

Nicole Saldaña

July 19, 2014

Global Migration Issues/ Andy Barfield

### Introduction

My name is Nicole Saldaña. I am 22 years old, and have lived in the United States for the majority of my life. I was able to live this past year in Japan, and had other opportunities to travel to Mexico and France as well. Growing up I learned English and Spanish at the same time, and started studying Japanese when I was in middle school. This want to study a different language and culture was my drive to someday travel to this place.

### Commentary

I took this course to get a better understand of other viewpoints other than how I see the world on different issues. Global Migration seems to have a different effect on a case by case basis, but it does affect everyone. By being able to want to focus on issues such as this one, I feel I can integrate much better into different countries by trying to understand what is happening around me instead of just my own country. This similar situation occurred when I visited my father's hometown the first time, and that I knew very little about Mexico. I had offended some people that didn't mind much since I was a kid, but it still weighed on my mind of how close minded I had been. This class helped me to see not only Japan's issues and solutions that could help, but the world in general. Learning about history also helped me to understand situations better that are occurring in the present. I felt that the readings helped immensely to think about different viewpoints and discussing them with our neighbors helped us open up more about how we feel in different topics. Writing the reflections afterward did help to help me retain what emotions I had through discussing certain topics. One of the pieces that stood out most to me was

the Reading B of Migration and Security, which talked about a lady named Kubra Gumusay, known as the Ambassador against Racism. The reason this article stood out to me was because she mentions how globally, there was a heavy development of Islamphobia, following the September 11 attacks. I was even asked of my own opinion in the class, and even though I viewed it silly at the time, the more I thought of it, the more I realized the cold truth of it. Many American's did not think the same as me, as I viewed the people who did the act at fault, but not the whole entire race connected to those people. If that logic worked for everyone else who have also done some bad things, then American's would be scared of many different places, not just Iraq. During the time the attacks occurred, it didn't help that Muslims were all immediately portrayed as a bad guy thanks to the media not being sensitive about that topic. I have heard other horrible stories of an American going crazy and doing a shootout of many people at a school or another public place. Even this doesn't make Americans hate other Americans. But it seems to follow that other logic when it comes to discuss about people who are not from America. Usually in America if you are found mentally unstable, you are taken better care of then just admitting how messed up you are. This needs to change in America and why I agree with the writer, Kubra Gumusay, that this should be stopped soon. It was thanks to taking this class that made me realize this, and makes me want to look into it again but maybe discuss with people with my own country to get the full understanding of what people think.

## My Family Migration History

My family migration history includes my grandparents on both of my parent's sides being born in Mexico. Even though they were born in various states, they settled down to have my parent's in two cities.

My dad was born in Guadalajara, Mexico, oldest of 13 siblings, 5 brothers and 8 sisters. Having this many children is pretty common in Mexico. At a very young age, he had to drop out of his middle school education to start taking care of the other members of his family. He started working and helping his father and mother take care of the ranch they own, which back then had a lot of fields and livestock. At the age of 17, he was offered an opportunity to move to California, United States with one of his friends to start a new life. He took that opportunity and worked as an illegal alien working in agriculture fields. He did this hoping to have a fresh start and possibly send some money back home if he became successful. He did this even knowing that his parents could never leave their home behind to join him.

My mother was born in Calexico, Mexico, having only 2 brothers, an older and younger. However, the younger one passed away in a bad accident at a young age. During the time after the accident, my grandfather left my grandmother to take care of the remaining two children they had together. Even to this day I do not know who he is or how he is doing. My grandmother was able to acquire a job in California as a cleaning lady for a wealthy man. Seeing as she was an illegal immigrant, this man offered to marry my grandmother to have her become a legal citizen in the United States. She agreed with the intention of better securing her children with a better future. This is what usually occurred for people with dual citizenship. Having them be legal citizens would make things much easier in the long run. After all the paperwork was filled out to have her family legal citizens of the United States, they then divorced.

My parents met at a dance in Watsonville, California. My mother was at an 18 an older dance when she was not of age. She was 14 years old at the time while my dad was 21. They married that same year falling deep in love, and had my oldest brother one year in marriage. They have just celebrated there 35 year anniversary together. At this time, they got their first apartment together in Salinas, a neighboring city by Watsonville. They both got jobs in agricultural fields due to their limited education. During this whole time, my grandmother on my mother's side, still lived with them and took care of my siblings and me as we grew up. Eventually, my mother was able to go and get her high school degree and my father got a driver's license for both commercial and truck vehicles to acquire better jobs. My mother attended a year of high school and was able to take the GED test to get a high school diploma. They both are now pretty well off, and glad to know my family migration history.

## Weekly Reflections

### 1. First Reflection: April-May, 2014

In one of our first classes, I wrote a reflection after taking notes in the colonization and industrial revolution. It was through class reading that were required of us but there was a twist. We also had online sources through the website we were added to find more information on either subject. I feel as though this was a good way to look through colonization and industrialization. Besides having in-class readings, I was able to find out more information through the website. I was able to make the connection how slavery ancestors were the most difficult to find a family history connection due to many records being destroyed. Slave owners would usually burn their slave's documents to keep them imprisoned for life without being able to go anywhere. Proper documentation was vital for everything in this time period, wanting to move, buy land, or just travel. However, one woman's search for her family history involving slavery proved to be difficult but possible. She was able to find a connection through a marriage record. It makes me wonder how other people have been able to find similar information or if they can at all if they are not as lucky.

### 2. Second Reflection: May-June, 2014

Today's class showed to be very informative of my research topic and many others that I did not think about. There were many different issues to discuss with the other students that also helped me expand my topic and made it clearer to know fully what needs to be done. I also noted what I can research more about. Right now my main focus is labor immigration. However, that topic does connect to other topics that were discussed that I could use for more information supporting my research topic. One example was education. This would very important as immigrants who want

to work in Japan might very well need a structured education system. This would help tremendously break the language barrier, which in my opinion is a major drawback to labor migration working efficiently. However, education doesn't just have to be language, but the culture as well. Japan is one of the special countries where they have their own method of doing things, and have grown up to where it is imbedded in their everyday life. I was lucky myself to have classes in Japanese culture and know many differences between Japan's culture and America's. One infamous example is how Japanese greet each other with bows instead of shaking hands, which is what I'm used to. If uneducated immigrants want to seek work in Japan, that is something they would have to know. Only this would help make themselves feel comfortable in Japan as well as Japanese taking light of foreigners in their society.

### 3. Third Reflection: June-July 2014

Today's discussion was based off a previous reading assignment. I was assigned reading E, which discussed Migration in the Asia Pacific Region. It talked about the Vietnamese government have a big idea to send workers to other places to help try to eliminate their debt. In this article it discussed what the consequences were when trying this method in Malaysia. Moreover, the talk of the article was how some of the Vietnamese workers were scammed into thinking if they paid someone to help them find a job then they would find a better way of living. What usually happened was after these job recruiters would take the workers money and visa, especially when the tourist's visa had just expired or would expire soon, and run away never to be heard of again. Malaysian officials who caught these workers would imprison them, then after some time served, send them back to Vietnam. I felt sorry for the unsuspecting people as this probably affected their lives for the worst more than just staying at home. Usually, jobs they

acquired were odd, low paying jobs no one wanted. After doing some research online, however, I found recent information to help me understand the current situation. Its last talk in the article was to see if they could migrate 500,000 workers by 2005. Now it seems like that was a successful movement and Malaysia accepts foreign workers better than before.

## Outline Revision

### Time Specific Inquiry:

- Looking at the past 20 years, there has been an increase of foreign nationals living in Japan (1<sup>st</sup> source)
- Half of these residents are from before World War II (-1945)
- Based on the revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1990, Japanese descendants from Brazil, Peru and other South American countries were granted long-term residential permits which allowed them to work and stay in Japan indefinitely. (1<sup>st</sup> source)

### Current Issues:

- Japan has a rapidly shrinking population problem, and fertility rates have shown to be really low, at 1.39% yearly.
- Aging population has grown, meaning less at the working force age
- Allowing immigrant workers to come to Japan would help improve Japan in the long term economic growth
- However, it has been reported that Japan has only 1.9% of foreign immigrants living in this country.
- Plan to accept foreign workers is not accepted by everyone. Conservative lawmakers highly oppose this
- If this issue is not adhered to, population of Japan (in 2013) is estimated to drop from 128 million to 80 million by 2060.

### My questions are:

1. How would allowing immigrant workers to enter and work in Japan affect the economic growth?
2. If this is approved, what steps would Japan have to take to properly regulate migrating workers to be able to work in Japan?
3. Does it seem likely that this policy will occur anytime soon?



1<sup>st</sup> Question:

[Allowing immigrant workers to help Japan's economic growth.]

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> source article, I read that Abe mentions his plan to allow 200,000 immigrants to boost Japan's potential for economic growth. But what does this really imply? After doing some research, I found that for a while Japan was able to meet labor requirements by using "untapped" resources such as females and elderly workers. However, even Japan, as advanced industrialized as it is, couldn't sustain this economic growth forever. More reasons for the rising demand for labor were to demographic changes and well educated Japanese youth not wanting to perform for 3K (dirty, dangerous, and difficult) jobs. This led to a rising demand for unskilled labor. One way to do that would be allowing immigration and regulating foreign workers to perform labor and live cohesively with Japan. By having these workers carrying out the job others did not want to do, the economic growth will rise again.

2<sup>nd</sup> Question:

[Steps Japan has to take to make this work]

Through all the research, it seems as though it's almost inevitable that Japan will accept immigrant workers. However, not just one law can be done allowing that to happen. Japan would have to take the proper procedures to make sure it's correctly regulated. One suggestion to take would be for unskilled laborers to also receive an education in Japan. In this way, they can be educated about how the culture, language, and daily life is in Japan. Migrant workers should also receive long periods of time to stay, depending on what unskilled labor they are doing. Regulating how long workers can stay as well will prevent these workers from inviting other family who do not work and thus do not help the economy. In the resource Japan Today, it also explains why Japanese might be so adverse to immigration. And Japan is a country where a lot of

nationalism is embedded into the daily Japanese life. To allow immigrant workers to want to work in Japan, they would also want to feel welcomed. Following this logic, current Japanese residents would need to also be educated to not fear immigrant workers and to share that value with newer generations. This does not mean Japan has to abandon its love for its country but to not mind sharing it with others, especially to those who want to move in comfortably with this way of living.

3<sup>rd</sup> Question:

[Does it seem likely that this policy will occur anytime soon?]

While it seems that it would be an obvious decision to make for Japan, it might not be implemented any time soon. It seems to have been somewhat implemented already, how Japan does have The Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act that was implemented in 1990. Even though this has maintained ban on unskilled workers and has penalties, it actually has many loopholes that enable unskilled workers to be legally admitted. In 1993, in the source Reluctant Hosts, 1993 had a trainee program started that if workers who had a 1 year stay could extend to 2 years to take 9 month training course. If trainees passed evaluation skills, they could then change their resident status to “technical interns”, who received full wage and benefits covered by Japanese labor laws. However this program hardly accepts any participants. If it would accept more, more immigrants could be educated and be properly trained for whatever job they are needed for.

### Summary/ Reflection of Own Presentation

My presentation was about the shortage of labor force in Japan. I talked about the current situation of how there is an increasing aging population but also a decreasing fertility rate. This is causing a shortage of available people to work in the labor force. More Japanese youth are getting an education, making them into more skilled workers and not wanting to do any of the risky, unskilled jobs. Because there is a need for workers, my solution is to allow foreign immigration to occur, for labor immigrants to do the tasks that Japanese do not want to do. Allowing this to happen would also help out Japan's economy in the long run, boosting economic growth. This could only be successful if this is properly regulated. Japanese society would also have to be educated as do foreign immigrants of accepting each other in the same society. Japanese have to be more willing to accept foreign help and immigrants can be educated of Japanese language, culture, and emerge successfully into Japanese society.

I found that my partner Lisa, listened intently to my presentation and had a couple of questions that added to what I presented. She wanted to know how this affected me which I did go into bigger detail. Currently, I'm working on an education myself, and I do not see myself becoming an unskilled worker soon to work in Japan. However, I am concerned of Japan's ability to accept foreign help, which we both have noticed may change sooner than we think in the future. There is a current program right now that allows some immigrants to be properly trained in 9 months and allows a 2 year stay. This is only done by very few companies in Japan, but has proven itself successful. In those two years, if these trainees pass an evaluation test, they get the full labor rights just as a Nationalized Japanese would. If I wanted to work in or with Japan in the future, it would make the job a lot easier when the society around you accepts you for who you are.

## Summary/ Reflection of Partner's Presentation

My partner for today's presentations was Lisa, and her presentation topic was about Dual Nationality. She discussed the main issues in Japan how there is no dual citizenship allowed. There is even a nationality law stating by the age of 22, a person of multiple nationalities has to declare one nationality and give up the other. Lisa then transitioned to talking about the limited rights one gets with Japanese nationality. This included social rights, suffrage, and civil liberty rights. The articles she used have shown in recent past ten years this issue has arisen. However, no more effort has been made in the past 6 years to have multiple nationalities. Inevitably, there are people who have dual citizenship only to not have reported it to the government. Debate of this topic, one man Kono, has a plan to allow Japanese nationals to be citizens of other countries. Lisa also mentioned the advantages and disadvantages of having dual citizenship. Some of the advantages include: integrate further into host society, easily come back to Japan with skills and knowledge, and reducing in-between-ness of countries. The disadvantages of having dual citizenship include: dual military service, double taxation, and conflicting diplomatic protection. The many people who claim dual nationality now are highly educated people and EU nationals. Lisa then added in her conclusion seeing this in the near future, possibly 20 years.

I'm really glad I listened with Lisa's presentation as it combined nicely with my theme as well. We both agree that Japan should not be afraid to open its doors to welcome people from other parts of the world. It's very difficult to learn and understand Japanese but many people try to be part of the culture. For me it wouldn't be fair to give up my American nationality because Japan doesn't allow me to be both American and Japanese. If I wanted to work in Japan as a skilled worker, I would want this to occur first to not have any problems in either place, Japan or America. However, paying double taxes sounds like a bad time, so I would expect to have a job worth it to

want to work in Japan. Again, Japanese society would have to be very accepting of foreigners in their country at all if a law like this could ever hope to pass in the future.