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**Comparing media representations:
Nikkei Brazilian youth's self-
representation on social media vs. their
representation by traditional media
outlets**

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要旨

日本における日系ブラジル人コミュニティ、特にその移民史に関する広範な研究が存在するにもかかわらず、伝統的メディアによる描写と比較した、ソーシャルメディア上における同グループの自己提示に関する議論は極めて限定的である。本研究は、定性的や比較的なアプローチを用いてこの学術的空白に着目し、『毎日新聞』のオンラインサイトから抽出した38本の記事（伝統的メディアを代表）と、若い日系ブラジル人インフルエンサー10名のInstagramプロフィールからそれぞれ5件のコンテンツ（ソーシャルメディアを代表）を分析した。

本論文の主な目的は、現代日本において日系ブラジル人が各メディアによってどのように表象されているかを理解し、表現手法やテーマをめぐる言説における相違を明らかにすることである。その結果、両者の間には決定的な相違が認められた。

『毎日新聞』の言説は、同情的な視座を交えつつも、日系ブラジル人を「社会統合のために管理を要する、様々な困難に直面しているコミュニティ」としてフレーム化する傾向がある。対照的に、Instagramにおける自己提示は、クリエイターが自らの公的イメージを能動的に統制する「個人のエージェンシー」に強く根ざしており、必ずしも文化的背景に縛られない、より幅広い表象の可能性を拓いている。したがって、本論文の主な結論は以下のとおりである。ソーシャルメディアが構造的な不平等を直接解消するものではないものの、日系ブラジル人が自らの可視性を能動的に奪還し、メインストリームの言説による制限的なカテゴリーを回避するための、極めて重要な空間を提供するものであることを示唆している。

Introduction

This thesis explores the representations and self-representations of nikkei Brazilians in contemporary Japan. It addresses the ways in which this group is portrayed in the Mainichi Shinbun and the manner in which the young nikkei Brazilians represent themselves on Instagram.

Brazil has the largest Japanese-descent community outside of Japan, having been populated by immigrants who arrived in the early 20th century, however, Brazil's economic crisis and hyperinflation in the late 1980s and a labour shortage in Japan led to another wave of migration, this time from Brazil to Japan. This migration was facilitated by changes to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1990, which allowed second and third-generation immigrants to return to Japan. This, in turn, resulted in tensions regarding cultural belonging, as nikkei Brazilians, who sometimes have Japanese names or features, were generally raised in a Brazilian environment, culturally and linguistically. Thus, their return to Japan did not necessarily entail their integration into Japanese society, leading to nikkei Brazilians facing discrimination on various grounds (for example language barriers and cultural and social segregation). Consequently, by examining the representation of nikkei Brazilians, this thesis aims to explore themes of ethnic belonging and multicultural coexistence (*tabunka kyōsei*), moreover, it will address the question of who gets to represent a minority group and the ways in which their representation occurs through media.

This research will address these issues of representation using the works of Stuart Hall, namely his theories on representation and encoding and decoding. In particular, Hall's theory will be used to examine the mechanisms through which the representation of nikkei Brazilians is produced. This thesis will also borrow from Teun A. van Dijk's research on discourse and symbolic elites, which will be applied to examine the ways in which journalistic discourse constructs minority groups. Lastly, for the Instagram analysis, this research will rely on Sini Kaipainen's discourse on automediality and Gulnur Yenilmez Kacar's work on Instagram's different stages of self-presentation. Thus, by combining these approaches, this thesis will investigate the ways in which institutional and individual agents participate in constructing the representation of nikkei Brazilians.

The significance of this research relies on its analysis of the representation of the nikkei in two different ways: institutional journalism (Mainichi Shinbun) and social media (Instagram). Previous research has highlighted the various economic, demographic and sociological aspects of Japanese-Brazilian immigration. In particular, research has been conducted on education, labour market insertion and residential issues, however the ways in which this minority group is portrayed in the Japanese media and represents itself on social media remain comparatively under-researched.

It is important to note that media discourse plays an essential role in representing minority groups since many people interact with media on a daily basis, whereas their direct interactions with other ethnicities may be minimal. For the nikkei Brazilians, these interactions are further limited by their residential and professional segregation, thus the Japanese newspaper discourse on the nikkei Brazilian can determine the perceptions that Japanese people from this community and, in turn, the representations that the nikkei Brazilians make of themselves on Instagram can indicate the ways in which they control their image.

This analysis is particularly relevant to contemporary society, where people consume media content on an unprecedented scale and engage with social media to produce and share their own content. Therefore, the analysis on how nikkei Brazilians navigate the two distinct discourse communities provides further insight into the mechanisms of representation that affect other minorities as well. As such, this research aims to compare media on nikkei Brazilians and the self-representation of this group on Instagram to highlight the differences between these representations and their unique mechanisms.

This thesis' main question is: How are nikkei Brazilians represented in mainstream media, and how do young nikkei Brazilians represent themselves on Instagram?

This question will be investigated through the following three sub-questions:

- How does the Japanese press represent nikkei Brazilian community and individuals and what recurring themes, categories and discourse patterns can be identified?
- How do young nikkei Brazilian Instagram creators negotiate their self-representation through visual, textual and linguistic resources?

- What similarities and differences exist between the two modes of representation and what do such similarities and differences say about representation and belonging?

The thesis will then pursue the following objectives in order to address the aforementioned questions:

- Identify and examine recurring representational patterns in the Mainichi Shinbun articles on nikkei Brazilians;
- Investigate the themes and patterns of self-representation found in the Instagram Posts of ten young nikkei Brazilian creators in Japan;
- Compare the two corpora in order to highlight the similarities and differences between the media representations and self-representation and identify the discourse mechanism that shapes them.

In doing so, this thesis will investigate the differences between the representation of nikkei Brazilian in Japanese media and their self-representations on Instagram, highlighting the mechanisms through which these representations are constructed.

This thesis used a qualitative, interpretative and comparative methodology to investigate the research question. Rather than attempting to quantify patterns of representation, this research endeavored to understand the mechanism of representation that shaped the discourse on and of nikkei Brazilians. In particular, this thesis relied on close reading to identify patterns that recur in the discourse of the Mainichi Shinbun articles and Instagram Posts. Furthermore, this research utilizes comparative methods to examine how the differences between the two modes of representation stem from their differing contexts and audiences.

This thesis relies on two corpora: the first consists of the Mainichi Shinbun articles and the second consists of Instagram corpora. The analysis of the Instagram Posts was conducted using automated close reading in order to account for the ways in which the Posts constitute the Instagram profiles of their authors as a whole.

The corpus of the Mainichi Shinbun consisted of 38 articles relating to the nikkei Brazilian community. The corpus of Instagram Posts consisted of the Instagram profiles of ten young nikkei Brazilian influencers: five pieces of content (Posts or Reels) per profile, selected based on the materials available to researchers at

the time of research and the analysis focused on the first impression (so the materials that a visitor to the Instagram profile would see).

As for structure, the thesis will consist of six chapters. The first chapter will provide a historical background on the nikkei Brazilian community and them in contemporary times. The second chapter will present a comprehensive overview of the research on Japanese-Brazilians and the theories that will be used throughout the thesis. The third and fourth chapters will discuss the representation of the nikkei Brazilians in the Mainichi Shinbun and Instagram respectively and chapter five will analyse the comparison between the two corpora. The final chapter will synthesise the main findings, discuss their theoretical and methodological implications, address the limitations of the study and suggest directions for future research.

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Chapter 1: Historical View of Nikkei Brazilians

1.1 History between Brazil and Japan

The shared history between Japan and Brazil started when the economic necessities of both countries started to align in the end of the 1800s, as Brazilian plantation owners were seeking workers to make up for the labour shortage for their expanding coffee plantations (*fazendas*) caused by the 1888 abolition of slavery, while Meiji Japan had an overpopulated and impoverished rural reality and not enough employment to tend to its citizens (Linger, 2001, p.20).

As a result, in 1894, the Japanese immigration envoy Sho Nemoto promoted Japanese immigrants as a solution for the labour shortage, and from there in 1908 the formal start of the relations between the two countries began with the first ship of immigrants from Japan arriving in Santos. From there, in the pre-war period, almost 200,000 Japanese people emigrated to Brazil (Linger, 2001, p.21). The intention was to go to Brazil, make money, and then go back to Japan in a few years, but most ended up settling in Brazil, and eventually moving to cities, like São Paulo, where they created famous, even to this day, centers of Japanese Brazil (for example Bastos, Moji das Cruzes, Susano and Liberdade), or to *colônias*, which are ethnic homogenetic, cooperative agricultural communities. Over time, having settled in Brazil, these people formed the nikkei community, a community made by foreign nationals of Japanese ancestry, and by the end of the 20th century, there are believed to be 2 million estimated Japanese descendants in Brazil as of today (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2026).

In the 1980s the situation shifted, as Brazil was afflicted with hyperinflation and economic stagnation, while Japan, after WW2, experienced an economic boom becoming an industrial powerhouse, and now in need of unskilled industrial labour (Linger, 2001, p.22). Consequently, in 1990, the Japanese government amended a new law which allowed second and third-generation nikkei to live and work legally in Japan without restrictions.(Linger, 2001, p. 23) This then created a phenomenon of “return migration” from Brazil to Japan, where Japanese Brazilians moved back to their ancestral home in search of higher wages. They were often funneled into manual labour described as the 3K: *kitanai* (dirty), *kiken* (dangerous), *kitsui* (difficult) (Linger, 2001, p.22), which is prevalent in factories where there is also a minimal need for the use of japanese.

Most Brazilian nikkeijin centered themselves around certain towns, such as Toyota, Toyohashi, Nagoya, Hamamatsu, and the Ota-Oizumi region (Linger, 2001, pp. 26-27). In Toyota, Linger writes about the condition of *Hōmi Danchi*, a vast complex of apartment blocks where a big number of Brazilian nikkei families lived. He describes them as “transnational sites of interaction” (Linger, 2001, p.17) where their migration reality came to life in their day to day life, seen as a “limbo”(Linger, 2001, p.6), a neutral, tolerable and temporary abode, hinting at how also the Brazilian nikkeijin felt in Japan.

1.2 Nikkei Brazilians in present times

According to the June 2025 statistics from Japan’s official statistics site (e-Stat, 2025), the ranking of the largest foreign communities now residing in Japan is as follows:

- China: 900,738 residents
- Vietnam: 660,483 residents
- South Korea: 409,584 residents
- Philippines: 349,714 residents
- Nepal: 273,229 residents
- Indonesia: 230,689 residents
- Brazil: 211,229 residents**

Despite the Brazilian community being the 7th overall, it still remains as the largest South American community in Japan.

Linger (2001), describing the situation for these residents in the early 2000s, talks about “dual diaspora”, to indicate their feelings of being stuck between two “homelands”, having ties with both Japan and Brazil. In Brazil, they were proud of their heritage and considered themselves for the most part Japanese, but the reality they found coming to Japan was quite different, being considered definitely Brazilian by the locals (Tsuda, 2003). Also to add to the alienation, in Brazil most of these nikkei communities, with time, were able to achieve a high social mobility (Matsuura, 2013). Consequently, the reality of their status in Japan, mostly relegated to unskilled manual labour and rejected as cultural foreigners, is a stark contrast to what they were used to.

Concentrating on the nikkei brazilian youth, there is also Matsuura (2013) who put her efforts in research that investigates between their identity development and

language acquisition and their difficulties as a transcultural and transnational group. Through a framework centred around content analysis of Youtube interviews, she notes that these individuals have frequent internal conflicts, alternating the feeling of being a foreigner in both Japan and Brazil. Applying Cummins' (1981 as cited in Matsuura 2015) theories on second language acquisition, she argues that the gap between their BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) leads to academic marginalization, which in turn facilitates trapping these youths in a cycle of unskilled factory work.

In more recent years, Tamaki (2026), referring to the city of Oizumi in Gunma prefecture, takes about how the city has been proactive in supporting nikkei Brazilians, not only as laborers but as residents with full social rights, for example implementing bilingual education (Portuguese and Japanese), hiring interpreters for public services, and giving access to public housing and healthcare. But there were still difficulties tied to the language and culture, as Tamaki describes Japanese culture norms as rational and based on emotion control, while Brazilian culture is instead formed on emotions and physical sensations . Additionally, surveys indicate that while Brazilian nikkeijin view Japanese residents in a favorable light, Japanese residents instead tend to hold negative perceptions of foreign residents, including nikkei Brazilians. But these surveys also show that this negative opinion tends to shift in a positive light with direct contact with the foreign communities through the workplace or their children .

1.3 Why Nikkei Brazilians

As stated before, the Brazilian community, mostly composed of nikkei Brazilians, is the largest South American community in Japan, and 7th largest overall, making them a relevant group of study already by its size. Brazilian nikkeijin also belong to a historically significant transnational community, whose experiences connect Brazil and Japan through the long history of migration to Brazil and return migration, giving them a status akin to “strangers in the ethnic homeland” (Tsuda 2003), phenotypically often Japanese but culturally foreign, making the community a complex environment for a study about media representation in contemporary times.

The focus on media in this thesis lies in the role it has in public perception. As said also by Tsuda (2004), Japanese public perceptions and attitudes are strongly influenced by Japanese media. He adds that especially in contexts with low level

immigration, like Japan, most impressions are obtained by the media, therefore, in the absence of direct contact between the local population and minority groups, that shown by the surveys conducted by Tamaki to be an effective way of changing opinions on foreign groups, most information and impressions are derived from what Tsuda proceeds to call “non-contiguous ethnic encounters”, which are interactions and exchange of information in non-direct ways - such as the news.

Furthermore, the younger generations, and in this paper the brazilian nikkei youth, are “digital natives”, giving the aspect of their self-presentation on the internet a central role in communication and self-expression. Platforms like Instagram are, in turn, not solely tools for entertainment, but especially venues for constructing an online self that allows for individual agency and community building. Specifically, Kaipainen (2022) refers to this self-representation as “automediality”, where identity is defined as not only a product of representation but also as a process of continually becoming mediated by technology. Within this perspective, the Instagram profile is a space where one could perform themselves as a “self-branding” rhetoric site by means of representing oneself. And as Japan, an ethnically homogenic country, has a low percentage of immigrants, the public's perception is mostly shaped by the media they consume, making the research regarding these nikkei Brazilians through the media lens a compelling study area.

Finally, there is a relevant number of previous research tackling this community focusing on their migration history, labour experiences and integration processes, fewer studies have examined nikkei Youth and how they represent themselves online, and how these portrayals compare with representations found in traditional media outlets. Tsuda (2004), in the early 2000s, found that in Japan the traditional news often employed “elite discourse” that could reproduce ethnic prejudices or portray Brazilian nikkeijin as pitiful victims of harsh circumstances (*kawaisō*) in an attempt to apparently fight the common Japanese stereotypes about them, but ending with a patronizing attitude towards these nikkei Brazilians, seen unconsciously as innately inferior. It is important, then, to understand if this approach to portraying the Brazilian nikkeijin has evolved since then or remains unchanged today.

This thesis, therefore, seeks to contribute to the academic status quo by examining the relationship between representation by media and self-representation of nikkei Brazilians in Japan. By comparing the hegemonic narratives of news outlets

with the internal lens of social media, this research aims to possibly shed light on the power dynamics involved in how a transnational group reclaims its voice in the digital age.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Academic State of Art

The academic exploration of the nikkei Brazilian community has a long history of ethnographic tradition, which prioritizes immersion and direct observations as the fundamental pillars of social knowledge. The most influential example of this approach is Tsuda Takeyuki (2003, 2004), whose studies involved extensive observation of labourers in the Japanese factories where they were employed. Tsuda's (2003) methodology was intended to enter the complex layering of migrant identity, through his Brazilian nikkei contacts depositions and his Japanese informants' outside perspectives on them. In addition, by working directly alongside the nikkei Brazilians, Tsuda captured their daily struggles and showed how the environment of the factory functions as a site for the reproduction of ethnic hierarchies, as most of the Japanese informants in his study equated the status of *dekasegui* with poverty, reinforced by the idea of Brazil as a Third world country.

But before Tsuda, this immersive tradition was applied also by Daniel Touro Linger (2001), who wanted a more “person-centred ethnography”, executed in his study of a Brazilian community in Toyota. Linger believed that broad sociological abstractions and theories, while useful for pinpointing macro-scale flows, are ultimately inadequate for capturing the “immediacy and aliveness” of human subjectivity. He also argued that a person isn't reducible to their social coordinates and that the experience of being “a stranger in the ethnic homeland” (Tsuda 2004) can only be understood through close-ups of individual life stories. Therefore, for Linger, the focus must then shift from the group as a monolithic entity to the individual as a “generative self”, which is a “self-constructing self” within transnational scenes, like *Hōmi Danchi*, a residential complex in Toyota where many nikkei Brazilians lived, where he concentrated on during his research. In the end, his work emphasizes that identity, in this case for Brazilian nikkeijin, is not a static birthright but an often painful process of negotiation between the “blood-connection” (their ancestry) and the “culture” (their lived experience in a Brazilian environment).

Furthermore, the study of nikkei media has its own distinct lineage and, in the digital age, it has evolved to include the analysis of “digital natives”. For instance, Matsuura's (2013) work is relevant as it shifts attention to the younger generation of

nikkei Brazilians raised in Japan, highlighting their struggles with language and belonging. And although Matsuura's research is not directly connected with media representations, it is relevant because it puts attention towards Brazilian nikkei youth, which is the very target examined by this thesis.

Adding to this, the contemporary academic status quo has been further enriched by the analysis of digital spheres. For example with Putikadyanto et al. (2021), talking about the Indonesian social landscape, they observe the rise of a "presentation culture", where self-image is no longer an occasional act but more of a habit or a lifestyle that is integrated into the construction of an online-self. In addition Kacar (2024), identifies the "two stages" of Instagram noting that the temporal affordances of the platform (referring to the aspect of the persistence of Posts and Reels on the main feed versus the 24 hour limitation of Stories) dictate different levels of impression management. In this context, the Brazilian nikkeijin youth are not just passive consumers of media but active participants who construct and communicate multiple aspects of themselves through multiple resources, aiming to present anything from an idealized self-representation that is permanent to a more spontaneous and fleeting expression of their "actual self" from everyday life. From a methodological point, Kaipainen (2022) argues further that profiles should be seen as a coherent multimodal text rather than isolated posts. Therefore through a close reading of the profile as a whole, it becomes possible to examine how representations are constructed. This is relevant to this research because it supports the analysis of Instagram profiles as consistent spaces of self-representation.

In this context, it suggests that digital artifacts, for example videos, posts and profiles, may be subject to analysis as valuable sources which can allow observation of self-representations. In summary, by focusing on mediatized environments, this paper aims to examine the possible representational conflicts between traditional journalism and digital self-presentation, departing from the works that have been briefly discussed above. It also seeks to understand to what extent and how Brazilian nikkei youth utilize the "presentation culture" (Putikadyanto et al., 2021) of platforms like Instagram and how it could connect with the "external lens" of mainstream media.

2.2 Theoretical context

This thesis argues that in our contemporary society, while lived experiences remain extremely important, they must be understood in a broader context that takes into account the modern era of mediated communication. Media environments are important in the process of making social groups visible to other social groups, especially if the former does not have direct contact with the latter. This is especially true in the Japanese context, where the wider community might first see the nikkei Brazilian in mediated representations, but not in inter-personal encounters. Although Japanese media might seem like a sympathetic representation of nikkei Brazilians, as Tsuda (2004) notes, it can also serve as a “trickster” that propagates the prejudices already held.

Social media has revolutionized the way media content is created, shared and used. Digital environments are not as institutional structures, but spaces in which users can actively engage in the production of content. Social media, as van Dijck (2013) claims, is a place-based system, operating with social and economic logic that cannot be captured by traditional media theories. The participation of users, connectivity and datafication are closely tied with one another in these place-based systems.

More importantly, the work of Hall, with his theory of representation (1997), is particularly important in the context of this theoretical shift. Hall argues that representation operates through two connected processes: firstly the conceptual map which is: “the system by which all sorts of objects, people and events are correlated with a set of concepts or *mental representations* which we carry around in our heads”; and secondly the language that is used to: “represent and exchange meanings and concepts” by utilizing *signs*, which are whatever mediums we use to convey meaning (pp.17-18). From this it is understood that Hall does not believe that representation creates a material reality itself, but instead it plays a constructive role in the production of social meanings. In this view, the brazilian nikkei “culture”¹ is not an essentialized intrinsic trait but a “representational effect” produced through the possession of a “shared culture of meanings” (p.18). In addition, Hall’s encoding/decoding method² (1980) provides a useful way of understanding the relationship between media representations and audience agency. While media

¹ from Hall’s (1997) usage of the word to mean a shared conceptual map by which to interpret the world.

² used in the article in the context of television transmissions but also applicable to social media platforms as both have a public

institutions may encode messages according to dominant cultural structure, audiences are not passive recipients of meaning and could interpret these representations in different ways (Culture, Media; language 1980 p. 131). In conclusion this perspective is particularly relevant for this thesis, as it allows social media self-representation to be examined as a possible space where meanings connected to brazilian nikkeijin representation can be reproduced or reinterpreted.

2.3 Chosen methodological approach

This research adopts a qualitative methodology rooted in the constructionist approach, as to be able to evaluate the possible discrepancies between the mainstream portrayals of the brazilian nikkei community and the forms of self-representation on social media. And while traditional ethnographic studies were centred on physical spaces (for example the factories for Tsuda), this thesis will focus on mediated spaces where the representations that will be analyzed are produced. The term mediated spaces refers to the environments where representations are mediated through communication technologies rather than produced through direct face to face interactions in a shared physical place. These platform-mediated environments (van Dijck 2013 *The Culture of Connectivity*) create digital artefacts (for example news articles or, in the case of Instagram, Posts and Reels) that can be then compared and analysed as forms of representation.

Within this landscape, representation is not a secondary reflection of a pre-existing reality, but a “signifying practice” that is integral for the very identities it depicts. Following Hall (1997), this approach is anti-essentialist, as it challenges the notion that identity is a fixed biological or cultural trait. With this also representations are seen as constructed rather than reflections of a fixed essential identity. And because symbolic forms are polysemic, meaning that they carry multiple different possible interpretations, the mediatic landscape becomes a zone of contestation where different groups struggle over the power to define social reality. Consequently, the representation found in the *Mainichi Shinbun* are examined as a regime of representation Hall (1997) through which particular narratives, in this case of the brazilian nikkei community, are established in public discourse, while Tsuda’s work provides a point of comparison regarding Japanese media portrayals.

Although both traditional media and new media belong to the field of mass communication, they have different communicative logics. Traditional old media,

such as newspapers, TV and radio, are characterized by a one-to-many asymmetrical one way model of transmission, where symbolic forms are produced by a centralized source and diffused to a large audience who receive these forms without any way to interact directly in the communication (van Dijck 2013). In contrast, new media, such as social media platforms, are characterized by a distributed network that allows a many-to-many two way transmission, defined by interactivity and participation, rendering users both producers and consumers of content (van Dijck 2013).

This thesis therefore defines nikkei Brazilian representation as a socially and technologically mediated process, bringing together Hall's perspective on the politics of representation and van Dijck's on platform mediated communication. With this framework, there is a direct confrontation between top-down institutional encodings and bottom-up digital self-constructions, recognizing that in a society where “non-contiguous encounters” dominate the public perception, the digital sphere could provide opportunities for the emergence of alternative representations and narratives. Ultimately, this research aims to examine how representations of nikkei Brazilian are seen across different media environments, such as traditional media outlets (Mainichi Shinbun) and social media platforms (Instagram).

2.3.1 Standards of analysis of the corpuses

The core of this research is a comparative analysis of two corpuses, evaluated through various standards depending on the origin of the said corpuses.

The analysis will commence from the corpus gathered from the Mainichi Shinbun. The articles which compose the corpus were selected after inputting a search through the Mainichi Shinbun website with the specific key word “日系ブラジル人” (nikkei brazilian). With the search results, this thesis subsequently further checked every article to assure the actual mention of the desired target demographic. This process continues until it reaches articles dated to the exact period of the year that precedes the day where the research started (in this case May 2026). After gathering the corpus, the article's analysis draws on Hall's understanding of representation and on the encoding and decoding process, and specifically on the dominant hegemonic position. From this perspective, the analysis examines whether the Mainichi Shinbun, as a media institution acting as a potential primary definer, encodes representations that may become normalized in public discourse through

dominant culture. As a research parallel there are the works of Tsuda who observed that Japanese media often functions as a “trickster” (2004), using an apparent empathy to portray the Japanese who went to Brazil for work, and in turn their nikkei, as “pitiful victims”. While this approach from the media appeared sympathetic, it reinforced hierarchical distance with the subject in a condescending way. Another parallel, not specifically regarding the nikkei brazilian community, is the work of van Dijk (1993) on elite discourse. He identified how journalists act as “managers of public opinion” by using topicalization to frame minorities within a limited range of stereotypical themes, such as for example “immigration as a problem”.

Afterwards, the analysis will continue with the corpus gathered from the spaces of self-representation on Instagram. Based on Patton’s (2002) concept of purposive sampling, the profiles were selected as information-rich sources of the brazilian nikkei community. Consequently, the instagram profiles that were chosen to assemble the corpus were selected through a fixed standard using set functions from the platform. On the instagram search bar the “nikkei brazilian” keyword was inputted, then there was an analysis of every single profile in search of specific flags such as: confirming if the profile was from nikkei Brazilian youth through the bio (which is the first thing that can be seen when observing an instagram profile other than profile picture, follower count and followed count) or other clues in the profile; checking if the profile could be considered an influencer³ (chosen as the case study for this corpus), whether big or small; and checking if the influencer is within the target audience through usual indicators (such as for example mentions of birthdays). Then from each profile the first five⁴ posted pieces of content⁵ that can be seen on the main feed (to mimic the first impression that can be made on a first visit to all profiles selected) will be analyzed, with indication of the date in which it was analyzed disclosed, as the social media sphere is subject to daily changes.

There will be particular attention to recurring themes, language choices, visual elements, self-labeling practices and references to ethnicity and everyday life. By applying Kaipainen's (2022) concept of “automediality”, these elements will be analyzed as parts of a “cumulative logic” where self-representation is not a static

³ “a person active on social media who is able to influence people's opinions or to persuade them to follow a particular lifestyle or buy a particular product” (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/influencer>).

⁴ chosen to obtain a manageable but also comparable sample across all profiles.

⁵ will exclude pinned content (such as posts, reels and stories).

reflection but a process of continually becoming. Furthermore, through the interpretation of visual and verbal cues (where images, videos and captions inform one another), the profile constructs a stable image over time, turning individual posts into a readable text. Also following Kaipainen (2022), the analysis will not focus solely on the content of individual posts but also touch briefly on profile-level features (ex. biography, profile picture, main feed and reels feed, etc.) as important components to the analyzed profiles' self-representation. Thus drawing on Hall's encoding/decoding model, the analysis explores the relationship of the forms of self-representation gathered and the mainstream media coverage. As research parallels there are the work of Putikadyanto et al. (2021), which sees Instagram as a site of "presentation culture" where users utilize multimodal resources (like images, videos, words...) and self-labeling practices (like hashtags) to relay an idealized and specifically selected representation, and the work of Kacar (2024), which distinguished the spheres of the Main Feed, where users curate more stable publicly visible representations of themselves to project a persistent and carefully selected self, and Stories, where temporal limits (the 24 hour expiry) allow for a more spontaneous expression of the everyday self, and the previously touched upon Kaipainen (2022), with the concepts of cumulative logic e, automediality and interpretation of domains of the instagram profile.

In conclusion, this research will thus compare first the similarities and second the differences between the two corpora, which will focus on common themes, references, and narratives regarding nikkei Brazilians. Therefore rather than assuming that either source provides a more authentic account of the representation of the nikkei Brazilian community, this study seeks to examine if and how different media environments produce different representational possibilities, and through this comparison, this thesis aims to determine the commonalities and divergences between the official institutional representations and the self-representations.

Chapter 3: Traditional Media Representation (Mainichi Shinbun)

3.1 Overview

The present chapter of this thesis aims to explore how nikkei Brazilians are represented in the discourse of the Mainichi Shinbun. Following the methodology that was introduced in Chapter 2, the articles were read beyond objective descriptions of events and interpreted in terms of representation as a reflection of specific ideological positions.

The corpus consists of thirty-eight newspaper articles published in Mainichi Shinbun between May 2025 and May 2026. The articles were selected according to the standards illustrated in Chapter 2.3.1. and, after conducting a qualitative thematic analysis, five major representational categories were identified:

- 1) Nikkei Brazilians as Vulnerable Migrants;
- 2) Education, Language, and Social Mobility;
- 3) Cultural Bridges and Multicultural Coexistence;
- 4) Transition from Foreign Workers to Residents;
- 5) Representation as Japanese and Brazilian.

The first two categories prevail in the corpus overall, while the other three were considered more marginal. The analysis reveals that in the discourse of the Mainichi Shinbun, nikkei Brazilians tend to be represented as vulnerable migrants who need support in various aspects of social life while, on the other hand, there is a tendency to depict them as contributors to Japanese society, particularly in relation to multiculturalism.

It is also noteworthy that the discourse of the Mainichi Shinbun appears to oscillate between celebrating ethnicity and stressing differences. Nevertheless, the articles also demonstrate that the image of nikkei Brazilians as migrant workers is gradually shifting towards their representation as residents, students, and contributors to the host society.

Article	Title	Summary
Article 1	Cheers resound at a second-generation Japanese Brazilian owned Brazilian restaurant in Ōizumi, Gunma, watching the World Cup	A Brazilian restaurant in Ōizumi becomes a space where residents gather to watch World Cup football matches

Article 2	Japan and Brazil brought together by “Aliança”	Explores the historical role of “aliança” in connection with Brazil and Japan
Article 3	Multiple troubles... Looking closely at a “ <i>danchi</i> ” where 80 percent of residents are foreigners - Landlords afterwards take action refusing them saying “No foreigners allowed”	Examines challenges of multicultural coexistence in areas with high foreign population
Article 4	A new local specialty for the hometown of a 33 year old, takes on the cultivation of Cassava in Ōta - sells them fried - popular with both foreign and japanese residents / Gunma	A Japanese farmer creates a cassava business by connecting local agriculture with Brazilian residents food culture
Article 5	Everyday words, episode 1688 - explanation - various kanji and readings	Explains different readings of Ōta, mentioning areas known for nikkei Brazilians
Article 6	Princess Kako, tour of a school for nikkei Brazilians and Peruvians - also asks questions as a teacher	Princess Kako visits schools supporting children with latin american backgrounds and learns about multicultural coexistence
Article 7	Forgiveness is not a defeat - Johnny’s sexual abuse revealed - Kauan debuts in Brazil	Kauan Okamoto rebuilds his identity through music between Japan and Brazil
Article 8	Kauan who revealed his sexual abuse by Johnny - debut in a new environment and the meaning of forgiveness	Kauan Okamoto’s career restart and reflections on forgiveness
Article 9	Attention students! Sophia Junior College towards closure - Japanese language learning support for over 30 years catered to foreign kids - how will the “seeds” of coexistence be passed on? Hadano, Kanagawa	Closure of Sophia Junior College threatens a 30-year Japanese support program for foreign children
Article 10	Scheduled closure of Sophia Junior College - what will happen to japanese language learning support for foreigners?	Closure of Sophia Junior College and doubts on the continuation of education for the foreign children
Article 11	Hanshin’s Vitor Ito of the WBC Brazilian National team nimbly completes a double play at shortstop! preparing for a tournament while	Brazilian national team player preparing for tournament while interpreting

	interpreting	
Article 12	Hanshin's interpreter Ito - completely prepared for player selection to Brazil's WBC "I think I'll maybe be selected. I should practice."	Player and interpreter in Brazilian National team prepared for selections
Article 13	Pioneers of the past / Yamaguchi	Reflects on Japanese emigration history and current attitudes towards foreigners
Article 14	American scout discovers them on youtube, Himori and Morechi sign with the Phillies - agent Ōtsuka: "He resembles his father"	Brazilian-Japanese high school pitcher signs with MLB after being discovered online
Article 15	7 movies for Brazil's diversity - film festival in Theaters and Online / Tōkyō	Introduces movies to watch at Brazilian Film Festival
Article 16	Depicting Brazil's diversity - Online film festival, Tokyo - Includes movie set in Ōizumi / Gunma	Brazilian films from the festival connect Japanese audiences with Brazilian culture
Article 17	Classes to experience "Social Participation" - 60 percent of students with "foreign roots" - Mitake Tonō Highschool / Gifu	Local high school supports students with foreign backgrounds through social participation projects
Article 18	As seen by Nakase Aikawa - Brazil and Japan connected by nikkei community	Illustrates historical and contemporary role of nikkei Brazilians as a bridge between Japan and Brazil
Article 19	A town of coexistence with rare points of contact (Part 1) - Japanese residents "I haven't made any acquaintances"	Examines the gap between the image of Ōizumi as a multicultural town and daily reality
Article 20	A town of coexistence with rare points of contact (Part 2) - signs of connection with foreigners - a natural presence at school	Ōizumi's problems with coexistence but also integration through the new generations
Article 21	"Back in the days it was bikes, now it's BMWs" Japanese residents bewildered by foreigners "influence"	Explores social and economic perceptions of foreigners in Ōizumi
Article 22	"Foreigners are foreigners, Japanese are Japanese" a town of coexistence with unexpectedly rare points of	Contrast between the public image of Ōizumi as a multicultural town and the

	contact	reality of social separation
Article 23	A nikkei Keio student and “Japanese First” - embodying the “discomfort of drawing lines” =digital news group ▪ Atsuko Ota	A nikkei Brazilian university student’s life challenges reveal the problems of defining belonging through nationality
Article 24	“Feelings towards Japan” drawing evaluation - Mizuura wins Murasaki Shikibu Literary Prize - overflowing with delight / Kyotō	Literary work with a nikkei Brazilian woman explores complex relationship with Japan
Article 25	It’s ok to mix cultures - 24 year old nikkei Keio student - overcoming language and nationality walls and seizing learning opportunities	Portrays a nikkei Brazilian student overcoming linguistic, educational and nationality barriers
Article 26	Carrier support for Brazilians in Japan - Grant-based scholarship for young people expects to “Increase future options”	Mitsui scholarship expands opportunities for Brazilian youth in Japan
Article 27	Scholarship for Brazilians in Japan “To increase future options” - established by Mitsui and Co. / Aichi	Mitsui scholarship initiative focusing on integration and opportunities
Article 28	Do you believe Japan lost the war...?	Reflects on “ <i>kachigumi/makegumi</i> ” among brazilian japanese after WWII and later social meanings
Article 29	Mitsui and Co., establishes scholarship for Brazilians living in Japan - “To increase future options”	The individual story of Arine Yukihiro and scholarship impact
Article 30	Engineering trainees from Brazil, Peru and Mexico welcomed - Third and Fourth generation nikkeis with connections to the county will study and engage in exchange until January of next year / Yamaguchi	Prefectural training programme connecting Japan with its descendants overseas
Article 31	Hearing about issues / 1 Coexistence with foreigners - Yoshihiro Yokota, representative director of Ibaraki’s NPO Center Commons	Discussion on the need to treat foreigners as residents rather than labour force
Article 32	The ridiculousness of “Japanese First” embodied by a 24 year old Keio University student	The story of a nikkei Brazilian student challenging exclusionary nationalism

Article 33	Prime contractor advances full amount of money - unpaid wages in publicly funded demolition operation - Noto Earthquake / Ishikawa	Wage exploitation of Brazilian workers after Noto earthquake
Article 34	Okazaki city and Meitetsu Bus, working together to train foreigners - the making of the first driver	Foreign worker training programme creates nikkei Brazilian bus driver
Article 35	Aoki Yuka = former JICA Volunteer heading towards multicultural coexistence in Toyama	Activist promotes multicultural coexistence based on previous Brazil existence
Article 36	on-site - Immigration policy - the spark for industries labour shortage / Shiga	Foreign workers supporting Japanese industries facing labour shortages
Article 37	Kōsai Junior High nighttime classes / 1 with a little bravery - to connect the world - Yume irie (19), a Fourth generation nikkei Brazilian / Shiga	Young fourth-generation nikkei Brazilian rebuilding their confidence through education
Article 38	Give me wings / Shiga	Brazilian school children participate in a Japanese cultural event despite educational inequality

Source: me.

3.2 Nikkei Brazilians as Vulnerable Migrants in Need of Institutional Support

The articles in the category tend to depict nikkei Brazilians as a vulnerable minority in need of protection and institutional support. This vulnerability is manifested in disparities in education, employment, and access to social services, with language barriers being the major contributing factor. In particular, nikkei Brazilians are often portrayed as dependent on society in such domains as language learning, employment, housing, and welfare.

A significant part of the articles are dedicated to discussing education and language learning opportunities for nikkei Brazilians. In particular, the articles regarding the closure of Sophia Junior College in Hadano, which provided free Japanese classes and language training for foreign children, including many Brazilian and Peruvian nikkei students (articles 9, 10), highlight the importance of such facilities for the children of immigrants, noting that they served as a “safe space” for discussing ethnic issues and offered support services for university

entrance exams, scholarships, and general education. The articles suggest that the needs of such children are significant, and the loss of this type of facility is certainly not insignificant.

Another article (article 6) follows the visit of Princess Kako to Japanese and Brazilian schools in Hamamatsu. Once again, the focus is on the need for providing educational support to nikkei Brazilians, including those studying Japanese at Brazilian schools. Regarding this, nikkei Brazilians are presented as dependent on society in terms of language learning, identity construction, and career counseling.

Notably, the articles in this category tend also to depict nikkei Brazilians as vulnerable in relation to employment. In particular, Mitsui & Co.'s decision to provide a scholarship to young Brazilians residing in Japan is discussed in two articles (articles 26, 27). While the scholarship program is undoubtedly a positive development, it also serves to highlight the lack of opportunity for many young immigrants. The articles report that many children attend Brazilian schools, struggle to learn Japanese, and consequently resort to factory work with limited opportunities for advancement. The article also highlights the personal story of Yukihiro Aline who aspires to become a psychologist to help other children with migrant backgrounds. According to her, receiving a scholarship is her way of giving back to society, which further underscores the need for support for the nikkei Brazilian community.

The issue of vulnerability also affects housing as foreign workers are often denied long-term tenancy by landlords (article 3). In this issue which discusses discrimination against foreign workers and migrants, nikkei Brazilians have a marginal importance (only being cited through the figure of Mario, a nikkei Brazilian man that became a building manager, at the end of the article). The article comments on the situation in which approximately 80 percent of residents in a particular housing complex are foreigners, including Brazilians. While the article highlights the value of multiculturalism and foreign workers, nikkei Brazilians (as can be inferred through the text) continue to be portrayed in a position of vulnerability and encounter social and institutional barriers in comparison to native Japanese. For example phrases such as “There is no shortage of landlords who refuse to rent to foreigners saying ‘no foreigners allowed’” (「*gaikokujin wa NG*」*to kotowaru ōya ga ato wo tatazu*) or “Having experienced the hardships of immigrating to Japan” (*nihon he no ijū no kurō wo taiken shiteiru*) highlight this portrayal of their vulnerable position.

Some articles explicitly link the vulnerability of status of nikkei Brazilians to the lack of migrant-friendly policies in Japan. For example, article 31 features an interview with the director of the Ibaraki NPO Center Commons, who criticizes the authorities for regarding foreigners as workers rather than residents. He recounts how the arrival of many Brazilians in the 1990s following the Immigration Control Act amendments and the economic crisis of 2008 prompted the need for welfare services. In the interview, the director emphasizes that the needs of foreigners should be considered from the perspective of their rights as “residents” (*seikatsusha*) rather than “labor” (*shūdōsha*), which marginalizes the former as only those willing to work are eligible for support.

In a similar vein, article 33 discusses the problem of wage theft affecting many nikkei Brazilian workers employed in the reconstruction of the Noto Peninsula. Subcontracting practices resulted in many foreigners being deprived of their wages, although they were eventually reimbursed by the main contractor. Once again, the article highlights the precarious position of migrants in Japan who are often dependent on subcontractors in terms of work and compensation.

Particularly, the issue of social inequality also affects education, as illustrated by article 38, which follows a group of Brazilian schoolchildren who participated in a public orchestra concert. The article discusses their achievements and challenges, describing their attendance at a Brazilian school in Shiga Prefecture. These immigrants study in a building where their Japanese counterparts used to be housed and receive significantly lower public funding compared to public schools. As the children grow older, fewer of them aspire to become doctors or police officers, with some stating that they simply do not know what they want to do in the future. This suggests that the lack of equal educational opportunities undermines the hopes and ambitions of many nikkei Brazilian students.

While most articles discuss the vulnerable position of nikkei Brazilians in Japanese society, some also comment on efforts aimed at supporting this community. In particular, article 35 highlights the work of Yuka Aoki, the founder of an NGO that supports children with migrant backgrounds. Aoki criticizes the failure of Japanese society to recognize the diversity of foreigners and treat them as individuals rather than “foreigners.” By organizing talks and promoting civic education, she encourages minorities to acknowledge their uniqueness and demand respect. This article illustrates the efforts needed from Japanese society to promote

multiculturalism and treat nikkei Brazilians not as vulnerable foreigners but as individuals with distinct ethnic heritages.

On the other hand, article 21 explores the perception of nikkei Brazilians among second-generation immigrants who grew up alongside their Japanese peers in Ōizumi. According to the article, younger Japanese people regard nikkei Brazilians not as foreigners but as regular classmates. Thus, the article suggests that ethnic differences appear to be diminishing with time as minorities and majorities interact on a daily basis. Nevertheless, this optimistic view is undermined by the fact that the two groups rarely communicate and remain unaware of each other's cultures. As such, while most articles depict nikkei Brazilians as vulnerable migrants, some also feature accounts illustrating that their integration into Japanese society is a slow but inevitable process.

In summary, as seen by the articles shown, nikkei Brazilians are seen as vulnerable migrants who require support in various aspects of social life, dependent on society in terms of education, employment, and welfare. This dependence is explained by their limited fluency in Japanese and low levels of proficiency in the national language, which affects their ability to compete on the job market and access public services.

Indeed, most articles appeal to the readers' empathy by depicting nikkei Brazilians not only as dependent on state and private organizations in terms of language learning and career development but also as contributing to society through their willingness to work and adapt to the local culture. Nevertheless, the emphasis on vulnerability and the need for support reinforces the perception of nikkei Brazilians as different from Japanese people. In Tsuda's (2004) research, he noted that the media he analyzed showed a positive and empathetic attitude towards nikkei Brazilians, but at the same time these representations end up reinforcing prejudices and having a condescending tone. The articles analyzed in the corpus gathered for this thesis, by appealing to the idea of social responsibility, seems to imply that it is the duty of native Japanese to care for vulnerable minorities such as the nikkei Brazilian community. Thus, this view is similar to Tsuda's findings, as the articles promote paternalistic attitudes rather than equal treatment.

From van Dijk's (1997) perspective, the discourse of the *Mainichi Shimbun* reflects the dominant representation of minorities in which they are depicted as different and only deserving of recognition and support. In particular, nikkei

Brazilians are portrayed as socially disadvantaged and vulnerable, which aligns with van Dijk's (1997) notion of minority language and negative evaluations, but they can also be understood as an empathetic portrayal that highlights the hardships they face. On the other hand, nikkei Brazilians are also presented as contributors to society, which corresponds to their representation as desirable but different from the dominant group.

3.3 Education, Language and Social Mobility

One of the most common representational strategies identified in the corpus is education as the means by which nikkei Brazilians can achieve social mobility and integration into Japanese society. Unlike previous articles focusing on labour or multiculturalism, these texts present educational institutions and initiatives as platforms for future prospects for migrants. Education is conceptualised as the bridge between migrants and Japan, providing the knowledge, language skills, economic opportunities, and social capital for achieving wider acceptance.

The acquisition of Japanese language proficiencies emerges as a key goal in this representational view. Frequently, opportunities for higher education, professional advancement, and general social mobility are linked to levels of Japanese language competency, while limited proficiency is presented as a significant barrier for many young nikkei Brazilians. As such, education is consistently portrayed as both a humanitarian goal and an investment in the country's multicultural future.

Several articles explore the topic of Japanese language acquisition as an integral support for migrant children. Articles 9 and 10, seen in the previous category, which discuss the impending closure of Sophia Junior College, are particularly illustrative of this also in this category. Beyond the issue of the college's closure, the articles focus on Sophia's role as an educational establishment which has provided language support to countless migrant children over the past three decades. The articles depict an extensive support network mobilised around the Junior College, as university students volunteer their time to help with the language learning, education, and general well-being of migrant children. Language acquisition is consistently presented as a vital component of migrant children's socialisation, as is the opportunity to learn about Japanese culture.

Moreover, the educational environment is depicted as nurturing and conducive to developing trusting relationships with the host society. Professor Miyazaki notes:

“I want the children to have the experience of coming to like Japanese people and know that there are Japanese people who accept them just as they are” (*kodomotachi ga ari no mama no jibun wo ukeirete kureru nihonjin ga iru koto wo shitte, nihonjin wo suki ni naru keiken shite hoshī*). This quote is particularly illustrative of the educational philosophy underpinning much of the language instruction received by migrant children, which goes beyond language learning into areas of cultural and social acceptance. Language is presented as a tool for building relationships and achieving social integration, with the trust between migrants and Japanese society being of paramount importance.

It is notable that throughout the articles, nikkei Brazilians and other migrant children are not framed as passive beneficiaries of the support systems designed to assist them. Community volunteers, education professionals, and even corporations are portrayed as active agents which seek to improve the educational prospects of migrant children.

With few exceptions, however, the articles continue to present Japanese educational institutions as the primary providers of support, with migrants depicted as the recipients of this support.

The value of language as social capital is further reinforced, as Japanese language skills are consistently linked to migrant children’s educational, professional, and social prospects. With the exception of a few articles, the closure of Sophia Junior College prompts many articles which centre on language as the critical competency which will allow many migrants to gain access to higher education and socioeconomic opportunity.

Article 6, also seen in the previous category, examines the theme of language acquisition and social mobility through the visit of Princess Kako to schools for Brazilian and Peruvian students in Hamamatsu. Throughout the article, the princess interacts with the language learning resources made available to students.

Rather than focusing on the material resources, the article examines language as the means by which migrant children can become more integrated into Japanese society. Indeed, much of the article focuses on Princess Kako interacting with children as if she were their teacher, asking them questions and engaging with them in language classes.

The educational opportunities available to these children are further reinforced through their interactions with the support network provided by the multicultural

organisation COLORS. Throughout the article, the princess asks the staff about ways in which they can advise prospective migrants on choosing their nationality, pursue employment opportunities, and learn the Japanese language. In turn, language, jobs, and nationality are presented as three interconnected issues which concern many Brazilian migrants.

Unlike many articles which centre on the economic contributions of nikkei Brazilians, this article examines the needs of migrant children and their families. Moreover, the presence of a member of the Imperial Family acts to reinforce the positive evaluation of these support mechanisms, which are thus presented as beneficial to both migrants and Japanese society.

Article 17 examines education as a means of promoting wider social participation by delving into the experience of Tōnō High School in Gifu Prefecture. Approximately sixty percent of this school's students are foreign nationals, many of whom are of Brazilian descent. In other respects, the school does not differ from other educational institutions, offering Japanese language education and attempting to accommodate the diverse needs of its students. However, article 17 identifies Japanese language education as the means by which the school promotes greater social inclusion by linking language learning to social participation. Language instruction goes beyond teaching vocabulary and grammar to developing proposals for improving public transportation in the city, which are then presented to the mayor.

The teacher notes that many of these students will not be granted voting rights in Japan and therefore need to experience “proof of social participation” (*shakai sankakushita akashi*).

By framing social participation as an important aspect of education, this article illustrates how Japanese language and culture can provide migrant students with a sense of civic responsibility. In turn, this perspective promotes their social inclusion as they seek to contribute to Japanese society. The article quotes a fourth generation nikkei Brazilian woman who dropped out of high school many years earlier after struggling to learn Japanese, expressing that they wished the teachers had tried another approach in her education. By mentioning this resident's difficulties, the article highlights the ways in which language acquisition, and lack thereof, can hinder the educational prospects of migrant children.

Individual experiences of social mobility through education are even more prominent in articles 25, 26, 27, and 29.

Article 25 spotlights the educational biography of Kauanne Haratanno, a 24 year-old second-generation nikkei Brazilian who is currently studying neuroscience at Keio University. Similar to many of the other migrants profiled in the corpus, Kauanne was raised in Brazil and attended a number of educational institutions prior to finding her way to Keio. This article presents her as someone who actively sought opportunities to improve her education: after finishing high school, Kauanne explored study abroad options in Hungary, Italy, Canada, and Japan, frequently having to navigate institutional barriers before finding a suitable solution. Language remained an important consideration throughout her educational journey, which is especially notable given that she learned Japanese by watching anime and television shows.

Moreover, the article documents Kauanne's reflections on her identity as a nikkei Brazilian. Having struggled to adjust to life in Japan, she ultimately decided to embrace her bicultural identity. As such, not only did her education enable her to achieve social mobility, but it also allowed her to reconcile her Japanese and Brazilian roots.

Articles 26, 27, and 29 explore similar themes, this time focusing on Mitsui's scholarship programme for young Brazilian migrants. Throughout several articles, the barriers to higher education experienced by nikkei Brazilians are documented. Many such migrants attend Brazilian schools, only to find themselves limited in their career prospects due to their lack of Japanese language skills. The scholarship programme is presented as one way by which these disadvantages can be offset, creating new opportunities for these students.

Arine Yukihiro, one of the scholarship's beneficiaries, recounts her childhood and early adulthood struggles. After having studied in a Brazilian school, she spent several years working in factories before deciding to pursue a degree in Psychology and Social Welfare. Her goal was to help other Brazilian migrants, particularly children, overcome the hardships she had experienced.

By focusing on her future contributions, this article presents higher education as a means by which migrant residents can achieve social mobility. In turn, these individuals will serve as role models for the next generation of nikkei Brazilians, while also acting as positive contributors to the host society.

The involvement of Mitsui Holding Company further frames investment in the education of Brazilian migrants as a socially responsible decision, benefitting both the company and the country. Similarly, the Brazilian ambassador comments on the programme as a win-win situation for both countries, with education serving as yet another bridge between cultures.

Article 34 examines education as an enabler of social mobility in greater detail, specifically focusing on vocational training. Unlike many of the other articles which feature children and young adults, article 34 focuses on adults who have benefited from the “Okazaki Model” which promotes Japanese language and vocational training among foreign residents. Through these measures, many bus drivers who speak little Japanese have been able to secure employment (and in this case a nikkei Brazilian man). Thus, language training has become an important enabler of social mobility, as it has allowed them to overcome the discrimination they would otherwise face.

Kenji Suzuki recounts his early years as a temporary worker, followed by his decision to improve his Japanese in order to secure better employment. He has since become a bus driver for the city, butchered his own meat, and begun training to be a nursing caregiver. His story serves to illustrate the determination required to achieve social mobility through language learning.

Articles 37 and 38 contain some of the most heartwarming accounts of migrant education in the corpus. Article 37 follows Yume Irie, a fourth-generation nikkei Brazilian who decided to attend a newly established evening junior high school. While she currently serves as a language support assistant for many Portuguese-speaking children, Yume wants to improve her Japanese in order to better communicate with her peers and teach at the schools for migrants.

Language, for Yume, is an important aspect of personal growth which has enabled her to achieve many of her goals. Evening school, in turn, serves as a tool which will allow her to pursue her dreams of attending either a Japanese or a foreign university. Her improved language skills have given her confidence, while her qualifications as an educator have given her opportunities. More importantly, education has allowed her to become a role model for other migrant children, demonstrating that her prospects are not limited to factory work or other low-skilled occupations.

While many articles examine the ways by which language skills can enable social mobility, language education is not always framed as a solution to the disadvantages experienced by Brazilian migrants. Article 38 focuses on a Brazilian school which has been preparing its students for a concert at Biwako Hall. Throughout the article, the children rehearse and perform, demonstrating their talents and devotion to the project. However, upon visiting the school, the writer of the article identifies a number of systemic issues which affect many Brazilian students. According to the principal, many Brazilian children used to aspire to become doctors or police officers, but now feel that they do not have many options in life. Such sentiments are particularly worrying given the growing presence of these students in the host society, where they will soon occupy positions as voters and taxpayers. The article identifies several causes for this lack of optimism among Brazilian students, including the limited recognition, financial support, and employment opportunities available to them.

Yet even as the article documents the ways by which education can be a disincentive to migrant children, it concludes on a positive note. Education, and the opportunities it creates, should allow these children to become active contributors to Japanese society. Nevertheless, the systemic disadvantages which affect many Brazilian students cannot be ignored.

Taken together, these articles demonstrate how education can serve as an important tool of social mobility for nikkei Brazilians. Across the corpus, it becomes evident that migrants are not framed as permanent residents, but rather as students, scholars, and educators. By examining education as the cornerstone of migrant integration, these articles demonstrate how Japanese media seeks to position nikkei Brazilians as future contributors to society. However, such future prospects are largely conditional on migrants' ability to acquire Japanese language proficiencies and adopt Japanese cultural norms. As such, while the depictions of education in the corpus are largely positive, they remain intrinsically assimilationist.

Van Dijk's definition of elite discourse is useful in interpreting the corpus, particularly given the prevalence of articles which feature teachers, professors, policymakers, and even members of the Imperial Family.

While migrants themselves are often interviewed and quoted, these voices are positioned within the larger contexts provided by education professionals and policymakers. As such, it is evident that the discourse on migrant education

continues to be dominated by elites, who determine the ways by which migrants can best integrate into Japanese society.

While Brazilian migrants are often depicted as a source of enrichment to Japanese society, education, and the opportunities for social mobility which it creates, are portrayed as benefits which pertain to both migrants and host society. However, social integration seems to be frequently seen as a process which begins with migrants' adoption of Japanese cultural norms.

3.4 Cultural Bridges and Multicultural Coexistence

A third category identified in the corpus concerns the role of nikkei Brazilians as bridges between Japan and Brazil, who enrich everyday cultural exchange, education, food, sports, historical memory and civic participation. Contrary to the previous themes related to labor, settlement, or institutional support, this category highlights interaction, dialogue and multicultural coexistence, presenting the nikkei Brazilians as mediators rather than objects of public policy or migrant workers.

The Japanese newspaper promotes multiculturalism as a desirable end-goal and positions the nikkei Brazilians as its enablers and that successful cases of coexistence are more worthy of attention and publicity. These articles are diverse in terms of content, covering sports, food, education, historical memory, cultural production, and local solidarity. Yet, all of them contribute to the genre of cultural exchange by depicting nikkei Brazilians as agents who facilitate the coexistence of Japanese and Brazilian cultures.

The most striking example of such mediation is the article devoted to the football match during the World Cup between Japan and Brazil (article 1). Despite the competitive nature of the event, the press highlights the unity of the Brazilian community in Oizumi and its contribution to the local economy. The match was covered enthusiastically by a nikkei Brazilian-owned restaurant, which could be described as a meeting point for Japanese and Brazilian residents. The restaurant displays the flags of both countries, hosts Portuguese language interpretation and bilingual announcements, and holds regular parties. The locals warmly welcomed the goals scored by the Japanese team, yet ultimately celebrated Brazil's victory.

Crucially, the article does not depict the two cultures as incompatible and presents the co-existence of the flags in the restaurant as normal. So does the reference to Oizumi as a multicultural town where, since the 1990s, migrants have

been integrated into the local manufacturing companies. Rather than emphasizing diversity, the article describes it as the norm. Therefore, sports enabled the local news to celebrate multicultural coexistence as natural and desirable.

Multicultural exchange is also facilitated through food. In article 4, a young Japanese businessman dreams of growing cassava in Gunma Prefecture with the intention of using it as a regional specialty. Remarkably, he is not a nikkei Brazilian himself, but has identified an opportunity to satisfy the demand for cassava among the community. The product is presented as both typical for the foreigners and a way to develop the local economy. Notably, the article states several times that cassava is increasingly popular not only among foreigners but also among Japanese, thus presenting the food as a means of cultural exchange. Multicultural interaction is encoded in the story as a way to introduce Brazilian culture to the Japanese through the interest in a certain food product. In turn, the local economy benefits from that exchange by supplying the market with cassava.

Another article devoted to the concept of Aliança (article 2) that was instrumental in promoting multicultural coexistence. The word Aliança (in Portuguese) means alliance, harmony, cooperation and, according to the article, was used by Japanese immigrants to Brazil to signify their willingness to be close to the local Brazilian culture. The article describes Aliança as a response to the xenophobic treatment of Japanese immigrants in the early 20th century, who were often locked out of society. According to the article, second-generation Japanese Brazilians consciously opted for Aliança and friendly co-existence with the locals.

In turn, contemporary episodes illustrate the long-standing multiculturalism of the Japanese Brazilian community. For instance, coffee production in partnership with Brazilian companies, the exchange program with Tsukuba University, and the establishment of Brazilian cafes also aim to promote harmony and cultural exchange. The theme of exchange is thus presented as a continuation of the historical commitment to Aliança, yet simultaneously serves to raise the profile of the nikkei Brazilian community.

Remarkably, multicultural exchange is encoded in the articles as a two-way process, with both cultures influencing each other rather than one supplanting the other. For instance, in the story about international exchange, Japanese students learn about the Brazilian coffee-growing culture, yet the Brazilians also become acquainted with the Japanese university education system. Similarly, the local

Brazilian-owned cafes promote Japanese culture through anime cosplay, while the traditional Bon Odori dance transforms into the Matsuri Dance with elements of Brazilian street culture.

Education emerges as another important theme of multicultural exchange. In article 30, representatives of the Yamaguchi Prefecture Office talk about the technical internships for overseas workers with third and fourth-generation descendants of Japanese emigrants from Brazil, Peru, and Mexico. Crucially, the Yamaguchi Technical Internship Program aims to promote not only technical know-how but also multiculturalism and regional revitalization through the interns' experience. The article quotes one of the female interns from Brazil, who talks about her plans to introduce Japanese early childhood education back in her home country while also visiting her grandparents' village. In this sense, the Yamaguchi Prefecture Office regards the nikkei descendants as cultural ambassadors who will promote Japanese culture overseas. Notably, the local government encourages the interns to "spread the attractiveness of Yamaguchi" upon their return to their countries. The theme of education thus emerges as a way to enhance both multicultural exchange and the values of Japanese society for foreign visitors.

Multicultural exchange is also promoted through the theme of cultural production. In particular, the articles introduce the readers to the Brazil Film Festival Plus (articles 15, 16), which showcases films "that celebrate diversity, encounter and dialogue". The festival organizers highlight their mission to bring culture and people together, and one of the short films, entitled NOVA, depicts a nikkei Brazilian family in Oizumi. Through such cultural events, the Japanese newspaper encourages its readers to engage in similar activities that promote multicultural exchange. As seen in the previous articles, diversity is encoded in the accounts through typical social themes, such as sports, food, and education, yet applied in a way that promotes multicultural understanding. Thus, the film NOVA depicts Brazilian culture in a way that resonates with the local Japanese community, rather than presenting it as fundamentally different and exotic. Articles 15 and 16 showcase the broad spectrum of Brazilian society, from its youth to its elderly population, mothers and children, migrants and residents.

The nikkei Brazilians are once again presented as cultural facilitators who understand both sides and can communicate effectively. In turn, their awareness of

diversity is encoded through positive attitudes toward their own culture as well as the host country's.

The most comprehensive account of nikkei Brazilians as cultural bridges between Brazil and Japan is provided in the JICA feature (article 18). Throughout the article, the nikkei Brazilian community is described as the pillar of historical and cultural exchange between the two countries. In particular, the nikkei Brazilians are highlighted as bridges that Japan builds across the Pacific Ocean. Remarkably, the JICA organization utilizes the efforts of the nikkei descendants to facilitate contemporary international exchange and cooperation.

The article describes several areas in which nikkei Brazilians promote multicultural exchange, such as cultural organizations, youth exchange programs, anime, cosplay, Bon Odori, food, music and festivals. In particular, the nikkei Brazilians mediate between the two cultures by introducing the Brazilian audience to Japanese traditions and bringing Japanese culture to Brazil. At the same time, the nikkei themselves become part of the multicultural environment incorporating Brazilian street culture and dance.

The article stresses the positive aspects of cultural hybridity, which has long been a characteristic of nikkei Brazilian representation. Thus, rather than presenting Japanese culture as something purely Japanese that needs to be preserved, nikkei Brazilians argue that it is enhanced through interaction with other cultures.

As such, the nikkei Brazilians' multicultural lifestyles are seen as desirable examples for Japanese society. Article 18 also emphasizes the importance of youth exchange programs that employ young people in technical jobs. By promoting these programs, JICA calls upon the local community to participate in the international exchange.

It is notable that nikkei Brazilians are presented as simultaneously historical and contemporary actors who facilitate international cooperation. The article mentions that their ancestors participated in Brazil's agricultural development, while the JICA organization supports hospital development and leadership training programs. Additionally, the involvement of young people in international exchange will ensure the continuity of cultural exchange programs.

Finally, article 35 (seen also in the first category) discusses the work of Yuka Aoki, the founder of an educational NPO that supports children with migrant backgrounds. In particular, the article highlights Aoki's criticism of the discourse on

immigration, which presents foreigners as an undifferentiated mass. The migrant children and their families have difficulties engaging with Japanese society, and she believes that these challenges stem from the fact that immigrants are perceived as outsiders. Aoki promotes cultural exchange and education as tools to combat foreign xenophobia and facilitate social inclusion.

In this account, Brazil serves as a reference point for multicultural coexistence and social inclusion. Having worked in the Brazilian nikkei community in Brazil, Aoki recognizes the differences in the approaches to foreigners in Brazil and Japan. According to the article, the Japanese migrants face stronger pressures to assimilate, whereas in Brazil, there is a more tolerant attitude toward diversity. As such, the article calls for social change by educating the public on the situation of migrants and foreigners in Japan.

Overall, the analysis of this category identified four major representational genres related to nikkei Brazilians. The articles depict nikkei Brazilians in the roles of workers, objects of public discourse, migrants settled in the host country, and cultural facilitators. The last category comprises stories that emphasize the positive aspects of multicultural coexistence and encode it as a desirable goal. Through such accounts, the Japanese newspaper promotes multiculturalism by presenting diverse cultures as complementary rather than antagonistic.

Hall's (1980) encoding/decoding paradigm can be applied to the discussion of multiculturalism by noting that the articles encode multicultural coexistence as positive and socially beneficial. In turn, the readers are encouraged to decode the messages in a way that promotes acceptance of diversity. Subsequently, nikkei Brazilians are depicted as beneficial to Japanese society because of their capacity to facilitate cultural exchange.

Van Dijk's analysis of positive self-images can also be useful in interpreting the discourse on nikkei Brazilians as cultural facilitators. Multicultural coexistence is portrayed in a positive light because it enables the empowerment of immigrants and serves to elevate the public image of Japan as a socially tolerant nation. By emphasizing the successes of the nikkei Brazilians, the Japanese news shows a message of national pride and cultural inclusiveness.

In general, the articles listed under this theme represent nikkei Brazilians not as objects of public discourse but rather as subjects who actively promote multicultural exchange. The nikkei Brazilians are thus portrayed as beneficial to both

cultures as they participate in diverse social spheres, from sports to education to cultural production. The positive evaluation of multiculturalism enables a better understanding of immigrant contributions to the host society while highlighting elements of Japanese culture that are attractive to foreigners.

3.5 From Foreign Labour Force to Social Members

One of the clearest developments emerging from the later articles in the corpus is the gradual shift in the representation of nikkei Brazilians from an exclusively economic resource to members of Japanese society. While previous articles primarily framed them through their contribution to labour shortages, this theme of the corpus increasingly discusses education, community participation, home ownership, social mobility and intergenerational integration. Nevertheless, this transition remains incomplete, as inclusion is consistently portrayed as conditional upon economic usefulness and successful adaptation to Japanese society.

This shift is particularly evident in the series of articles dedicated to Ōizumi Town (articles 19–22). Since the 1990 Immigration Control Act revision, Ōizumi has become one of Japan's most well-known municipalities for its large nikkei Brazilian population. The articles explicitly reconstruct this historical trajectory, explaining that nikkei Brazilians were initially invited because factories were suffering from severe labour shortages. Their arrival is therefore contextualized primarily through an economic narrative. However, unlike earlier articles in the corpus, these reports move beyond labour itself and investigate everyday coexistence between Japanese residents and foreign communities. Rather than presenting multicultural coexistence (*tabunka kyōsei*) as an accomplished reality, the articles reveal significant social distance between Japanese and foreign residents.

One of the most repeated observations concerns the lack of interpersonal relationships despite decades of cohabitation. Japanese interviewees repeatedly explain that they have never experienced direct conflict with foreigners, yet they also admit having almost no personal relationships with them. Statements such as "Foreigners are foreigners; Japanese are Japanese" (*gaikokujin wa gaikokujin, nihonjin wa nihonjin*) illustrate a form of peaceful separation rather than genuine integration.

From Hall's perspective, representation here operates by constructing coexistence as physical proximity without social intimacy. Nikkei Brazilians are no

longer portrayed as temporary migrants, yet they are not fully incorporated into the symbolic category of "Japanese community." Their presence is normalized spatially but remains socially separated.

This perspective is also consistent with Van Dijk's observations regarding elite discourse. The journalists rarely express overt prejudice themselves; instead, they reproduce local residents' voices, allowing exclusionary attitudes to appear as ordinary opinions rather than explicit discrimination. The ideological effect is subtle: social distance becomes naturalized through everyday discourse.

These articles also introduce a more nuanced representation than earlier reports. Several interviewees explicitly reject simplistic stereotypes. One business owner explains that irresponsible foreigners certainly exist, but irresponsible Japanese also exist. Others note that many foreign residents maintain tidy homes, respect agreements and contribute positively to local businesses. Such observations partially destabilize the dominant binary between Japanese insiders and foreign outsiders. Instead of moralizing cultural differences, the articles increasingly individualize foreign residents. And economic success becomes another important theme. Several residents observe that foreign families now drive luxury cars, purchase detached houses and establish successful businesses. One interviewee famously summarizes this transformation:

"Back in the day foreigners rode bicycles. At some point they all switched to (Nissan) Silvias, and lately they drive Mercedes-Benzes and BMWs." (article 21: *mukashi wa gaikokujin ha minna jidōsha datta. aru jiki kara sore ga [nissan no] shirubia ni issei ni kawari, saikin ha bentsu toka BMW desu yo.*)

This narrative represents a remarkable departure from the victim-centred representation observed in earlier sections of the corpus. Nikkei Brazilians are no longer depicted as economically vulnerable factory workers in these contexts but as socially mobile residents capable of accumulating wealth. Nevertheless, this upward mobility also generates ambivalent reactions among Japanese residents. The articles repeatedly suggest that visible economic success produces feelings of uncertainty, envy and anxiety. Rather than eliminating difference, socioeconomic advancement complicates local perceptions of foreigners.

Hall's theory helps explain this contradiction. Representations are never fixed but negotiated. As the social position of nikkei Brazilians changes, media discourse simultaneously updates and redefines the symbolic boundaries separating

"Japanese" from "foreigners." Therefore, economic success becomes another site where differences must be interpreted.

The series also introduces an important generational perspective. Older residents consistently describe foreigners as separate communities with whom meaningful relationships are rare. However, younger interviewees offer remarkably different testimonies. Adults in their thirties recall attending elementary school with Brazilian and Peruvian classmates from childhood and therefore state that they never perceived them primarily as foreigners.

One interviewee explains: "They spoke Japanese like everyone else, and we've been together for a long time. Rather than foreigners, they were simply people living in the same town." (article 21: *karera wa futsū ni nihongo wo hanasu shi, mukashi kara isshō datta. gaikokujin to iu yori, isshō no machi ni sundeiru hito desu ne*).

Another argues that inside elementary school classrooms even the concept of multicultural coexistence becomes unnecessary because diversity has already become normalized. From Hall's perspective, this illustrates how identities are continuously reconstructed through everyday practices rather than fixed ethnic categories. The younger generation produces an alternative reading of multicultural coexistence that differs significantly from institutional discourse.

The articles also highlight tensions surrounding national politics. The reports explicitly connect local debates in Ōizumi to the growing popularity of political movements advocating stricter immigration policies. The mayor argues that misinformation circulating on social media has created the false perception that foreigners receive preferential treatment, despite evidence that foreign workers significantly contribute to municipal tax revenue, demographic stability and local industries (article 20). Here the representation shifts from individual migrants toward broader political narratives surrounding immigration. Foreign residents become symbols within competing national debates regarding demographic decline, labour shortages and Japanese identity.

Despite acknowledging these tensions, the articles consistently emphasize the structural importance of foreign residents. Municipal officials point out that nearly one-third of babies born in Ōizumi now have foreign nationality, while foreign workers sustain local manufacturing, care services and economic growth. Without immigration, they argue, demographic decline would be significantly worse. This framing continues to define migrants primarily through their economic contribution.

Their legitimacy as community members remains closely connected to their usefulness for Japanese society.

The scholarship articles (articles 26, 27 and 29) further develop this shift from labour toward long-term social participation. Instead of factory employment, these reports focus on higher education and professional aspirations among second- and third-generation nikkei Brazilians. The story of Arine Yukihiro illustrates this transition. After experiencing linguistic barriers, attending a Brazilian school and working in factories and elderly care facilities, she entered university with financial support from a newly established Mitsui scholarship. So rather than remaining within the industrial sector traditionally associated with nikkei Brazilians, she plans to become a certified psychologist supporting children with migrant backgrounds.

Importantly, her narrative emphasizes empowerment instead of victimhood. She explains that working in elderly care allowed her to realize that she, too, could contribute to Japanese society. This represents a significant representational shift. Unlike some articles centred on migrants needing assistance, these reports portray nikkei Brazilians as future professionals capable of supporting Japanese society themselves. Similarly, the ambassador's statement describes Brazilian youth as an asset for both Japan and Brazil, reinforcing a discourse of reciprocal contribution rather than unilateral dependence.

Article 34 extends this pattern into skilled employment. Rather than remaining factory workers, nikkei Brazilians appear as qualified professionals. The first bus driver trained under the "Okazaki Model" became a symbol of institutional investment in long-term integration. His transition from temporary agency worker to permanent employee also reflects upward occupational mobility and increased social stability.

Likewise, article 36 presents nikkei Brazilians alongside other foreign workers not as replaceable labour but as leaders within manufacturing companies, supervisors and long-term residents capable of settling permanently in Japan. Employers explicitly argue that committed foreign workers should eventually obtain stable residence rights, suggesting an evolving understanding of migration beyond temporary labour.

Finally, article 38 returns to education but adopts a more emotional narrative. The Brazilian school Santana Gakuen is portrayed through children's participation in a symphony concert where they sing *Tsubasa o Kudasai* (*traduco?*) together with

Japanese students. The event symbolically represents inclusion within Japanese cultural life. However, the article immediately contrasts this symbolic participation with structural inequality, as Brazilian schools remain outside Japan's formal education system, receive limited public funding and continue to educate children whose future opportunities remain significantly constrained. The concluding reflection is particularly significant. The journalist asks what Japanese society can do to allow these children to "spread their wings," shifting responsibility from migrant adaptation toward broader social inclusion.

Across these articles, the representation of nikkei Brazilians, therefore, undergoes a noticeable transformation. They are no longer portrayed exclusively as temporary workers recruited to solve labour shortages but increasingly appear as students, homeowners, entrepreneurs, professionals, neighbours and future citizens. Nevertheless, their acceptance remains conditional as their belonging continues to be legitimized primarily through economic contribution, demographic necessity and successful integration into existing social structures rather than through unconditional recognition as members of Japanese society.

From Hall's perspective, this reflects the ongoing negotiation of meaning surrounding nikkei Brazilian representation. The dominant representation has evolved beyond the earlier image identified by Tsuda of vulnerable migrant workers, yet it has not fully abandoned the distinction between Japanese society and foreign residents. Instead, the corpus constructs nikkei Brazilians as individuals gradually moving from the category of labour force toward that of social members, while simultaneously revealing that the symbolic boundaries of national belonging remain only partially open.

3.6 Representation as Japanese and Brazilian

One of the most common findings in the corpus concerned a shift in the representation of nikkei Brazilians from being portrayed as subordinate groups (migrants) to being in the process of negotiation of their representation. The focus was put on hybridity, the coexistence of multiple perspectives, and self-representation.

First of all, this can be seen by the profile of Kawanne Haratanno (articles 23, 25 and 32). Kawanne is a 24-year-old third-generation nikkei Brazilian studying neuroscience at Keio University, who is portrayed as having resolved the

self-representation dilemma peculiar to many nikkei Brazilians through continuous oscillation between her Brazilian and Japanese roots. Kawanne's individuality is negotiated throughout the article because, during her life, she changed the places where she lived and studied several times. She never settled in one place for too long: she was born in Brazil, but she grew up mostly in Japan, attended Brazilian schools, went to Japanese schools, went abroad, and entered one of the most prestigious Japanese universities. Kawanne's perspective at the end of the article represents the best example of such struggles: "I look Japanese and was raised almost entirely in Japan, am I really Brazilian? I've always struggled with questions of identity. The answer I arrived at is 'nikkei'. It's neither Japanese nor Brazilian" (*mita me ga nihonjin de, hobo nihon de sodatta jibun ha hontō ni burajirujin nanoka. aidentitī wo meguru kattō wa tsune ni atta. tadoritsuita kotae ga "nikkei". nihonjin tomo burajirujin tomo chigau*).

This suggests that Kawanne views herself as part of a distinct third culture that combines elements of Brazilian and Japanese cultures. Moreover, Kawanne's case is also interesting in terms of cultural authenticity. Despite speaking Japanese perfectly, she admits that most of her knowledge of the language came from anime and that she learned the Portuguese language at home. Kawanne had several different selves as well: the first one came with fluency in Japanese and living in Brazil; the second one was using Portuguese at home and living in Japan; the third one – attending high school in the United States; and the fourth and final one was studying neuroscience at Keio University. Kawanne was very pragmatic about her hybrid cultural mix, believing it is ok for them to blend and she also said that it is necessary to protect one's culture, traditions, and customs without trying to exclude other cultures and that societies should be open to other cultures rather than close themselves off from them. Kawanne's self-representation was not negotiated in terms of assimilation. When asked about the slogan "Japanese First" (*nihonjin fāsuto*), Kawanne replied that she thought it was ridiculous because people did not want to lose their unique background by adopting only the Japanese one: "I think a country will be greatly respected if it continues to cherish and protect its own culture, while also showing openness to accepting other countries." (*jikoku no bunka wo daiji ni mamori tsudzuketa uede, sarani takoku wo ukeireru shisei wo shimeseba sugoku sonkei sareru to omou*)

The fact that Kawanne's profile was published three times (articles 23, 25 and 32) suggests that the newspaper considered this issue prominent enough to require a special feature and that the author felt the need to reiterate the message. Kawanne's unique background and individuality was negotiated so heavily because her story represented the changing attitudes toward nikkei Brazilians in general. Kawanne was the embodiment of contemporary multiculturalism, and, as such, was presented as one of the most prominent cultural "ambassadors" for nikkei Brazilians.

In articles 7 and 8, the theme of identity negotiation is continued through the story of the artist named Kauan Okamoto. Unlike Kawanne, Kauan's story focused little on the representation of him being a nikkei Brazilian and instead unveiled the details of his career as a singer and actor in the Johnny's & Associates talent agency, which signed him as one of the first foreign artists in their history. Nevertheless, Kauan's being part of the nikkei Brazilian community was one of the defining themes of the article, as he openly admitted that he struggled with the differences between his two cultures throughout his life. He grew up with his Portuguese-speaking third-generation Brazilian parents but listened to both Japanese and Brazilian music. The former included J-pop idols, and the latter – MPB (*Música Popular Brasileira*), and that reflects in his music, having both influences.

Kauan's story also revealed the ways in which cultural differences affected him on a more personal level. He described the differences between his Brazilian and Japanese audiences, which he found very confusing. When he publicly shared the story of the sexual harassment he had suffered, the people in Brazil saw it as a courageous act, whereas in Japan, he was still regarded as a sexual harassment victim. Once again, Kauan did not seek to depict one culture as superior or more acceptable to another. Instead, he viewed himself as a person who could relate to both cultures and music had played a vital role in resolving this internal conflict for him, as it allowed him to embrace both cultures and be proud of his uniqueness.

Finally, article 37 (previously seen) follows a young nikkei Brazilian named Yume Irie, who had chosen a different path. Unlike Kawanne and Kauan, whose careers depended almost entirely on their multiculturalism, Yume was a student who decided to pursue her dreams despite the challenges she had to overcome on her way. She was currently attending Shiga Prefecture's first evening junior high school after having studied at Japanese public schools, learned Portuguese at a Brazilian school, served as a Portuguese language assistant at Japanese elementary schools,

and decided to attend an evening school to improve her language skills before enrolling at a university.

It is interesting to note that the theme of multilingualism was very common among the nikkei Brazilians. For instance, in this article, one could see how students who spoke English, Portuguese, Japanese, Nepalese, and Chinese helped each other during their English lessons, as she defined it as a fun experience. The article also depicted multilingualism in terms of representation because it was very common for nikkei Brazilians to speak more than one language.

Article 12 told the story of Vitor Ito, the official interpreter for Hanshin Tigers and a member of the Brazilian National baseball team, famous for being one of the most successful players in history. His nikkei Brazilian background was very much intertwined with his professional performance as both an interpreter and a player. Article 12 did not depict much struggle with his intertwined cultures, instead it illustrated how multiculturalism expressed itself in day-to-day activities, such as interpreting the Japanese language for his Brazilian teammates and simultaneously being a representative of Japanese baseball in Brazil.

Another example in the same vein of the last came from article 14 , which depicted the life and career of Alexandre Moretti, a Brazilian-Italian-nikkei Brazilian, whose unique multicultural background had not been an obstacle to his career in the Japanese baseball league. Alexandre's case was an interesting example of representation because neither he nor the author tried to overemphasize the uniqueness of his background. Alexandre was simply a third-generation Brazilian born to a Brazilian-Italian mother and a nikkei Brazilian father. However, it should also be noted that the focus of this article was on Alexandre's sports career, not his multiculturalism, which, perhaps, implied that there was no particular issue with it.

On the other hand, the topic of nikkei Brazilians' representation had also been raised in literary works. Article 24 did not follow a direct representation of a real nikkei Brazilian but told the story of a fictional character, a Brazilian-born nikkei woman married to a Japanese diplomat, written by Mizumura Minae. This article showed the subtle nuances of the Japanese mentality towards foreigners, especially through the prism of female consciousness. It also demonstrated the shift in perceptions over the years as the woman fell in love with Japan and decided to stay in the country for good. As such, this article proved that nikkei Brazilians were now an integral part of Japanese society as one of its esteemed cultural minorities.

Finally, article 28 , which primarily focused on the socio-economic issues affecting nikkei Brazilians, also served to demonstrate the long-standing tensions between Japanese and nikkei Brazilians. The article recited the history of two distinct groups – *kachigumi* and *makegumi* – (depending on if they thought Japan had been defeated) that used to exist within the nikkei Brazilian community and reflected the internal struggles of the nikkei Brazilians. Both the groups were characterized by undesirable attitudes towards each other, with the *kachigumi* thinking that they were superior to *makegumi* and had the right to look down on them and vice versa.

To summarise, the analysis of the corpus demonstrated that the representation of nikkei Brazilians was no longer portrayed exclusively within the lens of migration. Instead, nikkei Brazilians were now more diverse in terms of their backgrounds and discussed them to varying degrees.

3.7 Summary

The qualitative analysis of thirty-eight Mainichi Shinbun articles revealed that the portrayal of nikkei Brazilians in the Japanese traditional media is multifaceted, thus extending beyond the theoretical framework outlined by Tsuda's (2004). Whereas the researcher demonstrated that Japanese newspapers tend to position nikkei Brazilians as pitiful return migrants that should be sympathized, the current dataset includes a broader range of perspectives. Specifically, the articles were organized into the following five thematic categories: 1) presentation of nikkei Brazilians as vulnerable migrants; 2) education, language, and social mobility; 3) multiculturalism and bridges between countries; 4) shift from a foreign labor force to residents; and 5) representation as Japanese and Brazilians. In the first category, this thesis found that the Mainichi Shinbun still portrays the target population as dependent on temporary contracts, experiencing discrimination on the basis of language, and facing limited housing options in terms of private rental accommodation. However, themes 2 and 3 illustrate that the Japanese media assigns more roles and power to migrants by emphasizing the importance of education for settlement as well as their contribution to Japanese society through food and sports. Moreover, it became evident that foreign workers are no longer seen as an easily exploitable labor force but rather as residents (theme 4). Finally, theme 5 demonstrates that migrants are multifunctional, thus negotiating their representations as both Japanese and Brazilians rather than adhering to only one of the categories.

Overall, applying Hall's (1980) Encoding/Decoding theory to the current findings reveals that the Japanese traditional media encodes preferred meanings of immigrants as contributors to the economy and culture of the host country, which still aligns with Tsuda's (2004) findings, but in a more nuanced way. It is possible that the actual audiences either accept these depictions, negotiate their meanings, or reject them since Japan continues to struggle with its immigration policies at the moment when the nation needs to address its aging and decreasing population. Furthermore, analyzing the data under the lens of Van Dijk's (1993) Critical Discourse Analysis Theory suggests that the Mainichi Shinbun articles provide a biased representation of nikkei Brazilians. In other words, the dominant group (Japanese nationals) continues to represent the protected (nikkei Brazilians) in the public space. Such portrayals are beneficial for reinforcing multiculturalism and inclusiveness but still suggest that immigrants should adhere to the rules established by the host country. For instance, they should become economically productive and socially acceptable, thus embracing all aspects of Japanese culture.

While the initial research question hypothesized that Japanese media would depict foreign workers in a negative light, thus reinforcing their status as problematic guests in the country, the current findings contradict these expectations. In reality, the Mainichi Shinbun highlights the hardships faced by nikkei Brazilians, thereby supporting the view of them as vulnerable populations. Nevertheless, the newspaper actively promotes multiculturalism and immigrants' roles as cultural and economic bridges between Brazil and Japan. In doing so, the traditional media outlets confirm the positive stereotypification. Ultimately, by understanding how Japanese newspapers portray nikkei Brazilians, it becomes possible to compare the public discourse created by traditional media and self-representation of the community on Instagram.

Chapter 4 – Instagram Self-representation

4.1 Overview

The Instagram corpus incorporates ten nikkei Brazilian creators between the ages of 18 to 30 residing currently in Japan. Each account is distinct in terms of content focus, professional emphasis, and communicative strategies to have a diverse group of study and, while the creators identify as Brazilian and engage with the nikkei community directly or indirectly, their accounts depict varied approaches to representing this particular background, if they represent it at all. The conclusion that the sample accounts show is that these influencers do not conform to a monolithic view of what it means to be nikkei Brazilian on Instagram, instead, individual creators emphasize particular elements of themselves in correspondence with their interests, professional goals, and targeted audience.

As discussed in the preceding section, in traditional media outlets, nikkei Brazilians often are represented through specific categories such as workers, students, migrants, or advocates of multiculturalism. In contrast, Instagram provides a greater scope for self-representation, as believed by Kacar (2024), hence most of the selected accounts do not identify themselves primarily as ethnically Brazilian or Japanese. Instead, they utilize their ethnic culture as an additional resource for engagement (depending on the context and audience).

The content of the accounts falls primarily into several categories. First, there are nikkei Brazilian cultural mediators who educate their mostly Brazilian audience in Japanese lifestyles. Second, certain accounts focus on lifestyle content, depicting the everyday lives of the creators in Japan without foregrounding their status as nikkei. Third, there are accounts that centre around beauty and image, with the creator's ethnicity playing a minor role in terms of content. Finally, some accounts foreground entertaining or creative content as a means of engaging with the audience.

It is also noteworthy that none of the accounts explicitly focuses on discussing ethnicity or migrant status in the chosen content. Rather, in accordance with the views of Hall (1997), the influencers negotiate their cultural backgrounds actively through representation and discourse. In other words, rather than depicting a singular view of nikkei Brazilian migrant life, the Instagram accounts foreground multifaceted perspectives that respond to particular audiences, not necessarily

centred around their life as nikkei. Their representation is shown through elements of nationality, language, cultural specificity, and professional aspirations.

The main characteristics of the Instagram accounts are presented in Table 4.1 below.

Type of content	Main representatives	Main representation
Cultural Mediators	Profile 2 Profile 3	Bridge between Japan and Brazil, explicitly performing biculturality
Lifestyle Creators	Profile 1 Profile 10 Profile 9	Sharing everyday life in Japan without highlighting nikkei background
Aesthetic/Self-Branding Creators	Profile 5 Profile 6 Profile 7	Self-representation primarily built through fashion, beauty, mood, personal branding, nikkei aspect is in background
Entertaining/Creative Content Creators	Profile 4, Profile 8 (partly Profiles 1/6)	Creativity, hobbies, friendship and humor/entertainment are on the forefront, Japan incidental save for occasional appearance

Source: me.

While the accounts demonstrate a broad spectrum of characteristics, certain common traits can be identified. First, the most used languages for most accounts are Portuguese (in subtitles or spoken, or in captions) and then Japanese (spoken or in captions), in some cases there is an absence of language (with communication only through emoji, symbols and sometimes hashtags). English is mostly used by Profile 1, whose content revolves around vlogs in different languages or skits (short comedic video). Second, while the accounts overtly reference Brazilian roots or Japanese destinations, few discuss ethnicity explicitly. The majority of the accounts mention Brazil explicitly in their biographies (typically with a flag emoji) and frequently depict Japanese settings. However, few creators explicitly discuss their ethnic backgrounds in their content (only Profiles 2 and 3). Instead, their Brazilianness is demonstrated implicitly via language, food and social interactions. In essence, the

creators' Brazilianness and Japaneseness are part of their daily routines, which they document on Instagram without focusing on their Brazilian nikkei status.

This observation is especially interesting in comparison to the findings regarding the Mainichi Shinbun corpus. When discussing nikkei Brazilians, the newspaper articles tended to depict this group primarily through the lens of ethnicity, identity, and migrant status. In contrast, on Instagram, the nikkei Brazilians' ethnicity is not their main characteristic, which underscores the differences between social media content and traditional media discourse. While the newspaper articles foreground the uniqueness and specificity of this migrant group, the Instagram accounts depict creators' lifestyles without focusing on their status as migrants, just as normal people living their lives.

Another common feature of the corpus is that the Instagram accounts are visually consistent in terms of overall appearance. In particular, the accounts can be seen as multifunctional representational texts in accordance with Kaipainen (2022). Individual posts do not stand alone but comprise a broader system of visual and textual elements, including the account's biography, captions, and the overall look of the account. In other words, visual elements of each post exist within a specific context, interacting with other components to form a cohesive message, hence why the look of the profile in general was also considered in the analysis.

For example, Profile 7 presents highly stylised content designed to appeal to fashion-savvy audiences, reflecting his work as a model. His posts are visual and minimalist, often depicting the creator in particular poses while highlighting the details of his appearance. Meanwhile, Profile 6 presents Japanese urban settings and the creator's appearances in streetwear brands with a trap music subculture flair. His posts are also minimalist and visual but feature fewer human subjects, often using space, objects, and urban settings as replacements for the creator, and in some cases he is present but partially covered. In turn, Profile 8 focuses largely on home settings, DIY content, and first-person vlogs with an emphasis on creativity and inspirational content. Across the accounts, attention is drawn to visual appeal and consistency, which allows the accounts to be identified as belonging to specific creators at first glance.

In addition, several accounts demonstrate higher levels of intimacy than others, depicting the everyday lives and personal milestones of the creators. For example, Profile 10 and Profile 2 sometimes comment on their lives, education, and

relationships, which fosters a sense of closeness and identifies the audience. At the same time, Profile 7 and other accounts refrain from sharing personal details and present content that is appealing but visually detached from the creator's life. This approach highlights the differences between intimate self-representation as a means of achieving authenticity in the sense of vulnerability and visual consistency as a means of presenting authentic content.

Finally, it is noteworthy that within the sample, Japan plays varying roles for different accounts. As mentioned above, some accounts depict Japanese urban settings and cultural elements as the backdrop for the creator's life without attempting to discuss them in detail. And for accounts such as Profile 3 and Profile 2, the cultural mediators, Japan is the foreground of their content, suggesting that both accounts target Brazilian audiences who are interested in learning about Japanese lifestyles and cultures. Therefore, both accounts openly discuss and explain various elements of Japanese lifestyles for their audiences.

In contrast, the accounts of lifestyle creators depict similar cultural elements but present them as the familiar backdrop for their everyday lives. Hence, the cultural specifics of Japan are part of these creators' routines, which they document without attempting to educate their audiences on this aspect of the country. This phenomenon can be seen as an example of how cultural elements can be incorporated into the visual appeal of social media posts without being the central point of discussion and it is worth noting that this approach does not apply to all creators, and the content of accounts such as Profile 9 depict Japanese cultural elements as an extension of their aesthetic without foregrounding it.

Overall, the observations highlight that self-representation within the sample accounts is varied and multifaceted. Instagram allows the nikkei Brazilian creators to negotiate their ethnicities and represent their lifestyles flexibly depending on the audience. In the following sections, the characteristics of individual accounts will be further explored with attention to the ways in which these creators negotiate their identities.

4.2 Performing Cultural Brokerage

Among the influencers identified in the corpus, Profile 3 and Profile 2, which will be referred to in this chapter as Cultural Mediator 1 and 2 respectively, are the ones who most explicitly adopt the role of an intermediary between two cultures, namely Brazil

and Japan. Other than focusing on the portrayal of their own lifestyle, both creators provide context for the activities and locations they depict, often explaining their nuances in order to facilitate comprehension among their Brazilian audience. More specifically, Cultural Mediator 1 posts Reels regarding the juxtaposition of Brazilian and Japanese cultures, as explicitly stated in his biography “Vem brasileiro com os japoneses comigo”, (‘Come Brazilianize the Japanese with me’ in Portuguese). His content seem to focus especially on culinary culture, in the case of his videos showing his Japanese coworkers some Brazilian food to try, while at times also showing to his audience the differences and novelties between Japan and Brazil, in the case of the videos where the influencer tests new Japanese products or showcases a bizarre gachapon machine. Cultural Mediator 2, in the same vein, mediates the two cultures, as can be seen in her video reflecting on her nikkei upbringing or the Japanese church vlog (where she poses herself as a gateway for the viewers to understand the Japanese church she frequents). Both predominantly utilize Portuguese for their content, with a minor presence of Japanese, with the exception of Cultural Mediator 2, who posts travel Posts with her husband with Japanese captions and usually omitting voiceovers.

Unlike the other creators analysed in the present study, Cultural Mediator 1 and 2 do not frame their content exclusively around the presentation of Japan as the backdrop against which their lives unfold. Instead, they explicitly address the cultural particularities that make up Japanese society, even if in different ways.

4.2.1 Cultural Mediator 1

Cultural Mediator 1 is a clear example of cultural brokerage as he explicitly states his intentions to document life in Japan while simultaneously providing information and interesting facts to a Brazilian and Portuguese-speaking public. First, this appears in the description of the account, with the creator introducing himself as a digital creator, located in Japan, with the content categorized as “Vlogs | informações | Curiosidades” (“Vlogs | info | curiosities”). Additionally, the text “Vem brasileiro com os japoneses comigo” (“Come Brazilianize the Japanese with me”) indicates that the account serves not only as the creator’s self-expression but also as a tool to facilitate contact between Brazilian and Japanese cultures. Therefore, it becomes evident that the account’s purpose is not limited to sharing the perspectives of the creator, but rather it seeks to represent both parties involved in the cultural exchange process.

This purpose becomes particularly evident when considering the creator's content, primarily in the form of Reels. In the clip with a Japanese coworker trying the Brazilian sweet Tortugueta, the creator first comments on the product, but then asks the coworker to taste it and share his opinion. With the Portuguese language being dominant, both in the subtitling and the creator's speech, the Japanese coworker responds in Japanese, expressing his positive reaction to the product. In doing so, both the Brazilian object of consumption and the Japanese taste preferences are presented to the viewer, with the latter being particularly useful for the target audience who may not understand Japanese. Furthermore, the caption highlights other Brazilian foods and dishes that have been tried by the coworkers, including brigadeiro, pão de queijo, and pastel, and asks for the opinion of the viewer on which should be tried next. Therefore, the video content is explicitly tailored to the audience, combining entertainment, education, and participation.

The similar approach is seen in the next reel, which depicts Japanese women trying the Brazilian cocktail caipirinha. Again, the creator introduces the product and allows the Japanese guests to comment on it, with subtitling and visual aids being used to facilitate understanding. Furthermore, the caption specifically states that the creator enjoys sharing Brazilian foods and drinks with the Japanese people because he wants to “mostrar a cultura brasileira para o Japão também” (“show Brazilian culture to Japan as well”). This statement is particularly noteworthy, as it confirms that the creator explicitly recognizes the cultural relevance of his actions. In other words, the representation of Brazilian culture through the lens of Brazilian food culture is perceived by the creator as an effort to introduce and share that culture with a wider Japanese audience. Consequently, the cultural exchange process is clearly understood by the creator, who actively participates in constructing his content around the idea of sharing elements of Brazilian culture with others.

While the creator predominantly follows the approach of presenting Brazilian culture to the Japanese audience, there are Reels where the reverse approach is used. This phenomenon is best demonstrated by the video that depicts a Japanese gachapon with underwear. In this Reel, the creator attempts to explain the odd Japanese phenomenon to the Brazilian-speaking audience, presenting it in both Portuguese and subtitling to facilitate comprehension. Similar to the previous videos, the creator comments on the cultural oddity and shares his thoughts on the matter along with his friends. This particular video, again, is tailored to the target audience,

with the creator depicting the Japanese experience in a way that can be understood and entertained by the Brazilian viewers. Therefore, unlike the reverse approach used in the previous videos, the one of presenting Japan to Brazilians is explicitly aimed to entertain the viewer while educating them on the oddities of Japanese culture.

The same approach is seen in the Reel, comparing the Brazilian and Japanese bento (Japanese lunch box), which depicts the lunch preparations of the creator and his coworkers. Unlike the previous reels, the emphasis is placed on the differences between the two, with the Brazilian and Japanese flags being presented at the beginning to highlight the distinctions. While the creator explicitly uses the terms “Japanese bento” and “Brazilian bento”, the subtitling and visual framing contribute to the understanding that the cultural differences are the focal point of this video. Furthermore, the cultural differences serve as a basis for entertaining discussion, namely, the question of what meal is more enjoyable in the video caption. As the creator asks “qual será que é mais gostoso? Qual você prefere?” (“which one will be tastier? Which do you prefer?”), the humorous framing of the discussion is further emphasized by the use of question marks. Therefore, cultural difference is both the source of entertainment and a topic of discussion.

The most obvious indication of the creator’s intent to present culture through entertainment is the video regarding the new Nissin instant cup noodles which can be prepared with cold water. Similar to other reels, this one depicts the interaction between the creator, speaking portuguese, and a japanese speaking nikkei Brazilian collaborator with subtitling, however, the content of the video is significantly more varied. With the Brazilian and Japanese flags, again, at the beginning of the reel, the creator highlights the main theme of this particular reel, which is the discussion of Nissin’s initiative. The interaction between the creator and his collaborator, as well as the editing of the video, depict a humorous perspective in discussing the cultural peculiarities, each representing one of the cultures. Furthermore, the subtitling is used almost exclusively in the Portuguese language, which once again highlights the creator’s intent to entertain the Brazilian-speaking audience. In fact, it is the remark made by the Japanese collaborator and the reference to the Brazilian audience that suggest that the creator is aware of his primary mission to share Japanese culture with the Brazilians. Therefore, it is safe to say that the creator is clearly entertaining

his audience, presenting both Brazilian and Japanese cultures for the sake of entertainment and creating opportunities for discussion and participation.

Overall, the examination of the content created by Cultural Mediator 1 allows for a better understanding of the purpose pursued by the creator. First of all, the analysis suggests that it is the cultural exchange, framed around the themes of Brazilian products and Japanese reaction, that appears to be the most prevalent. However, it is not necessarily the result of the creator's efforts; rather, it can be described as an explicit choice that is reinforced by the repeated use of similar framing, captioning, subtitling, and hashtags. The concept of Brazil is largely encoded through references to Brazilian products and food, while Japan is depicted either through the reactions of Japanese collaborators or the culture-specific practices that are peculiar to the country. Furthermore, the Japanese collaborators are generally presented in a positive light, as individuals who are entertained by Brazilian culture. This allows the creator to construct a harmonious representation of the cultural exchange, emphasizing its potential for positivity and entertainment, rather than focusing on the possible complications that may arise. As a result, the creator is successful in presenting himself as an agent of culture, facilitating exchange on both sides, and participating in the process of entertainment. However, the choice of the Portuguese language, combined with the frequent mentions of Brazilian audiences, suggests that it is the Brazilian-speaking viewers who are primarily entertained by the content. In other words, the cultural brokerage facilitated by the creator only exists due to his efforts to entertain his primary audience, making it a unique form of cultural exchange. Specifically, the exchange occurs due to the viewer's curiosity about both cultures, which is facilitated by the creator's ability to depict the differences and similarities in an entertaining manner.

4.2.2 Cultural Mediator 2

Cultural Mediator 2's Instagram account presents a form of self-representation centred on ordinary multicultural life in Japan, rather than on Japan itself as a tourist destination or on an explicitly aspirational lifestyle. Her bio already establishes this positioning through the combination of "Lifestyle | Beauty | Burajirujinmama," her location in Kagawa, and the   symbols (the abbreviations for Brazil and Japan). The expression *Burajirujinmama* is particularly significant because it refers to the humorous persona she occasionally adopts in her content: a

Brazilian woman living in Japan who speaks Japanese with a strong Brazilian accent, but not seen in the content chosen for the corpus. This allows her to turn her bicultural background into both an element of identity and a source of entertainment. Overall, the profile constructs Brazilian and Japanese identities not as mutually exclusive categories, but as coexisting dimensions of everyday experience.

This becomes particularly evident in the first Reel, in which Cultural Mediator 2 discusses “things my parents got right while raising me in Japan.” In the clip, she talks to the camera while being in her car, speaking in Portuguese. She reflects on things that her parents did right while raising her in Japan, including speaking Portuguese at home, not ‘mixing languages’, and allowing her to grow up mainly eating Brazilian food. The ways in which she identifies herself as a member of the nikkei Brazilian community in Japan, as well as her use of “gente” (“we/us”), ground her message in a more general audience of Brazilians and nikkei. She mentions specific Brazilian foods and also notes that she had no problem with adapting to Brazilian food when she first came to Brazil. In this way, the cultural elements of Brazil are framed as part of her everyday experience. From this perspective, Hall’s view that the Reel constructs a representation of a Brazilian identity in Japan is especially relevant, as it encodes a positive connotation towards the elements of Brazilian culture that have been kept throughout her life in Japan. The use of Portuguese language, minimal editing, energetic gestures and facial expressions, and an informal approach to the audience further reinforce this viewpoint.

The second piece of content, which takes the form of a set of pictures Posted in Kōbe, offers a slightly different take on the subject. Unlike the previous Post, this one’s text is in Japanese in the caption, and the hashtags identify the author as Brazilian (*burajirujin*) and her husband seen in the pictures as Filipino (*firipinjin*). The images depict everyday moments spent with her Filipino husband, including visiting Kōbe while eating Brazilian food in a Brazilian restaurant and taking walks around the city. In particular, the presence of Brazilian-style churrasco, rice and beans, and guaraná in the set grounds the ordinary activities in Brazil, which is somewhat juxtaposed with the general Japanese setting of the city. The mention of the husband’s ethnicity adds another cultural layer to the Post, although it is not explicitly commented on beyond the hashtags. In this way, the lack of explanation allows the content to encode multiple cultural elements, which can be seen as

representative of the multiculturalism of Cultural Mediator 2's influencer's everyday life. It constructs the image of a nikkei Brazilian-Filipino couple that is used to both cultures being present in their life on a regular basis, without attempts to separate or distinguish them. The different language used in the Post (Japanese) also speaks to a possibly different audience than the one addressed by the first Reel in this series – in this case, the emphasis on the couple's daily life and the visual-centric nature of the Post suggest that the intended audience might also include the local Japanese-speaking community.

The third Post documenting the Cultural Mediator 2's recent visit to a Japanese church serves to illustrate more her role as a cultural intermediary. The clip starts with the author noting that it is a Japanese church rather than a generic one, and proceeds to talk about the experience of going there in Portuguese. She shows the inside of the church, the people, the singing, and the meals and conversations that took place after mass. The majority of the footage is shot from the first-person perspective, with the author only visible in some shots, further reinforcing the viewpoint. In terms of analysis, Kaipainen's (2022) suggestion that the Instagram accounts portray a multimodal construction of an individual is especially relevant: by using the first-person perspective and the Portuguese language, the account constructs a representation of a Brazilian visitor to a Japanese church. By virtue of being able to see through the visitor's eyes, the audience is able to engage with a carefully selected series of moments that the latter finds noteworthy. At the level of representation, this further supports the view that the Reel constructs the individuality of the visitor through her actions, as well as her active participation in the church goings-on.

The fourth Post, comprising a set of pictures and silent videos, is focused on Brazil and features the caption referring to the author's first ever visit to the country three years ago. Overall, the content item depicts the author, the food, streets, friends, drinks, and locations she experienced there, further highlighting the changes in her perspective. In particular, the use of first-person perspective in the videos, including shots of food, people, locations, and objects in the author's hand, encodes the idea of experiencing Brazil through her eyes. In this way, the visitor's role as a cultural intermediary is apparent once again – she acts as a conduit for projecting images of Brazil onto the audience. It is further reinforced by the use of the 🇧🇷 emoji as well as the hashtags that include terms referring to Brazil.

The last piece of content to be considered is the Post describing the Cultural Mediator 2's recent visit to Okayama with her husband, which serves to highlight their everyday life. Unlike the preceding Post, this one's text is written in Japanese and describes their activities in the Bikan Historical Quarter and their meal of kibi dango. The set comprises multiple pictures and videos that depict their travel, food, walks around the city, and general activities. Notably, this Post does not include any hashtags, and its content is more focused on the couple's life than on any particular cultural elements. Once again, the choice of Japanese language reflects the approach to constructing Posts that involve general observations about everyday life in Japan. At the same time, the previously discussed themes of encoding multiculturalism through language are apparent – in this Post, the choice to use Japanese words and script for the text indicates that the account's default language for everyday life travels is Japanese. However, as noted by the majority of other Posts, the switch to Portuguese dominates when they discuss either Brazilian or Nikkei-related topics. By virtue of its language, medium, imagery, and hashtags, the Post encodes the theme of everyday life that is multicultural but does not explicitly accentuate any particular cultural elements beyond the couple's regular activities.

The accounts analysed above construct the sense of self through the lens of multicultural ordinariness. In particular, Brazil is depicted as a source of cultural roots for the author, reflected in language, food, family, memories, and other elements. It is juxtaposed with the everyday life in Japan, which also comprises various cultural facets, from traveling and visiting places of worship to getting married and engaging in everyday activities with locals. In accordance with Hall's (1997) view, these elements should not be seen as objective reflections of the author's self; rather, she actively selects what ought to be represented in order to construct the desired view of herself in relation to the larger society. The analysis further demonstrates how this process is affected by the use of different languages, mediums, and imagery. In particular, the role of the language choice is especially notable in the examined Instagram account, as switching between Portuguese and Japanese scripts highlights the multilingual and multicultural nature of the author's ordinary life in Japan. On the other hand, the use of the first person, in combination with the selected visual and textual elements, underscores the intermediary status between the two cultures. By portraying herself as a conduit for viewing elements of

Brazilian and Japanese culture, the account balances the representation of her multicultural background.

4.3 Everyday Japan

One of the most common themes that appears in the Instagram Posts of my informants is the centrality of everyday life. While many creators do not identify themselves as ‘nikkei Brazilian’ and make no explicit references to this aspect, a significant number construct their representation by virtue of engaging in everyday activities that take place in Japan. Whether it is documenting a routine, spending time with friends or family, visiting cafes, shopping, commuting, taking photos of the surrounding nature or the cityscape – all these elements serve to ground the creators’ presence in Japan and to shape their self-representation.

Unlike cultural brokering, in which Japan is framed as a specific context of explanation for the audience back home, for these Instagram accounts, Japan is an ordinary habitat in which human activity takes place. It is a background that does not need to be explained or framed; it simply exists. Kaipainen (2022) notes that Instagram allows users to perform their identity through the accumulation of multimodal resources, which include not only words but images, location tags, and other material. In the case of the Profiles 10, 9 and 1 (which will be referred to as Lifestyle Creator 1, 2 and 3 in this chapter), the emphasis is on the latter: the image of the influencer is negotiated through the routine aspects of everyday life. By engaging in everyday routines and commenting on them, the creators construct themselves within the framework of their activities, which also serve to ground their presence within Japanese society. More specifically, Lifestyle Creator 1 presents her feed as a personal diary of youth and coming of age in Japan, through carousels of pictures featuring selfies, urban night photoshoots in Tokyo and big milestones with Portuguese captions. Lifestyle Creator 2, similarly, keeps his narrative minimal by focusing on casual modeling pictures at home or in the Japanese countryside, with his connections with his nikkei background limited to subtle nods, for example in his post posing next to a race car during Brazilian Day (tagged in the Post). Finally, Lifestyle Creator 3 frames his content around an international audience, posting predominantly English content or vlogs showing his prowess with other languages (in the corpus Spanish is seen).

4.3.1. Lifestyle Creator 1

Lifestyle Creator 1 is focused on presenting a typical example of everyday youth, friends, travel, and coming-of-age, not necessarily emphasizing on her Brazilian-Japanese identity. In particular, although in her bio, the girl mentions both  and  , these aspects are not explicitly emphasized in the account. Instead, the young woman focuses on portraying her own image as a part of youth, highlighting such values as friendship, travel, education, and everyday beauty. From this perspective, Lifestyle Creator 1 is different from those discussed earlier, as her account is not necessarily dedicated to explaining and teaching people about either Japanese or Brazilian cultures or traditions. Particularly, applying Hall (1997), one can see how the young woman's self-representation is presented through selected aspects, with an emphasis on what to portray and what to omit. In other words, in Profile 10, the girl does not seek to present herself as nikkei; instead, she shares her life as a teenager who graduates from high school and moves further in her self-development.

The first Post is a carousel dominated by selfies, with the young woman trying to capture herself with different facial expressions. In particular, her dark-red hair, lack of significant makeup, and trying to make pouts in pictures present a typical image of a teenage girl. However, with the last picture, in which the girl looks in the mirror, one can see her clothes, bag and room, which provide some context to the carousel. In addition, the post lacks captions and hashtags, making the focus on the selfie as the means of communication. As such, it can be argued that the post presents an example of a young woman who seeks to capture beauty in everyday life, presenting herself as an ordinary and attractive girl. In this post, Japan is not presented or explained; instead, it is the girl's look and style that dominate the visual.

The second Post is again a carousel that continues the theme of the first post but moves towards a more urban setting. Again, the girl is presented in selfies, however, now she is in the city, with several pictures capturing the street, traffic, and crowds. Similar to the previous images, the young woman is captured in different angles, with some of the pictures presenting the urban scenery without her. Once again, she makes pouts and poses in a somewhat model-like manner, with the colorfulness of the night lights making the urban context of Tokyo more dominant in the visual. At the same time, the last photo of the carousel presents her showing a bruised knee, thus, making the visual more relatable to the audience, as the girl is

presented as an ordinary human with flaws. Therefore, in the young woman's perception, Japan is part of her life and is presented in the images, but it is not necessary to explain or justify it.

The third Post is another carousel that shows a trip with a friend and Mount Fuji with an emphasis on the beauty of everyday life. In particular, the visual presents pictures of the girl, her friend, Mount Fuji, zebras (captured from a car), selfies and a pothole decorated with the image of Mount Fuji. In addition, the caption states "Fuji. 🌋" with no other context or explanation. Such an emphasis on the image of Mount Fuji, which is well-known to the public, indicates that the visual aims to present Japan as part of everyday life. From this perspective, the caption does not seek to explain or justify the cultural significance of the image; instead, it presents it as a part of the young woman's experience in the same way as any other girl would post pictures from her vacation. As such, the visual assumes that the audience knows what Mount Fuji is, which makes it a part of the shared cultural experience. As a result, the carousel presents a more lifestyle-oriented image of Japan as a part of daily living. In particular, the girl emphasizes the fun and beauty of her experience.

Unlike other Posts, the graduation carousel represents the girl's personal experience most explicitly. In particular, the images capture the girl with friends, the same friends with teachers, family, and presents for the graduation. In addition, the caption in Portuguese highlights that the experience of the three years of high school were difficult, but thanking God and her family, she did it and thanks all the friendships she made along the way. As such, unlike other carousels, this post explicitly highlights the personal experience of the girl, making her background more relatable to the audience. At the same time, it can be noted that the Post represents a unique blend of youth and Japanese cultural experience, in which the girl emphasizes her personal experience with her Brazilian background. Unlike other Posts, this carousel does not seek to present a lifestyle or everyday beauty but rather focuses on the personal and close experience of the creator. In particular, the audience can see the graduation from school as a meaningful transition in the girl's life. Her representation in the post is presented through language (Portuguese), family and friends, as well as the experience she went through. As such, the Post highlights the beginning of the girl's adulthood in Japan.

The last Post carousel presents a typical image of a trip to Osaka as a young woman, and in particular, the visual presents the girl in front of the famous Running

Man logo, eating local specialties, taking the train, and exploring the local urban environment. The caption “Konnichiwa” and the hashtag #osaka represents the minimal text of the carousel, thus making the focus on the images and the girl’s experience. Similar to the post with Mount Fuji, this visual assumes that the audience knows what Osaka is, which makes it a part of the shared cultural experience. The images present a short story of travel, as the girl moves from one mode of transportation to another, different objects, and scenery. Once again, the young woman’s fun and humorous side are presented, in particular, in the last picture, in which she points to the small plush of the Sonic.

In general, it can be argued that Lifestyle Creator 1 represents the Instagram version of a personal diary of everyday youth and coming-of-age experiences. Unlike other accounts discussed in this module, this girl rarely talks about Japan or her identity in particular. Instead, with minimal references to her Brazilian roots (Portuguese language and  in the bio and the graduation Post), she focuses on portraying her life as the everyday life of a teenage girl. From Hall’s perspective, in her account, the young woman seeks to represent her identity through selectiveness, presenting the image of a girl who has graduated from high school and actively likes to travel. As such, the carousel format, selfies, first-person perspective, and the focus on the journey, humor, and minor everyday details help to construct the relationship between the girl and her audience. Notably, there are no Reels present in the main feed, and it is probably a conscious choice as the main feed is customizable to separate Posts and Reels (something that will be relevant especially in 4.4). This is important as it shows that there are possibly different targets for each type of content.

4.3.2 Lifestyle Creator 2

Lifestyle Creator 2’s account is different from the previous ones in terms of lifestyle representation. While the creator described themselves as a content creator focused on “food e lifestyle no Japão” (food and lifestyle in Japan [in Portuguese]), none of the analysed posts contain much narrative about Japanese food. Instead, the account focuses on the creator’s own image, using portrait-style pictures and casual modeling and commenting on everyday adventures. Japan is more of a location for the account’s creator than a subject to discuss.

The first Post contains multiple photos of Lifestyle Creator 2's face, with the creator wearing light clothes and keeping an aloof look. They keep the caption minimal with only a 🍷 emoji, thus putting the emphasis on the visuals. This is a trend we see in other accounts' as well, where the captions don't contain much narrative context and instead emoji or symbols. In this particular Post, the audience has to make sense of the images themselves, with the visual components being the creator's appearance and the background, which is seemingly in the Japanese countryside. The former is put on display for the viewers, while the latter merely serves as a location.

The second image is similar to the previous one in many ways. It contains a series of pictures of Lifestyle Creator 2, again wearing light clothes and again presenting their face to the audience and posing at home. They keep the caption empty apart from mentioning the regata⁶ with a hashtag. Once more, the creator does not say much about the context or provide much narrative context for the post. Instead, the visual components say much about the creator, including their general appearance, attitudes, and the environment they live in, making the creator, specifically their appearance, speak for itself.

The third Post keeps the same format, a carousel of pictures of the influencer modeling at home. Lifestyle Creator 2's attire is also light, and their mannerisms suggest seriousness about the photoshoot. However, there is an image of Jake from Adventure Time at the end of the carousel. In this case, Jake's appearance does not have much meaning or significance that can be discerned. It is better to put it in the context of a humorous or internet-related cultural reference. As such, the account does not put much emphasis on his connection to Japan, choosing to focus more on the creator's appearance and lifestyle choices.

The fourth image is probably the most interesting one in terms of self-representation. It shows Lifestyle Creator 2 at an event, in which they are posing next to a race car with "Tokyo Drift Tour" written on the tent behind him. It is the only post that mentions the creator's interests, which are largely connected to this event, which is Brazilian Day Japan as indicated by the location on the Post and the only connection with his nikkei Brazilian roots. However, once again, there is almost no narrative context provided, and the only caption is 🍷. Such events are usually celebrated and explained by cultural mediators to convey their significance to local

⁶ which means "tank top" in Portuguese.

populations. In this account, however, no such efforts are made, and the only context can be understood is the sentiment of “this is me, and this is my life.” As such, it is safe to say that Japan is normalised in this post, with no special explanation needed for the audience to understand it.

The last Post contains a carousel of images, most of which feature animals in an exotic animal café. In some photos, Lifestyle Creator 2 can be seen with parrots, a meerkat and there are pictures of a pig, an owl, a goat, and a rabbit. Once more, there is little narrative context provided for these photos, with the creator this time not including a caption nor hashtags. Some of the images contain the creator, while others are entirely dedicated to animals and human interaction. As such, this Post is probably one of the best examples of the account’s general idea of lifestyle and self-representation. The audience perceives it as seeing the influencer and their usual adventures, which involve this time animals. It is more of an experience than an educational or entertaining segment with much context provided by the author.

Overall, lifestyle elements take much of the foreground in the account, while culture-specific contexts are largely ignored. This is evident from how little the creator talks about Japan and how much they portray their own appearance, interests, mannerisms, and attitude, while his cultural background is normalised in the account as something that is obvious for everyone, including the audience.

The account’s reliance on imagery and occasional captions also speaks of its adherence to Kaipainen’s (2022) points about multimodal representation on Instagram. Since the creator rarely puts much text in their posts, the meaning is generated through the arrangement of images, their subject matter, and the addition of visual elements. The use of hashtags and captioning is limited, with most of the emphasis placed on the pictures themselves. This makes the account unique in comparison to other examined profiles, most of which put more effort into description, subtitles, and context. It is also similar to Lifestyle Creator 3 (which will be seen further on), however, in that it normalises Japan and rarely talks about its unique cultural aspects. Unlike Lifestyle Creator 3’s posts, however, Lifestyle Creator 2 does not contain much entertaining context or commentary aimed directly at the audience. This makes its intended meaning slightly different from other similar accounts in the same way that it differs from Cultural Mediator 1 in its emphasis on nikkei representation.

Similarly, the account can be compared to Lifestyle Creator 1 in terms of lifestyle content. This creator also focuses on everyday adventures, traveling and exploring. However, while Lifestyle Creator 1 contains much visual content, the creator often puts much effort into describing the content of the post and explicitly communicates with the audience. Lifestyle Creator 2 does the former more often than the latter, keeping the captions minimal and focusing on the imagery. At the same time, they are similar to Lifestyle Creator 3 in terms of the emphasis on lifestyle and everyday experiences rather than nikkei or Brazil-related contexts. They are also different from Lifestyle Creator 3 in that they rarely talk about their experiences explicitly or attempt to maximise entertainment value. Across these profiles, it is possible to see how lifestyle content creators on Instagram tend to normalise their cultural background rather than explicitly mediate it. And again, there are no Reels present in the main feed like Lifestyle Creator 1.

4.3.3 Lifestyle Creator 3

Unlike the creators of the previous profiles, the content of this account seems to be dedicated to Japan as a whole. Lifestyle Creator 3's bio, "Sharing my Slice of Life 🍱," already suggests that the creator is not focused on their ethnicity. Thus, the account appears to be highly entertaining and multifaceted, combining travel vlogs, food, language, humor, and interaction with the audience. Also, the mention of "Slice of Life" can connect him with Japanese pop culture, as the term is used commonly as a genre of anime. In general, Japan seems to be a part of the creator's life that they document on their Instagram account.

The first Reel under consideration shows a vlog (video blog) of his trip to Kamikōchi in Nagano Prefecture. It combines landscape shots of the place and the creator's face and humorous poses. The English-language vlog, which features relaxing music, interaction with the audience, and some humor, asks the audience for recommendations on where to go next in the caption. The fact that the creator's face appears more than once in the reel suggests that they seek to demonstrate their experience, not just the beauty of Kamikōchi. In this sense, the influencer seems to shift the focus to themselves as part of Japan. The use of English and hashtags like #japan , #vlog , and #travel suggests that the creator is dedicated to an international audience. The absence of ethnicity-specific content, including Brazilian and nikkei background, highlights a more global focus than in the previous profiles.

The second Post is a carousel of pictures from the Kamikōchi trip, combining landscape photos of the place with the creator's pictures. Some shots, which seem to follow a "cool" aesthetic, and others depict the creator sleeping on a bench with blue "ZZZ" in a more humorous way. This collage features a mix of styles, from the serious and artistic to the plain funny and unstructured. Such a mix ensures a broader reach, as it can accommodate both the audience preferring serious and artistic content (visually) and those who want to see real, non-staged content (the creator sleeping). Similarly to the first Reel, the second content piece keeps the focus on the creator. The caption, again, directly addresses the audience like the previous vlog and like the captions from Cultural Mediator 1.

The third Reel shifts the focus to food, specifically to Japanese snacks from a branded collaboration. Once again, the creator keeps the language in English, but this time with Portuguese subtitles, indicating that their primary audience is international, but that he does not exclude Brazilians. The content creator faces the camera while tasting and grading the snacks. Thus, the primary purpose of this content piece is similar to the one of the first two: to recommend something interesting for the audience, but with the added context of it being a sponsored piece of content. The inclusion of Japan-specific elements (snacks, Mount Fuji) suggests that they serve the purpose of contextualizing the recommendation. The creator's role, therefore, is similar to that of a friend that has fun trying the Japanese snacks with you, while recommending them to the audience. From the cross-cultural communication perspective and using Hall's framework, this creator interprets Japan for their audience and encodes a message that recommends Japanese products.

The fourth Reel, which depicts a vlog of the influencer's travel to Nagoya for a business meeting, demonstrates the most evident internationalism. The content piece is bilingual, specifically, it is mainly in Spanish with English subtitles, as his image is of a person able to speak multiple languages. Moreover, the creator comments on their use of Spanish on the reel, claiming that they sound, as he defines it, Portanish (a combination of Portuguese and Spanish). The vlog combines travel, bento lunchboxes, Japanese rural landscapes, anko, and the creator's business presentation for his business. The anko (sweet bean paste) part of the Reel, in particular, has an explanation, which indicates that the creator sees themselves as someone who bridges the gap between Japanese culture and their audience. The

multilingualism of the reel suggests that the creator sees themselves as someone who understands several cultures, as an intermediary. In the vlog, therefore, the creator's self-representation is the ability to speak different languages and translate this competency to their audience.

The fifth Reel breaks from the travel theme and focuses almost exclusively on entertainment, combining a funny card trick, memes, humor, interaction with the audience and some elements of "magic". While the meme and humor indicate that the influencer is dedicated to entertaining their audience, the subtitles in Portuguese and English suggest that the primary audience is international, while again not excluding his Brazilian audience. The card trick, which the creator performs, is entertaining and combines some memes, comedic timing, and a failed (but well-chosen) shuffle that they decided not to cut out. The interaction with the audience continues at the end of the Reel when the end of the card magic trick is a message on a card with "I MISS U" written on it. Moreover, the caption "Send it to someone that brings magic into your life 🧙‍♂️", asks the audience to engage with the content. Therefore, this Reel is about creating entertaining content for the audience, as well as interacting with them.

When examining the profile, it becomes evident that the influencer focuses on being entertaining and approachable and, unlike the previous profiles, he generally does not seem to seek to promote Brazilian or Japanese cultures or show his nikkei roots. Rather, they seek to entertain the international audience with trips across Japan, learning languages, trying local snacks, and performing funny skits. When interacting with the audience, the influencer often uses emoticons to reinforce the message of the video/Post and asks to share opinions on specific topics (e.g., places to visit in Japan). They also invite the audience to follow them for more interesting content at the end of every Reel. Thus, the entire account seems to be dedicated to amusing the audience while showing his day to day life with vlogs, with the creator's identity being one of the people who enjoy entertaining others. Consequently, the encoding of this creator's account signals the intended interpretation for a preferred audience. It does so by using humor, interaction with the audience, non-specific cultural references, and multilingualism.

It is also noteworthy that Kaipainen's article highlights the complexity of Instagram profiles, with their meanings being determined through interaction with the audience. Therefore, the meanings associated with the account under

consideration come not only from the content of individual Reels but combined messages from different ones. Similar to Cultural Mediator 2, the meanings are linked to the idea of travel: the creator focuses on visiting Japan and demonstrating its aspects that people may find interesting (ex. landscapes, food). However, they are generally directed at the international audience, which can be seen in the English language, occasional Portuguese, and Spanish used in the Spanish-themed vlog. In addition, the audience is entertained not only within the vlogs themselves but also through the interaction opportunities that the creator offers. Therefore, the account encodes the meanings associated with the “slice of life” concept, which makes the audience members feel as if they travel with the creator while having fun and being entertained.

4.4 Aesthetic Self-branding

Yet another theme that stands out in the corpus is the emphasis on aesthetics as self-representation. In the case of the influencers examined in this module, one often gets the sense that the person behind the Posts is defined and differentiated by their appearance, the captions to their photos, which are mostly cryptic and composed of symbols and emoji if any at all, and the overall look of their Instagrams rather than what they say about themselves and their lives in their captions.

Across the three Instagram accounts in this section (Profiles 7, 5 and 6, which will be called Aesthetic Creator 1, 2 and 3 respectively), the three creators explored utilise the aesthetics of their Posts, the captions and the visual consistency to brand themselves. Clothing, poses, colours, locations all serve to distinguish them from others. Instagram allows people to create visual personas as Kaipainen (2022) notes: the medium of Instagram encourages its users to post photos as part of a multimedia story that the profile as a whole tells, and it is especially important for these profiles.

However, whereas the conventional celebrity would strive to conflate their online and offline personas, the creators whose accounts were analysed for this module often straddle the two, mixing professional images and mundane experiences all into one cohesive narrative. More specifically, Aesthetic Creator 1 constructs his profile around his professional modeling persona, posting carousels of pictures set in the places where he works (cafes, restaurants, vinyl shops, etc.), while highlighting his style and attractiveness and keeping text minimalistic and merely decorative. Aesthetic Creator 2, in a similar fashion, prioritizes her aesthetic composition

(primary example of this being her beach Post) and entrepreneurship (as seen in her Post modeling products from her brand) in her profile, with minimal nods to her nikkei background with a Japanese flag emoji in her biography and Portuguese captions or hashtags. Finally, Aesthetic Creator 3, on the other hand, embraces an urban streetwear aesthetic under his biography “Made in Brasil”, posing with hoodies partially obscuring his face, sports cars, Tokyo nightlife and more in the same vein. His captions in Portuguese, to pair well with the aesthetic, exude confidence and are the only nods to his heritage, alongside his bio.

4.4.1 Aesthetic Creator 1

Aesthetic Creator 1’s Instagram account is one of the most straightforward in terms of self-representation through fashion and aesthetics. While the account’s biography makes his profession as a model clear, as well as his residence in Japan and Brazilian origin, these elements are minimally present in the analysed Posts. Instead, the account prominently features appearances, clothing, accessories, body language, and photographic framing, with the focus on the creator’s image. While being Brazilian, nikkei or living in Japan, may be essential parts of Aesthetic Creator 1’s cultural background, he appears to represent himself as a model, stylish young man, and an aspirational figure.

The first Post is a carousel of images that supports this observation. While it appears to depict a café or a restaurant visit where it can be deduced that he was working there for a photoshoot, this location is only a background for the creator’s appearance. The post’s visual framing highlights the model’s clothing, accessories, body language, and facial expressions throughout the series. Even the two shots that depict Aesthetic Creator 1 in a more casual, playful manner, with him holding the camera and winking, are made in a composed manner. The account’s media leans towards the creator’s professional appearance while also depicting him in a non-professional, everyday manner. However, the two elements are combined in a way that makes the account’s visual framing somewhat unique.

Similar to the majority of the media items, the second carousel of images depicts the influencer in a casual setting while also portraying him in a professional manner. In this item, the focus is on the model’s facial expressions, eye contact, and body language. The selfie format in his car and the use of close framing suggest that the account’s aesthetic is geared towards youth and beauty, with the creator’s

appearance being the centre of attention. The lack of meaningful text, with the exception of the decorative row of symbols edited in the images, further reinforces this observation. As far as the creator's self-representation is concerned, the selfie series further highlights the account's visual framing. Across all photos, the creator's appearance is the only consistent element. The setting and the visual framing are similar, with Aesthetic Creator 1 using the same clothing and accessories but varying his facial expression, eye contact, and body language. The location and the creator's appearance are the most important elements in the photo series, with the former serving as a background and the latter being the subject of the series.

The third carousel of pictures follows the same pattern of visual framing, with the creator's appearance being the focus of the Post. Again, the location, which appears to be a restaurant, is only a background for the model, who uses accessories and clothing in accordance with the professional visual framing. Several photos depict the creator's body in a sensual manner, with some of them highlighting his underwear (for which searching through the profile it can be understood that there is a brand deal with the visible underwear brand) and focusing on his body language and facial expressions. Aesthetic Creator 1 appears to use the aesthetic of the Post to reinforce his masculinity and sexiness. He defines his self-representation as a man through his appearance, body language, and facial expressions, with little to no emphasis on other elements such as his nikkei background. And the other Posts analyzed have the same visual and thematic coherence as the previously illustrated Posts.

Compared to the other accounts in the sample, Aesthetic Creator 1's Instagram account does not appear to use cultural elements to define himself. The few cultural references depicted in the account's media are the location and the language, which are both minimally used. In contrast, the creator uses visual framing to depict himself as a model with a strong professional appearance. As far as the multimodality of the account's representation is concerned, the carousel items further highlight the account's approach to visual framing. In accordance with Kaipainen's (2022) observation, the creator depicts himself in a consistent manner across different photos. The model uses direct eye contact, attractive poses, and appropriate clothing to reinforce his appearance. Across the analyzed media items, the account follows a similar visual framing, with the creator's body being the subject of the photo, with the use of flash recurrent in most Posts, the choice of accessories,

and the photo composition. Furthermore, the account utilises the Instagram platform in a similar manner, with the majority of the creator's Posts being photos with minimal text. In combination with the observed visual framing, this approach highlights the account's aesthetic and reinforces the creator's image.

Compared to the other accounts, this creator depicts himself in a manner that combines professional and everyday visual framing. In doing so, Aesthetic Creator 1 appears to use the Instagram platform in accordance with Kacar's (2024) observation regarding the Main Feed's role as a space for curation and permanence. In accordance with this idea, the creator uses the Main Feed to depict himself in a consistent manner across different media items, which highlights his professional appearance and attractive image. While again, the division from his Reels is present.

4.4.2 Aesthetic Creator 2

Aesthetic Creator 2 is, similar to the previously seen profile, a profile that prioritizes lifestyle, beauty, and visual appeal in her representation. Even though her biography mentions that she is a model, lifestyle creator, and the founder of her brand, and even though she incorporates the Japanese flag into the design, Japan and Brazil are not the center of attention in her content. Instead, the influencer focuses on beauty, femininity, fashion, and entrepreneurship.

The first Reel is about transforming from the "no-makeup" look into the finished "Doll makeup" version. The transformation is commented on with music, visual appeal, poses, and facial expressions. There are signs of a connection with Brazil from her use of Portuguese in the caption and in her hashtags, while the Reel has no subtitles or voiceover, just a song by The Weekend, giving this media product an international appeal.

The second Reel does not focus on visual transformation, but it does so in another way. The content of the video is about lip-syncing to the song by Justin Bieber while maintaining an appropriate facial expression, to reinforce the lyrics of the song, and curated pose. Again, the focus is on the creator's appearance, although there is almost no mention of her ethnicity or nationality. On the contrary, the linguistic elements used in the second Reel also illustrate the global nature of Instagram as a social media platform. The song is performed by an English-language artist, the text of the caption is in Portuguese referencing the lyrics of the song ("Podemos ser?" 'Can we be'), and a hashtag in Spanish ("#parati" 'for you'). In this

way, the creator uses linguistic elements to express her visual appeal on a global scale.

In addition, the beach Post, which is a carousel of images, also focuses on the creator's appearance, although the location and nature are also important elements of the visual composition. Some photos in the carousel focus on the landscape, plants, and objects, while the creator is present only in one of the pictures in the form of a mirror selfie. The location does not seem to be the point of the post; rather, it is one element of the overall appealing composition. From Hall's (1997) perspective, being that representation is intentionally constructed, the environment acts as a resource for representation, enabling the creator to construct a particular version of reality. In other words, the beach scenery helps the creator to convey the idea of nature, leisure, luxury and elegance.

The fourth Post is perhaps the most interesting one from the perspective of representation. The background of the photo is not important, the creator's appearance is emphasized with makeup and hair, and the focus is on the visual aspects of the post. Similar to other posts, this one also has a short English caption with emojis. According to Kacar's (2024) analysis of Instagram's Main Feed, the selfie Post probably does not reflect the creator's spontaneous decision-making, on the contrary, the choice of the photo, its composition, and the caption represent the carefully created image of the creator. In this way, the post reflects her self-representation as a model and lifestyle creator.

The last Post reflects the creator's self in another capacity, as a successful entrepreneur. The photos focus on the creator's legs and the tights she wears with dried flowers inside as the center of attention. However, the Post also serves to promote the lingerie brand that the influencer claims to be the founder of in her biography. In other words, she acts both as a model and an advertiser. Her appearance is part of the promotion, which means that her carefully crafted image can be used for entrepreneurial purposes. In this way, the post illustrates the economic dimension of self-representation, as the creator turns her aesthetics into a source of income.

Overall, the five analyzed posts reflect the creator's image in terms of her preferences. Aesthetic Creator 2 rarely mentions, if not implicitly, her ethnicity or nationality, and these aspects are not the focus of her Instagram. Rather, she emphasizes her appearance, image, and beauty, as well as her successful

entrepreneurship, in line with Aesthetic Creator 1. The linguistic elements used in her posts also suggest that her content is intended for a global audience. The English language is in the songs she chooses, the Portuguese language is used in the captions, when there are any, and the hashtags can be in other languages.

Moreover, the creator also represents the concept of self-branding, which is yet another element of her self-representation. She uses specific visual features in her Posts, such as her curly hair, doll makeup, and clothing. Moreover, she uses the same poses, color schemes, and composition in her photos. Even her lifestyle Posts, such as the beach carousel, are part of her self-branding. In other words, she does not share her daily life; rather, she presents a particular version of herself, emphasizing her appearance and successful lifestyle, like Putikadyanto et al. (2021) saw in their work.

4.4.3 Aesthetic Creator 3

Aesthetic Creator 3 represents a different take on aesthetic Posts with a focus on beauty, luxury, and other qualities seen in the other profiles in this category. Despite “Made in Brasil ” in the biography, the analysed Posts suggest that the creator is more interested in street culture, urban aesthetics, and youth lifestyle. Japan does not appear as a subject to be understood but rather a frame in which the creator wants to place himself. Indeed, Aesthetic Creator 3 does not appear to focus on his Brazilian, Nikkei, or migrant roots. On the contrary, he states his inclinations for urban life, masculine aesthetics, and being fashionable (via repeated use of dark clothes, hoodies, cars, neon lights in night urban landscapes). These themes are then reiterated in the first carousel, which showcases the most common elements for the creator: cars, street culture, friends, gaming, sometimes with the face hidden under a hoodie. Overall, a typical streetwear look is seen in Aesthetic Creator 3 to project his self-representation.

In the first Post, a carousel of images, we see elements of gaming and modern art. We see references to Pokémon and Japanese popular culture. We see the creator dressed in dark clothes, with his face hidden under a hoodie. Despite the variety of subjects in the photos, they all tie in with urban aesthetics. The first carousel combines personal and cultural elements with minimal use of explanatory language in the caption that says “to falando, isso é coisa séria” which in Portuguese means

“i’m saying, it’s something serious”. Thus, the Portuguese audience is also a factor to consider.

The second Post carousel continues to explore similar themes with outfits with a matching set, cars, nightlife, etc. Again, note the emphasis on the face hidden under a hood or other elements of street culture. An interesting observation to make regarding Profile 6 is that his posts tend to combine elements of an aspirational lifestyle (exclusive cars, urban culture) with an ordinary one (using public transportation, eating at local restaurants). The aim, in this case, is to possibly present a specific outlook on life, one that is desirable but still attainable. In this context, Profile 6 is selective about the elements he uses to present himself. He chooses carefully the clothes, location, and other accessories that would best convey his intended image, hiding the parts of the body and face that could be seen as unsightly. Again, a Portuguese caption which says “Evolução diária” which means “Daily Evolution”, appealing to a possible target audience.

The third Post, in the same vein as the others, continues to build on the theme of street culture and urban lifestyle with references to racing, ramen, and Pokémon. We also see more references to Japanese popular culture and the bustling streets of Tokyo. However, once again, we do not see the creator commenting extensively on Japan. On the contrary, he seems to want to engage with the environment and represent himself as someone who feels comfortable in Tokyo nightlife, not necessarily someone who thinks about the country. It is important to add at this point that Profile 6 engages with Kaipainen’s (2022) view of Instagram as a multimodal text. In this context, the meaning of the account is created via multiple modes or channels, including photography, accessories, location, clothes, and much more. He does not explain much about his self or cultural background because it is all conveyed through visuals: the choice of clothes, location, and other elements imply it without the need for extensive captioning.

The fourth Post carousel sees the return of multiple themes explored in previous carousels, including streetwear fashion and urban lifestyle. We also see more “ordinary” elements of life in Tokyo, including public transportation, restaurants, pachinko parlours, and the night view over the city. Once again, the creator dresses in dark clothes, usually with a hoodie and a beanie. In the context of this carousel, the creator presents various aspects of his ordinary (but desirable) life. He does it in the same way as in previous Posts: with minimal explanatory text and

maximal use of visual cues. The lifestyle he promotes is consistent with the streetwear culture of the other carousels. The caption is also interesting, as it resonates with the view that language is contextually dependent. In this post, the creator thanks everyone for supporting him and getting to 200k followers, even though he does not speak Japanese, which *per se* is an interesting statement.

The fifth Post, a carousel of pictures, combines many themes and elements seen in the first four carousels: streetwear fashion, cars, references to Japanese popular culture, food, friends, leisure time, and nightlife. The only significant novelty is the presence of a Brazilian football shirt as the creator looks at the ocean, connecting him a bit more to his nikkei roots. This Post continues to be coherent with the other ones, and the caption, again in Portuguese, projects an air of confidence (“no japão existe alguém mais interessante que eu?” ‘Does anyone more interesting than me exist in Japan?’) even as most of his pictures feature him covering his face.

Overall, the analysis of the five carousels suggests that the creator of Aesthetic Creator 3 focuses on themes of streetwear fashion, urban lifestyle, cars and popular culture. He is also interested in representing himself as a migrant in Japan, albeit without much elaboration on this aspect of his identity. From Hall’s (1997) view, the profile is an example of someone selectively representing themselves with particular attention to the factors that are important to him. The emphasis is on urban culture, which resonates with the desire to embrace an alternative and desirable lifestyle. As such, Japan serves as a context for representing himself but not as an object of interpretation. Mostly, the creator relies on the choice of clothes, location, and other accessories for self-representation. In this way, he adheres to Kaipainen’s (2022) account of Instagram as a multimodal text, as the emphasis remains on the image as the primary carrier of meaning.

4.5 Entertainment and Creativity

The last category identified in this analysis regarding how nikkei Brazilians choose to represent themselves on Instagram is by highlighting creativity, hobbies, humour, friendship and entertainment. This category is especially interesting in this regard, as it shows that the self-representation of these profiles (Profiles 4 and 8, which will be called Entertainment Creator 1 and 2, respectively) does not necessarily involve the explicit articulation of either Brazilian or Japanese culture. In other words, being a nikkei Brazilian creator in Japan is only one implicit aspect of themselves – the other

is the individual personality, hobbies and associated aesthetics that the influencers share with a global audience. More specifically, Entertainment Creator 1 focuses his feed on friendship, social experience and sometimes comedy rather than cultural mediation (despite noting “26 anos morando no Japão” ‘26 years living in Japan’ in his biography). A highlight of his of content is the Reel regarding a night out with friends where he records one of his friends practicing Japanese phrases and being pranked with a funny phrase (“chinchin chiisai arimasu” ‘I have a small penis’, as indicated from the subtitles in the Reel). Entertainment Creator 2, on the other hand, frames her profile as a “virtual club” centered around creativity and offline hobbies. Her content features first-person POV carousels and DIY Reels showcasing this creativity while utilizing Portuguese primarily to connect with followers (a trait shared in both profiles in this category).

4.5.1 Entertainment Creator 1

Entertainment Creator 1 presents a type of self, in which the elements of entertainment, friendship, and experiences play a more important role than the ethnic or cultural ones. Although his biography clearly defines his connection to Japan via “26 anos morando no Japão” , and the analysed Posts contain various references to travels and curiosities, the Brazilian culture and Japanese one are not the central points of the content seen. Rather, Japan is the environment, in which the creator builds his social connections, lifestyle, and comedy. His Brazilian background is highlighted through the language of the captions and the profile account name.

The first post contains a portrait, in which the creator presents himself in the Mori Art Museum, as seen from the location on the Post. However, the elements of art and the environment are poorly seen, as the focus is on the influencer. Thus, the post highlights the role of the creator in the context of art. Although the environment serves as a marker of Japan, it seems that the goal of the post was to present a well-dressed and attractive man (based on the selfie-style composition). This assumption is supported by the lack of meaningful context in the caption, apart from a few emojis.

The second post is also set in the Mori Art Museum, but this time, the creator adds a sculpture to the composition on the left while he is looking at it. Meanwhile, he does not seek to educate his audience on the art, but rather to become a part of it himself. Thus, the cultural context becomes a major condition for his creator role.

The third post, which is a Reel with friends, is the most interesting piece of content in this profile. The creator and his friends (included in these Aesthetic Creator 3's influencer) practice Japanese phrases he taught them while they are out and about in Tokyo at night. Afterward, we see a clip from afar of one of his friends using another phrase learned from Aesthetic Creator 3's creator to interact with two Japanese men, but this time the phrase is "chinchin chiisai arimasu" (which in Japanese means "I have a small penis") and it garners a weird reaction from the men. It then cuts to the last clip of the pranked person a bit slighted by the prank, cursing and using slang words but with an air of playfulness and humor. Portuguese is used both in the dialogue and the subtitles to deliver the comedic effect, which is more inclined to appeal to Brazilian viewers. In turn, Japanese is used as the object of fun.

Unlike professional localizers, Entertainment Creator 1 does not seek to explain Japanese culture through the lens of language, instead, he uses the comic potential of the language barrier. Additionally, the collaborative nature of the video highlights the friendliness and the supportive environment, which is characteristic of this Instagram profile.

From Hall's (1980) Encoding/Decoding perspective, the preferred reading of this Reel is comedic, but it is not fully understood by non-Japanese viewers. Thus, those, who followed the channel in search of Japanese language learning content, might decode the post differently than the bilingual Brazilian audience.

The third Post, a photo with the pranked man from the previously discussed video, seems to continue the story, as the location, the clothes, and the overall setting are similar to the ones in the previous Reel. It connects with the previous Reel as it repeats the infamous phrase from the prank in Japanese in the caption, and the image is a selfie with the influencer laughing and the friend smiling embarrassedly. It highlights the comedic nature of Entertainment Creator 1, which builds its content on the friendliness and sometimes ridiculous interaction between the creator and his friends.

The final Post, a carousel of images, changes the accent to friendship, as two of the three people in the photo are friends of the creator. Moreover, the captions suggest that the three are close to each other: "Saudades de vocês" ("Missing you"). The Post becomes focused on the positive relationships between the people in the photos. Thus, the carousel illustrates a different aspect of the creator's self-presentation, which is based on positivity and friendship.

Overall, throughout the five pieces of content, the creator prioritized friends and comedy, which allowed him to build an entertaining persona, rather than a cultural mediator. The environment of Japan is barely noticeable, except for a few mentions in the Reels. Even when the language and culture are the central point of the media text (the prank), they are transformed into a tool for humorous content. As such, the Instagram profile of Entertainment Creator 1 highlights the importance of cultural context in self-presentation. The Japanese location and cultural practices are used as a background for his content.

4.5.2 Entertainment Creator 2

Among the provided samples, Entertainment Creator 2 is one of the most relevant in terms of using creativity, hobbies, and everyday routine as instruments of self-representation. First of all, the account refers to its followers as the members of a “virtual club,” establishing the idea of accessibility. Moreover, instead of focusing on herself, the influencer puts emphasis on various crafts, hobbies, and the bright side of everyday life, which seem to be the focus of the profile. Since the account is run in Portuguese, Brazil seems to be the country of nationality, while Japan is rather excluded from the description.

The first carousel Post perfectly demonstrates the account’s main idea with the help of first-person photography. Listening to music, engaging in various hobbies, and visiting places with friends are all presented by the creator as the forms of aspirationalism for everyday life. The recurring “meio chique” (“kind of chic”) puts emphasis on the transformation of the ordinary into something extraordinary. It is interesting that the first-person perspective of various scenarios is overwhelming in the given Post. In most of the photos, the creator is barely seen, while the visual appeal is provided by the objects she is interacting with. The immersive experience is created in order to make the audience imagine themselves following the same life philosophy as Entertainment Creator 2 does.

The second carousel Post item is another example of focusing on the hobby itself rather than on the creator. The post is dedicated to offline activities, such as creating miniatures, crocheting, journaling, and decorating. Once again, the creator barely appears in the photos, which puts even more emphasis on the idea of offline creativity and hobbies as ways to engage in offline activities as a way to better themselves. The beautiful design of the posts, along with the bright stars decorating

the images and the text itself, makes the post appealing in order to encourage engagement. Therefore, it can be concluded that this Post doesn't simply document offline hobbies, on the contrary, it aestheticizes and advertises these activities, making the audience desire to participate in them as well.

The DIY tutorial Reel is another example of the creative emphasis on offline activities. Once again, the creator barely appears in the video, being present only in the first moments to explain the task and reveal the tools she has selected for the DIY project. Throughout the rest of the video, she decorates the item she wanted to create, demonstrating how she does this in particular with the help of the mentioned materials. This focus on creating, as well as the first-person interaction with the DIY project, emphasizes the creator's self-representation in terms of her hobbies. In fact, no time is spent on highlighting the appearance or personal experiences of Entertainment Creator 2's influencer. Instead, a certain level of detachment is observed in the presentation of the Reel. The creator also appeals to the universal need to express creativity through decorating. It is worth noting that the video primarily includes the Portuguese language, as well as the subtitles and caption indicating the content.

The fourth Post, a carousel of mini videos divided horizontally in two, illustrate an aspirational sentiment, mimicking the first Pots. The texts in the videos indicate two "what if" perspectives, the first half representing a pessimistic one and the second half representing the opposite optimistic one (for example "e se eu não pertencer?" "e se eu encontrar meu lugar?" which means "what if I don't belong?" "what if I find my place?"). The caption then explains the Post stating that she is changing the questions. This continues to show how Entertainment Creator 2 values positivity and inspiration in her content, other than the hobby and creative aspects.

In the last Reel the creator appeals to the audience, talking about her dream house and what would be in it. The video includes music and subtitles, as well as the photos of houses and the items she would like to find there. There are Studio Ghibli images in the background, but it can be stated that no specific aspects of Japanese culture other than that are explicitly included in the Reel. This piece of media reinforces her connection to aesthetics and creativity, as the items she would add to her dream house are artistic.

When considering the self-representation of Entertainment Creator 2, it is essential to state that no specific cultural references are made. More specifically,

neither Brazil nor Japan are openly discussed and represented by the creator, except for the use of Portuguese in all of her content. Entertainment Creator 2's influencer rarely talks about herself in general, but she does so in terms of presenting her hobbies and values in particular. The offline activities and creative tasks are the highlights of her Instagram account. Thus, Entertainment Creator 2 highlights the opportunities for engaging in everyday activities in an interesting and creative way as an essential tool for self-representation.

4.6 Summary

The qualitative analysis of the ten nikkei Brazilian Instagram accounts explored how their self-representation via Instagram content is multifaceted and complex, since they all express their Brazilian-Japanese roots differently, if they do at all. While some accounts tended to emphasize either aspects of Brazil or Japan, others focused more on their hobbies, professions, relationships and so on. The ten accounts were divided into the four categories based on the similarities in their content: 1) cultural mediators, 2) lifestyle creators, 3) aesthetic/self-branding creators, and 4) entertaining/creative content creators.

The first category of nikkei Brazilian Instagram accounts, the cultural mediators, includes Profiles 2 and 3. The representatives of this category value the connection between Brazil and Japan and act as bridges between these two countries. Moreover, they explicitly base their content creation on the interplay of cultures and languages, which makes both Brazil and Japan the central elements of their self-presentation. These individuals address their audiences in both languages or document their interaction with other people, giving multilingualism a pivotal role.

The second category, the lifestyle creators, is represented by Profiles 1, 9, and 10. The accounts of this category focus on documenting their adventures and lifestyles rather than comment on the specifics of either Brazil or Japan. The only goal of the lifestyle creators seems to be demonstrating the life lived in Japan as a part of their everyday routine.

Other accounts, including Profile 5, 6, and 7, are united under the third category, the aesthetic/self-branding creators. The accounts of this type put a strong emphasis on beauty, urban culture, and profession-related material. The aesthetics of their pictures, outfits, and accessories, the specific location, and professional image are consistent throughout their Posts, creating the image of a recognized

public person. Therefore, the cultural aspect is definitely less essential for these creators, being complemented by their professional goals and ideals.

The last category, the entertaining/creative content creators, unites the Profiles 4 and 8. The accounts of this category focus on expressing their creativity through humor, art, and various projects and interact with their audiences predominantly through this content. In particular, Profile 4 demonstrates a use of Japanese language for a playful crosscultural interaction with his friends. In turn, Profile 8 emphasizes the DIY concept of her account, which unites handmade items, decoration, and an inspiring attitude towards everyday life. Both accounts create entertaining content on Instagram, choosing the means of expression that unite them on the fundamental level and ignoring the cultural context of their existence.

The results presented above can be supported by Hall's (1997) definition of representation, which implies that meaning is created by people rather than discovered in the existing reality. In this case, Instagram accounts represent who the accounts' owners want to present to the audience by choosing which elements to emphasize or ignore.

In addition, Kaipainen's (2022) view of Instagram Posts as multimodal and automedial texts explains why the emphasis was made on the similarities within the accounts rather than analysing the Posts separately, as when they are viewed through the prism of the entire account, the recurring motifs present clear representational patterns. Moreover, Instagram accounts offer a biography, allowing the audiences to build a particular understanding of the account before viewing any Posts. Thus, the self-representation within Instagram Posts is determined by the content of the account in general added to the characteristics of every single image within it, including text, hashtags, and visual motifs.

The findings can also be related to Kacar's (2024) distinction between the Main Feed and Stories⁷, which can be used to analyze how Instagram accounts represent their owners' lifestyles and self-images. The ten accounts investigated in this research showcases how some influencers use the Main Feed and, in the context of this thesis, Reels to store their content in two separate compartments for different audiences but following the similar conventions. In particular, while the Main Feed

⁷ in this thesis the Story aspect is left aside in favor of postulating an analogous function with Reels (that were effectively observed in the corpus)

presents a more refined and curated type of content, the content from other formats aim at other types of representation.

Finally, the analysis aligns with Putikadyanto et al. 's (2021) notion of 'presentation culture', which illustrates a strategic display of an idealized lifestyle rather than recording everyday life. The nikkei Brazilian Instagram accounts rarely document their lives faithfully, rather they transform their daily occurrences into curated content with a specific appeal for their audiences. This is especially evident in the accounts of category 3, where consistent motifs are combined with attention to various aspects of creators' lives.

In conclusion, the analysis of the Profiles of nikkei Brazilians revealed that they can represent themselves in numerous ways on Instagram. Some accounts emphasize their Brazilian-Japanese nikkei background, while others tend to ignore it, prioritizing other aspects of their lives.

Chapter 5: Comparative Analysis of the Corpora

5.1 From Representation to Self-Representation

The previous chapters addressed two ways in which nikkei Brazilians are represented in contemporary Japan in two different discourses. In chapter 3, the representations of nikkei Brazilians in the Mainichi Shinbun corpus were analysed, examining the discourse on immigration, work, education, language, multiculturalism, and social inclusion. In chapter 4, this thesis explored the ways in which young nikkei Brazilians represent themselves on Instagram. By comparing these two corpora, it becomes possible to go beyond the analysis of representation and consider the differences in representation possibilities.

The difference between representation in the news and self-representation in social media can be further understood in the context of representation theories. According to Hall's (1997) definition, representation is a process in which people's thoughts, ideas, and intentions are conveyed to the audience within the specific representational system. It is a process that involves encoding representational resources and subsequently decoding them on the receiver's end. Representation is informative, however, its meaning depends on what is chosen for representation and how this choice is decoded by the audience. Hall's (1980) encoding/decoding paradigm highlights the importance of considering both producers' intentions and receivers' interpretations.

The comparison between the Mainichi and Instagram corpora is useful precisely because it highlights the differences in what is chosen for representation. In the case of the Mainichi corpus, the choice is largely determined by the fact that nikkei Brazilians are a specific migrant group that is represented in connection to broad social issues: immigration, work, education, language, and so on. In the Mainichi Shinbun articles, nikkei Brazilians are primarily represented from an institutional third-person perspective. The Instagram profiles studied in chapter 4 demonstrate that self-representation involves different strategies and resources. The differences between the two corpora indicate that the third-person institutional perspective prevails in the press, while first and second-person perspectives are more prevalent on social media.

It is also noteworthy that the self-representation of nikkei Brazilians on Instagram rarely involves overtly negative depictions. The young people portrayed in the Instagram Posts are often multi-lingual, multi-cultural, and multi-talented, utilizing a wide range of representational resources. However, this does not mean that the Instagram representations of nikkei Brazilians are universally positive. The differences between the press and social media can be seen as diverging representation options and resources. While the press primarily uses a third-person perspective to represent specific aspects of nikkei Brazilian life, Instagram Posts utilize a wide range of first and second-person perspectives to convey diverse meanings.

This thesis chose to compare the ways in which nikkei Brazilians are depicted in the Mainichi Shinbun articles and represented on Instagram in terms of four aspects: subject positions, language and cultural hybridity, space and belonging, and the role of institutional structures.

5.2 Mainstream Media and the Institutional Subject Position

The Mainichi Shinbun corpus demonstrates that nikkei Brazilians are predominantly represented from an institutional perspective. This thesis identified several topics that are prevalent in the articles: immigration, work, education, language, multiculturalism, and social inclusion. Overall, the articles adopt a positive tone, suggesting that nikkei Brazilians are integrated into Japanese society as equal members with access to education, employment, and other resources. However, a closer examination of the discourse reveals that the integration is conditional, taking place within the framework of specific programmes and addressing specific needs.

The positive tone of the articles indicates that both migrants and the host society benefit from the interaction. It also suggests that the Japanese side is portrayed in a positive light as the one that supports and assists migrants in overcoming the challenges of living in a foreign country. However, the positive evaluation is coupled with the implicit perception of migrants as dependent on the support provided by institutions and local authorities. This is especially evident in the discourse on education and language, which depicts Japanese as an essential element of migrant life.

The linguistic component of nikkei Brazilian migration is multifaceted, addressing interpreters' needs, language learning experiences, and linguistic

difficulties encountered by migrants. Mainichi Shinbun articles describe these topics from an institutional perspective, depicting interpreters as essential mediators in the interaction between migrants and the host society. The language learning component of migration is also represented from an institutional perspective, depicting Japanese as the language that needs to be mastered. The articles acknowledge that achieving proficiency is essential for migrants' social and economic success, and nikkei Brazilians are generally depicted as economically successful members of society.

Similar institutional perspectives on immigration can be observed in the articles addressing multiculturalism and social inclusion. However, as in the case of language, immigration is portrayed as a process that requires adjustment on the migrants' part. This perspective is particularly evident in the articles depicting the conditions of returnees' employment and migration in general. The articles suggest that nikkei Brazilians serve to fill the labour market gap, which has little to do with their personal aspirations. Overall, the institutional perspective implies that migrants are welcome in the host society, but their presence is justified by their ability to serve specific social and economic needs.

The contrast with the Instagram corpus further highlights the limitations of representing nikkei Brazilians primarily through institutional categories. While the Mainichi frequently frames them in relation to migration, language, education, etc., the Instagram profiles depict a broader range of subject positions and, in many cases, the migrants' ethnic identity is not their primary subject position, as they prioritize other aspects of their lives.

5.3 Instagram and the Expansion of Subject Positions

Unlike the institutional perspectives on nikkei Brazilians depicted in the Mainichi Shinbun articles, Instagram posts reflect the self-representation of young migrants. As mentioned earlier, this thesis analyzed the Instagram profiles of ten young nikkei Brazilians, examining the ways in which they depict their experiences in Japan. The analysis was based on Kaipainen's (2022) concept of automedial text, which views social media posts as meaning-making devices. The Instagram posts analysed were created in accordance with the norms of the Instagram platform and involved the use of visual and textual resources to convey specific messages.

Four broad subject positions depicted in the Instagram Posts were identified: Cultural Mediators, Lifestyle Creators, Aesthetic/Self-Branding Creators, and

Entertaining/Creative Content Creators. Within these subject positions, young nikkei Brazilians represent their lives and experiences in Japan in ways that differ significantly from the institutional perspectives on return migration found in the Mainichi Shinbun articles.

Representatives of the Cultural Mediators subject position utilise biculturality as their primary resource. By depicting their interactions with local institutions and businesses, they raise awareness about the existence of Brazilian culture in Japan. Profile 3 frequently depicts his interactions with local businesses and restaurants that offer Brazilian specialties such as Tortuguita and caipirinha. His posts, which are published in the form of Reels, utilise Portuguese subtitles and voiceovers to communicate with Brazilian viewers and provide an overview of local Brazilian businesses for his Japanese followers. This way, he acts as an intermediary between the two cultures, interpreting them for his audience. In his posts about Japanese products and companies, he highlights the cultural differences in a humorous and entertaining manner, once again serving as a cultural intermediary.

Profile 3's approach resonates with Profile 2, who depicts her biculturality in the Burajirujinmama brand and the Portuguese voiceovers of her posts. By frequently referring to both Japanese and Brazilian cultures, she represents herself as a bicultural intermediary, similar to Profile 3. Her posts about the local Japanese church depict this subject position in greater detail, demonstrating how this young woman navigates between cultures and shares her experiences with her audience.

Lifestyle Creators, represented by Profiles 1, 9, and 10, differ from Cultural Mediators in that they rarely depict their biculturality and focus on the universality of their experiences as migrants in Japan. This subject position is demonstrated in Profile 10's post about graduation, which depicts high school as a routine part of her life in Japan. Similarly, the Lifestyle Creator's post published in the form of a portrait photograph (Profile 9) depicts everyday life without referring to specific aspects of ethnicity or migration. Lifestyle Creators can also be seen in the posts of Profile 1, who depict travel, dining, and business events without referring to ethnicity or migration. However, his multilingualism and frequent references to his hybrid identity demonstrate that migration is still an integral part of his life.

Aesthetic/Self-Branding Creators, including Profiles 5, 6, and 7, rarely refer to either their ethnicity or migration experiences. Profile 7's post, which depicts him as a model, demonstrates how he constructs his identity in terms of aesthetic appeal

and attractiveness. In his Instagram posts, Profile 5 talks about beauty, streetwear, and entrepreneurship, frequently utilising English and Spanish hashtags. Profile 6 refers to himself as a car enthusiast, frequently posting photographs of automobiles, streetwear, and nightlife. By depicting their lives in Japan without referring to ethnicity or migration, these Instagram users demonstrate that their subject position is not defined by their identity as nikkei Brazilians. It is also noteworthy that Aesthetic/Self-Branding Creators depict themselves in accordance with the aesthetic norms of social media.

Entertaining/Creative Content Creators are the least numerous, with only two profiles (Profiles 4 and 8) depicting their migration experiences from an entertaining perspective. Profile 4's post demonstrates how he entertains his audience by referring to linguistic differences between Japanese and Brazilian cultures. Similarly, Profile 8 depicts her hobbies, journal, and miniatures in an entertaining format, attracting her audience with the help of first-person visuals. She refers to herself as "meio chique" (kinda chic in Portuguese) in one of her recent Posts, communicating her subject position as someone who enjoys being entertaining and creative. With this subject position comes the responsibility to represent herself in accordance with the norms of social media, which means entertaining her audience and providing it with content that it expects to see.

Overall, the differences between the subject positions depicted by Instagram posts and the institutional perspectives illustrated by the Mainichi Shinbun articles highlight the diversity of young nikkei Brazilians' experiences and self-representation. Unlike the institutional discourse on return migration, which depicts limited subject positions, Instagram users utilize a wide range of visual and textual resources to represent themselves.

5.4 Linguistic and Cultural Hybridity

Another significant difference between the institutional discourse on nikkei Brazilians and their self-representation on Instagram concerns language. The Mainichi Shinbun articles depict Japanese as an essential part of return migrants' experiences. In the context of the articles' focus on immigration, work, education, language, multiculturalism, and social inclusion, language emerges as the most prominent aspect of migrants' lives. Language is often the reason why migrants seek

assistance: interpreters are frequently depicted as necessary facilitators of communication between migrants and local institutions.

The Instagram Posts depict linguistic hybridity in ways that differ significantly from the institutional perspectives on return migration. First of all, Instagram users address multilingualism by utilising various languages for different audiences. This is especially evident in the case of Profile 3, who publishes his Reels in Portuguese with Japanese subtitles to communicate with his Brazilian and Japanese audiences. Profile 1 also uses different languages for different purposes: he speaks and writes in Portuguese, Japanese, and English while posting about travel and reviewing products and services in Japan. He even refers to his hybrid language use as “Portanish” in one of his recent posts. Profile 4 depicts linguistic hybridity in yet another way, using Japanese and Portuguese to entertain his audience by commenting on the differences between the two languages.

The differences between the Instagram Posts and the institutional discourse on return migration become especially evident when viewed through the lens of representation theory. Rather than being presented primarily as a barrier to integration, multilingualism on Instagram becomes a representational resource through which influencers construct subject positions and address multiple audiences. In this context, the contrast between the two corpora illustrates how the same linguistic resource can acquire different meanings depending on the representational context. In the Mainichi corpus, Japanese proficiency is primarily presented as a requirement for integration, whereas on Instagram, multilingualism can function as a resource for self-expression, entertainment, cultural mediation and audience engagement.

5.5 Space, Belonging, and Symbolic Citizenship

The differences between the Instagram posts and the Mainichi Shinbun articles can also be seen in the way space is represented. In most cases, the Mainichi articles depict nikkei Brazilians as foreigners who are socially and economically separate from the host population. This is evident in the fact that nikkei Brazilians are predominantly depicted in the workplace, *danchi* housing complexes, and other institutional settings. These spaces contribute to a representation in which migration, work, education and settlement become the principal contexts through which nikkei Brazilians are made visible.

The Instagram posts depict a variety of spaces, ranging from the workplace to travel and dining destinations. Lifestyle Creators, such as Profile 1, depict their lives in Japan in a manner that suggests that they are not marginalised and have access to the same opportunities as Japanese residents. In his Instagram post, Profile 1 reviews a popular restaurant among young people, suggesting that he is familiar with and participates in local culture. Similar observations can be made in regard to other Lifestyle Creators, such as Profile 5, who depicts beauty, travel, and entrepreneurship, and Profile 6, who refers to himself as a car enthusiast and frequently posts photographs of streetwear and nightlife.

The differences between the two corpora become especially evident when space is examined in relation to the migrants' belonging. While the Mainichi Shinbun articles depict nikkei Brazilians as socially and economically separated from Japanese residents, Instagram users suggest that they belong to the same community. This can be seen in the way Lifestyle Creators depict their engagement with local culture, such as visiting shrines and festivals or dining at popular restaurants with friends. In this regard, it may be useful to examine the concept of symbolic citizenship, which refers to migrants' desire to become accepted members of the host society. By participating in local traditions and visiting local landmarks, Instagram users demonstrate symbolic citizenship and belonging to the local community. It is also noteworthy that none of the Instagram posts depict overtly negative depictions of nikkei Brazilians as socially or economically separated.

Therefore, the contrast between the two corpora concerns not only the spaces in which nikkei Brazilians are represented, but also the meanings attached to those spaces. In the Mainichi corpus, institutional and residential spaces tend to foreground migration and social adjustment, whereas Instagram broadens the spatial contexts through which belonging can be represented.

In regard to the Instagram posts, it is important to note that while many Lifestyle Creators depict themselves as full members of Japanese society, this is not always the case. Some Instagram users, such as the Cultural Mediators identified earlier, depict their bicultural backgrounds and serve as interpreters for their audiences, which highlights the fact that they are still foreigners who have chosen to reside in Japan.

5.6 Platform Architecture and the Multiple Audience Problem

The observed differences in representational strategies also stem from the characteristics of the media platforms themselves. As discussed in Chapter 4, Kacar (2024) notes that Instagram offers different modes of self-promotion that vary in terms of their persistence and visibility. The Main Feed is static and serves as a permanent showcase, which means that posts published there require more careful curation. In contrast, Stories provide a more spontaneous and ephemeral mode of communication. Reels differ from both Feed and Stories in that they combine permanence and reach: while they are curated and stored in a profile, they also have the potential to virally propagate beyond one's audience.

This platform specificity is especially pertinent to the nikkei creators due to the fact that their audiences are not unified in terms of ethnicity and expectations. For instance, the majority of the Instagram creators' followers are Brazilian, but the creators' audiences also include Japanese, nikkei Brazilian, and international viewers. The researchers note that the creators have to negotiate these multifaceted audiences every time they publish content. The most obvious way to navigate this challenge is to employ either Portuguese or Japanese, with many creators using both languages to maximize inclusivity. However, the analysis also demonstrates that the creators address these audiences differently: while certain posts are clearly aimed at a Brazilian audience, others are designed to maximize appeal to visitors from Japan. Overall, the nikkei creators utilize the full spectrum of Instagram's affordances to balance their diverse audiences in terms of ethnicity, language, and expectations.

It is also evident that the Instagram creators carefully navigate the representation of ethnicity in their content. The analysis demonstrates that ethnicity is contextual in these creators' content: depending on the post, it is foregrounded as an element of multiculturalism or backgrounded in favor of other themes. For instance, a creator may explicitly reference their Brazilian roots and Japanese ethnicity to appeal to bicultural audiences or, alternatively, adopt a neutral stance on the matter to avoid singling out any particular group. In other cases, ethnicity is not mentioned at all in the captions or video content. Thus, the nikkei Brazilians' self-representation is cumulative in nature, as described by Kaipainen (2022). The creators can accumulate a variety of subject positions, ranging from entertainer to cultural mediator and from tourist to entrepreneur, without being strictly confined to any one of them.

A similar approach can be used to negotiate the subject position of ‘nikkei Brazilian’. When appropriate, the Instagram creators foreground their ethnicity or Japanese cultural heritage to appeal to the audience interested in such content. Outside of this context, however, they rarely mention their unique status as migrants from Brazil. As a result, their self-representation is not distinctly different from the self-promotion of Japanese creators. In most cases, the nikkei Brazilians on Instagram represent themselves as ordinary members of Japanese society, albeit with an emphasis on their multilingualism and biculturalism. This can be understood as a representational strategy through which belonging is foregrounded without necessarily making ethnicity the defining feature of the self.

5.7 Comparative Synthesis

The comparison demonstrates that Instagram allows for more options in terms of representational strategies and subject positions. Overall, the Mainichi Shinbun corpus is characterized by a narrower focus on specific subject positions, with an emphasis on the themes of ethnicity, integration, and support. In contrast to the newspaper’s articles, which highlight the difficulties of the nikkei Brazilians’ living conditions, the Instagram creators emphasize their positive traits, multilingualism, and ability to appreciate both Japanese and Brazilian cultures. In the Mainichi corpus, ethnicity is always either explicitly or implicitly stated, whereas in the Instagram corpus, it may be entirely absent. Moreover, the Instagram creators use the wide range of the platform’s affordances to promote their content, translate their ideas into Japanese, and build relationships with their audiences. Thus, the Instagram creators use the tools discussed in Chapter 4 to negotiate their subject positions and represent different aspects of their everyday life.

At the same time, it is important to note that the Instagram creators do not appear to be overtly positive either. The analysis of the Instagram corpus demonstrates that the nikkei Brazilians’ self-representation is cumulative, with the creators adopting several subject positions at once. In particular, a single creator may combine the positions of a cultural mediator, entertainer, and entrepreneur. Such variety is absent from the Mainichi Shinbun corpus articles, which are thematically focused on the subject of migration and its effects.

It is also noteworthy that the observed differences between the corpora do not necessarily indicate a historical replacement of one form of representation by

another. Rather, these differences suggest that the representation of nikkei Brazilians cannot be reduced to a single or fixed subject position. In the Mainichi Shinbun corpus, they are frequently associated with migration, language, education, labour and multicultural coexistence. However, in the Instagram corpus, creators are able to foreground a wider range of roles and interests, including entertainment, fashion, entrepreneurship, friendship, travel and everyday life. This reflects the different representational possibilities offered by institutional journalism and platform-based self-representation. In particular, they use social media to promote themselves as multilingual content creators rather than as representatives of a single minority group.

5.8 Conclusion

The comparison of the Mainichi Shinbun and Instagram corpora revealed that the representation and self-representation of young nikkei Brazilians differs significantly in several key areas. In the Mainichi Shinbun articles, nikkei Brazilians are predominantly framed within the context of the collective subject positions of migrant workers, students, language learners, and biculturalism advocates. These positions stem from the fact that the newspaper's audiences are primarily Japanese, meaning that the articles' primary purpose is to explain the nikkei Brazilians' migration experiences to the domestic readers. The analysis of the Mainichi articles demonstrates that the framing of nikkei Brazilians as a migrant workers and Japanese-language learners is by far the most prevalent one. While the tone of the articles is generally positive, they depict Japanese officials and organizations as the enablers of the migrants' adjustment to local society.

In contrast to the newspaper's articles, Instagram creators have a wide array of representational strategies to navigate their audiences' diverse views on ethnicity and migration. As demonstrated by the analysis of ten accounts, young nikkei Brazilians on Instagram adopt a variety of subject positions, which range from cultural mediators and entertainers to entrepreneurs and students. In particular, the nikkei creators use Instagram's affordances to promote themselves as multilingual content creators. They foreground their ethnicity when it appears to be beneficial for their content creation and audience growth but rarely discuss it unless a relevant topic is requested in the comments section. The Instagram creators are also capable of

switching between the subject positions of a Brazilian migrant, Japanese based, and tourist.

As discussed in Chapter 4, language is one of the most important elements of self-representation. The analysis demonstrates that their strategic use of Portuguese, Japanese, English, and Spanish allows them to communicate with their audiences in their native languages, which, in turn, enhances the creators' authenticity. Moreover, the nikkei Brazilians' multilingualism enables them to engage in code-switching as a way of constructing content that appeals to different audiences. Thus, the Instagram creators utilize multilingual discourse to promote their content and strengthen their bonds with the audience.

This multilingualism is further related to the nikkei Brazilians' attempts to negotiate their ethnicity. While the majority of the Instagram creators adopt a neutral stance toward this issue, their self-representation remains flexible and contextual. As discussed earlier, the nikkei Brazilians' self-representation is cumulative: the creators combine their Brazilian and Japanese roots to appeal to the broad audience. In particular, they adopt the subject position that emphasizes their multicultural experiences, encouraging their followers to appreciate different cultural backgrounds. As such, the Instagram creators' subject positions are contextual, which allows them to participate in a wide range of social media discourse while emphasizing specific aspects of their identity in accordance with their audiences' expectations.

Overall, the comparison of the Mainichi Shinbun and Instagram corpora demonstrates that social media creators have more opportunities to self-represent their multilingualism and multifaceted migrant background. The analysis demonstrated that the nikkei Brazilians' self-representation is cumulative, with the Instagram creators adopting the most advantageous subject positions in accordance with their audiences' expectations. Therefore, in order to maximize their appeal, the creators emphasize their multilingualism and biculturalism but rarely foreground their ethnicity as the distinguishing feature of their self-representation. In doing so, they utilize the tools of the Instagram platform to negotiate the themes of language, ethnicity, and migration in order to increase their visibility on the social media platform.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Synthesis of the Research Findings

This thesis has focused on the representation of nikkei Brazilians in contemporary Japan by analyzing two modes of representation: Mainstream Japanese media representation of nikkei Brazilians and their Instagram self-representation. The study has focused on how nikkei Brazilians are represented in various representational frames and how these frames differ between traditional and social media, based on Stuart Hall's theory of representation, encoding/decoding, and van Dijk's approach to media discourse, as well as Kaipainen's concept of automediality.

The analysis of the corpus of the Mainichi Shinbun, presented in Chapter 3, revealed that the mainstream discourse on nikkei Brazilians was varied but often contained a few recurring themes. They involve labour, migration, school education, acquisition of Japanese, the coexistence of cultures, community support, and social/cultural problems. Nikkei Brazilians are not consistently negatively represented in the articles read, but they are often situated in the context of a problem to be solved, a community to be institutionalised, or a population that must adapt to Japanese social and linguistic norms to be a successful part of this community. The conclusions, then, indicate that the mainstream press representation is embedded in a varied discourse that includes both positive and supportive and sometimes negative and assumptions about difference, adaptation and integration. This can be seen, especially, in relation to education and language, as Japanese institutions are often portrayed as giving assistance to the nikkei, while they are themselves portrayed as receiving something from the Japanese that they lack: skills in language and culture.

Chapter 4 of the Instagram analysis showed a very distinct representational pattern. In the ten profiles analyzed, the nikkei youth used many different modes of self-representations and expressed themselves in diverse ways through fashion, beauty, entertainment, traveling, family life, entrepreneurship, hobbies, cultural mediation, and more. Often Japanese and Brazilian cultural references appeared in the context of the profile but were not the main feature of the text itself. Rather, artists often depicted their lives in Japan as normal. This difference is particularly significant in relation to the role assigned to cultural difference. Cultural and linguistic differences are often represented as being explained in the mainstream

media corpus; something to be managed, overcome or accommodated. In the Instagram corpus, difference is, on the other hand, the resource. Portuguese, Japanese, English and sometimes Spanish are integrated in accordance with communicative context; the Brazilian cultural referents are introduced in the day-to-day content; and Japanese space is represented not as an environment that needs to be explained, but as an everyday space of living.

Therefore, the answers to the first two research questions are differentiated from the findings. While all these are part of the dominant narratives in mainstream media, Instagram allows individual creators to highlight aspects of their experience that are missing from these institutional discourses. The profiles also show that digital self-representation is selective and strategic, especially when using aesthetic curation, personal branding, multilingual communication and when dealing with different formats of the platform.

The comparison thus does not uncover a straightforward contrast between a "negative" traditional media and a "positive" social media. Rather, it demonstrates a difference in representational agency, as the difference lies in how the individual experiences are selected and ordered: traditional journalism does it according to institutional news values and the public discourses, while Instagram lets the creator choose which elements of the image and everyday life to make visible.

Specifically, these findings are relevant to the research questions of this thesis as listed below. First, the mainstream Japanese media tend to portray nikkei Brazilians collectively and institutionally (migration, education, language, labour, multicultural coexistence). Second, the Instagram profiles reveal that young nikkei Brazilians can project themselves in ways other than those defined by traditional media. Third, the big contrast in the two types of representation is that the discourse of the Mainichi Shinbun is created and enforced within an institutional process of selection, whereas the Instagram discourse enables individuals to directly participate in the process of selecting and arranging the meanings by which they make themselves visible to the public. Last, it is possible to relate these differences to the different communicative functions, audience configuration and technology capacities of the two types of representation: mainstream journalism and social media.

6.2 Theoretical implications

The results are added to the application of Stuart Hall's theory of representation (1997) in the digital world. Hall's focus is on the process of representation and how meaning is created rather than something that reflects reality. This is very well exemplified in the comparison that was made in this thesis: the same social group can be endowed with different meanings as a product of different producers, communicative conventions and what aspects of social life are represented.

In the Mainichi Shinbun corpus, nikkei Brazilians are often referred to as institutions like workers, students, migrants or multicultural communities. These categories serve, in particular ways, to call attention to aspects of their experience, while making others relatively peripheral. By contrast, the Instagram corpus depicts the ways in which people can be directly involved in the creation of self-representations. Instagram users do not "escape" dominant discourse. Instead, their self-representations could be interpreted as re-significations and negotiations. Representations focused on fashion, humour, relationships, creativity and professional achievement may include cultural markers that can potentially assume problematic connotations in mainstream narratives, for example linguistic differences, nationality (Brazilian), or the physical self.

This thesis also shows that the "automedial approach" developed by Kaipainen (2022) for analyzing Instagram profiles is useful. The analysis establishes that it is not always possible to read an individual post without looking at the context. This belief connects with Hall's opinion on representation as something constructed, and connects it to the social media sphere.

Meanwhile, the results indicate that self-representation is influenced by the affordances and conventions of the platform itself. Discussed in Kacar (2022) work on the various phases of Instagram's self-presentation, users do not present themselves in a completely unconstrained environment. Instead, they strategically negotiate their visibility based on the expectation of permanency, audience and communicative context of their different formats.

The study thus contributes to an understanding of the activity of Instagram as agentic and structured. While creators have much more agency in determining who they are, and how they present that image, their approach to the topic is nevertheless influenced by platform architecture, audience expectations, aesthetic conventions, and the general commercial logic of social media.

6.3 Reconsidering *Tabunka Kyōsei*

The results are also relevant to the discourse on *tabunka kyōsei* (multiculturalism) in Japan. The concept is often expressed in institutional practices related to Japanese language education, schooling, community support and assistance for foreign residents, as mentioned in Chapter 3. Such initiatives may be a valuable resource for the migrant population but the discourse in the media may simultaneously and inadvertently create an uneven form of coexistence where the migrant population is largely perceived as the recipient of support, and where they are largely attributed the responsibility for adapting to the existing Japanese institutions.

The Instagram corpus provides another view on coexistence. Creators often depict multiculturalism in everyday activities: using multiple languages, keeping Brazilian cultural references, engaging in Japanese social settings, travelling in Japan, going to school and work, and meeting with Japanese friends and coworkers.

As such, *tabunka kyōsei* may also be interpreted as an existing and negotiated practice, as opposed to a strict institutional policy. Multiculturalism is not necessarily an explicit theme in the profiles researched in this thesis. Rather, their everyday self-representation brings into view multicultural co-existence, as different languages, cultural references, relationships and ways of belonging co-exist. This is extremely relevant as it pushes the discussion from questions of 'successful integration' of migrants in Japanese society to questions of migrant belonging and migrant demonstration of belonging.

The analysis should not however be read as an indication that social media has solved the structural inequalities linked to migration and multiculturalism. Instead, Instagram offers creators a “representational space” for them to shape the ways in which they can be visible without relying on institutional recognition.

6.4 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There are a number of caveats to keep in mind:

Firstly, the Instagram corpus is ten Instagram profiles, and five selected posts or Reels on each profile. The sample was carefully selected to suit qualitative analysis and not for statistical generalisation. Therefore, the results reveal trends in the selected self-representations, but not necessarily those of the self-representation practices of all nikkei Brazilians in Japan. Furthermore, the Instagram corpus relies on open profiles from influencers, thus, their representational practices could be

different from those of nikkei Brazilians that use Instagram privately or make no public content.

Secondly, posts chosen were those that appeared on the profiles when they were analyzed. Instagram is a growing platform that can be taken down, archived, rearranged and even temporarily suspended. Thus, the analysis does not offer a fixed snapshot in and of themselves, but rather a snapshot of how these influencers present themselves to the web audience at a given point in the creators' online history.

Thirdly, the study looks at the public rather than the receptors, with a concentration on the published content. The reception is the focus of Hall's encoding/decoding model, while this thesis is mostly interested in processes of representation and self-representation. Future work might then benefit from complementary approaches to textual and visual analysis by conducting interviews and questionnaires, or analysing comments, to explore the final interpretation of these representations by various audiences.

Fourthly, future research could be more geographically and generational in scope. Local environments might be reflected by comparing creators residing in industrial centres with those residing in metropolitan centres like Hamamatsu and Ōizumi, or Osaka and Tokyo. Finally, if these relationships with Brazil, Japan, language, and cultural background can evolve over the years, it would be interesting to explore how it might be further shaped by looking into the younger generations of nikkei from the community.

Lastly, comparative studies across platforms might help to gain more insight into the link between platform architecture and the representation of minorities. The nature of the formats, recommendation system, and type of audience of these emerging platforms such as TikTok and YouTube may generate different forms of visibility and representation negotiation.

6.5 Final Remarks

This thesis started with an initial question: How are nikkei Brazilians represented in mainstream media, and how do young nikkei Brazilians represent themselves on Instagram?

The mainstream media and Instagram provide a comparison of the main media versus the Instagram that illustrates how these questions cannot be addressed with a

static set of images in which the nikkei image is represented. Mainstream discourse, as reflected in the Mainichi Shinbun corpus, was often manifested as a presence of nikkei Brazilians in institutionalized frames and categories, such as labour, education, language, migration, and multicultural coexistence. Such representations can be supportive and sympathetic, but can at the same time mirror an asymmetric relationship, where nikkei Brazilians are largely represented in relation to their difference from the Japanese majority, and in relation to their process of adaptation to Japan.

The Instagram corpus uncovers a wider range of subject positions. In this thesis, the creators are not only nikkei or Brazilians, but also students, models, entrepreneurs, travellers, artists, entertainers and just regular citizens of Japan.

The main conclusion of this thesis is not that the mainstream representations have been replaced or outcompeted by social media, instead, it is the growth of digital self-representation that has changed who can be part of the process of making public meanings about minority life. Instagram enables nikkei Brazilian youth to pick and mix and re-negotiate parts of themselves to create representations that are more individual and multi-layered than those of institutional media.

In this respect, digital self-representation can't overcome the structural inequalities that surround migration and multiculturalism in Japan. But it does open up other options for visibility and agency. As a result, the comparison also suggests that there are different power dynamics in relation to representation: although the mainstream media still has a lot of power in determining what becomes visible to the public, social media gives the represented subjects a greater opportunity to be part of the process of meaning making.

The comparison finally points to the idea that representation is not an accomplished entity but a process of negotiation. What is remarkable about Instagram is its ability to bring in new actors into this process and let nikkei youth add their own voice, image, language and everyday experience to their representation in contemporary Japanese society.

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Dichiarazione del ricorso a strumenti di Intelligenza Artificiale (IA)

Il/La sottoscritto/a *Stephanie Recchia Pimenta*, matricola numero 884722, iscritto/a presso Ca' Foscari al corso di Laurea magistrale in *Lingue, Economie e Istituzioni dell'Asia e dell'Africa mediterranea*, autrice della tesi di laurea *Comparing media representations: Nikkei Brazilian youth's self-representation on social media vs. their representation by traditional media outlets*, relatore *Partick Heinrich*, consapevole delle sanzioni previste dall'art. 76 del Testo unico, D.P.R. 28/12/2000 n.445, e della decadenza dei benefici prevista dall'art. 75 del medesimo Testo unico in caso di dichiarazioni false o mendaci, sotto la propria personale responsabilità ai sensi degli artt. 46 e 47 del D.P.R. 28/12/2000 n. 445,

DICHIARA

- ☐ di NON aver fatto ricorso a tecnologie di intelligenza artificiale generativa per supportare vari aspetti della ricerca e della scrittura del suo elaborato finale/della sua tesi di laurea;
- ☒ di aver fatto ricorso a tecnologie di intelligenza artificiale generativa per supportare vari aspetti della ricerca e della scrittura del suo elaborato finale/della mia tesi di laurea, in particolare:
 - *Notebook LM*;
 - ☐ *altro (studio delle fonti e supporto nel collegamento tra esse, supporto nel ritrovamento di errori di battitura o refusi da correggere)*
 - ☐ *Capitolo 2 e 5/6 (per questione degli errori tutto il testo)*
 - *DeepL*;
 - ☐ *altro (ausilio nella traduzione, per verificare se fossero coerenti)*
 - ☐ *bibliografia e abstract in lingua*
 - *ChatGPT-5.5*;
 - ☐ *altro (supporto alla revisione della scrittura accademica e al controllo di chiarezza/coerenza del testo e talvolta supporto nella scrittura di frasi)*
 - ☐ *Capitoli 3 e 4*
 - per ogni strumento utilizzato ho provveduto a controllare le risposte fornite e confrontare con le mie personali conoscenze e le fonti accademiche a mia disposizione per garantire che le risposte fossero a me gradite e all'altezza di standard accademici e della mia sensibilità.

DICHIARA INOLTRE

che tutto il materiale generato dall'IA è stato attentamente verificato, rivisto e rielaborato dall'autrice, che si assume la piena responsabilità per la qualità, l'accuratezza e l'integrità scientifica del lavoro.