LOCAL CITIZENSHIP AND THE REALIZATION OF POLITICAL RIGHTS OF JAPANESE BRAZILIANS: COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF AICHI AND YAMANASHI PREFECTURES OF JAPAN

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ABSTRACT

This thesis research aims at examining if and to what extent the Brazilian migrants in Japan enjoy the right to political participation in Japan. It also looks at the relationship between nationalism, internationalism, and local citizenship, which is an alternative approach to citizenship to separate membership in local communities from national affiliation. The study was conducted through documentary research, interviews, and participatory observations. Japan is among many countries which fail to accept migrants as equal participants in society. The issues of non-national residents are the concerns of local governments in the case of Japan, and some local governments are progressive in accepting a non-citizen population into local communities' while others remain conservative and fail to integrate migrants. Therefore, factors behind and influences of such regional differences are also explored through this investigation.

The study found that the political rights enjoyed by Brazilian migrants have not been realized in Japan despite the fact that some local governments acknowledge the concept of local citizenship. Regional differences in migrant administration are triggered by the difference in economy, population size, and historical experience. It was also found that, in the case of Japan, internationalism both limits and promotes the idea of local citizenship while nationalism hinders the realization of such a concept.

Today, an increasing number of people migrate internationally and reside in countries which are different from where they hold their nationalities. This thesis suggests that introducing local citizenship as a formal status could provide the solution to the injustice of political exclusion of migrants.

KEY WORDS: MIGRATION / CITIZENSHIP / LOCAL CITIZENSHIP/ POLITICAL RIGHTS / BRAZILIAN MIGRANTS/ JAPAN

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