

SHE LOOKS LIKE US: REPRESENTATION OF IDEALIZED ETHNIC BEAUTY IN MAGAZINE'S IMAGES, LOCAL ADVERTISEMENT FOR MIGRANTS

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Abstract

This study aims to examine representation of idealized beauty and self-image of Brazilian migrants (descendant of Japanese migrants to Brazil, i.e. ethnic Japanese) in Hamamatsu, Japan. Hamamatsu city has the biggest population of Brazilian migrants community in Japan, thus there's demand for ethnic goods, which are widely available at about 80 ethnic shops in city. Teen magazine is good orientation of appearance and behavior for such migrant-rooted girls, which provides concepts of "ideal beauty" and "ideal looking of self".

In this study, we focus on how concept of idealized beauty appears in Brazilian teen magazines which are imported to Japan for migrants and compare with local ads, free paper, magazines, and news paper to analysis the difference between them. Previous studies show Japanese Brazilian migrants have strong identity as a descendant of Japanese migrants because of their oriental appearance and cultural roots, although their preference changes gradually toward more "Brazilian" by being rejected their Japanese identity in Japanese society. It shows also those segregated immigrants tend to over-build their cultural and ethnic identity, which appears often as more "Brazilian-like" appearance (e.g. fashion, hair style).

However, our analysis indicates that their appearance and behavior become not significant culture-of-origin-oriented, even their culture of origin-oriented appearance is also strongly influenced by host country's culture. While Brazilian magazine indicates us concept of ideal Brazilian beauty in Brazil, local advertisement for Brazilian migrants in Hamamatsu city shows us the real representation of these migrants in Japan. From this perspective, the image in local ads etc. may reflects new culture which is mixed both Japanese and Brazilian one.

Key Words: *Image, Beauty, Representation, Migration, Identity*

JEL Classification: Z13

1. INTRODUCTION

The revision of immigration policy in 1990s enabled Japanese-origin foreigner coming to Japan to get permanent and unlimited work permit. It resulted to the massive arrival of Dekasegi, temporary

labor migrants in Japanese, who aim to return to home country after several years' stay. The most source of Dekasegi has been Latin America, especially Brazil, where has largest Japanese migrant community in entire region. The economic downfall in Brazil encouraged descendant of Japanese migrant to go back to "father land" to earn money and provide financial resource to have a richer lifestyle in Brazil after their comeback.

The great impact given by them was not only in academic scene among migrant researchers, but also in the host society- namely Japanese society itself. This phenomenon was been reported in sensational way on different Japanese media, usually negatively and warningly. Such report focus on usually their uncertain employment statues, divided identities, and educational problems of their children.

While their image has become more "poor temporary labor migrant, who get a lot of social problem due to their lack of solid life plan", the original definition of their ethnic identity among Japanese society has also gradually been changed along times. At the very early period of their arrival, Japanese regards them as "Japanese but who has born in Brazil", which became later "Brazilian but who runs Japanese blood". This indicates an important changing moment of perspective of Japanese society, by the time going these migrants became to be seen more outsider of society, instead of people united by blood to be welcomed.

However, recession after September 2008 has cast new light into situation of Dekasegi in Japan. Companies started huge ray-off, especially of Dekasegi, which forced migrants to choose their fate between two opposite option: permanent settlement in Japan, or leaving Japan permanently to Brazil. Nevertheless most Japanese Brazilian lost their job and became financially challenged, the population of Japanese Brazilian in Japan decreased only slightly, who are supported to be reduced dramatically by analysis and academicians. This also changed the trend in Dekasegi studies in Japan focusing on impact of migrant's settlement, which may be great challenge for Japanese society, which has been believed them as non migrant society.

2. MEDIA AND MIGRANTS

Recession and the massive ray-off of migrants have contributed to add new image for them as "victim" of Japanese economic system, which is against humanity and "cold". By repeating news of miserable Japanese Brazilian who begged for financial support by governments, made Japanese aware that Japan has been already changing the direction to migration state. In this chapter, we explore the influence of media for building image in the society and how it masters to ethnic identity of represented migrants.

2.1. Media

In modern life, we cannot deny that medium places on center of our daily life. McLuhan assets the subliminal effect of the medium and its powers of hypnosis. Medium is a message, and same time it is a massage (McLuhan,1967). Medium stimulates us in various field, it also helps to create image of certain thing. The nature of medium is to creep inside the viewer unconsciously. (McLuhan, 1964).

Furthermore, McLuhan refers two types of medium, namely hot and cold medium. Basically, a hot medium excludes and a cool medium includes; hot media are low in participation, or completion,

by the audience and cool media are high in participation. A hot medium is one that extends a single sense with high definition.

Following to this definition, image-centered advertisement and magazines can be regarded as hot media. That is, photos “appeal to us” with a lot of information, which reach to one's mind more effectively and speedy, deeply than anything else. Therefore, we presume that it may have the great influence to audience by cultural and behavioral orientation of migrants. Their orientation is here, thus “very visible”.

2.2. Cultural representation in media discourse

Encoding-decoding, a well known Reception theory by Stuart Hall (1973), focuses on the scope for negotiation and opposition on part of the audience. This means that the audience does not simply passively accept a text, but they decipher the message depends on their status, like shown as three types-Preferred, negotiated, and oppositional readings.

These three types of way of reading can be also applied to acculturation strategies. For example, migrants who prefer to maintain their origin can be good reader of ethnic media and may use preferred reading, since the aim of such media is to let maintain reader's cultural origin.

On the contrary, Migrants who may use oppositional reading will not be reader of ethnic media, since they prefer themselves to be assimilated to mainstream culture of host society. That is, preferred readers mean the migrants who agree with the value in country of origin or ethnic community they live in, and negotiated readers are the people who live between two worlds. Therefore, these categorizations of the way of reading will show their socio-cultural position towards host and country of origin.

From this perspective, we presume that migrant with preferred reading may follow the concept of ideal beauty. In the case of Brazilian migrants, emphasizing “stereotyped Brazilianess” - passionate, sexual, good at dancing - will match to the acculturative strategy of emphasizing their feature as minority.

3. RACE, REPRESENTATION AND SOCIETY

In previous chapter we argued that choosing to let their appearance to become more “Brazilian-like” is an acculturative strategy of migrants. This contains a big question which has been ignored in prior research of Japanese Brazilian's integration problem: What is Brazilian-ness? To clarify this, in this chapter we explore the concept of “Brazilianess” and re-consider ethnicity of Nikkei's and its relation with Japanese and Brazilian society from the other dimension.

3.1 Race and society

Arguing image of “Brazilian” is also arguing of what “Brazilian-ness” in Brazil itself, where is been dominated Strong race ideology since nation building. The history of race ideology in Brazil has very long history which is strongly tied to the nation building of Brazilian, which is conducted by government. President Vargas's dictatorship during the 1930's was great turning point for Brazil and its public consciousness toward their Brazilian-ness. The previous Brazil's situation of turmoil and pessimistic view which delivered from lack of unity among the race and ethnic, and a sense of inferiority against Western countries which are believed that the country is dominated by White

race group. Such situation evoked a need to an unified nationalistic consciousness based on shared community solidarity by the nation of Brazil socially and politically , and led to implement numerous policies on racial issue, by the slogan of "Brazil is a nation consisting of a single homogeneous race"(Lowenstein,1942:188).Hence, the flux of non-White race group migrants, such as Japanese and south European after the mid 1920's made government afraid of jeopardizing for creating "ideal model of Brazilian nation", seeing distinctive biological feature and culture of new comers compared with White race group as a problem. (Azevedo, 1943) Thus the migrants who did not applicable to the presented biological and cultural mold and linked to a discussion to exclude such "otherness" represented as the statement "Japanese migrants are the culprit of polluting the land of Brazil by creating mosaic pattern of different ethnic community" remarked by politician in the congress for revision of migration policy. This way, increasing of Japanese migrants was not welcomed positively from the beginning and attract attention its presence all the time.

In the multi-ethnic society, biological racial feature is one of clue to show the person's belonging. Whether they accept to be judged in such way or not, and for Japanese-Brazilians, as examples of preserving Asian-looking even third or fourth descendants by frequent intra-marriages, it became clear that most cases Japanese migrants in Brazil states they attached to the Japanese society.

3.2. Visual image and gender on Magazine

Fashion, sometimes seen as cognitive choice of style, also can be indicate its political meaning in the society they live. The image in the women's magazines, to some extent, works as mirror which reflects the time and the women's image in each era, which is approved by women themselves. However, such approved image contains -often not knowingly- the hidden cultural and ideological meaning, and has also power to be believed that the suggested images is be chosen spontaneously by women. Friedan(1963) studied popular American magazines for women, and described its contents below :

"This image-created by the women's magazines, by advertisements, television, movies, novels, columns and books by experts on marriage and the family, child psychology, sexual adjustment and by the popularizes of sociology and psychoanalysis-shapes women's live today and mirrors their dreams (Friedan, 1963)."

4. HYPOTHESES

From discussion above, the image of Japanese-Brazilian which appeared in ethnic media should be separated into two patterns, when the advertisement or articles in Magazines are published in Brazil, the image of Brazilian would be dominated by White or Black. For (Japanese-) Brazilian in Japan, the image of Brazilian would appear as an extreme form of typical Brazilian image, by emphasizing their stereotypical image to drop a line between "we" and "others". While Brazilian who has already integrated in Japanese society does not need such image any more. By representing visible difference between "(Japanese-) Brazilian" and "Japanese", ethnic media would work as a symbol of solidarity of Japanese-Brazilians.

5. RESEARCH METHODS

The fieldwork is conducted in Hamamatsu city, located western part of Shizuoka prefecture. We collected imported teen magazines from Brazil (Altavista, Capricho), free magazines (Alternativa, Vitrine, Acha Facil), Ads of Brazilian fashion shops as ethnic media which Japanese-Brazilian who living in Japan can acquire. Analyzed images are published from February 2009 to May 2010. Those are available at ethnic shops, Brazilian restaurant, cell-phone shops (where hire Brazilian staff).

6. ANALYSIS

Before we state the result of our analysis, we mention the history of Brazilian media in Japan briefly.

History of Brazilian media in Japan has been categorized into three. First generation is from 1992 to 1996. Main competition was IP(International Press) and JTB(Journal tudo bem), and contributed Journalist were mainly second generation of Japanese Brazilian, and speaking little Japanese and Advertisers were banks, contractors.

Next period is from 1996 to 2000. Ethnic media in Portuguese developed incredibly, and main competitions have changed to Regional IP, JTB, periodicals (Folha E, Look, Folha Mundial),in addition free papers in English (Tokyo Classified), Globo Internacional TV,videotapes of news programs and soap operas. Contributed Journalist have shifted to ex-dekasegi,who settled down in Japan. Advertiser has expanded to: banks, contractors and stores (generally, Brazilian-owned establishments). From 2001 until today, the ethnic media has experienced big shift by development of Internet technology. Nowadays collection of ethnic media shows more diversity: IP, JTB, various Internet sites(portals, sites, blogs, wireless devices), free news sources (Gambare!, Alternativa, Vitrine, Mais Brasil), weekly and every two weeks "free papers," monthly and every two months "free papers," segmented - auto, religious, etc. - "free papers," Globo network, Record network, NHK(Japanese national broadcasting station) in Portuguese. Contributed Journalist became more diverse: some have experience of stay in Brazil or in Japan, some are ex-dekasegi with or without a degree in journalism, pure Nikkei, ethnically mixed, with spouse of either Japanese and non-Japanese ancestry. Advertisers are banks, contractors, retail, restaurants, schools, travel agencies, driving schools, academies, beauticians, hostess services, Telecommunications Company, Internet, computer sciences

6.1 Magazines from Brazil

Generally, photos are white and mixed race (white and brownish skinned) dominated. The beauty is presented into two patterns: emphasizing on Whiteness, such as blond or light hair-color, pale white skin, and eye colors are blue or green. The other pattern is having sun-tanned, brownish skilled glamorous girl. Black models are slightly appeared, but most cases they appear in subordinate position. Asian-looking models which represented as ideal beauty models are quite rare; they tend to appear when the publishers intend to appeal the oriental or foreignness'.

Cover girls are mostly American idols or international supermodels. We found out that especially American idols with white or Latin feature is preferred. The contents focus on beauty or make up

skills, being feminine (ex. by wearing in Pink) and sexy (ex. Micro bikini, short pants). Contents highlight feminine by placing it on the opposite of masculinity.

6.2 Magazines in Japan

Appearance pattern of models by race is separated into White or brownish skinned model and Asian-looking models. However, there is a significant difference on which theme the model will be used. Articles about Beauty and Fashion are dominated by white or brownish skinned models, and they tend to be used for cover girls. Asian-looking models appeared mainly commercial advertisement (Like Telephone service, grocery, Job offer etc.) and the articles which reported their real life or emphasized on Japanese-Brazilianess. In the articles which themed Fashion, intriguingly, “wearing Brazilian-like Fashion” or buying clothes from Brazil is focused. Such Brazilianess representation is usually leads to dress sexy by body-conscious, less-clothes and colorful, rather than average Japanese fashion style. Besides, they represent wearing Brazilian fashion is “more relaxed”, and “our own style” against Japanese one.

7. CONCLUSION

If our hypothesis was supposed by empirical data, Japanese Brazilian’s cultural orientation toward White dominated Brazilian culture must be strong. However, our findings rejected this hypothesis.

Instead, their appearance became neither significantly Brazilian culture oriented, nor Japanese culture oriented. Images in Brazilian magazines in Japan indicate us the identity strategy by them, that they switch their ethnic identity depending on the situation.

As beauty-related articles are still strongly dominated by white and brownish skilled models, it can not be denied that their ideal beauty was built on the base of race ideology in Brazil. This supports the fact that ethnic shops tend to sell “extreme body conscious” clothes imported from Brazil. The preferred way of make-up also seems that it aims to approximate their face to “westerner”.

While the advertisements and articles which related on Beauty and Fashion is dominated by Western value, the point of Asian-looking models are appeared in those which printed for promotional purpose and articles related on their daily life is worth noticing. Their ideal beauty is based on the value in Brazil, and they have strong desire to fit themselves into the mold as majority. However, at the same time, they judge themselves realistically, and know that cultural molds which produced both in Brazil and Japan do not fit to them. Therefore, producing their own beauty standard and the orientation is needed, to fit in real themselves.

In summary, their identity is multi-layered. Their core belief is strongly affected by the value in Brazil, but they also have the conscious as Japanese-descendents and the sense of “living in Japan”. Although most studies on Japanese-Brazilians tend to be categorized them into either Brazilian or Japanese, our study gives the new perspective into this issue.

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