

The Acceptance and Co-existence of Migrants in Paraná, Brazil

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The introduction of migrants to Brazilian society began with the twin aims of solving the labor shortage which ensued after the abolishment of the slave trade, and the establishment of a nation-state for Whites. While the state of San Paulo and the three southernmost states are known widely as states of immigration, the state of Paraná is distinctive amongst these as it accepts the least number of migrants of the three. However, at the same time, over the last sixty years, its capital, Curitiba, has received the most wide-ranging variety of migrants out of these states – to the extent that the city today it is often referred to as an “ethnic laboratory”.

In the background to the introduction of immigrants to Paraná at the beginning of the 19th Century lies the problem of attacks on immigrant livestock caravans and settlements in sparsely populated regions by the indigenous population. The overall makeup of migrant populations coming to the area consisted of Italians, Spanish, Portuguese and Japanese who entered into the expanding coffee economy of San Paulo in the North, and Italians, Germans and Polish pioneers who settled in Rio Grande du Sul and Santa Catarina to the South.

Although wealthy land-owners, politicians and real estate companies were involved in the introduction of migrants to these regions, this did not mean that a consistent migration policy was adopted and executed across the region. Therefore, rather than an examination of individual policies, in this presentation I would like to access, historically, how migrants entered Paraná, the influence they have had on the region, and in what ways the contemporary “ethnic laboratory” of a society in which migrant culture is respected was formed as a result of this lack of consistent migration policy. I would also like to mention the role played by Nikkeijin in this process and compare this to the situations of American Nikkeijin and *dekasegi* workers in Japan.