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Ethnic Violence Against Japanese Migrants In California

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Abstract

This article discussed the persistence of ethnic conflicts around the world, evolving from post-World War II national disputes to internal conflicts driven by ethnic and intergroup tensions. These problems impeded democratization and remained crucial to the development of societies and national identities. Ethnic violence was an example of political violence rooted in ethnic hatred. Countries such as the United States, with its racially and ethnically diverse population, faced significant challenges of ethnic discrimination against Japanese immigrants. Japanese immigration to the United States, especially in California, which began in the mid-1880s, was driven by labor shortages following the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and later by economic difficulties in Japan. United States immigration policies, especially the Acts of 1917 and 1924, imposed restrictions on Asian immigrants, which impacted Japanese immigration. This study, using qualitative research with a descriptive overview through the densho.org portal, aimed to analyze Japanese ethnic violence in California. Racism and economic competition fueled anti-Japanese violence. Anti-Japanese sentiment increased, especially after the attack on Pearl Harbor, which led to the mass internment of Japan-American.

Keyword: *Japan, California, ethnic violence, discrimination, Migration*

1. Introduction

Currently, ethnic conflicts persist in various countries globally. While conflicts between nations were diminishing post-World War II, they were succeeded by internal disputes rooted in ethnicity, religion, and tensions between religious-ethnic factions, including conflicts with state authorities. Consequently, ethnic issues remain a significant concern in societal development, particularly concerning national identity. With the rise of democratic movements, inter-ethnic conflicts pose a hindrance to democratization efforts (LIJPHART, 1984). Ethnic violence, fueled by hatred towards specific ethnic groups, constitutes a form of political violence. Acts of ethnic violence that resemble terrorism are termed ethnic terrorism or ethnically motivated terrorism. "Racist terrorism" denotes ethnic violence marked by explicit racism and extreme xenophobia. Numerous countries, including Japanese immigrants in America, notably in California, grapple with ethnicity-related challenges.

The influx of Japanese immigrants to California gained momentum in the mid-1880s following the Japanese government's initial approval of emigration. The implementation of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 resulted in a scarcity of affordable Asian labor, prompting employers to actively promote Japanese immigration to address the labor shortage. Subsequently, a significant number of immigrants arrived from Hawaii after 1898, following the annexation of Hawaii by the United States, which enabled them to travel without passports. Despite the relatively smaller size of the Japanese population in San Francisco compared to the Chinese population, Japanese immigrants encountered comparable levels of prejudice and racism (FoundSF, 1997).

The United States is renowned for its rich diversity encompassing various races, ethnicities, and skin tones. Unfortunately, individuals with skin of color often face disproportionate levels of racial and ethnic discrimination. As defined by Law No. 40/2008 on the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination, racial discrimination encompasses discriminatory actions aimed at specific races, nations, tribes, and religions. Such actions may involve insults and stereotyping based on differences in skin color, physical appearance, and beliefs (Syabani Korompot et al., 2021). This illustrates that racial discrimination extends beyond mere skin color to encompass other facets such as physical characteristics and cultural beliefs. The multifaceted nature of racial discrimination underscores the need for comprehensive efforts to combat it. Moreover, Japanese immigration to the United States

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was driven by a multitude of factors, reflecting the complex socio-economic and political landscape of the time.

Following a prolonged era of strict “Sakoku” policies that restricted both entry to and exit from Japan, the Meiji Imperial Restoration heralded a significant shift by opening avenues for emigration (Black, 2022). This change was prompted by the pressing need to modernize Japan, which imposed substantial financial burdens, particularly on the peasant class, leading to the loss of cultivated lands and heightened poverty levels. The repeal of Sakoku in 1868 marked a turning point, prompting many Japanese residents to consider emigration to escape economic hardship and pursue better opportunities abroad (Numao, 2024). The term "netsu" emerged to describe the wave of emigration that swept through Japan during this period. Within this context, the United States emerged as an appealing destination for Japanese immigrants in search of a more tranquil, dignified, and prosperous life (Vassil, 2011).

At the onset of their interaction, Japan did not hold the same level of strategic importance for the United States or other Western nations, especially in comparison to the significant attention directed towards China during the 18th and 19th centuries. Diplomatic engagement between the United States and Japan commenced in 1853 under the leadership of Commodore Matthew C. Perry, primarily focusing on the access to whaling grounds and initiating limited trade missions. The signing of a bilateral treaty between the United States and Japan in 1854 is often attributed to Perry's implementation of gunboat diplomacy. This approach involved the utilization or threat of military force to compel the establishment of diplomatic relations.

The Japanese diaspora, consisting of individuals known as Nikkei or Nikkeijin, includes Japanese immigrants from Japan and their descendants living in countries outside Japan. Although historical records indicate Japanese emigration as early as the 15th century to the Philippines, significant migration did not occur on a large scale until the Meiji period (1868-1912), particularly with movements to the Philippines and the United States. There was also notable emigration to territories under Japanese control during Japan's colonial expansion period (1875-1945). However, many of these emigrants returned to Japan after Japan's surrender in 1945, which marked the end of World War II in Asia. According to the Association of Nikkei and Overseas Japanese, approximately 4 million Nikkei reside in various host countries. The largest Nikkei communities are found in Brazil, the United States, the Philippines, China, Canada, and Peru. Descendants of Meiji-era emigrants continue to form identifiable communities in these countries, distinct from the Japanese population in Japan. The largest of these foreign communities is located in Brazil, particularly in São Paulo and Paraná. Cohesive Japanese communities also exist in the Philippines, Peru, and the state of Hawaii. It is important to note that many Japanese immigrants have assimilated into the cultures and societies of their host countries over time.

Asians have lived in the United States for more than 160 years. When they first arrived, especially the Chinese, they were mostly employed in mining and railroad construction. These jobs were high-risk but offered great employment opportunities, albeit at very low wages. However, Asians, both immigrants and their descendants, often face unfair treatment, including violence and racial discrimination by bigots in society (Library Of Congress, 2024a). Take Los Angeles, California, USA, for example.

2. Methods

This paper employs a qualitative research method. Qualitative research methodology generates descriptive data, consisting of narratives constructed from a series of words and language. This data is utilized to address existing issues without necessitating a computational process or statistical data from a study (Moleong, 2017). Employing a qualitative approach, this research prioritizes a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation through the interpretation of its significance, context, and intricacies, rather than solely relying on numerical data or statistics. Furthermore, this paper utilizes literature review data collection techniques, drawing upon various credible and valid

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sources such as journals, books, articles, and news outlets (Basri & Ismiyatun, 2024). Additionally, the author accesses data in the form of official documents, often including reports issued by various relevant institutions and agencies (Azwar, 2003). By incorporating these diverse sources, the research endeavors to delve deeply into the topics under discussion and ensure a well-informed analysis.

Data for this study was gathered from diverse sources, encompassing firsthand accounts from Japanese individuals who have encountered instances of racism and documented their experiences through the platform densho.org. Additionally, information was collected from organizations collaborating with Densho to combat discrimination in the United States. Other sources of data included official websites, articles, journals, books, and online media pertinent to Densho's role and initiatives. Through the integration of these various sources, the research aimed to offer a comprehensive depiction of the issue of discrimination against Asian communities in the United States and the measures taken to address it.

3. Results and Discussion

History of Japanese Migrant Entry into California

Japanese Americans began migrating to the United States in significant numbers following the political, cultural, and social transformations brought about by the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Large-scale Japanese immigration was first marked by arrivals in Hawaii during the initial year of the Meiji period in 1868. However, there is evidence of earlier encounters between Japanese individuals and North America. In October 1587, a Japanese boy accompanied Franciscan Brother Martín Ignacio Loyola on his second circumnavigation of the globe, marking one of the earliest known instances of Japanese presence in North America. Additionally, Oguri Jukichi, a stranded Japanese sailor, arrived in California in 1815, while Otokichi and two companions reached Washington state in 1834. Japan's emergence from isolation was further accelerated by Commodore Matthew Perry's expedition to Japan, during which he successfully negotiated the opening of Japan to American trade. Subsequent developments included the initiation of direct shipping between San Francisco and Japan in 1855 and the establishment of official diplomatic relations in 1860.

Japanese immigration to the United States was primarily motivated by economic factors. Deteriorating economic conditions in Japan led to poor living standards and high levels of unemployment, prompting many Japanese individuals to seek better opportunities elsewhere. The population density in Japan surged from 1,335 individuals per square kilometer in 1872 to 1,885 in 1903, exacerbating economic hardships for the working-class populace. Rumors of a more prosperous life in the "land of opportunity" spurred increased immigration to the United States, particularly among young individuals aspiring to establish themselves overseas. In 1870, only fifty-five Japanese were documented as residing in the United States. However, by 1890, this number had increased significantly. The number of new immigrants had surged to over two thousand. Despite the allure of better prospects, the journey to the United States was often arduous, and immigrants encountered numerous challenges and uncertainties as they sought to improve their lives in a foreign land.

During the years 1904-1905, Japan experienced economic downturn following its war with Russia, significantly impacting its populace. The increasing population density in Japan compounded the challenge, as limited natural resources and land made it increasingly difficult to meet the growing needs of the people. Intense competition in the labor market further exacerbated economic pressures on residents. Consequently, a significant number of workers and farmers migrated to America with hopes of earning money and altering their fortunes. Additionally, many sought to evade military service, viewing emigration to achieve both economic prosperity and freedom from conscription (Anderson, 2024). The lives of Japanese Americans residing in Hawaii and along the west coast of the US underwent significant changes following the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. However, the experiences of Japanese Americans in Hawaii differed considerably from those on the mainland. Jean Ariyoshi, the former First Lady of Hawaii, recounts a period of fear in her life

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following the eviction of her uncle from their home by the FBI on December 12. Suspected of being a "fifth columnist" or Japanese subversive operator due to not being born in Hawaii or the United States, her uncle was perceived, according to prevalent prejudices of the time, as more loyal to the Japanese emperor than to America. Ariyoshi's uncle was detained in a local jail while law enforcement officials seized weapons, radios, and other potential tools that could aid Japanese forces in coordinating further attacks. Despite initial assurances of a brief detention, Ariyoshi's uncle ended up spending nearly three weeks at the army detention center on Sand Island. Throughout this period, his family attempted to contact him or obtain updates on his condition without success. This experience highlights the challenges and injustices faced by Japanese Americans in the wake of the Pearl Harbor attack, particularly in the atmosphere of suspicion and discrimination prevailing at the time.

Upon their arrival in Hawaii, Japanese immigrants were warmly received by the government and local populace. This reception was influenced by the Friendship Treaty established between Japan and the Kingdom of Hawaii in 1860, initiated by King Kamehameha IV. Eugene Van Reed, appointed Consulate General of Hawaii in Japan by the Kingdom of Hawaii in 1865, played a significant role in fostering good relations between the two entities. Van Reed also facilitated the process of Japanese immigration to Hawaii, leading to a favorable reception by the King of Hawaii towards Japanese immigrants. Japanese immigrants were granted direct entry into Hawaii without the need for health inspections. As a gesture of welcome, they were presented with a meal of marinated fish by the King of Hawaii. Furthermore, at the suggestion of Captain Reagan, who commanded the ship transporting the immigrants to Hawaii, the Japanese immigrants were granted a two-week respite and vacation to recuperate from the arduous journey and avoid fatigue. This hospitality and accommodation exemplify the positive reception extended to Japanese immigrants upon their arrival in Hawaii.

Upon their arrival, Japanese immigrants are provided with extra clothes and hats for work. However, they show reluctance towards their first taste of Western food, particularly due to the presence of butter, which they find to have an unpleasant odor. Workdays extend for 10 hours, and punctuality is strictly enforced. A delay of 10-15 minutes results in a deduction of one-quarter of the day's wages(Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle, 2024). At 9pm, lights must be extinguished, and no further discussions among workers are permitted. Overtime work warrants additional compensation, with salaries disbursed on a monthly basis. Maintenance of cleanliness is mandated, with workers required to clean their rooms weekly. Deductions from wages are imposed for any damaged, lost, or stolen items. Personal use of canes incurs a charge of 25 cents per cane. Workers are prohibited from consuming alcoholic beverages and opium. These regulations outline the working conditions and expectations imposed on Japanese immigrants upon their arrival.

The labor shortage in Hawaii during the 1880s reignited the influx of Japanese migration to the region, which steadily increased over time as individuals sought employment opportunities and settlement in Hawaii (densho.org, 2024). However, some Japanese immigrants discovered job advertisements in mainland America offering higher wages than those in Hawaii, prompting them to pursue opportunities in the American territory in search of a better life. According to data from (Murayama, 1991) journal "Information and Emigrants: Interperceptual Differences of Japanese Emigration to the Pacific Northwest, 1880-1915," between 1890 and 1910, over 80,000 Japanese migrated to the United States, with 38,375 of them arriving through Hawaii. Both direct migration from Japan and migration through Hawaii contributed to the rise in the number of Japanese migrants in the West Coast region of America. Cities such as Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Francisco, Oakland, Seattle, and Portland emerged as centers of Japanese population growth in the 1900s. Japanese immigrants who began arriving in the American plains during the 1890s to 1900s are commonly referred to as the first generation or "Issei," which in Japanese signifies the first generation of Japanese immigrants in America. The subsequent generation, consisting of the children of Issei born in America, are known as "Nisei," meaning the second generation.

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California boasts the highest concentration of Japanese immigrants compared to other regions in the United States. Out of the more than 38,000 Japanese immigrants who arrived in America through Hawaii, approximately 12,000 settled in California. Many of these immigrants found employment in the agricultural sector, particularly in fields requiring manual labor. Japanese workers in California's agriculture sector possessed certain advantages, which facilitated their integration into the workforce. Firstly, they were willing to accept lower wages, thereby increasing their likelihood of securing employment in agriculture, a prominent industry in California. Moreover, their presence was crucial for handling seasonal agricultural crops, making them indispensable to the agricultural workforce. Most Japanese immigrants who arrived in America after 1900 lacked significant family ties and land, making them more inclined to engage in seasonal agricultural work that necessitated regional mobility. The majority of Japanese farmers found employment in sugar fields and vineyards. Over time, Japanese immigrants came to dominate the agricultural labor market in California. By 1909, they comprised approximately 41.9 percent of the total agricultural labor force in the state, with the remaining workforce primarily composed of white workers and a small percentage of other immigrants.

The cultural differences brought by Japanese immigrants were a significant factor contributing to the negative stereotypes often associated with them(Miller, 2014) . Upon arriving in the American plains, Japanese immigrants typically carried minimal financial resources and personal belongings. However, what they brought with them was their cherished culture. Japanese immigrants regarded themselves as a distinct race, feeling a sense of uniqueness and intelligence. This proud racial identity sometimes stirred resentment among white individuals on the American West Coast. Japanese immigrants held great pride in their cultural heritage and placed strong emphasis on traditional values in their social lives. As a cohesive immigrant group, they were united not only by pride in their racial identity but also by their commitment to cultural preservation and integration.

The arrival of Japanese immigrants on the West Coast of America coincided with a period of economic development in the country, presenting opportunities for the Japanese to participate in this growth. However, their success often elicited disapproval from the dominant group in America, namely the white population. The remarkable economic achievements of the Japanese were viewed as "aggressive" by whites, particularly in light of Japan's assertiveness in various conflicts, leading them to perceive the Japanese presence on the West Coast as a threat. The substantial increase in the number of Japanese immigrants in the 1900s triggered immediate protests in California. These protests were not only a response to the economic achievements and cultural heritage of the Japanese but also stemmed from the longstanding anti-Chinese movement in the state. Despite restrictions and regulations on Chinese immigration, anti-Chinese sentiments remained prevalent in the 1900s. Over time, these attitudes extended to encompass anti-Japanese sentiments, with anti-Chinese sentiments becoming synonymous with anti-Japanese attitudes in California.

Migrant policies in USA

In 1917, the United States Congress enacted the first significant immigration law aimed at restricting the entry of immigrants. The backdrop of uncertainty surrounding national security during World War I provided the impetus for Congress to pass this legislation, which laid the groundwork for the Immigration Act of 1924 (Department of State, 2017). The 1917 law introduced several key provisions that would shape immigration policy for years to come. One of the notable provisions was the implementation of a literacy test, requiring immigrants over the age of 16 to demonstrate basic reading proficiency in any language. Additionally, the law increased the taxes imposed on new immigrants upon their arrival and granted immigration officials greater discretion in determining who to exclude from entry into the United States. Furthermore, the 1917 law established the exclusion of individuals born in the geographically defined "Asian Barred Zone" from entering the United States, apart from Japanese and Filipino citizens. This provision was significant in shaping immigration patterns from Asia to the United States. Notably, the Japanese government had previously agreed to

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voluntarily restrict Japanese immigration to the United States through the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 (Asia Society, 2024). Conversely, citizens of the Philippines, being under US colonial rule, were considered US nationals and thus permitted to freely travel to the United States. While China was not specifically included in the Restricted Zone, Chinese individuals had faced significant barriers to immigration under the Chinese Exclusion Act. These legislative measures collectively reflected the United States' evolving immigration policies and attitudes towards immigrants from various regions, particularly Asia, during this period.

At the turn of the century, there was a significant influx of immigration over a span of twenty-five years, with over 100,000 Japanese nationals arriving in the United States. During this period, fundamental Japanese-American community institutions began to take shape. These newly arrived immigrants initially found employment in the migrant labor force, undertaking various roles on farms, mines, construction sites, and railroads across the American West. At times, they were also involved in labor agitation. However, many Japanese immigrants eventually transitioned to entrepreneurship, starting their own businesses. Initially, these enterprises catered primarily to the needs of the Japanese community, including restaurants, inns, and stores. Yet, they quickly expanded to include department stores and retail chains serving the public. Japanese associations and cooperative societies provided crucial financial support and guidance to many of these ventures. Many Japanese immigrants, drawing on labor-intensive agricultural techniques from their homeland, were able to acquire their own land and establish successful agricultural enterprises, ranging from farming to production. By 1920, Japanese immigrant farmers controlled over 450,000 acres of land in California, contributing more than 10% of crop income to the market. Additionally, at least one American-made millionaire emerged from the Japanese immigrant community, underscoring their significant contributions to the agricultural economy and broader society.

The Immigration Act of 1924 marked a significant turning point in US immigration policy by imposing stringent restrictions on the number of immigrants permitted entry into the country through national quotas. These quotas were designed to allocate immigration visas to only two percent of the total number of people of each nationality residing in the United States, based on data from the 1890 census. This legislation effectively excluded immigrants from Asia, reflecting a strong opposition to the influx of Asian immigrants to the United States. The implementation of these new legal barriers led to complex legal issues, as Japanese landowners sought to circumvent the restrictions by registering their properties in the names of Americans of European descent or their US-born children. Additionally, Japanese immigration became skewed towards females, as a growing number of women from Japan immigrated to the United States as "picture brides," entering arranged marriages with immigrant men whom they had never met. Ultimately, the Immigration Act of 1924 imposed stringent restrictions on immigration from non-European countries, effectively halting Japanese immigration to the United States with forecasts suggesting an indefinite period of restriction (Library of Congress, 2024b). With these laws in place, it appeared that the initial wave of significant immigration from Japan would also be the last, marking a stark shift in US immigration policy and the end of an era for Japanese immigration to the United States.

The first significant immigration law in the United States was enacted in 1917, prompted by concerns surrounding national security during World War I. This legislation introduced various restrictions, including literacy tests, increased taxes for new immigrants, and limitations on immigrants from specific regions, such as the "Asian Barred Zone." In the early 1920s, efforts to further restrict immigration gained momentum, culminating in Senator William P. Dillingham's proposal of immigration quotas in 1921. Despite opposition from President Wilson, the legislation was eventually passed in 1924. This law altered the quota system to allocate immigration visas to only two percent of the foreign-born population, based on the 1890 census count, and excluded immigrants who did not meet citizenship criteria due to their race or nationality. As a result, the 1924 Immigration Act imposed

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significant restrictions on immigration, particularly from Southern and Eastern European regions as well as Japan. Although repealed in 1952, the principles established by the 1924 legislation continue to influence United States immigration policy, with an emphasis on maintaining the racial homogeneity of the country.

The agreement led to a gradual increase in the Japanese population in America over the following fifteen years, as it permitted the entry of wives and children. Many of these marriages were arranged through "picture marriages," where couples were matched via photo correspondence prior to the bride's arrival in the United States. This practice helped alleviate the severe gender imbalance that had afflicted the Chinese American community. In 1910, the ratio of Japanese men to women was 7:1; by 1920, it had decreased to less than 2:1. Additionally, the treaty facilitated the establishment of the Japanese American Association in 1909, entrusted by the Consulate General of Japan with comprehensive registration and social oversight of Japanese Americans. While the association primarily performed bureaucratic functions, such as processing various certificate applications, it later came under scrutiny from proponents of exclusion, who viewed it as an "invisible government" with alleged Japanese imperial ambitions.

In 1929 marked a significant turning point in the movement to modify immigration policy in the United States, with notable changes driven by various factors. West Coast businessmen, who had been supportive of Japan even prior to 1924, began to reinvigorate efforts in the modification movement. For instance, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce had long advocated for Japan on immigration issues in California, primarily due to concerns about the negative impact on trade relations with Japan. The Committee on Japanese Relations, led by prominent businessman Wallace M. Alexander, had actively opposed the anti-Japanese movement since its inception in 1915. While the primary motivation for these businessmen was to foster trade with Japan, their sustained commitment demonstrated that their activities were influenced by more than just economic fluctuations. The movement gained further momentum with the support of Western businessmen who opposed exclusionary measures. While the economic situation in San Francisco did not experience a downturn in the early months of 1929, the optimism and confidence in the economic future exhibited by West Coast businessmen became increasingly apparent. Although the economic depression was not the primary driver behind the rise of the anti-exclusion movement, the heightened economic pressure tended to bolster support for the movement. This suggests that while the movement had its roots in economic considerations, its support was not solely contingent on the prevailing economic conditions of the time. Instead, broader factors such as trade interests and international relations played significant roles in shaping views towards immigration policy modifications.

In an atmosphere conducive to significant amendments to the 1924 Immigration Act, Albert Johnson, the chairman of the House Immigration Committee, unexpectedly announced his intention to introduce measures for a special quota for Japan. The response to this announcement was widespread and intense. The New York Times not only covered the announcement itself but also highlighted its significant impact in Japan, including the satisfaction expressed by officials in the Foreign Office as reported in Japanese newspapers. In the Western United States, reactions to the announcement were similarly robust. The day following the announcement, McClatchy voiced a resolute opposition to any changes in the law. Several smaller newspapers affiliated with McClatchy also echoed this sentiment. For instance, the Fresno Bee emphasized that the Japanese Immigration Law should remain unchanged, and a similar sentiment was expressed in an article published by the Sacramento Bee. While Hearst newspapers did not explicitly address the announcement, most newspapers, including the Los Angeles Times and Seattle Times, did not oppose the proposed special quota for Japan. This reflects the complexity of reactions to the plan, with some newspapers taking a firm stance against it while others remained neutral or even supportive.

The concept of minzoku (民族, "ethnic group") in Japan does not differentiate between racial, ethnic, and national identities, unlike systems in countries such as Britain, where

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ethnic or racial background is separate from nationality in population registries. The Japanese Census and Statistics Bureau does not make a distinction between these identities, resulting in the fusion of ethnic, racial, and national boundaries. This has led to the portrayal of Japan as a tan'itsu minzoku kokka (単一民族国家, "ethnically homogeneous country"), characterized by perceived blood and cultural purity. In 2005, future Prime Minister Tarō Asō characterized Japan as a nation of "one race, one civilization, one language, and one culture," mirroring similar views expressed by former Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara in 2012. The concept of a unified minzoku holds legal importance, as demonstrated by a 1984 amendment to the Japanese Nationality Act, which established citizenship on the principle of jus sanguinis, tying it to bloodline rather than birthplace. Japanese citizenship is exclusive in nature: individuals who naturalize are required to renounce their original nationality, and those born with dual citizenship must choose one nationality by the age of 20. This legal framework reflects the emphasis on blood ties and the unified minzoku concept within Japanese nationality laws.

Start of Ethnic Violence against Japanese Migrants

Racism and economic competition, exacerbated by the economic downturn of 1929, fueled serious anti-Filipino violence following the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act in 1935. This legislation established an annual quota of fifty Filipino migrants, excluding those already present in the United States. In the years leading up to the outbreak of World War II, various federal agencies closely monitored the Japanese-American community to assess the potential for conflict with Japan (immigrationhistory.org, n.d.). While the consensus among these agencies was that the Japanese-American community as a whole did not pose a significant threat to the United States in the event of war with Japan, they nevertheless compiled lists of individuals to be targeted for internment in the event of hostilities. These lists facilitated the swift roundup of individuals labeled as " hostile foreigners" within hours of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Most of those arrested were male immigrant community leaders suspected due to their positions of influence, such as heads of Japanese Association branches or priests at Buddhist temples, rather than any specific actions they had taken.

For five decades spanning from 1882 to 1935, Asian immigrants made significant contributions to the development of the United States, yet they were systematically denied entry and naturalization rights until the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952. Despite their diverse origins in countries such as China, Japan, Korea, India, and the Philippines, these pioneering individuals shared a common experience of exclusion that marked the beginning of the Asian presence in America. The histories of European and Asian immigration exhibit striking parallels, particularly in how individuals responded to the economic and social conditions prompting them to leave their home countries, as well as the contrasting experiences of encountering both discrimination and opportunity upon arrival in the United States. The expulsion of Japanese Americans from the West Coast during World War II led to their relocation to short-term detention facilities established by the military, euphemistically referred to as "gathering centers." Among these facilities was the "assembly center," repurposed from existing venues such as exhibition grounds and horse racing tracks located near the areas from which Japanese Americans were expelled. At larger sites like Santa Anita in Southern California, Tanforan in Northern California, and Puyallup south of Seattle, Washington, detainees often lived in makeshift quarters on empty horse stalls and slept on rubber mattresses. Following a stay lasting several weeks to months, Japanese Americans were transferred to ten concentration camps administered by the newly established federal agency, the War Relocation Authority (WRA). Situated in remote desert or prairie locations across the Western United States and in Arkansas, these "relocation centers" were enclosed by barbed wire and guard towers, some of which were still under construction when the first detainees arrived.

Detainees resided in housing blocks equipped with shared facilities such as bathrooms, washing areas, and communal dining halls. Many Japanese immigrants endured harsh living conditions behind barbed wire, including extreme weather, dust storms, limited privacy, and

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insufficient food. The hardships of camp life often strained family ties, as children spent their sleeping hours and meals with peers rather than with their Japanese immigrant families. Moreover, WRA policies favored American-born Nisei over their Issei parents, contributing to further divisions within the community. The WRA attempted to administer these camps as self-contained communities, establishing schools, recreational activities, and facilitating "self-government" through elections. Detainees held various jobs vital to camp operations, such as food preparation, serving, and firewood chopping, earning meager wages ranging from $12 to $19 per month (Miyawaki, 2014). Japanese immigrants also endeavored to beautify their surroundings by cultivating gardens and crafting furniture and decorative items. However, despite efforts to create semblances of normalcy, many Japanese immigrants remained acutely aware of the confinement's reality and its implications.

Following the upheaval in the concentration camps during the autumn of 1942, the War Relocation Authority (WRA) initiated a questionnaire in early 1943 aimed at segregating detainees into categories of "loyal" and "disloyal." Based on responses to two pivotal questions, individuals deemed loyal were eligible to enlist in the military or relocate to areas distant from the West Coast to resume civilian life, while those classified as disloyal were transferred to Tule Lake, a concentration camp in California (Rosemblatt & Benmergui, 2018). With the restoration of Japanese Americans' right to serve in the military in early 1943, thousands from Hawaii, where mass incarceration had not occurred, prepared to enlist. However, the number of detainees opting to leave the concentration camps was relatively small, though many young men chose to depart even as their families remained incarcerated. A significant portion of these individuals joined the Segregated 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which distinguished itself in some of the most intense battles on the European front, earning widespread admiration as one of the war's most esteemed units. Others enlisted in intelligence units in the Pacific, utilizing their proficiency in Japanese language for interrogation and translation tasks, which proved invaluable to Allied successes.

In 1943 and '44, despite facing considerable hurdles from stringent security measures, thousands of predominantly young Japanese Americans left the concentration camps with encouragement from the WRA. Barred from returning to the West Coast, many headed eastward in pursuit of higher education or better employment opportunities. Japanese American communities began to form in cities like Chicago, Denver, and New York. The WRA, and even President Roosevelt, believed that dispersing Japanese Americans across the nation and preventing the re-establishment of ethnic enclaves would mitigate prejudice against them (Bai, 2015). In 1944, the army initiated the roundup of Nisei individuals from the concentration camps. While most complied with the draft, approximately 300 resisted, refusing to report until the civil rights of Japanese immigrants were restored. This resistance sparked division within the Japanese American community, and the history of draft resistance remained largely suppressed for around forty years(Robinson, 2023) .

In late 1944, the Supreme Court addressed a significant case involving Mitsuye Endo, a young woman challenging her prolonged internment despite her professed loyalty. The Court's ruling in the Endo case paved the way for Japanese Americans to begin returning to the West Coast starting in January 1945. However, about one-third of those classified as "loyal" were not permitted to leave the concentration camps until late 1944, and they faced resistance upon their return to the coast. With the conclusion of the war, most camps were shuttered by the end of 1945 (except for Tule Lake). Many detainees were forcibly removed from the camps and sent back to their original locales more than three years earlier. Japanese American communities began the process of rebuilding and slowly restoring their cultural identity.

For those who settled outside the West Coast, returning to their former Japanese American neighborhoods presented challenges, with areas often inhabited by different ethnic groups. Competition for jobs and housing was fierce, and many Japanese immigrants had to start anew, either as agricultural laborers or in other occupations. Over time, the public perception of Japanese Americans shifted dramatically. Many Americans acknowledged that the internment during the war was a grave mistake. Japanese American veterans' bravery

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and sacrifices were cited as evidence in calls for fair treatment and the repeal of discriminatory laws, such as the alien land laws and the ban on Issei naturalization. Japanese Americans were increasingly regarded as a "model minority."

The ethnic conflicts between Japanese and white businesses in San Francisco, particularly in the early 20th century, can be analyzed through theoretical perspectives such as intermediary minority theory and labor market theory. Intermediary minority theory suggests that Japanese immigrants were perceived as transient workers aiming to accumulate wealth quickly before returning to Japan. They often engaged in entrepreneurial ventures that could be easily dissolved and relied on family networks to procure inexpensive labor. However, the extent to which Japanese immigrants served the interests of the dominant group by providing economic services remains ambiguous. On the other hand, labor market theory posits that Japanese immigrants directly competed with white workers for employment opportunities. Capitalists exploited this competition by hiring Japanese immigrants as low-wage laborers, which in turn depressed wages for higher-earning white workers. Both theories shed light on the economic dynamics and tensions between Japanese immigrants and the white majority in urban settings like San Francisco. They highlight the complex interplay of economic competition, social perceptions, and power dynamics that contribute to ethnic antagonism and conflicts.

4. Conclusion

The migration of Japanese-Americans to the United States commenced subsequent to a series of political, cultural, and social transformations within Japan following the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Following Commodore Matthew Perry's expedition to Japan, which facilitated American trade with the nation, Japanese immigration experienced a notable increase. Economic motives predominantly drove Japanese immigration to the US, with adverse economic conditions in Japan prompting individuals to seek better opportunities abroad, particularly in the United States. While Japanese migrants initially received warm receptions in Hawaii and the US west coast, they often encountered challenging working conditions characterized by meager wages and prolonged labor hours. A significant portion of these migrants engaged in agricultural activities, eventually gaining dominance in California's agricultural labor market by the early 20th century. However, US immigration policies, notably those enacted in 1917 and 1924, severely restricted immigration from Japan and other Asian regions through the implementation of literacy tests, heightened taxation for new immigrants, and imposing minimal immigration quotas for Asian immigrants, including those from Japan. Towards the late 1920s, a shift in attitude towards Japanese migration emerged, with some businessmen on the US west coast advocating for modifications to immigration policies to facilitate trade with Japan. Nevertheless, sentiments towards Japanese migration remained complex, with certain factions opposing it. Anti-Japanese violence, fueled by racism and economic competition, escalated significantly, particularly following the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1935, which curtailed Filipino immigration. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese Americans encountered suspicion and discrimination, culminating in their mass incarceration and internment. Consequently, the history of Japanese migration to the United States was shaped by a confluence of economic factors, US immigration policies, and evolving perceptions towards Japanese immigrants. Despite enduring significant challenges, many Japanese immigrants were able to establish prosperous lives in the US, albeit amidst pervasive ethnic discrimination and violence.

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