, Opportunities, and Challenges

In his ethnographic book, Linger wrote that most Brazilians, including Nikkei, found Japanese foods strange or bland, thus Brazilian restaurants served as the important source of recreation for Brazilians in Japan (2001). It is reasonable to assume that there is a certain demand for Brazilian food at least among Brazilian and Nikkei Brazilian populations in Japan. Ray has discussed the sociology of taste and the influence of migrant communities in a dominant culture. "Nothing devalues a cuisine more than proximity to subordinate others." Ray writes. "That explains not only the rise, fall, and rise again of Italian cuisine in America, but also the difficulty of Chinese, Mexican and Soul food to break away, in dominant American eyes, from the contamination effect of low class association" (2017:44). In the context of Japan in the 1990s, Nikkei Brazilians were socially marginalized as impoverished part-Japanese foreigners whose ancestors were too poor to make it in Japan and left for Brazil, but after many decades were still so poor that they returned and took over undesirable jobs in Japan. Some local Japanese developed strong prejudice against Nikkei Brazilians partially because they never had non-Japanese neighbors before and evaluated so-called 'Brazilian behaviors' negatively, such as not following the garbage disposal rules, being too loud, and demonstrating petty offenses (Tsuda 2009; Vogt 2014).

For this reason, the food service offered by Nikkei Brazilian return migrants did not attract local Japanese customers in the beginning. Brazilian restaurants and grocery stores, whose proprietors and staff often had limited Japanese language, were left untapped by local Japanese for a long time. For this reason, Hisayo, the manager of a locally owned *churrasco* restaurant in Hamamatsu, (one of the 'little Brazil' cities in Japan), told me that she and her Brazilian husband and chef never advertised their Brazilian *churrasco* restaurant as a 'Brazilian restaurant.' Instead,

they have marketed their business as an all-you-can-eat BBQ restaurant since they opened the business 15 years ago. “My husband was very adamant that we should not give people the impression that this is a Brazilian restaurant. So, we never displayed a Brazilian flag inside and at store front like many Brazilian businesses do around here.” Hisayo thought that it was part of the reason their restaurant survived over a decade, despite the fluctuating Brazilian and Nikkei population in the area. “If you’re doing business with just Brazilians, it’s not sustainable for the long term,” Hisayo continued, “We got used to the fact that even Brazilian customers who really liked coming to our place might suddenly go back to Brazil one day. You have to have Japanese regulars to make the business successful in a long term too.”

In the early 1990s, Brazilian food and restaurants were either too small a niche in mainstream Japanese foodways, or they were perceived as lowbrow culture and avoided by local Japanese who already held stereotypes against Brazilians. As a result, their cuisine did not get fair treatment by Japanese customers initially in some parts of Japan. A turning point of Brazilian food in the Japanese market occurred by doing the opposite, that is, marketing the grilled meat as Brazilian-style BBQ to construct the image of Brazilian food that is familiar to Japanese patrons, and presenting it in highbrow social settings.

Churrasco, Social Construction of Brazilian food in Japan

As a country consisting of African descendants, Portuguese and Italian migrants, Japanese *dekasegi* migrants, and indigenous groups in the Amazon, it is nearly impossible to define Brazilian food succinctly. Their food culture was enriched by migrants from several different continents, the history of slavery, and national development. Thus, the diversity of

social class and ethnicity is the bedrock of Brazilian food, which also accounts for regional differences of foodways within a nation (Fajans 2013; Mori 2007).

Brazilian restaurants were both an ethnic enterprise and a Japanese owned business, and a commercialized Brazilian food business emerged in Japan's food service industry around the same time as the *dekasegi* boom. In 1991, the first *churrasco* chain restaurant opened in Shibuya, the urban center of metropolitan Tokyo. The majority of *churrasco* restaurants offer all-you-can-eat pricing for barbequed meat brought to the table on a large upright skewer, plus a self-serve buffet bar that included salad and popular Brazilian side dishes and snacks. Entertainment became a unique asset to Japanese-owned Brazilian restaurants, offering live music, dance lessons, and samba shows on certain dates and nights of week. Around the same time as Japan's bubble economy was declining, Japanese urban eaters were more curious and outgoing than ever, since more Japanese were exposed to different cultures outside their home after the bubble-induced boom of international traveling (Ohno 2016).

As such, the *churrasco* boom spread nationwide from Tokyo for its novel service and entertainment, becoming a new addition to existing popular meat dining repertoires in Japan such as Japanese-style BBQ (*yakiniku)* and American-style steak restaurants. Barbacoa, the first Japanese branch of a well-known *churrasco* restaurant brand from Brazil, opened in 1994 as the first globally franchised restaurant managed by Wondertable Ltd, Japan's global restaurant management company. Barbacoa became the game-changer of the *churrasco* industry, transforming the existing image of *churrasco* as a casual and lively Brazilian restaurant to a luxurious and sophisticated dining spot with a high-end ambiance and high prices to match. In fact, even today, Barbacoa's all-you-can-eat dinner with drink bar starts from 9000 yen (80 USD), and even the lunch price without drink bar starts from 4000 yen (36 USD). Despite the

high prices, Barbacoa opened several locations in Japan that became popular spots among white-collar workers, young eaters who were keen on gourmet trends, and upper-middle class housewives. In so doing, Barbacoa established their high-end brand value in Japan as the place to go for business meetings or dress-up occasions with family and friends (Ohno 2016).

Churrasco also gained media attention when Japan's first professional soccer league, J. League, was established in 1993 and the soccer boom brought news coverage about Brazilian players joining Japan's league teams. Mass media introduced Brazilian food as a new, trendy meat cuisine in relation to Brazilian soccer stars, and not as the food that Brazilian immigrants in the industrial belt of Japan eat on the weekend as a family ritual. While everyday Brazilians remained isolated in small cities of Japan, *churrasco* was quickly embraced in Japan's urban gourmet trend through a carefully curated image of *churrasco*. As Peterson and Anand (2004:317) observed, "once consumer tastes are refined as a market, those in the field tailor their actions to create cultural foods like those that are currently most popular as represented by the accepted measurement tools". Brazilian food in Japan illustrated the case that Japanese restaurant corporations produced the image of *churrasco* as a highly sought out, novel cuisine by utilizing media coverage and appealing to the desires of upper-middle class Japanese with cultural and economic capital, who sought symbolic cultural markers of distinction (Johnston and Baumann 2014). In this way, the development of *churrasco* as a trendy cuisine in the 1990s represents a process of gentrification (Peterson and Kern 1996:906), in which Brazilian *churrasco* is appropriated and incorporated into popular culture by Japanese corporations engineering a food trend for profit. However, as happened to all short-lived gourmet trends in Japan, the *churrasco* boom slowed down around 2005, simply because there were too many *churrasco* restaurants and

the market became saturated. The number of *churrasco* restaurants decreased, and even the well-known *churrasco* franchise Barbacoa had to close their doors in some locations (Ohno 2016).

Brazilian Ethnic Entrepreneurship in Japan

Meanwhile, outside the urban centers of Japan, there were virtually no Brazilian restaurants and grocery stores anywhere in Japan in the early 1990s, so Nikkei Brazilian return migrants depended on their incoming friends and family who could pack up extra *feijão* beans and bags of coffee in their luggage as treats on their arrival (Ishi 1995). Great scholastic attention has been given to ethnic entrepreneurship as the Brazilian population and the demand for Brazilian commodities grew, notably in the industrial areas where the Brazilian population concentrated (Ishi 1995, 2009; Kataoka 2012; Kajita et al. 2005; Ishi 2009a). Another unique characteristic of the Brazilian and Nikkei Brazilian labor market of is that a number of business proprietors is smaller than other migrant groups such as Koreans and Chinese, despite the large population (Kataoka 2012:105). Scholarship on ethnic entrepreneurship has contended that the development of ethnic business depends on how the ethnic group utilizes and adapts their labor and social capital to their environment and the structure of opportunities (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). From such a perspective, there seem to be no major obstacles preventing Nikkei Brazilians from starting their own businesses. Besides their legal flexibility because of the special visas, the increasing pattern of return migration to Japan with their families indicate that Nikkei Brazilians have familial resources to start a business, which is indispensable to run ethnic business in immigrant host countries. However, the viability of Brazilian ethnic business was largely affected by the fluctuating economy in Japan from the stagnation in the 1990s to the

For example, the city of Hamamatsu and neighboring cities observed a variety of Brazilian business development such as grocery stores, print media, restaurants and café, banks, schools, beauty salons, and importing companies, but the most of these businesses were short-lived due to the stagnant economy in the 2000s followed by the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008 (Kataoka 2012, 2013). Therefore, despite the increasing number of Brazilian permanent residents, there was also a big wave of *dekasegi* returning to Brazil, which paused the linear development of Brazilian business and made survival very competitive for the remaining businesses. There was also a general challenge for small business owners in Japan as their everyday consumers were absorbed by emerging large shopping complexes in suburban cities (Kataoka 2012).

Given the unstable Brazilian clientele, some Brazilian owners attempted to attract local Japanese consumers as well, which was a challenge not only due to the language barrier, but also because Japanese residents remain unfamiliar with Brazilian culture and lifestyle due to limited interactions with Brazilian residents, and some Japanese were prejudiced against Brazilian working-class communities in general (Ishi 2003, 2009). According to the survey and interviews that Kataoka conducted in Hamamatsu, 90% of her 365 respondents were aware of the existence of Brazilian shops in their neighborhood, yet only 20% of them actually had shopped at Brazilian businesses. Additionally, the survey also showed that nearly the half of the respondents were interested in checking out Brazilian business in the future, which suggests that Japanese consumers are curious and not entirely indifferent to Brazilian residents and their culture (2012:123).

Kataoka's survey result explains why it is hard to absorb Japanese clients into their business, and also why Brazilians often feel isolated (Linger 2001; Tsuda 2003). It might be true

that some Brazilian stores and restaurants serve as the intercultural contact zone for both Japanese and Brazilians residents, providing them a precious opportunity for Japanese and Brazilians to interact outside the work sites (Zambonelli 2015), but it is also too optimistic to assume that social harmony organically stems from such consumption-based ethnic sites, which do not necessarily yield meaningful connections or indicate greater tolerance of cultural difference (Linger 2001; Warde and Martens 2000).

Still, scholars argue that Brazilian ethnic businesses have established solid roots in Japan, despite their fundamental challenges including language barriers, the lack of connections to local Japanese communities, and the lack of business experiences from Brazil (Kataoka 2012; Ishi 2009). In Brazilian residential cities like Hamamatsu and Ōizumi, scholars (Kajita et al. 2005; Ishi 2005; Onai 2011) observed that Brazilians and Nikkei Brazilians built new social networks among themselves and created communities where Brazilians and Nikkei Brazilians could "get anything from Brazil" as opposed to before the 1990s when "there was nothing (Brazilian related business and service)" (Ishi 1995:242). Such communities allowed ethnic business to thrive due to the continuing clientele of temporary working-class Brazilians who do not intend to live in Japan for a long-term, and are therefore less motivated to learn Japanese or to explore non-Brazilian culture and services. In fact, Kataoka's study conducted in Hamamatsu found that more than 80 percent of frequent customers at Brazilian grocery stores are Brazilians who had been in Japan less than a year, and their frequent use of Brazilian ethnic business also correlated with low Japanese proficiency (2012:116-117).

Among the long-term Nikkei residents, meanwhile, use of Brazilian shops became occasional, and the "de-Brazilianization" and "Japanization" of younger Nikkei children became prevalent (Onai 2011:83). Kataoka's study (2012). also revealed that long-term Nikkei residents

avoid Brazilian ethnic businesses due to the stigmatization of foreigners in the area, though such Brazilian stores are important place where they re-connect with their identities and Brazilian culture and lifestyles. Moreover, becoming a business owner does not seem to become a pathway to upward social mobility. Kataoka found that most business owners had almost no increase in their income compared to manual work in factories (2012:127).

In sum, Brazilian ethnic entrepreneurship did not become a lucrative field in Japan because (1) many Brazilian working class residents did not stay in Japan long-term due to the fluctuating economy, (2) becoming a business owner entailed more financial risk than engaging in the working class labor market, and (3) Brazilian products catered heavily towards Brazilian consumers, failing to attract local Japanese consumers and even some Nikkei Brazilians who were not as heavily dependent on Brazilian products and services in Japan.

Dekasegi Business

When the number of Nikkei Brazilian workers increased drastically in the 1990s, demands for certain Brazilian goods were met by food vending trucks that circulated in the areas populated by Nikkei Brazilians (Ishi 1995; Tsuda 2003). Within a few years, businesses targeting Nikkei Brazilians extended beyond their dietary needs. Clothing stores, Portuguese newspapers, banks, and travel agents opened and completed the comprehensive lifestyles of growing Nikkei Brazilian communities in Japan. For example, Portuguese newspapers and magazine provided advertisement sections on houses and cars for sale, and articles on life tips in Japan informed Brazilian and Nikkei readers of workers' rights that some Nikkei Brazilians might not know they had (Mori 1992:147).

A small number of Nikkei Brazilians who came to Japan as *dekasegi* in the early 1990s pioneered a new career direction in Japan, discovering business opportunities among *dekasegi* who could not get used to the flavor of Japanese food and became homesick for the familiar tastes from home. According to Ishi, the first Brazilian restaurant in Ōizumi was opened by a Nikkei Brazilian who was working in a home appliance factory. His restaurant opened initially on weekends only and later expanded to full-time operations (Ishi 1995). At that time, virtually all servers and kitchen staff there were other *dekasegi*, who worked in factories during the day and worked at the restaurant at night. Unlike most Brazilian restaurants in Japan today, the *dekasegi* Brazilian restaurants that opened during this time served no-frills food that resembled the flavor and food portions from Brazil for Brazilian and Nikkei patrons, and they served Brazil's plate lunch and dinner, not *churrasco*. Brazilian food was made and consumed rather exclusively for (Nikkei) Brazilians, and most Japanese consumers avoided these unknown groups of foreigners who ate and lived much differently. This history of the first Brazilian restaurant in Ōizumi is parallel to the development of Japanese eateries along Conde street in 1910's São Paulo, introduced in Chapter 3. Thus, food at such restaurants was not adapted to Japanese clients' taste preferences at all.

In Toyota city, Aichi prefecture, where a large number of Nikkei Brazilians work for Toyota automobile parts factories and assembly lines, commercial businesses were established within the apartment complexes, where you could find not only Brazilian grocery stores and snack stands, but also even more specific Brazilian businesses such as hair salons, home appliance stores, and private schools and afterschool for programs for Brazilian children (Sasaki 2020).

In sociological studies, ethnic entrepreneurship is largely understood as an economic practice in which immigrants provide commodities and services to co-ethnic groups in their neighborhood (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990; Zhou 2004). While some ethnic minority members benefit from this dynamic which offers them more power and social prestige as owners and managers, they are also "intrinsically intertwined in particular social structures in which individual behavior, social relations, and economic transactions are constrained" (Zhou 2004:1040). This form of self-employment is usually considered an alternative social mobility strategy among migrants, who are disadvantaged to compete in a host country's labor market due to cultural and linguistic deficiency and racial discrimination.

What is interesting here is that such Nikkei-specific services were developed by both Nikkei Brazilian entrepreneurs and Japanese merchants, establishing transnational retail networks and new economic exchanges on both ends of the supply chain concurrently (Ishi 1995; Tsuda 2003). This double involvement of Japanese merchants and Nikkei Brazilian entrepreneurs is relatively untraditional in the widely observed dynamics of enclave business and entrepreneurship studied by migration scholars. As such, Ishi called this drastic increase of Nikkei Brazilian-specific business and service in 1990s "*dekasegi* business" (1995:241). What distinguishes *dekasegi* business from other ethnic business is that they did a type of transnational business that supported sustaining ties between *dekasegi* and their family members in Brazil, such as remittance brokers and delivery services between Japan and Brazil.

Japanese businesses involved with food had economic incentives, but some of them genuinely tried to be helpful to *dekasegi* who were seeking familiar tastes and goods for their own comfort in their work-intensive lifestyles surrounded by foreign Japanese culture. For example, local Japanese small business owners picked up the niche demands of *dekasegi*

consumers. The liquor stores near factories and Nikkei Brazilian workers' dormitory opened early or late depending on hours that local *dekasegi* finished working, and they started carrying Brazilian grocery items based on requests from *dekasegi* customers (Ishi 1995). Unlike franchised grocery stores, small Japanese business owners were able to accommodate *dekasegi* consumer needs flexibly and provided more personal service by interacting with customers individually.

Emerging business demands for Nikkei Brazilians tastes

Dekasegi business fluctuated because local Nikkei Brazilians usually stayed in one place temporarily and moved to different cities for better work conditions or wages. As a result, while the number of Nikkei Brazilian permanent residents increased, the growth of *dekasegi* business in Hamamatsu has stagnated since the 2000s due to the recession, making the remaining *dekasegi* businesses compete for market survival (Kataoka 2012). One of the oldest Brazilian grocery stores, which is still open today in Hamamatsu, was funded by Lucio, a third-generation Nikkei. Lucio grew up helping in his father's coffee farm in Adamantina, the countryside of São Paulo state. After he got retail job experience in the first Brazilian branch of a Japanese supermarket in 1971, Lucio was drawn to Japan for its economic potential in 1988 and worked in a factory as *dekasegi* for two years in Hamamatsu. Lucio was always interested in "the kind of work where I can play a bridging role between Japan and Brazil," and opened a Brazilian restaurant, which evolved over time and has added a grocery store, bakery, and event space since opening in 1991 in Hamamatsu. Lucio himself grew up with Japanese food, but he quickly realized that food was the largest problem that many *dekasegi* had a hard time getting used to, so much so that his fellow *dekasegi* got sick due to malnutrition and returned to Brazil. Even when

dekasegi overcame the diet-related culture shock, the intense manual labor required calories and energies to endure long work hours. They found Japanese box lunches or cafeteria food without meat insufficient, so they had to have sandwiches or snacks during breaks in between.

Along with Ray's argument that immigrants' food is perceived as lowbrow food, it is also important to remember Bourdieu's notion about the food consumption of peasants and working class. In *Distinction*, Bourdieu elaborated on his famous term "the taste of necessity," the kind of food which was economical and filling for working class eaters who favored quantity over quality (1984:6). Thus, working class taste was characterized by necessity, meeting the unrefined need for "filling" food to fuel labor power (1984:177). Although Bourdieu's theory of taste could be seen as outdated for potentially overestimating the persistent nature of habitus in the face of social and economic change, his observation on the taste preference of the working class is compelling and applicable here. In fact, building on his food space figure (1984:186), Bourdieu even claimed that industrial workers tend to eat "fatty, salty, cheap-nourishing" food such as pork and bread, due to economic and time constraints, which could be easily replaced with rice and *feijão* in the context of Brazilian *dekasegi* here.

According to Lucio, Japanese food is *sappari* (mildly seasoned and light), and it is not very filling for Brazilians, while Brazilian food is *kotteri* (rich, strong, and heavy). So, there is a major difference between the two.

> Lucio: Even though I grew up with Japanese staples, I really craved beans. *Feijão* is like miso soup in Japan, so I could not eat rice without it. I didn't even need any side or main dishes if I had beans.
>
> Rumika: But you mentioned that your father made home-made miso and natto in Brazil growing up, right?
>
> Lucio: Yes, he made them. But I did not eat them every day. Some days, we had Brazilian meals and had Japanese meals some other days.

Although Lucio was not new to Japanese food when he first came to Japan as *dekasegi*, he craved *feijão* beans as indispensable to provide energy for physically demanding work at the factory. Other familiar foods, such as miso and natto, were readily accessible in Japan, but they did not substitute for the filling satisfaction that he got from eating *feijão*. Lucio continued:

> When you start working in factory, you lose weight drastically… New *dekasegi* got hungry two hours after a meal, but you must work at least another four hours (until the next break). So, in my case, I had snacks and sandwiches during my 15-minute breaks.

It was from his experience also that Lucio realized that access to Brazilian grocery items would become literal lifelines as more (Nikkei) Brazilians came to Hamamatsu to engage in manual labor. Due to the *dekasegi* boom, Lucio's business developed quickly, and it also created employment opportunities for local *dekasegi i*n Japan. Even though his multi-complex grocery store is not as busy as it used to be in the 1990s, especially since the pandemic, their bakery goods are packaged and distributed to Brazilian grocery stores and restaurants nationwide, keeping his store brand intact as the oldest active Brazilian grocery store in Japan. His store also has been the site of community gatherings, hosting community Christmas parties and karaoke tournaments, which bring long-term Hamamatsu Brazilian residents and newcomers together.

Such *dekasegi* businesses grew in numbers and scale in cities with large numbers of *dekasegi* until the peak of Brazilian resident population in 2007, when they ranked in as the third largest non-Japanese ethnic group following after Chinese and Korean residents (MIAC 2008). However, after 2007, following the 2008 global financial crisis, the worldwide economic stagnation paused the growth of *dekasegi* business and population, and even newly opened stores closed their doors abruptly as many *dekasegi* returned to Brazil due to the uncertain economic situation in Japan (Kataoka 2012). Since the population of Brazilian residents in Japan has never

fully recovered ever since, the number of Brazilian shopping centers and merchants decreased gradually.

To serve wider customer demographics, some Brazilian grocery stores, including Lucio's grocery store in Hamamatsu, began carrying non-Brazilian items such as Peruvian, Vietnamese, and Filipino grocery goods. The change in the selection of store items reflects the changing demographics of the labor force in the industrial belt of Japan, which primarily depended on Nikkei Brazilian or Peruvian workers on long-term resident visas in 1990s, but is now replaced by a larger pool of 'newcomer' Chinese, Vietnamese, and Filipino migrants with student, trainee, or short-term stay visas also seeking jobs in the low-wage market (Idei 2019; Liu-Farrer 2009). Lucio explained that the influx of Southeast Asia customers increased in the last few years, so they started carrying Vietnamese and Indonesian grocery items. In contrast, Lucio also noticed a large decrease in Brazilian shoppers when Japan's major grocery chains in the area began carrying Brazilian grocery staples. Lucio shrugged and said, "Many Japanese grocery stores carry Brazilian goods today, so they do not need to come to Brazilian stores specifically."

Another Brazilian food business that developed during this time was Brazilian box lunch sales for *dekasegi* workers. A restaurant opened by the Japanese broker agency in Toyota city started making *box* lunches for their *dekasegi* workers during the night shift. The majority of *dekasegi* workers at that time did not like the taste of regular Japanese *bento* box lunches, so the restaurant started selling Brazilian-style box lunches consisting of *feijão*, meat, and rice cooked with oil and garlic for 500 yen (4.5 USD) (Ishi 1995:244). Such Brazilian *bento* were slightly more expensive than regular Japanese *bento* due to the cost of ingredients and labor, but that did not deter most *dekasegi* from choosing Brazilian *bento.* For single *dekasegi* who were too busy to cook or did not know where they could get Brazilian food, Brazilian *bento* was an ideal and

convenient way to order and eat their taste of home at work, and the Brazilian *bento* business became popular in other areas with large *dekasegi* populations in Japan.

One all-time popular grocery item is canned *feijoada*, stewed beans cooked with diced meat, which is the soul food of many Brazilians. Occasionally, a large group of *dekasegi* drove down to the shop in a big truck, presumably borrowing a vehicle from work and carpooling with dorm mates and co-workers from a factory. Ishi's study observed that each *dekasegi* spent 12,000 to 13,000 yen (107 to 116 USD) on average, or over 20,000 yen (180 USD) for the most lavish expenditure (1995:246). These amounts might appear extravagant spending for a single person living alone, but Ishii's study was conducted right before the end of bubble economy and the excessive consumption culture seemed to have spread among new *dekasegi* who had never made high earnings from manual labor in Brazil. Other than the canned foods and Brazilian rice, *dekasegi* often bought Portuguese newspapers, magazines, and Portuguese-Japanese dictionaries. *Pinga*, a distilled spirit made from fermented sugarcane juice, was also popular for *dekasegi* to drink for themselves and as a gift for their Japanese relatives and employers (Ishi 1995:246). As such, *dekasegi* business was the important lifeline for the first wave of *dekasegi,* who did not have easy access to information and commodities from Brazil as they do today.

Brazilian Food Business Today

The Brazilian food-related economy grew rapidly in the 1990s through two different but concurrently processes. One was established in urban cities such as Tokyo and Osaka, where highbrow eaters and Japanese with a cultural affinity for Brazil participated in the *churrasco* boom. Because any cultural products related to Brazil were relatively new, the Japanese public bought the luxurious image of *churrasco* without any negative bias against Brazilians. Because

of the market competition of franchised *churrasco* restaurants in urban centers, Brazilian food was overtly represented and generalized as *churrasco*, alongside entertainment hours representing Brazilian culture. International travel and the soccer boom were other factors that increased the popularity and the fame of *churrasco* among ordinary Japanese eaters. *Churrasco* and food presentation at places like Barbacoa was highly stylized, and the food taste was adjusted to Japanese eaters' general preference, which avoided overtly salty and heavy flavors.

The second development process was observed in industrial cities heavily populated by Brazilians, and the Brazilian food economy that was initiated by *dekasegi* and their families. Such businesses were small, family owned, and primarily met the everyday food needs of local Brazilians and other temporary workers from South America, who favored Brazilian food and its flavor that tasted similar to their food from home. Because most *dekasegi* intended to return to Brazil once they reached their earnings goal, a few of these food businesses successfully survived in the long run.

Although there were a few non-*churrasco* Brazilian restaurants with relaxed, casual ambiance serving home-made style food, such places were too small in number, and only a few of them stood the test of time in 2000s (Yamamoto 2019). One such casual, family-owned Brazilian restaurant that has been in business for over a decade, is Restaurant B. Unlike Barbacoa and other similar *churrasco* restaurants that season meat and side dishes for Japanese eaters' taste, food at Restaurant B is unsparingly seasoned for Brazilians," as the restaurant manager Shizuka described with laugh.

Starting a Brazilian restaurant was Shizuka's Nikkei Brazilian husband Mauricio's longtime dream since he was a child. Mauricio and Shizuka met in Japan when Mauricio was working as *dekasegi* in an automobile factory in prefecture near Tokyo. After mass lay-offs

resulting from the 2008 Lehman shock, Mauricio obtained culinary training by working in franchised *churrasco* restaurants and opened his own place in 2010. Being located close to Tokyo and industrial pockets where Brazilian and other South American workers live and work even today, the business generated a customer base of both Japanese and Brazilians. The restaurant serves an ala carte menu during weekdays and all-you-can-eat *churrasco* on weekends. Both offerings are popular for different clientele. During weekday dinners, the business attracts both Japanese and Brazilian customers, including couples, families, white and blue-collar workers, and solo Brazilian diners, who get off from factory work and stop by the restaurant for a plate dinner, which is exactly the kind of menu eaten in Brazil as well. On weekends, the restaurant gets busy and crowded with groups of family and friends who enjoy *churrasco* for casual and special occasions such as birthday and holiday events.

For this reason, serving food very similar to or almost the same flavor as Brazil is very important for Restaurant B's business to satisfy their loyal Brazilian and *dekasegi* working class clients in the area. As for their Japanese customers, Shizuka shared her observation of the restaurant's demographic in this way.

> My husband has so many friends, so our business was sustained by his friend's networks in the first couple of years. I think, *churrasco* meat can be a hit for Japanese customers too because it goes great with alcohol. But more niche dishes like *feijoada*, people either love it or hate it. At our restaurant, we don't season it for Japanese at all, but Brazilians and the Japanese who have had *feijoada* in Brazil love it. I have heard from the customers that they can't eat *feijoada* at other places after eating it here, because other places often season it for Japanese. So, I'm afraid, but some Japanese people can't eat ours at all… I would say, on average, Japanese are 60% of our customer population, Brazilians are 30%, and the rest of 10% is other foreigners like Filipinos. There are many Filipinos who live around here too, and other South Americans. I think our customer demographic is pretty unique.
>
> Rumika: But you have a solid Japanese *churrasco* fan base too.
>
> Shizuka: Right. Near this area, there is a Yokohama-based big samba team, so people who really like Brazil and its culture, samba and soccer alike, come here. Because our

> Brazilian food is not like other places seasoned for Japanese public, we attract certain types of Japanese who know the real taste of Brazilian food like expat workers and their family who have lived in Brazil before. The people who have lived in Brazil for some kinds of reasons come here to feel nostalgic about their time living in Brazil, at least that's what they told me.

Maintaining authentic taste or adjusting flavor for general Japanese clients is a choice that could influence the restaurant's position within a larger Japanese and co-ethnic community (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). However, the proximity to central Tokyo and Brazilian and other non-Japanese communities enabled Restaurant B to attract both Brazilian and Japanese diners, while maintaining the authentic Brazilian flavor. In this way, a family owned, non-franchised Brazilian restaurant survives by sustaining their personal social ties to Brazilian communities and serving authentic Brazilian flavors to those who really know what Brazilian food ought to taste like, unlike chain restaurants' foods that are adapted for the general Japanese taste.

Although Shizuka and Mauricio were able to work and prepared to open their restaurant by building up their savings, the requirement of capital is another reason that Nikkei Brazilian owners make up a small fraction of *churrasco* restaurants in Japan. "Opening a *churrasco* restaurant costs a lot for up-front payments, like, industrial meat grill equipment and its maintenance is not cheap at all," as a different *churrasco* restaurant manager corroborates.

Some Brazilian grocery stores also have eat-in sections, where they sell staple menus such as *feijão,* rice, hamburgers, sandwiches, etc. for shoppers and local residents to stop by for a quick meal or snacks. For example, the picture below on left is the menu board of the Brazilian grocery store with eat-in space in Hamamatsu. They offer all-you-can-eat rice and *feijão* with any plate lunch set, the common menu structure in Brazil. Clearly, such grocery store owned eat-in business targets (Nikkei) Brazilian clients who are familiar with lunch offerings in Brazil, thus the menu is written in Portuguese and Japanese. The menu also features common Brazilian street

foods. In contrast, the lunch menu in *churrasco* restaurant A in Tokyo (pictured below on right) looks very different, even within the same plate lunch concept.

Restaurant A's menu hallmarks grilled meat with pictures, as it is their specialty as a *churrasco* restaurant. The plate lunch comes with salad and rice instead of *feijão* and rice, which is a common complimentary set offered during lunch time in cafes and restaurants in the central wards of Tokyo. The menu is written in English and Japanese, but not Portuguese. Evidently, restaurant A's menu was simplified and adapted to make it look familiar to Japanese and non-Japanese clients who might not be familiar with Brazilian food.

It is also clear that clients have different expectations for Barbacoa-like restaurants and family-owned restaurants like Restaurant B. While clients for restaurants like Restaurant B and grocery store's eat-in space visit the business for their food specifically, they satisfy their cravings of Brazilian food from home in no-frills establishments, even enjoy casual conversations with the business owner or workers in Portuguese. On the other hand, most Brazilian *churrasco* restaurants in urban centers like restaurant A tend to draw Japanese customers who enjoy eating out more or less as a leisure activity, so their visit might be a one-

time, passing experience. As Zambonelli (2015) pointed out in her study of Brazilian restaurants in Japan through an intercultural lens, such types of *churrasco* restaurants not only satisfy the clients with a marker of cultural capital, but they also perpetuate the exoticization of Brazilian food as culinary others, enhancing the clients' superficial curiosity and appreciation for the dining experiences largely due to its dissimilarity from their everyday food repertoire (Long 1998).

There is another type of Brazilian restaurants which offer opportunities for intercultural engagement for both Japanese and Brazilians living in Tokyo, but it comprises the smallest share of Brazilian restaurants as a whole. Owners of such business tend to be Japanese who have personal connections or passions for Brazilian food and culture such as samba dance, Bosa nova music, and soccer, so the customers visit such businesses to encounter and enjoy the culture intimately with other like-minded fans, who have a genuine interest in learning about Brazil beyond the superficial understandings of Brazilian culture. (Zambonelli 2015:145). As such, food could be a secondary or complementary element to complete a symbolic link to Brazil and its culture they love.

Due to COVID-19 and the state of emergency in Japan, I was not able to reach out to Brazilian food businesses that also function as intercultural sites. However, Zambonelli's study and my observations of Brazilian food businesses indicate that Brazilian food remains as a less sought-after genre of cuisine among Japanese public, and Japanese-owned *churrasco* Brazilian restaurants rely on immersive experiences and distinctive presentation of *churrasco* to elicit consumer interest. The popularity of Brazilian restaurants also rests on other Brazilian cultural products such as soccer and music, making the food itself a secondary element to complete a whole immersive package of experience 'authentic' Brazilian culture without traveling there. As

such, a plethora of *churrasco*-only Brazilian food businesses prevent the Japanese public from learning and engaging in diverse Brazilian culinary cultures outside of *churrasco*, and perpetuate an oversimplified image of Brazilian food, culture, and people.

Nikkei Brazilians' Receptions of 'Fancy' Churrasco

Interestingly, however, the interview data suggest that Nikkei Brazilians in Japan indeed go to Japanese-owned, high-end brand of *churrasco* restaurants like Barbacoa. Although most of them did not go to such Brazilian restaurants frequently, more than half (43) of my interviewees mentioned that they have been to Barbacoa or other franchised *churrasco* restaurants for someone's birthday, holidays, a date, occasions to celebrate, friends in town, or when their non-Brazilian friends wanted to try Brazilian food. Regardless of their socioeconomic class and locations, my interviewees have been to Barbacoa at least once or twice since they came to Japan.

Although the price tier of such *churrasco* restaurant is definitely high, the cost was not a main concern for interviewees with upper middle-class status. One interviewee, Elaine, a third-generation Nikkei Brazilian who used to work and live in Shinjuku, the busy neon district of Tokyo, mentioned that she used to go to Barbacoa and other franchised *churrasco* restaurants with her friends and family twice a month. However, for most interviewees, occasions to eat *churrasco*-style grilled meat with no limit was a rare treat. Visiting a Brazilian restaurant aroused emotional reactions about Brazil and its food to some interviewees, such as Sony, who commented, "I literally started crying for joy after two years of not eating *churrasco*."

In terms of Nikkei Brazilian's opinions of Barbacoa varied. Since the main attraction of a *churrasco* restaurant is grilled meat, which "cannot go wrong" due to the restaurant's quality in many interviewees' opinions, most interviewees had positive experiences at Barbacoa, but certainly most of them did not think that food at Barbacoa had the taste of foods in Brazil. Specifically, some interviewees found side dishes, such as *feijão* and hot snacks that were offered at buffet bar, were underwhelming. However, they quickly attributed their disappointing taste experiences to "the difference of ingredients" and "food flavored for Japanese people." Whether the food was close to or different from how it tasted in Brazil, reunion with their familiar food brought immediate joy for interviewees who had not had Brazilian food for a long time. As described by Sony:

> Oh, I just felt so happy when I ate *coxinha* at Barbacoa back in February [2020]. I was elated. I was like a kid. Yes, it did bring back the taste of home… They also had this juice that was made from sugarcane, which is a common juice in Brazil. Oh, if I could have that now, I think I would cry for joy, tears of happiness.

For some interviewees, going to Barbacoa was more for gathering socially with friends and family than for the food itself, so their experience was positive even though there was nothing to write home about in terms of food and its quality. As Meiser (2021) has discovered in her dissertation, even average food gets 5-star reviews when it is served at positive emotional occasions such as weddings, thus the context of when and how food is consumed matters in eaters' assessment of the restaurant and food. In this study, most of those who went to Barbacoa were excited by the prospect of eating *churrasco* with somebody in Japan, and they did not come to the restaurant expecting that Brazilian restaurants in Japan offer authentic tastes of food from Brazil. Thus, the value of their dining experiences was rated highly, partially because the place provided them rare opportunities to encounter familiar tastes from home in their everyday lives in Japan.

The flipside of Japan's restaurant market situation highlights limited variations of Brazilian food businesses in urban areas of Japan. Interviewees in Tokyo and Osaka were aware that there are Brazilian-owned diner style Brazilian restaurants, bakeries, and pizza parlors outside large cities where Nikkei Brazilian populations are concentrated, but they did not visit so-called 'Little Brazil' unless they had relatives living there or friends and family to make a special trip together. On the other hand, Barbacoa has seven locations in Tokyo and two in Osaka, so franchised *churrasco* restaurants inevitably come up as a conventional option to savor Brazilian food without traveling far from city centers.

Therefore, interviewees who lived close to 'Little Brazil' mentioned that they did not go to Brazilian restaurants very much in general, since such restaurants usually served what they could cook at home. In other words, interviewees who cooked Brazilian food at home regularly did not visit Brazilian restaurants frequently. Since all my interviewees from such areas lived there with their family, they could not justify paying more for 'home-cooked-style' meals at restaurants, whereas single Nikkei Brazilians who did not have family or friends in the local Japanese community yet, might have more motivation to go to Brazilian restaurants in their area.

Interviewees who lived outside large cities did not have space-related issues for *churrasco*, which was usually a problem for interviewees living in Tokyo even when they wanted to make *churrasco*. Sayaka, for instance, a *dekasegi* who came to Japan with her Nikkei Brazilian husband and started a family in Hamamatsu, talked about grilling *churrasco* at the beach or in the backyard at her home, where Sayaka's husband made a *churrasco* fireplace with bricks when they bought a house. As such, interviewees who lived in areas with large Brazilian populations had closer access to Brazilian food in terms of its availability and social networks, which brought people together through food such as *churrasco*. For such interviewees, *churrasco*

was a familial and social ritual they had at home or were invited by their family and friends hosting *churrasco*, which was closer to how all of interviewees had grown up with *churrasco* culture back in Brazil.

Outside of the food and comfort aspects, Barbacoa symbolized the class and socioeconomic statuses across Brazil and Japan. In one way, it seemed reasonable that Nikkei Brazilians gravitated towards Barbacoa because the restaurant is originally a Brazilian brand. However, not all interviewees knew that Barbacoa was from Brazil, and they learned that Barbacoa in Brazil was even more expensive than Barbacoa in Japan. It is known as one of the most luxurious restaurants in Brazil as well as the top tier of *churrasco* restaurants in Brazil. Gabriel, who just went to Barbacoa with his friends a week before our interview, had just learned about the difference of Barbacoa in Japan and Brazil.

> Gabriel: We wanted to go to Barbacoa because we couldn't afford it in Brazil. I mean, you could, but you cannot eat for the rest of month because you'll be spending all of your money... In Japan, Barbacoa is much more accessible.
>
> Rumika: Oh really?
>
> Gabriel: Yes. I didn't know Barbacoa until I came to Japan. My two friends at the factory told me it's a restaurant from Brazil. So, I asked some of my friends in Brazil and they said "Oh no, dude. You can't eat there. it's impossible for us." And they sent me a picture of their menu and I was like... man, I can't afford it! It's my paycheck.

In Japan, not only *dekasegi* could go to Barbacoa without breaking the bank, but they also could dine vicariously at a restaurant only wealthy people can afford to go in Brazil, which makes their visit even more valuable symbolically than just food itself. Meanwhile, for an interviewee with an upper-middle class background like Elsa, Barbacoa reminded her of "the similar ambiance, service, and food from Barbacoa in Brazil" that she and her family frequented when she was a child. Even though Elsa described that she could budget going to Barbacoa in

Japan every three or four months and it was not the kind of restaurant that she could go to casually, she and her family frequented it enough to conjure up nostalgia for Brazil and her family memories. In this way, globalized franchise restaurant business reminded Nikkei Brazilians of Brazil in different ways, depending on their current and previous socioeconomic standing in Japan and Brazil.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of Brazilian restaurant history in Japan, which had different development paths in urban centers and outskirts of Japan. Throughout the process in which Brazilian food became known to the Japanese public, Brazilian food was exoticized and commodified as a mean of cultural and economic distinction among Japanese patrons. The phenomenon of migrants' food getting contextualized by a dominant culture in a host country has been studied in food and cultural studies more recently (Fallwell 2008; Johnston and Baumann 2014; Long 1998; Warde 2016). In Bordieusian sense, Ashley et al. (2004) argued that local eaters seek social distinction (through consuming the culinary others) and cultural capital (through acquiring culinary knowledge), and both processes assert their identity and class difference. Such interpretations help us to understand why Barbacoa remains successful in Japan to this day. Japan's restaurant corporations profited from Japanese customers' unfamiliarity with Brazil by appropriating Brazilian *churrasco* to symbolize abundance, exoticness, and luxury. Meanwhile, Barbacoa also signified Nikkei Brazilians' class difference from Brazil to Japan. While some interviewees saw Barbacoa as an overpriced, non-authentic Brazilian food place, others visited Barbacoa to dine vicariously at a restaurant that they cannot afford to go in Brazil,

obtaining a marker of economic capital despite their socioeconomic status as *dekaseg*i. Capital here, therefore, plays an interesting role in influencing Nikkei Brazilian interviewee's foodways.

This chapter also answered the questions posited earlier: who produces and consume Brazilian food in Japan? Japan's restaurant market is dominated by well-known Brazilian restaurant brands such as Barbacoa, and they imprinted the image of Brazilian *churrasco* as a high-end, all-you-can-eat food for special occasions to the Japanese public, who are unaware that *churrasco* in Brazil serves as a family weekend ritual for relaxed socializing. Although there are more casual, small Brazilian restaurants owned by (Nikkei) Brazilians, such businesses primarily draw Brazilian workers and nearby residents, and Japanese customers who are already familiar with Brazilian food. Since starting a Brazilian restaurant requires upfront cost to afford the equipment such as an industrial grill and some level of Japanese proficiency or a Japanese partner who can manage necessary paperwork, Nikkei Brazilian residents would rather cook Brazilian food at their homes, Hence, Brazilian food remains as a niche cuisine even in a city like Tokyo, which is known for its world-class food scene.

Chapter 7. Memories, Longing, and Identity – Emotive power of food

Perhaps one of the most common academic arguments made in relation to food and diaspora is food's association with identity within diasporic contexts (Mintz 2008; Janowski 2012; Parasecoli 2014). Scholars have been interested in the role that food-related practices may play as migrants develop a sense of community and belonging, which may then become a reference to their identities that could be grounded in culinary practices and food products. Food also communicates sensual experiences linking social actors to nostalgia, memory, and longing for cultural pasts (Gabaccia 2009; Ray 2004). How individuals perceive and appreciate certain flavors, smells, and appearances speaks to one's identity and cultural background. For migrants who live outside their countries of origin, eating is the beginning of a complex socialization process within a host country that forges a sensual bond with their culinary identities. The following section probes Nikkei Brazilian interviewees' tastes and the relationship between taste and notions of 'home.' It explores the kinds of cuisine Nikkei Brazilians were accustomed to in their upbringing, the roles and meanings of eating, and, finally, given the untraditional life courses they took, how their identity journeys took place alongside their foodways.

Brazilian Food as More Than 'Just Food'

As seen in this dissertation so far, Brazilian food is strongly related to a social component of bringing people together to spend quality time, rather than simply eating food itself. The Japanese writer, Ohno, wrote about her memories of *churrasco* when she visited Brazil. Unlike the *churrasco* in Japan, which emphasizes a special dining experience marked by savoring grilled meat with personalized table service and unlimited choices of food from a buffet bar in a luxurious restaurant ambiance, Ohno found that *churrasco* in Brazil is a vehicle through which

Brazilian people show their caring and hospitality toward others by inviting guests to their home and treating them with abundant food offerings and home-grilled *churrasco* (2016).

Therefore, when interviewees were asked about the meaning of food to them, the most frequent response was that food facilitates sociability and nurtures a sense of community, followed by responses that food is a source of comfort and happiness. Interviewees who lived outside Brazilian communities in Japan longed for *churrasco* and holidays that they spent with family and friends while feasting, as well as cooking and preparing food together with them. A *churrasco* chef in Tokyo, Orlando said the following:

> My mother's side of the family is huge in Rio Grande do Sul. There, every weekend, someone in the family is making barbeque in houses or near some rivers. So, we didn't need to go to restaurants on weekends, but just went to barbeque parties (laugh). I started helping my mom to cook when I was seven years old. That is the big reason why I became interested in the culinary field. I helped my mom and stayed with my mom and aunties in the kitchen, listened to their stories about family, and laughed together. It was fun, really fun. When we had some parties in Brazil, family parties used to have 30 to 40 people. And for sure, to cook for that amount of people, my mom, all my aunties, and my nieces stayed in kitchen talking and cooking, and laughing all morning. I remember I loved that kind of situation, this funny and chatty ambience when I used to stay there. At some point, I started helping them… That's the thing that I missed the most here in Japan. It's hard to do the same because houses are too small, you normally don't invite too many friends to your apartment at once, but you need at least four guests at minimum [to host Brazilian *churrasco*].

Even for a 'foodie' interviewee like Orlando, who liked to explore different kinds of restaurants in the central Tokyo area as a hobby and who was also a trained chef, the meaning of food was not entirely about its quality or any aesthetic aspect of food, but rather entailed the communal process of preparing food with others. Additionally, even though some interviewees' foodways like Orlando's became isolated and individualized due to their urban lifestyles, (especially since COVID-19), interviewees still attached the same meaning of food that they

cultivated from their life in Brazil, and their life in Japan did not alter their ideas around the meaning of food even after being away from Brazil for many years.

It was common that interviewees maintained their *churrasco* rituals with fellow Nikkei Brazilian or Brazilian friends, family, and neighbors if they lived in industrial cities with a large Brazilian population. Sayaka, Margarete, and Katia, mentioned in earlier chapters, are examples of interviewees who were able to recreate their sociocultural rituals in Japan because of their residence in an area with a high Brazilian population. Additionally, this study also found two interviewees who employed *churrasco* to connect with local Japanese, employing the same *churrasco* format or style (with an emphasis on sociability) found in Brazil. One such interviewee was Keila, a *dekasegi* who lived in a small city of Shizuoka prefecture. Keila told me about her hybrid diet and lifestyle, both in terms of the food she eats and her social life. Being married to a Japanese husband and having three young children, Keila fed her family both Japanese and Brazilian food. For example, while she cooked popular Japanese foods that children like, such as curry, hamburger steak, and pasta, Keila also cooked quintessential Brazilian dishes like *feijão,* lasagna, and *feijoada* once a month at least. Although Keila did not get involved with the local Brazilian community in her area, she hosted *churrasco* and invited her mom friends from her eldest daughter's daycare before the pandemic hit. They were all Japanese who had never had *churrasco* before.

"My husband is Japanese and my kids are Japanese," Keila said, "so I know that we will not move to Brazil in the future. Since my kids were not interested in speaking Portuguese, I did not see any point in forcing them to go to a daycare for Brazilian kids." There were not many Brazilian workers at her previous workplace, so Keila learned Japanese at work and from her husband over two decades living in Japan. Thus, *churrasco* served as a way in which she could

show her Brazilian-style hospitality and sustain the new local networks that she cultivated in Japan. “Because they never had it before, they want to come again (to the *churrasco*) [laugh]. I guess it’s something new for them.” As such, some interviewees felt that *churrasco* was an aspect of their culture that they had left in Brazil, or that they could not find the right environment or social circle in Japan within which to recreate that cultural aspect. However, others, like Keila, carried on their family tradition in a new, Japanese social environment to nurture new social networks where they resided.

For interviewees whose lifestyles centered around work, and specifically workplaces with mostly Japanese or international colleagues, encounters with Brazilian food were mostly limited to the home or to restaurants, such as *churrasco* restaurants they visited with their Brazilian friends. Moreover, interviewees without spouses or family members routinized their meal plans during their busy weekdays by themselves, so they expressed less financial and emotional investment in making and consuming food due to their lack of communal eating occasions. Particularly, several graduate student Nikkei Brazilians expressed boredom and tiredness of eating food that they cooked themselves in their apartment or dorm room, citing the downside of COVID-19 affecting campus guidelines that prohibited group gatherings on campus and in dorm common spaces. As a result, graduate student interviewees felt deprived of social events and gatherings involving food, which made their everyday food routines uninteresting.

Meanwhile, interviewees with full-time jobs and intense work schedules also described food as a source of comfort and relaxation, which brought small moments of happiness into their busy lifestyles. Of course, every single meal that interviewees ate was not necessarily full of meaning. Some studies have found that people make more than one hundred ‘automatic’ food intake decisions unconsciously every day (Furst et al 1996; Wansink and Sobal 2007). In

contrast, interviewees who had frequent contacts with Brazilian friends or family saw the communal value of food as being integrated into their lifestyle, because they had more occasions to embody such meanings of food in their everyday foodways.

"Taste of Home" and Transnational Family Caring Work

In order to gain a general understanding of what interviewees ate (or were fed) at home in Brazil or Japan, this study asked interviewees to describe their idea of a 'home cooked meal.' In sociology and food studies more broadly, 'home cooked meals' are often found to bear romanticized notions of pleasant and healthy food, obscuring a class hierarchy and privilege and gendered exploitation grounded in the domestic division of labor (DeVault 1994; Julier 2013; LeBesco and Naccarato 2008b; Oleschuk 2019).

In Japan, the concept of home cooked meals or *katei ryōri* took over the Western ideal of middle-class homemakers reifying domestic work within a patriarchal order, which was boosted by a rhetoric of domesticity in print media during the post-Meiji reforms (Cwiertka 2018). Furthermore, scholars have identified a revival of traditionalism that reproduces and reinforces Japan's cultural identity through food and cultural practices (Goldstein-Gidoni 2001; Murase 2020; Takeda 2008). Since the mid-1960s, magazines, newspapers, and Japanese celebrity chefs have glorified "the taste of mothers," or "*ofukuro no aji*" as part of a strategy to re-brand local, countryside cuisine in Japan (Murase 2020). The term *ofukuro no aji* was generally employed to indicate common Japanese home-made dishes prepared by mothers, conjuring up sentimental values of dishes related to nostalgia and longing for home (Murase 2009).

Katei ryōri and *ofukuro no aji* have very similar meanings and are often used interchangeably. In fact, when I asked interviewees their ideas about or memories of *katei ryōri* during interviews conducted in Japanese, many of them used the term *ofukuro no aji* instead of

katei ryōri. The slight difference between the two terms comes from the fact that *ofukuro no aji* conjures up nostalgia for one's family home or hometown and emphasizes the notion of tradition within a family that was preserved by female family members. These female family members were presumably in charge of feeding the family and were also responsible for carrying on both family tastes and local cuisine, according to gender ideologies embedded within Japanese foodways (Murase 2020).

Given this context, the gold standard of what constitutes a "good mother" seems unrealistic to impose upon working-class families with low socioeconomic statuses, both in Japan and throughout the world, including transnational migrant families such as Nikkei Brazilians. After all, the ideal image of the nuclear family is established upon the premise that mothers are readily available for all sorts of domestic tasks and are present for childcare at any given time of the day. The mother-child relationship within transnational families is more complicated than the traditional concept because of their transnational lifestyles and the geographical distance from extended family members and other familial support groups, which not only complicates the day-to-day operation of their family life but also puts emotional strain on their relationships (Parreñas 2005; Hillyer 2020). This inquiry into the classic notion of 'home-made meals' reveals the racial and social inequalities of performing domestic work in transnational families and the unique family dynamics in which traditionally gendered work is altered to complete family work and raise children, even when one of the household's parental members lives and works abroad.

When reflecting upon 'tastes of home,' three quarters of the interviewees mentioned the typical Brazilian meal of rice, *feijão*, grilled meat, and a vegetable dish (usually salad) as their primary meal. Most of them also differentiated such tastes of home from the food for special

occasions or events, like Christmas, so the taste of home was usually distinguished as 'non-fancy' or casual, and something they regularly ate with their family. While most interviewees grew up with home-made food prepared by their mother or grandmother, others had untraditional arrangements due to their parents being *dekasegi* or because both of their parents worked full-time. For example, Liz, whose parents and extended family worked in Brazil's agricultural industry, started cooking at age 12, and would usually make *feijão*, Japanese plain rice, pasta, and stroganoff for big Sunday lunches that she and her family and friends would eat all together.

For *dekasegi* parents, working at a factory, including overtime shifts, while also cooking food for the family, was a laborious task. While some interviewees who came to Japan with their parents as *dekasegi* reported that their parents cooked and ate together as a family, some interviewees were in charge of the family's dinner. One interviewee named Elaine came to Japan when she was twelve with her older sisters and parents as *dekasegi*. Elaine started taking care of her family's housework and cooked dinner such as curry, pasta, and stir-fried meat and vegetables after school, while her parents and older siblings worked at a factory. Doing so meant that Elaine's family could eat dinner together when they came home. As such, some interviewees transitioned their roles from 'being fed' to 'feeding,' learning how to cook and contributing to family-care work in substantial ways from an early age.

As a Nikkei who grew up in Japan, Asami's idea of the taste of home changed when Asami and her sister moved back to Brazil while her parents remained in Japan working as *dekasegi*. When they started living with an aunt and her family in Brazil, Asami lost weight due to her change in diet from Japan to Brazil as she struggled to get used to unfamiliar Brazilian food flavors that used heavier spices and herbs. However, when asked what her taste of home would be, Asami answered without any hesitation that her aunt's cooking is her *ofukuro no aji*.

> For breakfast, I wanted the Japanese style rice and miso soup breakfast when I was a child, but my mom is Nikkei, so she liked bread better. And it was easier for her, I think. In the morning, my mom would just fix some toast or cereal and say 'here, there's your breakfast'[laugh]… Honestly, I don't have memories of seeing my mother cooking. In Japan, what I remember eating is like snacks and instant food other than school lunch. My mom simply didn't have time to cook for us while working full-time at a factory. My aunt's cooking [in Brazil], to me, is the taste of *ofukuro no aji*. Most of the stuff that my aunt cooked was delicious, but probably her *feijão* is what I miss the most. Everyone makes *feijão*, but it's different in each family. Some people like soup-like *feijão*, and some families make theirs a bit stew-like. And I grew up with my aunt's *feijão*, so that's my favorite style.

Although Asami retains a close relationship with her mother now, her mother was still *dekasegi*, constantly moving around different parts of Japan for work at the time of our interview session. Because she understood the nature of her mother's lifestyle, Asami did not resent her mother for not providing typical maternal work such as making home-cooked meals when she lived in Japan. Instead, her idea of the taste of home extended to her experiences of being raised by other family members, which was initially a foreign taste to her, but eventually became her favorite taste, reminding her of her memories growing up in Brazil.

Similarly, nine interviewees mentioned that their grandmothers cooked food because both of their parents worked full-time in Brazil or were in Japan as *dekasegi*. Whether grandmothers were Japanese, Nikkei Brazilian, or Brazilian, the food they made also became a medium of nostalgia, in the sense that the most of these interviewees' grandmothers had passed away since and the interviewees longed for the taste of their childhood that they could no longer recreate or eat with their grandmothers.

Other interviewees who grew up separately from their parents also had an extended idea of home-cooked meals that transcended nuclear family bounds. For example, Rika named two distinctive dishes that she regarded as *ofukuro no aji* with vivid memory for each in Japan and Brazil, so her idea of a home cooked meal was not a singular.

> Hmm… It's difficult because in my case, it's mixed between my mom's food and my aunt's cooking. I guess for something that I have lots of memories is this simple fried rice that my mom made. It's just eggs, rice, and seasonings, but it's special because she made it for me when I really needed it, like when I was angry, sad, or really hungry… With my aunt, it's her *feijoada* because it's something my family never made at home, and it's really good. My aunt always liked to invite lots of people from the Brazilian community to eat together, so for *feijoada*, it takes a lot of time and there are also many ingredients you have to put in. So, when she made it, she just used it as an excuse to invite people to make a party. My aunt is a very sociable person, and she made many friends, mostly Nikkei and Brazilian and a few Japanese people. I think it's funny to think that I grew up within a mix of different people…

Both Asami and Rika experienced transnational familyhood, in which their parents chose to create untraditional family dynamics where parents and children forged transnational affective ties. Though difficult, their parents felt it was in the best interest of their children. Asami's parents decided to continue as *dekasegi* to maintain economic stability, while counting on their family in Brazil to raise Asami and her sister. In Rika's case, her parents sent her to Japan alone so that she could get what they felt were better educational credentials and therefore hopefully achieve a higher socioeconomic status than her parents in Brazil.

Their parents decided to be 'absent' during the children's adolescence to pursue economic stability or better educational outcomes for their children. Such parental decisions to live in different parts of the world evoke notion of caring work in studies of transnational migrants. The pioneering scholar of affectional ties among migrant families, Francisco-Menchavez, shed light on intimate family narratives of Filipino migrant families, and examined the ways in which parents bear a sense of guilt, deal with great distance, and cope with being physically absent from their children's lives while devoting themselves to earning income, albeit often times in low-wage labor jobs in developed countries (Francisco-Menchavez 2018a, 2018b). Unlike a traditional parent-child relationship that takes place in romanticized 'warm,' 'fuzzy,' and other idealistic images of family affection, especially in Western cultures, transnational

migrant families construct new forms of family care work by utilizing digital technologies and ICT to supplement the lack of real-time communications and intimate family space while they live far from each other (Francisco 2015b; Hillyer 2020).

By living with her Nikkei Brazilian aunt and uncle, Rika grew up in a cultural environment similar to her first home – speaking Portuguese with her aunt and uncle and eating both Japanese and Brazilian home-cooked food – while she started going to an international school in the Yokohama area. She also grew up becoming a part of the Brazilian community within her relatives' networks in their neighborhood. Still, Rika had to become more mature for her age to accept her aunt and uncle's guidance, as they became her primary caretakers in Japan, disciplining her in regard to both life and food habits. In our interview, it was clear that Rika felt that she could not complain about certain things that were provided by her aunt, especially when she talked about breakfast:

> Rumika: So, you said that you liked eating bread with ham and cheese for breakfast, but your aunt started making rice for breakfast. Did you ever tell her that you prefer bread to rice?
>
> Rika: Usually, how can I say… I always woke up with weak energy, so I was usually not interested in food and eating breakfast in the morning. But I ate the things [breakfast] because I had to eat. Something lighter would have been easier for me, but I had this kind of education since I was a child. I think it's because of my grandparents and [the fact that] they experienced the war. They have a strong concept of *mottainai*, and to be grateful for the food that we have. So, I always had this education of eating and appreciating all the things that are served.

Mottainai is a Japanese word with an alleged Buddhist origin, which expresses the regret and sentiment towards things that are lost or disposed of, often indicating resources and any waste of various sorts, including food (Siniawer 2018). Despite only being a teenager, Rika learned to minimize her inner voice and desire and adapt to her new environment. As studies have shown (Francisco 2015a; Parreñas 2005), extended family networks are lifelines for

migrant families in sustaining their transnational family dynamics. They are one of the few means for parents to make economically-motivated migration possible, because they know that their children are safe and taken care of by trusted family members. Just like Rika, migrant children often perform their part of care work by showing an understanding of new rules, minimizing anger toward both their parents abroad and their relatives who took care of them. Therefore, children's family care work is a crucial part of the mutual effort between transnational parents and children to maintain and nurture their intimate family bonds. However, the active role children play in maintaining these bonds, such as Rika's efforts to remain reasonable and understanding instead of getting sad or frustrated with her living arrangement in Japan, have received limited attention from scholars (Francisco-Menchavez 2018a).

Some interviewees remembered times their diets changed drastically when they came to Japan as *dekasegi* with one of their parents. This study found six interviewees who came to Japan with their fathers, who recalled that their fathers stepped up and made meals (mainly dinner), while their mothers and siblings remained in Brazil. One interviewee named Luiz came to Japan as a *dekasegi* with his father when he was 18.

> When I first came to Japan, I couldn't really eat a *bento* box provided from the factory. The factory didn't have a cafeteria, so lunch bento was deducted from my salary. I have had some Japanese food that my grandma made like *manjū* [a Japanese confectionary usually filled with red beans] and *zōsui* [porridge] in Brazil, but never had something like *tsukemono* [Japanese pickles, usually included in generic *bento*] until I came to Japan. The *bento* really didn't suit me – sometimes I could only eat rice and the side of salad in there. I'm not used to instant food, so even something like miso soup, I won't eat it unless it's homemade. So, my father and I didn't usually buy *bento* from convenience stores either. Because we were both working during weekdays, my father usually cooked a lot of food during the weekend. So, we ate the same dinner for an entire week [*laugh*]. It was usually rice, beans, some kind of meat, and not so much vegetables. My aunt was living not too far from us at that time, and she sent her home-made *feijão* every once in a while. A bit complicated stew-dish like *feijão* was something my father couldn't cook, so the aunt shared her *feijão* with us. Meat was usually *linguiça* (Portuguese sausage) because it can be cooked quicker and easier than raw meat."

Similar to Luiz's case, some interviewees' fathers played an important role in taking care of the logistics at home while interviewees became accustomed to new jobs and lifestyles in Japan. Since interviewees' fathers were not often the primary caretakers or home chefs in Brazil, interviewees who traveled to Japan with their father were often exposed to new foods than what they received from their mothers. One interviewee named Orlando said, "My father used to cook really good, but the first time he cooked something for me was when I moved to Japan and I came to live with him. If my mom was at home, it was always my mom who cooked the family meal."

This father-son living arrangement in Japan also provided the interviewees opportunities to acquire their father's food preferences and 'tastes,' which they had not known in Brazil. While socialization around cooking is often seen as a parallel to gendered inequalities due to its prevalent connections to domestic foodwork and femininity (Oleschuk 2020), such interviewees had somewhat untraditional experiences, learning cooking from their fathers, in contrast to the traditional experiences of "cooking by our mother's side" (p. 39).

For example, Roberto, a white-collar worker who retained a white-collar job from Brazil, lived with his *dekasegi* father when he first came to Japan in 2016. Due to his intense work schedule and a practical preference, Roberto is one of the few interviewees who preferred ready-made food from convenience stores and quick meals from Japanese-style fast food eateries because he did not want to spare his time for cooking. He also maintained some dietary lifestyle habits from Brazil such as drinking soda regularly. Reflecting on his earlier days about food, Roberto told me that he would never have discovered his new favorite food, 'raw egg on rice,' or *tamago-kake gohan*, unless his father introduced it to him in Japan. This is a popular way of eating rice in Japan for any type of meal. As the name literally suggests, it is a simple dish

mixing a raw cracked egg in a bowl of steamed rice with a drizzle of soy sauce or other condiments, though it must be made with fresh eggs due to a risk of foodborne illness. In Brazil, eating raw eggs is 'prohibited' due to the dangers of salmonella, and so Japanese living there usually must give up this dish. Roberto's father is from Japan and married Roberto's Nikkei Brazilian mother in Brazil. So, Roberto did not learn about his father's Japanese foodways and food culture until he moved in with his father at the age of 38. Thanks to his father, who took initiatives in the kitchen, Roberto described that he started eating healthier, overall, in Japan than he did in Brazil.

> Roberto: I came to Japan in 2016, and in the beginning I was working in the office, so I didn't change my lifestyle and weight that much from Brazil. I was living with my father here in Japan at that time. My father used to cook food, so I was mainly eating Japanese food when I was living with him. He usually cooked food with lots of vegetables and fish. I still like to drink soda until today, but when I lived with my father, we mainly had tea. He liked to prepare his own food, and I was forced to eat it [laugh]. My father, I think he doesn't like meat at all. He prefers fish… When we lived together, he used to complain that I bought more chicken than he would be able to consume. So, he definitely has more Japanese taste.
>
> Rumika: What is your favorite dish that he made, if you remember anything?
>
> Roberto: Probably, *yasai nabe* (vegetable hot pot). You put all veggies in and prepare, and it'd last for a week [laugh]. You can put anything in the nabe, like *daikon* (radish), *negi* (green onions), and whatever other vegetables. Definitely, he ate healthier than me in Japan. I consume food differently from him.

Roberto said that the Japanese food he grew up eating in Brazil, even his Nikkei Brazilian grandmother's food, was seasoned strongly with salt and sugar to fit the Brazilian taste. Therefore, Roberto's father's cooking provided his first encounter with 'real' Japanese food, which he found healthier in the sense that food was seasoned mildly and cooked with less oil and plenty of vegetables. Roberto was adamant that he still prefers Brazilian food to Japanese food because of the flavor and meat-centered meals. In fact, now that his father is retired and has gone back to Brazil and Roberto lives by himself, Roberto likes to cook Brazilian food. However, he

also thinks that his diet is more balanced and healthier in Japan than in Brazil. As many interviewees struggled to adapt to the change of diet when they first started living in Japan, Roberto's adjustment to Japanese food was facilitated by his father, who was able to perform care work through food, and specifically Japanese food.

As such, this study observed that many interviewees have lived in Japan experiencing unconventional forms of care work through their family networks. The literature on migrant families often underscores the roles of migrant mothers and their sacrifices, and the mostly inactive roles of fathers in housework and day-to-day decision-making processes (Pratt 2012; Parreñas 2005). However, my interviewees' narratives underscored: (1) empathy and understanding for their parents' decision of living transnationally between Japan and Brazil, especially related to *dekasegi*, and (2) the fact that fathers blurred the gendered division of labor by playing proactive roles in the kitchen to fulfill a mother's roles while working full-time with their children in Japan. Not all interviewees had relatives in Japan, but in the cases of Rika and Luiz, relatives were a crucial part of their support system, especially in regard to food. Nikkei Brazilians' transnational familyhood might not always fit into typical notions of nuclear family dynamics, but their efforts and sacrifices have helped the interviewees realize that their parents had the interviewees' best interest at heart while also providing home-cooked meals prepared either by themselves or extended family members.

Saudade

In her work on food, Janowski describes eating as a sensual process and argues that food has an "emotional strength," which she says has "a particularly powerful ability to recall the past" and "a potent ability to manipulate feelings and behavior" for the future (2012:182). Eating, therefore, evokes personal and/or group memories of foodways, nostalgia, and shared

memories that may help migrants maintain sociocultural ties and belonging to their homelands. However, it also suggests the emergence of an in-between identity for second-generation migrants who may reject the "old" foodways of their parents and grandparents due to their lack of familiarity with that part of their identity.

While some interviewees felt immediate joy when they encountered Brazilian food in Japan, others used the Brazilian word *saudad*e, a deep emotional state which has a deeper melancholic connotation than nostalgia. Although Sabrina is very content with her staple Japanese diet, which usually entails a set of rice, miso soup, and natto, she also misses cooking *feijão* regularly without worrying about getting pricy cans of *feijão* and hearts of palm in accordance with her grocery budget. Sabrina feels *saudade* not just for the foods themselves, but the food-associated memories about the places, culture, and people she knew during her life in Brazil.

Interviewees who shared these sentiments toward Brazilian food did not have their family members living close to them, but rather lived in Japan on their own with their family members still living in Brazil. According to Ishi (2003), the shadow of *saudade* is a common emotion found among Brazilians living abroad, including Nikkei Brazilians in Japan, which serves as "the imaginary bridge" sustaining ties with their beloved home country and idealized notions of home (92). For an interviewee like Rika, who has been living back and forth in Japan and Brazil for decades, the emotional lacuna is deep-seated and cannot be fulfilled until she goes back to Brazil one day, despite increased access to Brazilian food and grocery items in Japan that ease her cravings for Brazilian food in some ways.

> I think I was more homesick about food when I came to Japan because it [Brazilian food] was a rare thing at that time. So, when I just saw something related to Brazil, I'm like wow! But it's becoming a little bit common here and many people know *churrasco*, and we can have some ingredients here. It's not very nostalgic anymore, but I think one thing

> still makes me feel nostalgia is Brazilian snacks that are not sold in Japan…It's kind of mixed feelings because at the same time I'm happy to have that kind of like Brazilian food here, but I'm kind of sad because it's not exactly the same. I can't help noticing that something is different. And maybe also it proves to me more that I'm not in Brazil.

Rika's remarks also highlight the fact that, despite the emergence of transnational market channels making Brazilian commodities more accessible in Japan, Nikkei Brazilians living in urban areas of Japan feel that Brazilian food in Japan does not completely replicate the taste of food in Brazil. As phrased by another interviewee named Paulo:

> When I had Brazilian food at this Brazilian style bar in Tokyo, I wasn't happy. When I saw the menu, I'm like, wow that sounds amazing! But when I actually tasted it, I was… a little bit disappointed, so my mood went down [laugh]. It was good to try, since it's been a while [since I've eaten Brazilian food], but it was not what I expected, right? But when I was in Oizumi and visited this one restaurant there, I first had Brazilian snacks, and I ate everything. Like, after I had the first thing I ordered, then I ordered a lot. I knew the place served real Brazilian food and the experience there was more satisfying."

Although there are Brazilian restaurants that can satisfy the palates of Nikkei Brazilian eaters, interviewees living in urban centers could hardly take advantage of such places unless they made a special trip to 'Little Brazil' neighborhoods or areas, which are mostly located in more suburban areas. Even an upper-middle class interviewee like Paulo could not overcome the geographic limitation to access authentic Brazilian food easily from Tokyo, which goes to show that Brazilian food remains a niche kind of food in Japan's mainstream consumer culture and restaurant industry.

Culinary Identity

Migrants' foodways are interconnected with tension and symbolic conflicts when migrants are deemed as threats to a host country and its cultural, religious, and social values. Parasecoli underscores the binary position of "Self" and "Other" as perpetuated and shaped by "sociopolitical power, cultural capital, and sheer economic clout" (2014:418). This instability

and vulnerability of migrants and their foodways can provide an avenue for exploring the emotional, objectified, and subjective experiences of migrants whose food-related needs for specific environments, cultural understandings, and embodied desires receive limited attention in the present-day academic focus on globalization and transnationalism. Parasecoli suggests that studies analyzing the culinary identity of diasporic populations greatly contribute to studies of globalization with a focus on subjective experience, because they observe the physical and emotional reactions of migrants, with food serving as a coping mechanism that anchors or re-constructs migrant identities amid the collective forces of globalization (2014).

The culinary identities of my interviewees have changed over the course of their time in Japan. Some Nikkei Brazilians' Japanese identities fluctuated when the were treated as foreigners by local Japanese, which led them to realize the Brazilian part of their 'self,' both culturally and socially. Their culinary identity journey parallels this process, and some interviewees came to realize that their culinary identity was more rooted in their Brazilian side than their Japanese side. Carlos grew up eating both Japanese and Brazilian food, and before coming to Japan he was excited with the prospect that he would be eating Japanese food regularly. However, from his second year in Japan, Carlos found himself missing his favorite food from Brazil badly, such as Brazilian pizza and *feijoada*. As Ikebuchi and Ketchell contended, "it is through the consumption and production of food that many come to know who they are as cultural citizens" (2020:15). Although Carlos used to eat Japanese food frequently both at home and at restaurants in Brazil, he realized by living in Japan that Brazilian food was an indispensable part of his everyday diet as well.

In fact, Carlos was not the only interviewee who had cravings for everyday staples from Brazil. Several interviewees talked about how they miss *feijão,* the stewed beans that are present

in almost any meal of the day in Brazil. A dish like *feijão* became a common object of *saudade* due to its inaccessibility and rarity in Japan. As simple as *feijão* might appear, the Brazilian staple requires a pressure cooker and time commitment in a kitchen to cook. Hence, many interviewees compromised by purchasing cans of cooked *feijão*, instead of cooking it from scratch. According to Ishi (2003), mundane objects that were not highly appreciated at home can actually make individuals "miss" their homeland the most once they move abroad (p. 92). Some interviewees said that they felt *saudade* most intensely when longing for familial and social rituals tied to food, and not necessarily just when longing for the food itself. For example, many interviewees said that they did not particularly crave the black bean and rice stew *feijoada* while living in Brazil, but because they missed their families and social rituals once they moved to Japan, they found themselves craving the dish regularly as a kind of remedy for their feelings of nostalgia and longing. Such nostalgia and longing did not stem from the food itself, but from the family with whom that food was inextricably linked in their memories.

Some interviewees also realized that Japanese food in Japan consisted of more varieties than the Japanese food that they were accustomed to in Brazil. For example, Rika said that she never had "real Japanese food" until she came to Japan when she was 15. When I asked her what she meant by "real Japanese food," she clarified it as Japanese food eaten at home in Japan. "I knew Japanese food as gourmet places like sushi restaurants," Rika said, "so when I first had nimono (Japanese vegetables simmered with sugar and soy sauce), I was really surprised by how sweet the taste was. You never find sweet flavors in Brazilian meals. And it took me a while to get used to the flavor. It's still not my favorite flavor today [laugh]."

In another example, Maki, a third-generation Nikkei Brazilian who came to Japan with her siblings and *dekasegi* parents, explained that her everyday Japanese food was Brazilian-style,

adapted from her Japanese mother who often cooked stir-fried vegetables with soy sauce and mirin:

> If you make legit Japanese food, which I try sometimes, maybe it's more work…The other day, I prepared dashi broth to cook some dishes, which takes a lot of time. But my mother, she never made dashi broth from scratch. She would use *hondashi* [dashi flavor seasoning]. I guess in Japan, there are people who use *hondashi* too, but most people know how to make dashi broth. In Brazil, our cooking is adapted with the ingredients we have there, and I'm more used to cooking dishes in the style I learned there than here in Japan.

Based on Maki's description, it appears that her mother's Japanese cooking was simplified slightly due to the availability of certain seasonings and ingredients in Brazil. By saying "legit Japanese food," Maki envisioned Japanese food in Japan as a more elevated and delicate cuisine than the Japanese food that she knew from Brazil. Even though Maki has been living in Japan over a decade and cooked at home regularly, her fundamental cooking style remains as it was in Brazil, and "legit Japanese food" is something she tries when she has spare time or experiments with recipes that take more time and preparation.

In fact, nearly half of interviewees (N=25) talked about their surprising encounter with 'sweet' tastes in Japanese meals, and many had a hard time getting used to the flavor. In Brazilian cooking, salt is the main seasoning in savory dishes, and sugar is used only for baked goods and confectionaries (Terashima and Kawada 2003). Thus, before coming to Japan many Nikkei Brazilians never tasted a combined sweet-and-salty flavor, often seasoned with sugar and soy sauce, which is a very common combination of seasonings in Japanese meat, fish, and vegetable dishes. For example, *tamagoyaki* (rolled omelet) is one of the best-known egg dishes in Japanese cooking, which Japanese people often season with sugar and soy sauce or salt and dashi-broth. When I asked interviewees the type of *tamagoyaki* flavor that they were familiar with, only two interviewees answered that their family cooked sweet tamagoyaki, and the rest of

them mentioned that they had never tasted sweet tamagoyaki until they came to Japan, and added that they found the flavor strange. The taste of *nimono,* simmered vegetables cooked with soy sauce and sugar or mirin, which Rika found peculiar, was already part of the repertoire of common cooking techniques in Japan's Meiji period (Cwiertka 2006). Thus, it is likely that Japanese who moved to Brazil in the pre-war period were familiar with sweet-and-salty flavor, but this seasoning method became less common as later Nikkei generations became acculturated with Brazilian food and its salty flavor.

It was common among Nikkei Brazilian interviewees to discover this flavor difference when they first came to Japan, due to the difference of staple ingredients like Sakura soy sauce, as mentioned in Chapter 3. The difference also partially derives from the distinctive feature of the migrants' food, which was a hybrid cuisine combining Japanese and Brazilian influences eaten by early Nikkei Brazilians. Since many interviewees understood Brazilian food as a mix of different cuisines brought by immigrants, Japanese food consisted of a large picture of Brazilian food to some interviewees, blurring an ethnic-based categorization that distinguished what Brazilian and Japanese food ought to be.

Particularly among the interviewees who had grandparents cooking for the family, it was typical to serve miso soup, Japanese pickles, or other Japanese side dishes alongside rice and beans and grilled meat. This menu was very typical in any family meal in Brazil, whether it was lunch or dinner. Therefore, some interviewees came to realize that a difference between Japanese food in Japan and the Japanese food consumed in their immigrant diet in Brazil. Paulo, for example, was already familiar with some Japanese dishes, and some food that he encountered at convenience stores and restaurants in Japan tasted similar to how they tasted at his family dinner in Brazil. But after exploring different restaurants in Japan, he also discovered that Japanese food

could taste "simple and sophisticated," which he did not find in Japanese food in Brazil that he was accustomed to.

> Paulo: In Brazilian food, they use more heavier ingredients with meat and fat, but at the same time, they are what make the dishes tastier. In Japanese food, they care so much more about how you treat the ingredients, and avoid using salty ingredients. The taste is simple but sophisticated and complex.
>
> Rumika: Did you always think that Japanese food was simpler and more sophisticated, going back to your time in Brazil?
>
> Paulo: I think that I found out after I moved to Japan. Of course, there are some Japanese dishes that we prepare in my family which taste like pretty much same [with Japan]. But you don't know how to compare, right?

When I asked interviewees to elaborate on the main differences between Japanese and Brazilian food, their most common responses included the difference of ingredients and preparation styles and the contrast of 'heavy' and 'light' dishes. Only thirteen interviewees talked about the delicacy and sensory aspects of Japanese food, and these interviewees also happened to be educated, upper-middle class or middle-class individuals who work in the culinary industry. Such comments by interviewees corroborate Warde's remark on food and social class, specifically when he argued that "[t]here is evidence that the habit of talking about food and its qualities, or evaluating it in aesthetic terms, is predominantly a trait of the professional and managerial middle-class fractions" (1997:107). Taking Warde's remark inversely, four of my upper-middle class interviewees did not talk about food in aesthetic terms (e.g. describing Japanese food as 'too bland'), meaning that not all educated, upper-middle class interviewees possessed refined food tastes. It further suggests that the development of one's socioeconomic status and professional career does not neatly correlate with the linear progression of one's taste development. Some of my data contrast with Bourdieu's contention of homology between culture and class, which posits that habitus is developed through lifestyle, family socialization,

and formal education based on one's social class from an early stage of life (Bourdieu 1984). Some interviewees in my study acquired their own taste in a cross-class manner by multiplying their cultural capital in their social or professional life spheres and by having lived transnational lives in Japan and Brazil and experiencing different occupations beyond manual labor.

Transnational culinary identity

Sabrina was another interviewee who developed her palate by being exposed to the variations of Japanese food since coming to Japan. Although Sabrina advanced her understanding of Japanese food and flavors after coming to Japan, her culinary expressions retained the Brazilian style that she shared with her Nikkei Brazilian friends. Thus, she had a hard time answering my question when I asked her whether she was more accustomed to Japanese or Brazilian food:

> That's a difficult question. I really like to cook for myself and my friends, but I will feel scared if I have to cook for Japanese women who really know how to cook Japanese food because there are many proper steps in cooking Japanese food. Not that I'm confident with my cooking skills of Brazilian food, either, because I only know basics… So, I guess I'm more confident with Japanese cooking skill. I think my friends, especially Brazilian friends that I have here, they really enjoy my Japanese food. So, they are always like 'Oh Sabrina, can you cook Japanese food for me?' [laugh] They really like my food like Japanese curry and *udon*, because I feel that I cook in a way that is more adapted to Brazilian [laugh]. The food is very Japanese, but it's more to the Brazilian taste so that's why my Brazilian friends like it… I think this is also a Brazilian thing to invite your friends at home for food. At my place, I always invite people to my home. But I noticed that it's different in Japan. You have to be really close to someone to invite them to your place. In Brazil, you don't need to be that close [to be invited].

The transnational spectrum of Sabrina's culinary skills raises an interesting point. Sabrina is keenly aware of the subtle difference between Japanese food in Japan and Brazil, the latter of which she cooks for her Brazilian friends who see Sabrina as a "great Brazilian-style Japanese food chef." Despite the fact that her apartment has a small kitchen with a hotplate with one

burner —a factor that interviewees often cited as discouraging them from cooking intricate dishes at home—the social custom of Sabrina's diet-related lifestyle actually carried over from Brazil. In other words, the small space issue in the Japanese apartment did not stop Sabrina from inviting her Brazilian friends, who appreciated the Brazilian flavors in Sabrina's Japanese food, which enabled her to remake her physical home space and the cultural making of home and identity. Sabrina's example denies the binary frame of 'either Japanese or Brazilian identity' that many Nikkei Brazilians have struggled in during the course of their lives, by asserting that identity and their foodways can be both Japanese and Brazilian at the same time.

Performing taste between two cultures

The way in which migrants' food practices are absorbed into cultural homogenization in a host society is mediated by their experiences of dislocation and disorientation and how they anchor themselves in a host society both socially and culturally, which can be painful and suffocating. In this sense, Japanese descendants outside their homeland inhabit dual cultural environments: the outer environment where they learn to fit into a host society, and the inner environment where they share cultural rituals and lexicons with family members. Ikebuchi and Ketchell have written about the contradiction of pleasure and inferiority in practicing two distinctive diets growing up in Canada as Japanese Canadians, and the difficulty of trying to conform in the dominant dietary practice (normative Western foodways in Canada) while keeping Japanese culinary identity as secondary or inferior (2020).

For interviewees who were culturally and socially pressured to fit into Brazilian society, food was the only cultural expression through which they retained their Japaneseness, whereas they did not need to show or prove their Brazilianness to others. Ian, a third generation Nikkei

Brazilian who has worked for a multinational corporation in Tokyo since 2016, opened up about his suppressed childhood, during which he was bullied at the local Japanese elementary school for not being able to speak Japanese. Since his parents were not actively involved with the local Japanese community, such as the temple and Japanese community center, Ian did not have frequent contact with Japanese culture growing up. Japanese was "the secret language for adults" that his parents spoke to each other. Still, food that his family consumed at home was mainly Japanese, and Brazilian food was something Ian experienced mostly outside his home.

Unfortunately, it is very common that Japanese descendants living abroad prefer to keep their cultural practices to themselves (Omori 2017:155). Ian's opportunity to cultivate his language and cultural connection with Japan was disrupted by outside forces imposing their expectations of how Japanese/Brazilians ought to be. Ikebuchi and Ketchell have illustrated a social pressure that Japanese Canadians felt in which they had to perform their Canadian-ness by speaking English and conforming to Western cultural norms (2020). Ian's example, on the other hand, shows that he had to signify his Japaneseness to blend in with his Japanese-speaking peers at the school, otherwise he would not be considered Japanese enough to be welcomed into the circle of Japanese and Japanese-speaking Nikkei Brazilian kids in his neighborhood. As such, Nikkei Brazilians are expected to conform to both Brazilian and Japanese sociocultural environments depending on the context, and the failure to do so can potentially cause trauma among Nikkei Brazilians from a young age. Ian's upbringing, therefore, is an example of a Nikkei Brazilian whose Japanese roots were manifested in his mother's home-cooked meals and rituals, despite his lack of cultural understanding of Japanese food and collective experiences sharing food and culture with the larger Nikkei community outside his family.

As such, to some interviewees, Japanese food is the cuisine that their family made at home, so it's the taste of home conjuring up family memories and nostalgia in Brazil, but not necessarily evoking affective ties to Japan. This pattern was observed among interviewees who grew up with parents who cooked Japanese food, though these interviewees did not develop habits of eating and making Japanese food on their own in their adulthood. Ian, for example, cooked pasta, meat, and vegetables in Western style at his apartment, but never made Japanese food. Despite the fact that Ian had easier access to Japanese food than he ever had before due to living in Japan, Japanese food in his mind remained a food that he only ate at home, prepared by his mother, who cooked quintessential Japanese menus. His adult taste preference was influenced by the food he encountered outside.

Part of the reason that some interviewees did not cook such quintessential Japanese menus can be explained by their single lifestyle. Bianca, who had a similar lifestyle to Ian, worked for a multinational corporation in Tokyo and lived on her own. She expressed that so-called 'home-cooked' Japanese-style meals like the ones her mother used to cook "doesn't work for a single lifestyle," primarily due to lengthy preparation and cooking times and the presence of several side dishes that each require their own special preparation. Moreover, Bianca explained that these kinds of meals felt too large to eat by herself, and that she often stopped herself from preparing such meals due to concerns over storing and potentially wasting unfinished food. The cases of both Bianca and Ian are representative of how tastes of home, although appreciated and savored, can be inherently restrictive in their independent work and life circumstances, and therefore separate from what interviewees tend to cook and eat in their everyday diets.

Identity

All interviewees except one reported that they experienced a change of selfhood or identity over the course of their lives between Japan and Brazil. Some interviewees assumed they were returning to their ancestral home where they truly belonged, but found Japanese cultural and social customs foreign. Bianca, for example, confirmed her Brazilian cultural identity by experiencing schooling and professional work in Japan.

> In Brazil, we [Nikkei Brazilians] are not Japanese descendants. We are Japanese, right? But when you come to Japan, you're not Japanese. It's completely different. Because you create this image that you have a lot to do with Japanese culture. But when you come here, you realize that you don't have anything to do with the culture. So, it was the first identity shock, I guess. I think being a Brazilian in Japan in general can be a little bit struggling because I think we have different values in many things, you know, like the display of affection even when you meet someone for the first time, talking loud, and touching people – it's part of our culture. But I think it's seen as a bit too much in Japan, so it's kind of hard to be myself here.

Bianca's quote here reflects Yamashiro's study (2011), which posited that Japanese Americans who 'return' to Japan actually become socially and linguistically othered despite living in their ancestral homeland (p. 1518). Bianca's experience demonstrates a textbook example of identity conflict that many Nikkei Brazilians experience upon their arrival in Japan. Her sentiment that she could not be her true self as a result of following Japanese cultural norms while suppressing her Brazilian body language can be interpreted as the front and backstage interplay in Goffman's dramaturgical theory (1959). In the dramaturgical sense, Bianca learned to deploy "the techniques of impression management employed in a given establishment" when she interacted with Japanese people to perform a culturally aligned character in Japanese society (Goffman 1959:2), while her true Brazilian self was put off to the backstage of her life. Although Bianca has had a finance job with a promising career in Tokyo since 2016, she had few Japanese friends due to her limited Japanese proficiency at the time of our interview in 2021. As a result,

her friends in Japan were fellow Nikkei Brazilians whom she met in Japan or Brazil, recreating similar social networks that she had in Brazil. Some interviewees came to recognize their Brazilianness and cultural identity that was more closely affiliated with Brazil than Japan, so life in Japan brought a new perspective on Japanese heritage and identity for some interviewees.

Paulo rediscovered and affirmed his unique bicultural background for being a Nikkei Brazilian having started his in time in Japan by living in Tokyo. By interacting with local Japanese, Paulo realized that being a Nikkei Brazilian makes him unique, and he was therefore proud of his upbringing.

> Paulo: I think that when I came to Japan, I became more proud of myself and who I am and where I'm from. I think that that's the main difference. When I was in Brazil, it was just me, you know? Just a normal Brazilian guy, which was common in Brazil. Here in Japan, I'm like a Brazilian Japanese guy, but the Brazilian Japanese guy, you know?
>
> Rumika: Can you elaborate on that? Like, you're prouder to be…?
>
> Paulo: Yeah, so, I think that, for example, right now here in Japan, I feel that when people look at me, they see a Japanese. But when they talk to me, they understand that I'm not Japanese, so they get more interested in where I'm from and how I came to Japan and why, right? Through these, they kind of like 'wow that's so different' and 'that's so amazing,' those kinds of things.

Paulo's comment here evokes a popular notion about *hāfu*, the common Japanese term to indicate someone with one Japanese parent and one non-Japanese parent. The term is lightly used among Japanese people and media to connote the fact that a person is multi-ethnic, but the term became a point of academic inquiry concerning issues of labeling and ethnic misidentification, with several studies analyzing the experiences of part-Japanese individuals in Japan (Oshima 2014; Sato 2021; Yamashiro 2013).

It is perhaps important to underscore that Paulo felt flattered about being different from generic Japanese in his professional life in Tokyo, which is not a common place of residence for Nikkei Brazilians. In this sense, if Paulo lived in a city with more Nikkei Brazilians, like

Hamamatsu or Ōizumi, he may be viewed one of many 'Brazilian Japanese guys' in the area. This difference is important because Paulo's Japanese Brazilian background was perceived with positive curiosity in Tokyo, where people are generally unaware of Japan and Brazil's historical relationship. Thus, Japanese people meeting a Nikkei Brazilian for the first time in Tokyo might not have stereotypes or negative biases towards Brazilian migrants like some locals in Hamamatsu and Ōizumi. Generally, someone like Paulo who is a white-collar employee working in a multinational financial corporation is not categorized the same as blue-collar foreign workers in Japan, such as *dekasegi (*Yamashiro 2013). Thus, Paulo was able to avoid a class bias and the label of 'Brazilian' or '*dekasegi*,' and his interactions with local Japanese who were genuinely curious about his bicultural backgrounds boosted his confidence and self-esteem.

For one interviewee named Penny, living in Japan brought an opportunity to reconcile with a difficult part of her history and identity of growing up as a Nikkei in Brazilian society. She despised being called and treated as Japanese in Brazil, which gave her the feeling of being put into a box or chided with stereotypes about Japanese. After living in Japan, she was able to learn more about Japanese culture and history in greater depth, and finally made peace with the Japanese aspects of her selfhood that she did not understand before coming to Japan. As a result, Penny was able to embrace her Japanese identity by discovering more about her family roots, and she became more comfortable with the idea of being "in-between" two ethnic groups and cultures:

> I started understanding many things about my education, my family, my parents' values, and what I learned as a kid. And I understood why I used to fight so much with my mom when I was younger because she's very Japanese, in her mentality, and the way she perceives and reacts to things. But I was living in Brazil back then, and there was always this conflict about being brought up by your Japanese family and living in Brazil. Outside of my home, I see other values and different ways of dealing with things in life. So, I kind of grew up in a conflict. And this is very common for Nikkei people that we don't want to be Nikkei. We don't want to be perceived as Japanese people in Brazil. We just

> want to mingle, but we can't because of our facial differences. So, since I was a kid until a young adult, I didn't want to have any connection with Japan. I didn't want people to call me like oh "*Japena*" or "*Japa*", (a Japanese girl) because there's all these stereotypes associated with Japanese or Nikkei people. So, I grew up in that context, but when I was around 20, I became more interested in learning about my family history. Why my grandparents had moved to Brazil, I didn't know that. So, I kind of started researching about my own family, and that was the start, the beginning of my interest about Japan. A few years later, I wanted to have an experience of living abroad, and that's when I came here for the first time in 2013. At that time, I realized that many things started to make sense and connect because I finally understood my family values, the way that I grew up, and the way that I was brought up. So that was very important for me to find this Japanese aspect of culture that I had it all the time, but I didn't really understand and then it made sense for me when I came here. and I started to appreciate more to have grown up in a Japanese family.

Being labeled as a "Japanese girl" from an early age significantly impacted Penny, so much so that she did not feel her genuine interest in learning about her family or Japanese culture until her early adulthood. The ways in which the Japanese label affected multiple aspects of Penny's life corroborates identity scholars' contention that labeling determines an individual's sense of self, self-esteem, self-image, behavior, and social identity (Goffman 2009; Kuther 1994). Living in Japan also brought objective perspectives on Brazilian culture that the interviewees had grown up with, and consequently they developed a comparative view of societal and cultural differences between Japan and Brazil. Carlos, for example, learned to adjust his communication style to the Japanese norm, and now finds it difficult to re-adjust to the Brazilian style, which he finds more bothersome after growing accustomed to communicating with his Japanese and his Nikkei friends in Japan.

> Before going to Japan, I was definitely more talkative and usually talked in a loud voice. And I used to not to care about rules, especially home rules. But when I came to Japan, I tried to blend myself in the Japanese culture. Because when I compare Japanese and Brazilian culture, I'd say Japanese culture has a stronger sense of community. So, the society rules are more communal and considerate for other people compared to the Brazilian society. For example, separating garbage, being silent after 9 pm. Even in conversations, try to listen more instead of, you know, talking out loud whatever you want to talk. I feel that because when I went back to Brazil and trying to talk to my friends, my friends were in that Brazilian style of conversation that is more they often

> cross out everybody they talk at the same time. I didn't see that conversation style in Japan, even among the Brazilian students. So, that is something that I still struggle with, how to point out my thoughts and position myself during a conversation because I feel like I lost that part of me. Sometimes, I prefer the Japanese way of communicating things. It's not direct, but more subtle and respectful in some ways. In Brazil, language could be harsh sometimes, and it's easy to offend people.

Ironically, Carlos's point on the individualistic approach and the lack of communal sense among Brazilian people match with the stereotypical descriptions about Brazilians often described by the local Japanese residents in the area where the Brazilian population is highly concentrated (De Carvalho 2003; Tsuda 2003; Nishida 2017). Micheli (2020) argues that this difference in cultural and behavioral norms is the leading cause of Nikkei Brazilians' estrangement from mainstream Japanese society, ultimately resulting in their social marginalization. Thus, as Carlos changed his approach and incorporated Japanese cultural norms and speech manners, he became more critical about the ways in which his Brazilian friends talked to him, which represented how he used to communicate with people before living in Japan. In this sense, Nikkei Brazilian individuals not only experience feelings of loss and estrangement with their Japanese identities, but also can gain introspective views on themselves before and after coming to Japan, and therefore discover the positives and negatives of both the Japanese and Brazilian cultures that they grew up with.

Non-static Brazilian cultural and culinary identity

Interviewees' taste palates also naturally changed based on their age and duration of living in Japan. Interviewees who had lived in Japan for more than a decade often said that they found some Brazilian foods too heavy or salty after they got used to the food in Japan, which is, generally speaking, mildly seasoned and served in smaller portions. For this reason, some interviewees even mentioned that they preferred going to *churrasco* restaurants which target Japanese patrons rather than those owned by (Nikkei) Brazilians and mostly popular among

Brazilian patrons. One interviewee named Oscar is a Nikkei Brazilian manager at Brazilian restaurant B, which is owned by a Japanese company that brought a popular Brazilian sportswear brand to Japan. When asked if his restaurant's food is curated for Japanese or Brazilian patrons, Oscar said:

> Probably, our food is in the middle place (between Japanese-favored food and authentic Brazilian food). After all, the staff at the restaurant have lived in Japan for a long time, so they don't cook food salty like Brazil. I myself started feeling that food in Brazil is too salty when I go back to Brazil. So our taste might be reflected in our food too. I don't think the current food is too salty for Japanese, but we have Nikkei or Brazilians patrons keep coming back too, so it must be still acceptable by Brazilians. And of course, I'm confident with the taste of the food (offered at the restaurant).

Brazilian restaurant A has been in business in central Tokyo since 2006, and has served Japanese and international patrons ever since. Because the Brazilian restaurant scene was dominated by the Brazilian chain restaurant Barbacoa in the early 2000s, which offered *churrasco* in a luxurious ambiance, the founders of restaurant A aimed to start a more casual and inviting churrascaria, according to Oscar. Oscar came to Japan as a *dekasegi* in 2003 and was drawn to restaurant A by his drinking friends who used to work there in 2007. Starting as a part-time server, Oscar gradually bore more responsibilities and developed his Japanese skills while working different part-time jobs, before eventually being promoted to a branch manager position in 2018. Being located in Tokyo helped restaurant A's longevity, as the restaurant is sustained by both Japanese and international patrons favoring the food that is not overly seasoned for Japanese taste, but balanced.

Interviewees who had been in Japan for less than five years were more inclined to characterize Japanese food as too mild and less filling and preferred Brazilian-style seasoning when they cooked at home, including Roberto, who came to Japan in 2016, and Luiz, who came to Japan in 2019. The exception to this demographic of favoring Brazilian food and flavor was

Margarete and her family from Chapter 4, who maintained an entirely Brazilian diet for decades. Meanwhile, most interviewees who had lived in Japan for over a decade, or for more years than they had spent in Brazil, expressed that their tastes changed as they aged, while maintaining some Brazilian foodways in their lives in Japan. Yoko, a home maker and a part-time cleaning worker in her 40's, reflected on her changing diet over the past 20 years with her Nikkei Brazilian husband and two teenage children.

> In Brazil, everything is salty. Nowadays, I really feel that my palate became mild. So even when I cook Brazilian food, it'd be seasoned good for me and my family, but it'd be not salty enough for Brazilians in Brazil… Since my mother made rice and miso soup regularly, the food did not change drastically when we moved to Japan. But unlike regular Japanese families, we always have some kind of meat dish as a centerpiece of meal [laugh]. But my husband misses Brazilian food more than anyone else, so I cook *feijão* twice or three times in a year, mostly for him. I don't miss *feijão* anymore, I'd rather eat natto as far as we are talking about the category of beans dish [laugh]. You know, rice and *feijão* make a golden combination representing the taste of home in Brazil, just like Japanese curry and rice – but we definitely eat more Japanese curry than *feijão*. It's not that we eat Japanese curry all the time, it's like once a month or so, but I cook it more frequently than *feijão.* For me, I like Japanese food better than Brazilian food at this stage of my life. Probably because of my age, I eat less deep-fried and rich food than before.

Like Yoko, many interviewees grew to prefer milder seasoning as they aged, and not necessarily because they were more distanced from Brazilian food. In a similar vein, an interviewee named Kumi, a non-Japanese student assistant in a middle school in her late 30's, realized that even when she ate Brazilian food occasionally, such as for a friend's birthday party, she experienced heartburn or indigestion because, she surmised, the food was heavy. As a result, as she aged, Kumi found that she could only eat a small portion. Moreover, Kumi's children also started to request less Brazilian food at home as they were exposed to Japanese and other genres of foods at school and elsewhere.

As a parent of teenage Nikkei children, Sayaka cooked *feijão* and deep-fried Brazilian snacks less often after her daughter became more self-conscious about her weight and

appearance as a teenager. Since many interviewees like Yoko and Kumi ate Japanese food regularly from Brazil, their shift from Brazilian food to Japanese food was not a drastic change. Sayaka, who could not eat any Japanese food in the beginning, expanded her palate through her Nikkei Brazilian husband, who introduced her to new foods to the point that she now loves Japanese confectionery and sushi. As such, female interviewees, who were responsible for feeding their family, naturally started cooking and eating Japanese food more frequently than Brazilian food, and their bodies started reacting better to Japanese quantities, flavors, and cooking methods of food, according to interviewees.

Foodways shaped the tastes of the descendants of first-generation Nikkei Brazilians who returned to Japan and started families. This study found eighteen Nikkei Brazilians who became parents in Japan, and their children's ages varied from an infant to college-age. Similar to Ray's (2004) analysis of the generational difference of Bengali-Americans' adaptabilities to food and consumption in the U.S., the Nikkei children of interviewees developed their palate for Japanese food quicker than their parents anticipated. Since such interviewees do not reside with their Brazilian parents or grandparents in Japan, their children will not be raised in the mix of Japanese and Brazilian meal style, which was common for the interviewees who grew up within Japanese and Brazilian multigenerational families in Brazil. Some of these interviewees' children mainly grew up with Japanese food, and they were not keen on the occasional appearance of Brazilian food in meals. Maya, the mother of 3-year-old boy, talked about the difficulty of raising her son with both Japanese and Brazilian food:

> Because of the foods that are served at daycare, Japanese food seems to suit him better. When he started eating more non-baby food, I tried to make Brazilian food more because he'd be eating Japanese food at the daycare and everywhere else. So, the least I could do is to feed him Brazilian food at home. But I think once he got used to Japanese food, I could tell that his palate has changed. He was curious in the beginning when I made Brazilian food like *feijão*. He loves Japanese white rice, and when I poured *feijão* over

> white rice… He was… He did not know how to eat it. It's either only eating rice or beans… He couldn't understand that he was supposed to eat them together [laugh].

Four interviewees mentioned that, at the time of interviews, their children were more used to Japanese food and did not favor Brazilian food at home. However, given their young age in which tastes have so much potential to change, Maya did not see her children's indifference toward Brazilian food as a negative:

> I usually cook *feijão* for myself, but I don't necessarily force my kids to eat it. My kids are not prone to eat *feijão*. But I believe that they have to know how the food is made and what is in it in order to get curious about the food, so I tell them that *feijão* is a good source of iron and healthy for them. If they tried a bit and thought that it's not for them, I'm ok with it as long as they eat healthy with Japanese food [laugh]. In the future, when they grow up and learn about different culture and food when they visit different countries, they will learn about different food and its unique flavor and customs. So, they might fall in love with Brazilian food when they get older, and that's ok for me.

As shown in the aforementioned stories of the interviewees who became mothers in Japan, it is likely that their children will not grow up with Nikkei immigrant diets like the interviewees themselves did in Brazil. However, all of their children are used to Japanese food and influenced by their mother's Brazilian foodways occasionally. However, the children who are rather confined within the Brazilian cultural environment or the children who moved to Japan after adolescence experienced challenges shifting from Brazilian to Japanese food.

The children of Nikkei or Japanese parents have more cultural exposure to both Brazilian and Japanese food from an early age. According to Mayumi, who works as an elementary school staff member assisting non-Japanese students with Portuguese-Japanese translations and their adjustment processes to Japanese classrooms and culture, the challenge associated with food is prevalent among children with Brazilian parents.

> Mayumi: Obviously, students with Nikkei parents who have more familiarities with Japanese food do much better. Some students from entirely Brazilian households are the ones who struggle a lot... In extreme cases, they can only eat rice but nothing else from school lunch. Some students can't eat Japanese food at all even after a year of living in

> Japan. When it happens, the classroom teacher asks me to speak with their parents, and I ask, the moms usually, to serve some Japanese food at home, even just a little bit so that the student can get used to the flavor. The parents respond in different ways. Some parents say that "well we don't eat Japanese food at home at all", or they are like "ok, I try to go to a family restaurant with kids and order some Japanese food", but even when parents make efforts, their kids are not responding to them well. The school lunch rules vary by each school too, but if the situation does not improve still, then we start a formal process of granting the student permission to bring their own food from home.
>
> Rumika: So, based on your experiences overseeing students at a couple of different schools throughout the year, do you encounter a student who struggles with school lunch every semester?
>
> Mayumi: Hmm, yes. It's case by case how to work with students. When a classroom teacher first asks me to check on the student and talk to him or her, I visit the classroom to talk to the student during lunch time and explain what each dish is. In a nutshell, my job is to communicate with students on behalf of the teacher, telling the students what the teacher would want to tell him or her.

Schools with high concentrations of non-Japanese students take the school lunch problems seriously, but they first ask parents and students to make efforts to get used to foods served by schools. However, the difference in school customs could present a cultural shock to children from Brazil. In Brazil, elementary through high there is no communal school lunch time in which students eat the same meal together with their peers.

In Toyohashi City in Aichi prefecture, known for its high population of Brazilian and Filipino factory workers, the city's Board of Education has made numerous informational documents available online in five different languages for new non-Japanese parents to help them understand and prepare for the Japanese school system. In one informational brochure distributed for non-Japanese parents preparing their children for elementary school, the section on school lunch notes that "In Japan, rice is not seasoned with salt and pepper. Many dishes are usually flavored with miso, soy sauce, sugar, and/or mirin (a cooking wine). If your child is not used to Japanese food, please have him/her try to get used to it little by little" (Toyohashi Board of Education 2021:9). Given the fact that rice is cooked with oil and seasonings in Brazil, the

first sentence in the bulletin indicates that some students even find plain rice, a basic staple in Japanese school lunch, foreign to their palate.

There is no data quantifying how many non-Japanese students struggle with Japan's school lunch and how many are part Brazilians, but students' adaptability to Japan's school lunch is more nuanced and can only be explained by examining numerous factors. Amanda, introduced in Chapter 4, said that she rarely ate Japanese food at home as a child, and therefore she struggled to eat school lunch in Japan. Eventually, she made an arrangement with her school to bring her own food from home. On the other hand, someone like Maya said that school lunch period was her "favorite time in school" and that she loved everything served at school lunch, even though her mother only cooked Brazilian food at home. However, as Amanda became more open to Japanese food in her early adulthood, she had a change of taste, showing that taste can be unpredictable and subject to change through different variables such as socialization and major life events like marriage and pregnancy.

Beyond the binary of 'either-Brazilian-or-Japanese'

Since this dissertation is interested in how Nikkei Brazilian individuals' diets changed from Brazil to Japan, the original interview questions centered around interviewees' familiarities, attitudes, practices, and relationships with Japanese and Brazilian food. However, it quickly became clear that interviewees' foodways involved more than just Japanese or Brazilian food. In other words, as shown in the cases of Adriana and Juan, culinary identities grow beyond national boundaries and countries of origin, as these two interviewees were exposed to different values and cuisines in their lives and chose diet options that suited their bodies over the courses of their lives. For example, Lia was the only interviewee in this research who was vegan.

Lia, a former third generation Nikkei Brazilian *dekasegi*, moved back and forth between Brazil and Japan over the course of 34 years, beginning at age six. Lia spent about 17 years total each in Brazil and Japan, and therefore grew up with a mix of Japanese and Brazilian food, like many interviewees. However, she disliked the taste of meat and has avoided meat dishes as long as she could remember. When she started a Portuguese and English translator job at a temporary staffing agency for non-Japanese workers in Japan, Lia switched to an entirely vegan diet and has been practicing the diet over the past nine years. For the past three years, Lia had been consulting with her dietitian in Brazil online regularly, who had been helping her design a weekly vegan menu. In so doing, Lia learned Indian-style vegan recipes from her dietitian. Lia went to a cross-fit gym during the weekdays and actually weighed each food item to ensure she consumed 180g of protein every day. Because Lia selected food based on plant-based nutritional values, she developed a cooking style that was neither Brazilian nor Japanese and arranged typical Brazilian or Japanese recipes in a vegan way. So, when she was asked if she is more used to cooking Brazilian or Japanese food, Lia laughed and replied, "Neither of them. Probably Indian-style."

For example, her dinner menu from one evening consisted of miso soup, salad, natto, and pumpkin stew made with *dal* (Indian style cooked beans). On weekends, Lia and her husband, who is also vegan, went out to explore different vegan foods at ramen shops and cafés in Nagoya that Lia found on social media and vegan food apps. Because her food choices revolved around vegan-friendly cooking and ingredients, Lia frequented Japanese and Indian grocery stores. Even though her neighborhood area had more Brazilian restaurant and grocery store options than other cities in Japan, Lia rarely went to Brazilian supermarkets or restaurants. Therefore, even though her Japanese colleagues at work were familiar with *churrasco* and went to Brazilian restaurants

often, Lia never joined them. Moreover, there were ten other Nikkei and Brazilian colleagues at her work, but Lia barely talked to them, except her boss.

> I only go to the office twice a week since the beginning of pandemic. There's one other office staff like me who is also Brazilian, and the rest of co-workers go everywhere to visit the sites where temporary workers are at. So, I really don't interact with them that much. My interest and hobby are different from them (Brazilian co-workers). My Japanese colleagues like to go check out cafes and new local business, so I guess I share more similar interests with them.

Lia added that she occasionally got her Brazilian food fix from her Filipino colleagues who liked to make and share home-made Brazilian and Filipino snacks with her. It might seem natural to assume that Nikkei Brazilian individuals would prefer to spend some time with Brazilian colleagues and share similar food-related interests more than they do with Japanese colleagues. However, those with diets and athletic lifestyles similar to Lia's may have suggest that those with similar cultural interests can sometimes be more meaningful in developing social networks than having the same national background. By identifying what she truly enjoyed eating and exploring, Lia's social life developed outside the generic categories of 'Brazilian' or 'Nikkei.' Aided by the fact that Lia speaks Japanese and has lived in Japan for more than a decade her preferences suggest that an interviewee's culinary culture and preference become a major factor in constructing social networks through common interests and hobbies in Japan.

Lia's dietary repertoire adapted from both Brazilian and Japanese cuisine may have been influenced from her childhood diet. For example, due to her diet preference from an early age, Lia's family made meatless dishes just for her, although everyone in her family ate meat except her. Lia particularly remembered her Japanese grandmother's cooking in Brazil when she was little. Her grandmother made vegetable sushi rolls, Japanese white rice (opposed to Brazilian-style rice cooked with seasonings and oil), burdock salad, and *farofa* (a toasted cassava flour mixture, a Brazilian side dish) made with Japanese soy. This dish is something Lia learned from

her Japanese grandmother, whom she lived with in Brazil when the rest of her family members were in Japan for dekasegi. On occasion, Lia cooked vegan *feijão* with black beans, onions, garlic, and tomato. From her vegan diet, Lia might not appear to have a quintessential Brazilian diet every day, but when asked what her favorite home-made meal is, she answered Japanese white rice and *feijão* without hesitation.

As seen in Lia's narrative, even for interviewees who highly value health and nutritional values, food intake choices are not solely determined by pragmatism, and it is often impossible for interviewees to decide whether Japanese or Brazilian food is tastier. Orlando, for example, is a trained *churrasco* chef who highly appreciated 'good food,' which he defined as foods created by chefs who really care about quality ingredients and the chemistry of cooking methods to make unique aesthetic flavors. Therefore, it was natural for Orlando to judge food by its cooking techniques, flavors, presentations, and various elements that speak to the quality of the food itself. However, even his artisan philosophy of food could get skewed when it came to Brazilian food because it was connected with feelings of nostalgia and memories from home. Orlando said:

> If you ask me what I like the most, it's hard to answer… because there is, how can I say, an affective memory from your childhood. Speaking as a chef, sometimes I can judge that this dish is better because of the taste, technique, or other reasons. Better how chefs produce the dish, better the dish tastes. But some plates like *feijoada*, for example, it is not a technical dish. *Feijoada* is not hard to make. But there's affective memories of my childhood that make me love the dish more than any fine, well-produced dishes. So, for me, it's impossible to say whether Japanese or Brazilian food is tastier.

As the interviewees grew their own taste palates and were exposed to different culinary cultures throughout their lives, they also gained better understanding of what 'healthy or 'gourmet' food ought to be like. Emotive reactions and sentiments towards food from Brazil weighed heavily for some interviewees, even though they might not have missed Brazil itself badly or experienced

any difficulties with food in Japan. No matter how many years have passed since they left Brazil, affective memories like Orlando mentioned are the reason that some interviewees still could not live without both Japanese and Brazilian food.

Some Nikkei Brazilians hardly went to Brazilian grocery stores or restaurants even when they lived close to such resources, which showed how they were willing to adapt to the Japanese social environment. In other words, Brazilian food is a taste from home and holds a special place in their hearts, but it does not mean that they constantly felt the urge to recreate the same diets from Brazil in Japan. The indifference to Brazilian food that some interviewees felt while living in Japan also stemmed from the price of food (Brazilian food being much more expensive in Japan) and the lack of food and grocery item varieties due to an overrepresentation of *churrasco* in Japan's restaurant industry. In a similar vein, most interviewees living in Tokyo did not show enthusiasm about South American grocery stores, which are often the only stores in Tokyo specializing in Brazilian goods, although they are aware of one particular store that is located right above the Consulate of Brazil. One interviewee, Paula, felt that she did not need to eat or pursue Brazilian food in Tokyo.

> I wouldn't go to churrascaria just to have *feijão*, which I really like. Because I don't go for meat, the *churrasco* restaurants are too expensive for me. And it's not something I'd die if I don't have *feijão*. Sometimes, my friends cook *feijão,* and they invite me over for lunch, which is a nice treat. I don't feel the need to have the same thing that I have in Brazil. It's not that I need to find the same thing here, otherwise I won't feel at home. I just try to adapt, I think? with what I have here.

Like many other interviewees, Paula did not cook at home often because she only had a single electric plate in her small Tokyo apartment, but she has explored different bakeries, cafes, grocery stores, and restaurants since 2019. Although Paula and some other interviewees did not speak Japanese, it did not seem to prevent them from adapting to the food environments in Japan. Being a content creator for a website introducing Japanese culture to Portuguese-speaking users,

Paula expressed her contentment with her dietary lifestyle in Japan, especially due to the diverse food scenes in Tokyo. Interviewees like Paula who are outgoing, curious, and open to learn about Japanese culture, did not see it as a disadvantage to live far from so-called Brazilian towns, where everyday Brazilian food and commodities are more accessible than other prefectures. Rather, as mentioned earlier in Chapter 4, interviewees in Tokyo learned to enjoy international food scenes outside Japanese and Brazilian food, such as Chinese, Thai, Indian, or Vietnamese, that they were not familiar with in Brazil. As many individuals in today's modern society have developed global palates, either by traveling, living abroad, or exploring different food locally, it is rather unrealistic to assume that all Nikkei Brazilians in Japan maintain either Japanese or Brazilian-centered diet. Some interviewees are more emotionally attached to foods from Brazil so that they get their Brazilian food fix more often than others, while others like Paula is somewhat neutral to Brazilian food in Japan and willing to explore Japanese and other cuisines during their time in Japan.

Conclusion

The discussion surrounding migrants' food and its relations to emotive power, identities, and the transformation of taste from a home to a host country warrants an entire whole dissertation in its own right, and it is nearly impossible to explore each and every dimension thoroughly in one chapter. However, this chapter has shown that sentimental values, social elements, and memories related to food make some interviewees feel *saudade* about their home, friends, and family in Brazil. Some interviewee's identity journeys were concomitant with the growth of their culinary identities in Japan as they encountered 'real' Japanese food that had different flavors from the food they grew up with in Brazil. While learning nuanced differences

between Japanese food in Japan and Nikkei understandings of Japanese food, some interviewees also discovered cultural differences between Nikkei Brazilian and Japanese, developing a transnational perspective of evaluating each culture after having lived in both Japan and Brazil. Such transnational understandings of Japanese and Brazilian culture released interviewees from their beliefs in the myth of Japaneseness and enabled them to understand and affirm the in-betweenness of being both Brazilian and Japanese.

Some interviewees maintained their food related practices from Brazil such as inviting friends over for dinner and hosting *churrasco*. Such interviewees maintained active social lives even in Japan, either through Brazilian communities or through international friends from school or work and getting to know local Japanese in the neighborhood and children's school. Some interviewees repurposed *churrasco* to introduce local Japanese to their real culinary practice, although they can no longer surround *churrasco* with their family and friends in Brazil. By incorporating the Brazilian foodway into their everyday foodway even a bit, the interviewees were able to appease the sentimental feeling of nostalgia and longing in their current life in Japan.

This chapter also underscored that Nikkei Brazilian foodways are neither static nor binarily constructed of Japanese and Brazilian food. Throughout the interviews, this study found Japanese food grew on some interviewees over years, despite their initial dislike. Social networks served as a point of introduction to new foods through spouses, partners, and friends. They also served as a point of forging cross-cultural social networks based on common interests in food and cooking with people from different backgrounds.

As such, the deep inquiry into the palates of Nikkei Brazilians revealed that they consumed food to adapt to Japanese food culture and Japanese society, and only a few of the

interviewees maintained the same foodways and rituals of *churrasco* from Brazil. Their foodways changed according to several variables such as their health, body, age, work, family, and life events. In so doing, Nikkei Brazilians also accepted being in-between Japanese and Brazilian, instead of trying to conform to either one or the other.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

As mundane as it seems, the inquiry into foodways has led this study to discover intimate details about Nikkei Brazilians' everyday lives from socioeconomic status, values, upbringing, culture, family, and work, to identity, in a way that was never discussed in existing scholarship. The following questions were posited prior to the fieldwork: how do variations in Nikkei Brazilians' food engagement (procurement, preparation, and consumption) relate to economic and social variations within Nikkei Brazilian groups more broadly? How is food linked with nostalgia, memory, and longing among Nikkei Brazilians, how does this vary within different Nikkei Brazilian groups, and what role do these feelings play in helping or hurting Nikkei Brazilian efforts to maintain Brazilian cultural practices? How do Nikkei Brazilians utilize their cultural capital, specifically in relation to food, for socioeconomic gain?

This dissertation discovered important roles played by various forms of capital – economic, social, and cultural capital – which shaped Nikkei Brazilians' food related lifestyles in Brazil and Japan. Particularly, this study observed several linkages between food and interviewees' socioeconomic status, along with the social and cultural capital that they cultivated. In discovering coherent sets of class and taste, the interview data also brought attention to more complex layers in the discussion of taste and class that are not discussed in existing Bourdieusian studies of class. The following section reviews the theoretical discussion of taste and class, citing Bourdieu's *Distinction*, followed by social class specific discussion and observations of Nikkei Brazilians in Japan in this study.

Taste and Class

Bourdieu's theoretical arguments about taste are applicable to some food-related habits of my interviewees. In some ways, this study confirms Bourdieu's contention of homology between culture and class. For example, working class *dekasegi* craved *feijão* to give them the energy to perform labor intensive work at factories, which conjures up "the taste of necessity," the kind of food which was economical and "filling" for proletariat who favored quantity over quality, as Bourdieu discussed in *Distinction* (1984:6).

Interviewees' locations, cities versus outskirts of big cities, signify the difference in their tastes and statuses as well. The interviewees who lived on the outskirts of big cities frequented chain restaurants and eateries on the weekend, mainly due to their accessibility and prices. Although interviewees in cities also ate out at such chain places for price and conventional reasons too, some interviewees, who like to "explore" different restaurants and cuisines, adopted a more elite style of food consumption that was not observed among interviewees who lived outside cities. For example, Sayaka and Ayaka, a mother and a daughter living in a neighboring prefecture of Tokyo, told me that they both love sushi and Italian restaurants for weekend eating out. However, sushi for them meant conveyor-belt chain sushi places and they also frequent an Italian chain restaurant that is owned by a franchise corporation. While some interviewees living in big cities also go to such chain restaurants, some interviewees like Paulo, a white-collar worker in Tokyo, talked about going to an exclusive boutique sushi restaurant with his girlfriend every other month, which only offers a fixed price menu that costs at least US $200.

Such lifestyle difference is consistent with Bourdieu's contention on the importance of geographical locations, as he wrote that "a group's real social distance from certain assets must integrate the geographical distance, which itself depends on the group's spatial distribution and,

more precisely, its distribution with respect to the 'focal point' of economic and cultural values…" (1984:124). In this study's context, considering Tokyo or Osaka as a 'focal point' of gourmet scenes, it does makes sense that interviewees outside the regional centers are literally "distanced" from a rich food and cultural scene, compared to interviewee like Paulo. The access to a focal point of culture and food is not equal among interviewees living in cities and outside cities, and the data collaborates that such discrepancies correspond to the interviewees' level of cultural and economic capital.

Some interviewees in cities are categorically foodies, gourmet eaters who are attracted by fine dining, celebrity chefs, and the rarity and exclusiveness of certain cuisine or a restaurant that they can access due to their relative social and economic privilege (Johnston and Baumann 2014). In this study, such foodie Nikkei Brazilians were middle aged with middle-class or upper middle-class jobs, who were single or in relationships. Chain restaurants were preferred by the interviewees with babies or toddlers for their kid-friendly services and ambiance, while foodie interviewees were able to choose where they want to go out to eat based on their interests and preferences.

As Johnston and Baumann pointed out, being a foodie is not an innocent symbol of someone who is very passionate and interested in food. Rather, foodie is a marker of status and class, masking their outward cultural snobbery and social hierarchies of food (Johnston and Baumann 2014). As such, there is a difference in eating-out repertoires among interviewees in urban centers and smaller cities, and their socioeconomic statuses paralleled their eating out options.

As some *dekasegi* interviewees climbed the social ladder and attained a new social class, their tastes shifted accordingly, as observed in the narratives of Juan and Adriana in Chapter 5.

For Juan, *feijão* was indispensable when he worked at the factory because it provided him more energy for work. However, today, Juan rejects unhealthy food options like sweets, soda, even Brazilian 'heavy' dishes like *feijoada*, which became "unthinkable" after his career shift to the beauty industry in Tokyo. Juan's choice of diet here again supports Bourdieu in the way that he described fast food and sugary food and drinks with negative connotations, which suggested his previous "unrefined" need for food like *feijão* and soda when he was *dekasegi* (1984:177).

Additionally, we can see that Juan's diet is very important in structuring his lifestyle as a spa salon owner who interacts with his clients closely and advises them with beauty and body-making advice. Here, the intertwined relationship between identity and self-selected lifestyles is attested by Anthony Giddens, who argues that self-selected lifestyles provide a crucial element to one's identity in the modern age, unlike past generations when identities were constructed by social variables like tradition, religion, or work roles (1991). As Giddens asserts, lifestyles are all the choices we make that "give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity" (1991:81), Juan embraces his work and food-related lifestyles to appear professional and convincing for his clients and to become someone other than "an ordinary Brazilian in Japan."

Cross-class Developments of Capital

However, one of the major findings from this study conflicts with Bourdieu's expectation of homology between class and culture. This study observed cross-class cases, meaning that interviewees had incoherent sets of taste and class due to their transnational lifestyles and the same person experiencing both manual labor and professional jobs in Japan and Brazil. For example, we saw in both Asami and Fabio from Chapter 4 that they were both mindful about food cost and being frugal, despite Fabio's class status as a successful PhD researcher in Japan

and Asami's middle-class career in Brazil. Their eating habits still reflected their humble backgrounds, as both of them had a parent who experienced working as *dekasegi* at least once. While we saw a coherent homology between Fabio's well-calculated dietary lifestyle and his educational cultural capital, there was also a lack of homology between their rising socioeconomic status and working-class spending habits, deriving from the persistent power of the class structure that they grew up with, which spilled over into their young adult lifestyles. As many interviewees found chances to improve their socioeconomic status with prefectural scholarships based on their family's ancestral connections to a particular Japanese prefecture, or by cultivating specialized skills despite their humble backgrounds, cross-class developments of taste and capital happened organically among some Nikkei Brazilian interviewees.

As such, this study also observed that having an upper-middle class status did not necessarily mean that an interviewee had what Bourdieu would call "refined" tastes. In fact, four upper-middle class respondents did not talk about food in aesthetic terms, suggesting that not all upper-middle class interviewees possessed refined food tastes. It further suggests that the development of one's socioeconomic status and professional career does not neatly correlate in a linear progression with one's taste development.

As seen in Roberto's example in Chapter 7, one could retain an upper-middle class status and the same dietary habits transnationally, while not developing a keen appreciation or interest in the quality or health values of food like Roberto valued convenience and practicality in his diet. Roberto's 'freedom of choice' was represented through his economic capital, which is to say that he was able to afford options to buy pre-cooked food frequently with little to no economic constraint, but his dietary choices are simultaneously associated with the "filling" purpose of food that is supposedly expressed by a proletariat sense of "taste of necessity."

Considering Fabio's and Roberto's examples, it appears that cultural capital has more significant impact than economic capital in shaping one's taste, due to the connection between intellectual curiosity and the nutritional and health values of food. The contrast between them also reveals a compelling comparison, as the Bourdieusian study has argued that those with high levels of economic capital are more mindful about managing their health in long-term perspective than those with low economic capital, who can only take care of immediate health issues when necessary (Paccoud, Nazroo, and Leist 2020). Clearly, Roberto's case is an outlier in the traditional observation of a high economic capital profile, which underscores the crucial importance of educational attainment as cultural capital, as seen in Fabio, Ivan, and Juliana, who obtained advanced degrees in Japan and made deliberate changes in their diet. Therefore, this dissertation argues that habitus today, especially for those with transnational experiences, develops through more cross-class contexts, individualized processes, and the unsystematic formation of taste preferences than Pierre Bourdieu (1984) proposed in his seminal texts.

Cosmopolitanism and Nikkei Brazilians in Japan

I should underscore that my examination of Nikkei Brazilians and their class analysis is mostly limited to individuals who were born and raised in Brazil and came to Japan in their adult lives. In some cases, it is also hard to say to what extent an individual grew up in Brazil or Japan, because so many interviewees went back and forth between Japan and Brazil during their childhoods.

My study only included eight interviewees who spent some periods of their childhood in Japan, one of whom recently completed high school in Japan and had more recent experience of growing up in Japan as a teenager. I clarify this because I introduced prefectural scholarship

opportunities as recourses that some interviewees utilized to enhance their cultural capital. However, such scholarships are offered to Nikkei Brazilians who lived in Brazil because these prefectural scholarships and intern programs are intended for Nikkei Brazilian to get valuable experiences in Japan and bring such experiences and skills back to Brazil in order to enrich Brazilian society. Thus, these programs usually exclude Nikkei Brazilians who grew up and completed their education in Japan.

As some studies on Nikkei Brazilians concern the future and well-being of *dekasegi* youth in Japan (Ishikawa 2015; Kojima 2008; Nebashi 2014; Taniguchi 2014; Yano 2007), it is important to clarify that Nikkei Brazilians who grew up in Japan cannot utilize their ancestral connections for career and educational opportunities as their counterparts in Brazil could do. I did meet some interviewees who earned higher education through other Japanese scholarship opportunities, like Katia in Chapter 4, but complex eligibility requirement for Japan government scholarships can pose challenges for Nikkei Brazilians from transnational backgrounds. Most of all, the path to higher education requires guidance from parents or schools, independent research, and good academic standing of the students themselves. While there is increasing attention to Nikkei Brazilian or Peruvian youths developing their professional careers from their humble *dekasegi* beginnings (Ninomiya 2022; Nikkei Shimbun 2019), it is important to remember that such success stories are celebrated as rare examples. Ongoing educational and career issues of Nikkei Brazilian youths in Japan cannot be overlooked.

Not only is there an inequality of resources presented among Nikkei Brazilian youth in Japan and Brazil, but some interviewees in this study also expressed attributes of cosmopolitanism through their transnational lifestyles and their fluid ability to adjust their lifestyles to both Brazil and Japan culturally, linguistically, and culinarily. Several interviewees

living in cities possess qualities of cosmopolitanism, such as being bilingual or trilingual and maneuvering career and lifestyle changes from Brazil to Japan with relative ease. Future studies need to pay more attention to this subset of Nikkei Brazilians, as current children of *dekasegi* parents may be competing with cosmopolitan Nikkei Brazilians who possess more cultural capital and multicultural competencies to work in white-collar professions in Japan.

Brazilian Food and Emotions

Food and home showed a complicated emotional relationship. However, (1) whether the interviewee's family members are in Brazil or Japan, and (2) the length of their stay in Japan and how frequently they returned to Brazil, seem to impact emotional strains between food and Brazil for interviewees. Interviewees whose parents resided in Japan were not deprived of food-related Brazilian social rituals, such as weekend *churrasco* gathering and Christmas dinners. Therefore, Brazilian food continued to be their regular food repertoire when interviewees saw their family or friends in Japan.

On the other hand, interviewees who lived on their own without friends or relatives from Brazil were relatively isolated, both as a lifestyle and from Brazilian food. When they have less frequent encounters with Brazilian food and people in general, they acculturate to dietary patterns in Japan; therefore, it felt more special and moving when they ate Brazilian food. Such interviewees have also lived in Japan over a decade or more, and rarely return to Brazil. Whether the food tastes like their home in Brazil or is seasoned for general Japanese eaters like Barbacoa's food, reuniting with their familiar taste from home brought them immediate joy, conjuring up the sense of nostalgia even though they did not overtly miss Brazilian food until then.

However, some interviewees who have lived in Japan for less than five years had 'explorer' mindsets when it comes to food, meaning that they were trying to take advantage of living in Japan and to experience different regional variations of Japanese food that they cannot get in Brazil, as well as international cuisines that are unavailable in Brazil. Because such interviewees plan to return to Brazil eventually, Brazilian food was not something that they actively pursued in Japan, given its price tag. Such interviewees differ from the previous understanding of the Nikkei Brazilian population, who were deemed to be less motivated to learn Japanese and to immerse themselves into Japanese culture than fellow Brazilian workers due to their short-term stay mentality (Tsuda 2003:273).

Finally, for interviewees who have lived in Japan for a long time and have not seen their family in Brazil for a while, the encounter with Brazilian food conjured up *saudade*, the melancholic yearning introduced in Chapter 7. The increased accessibility of Brazilian snacks or groceries or going to Brazilian restaurants did not fulfill the emotional lacuna of *saudade* because it reminded interviewees that the real Brazilian food that they ate with their family and friends in Brazil, was far from Japan and cannot be replicated until they return to Brazil one day.

Despite the emotional strains of food and home, some interviewees like Yoko and Keila in Chapter 7, who started a family and decided to stay in Japan permanently, used Brazilian food to connect with local Japanese by introducing them to Brazilian food culture. In this sense, they maintained the communal eating culture and *churrasco* rituals from Brazil with a new Japanese community from work or their children's school and fellow parents' networks. Because they live outside cities, their homes were roomier and did not have the space problem with hosting *churrasco* that interviewees living in apartments did. Even for a young interviewee who lived in Tokyo like Sabrina from Chapter 7, her small kitchen with one electric burner did not discourage

her from inviting her friends over and sharing her famous "Brazilian-style Japanese food" with them. In this way, some interviewees remade their physical home space and the cultural making of their home and identity in Japan. As a result, food and social customs from Brazil were more present in their current lifestyle in Japan, and they were not as firmly bound to emotional sentiments as other interviewees were when they ate Brazilian food.

In sum, interviewees' accounts showed that food is linked with a multitude of emotions, which differed by their intended length of stay in Japan and whether their family members are in Japan or Brazil. Going back to the research questions, how is food linked with nostalgia, memory, and longing among Nikkei Brazilians, how does this vary within differing Nikkei Brazilian group, and what role do these feelings play in helping or hurting Nikkei Brazilians' efforts to maintain Brazilian cultural practices? Some interviewees fulfilled their longing and nostalgia by maintaining their food related practices from Brazil, such as inviting friends over for dinner and hosting *churrasco*. Although they no longer lived in Brazil, some interviewees were able to appease the sentimental feelings by carrying the torch of food traditions and rituals from home and sharing them with their new family and friends in Japan.

Interviewees' mindsets and relationships with food seemed to change when their length of stay changed from a short or temporary stay to a long term. Short-term stay interviewees were content with their dietary lifestyles because they were discovering 'real' Japanese food or other cuisine that they were not exposed to in Brazil. For those who had remained in Japan longer, the uncertainties of when to return to Brazil and their prolonged alienation from Brazilian food and community seem to deepen their geographical and emotional distance to Brazil. Perhaps, more than a craving of specific foods, these long-term interviewees described their cravings for communal settings of cooking and eating food with their family and friends (Ishi 2003). Whether

they cooked Japanese or Brazilian food with their loved ones, it is the aspect of ritual crystalized in their memory, which became impossible to recreate in Japan and deepened their sense of *saudade*.

Food and Careers in the Culinary Field

Finally, I revisit the last research question; How do Nikkei Brazilians utilize their cultural capital, specifically in relation to food, for socioeconomic gain?

This study observed several cases in which interviewees utilized their Brazilian food-related skills and knowledge to leverage their socioeconomic status. Perhaps the most successful example was Bella from Chapter 5. Bella originally came to Japan as *dekasegi*, but her culinary school diploma and independently acquired Japanese skills allowed her to fully utilize an online social networking platform, so that she was able to host students at her home and teach them Brazilian home cooking and baking. However, her example also showed the significance of both cultural capital and certain economic capital. When Bella is compared with another former *dekasegi* Cristiano, who also thought of the same career, it became clear that one needs more than just Brazilian cooking skills and knowledge to succeed. In order to advance their socioeconomic status in the culinary field, Nikkei Brazilians also needed to invest in themselves. For example, Bella used her hard-earned money from factory work to go to culinary school and she rented a house instead of a tiny apartment so that she could host her students. Professional experiences working as a chef in different restaurants also allowed her to gain technical skills in the kitchen, such as converting the recipe for a smaller serving size and providing recipes in Japanese for her students. As such, Nikkei Brazilians need a combination of cultural and

economic capital as the foundation to turn their hobbies or passions for Brazilian food into career success in the culinary field in Japan.

It was true that some interviewees were able to leave manual labor and enter the culinary field because of their passion for food and culinary skills, but it was difficult to say that such interviewees became financially "better off" as a result. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurant businesses have had to reduce their labor costs, and some interviewees like Mami were left with no choice but to get a second part-time job. Due to restaurants' shorter operating hours on top of state-mandated restrictions on business hours, the interviewees were no longer able to depend on long working hours and the night shift that allowed them to earn high hourly wages in a short period. There were some unexpected financial setbacks in shifting their careers to the food industry, and the restaurant business happened to become an especially vulnerable workplace during the pandemic. Still, such interviewees found that they were able to get out of repetitive manual labor, which would become even more taxing on their bodies with age and did not offer career prospects and financial security in the long term.

This study also observed Brazilian food and restaurant business operations as small family businesses, where Nikkei Brazilians, their Japanese spouses, and their children all contributed their social and cultural capital to make the business work. Here are snapshots of what such business dynamics look like:

> Case 1: John is the owner of a newly opened Brazilian restaurant in Tokyo. John is from the U.S., and he met his Brazilian wife, Maria, in Japan. Typical Brazilian food items are cooked based on Maria's family recipes. John, who is passionate about BBQ meat, adds his twist and invents an original menu item of "Brazilian style burger." Because their Japanese is at an intermediate level, they struggle with paperwork and rely on Japanese part-time workers' help to update their menu and social media.
>
> Case 2: Shizuka (a Japanese wife) and her Nikkei Brazilian husband Mauricio opened their family-owned *churrasco* restaurant near the industrial part of Kanagawa prefecture. Shizuka serves as manager as she speaks Japanese with customers and deals with

> paperwork. Mauricio cooks all the food and came up with recipes, as starting his own Brazilian restaurant was his longtime dream since he was *dekasegi*.
>
> Case 3: Vanessa and Theo met in a factory as *dekasegi* workers. Theo returned to Brazil at one point to for training to open a pizza parlor in Japan. Their business had a stable Brazilian client base, but their business became fully successful when their daughter Misato got involved with the business. Misato utilized her social capital to re-design the business and her Japanese language ability and familiarity with social media helped significantly to market their business to local Japanese.

All three examples show that their ethnic entrepreneurship thrived because of the kinship support that supplemented the lack of social and cultural capital (Japanese proficiency and social media skills). The small family business operated by a married couple of a Japanese and a Nikkei Brazilian was commonly observed in this study, where the Nikkei Brazilian's lack of cultural capital was supplemented by a Japanese spouse. As Hisayo mentioned in Chapter 6, their restaurant business that became successful attracted not only (Nikkei) Brazilian patrons, but also Japanese and international patrons. In order to succeed, their business needed input from a spouse or partner who understood the taste and characteristics of local Japanese patrons, who might otherwise have deemed the Brazilian-owned business "scary" or "different." As seen in Misato's example in Chapter 5, it was not enough that pizza made by Theo and Vanessa be delicious, but the business model needed to be nuanced and ironically, to downplay the element of Brazilianness to attract local Japanese patrons.

While studies like Takenaka's study of Nikkei Peruvians (2009) argued that migrants were able to utilize their cultural capital, their non-Japanese appearance, and their foreign language proficiency to enter the workforce outside of manual labor, this study found that the interviewees' 'exotic-ness' or 'Brazilianness' does not always work for their benefit when they own their businesses. Depending on their business location and the client base, Nikkei Brazilian

food businesses had a delicate challenge of either emphasizing Brazilianness or dialing it back to represent their business in a neutral way to attract the general population.

Takenaka's study has some applicability—in a Nikkei Brazilian context—to Aida, a Japanese *churrasco* owner in Tokyo from Chapter 5, who said that he likes to hire (Nikkei) Brazilian staff to make their Brazilian food business legitimate and convincing for Brazilian patrons and the food savvy. However, Aida's business did not differentiate Nikkei Brazilians from other Brazilian workers. What ultimately mattered the most was a worker's skills and experiences with Brazilian food, not their Brazilian appearance per se. A similar sentiment was expressed by Oscar, a Nikkei Brazilian restaurant manager in Tokyo from Chapter 7, who talked to me about the hiring process:

> Nowadays, we don't want to hire someone just because they are Brazilians. You have to be able to speak a little bit of Japanese, even in the kitchen. Now there are children or grandchildren of *Nisei* or *Sansei* of adult age and these newer generations growing up in Japan have got to be able to speak Japanese. I bet they must be able to speak Portuguese, but Japanese too (to work). Actually, some (Nikkei) Brazilians who only speak Japanese are great (to work at his restaurant), but the opposite (non-Brazilians who don't speak Japanese) would be difficult candidates.
> Even the kitchen staff, I expect that they can greet customers and explain about the food that they cook. When they (the kitchen staff) bring food or meat on the skewer to the table, if a customer says in Japanese "Oh this looks great, can I get *ohiya* (a glass of water)?", I expect that they will be able to understand what *ohiya* is. I understand that they can't understand Japanese completely, but I'm like, come on, they should be at the level of knowing what *ohiya* is.

Oscar was candid about the qualifications of (Nikkei) Brazilian workers and his frustration in the past when he hired someone who did not speak Japanese and he had to cover what they could not do such as responding to customers' requests and inquiries on the spot. Oscar is alluding to what Frank (2012) defined as "occupational capital" from her study, which is a set of "skills, capacities, and/or capabilities that an individual or population acquires as a result of the occupations in which they engage or have engaged" (p. 237). Because some restaurant

managers like Oscar expect ideal workers to be able to multitask and speak Japanese and Portuguese or English, the criteria for even a server position entails more than basic skills that Nikkei Brazilians may have, such as work experience in the service industry in Japan.

Applying Takenaka's study of Nikkei Peruvians to a Nikkei Brazilian context, it should hold true that Portuguese fluency and Brazilian appearance would be enough for Nikkei Brazilians to be perceived as so-called ideal workers, specifically in ethnic restaurants like Brazilian *churrasco* restaurants. However, implicit limits, formal and informal rules, and unwritten preferences in the restaurant industry conjure up the Bourdieusian sense of "doxa" (1984), which requires a player in the field to have sufficient competency to navigate to "win" the competition. As Oscar asserted that he prefers hiring someone who looks Brazilian but only speaks Japanese, candid opinions from the actual Brazilian food workplace reveal that that being a Brazilian as cultural capital is not enough to get a preference to be hired by the business, and their all-around competency, or occupational capital, is highly preferred to save *trouble* on both customer's and employer's ends.

As such, Nikkei Brazilians are still in competition even in the Brazilian-specific culinary workforce, and they need to acquire Japanese proficiency and kitchen experiences to be attractive candidates to work at Brazilian restaurants, especially in cities where the general client base is not solely Brazilian. Participating in the Brazilian food service workforce might be easier for young second and third generation Nikkei Brazilians, who grew up in Japan and speak Japanese. However, such skills might pose challenges to other Nikkei Brazilians who came to Japan as *dekasegi* with limited skills and experiences, making their career transition more difficult. In fact, seven out of ten interviewees who were former *dekaseg*i but transitioned to the

Brazilian food service workforce, spoke with me in Japanese or English, highlighting that they had obtained more cultural capital than typical *dekasegi* workers.

In sum, this study observed cases in which some Nikkei Brazilians utilized food as a medium to leverage their socioeconomic statuses, but it did not happen so easily. Unlike the existing literature's findings, innate cultural capital, such as having a Brazilian appearance or speaking Portuguese, did not count as crucial cultural capital that made them attractive candidates to work in the Brazilian-specific food industry in Japan today. Most of the interviewees who succeeded in Japan's culinary field were formerly *dekasegi*, but they independently earned cultural capital to become competitive in the Brazilian culinary workforce in Japan. Otherwise, some interviewees made their food business work because of their support systems of family or friends who could supplement their lack of certain skills. Ultimately, even with their knowledge and experiences working with Brazilian food, this research found that Nikkei Brazilians needed acquire more competencies to own the food business or to work in Brazilian food restaurants in Japan.

Limitation and Acknowledgement

Since this study was conducted during the pandemic year, from 2020 to 2021, there are some limitations in this study that were out of my control as a researcher. That being said, other limitations of this study lie in the methodological approach and my competency as a researcher. I addressed the former in Chapter 2, switching my fieldwork to virtual platforms and recruiting and communicating with prospective interviewees completely online.

Despite this study being a qualitative sociological study conducted in Japan, it is clear that this study is missing a Geertzian "thick description" of Nikkei-Brazilian food engagement in

their food space, including restaurants, grocery stores, festivals, and kitchens in Nikkei-Brazilian homes. If I could redo my fieldwork year, there is no doubt that I would lean in so much more to enrich the in-person ethnographic, participant observation part of this study.

I also acknowledge that my study magnifies non-*dekasegi*, middle- and upper-middle-class Nikkei Brazilian communities too much, especially in regard to their diet-related lifestyles. After all, the number of Nikkei-Brazilian *dekasegi* across Japan collectively comprise a much larger population than Nikkei Brazilians who work outside the manual labor workforce. My study population may well have been skewed by its reliance on the very online resources that made it possible and like most qualitative studies, I certainly do not claim that it is a statistical representation of the Nikkei Brazilian population in Japan. However, I believe that my study sheds light on a soon-to-be growing demographic of Nikkei Brazilians, who might live and work in Japan for job and financial incentives, and who also have more autonomy to explore new lifestyle options in Japan.

Sociological Implications and Future Studies

This study specifically looked at the intersectionality of social class and identity in contexts of food. However, as I discussed my findings, there were other codes generated from the interview data which I could not fully delve into in this dissertation, yet are very worthy of further academic inquiries such as health aspects of diet among interviewees and their family members. High blood pressure and diabetes were the common chronic health conditions reported by these interviewees and their immediate family members, which are very likely derived from Brazilian foods' typical characteristics that are rich, strong, and heavy. Dietary habits and their health impacts in the Nikkei Brazilian population are of major research interest among Japanese

scholars (Chino et al. 2005; Naganuma et al. 2006; Shibasaki et al. 2008), and my interview data can make further contributions in the health field because a large portion of my data include dietary habits that interviewees had before and after they came to Japan.

Additionally, I anticipate that some readers would find connections between my interviewees' transnational profiles and studies of cosmopolitanism in the globalization literature. Although I did not present part of the upper-middle class interviewees from the perspective of globalization, I would like to continue studying their cosmopolitan lifestyles and their food tastes as a class marker within the frame of globalization studies in the future.

Throughout this dissertation, I have explored different facets of Nikkei Brazilians' economic, social, and cultural capital, and in so doing, confronted Bourdieu's concept of distinction with new complexity. From their experiences of changing career directions and taking advantages of new opportunities, my interviewees' narratives demonstrated their resilience, whether they were *dekasegi*, upper-middle class workers with careers, students, or Brazilian food service workers.

This is not the first study concerning the relationship between food and social class or food and forms of capital (Johnston et al. 2012; Johnston and Baumann 2014; Kennedy et al. 2019; Meiser 2021; Peterson 2005; Peterson and Kern 1996). However, by delving into culturally specific Nikkei Brazilian population in Japan, this study underscored the importance of subsets of attributes in studies of social class and tastes, which can alter the traditional academic understandings of social class and food tastes. For example, emotive aspects of food and food as sociocultural rituals were widely dismissed in classical studies of class and tastes (Bourdieu 1984; Peterson and Anand 2004; Peterson and Kern 1996). Additionally, my study has shown that social environment, family, community, and the people you ate with during the formative

time of youth, early adulthood, and the present time, have simultaneously enriched and limited individual dietary choices and decisions, which could be a central variable of research in future food studies project.

As social class was embedded with everyday diet, ideological forces that drove some of interviewees' food and diet choices cannot be overlooked. It was clear that interviewees with higher education or embodied capital revisited their diet in Brazil with critical and informed views, thus engaging with healthism, the neoliberal value of healthy eating. Although there were only a few instances observed in this study, Japan's ideological food and nutrition education legislation (*shokuiku)*, also affected innocent Nikkei Brazilian caretakers and mothers, who believed their advertisements that a Japanese diet is more beneficial for children's health and intellectual growth. Young Nikkei Brazilian interviewees were once vulnerable to such top-down cultural politics of food education and were not given an alternative option to learn about food in schools, such as a healthy Brazilian cooking class that students and their parents might be more familiar with. On one hand, this ideological program provided an opportunity for Nikkei Brazilian students to learn about Japanese food, who otherwise might only have recreated their Brazilian foodway and remained unexposed to Japanese food. However, since more recent studies have called for a culturally feasible and respectful approach (Shibasaki et al. 2008; Noda 2011), ideally a future longitudinal study that can follow a student's entire experience from middle to high school, should explore the most recent school practices of home economics classes with a large number of (Nikkei) Brazilians and other non-Japanese students.

By incorporating interviewees with different demographics, this study was also able to hear from Nikkei Brazilians from different generations, who came to Japan in a wide range of time– from Lucio, who came as a third generation *dekasegi* in 1988 to Paulo, a fourth generation

Nikkei Brazilian who maintained the same finance job from Brazil and came to Japan in 2019. Many interviewees also wondered about their Japanese generational typology, since they were born to a Japanese or Brazilian parent and a Nikkei Brazilian parent. As such, the demographic of my interviewees itself also shows ever-growing sociocultural diversity among Nikkei Brazilians and their backgrounds, which possesses the potential to change stereotyped images about (Nikkei) Brazilians in Japan as working class *dekasegi* concentrated in Japan's industrial belt.

Discussions of cultural capital in the Brazilian food industry begs further questions about migrants in other culinary industries in Japan. That is, does the distinct cultural capital of Japanese Korean, Chinese, American, and other multiracial individuals living in Japan help getting a job in a specific culinary industry or ascending the social ladder when they enter the culture-specific industry in Japan? How about Japanese or other migrants in other countries? This study focused specifically on the Brazilian food industry and cultural capital, but similar analysis into other Brazilian cultural industries, such as Brazilian music, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, and samba dancing would be necessary to see whether other specific cultural capital weighs more heavily in different cultural industries in future studies.

Future sociologists of social class can further delve into class mobility among migrant communities and how such class development is manifested through their different habits and consumption of goods. As I have argued throughout the dissertation, I still believe that future sociologists can use food and foodways as a legitimate mean of scholarly inquiry, not merely examining food through a cultural analysis lens. At the same time, scholars need to understand that eating is social and psychological, thus the need to treat such food variables with caution. Scholars have found that people make "automatic" food choices, meaning that some forms of

food consumption become a habit without a conscious process of what or how much food they choose and consume (Furst et al 1996). In other food research, Wansink and Sobal (2007) found that their participants made over 220 food and beverage- related decisions in a day on average, significantly more than their participants estimated initially (around 15 decisions). As such, it is a delicate dance to seek out meanings and emotions from people's everyday meal and the food items of dinner tables. Especially in in-depth interviews, the last thing you want from participants is that they invent reasons and explanations due to pressure and trying to satisfy what researchers want to hear (Wetsby et al. 2003). However, while understanding that people make mindless decisions about food, we can delve into why certain food habits become automatic, and what variables routinize certain food consumption to explore sociological implications about social class, inequalities, family, and education.

Ultimately, developing academic understanding into how social class shapes everyday foodways is crucial to a sociological study aims to understand the role of food taste and consumption, and in so doing, the merged focus of food and sociological studies can unpack the intertwined relationship of various actors including individual, states, market, and communities shaping our foodways.

APPENDIX A. PRIMARY STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDES

1. Transnational Backgrounds

IQ (Introductory Question). Tell me about your family background. What year were you born, and which generation of Nikkei Brazilian are you? Do you have any family members in Brazil now? What is your family composition in Japan? When did you move to Japan for what purpose?

FQ (Follow up question):

- Where do you live in Japan?
- What is your occupation in Japan?
- What did you do when you were in Brazil?
- What languages do you speak, and which one do you speak most often?
- What is your educational background? What schools did you go to, and where were they?
- What are your parents' educational backgrounds?
- Were your parents *dekasegi,* otherwise, what do they do when you were young?
- Do you have any dietary restrictions?

2. Food in Japan and Brazil

IQ: Next, I want to ask about how you diet may have changed after you moved to Japan.

FQ:

- Has your cooking changed since you moved to Japan? Why?
- What do you think are the main differences between Japanese and Brazilian cooking?
- What was your typical breakfast menu when you lived in Brazil, and where did you typically eat breakfast?
- What do you eat for breakfast typically in Japan, and where do you typically eat breakfast?
- What was your typical lunch menu when you lived in Brazil, and where did you eat lunch?
- What do you eat for lunch typically in Japan and where do you typically eat lunch?
- What was your typical dinner menu when you lived in Brazil, and where did you eat?
- What do you eat for dinner typically in Japan, and where do you eat dinner?
- Which one is easier to make, Japanese or Brazilian food?
- Which one sounds tastier, Japanese or Brazilian food?

3. Food and Capital

IQ: How often do you go out to eat? With someone or by yourself? What kind of places do you like to go to eat?

FQ:

- Do you go out to eat or to get coffee or drinks with people at work?

- Do you go out to eat or to get coffee or drinks with your friends?
- Do you like drinking? If yes, how often do you drink in a week, in what settings, and what is your favorite drink?
- Do you have any interests in food-related events? If so, how much and how often do you participate in such things? (e.g. potluck, food events, social gathering with food, cooking class, etc.)
- How often do you buy food, meals, or snacks to-go, and has your pattern changed since you moved to Japan from Brazil?
- How much do you spend on groceries in a month? Is the grocery expenditure more or less than when you were in Brazil?
- How much do you spend on eating out in a month? Is the eating out expenditure more or less than when you were in Brazil?

4. Food as Consumption of Self

IQ: What is the most important element of food for you when you decide what you eat or buy? Quality, price, convenience, taste, quantity, or something else?

FQ:

- How often do you cook? If you don't cook very often, who does the cooking in your family?
- In what language, do you use social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, etc.)
- In Japan, what kind of media outlets do you use? (e.g., Newspaper, TV programs, magazines, podcasts, etc)
- Do you still use the Brazilian media outlets?
- Do you use social media or apps to get information about food (e.g., coupon, search restaurants, food delivery, recipe ideas, or for your work)? If so, how essential is social media for your food lifestyle?
- Do you feel that your definition or feeling of being 'self' has changed after moving to Japan?

5. Food and Emotion

IQ: Does food mean something to you other than 'just' food?

FQ:

- Do you have any sentiments or nostalgia associated with food from Brazil? What food do you miss most from Brazil and Why?
- What is your idea of home cooked meals?
- Are you happy with your dietary lifestyles in Japan? Why or why not?
- Were you happy with your dietary lifestyles in Brazil? Why or why not?
- Which one sounds more appetizing, Japanese or Brazilian food?

- Have you encountered any stress related food in Japan or Brazil?
- Do you think eating outside your home in Japan can be difficult or uncomfortable? If so, in what situations?
- Did your diet change during the corona virus crisis in Japan? (and did the virus change your diet after the crisis?)

APPENDIX B. STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOOD WORKERS

1. **Transnational Backgrounds**

IQ (Introductory Question). Tell me about your family background. What year were you born, and which generation of Nikkei Brazilian are you? Do you have any family members in Brazil now? What is your family composition in Japan? When did you move to Japan for what purpose?

FQ:

- Where do you live in Japan?
- What is your occupation in Japan, and what did you do when you were in Brazil?
- What language do you speak, and which one do you speak most often?
- What is your educational background? What is the last school you attended?
- What are your parents' educational background?
- Were your parents *dekasegi,* otherwise, what do they do when you were young?
- Do you have any dietary restrictions?

2. **Food, cultural capital, and class**

IQ: What brought you to work in the Brazilian food industry?

FQ:

- What kinds of service do you provide at your work, and for whom?
- Tell me about your customers. Are they mostly Japanese? Brazilian? Male? Female? Young? Old?
- What languages do you speak?
- What language do you speak when serving customers?
- When does your job (or your restaurant) get busiest?
- How did you learn how to do this job?
- Have you ever considered working in non-Brazilian food restaurants or stores? Why not?
- If you did not have the job you have now, what would you do for a living in Japan?
- (if the interviewee is dekasegi or is originally from Brazil) Would you say you are financially better off with your current job in Japan than you were in Brazil?
- How did the corona virus affect your restaurants/work/livelihood?

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