

Paper:

Pivotal Factors in the Acculturation of the Second-Generation Marshallese Immigrants to the United States

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Climate-induced emigration from the Pacific Island countries to the United States is expected to increase as the island nations experience sea level rise. Since 1986, approximately 30,000 nationals from the Marshall Islands have immigrated to the United States. Hawaii has been a common destination for Marshallese immigrants over the past 30 years. However, Marshallese immigrants have not been fully acculturated to the United States. This has resulted in problems such as lower attendance rates at schools and work. In this study, we compared Marshallese immigrants' characteristics with those of second-generation Japanese immigrants to the United States from the late 1800s to the early 1900s, on the basis of the latter's documented adaptation to American society and establishment of a positive social status. We identified differences between Marshallese immigrants to Hawaii (from the late 1980s to the present) and Japanese immigrants to Hawaii (from the 1880s to the 1920s). This comparison is made from the viewpoint of second-generation immigrants' self identification while considering first-generation immigrants parenting of their children inculcating national and cultural identity. A comparison was made to identify the similarity and dissimilarity between the two second-generation groups, in order to identify the factors that made their acculturation to American society either a success or failure. It was found that the manner in which first-generation immigrants regard the cultural identity of the second generation greatly influences the acculturation of second-generation immigrants.

Keywords: immigrants, Hawaii, acculturation, Marshallese, Japanese

1. Introduction

1.1. Marshallese Immigrants to the United States and Their Descendants

Nationals of the Marshall Islands (RMI) are entitled to stay and work in the United States pursuant to the Com-

pact of Free Association (COFA) concluded in 1986 between the Marshall Islands and the United States. This agreement was established as part of compensation for the loss of life, health, land, and natural resources of the Marshall Islands due to the 67 nuclear tests conducted by the United States between 1946 and 1958. At the time, the Marshall Islands were a United Nations Trust Territory under the control of the U.S. The United States decided to conduct nuclear tests not on its own territory, but in the Marshall Islands, which were under its trusteeship. As a result of these nuclear tests, many Marshall Islanders suffered devastating illnesses such as cancer and birth defects due to the effects of radiation [1]. The security and defense provisions of the COFA are an important foundation for United States national security interests in the region. These provisions include indefinite United States authority over defense and security, denial of access to the region by potential foreign adversaries, and provisions for United States defense bases and operational authority [2].

Through COFA, approximately 30,000 people from the RMI immigrated to the U.S. [3]. As of 2015, the number of Marshallese in the U.S. was 25,782, of which 5,944 lived in the state of Hawaii and 8,351 in the state of Arkansas [4]. According to McClain et al. [5], who surveyed Marshallese immigrants living in the state of Arkansas, motivation to immigrate included family reasons (36% of respondents), jobs (26%), education (23%), and health issues (15%).

More than 30 years have passed since the initial immigration from the RMI to the U.S. As of 2015, in the states of Arkansas and Hawaii (where most Marshallese reside), about 38% of the Marshallese are second-generation (born in the U.S.) [4]. These second-generation Marshallese are in transition between the RMI and the U.S. They are Marshallese in race, but Americans in cultural behavior. Their aspirations, based on their experiences, are generally distinct from those of their parents.

The U.S. is often described as a melting pot. This implies that immigrants and their descendants should be acculturated and integrated into American society. This idea supports the concept that acculturation is the guiding principle of American society. A contrasting principle, pluralism, is distinct from melting pot idealism [6].



The authors are not able to make a value judgment regarding two perspectives. The tension between these two perspectives is a major topic for debate in the United States regarding how society should be designed and built. However, the authors regard acculturation as an unspoken agreement for immigrants and (at least) their immediate descendants. The naturalization oath of allegiance to the United States [7] commences with the following: "I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen." This study analyzes the issue of Marshallese immigrants to the U.S. from this perspective.

From the above-mentioned viewpoint, the authors suspect that Marshallese immigrants have not been fully assimilated to the U.S., and this has resulted in problems as shown by the following data. The graduation rate of Marshallese students (including first and subsequent generations) in high schools in Arkansas is just slightly greater than 50% [8]. This number is remarkably lower than the average United States graduation rate, which was approximately 88% (the rate varying between 74% and 94% depending on the state; from 2017 to 2018) [9]. Floyd-Faught [10] indicated that Marshallese students in a Northwest Arkansas Secondary School have lower attendance rates than colleagues belonging to other ethnic groups. This discrepancy suggests that they have some fundamental difficulties in pursuing school education. In addition, many Pacific Islanders who have immigrated to Hawaii face discrimination and harsh economic realities, such as homelessness.

1.2. Second-Generation Japanese (Nisei) Immigrants to the United States

Considering the issues encountered by second-generation Marshallese immigrants, the authors considered if Nisei, the second-generation of Japanese immigrants to the United States, may serve as a model for the second-generation Marshallese. Nisei represents the children of Issei, first-generation Japanese immigrants to the United States. This study principally addresses Nisei in the state of Hawaii. Hawaii contained the largest concentration of Nisei in the United States.

The sugar industry was established in Hawaii in 1835, and in 1849, a treaty was signed between the United States and the Kingdom of Hawaii. This treaty led to the export of sugar to the west coast of the United States. Because the sugar industry needed a large workforce, the Kingdom of Hawaii decided to accept immigrants from abroad in 1852. In 1860, a delegation from Japan visited Honolulu, while returning to Japan from San Francisco. The representative had an audience with King Kamehameha IV, during which the king requested immigrants from Japan. The first Japanese immigrants, numbering about 150, arrived in Honolulu from Yokohama. By 1893, when the Kingdom of Hawaii ceased to exist, approximately 29,000 Japanese had immigrated [11].

Between 1868 and 1924, 159,228 men, 49,612 women,

and 4,852 children immigrated to the United States from Japan [12], especially to Hawaii. Most of Issei were not educated, and they worked on plantations owned by the sugar industry. In contrast, many Nisei were educated and obtained leading positions in Hawaiian society, such as businessmen, educators, lawyers, doctors, and politicians. Although the social situation faced by contemporary Marshallese immigrants is very different from that of Japanese immigrants at that time, the comparison between the two groups may provide some valuable insights about the requirements that descendants of immigrants need to meet for successful acculturation to the American society to which they belong as citizens.

1.3. Objectives of This Study

This article addresses the acculturation of second-generation Marshallese living in the United States, particularly those living in the states of Hawaii and Arkansas, two significant Marshallese populations.

This study searches for differences between Marshallese immigrants (immigrating to Hawaii and Arkansas from the late 1980s to the present) with Japanese immigrants (immigrating to Hawaii from the 1880s to the 1920s). This work utilizes the perspective of the second-generation's self-identity and the way first-generation immigrants raised their children.

2. Materials and Methods

This study was conducted through a combination of literature review together with interviews of local experts and Marshallese community leaders. The interviews were conducted between May 2021 and July 2021 by the authors in a semi-structured manner. The questions covered demography, occupation and livelihood, social relationships, education, cultural identity, and language preference, among others. Six interviews were conducted online.

Information regarding Japanese immigrants was mostly collected from the literature. Detailed statistical data are available on Marshallese immigrants in recent years, but this is not the case with Japanese immigrants from about a century in the past. Thus, this study gathered information regarding the Japanese, Issei, and subsequent generations from various articles and reports by media. In some cases, numerical data regarding the Nisei Japanese are not as detailed as those regarding second-generation Marshallese.

3. Results

The recent, second-generation Marshallese immigrants and the Nisei of Japanese immigrants from the late 1980s to the early 1900s are compared in four contexts: population ratio, livelihood, cultural identity, and language. These criteria were chosen because the authors regard these four elements as pivotal to the smooth acculturation

of the second-generation into the society of the United States.

Marshallese communities in Hawaii and Arkansas, which respectively contain the second and first largest Marshallese populations, were used for this study. To present background information and comparison among generations, some data shown regard both first and second generations.

3.1.1. Population Ratio

According to a report by the State of Hawaii as of March 2018, the population of Marshallese immigrants in Hawaii is estimated to be 9,215, or 0.7% of the total population [13]. According to the American Community Survey (ACS), for the period of 2011 to 2015, 61.2% of Marshallese living in Hawaii were foreign-born (first-generation immigrants) and 38.8% were born in the United States (second-generation, analogous to Nisei Japanese in the United States). As for the approximately 17,000 Marshallese living in Arkansas, who comprise 0.6% of the state's population, these figures were 61.7 and 38.3%, respectively [4]. This signifies that more than 1/3 of the Marshallese population in these states belong to the second generation.

3.1.2. Livelihood

In general, Marshallese have migrated to Hawaii for better education, jobs, and health services, as reported by some previous studies [14]. However, extreme economic disparities exist among the Hawaii ethnic groups. Marshallese immigrants suffer from the highest poverty rate, with 51.1% of the population living in poverty [13]. They also had the lowest household and capita incomes, median household income of \$32,650 and per capita income of \$5,963 from 2011 to 2015 (Consillio 2018). Marshallese also had the largest household size, at 16.45 for owners and 6.15 for renters [13]. The unemployment rate was 16.9%, which was the highest among all ethnic groups. Compared to other ethnic groups, Marshallese had the lowest incomes among the Pacific Islanders, with less than half the per capita income of Samoans and Tongans. The most successful ethnic group was Okinawans, with the lowest rates for poverty and unemployment, 3.2% and 3.8%, respectively, and the highest median household income of \$87,938 [13]. This suggests that the jobs currently held by Marshallese are not diversified and are concentrated in low-skill, low-income occupations. Choi and Constance [15] points out that the low level of education and low job skills of Marshallese led to the concentration of Marshallese in poultry plants in Arkansas. In addition, Marshallese tend not to adhere to the work ethic prevalent in the U.S. [5], which may also contribute to the lack of occupational diversity.

Marshallese immigrants on Hawaii Island may be grouped into four communities: Hilo, Ocean View, Kona, and Waimea Honokaa. The Ocean View district in the southwest of the island has one of the largest Marshallese communities who mostly relocated due to nuclear testing

in the 1950s. They are likely to engage in relatively less skilled and seasonal jobs, such as macadamia nut farming. More recently, many Marshallese, roughly 500 people, have migrated to Hilo for education and jobs. Some migrants are likely to live in inconvenient and remote areas. This includes areas without electricity, water, or other public infrastructure. Meanwhile, many students from the Pacific, including the Marshallese study at the University of Hawaii Hilo campus. These Marshallese students have organized an association and organized occasional activities, such as cultural events within the campus. These communities located in different parts of the island of Hawaii are mutually supported, while they have their own leadership, such as the Hilo Marshallese Association.

In contrast, other communities of Marshallese immigrants are based on Oahu Island. A majority reside in the Kalihi Palama district, where there is one of the three community health clinics within the island. The interviewee stated that Marshallese communities in Oahu typically live in housing for lower-income families. Other Micronesian communities such as Chuukese, who are also based there, typically engage in entry-level jobs such as fast-food restaurants and a janitor at military facilities. This might also be true of Marshallese. According to another interviewee, more homeless people are observed in Honolulu.

3.1.3. Cultural Identity

The Marshallese living on the Island of Hawaii have felt overwhelmed by other ethnic groups; consequently, they tried to separate themselves from these other ethnic groups. Their identity as Marshallese was consolidated through daily routines in which members of the Marshallese community were obliged to be involved [16]. Marshallese immigrants maintain their culture, including language, by maintain contact with Marshallese communities [17]. Such a strong bond among Marshallese immigrants results in resistance to obtaining higher education. This is because immigrants with high education attained are viewed as being "Americanized" in the Marshallese community. Marshallese in Hawaii have a relatively low education level, considering about 47% fail to complete high school [18]. Once Marshallese have completed higher education in the United States, they often feel expelled from the Marshallese community [5]. An interviewee suggested that because of COFA, Marshallese may live and work freely in the United States and in their home country. Most intend to eventually return to RMI. This may allow Marshallese to maintain their Marshallese identity, rather than making efforts to naturalize themselves as "Americans."

In addition, most of the interviewees commented on the characteristics of Marshallese culture and tradition, which allowed them to prioritize family matters. This has been suggested as a reason why the immigrants fail to complete school or obtain employment. This results in a situation where family obligations are given priority over school or even employment. In addition, parents with lower levels

of education may undervalue education, or may not understand how to support their children. Therefore, they depend on schools for children’s education. One informant alluded that many families may not want to provide higher education for their children, because a perception that receiving educated will result in living apart from family. However, the situation is changing as the second-generation Marshallese recognize the importance of education. This is demonstrated by Marshallese communities in Hawaii holding Marshallese Education Day. This day is an annual occasion where outstanding students are recognized. Marshallese students generally choose more practical majors, such as business and engineering, over more abstract majors.

3.1.4. Language

Marshallese students who were born and raised in Hawaii generally understand and speak English. An interviewee acknowledged that they often struggle with English as a subject in secondary school because they use the Marshallese language at home. Nevertheless, they have good command of both standard English and Hawaiian Creole English, while being fluent in their parents’ language. Even though there is no formal Marshallese language training, Marshallese children in immigrant communities learn it at churches or at home. In these settings there is generally sufficient communication with elders within their communities.

Uchishiba [19] suggests that immigrant children either maintain or abandon their native language depending on external factors such as schools and discrimination. Some Marshallese immigrants in Hawaii suggested that their children preferred to speak only English when playing with their friends and that they faced ethnic discrimination. This implies that external factors generally lead the Marshallese to a monolingual English ideology. Language policy should be established by second-generation parents if Marshallese identity, culture, and language should be preserved by the second generation and beyond.

Table 1 shows the English proficiency of first- and second-generation Marshallese living in Hawaii and Arkansas. It should be noted that about half of second-generation Marshallese in Hawaii spoke only English. This figure was about 1/7 to 1/8 in Arkansas. Moreover, about 19% of second-generation in Hawaii spoke English “well,” “not well,” or “not at all.” The same figure for Arkansas was approximately 43%. This implies that a significant portion of second-generation Marshallese are not functional in English and that those in Arkansas should have more difficulty than those in Hawaii. It should also be noted that 50.8% of second-generation in Hawaii were bilingual (i.e., Marshallese and English), whereas this figure was 86.1% in Arkansas.

3.2. Nisei in Hawaii

Because the State of Hawaii, Honolulu specifically, was the major entry point to the United States for immigrants

Table 1. Language skills of the first and second-generation Marshallese (unit: %).

Living place	Hawaii	Arkansas
<i>Native (second generation)</i>		
Speak only English	49.2	13.9
Speak Pacific Is languages	50.8	86.1
Speak English “very well”	31.5	43.3
Speak English “well”	14.3	30.1
Speak English “not well”	5	11.6
Speak English “not at all”	0	1.1
<i>Foreign born (first generation)</i>		
Speak only English	1.6	15.6
Speak Pacific Is languages	98.4	84.4
Speak English “very well”	43	24.6
Speak English “well”	27.4	39.6
Speak English “not well”	26.5	18.3
Speak English “not at all”	1.6	1.9

Source: [4]

from Japan, Hawaii was chosen as the case for this study. Numerous studies have been conducted on Japanese immigrants from Japan and Nisei. This was partly because Nisei were supposed to ponder their identity seriously. This consideration permitted many Nisei to volunteer for military service to fight against their parents’ country. This was an opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to their new country, the United States. Many previous studies have thus been conducted regarding their dilemma regarding identity, particularly after the break of WWII. This study addressed the culture of Nisei’s identity in the early to the mid-1900s, up to the start of World War II (WWII). This is because the study should be conducted regarding the behavior of Nisei people during peacetime, instead of wartime. This transition facilitates the comparison between the Marshallese and Nisei immigrants in the United States.

3.2.1. Population Ratio

The thriving sugar industry in Hawaii during the 1800s required inexpensive labor to work in sugarcane plantations. First immigrants from Japan, 148 in total, arrived at Honolulu in 1868, when Hawaii was still a kingdom. Since 1868, immigrants from Japan to Hawaii have increased very rapidly. In 1900, 12,610 Japanese lived in Hawaii, which had a population of 80,578. This implies that 22.4% of people in Hawaii were of Japanese origin (mostly Issei and Nisei). In 1908, Japan and the USA concluded an agreement limiting emigrants, the so-called “Gentleman’s Agreement.” This agreement limited Japanese immigration to the USA to former USA residents and their families. Consequently, the migration of Japanese people to Hawaii also shifted from the era of unrestricted migration to the emigration era [20]. After this transition, there was an upward tendency in the

population of Japanese emigrants in Hawaii. In 1920, 109,270 Japanese people lived in Hawaii, which had a total population of 255,881. As much as 41.5% of Hawaiian residents were Japanese. The population was distributed among the islands in 1929 as follows: 50.8% on the island of Oahu (36.7% in Honolulu), 24.8% on the island of Hawaii, 13.1% on the island of Maui, and 9.6% on the island of Kauai [21].

Such an increase in Japanese concerned other ethnic groups in various states of the United States based on the belief that they would be deprived of employment opportunities. The United States Congress passed the Immigration Quota Law in 1924, which prohibited migration from Japan to the United States [11].

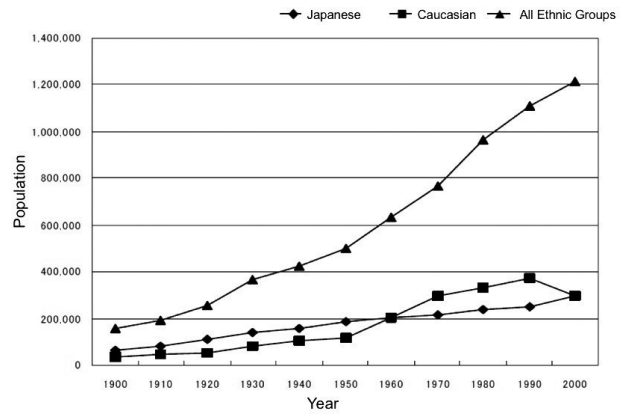
In practice, this terminated the significant migration of Japanese immigrants to the United States. After the law's incorporation, only people sponsored by prior immigrants were permitted to enter Hawaii. The majority of these post-law immigrants were brides. As of 1940, 122,188 Nisei (partly Sansei) and 34,661 Issei lived in Hawaii [22].

3.2.2. Livelihood

Some Issei left employment at sugar plantations to succeed in agriculture and fishery [23]. The Issei had economic power, although they did not have citizenship in the United States. Thus, prior to Nisei (who had citizenship in the United States) achieving adulthood, Issei had limited political power simply because most Japanese could not vote. Residences in Hawaii of other ethnicities were concerned by the growing and predominant economic power secured by the Japanese. Native Hawaiians and Caucasian settlers in the business sector were well connected with the political regime in Hawaii. This resulted in the development of legal instruments to constrain the power of Japanese residents. The Immigration Quota Law of 1924, which terminated the inflow of immigrants from Japan, was the product of such maneuvers (see **Figs. 1** and **2**).

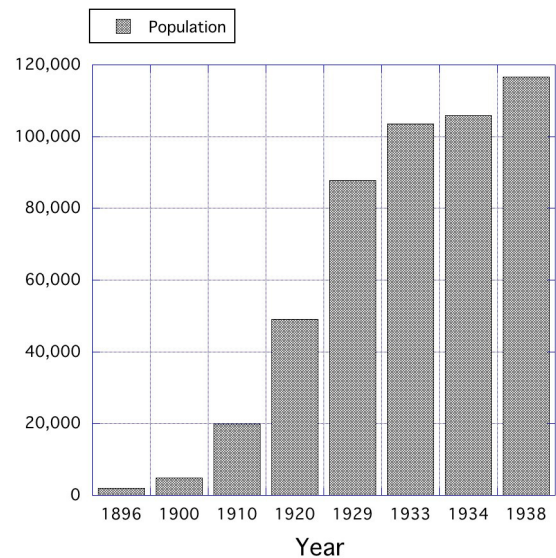
Meanwhile, the Alien Contract Labor Law of 1885, which prohibited immigration under contracted labor, was applied to Hawaii when it became an American territory in 1898. It also gave the Japanese immigrants freedom to choose their occupation [25]. Two labor strikes in 1908 and 1918, led by Japanese Issei and Nisei, also diversified economic opportunities for Japanese. According to the 1924 Census, 2,165 respondents were carpenters, 1,003 respondents were drivers, 1,369 respondents worked at stores, and others worked as bankers and journalists. More than 20 thousand respondents were engaged in the agricultural sector [25] (p. 187).

Issei generally married late in life. This implied that they had enough money to be spent on the education of their children. Nisei were familiar with the difficulties that Issei experienced. They selected practical subjects in universities, such as business administration, law, medical science, and engineering. They were discriminated in the university by haole (white) colleagues. At the university they studied more intensely to demonstrate that the



Source: [24] (p. 36)

Fig. 1. Population in Hawaii by ethnic group.



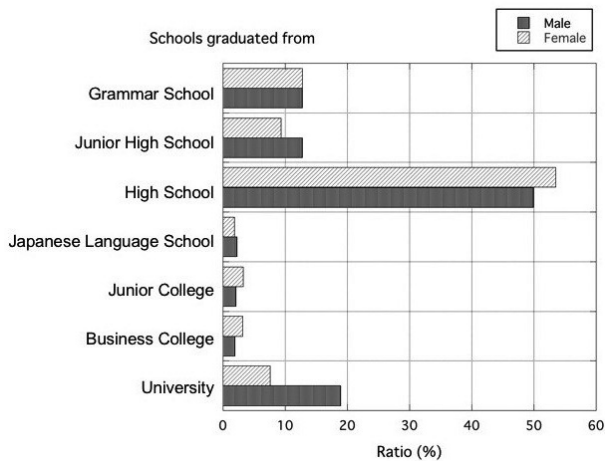
Source: [25] (p. 199)

Fig. 2. Nisei population trend of (including Sansei and Yonsei).

Japanese were superior to haole people. The objective for the Japanese was to become typical middle class “quiet Americans” [26].

3.2.3. Cultural Identity

Nisei's cultural identity reflects Issei's attitudes toward educating their children. Adachi [26] categorized the trend of education for the Nisei into three periods: (1) before the mid-1910s, when Nisei were educated as Japanese, (2) from the mid-1910s to the late 1920s, when Nisei were educated as a unique entity combining Japanese and American traits, and (3) the late 1920s onward, when Nisei was educated as an American. The Nisei first generation was reared as Japanese and educated predominantly in Japanese forms of courtesy. Issei expected Nisei to be adaptive to Japanese society as they intended to someday return to Japan with their children later in their lives. The first Japanese school in Hawaii was es-



Source: [27]

Fig. 3. Educational levels of Japanese Nisei who left to study in Japan.

established in 1893, and it attempted to “educate Japanese children in the Japanese ways” and used a standardized textbook equivalent to the one used in Japan.

Figure 3 shows the educational levels of Japanese Nisei, published in 1939 by an anonymous author. It indicated that 70–80% of the population had at least a high school level of education.

Since the 1908 Gentleman’s treaty started to restrict voluntary immigration from Japan, those who were willing to remain in Hawaii decided to be permanent residents rather than temporary workers. This was a turning point in the Issei’s evolution regarding education for their children. The Issei were prioritizing providing their children with the highest possible education [28]. Since the Nisei’s nationality was of the United States, Issei aspired that the Nisei develop their careers on to be analogous to that of other American citizens. Aside from this, Issei’s attitudes toward education for Nisei were also largely influenced by the anti-Japanese agitation and an Americanization movement that started in the late 1910s. In the aftermath of World War I, the United States government attempted to impose ‘100 percent Americanism’ on immigrants. In Hawaii, Japanese immigrants were scrutinized more than other immigrant groups. This was because Nisei accounted for approximately 44.5% of the territory’s total population by 1920 [29]. As Japanese schools were considered a deterrent for Nisei’s Americanization by the local society, Japanese educational leaders renamed them ‘Japanese language schools’ and fully reformed the contents of the curriculum in 1916. Since then, the sentiment that Nisei should adapt to the American culture was popular.

Against this backdrop, during the late 1920s, Japanese immigrants advocated for Americanization, as most of them intended to settle permanently and sought harmonious relations with other races [30]. Japanese immigrants and political leaders in Japan promoted Americanization movement.

It should be noted, however, that the Americanization advocated by the immigrants was intended not to assimilate solely into the American culture, but to integrate their ethnical strengths as Japanese into the host society. Tamura [31] named this approach “acculturation,” distinguishing it from assimilation. The immigrants’ Americanization movement first concentrated on the Issei, and then shifted its focus to Nisei and encouraged Japanese parents to raise their children as Americans. Nisei was expected to be conversant with both Japanese and American culture, and to become a bridge between these two countries [23, 25]. Note that Nisei’s cultural identities in the 1920s were flexible enough to use both identities depending on the situation [32].

This perspective was also reflected by the practice of some Issei to send their children to Japan so that they could learn Japanese culture and language before they returned home in the United States. McNaughton [33] (p. 14) documents an ironical statement “all a Nisei needs is a trip to Japan to make a loyal American out of him.”

In transition, however, there was a dilemma faced by Nisei, due to a gap between Issei’s expectation and demand for Americanization from the host society. Before the 1940s, Nisei were regarded as problematic for their Issei parents, because the Nisei’s self-identification contrasted with Issei ideals regarding cultural identity. Nisei generally regarded themselves as Americans, not an intermediate between the two cultures as Issei wished. McNaughton [32] presents this finding regarding Nisei, who were born and raised in the USA between 1910 and 1940, before the start of WWII.

Some studies highlight how Nisei struggled with the identity dilemma between the Japanese and American cultures. Nisei were educated in a strictly Japanese fashion in language schools, but their sentiments favored the American culture [33].

Spencer and Markstrom-Adams [34] maintained that the attitude of Issei drastically changed after the end of WWII; for Japanese internment in the USA mainland, motivated the Issei parents’ choice to “Americanize” their Nisei children as much as possible. Yamamoto [33], herself Nisei, indicated that a few years before the start of WWII, her parents (Issei) realized that their children became Americans. The parents were attempting to adjust themselves to the situation.

3.2.4. Language

Since the Issei spoke Japanese in most situations and used Hawaiian Creole English at work, it was difficult for Issei to acquire communicative competence in standard English. This was a partial cause for them being considered as “aliens ineligible to citizenship.” In contrast, Nisei, in general, were fluent in English, and only a small portion of them excelled at Japanese. Since the United States annexed Hawaii in 1898, most Nisei leaned standard English at school and used Japanese only with their families. Nisei, who were born in Hawaii, obtained United States citizenship and attended public schools for

12 years, in which the education was designed to foster good and loyal Americans. Hence, some Issei who were concerned that their children would lose their identity as Japanese sent them to Japanese schools. Although the Issei initially lacked an interest in education as they were uneducated themselves, their attitudes toward education changed over time [35]. As a result, more than 97% of Japanese children went to Japanese schools in 1920 [36, 37]. This high rate of attendance was driven by Issei's expectation for Japanese schools to maintain closer parent-child communication and to serve as a day-care center and a gathering place [38].

However, an increase in the intensity of Americanism throughout the 1920s significantly influenced Nisei's Japanese language ability. The English-only effort in Hawaii, which was an integral part of Americanization, mainly targeted Japanese immigrants, while the same effort in the United States mainland was relatively concentrated on European immigrants [32]. The Hawaii territorial government regulated foreign language schools, with the intention of undermining Japanese presence in society. Japanese language schools resisted the regulation policy, but gradually developed a mindset in which they foster the Nisei Japanese as an American who can understand both English and Japanese languages [25]. As Nisei matured, however, they became more fluent in English as they spoke the Japanese language only with their parents during childhood. The North American Times 1936 Yearbook described that, once they entered schools, they gradually shifted their major language from Japanese to English, to the extent that their parents had difficulties communicating with their children in Japanese when Nisei graduated from high school [28]. This implies that Nisei were fluent in English, as if they were their mother tongue.

However, the Japanese language still had symbolic value within the community, serving to keep the Japanese American in Hawaii together and to transmit the Japanese cultural insignia, moral values, and the language [39] until WWII. The first radio broadcast in the Japanese language in Hawaii was made in 1928, and commercial broadcasting in Japan increased its airtime as sponsorship increased in the 1930s [26]. Daily radio broadcasts in Japanese, provided by major stations in Hawaii, offered news dispatches emanating from Japan with Japanese music [40].

Despite several generational changes, the Japanese language is still spoken in modern Hawaiian society [41]. Yoshida [42] found a small group of Nisei near Hilo City on the island of Hawaii. They spoke Japanese fluently and maintained the Japanese culture in their livelihood. She attributed it to (a) Issei encouraged Nisei to learn Japanese language and culture, and (b) the Hawaii Japanese Center continually provided them with opportunities to practice Japanese language and stay in touch with Japanese culture. The Japanese language and culture were preserved by Nisei in a manner similar to that of the Marshallese on the Island of Hawaii tried to maintain the language and culture. These efforts were exceptional both among Marshallese and Japanese in Hawaii.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

The massive migration of the Japanese into the United States ended in 1924. A century has passed since then. Japanese immigrants are well acculturated into American society, especially in Hawaii. This is demonstrated by 60% Japanese Americans marrying individuals with no Japanese ancestry. This has accelerated their acculturation into the mainstream American society [34].

One notable difference between today's Marshallese immigrants and Japanese immigrants in the 19th century is the proportion of the population in the host country. While Japanese immigrants comprise about 20% of the Hawaiian population, Marshallese today represent only 0.7% of the population. This implies that Japanese Nisei had a more significant voice in society compared with the Marshallese second-generation immigrants. Therefore, a social support system for ethnic minority groups in the host country to help meet the needs of these population groups would help them better adapt to society. Currently, voluntary community groups and NGOs that support Marshallese immigrants are present in Hawaii, but these efforts may need to be strengthened.

Regarding livelihood, the Marshallese community is similar to the early Japanese immigrants. The majority work in entry-level jobs (i.e., jobs that do not require language skills or specialized knowledge), such as farm labor. The Japanese immigrants were initially employed in farm labor but subsequently diversified their occupation. The Marshallese have not made a similar transition.

It is often said that Issei were Japanese, Nisei were between Japanese and American, and Sansei (third-generation) were American.

Japanese Nisei regarded themselves as "American" rather than Japanese, while Marshallese tend to retain their cultural identity. A possible reason for this difference is that except for a few communities that were forced to migrate in the past, many current Marshallese immigrants have the option of returning to their home country. Japanese immigrants also initially migrated assuming that they would return to their homeland; however, their plans gradually evolved to remain in Hawaii. In an environment of severe anti-Japanese sentiment, the second generation achieved the hope of success as Americans. However, this situation may change in the future when Marshallese people have no choice other than stay in the United States or other destination countries because of the threat from climate change. It might affect the cultural identity of Marshallese immigrants.

There was also a significant difference regarding the attitude towards education between these two groups. Japanese immigrants generally pursued higher education to obtain better jobs and achieve middle-upper-class status in American society. When comparing English proficiency, the second generation was bilingual, with native language proficiency.

The Nisei Japanese were American rather than Japanese due to societal and historical reasons. Issei encouraged Nisei to behave as American, to the extent that

many Nisei volunteered for military service during WWII to combat the Axis powers. This implies that Nisei became more American than Japanese in terms of the cultural identity. This was partly because they had to show their loyalty to the United States during WWII for the welfare of their parents, who had the citizenship of Japan, an enemy country. However, the Nisei sentiment towards America was quite visible even before wartime, as illustrated by Yamamoto [33] and others.

It appears that the second-generation Marshallese are not similar to Nisei Japanese at this stage regarding their culture and identity. They are in a cultural paradigm ranging from a combination of Marshallese and American cultures at one end to a functional immersion in Marshallese culture at the opposite end. The authors suggest that Nisei Japanese were culturally assimilated as Americans about a century ago, while second-generation Marshallese are currently Marshallese.

The authors do not intend to insist that the second-generation Marshallese should follow what Nisei Japanese did in the past to become Americans; the historical context of their surroundings are distinct. Currently, it would be impossible to assume that the Marshallese would permanently reside in the United States. If Marshallese decide to come to the United States permanently in the future, and if they choose to live as United States citizens, the history of Japanese immigrants should provide some insights.

Notes

In this study, interviews were conducted in accordance with the research ethics regulations set forth by the Global Infrastructure Fund Research Foundation, Japan, to which the first author belongs. This study did not target groups with characteristics that create a vulnerability to social disadvantages. In addition, no intervention was conducted during the study period. The survey did not include questions beyond what is experienced in social life or what comes up in everyday conversation. No deceptive procedures were performed.

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