

Kinship and Differentialities:

Alternatives to identity and to ethnic frontiers
in the study of migrations

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Resumo

A partir do trabalho desenvolvido no grupo de pesquisa do LEM (Laboratório de Estudos Migratórios), focado nas pesquisas na região de Valadares e em pesquisas sobre a presença japonesa no Brasil, procuro discutir alternativas às abordagens focadas no binômio identidade/Fronteiras étnicas. O desenvolvimento de outra perspectiva surge no entrelaçamento das relações entre migração e parentesco

Palavras-chave: migração; japoneses; parentesco

Abstract

Based on work undertaken by the Laboratory of Migratory Studies, focused on research in the Valadares region of Minas Gerais State and on studies about the Japanese presence in Brazil, I sought to discuss alternatives to approaches that focus on the binomial identity-ethnic borders. The development of another perspective, critical of the concept of identity, arose at the interlacing of the relationships between migration and kinship with a perspective influenced by the work of Tim Ingold.

Keywords: migration; Japanese; kinship

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Introduction

This article interweaves the relations between migration and kinship, to construct the concept of “differentiality,” inspired by Ingold’s reflections about limits, margins and lines, in his study *Lines* (2007). Differentiality is an alternative to “identity,” seen here as a concept that has led to limitations in the understanding of the processes of production of differences. To achieve this objective, I follow two distinct ethnographic paths: international emigration from the region of Governador Valadares (M.G.) and Japanese immigration in Brazil. More than a systematic comparison between the two cases, we will present a reflection process that led us to differentiality, passing through ethnographic cases. The article then follows a temporal line related to ethnographies: first those related to the region of Governador Valadares, and the theoretical implications of these works. The ethnographies about the Japanese presence in Brazil are then presented, as well as their theoretical developments, which consider the previous ones. Thus, we narrate here a reflection stimulated by ethnographic experiences.

The works about Valadares were based on a detailed orientation: we had specific objectives that each new field tried to circumscribe. In this sense, the works about Valadares, because of this previous planning and by the obvious fact that they involve only one place, present an organic quality that allows us to understand in detail how kinship articulates the migrant experience.¹ The organic character of the studies about the Japanese presence is established by

¹ The studies are the result of orientations of masters dissertations and scientific initiation projects: Reis 2006 and 2007; Almeida, 2006, 2007 and 2010; Stabelini 2008 and 2009; Serra 2009; Mazer 2010; Moreira 2010.

the object – Japanese immigration in Brazil - but only generically. The process here was the reverse of that in Valadares: if there we constructed the articulation premeditatedly, focusing the look on situations in which kinship was evidently important (the model of the family, the treatment of children, the position of women, the marriage at a distance, the sending of goods and money) in the case of the studies about the Japanese, this articulation emerged spontaneously, merely from the conduct of the field work with these issues in mind.² One case involved planning, the other decantation (the evidence that remains, without planning). But the two sets of studies demonstrate that in some way, kinship is at the essence of migration.

But the fact that they are two separate routes – the studies about Valadares form one large ethnography, while the “Japanese” studies are distinct ethnographies – demanded distinct strategies, in terms of the theoretical foundation for the reflection. In the first case, based on a well mapped and detailed field, it is the ethnography itself that structures the reflection: we show how in Valadares what drives the movement of people is in and of itself a process of kinship. In the case of the “Japanese” study, we mapped distinct forms of marking the kinship relationships, understood from the notion of relatedness (Carsten 2004). These distinct forms allow us to generate the idea of “differentiality,” which arose as an alternative to the theory of identity and its fixation with limits and margins.

Valadarens Kinship

In Valadares, based on the ethnography in the most humble neighborhoods from where the majority of emigrants come, we identified a dynamic that we called the “nano-houses” (Machado 2010). We found that this is one of the main stimuli for the impulse to international mobility, constructed as an detour in the realization of a desire inscribed in kinship orders. “Nano-houses” are a desire to centralize a set of relations and socialities. This centralization requires a material expression of support: a home of one’s own, capable of congregating the (nuclear) family and uniting the extended family and friends. It is this material support that unavoidably indicates independence

² The studies are the result of orientations of masters and doctoral studies at PPGAS at UFSCar: Kebbe 2008 and 2010; Ribeira 2010; Lourenção 2009 and 2010; Hatugai 2010 and Kubota 2010

in relation to the other socialities. Having a home allows centralization, without a home, one can only be centralized.

This desire for centrality is what I call nano-houses.³ These nano-houses, evidently, have distinct durations that are directly related to the stability of a couple and financial success. The more successful, the easier it is to centralize a relationship (although money in and of itself guarantees nothing). This perception of the need for material resources to centralize “immaterial” relations articulates the desire to immigrate, as an option to shorten the process: earn more money quickly, return, have a business and prosper economically and in relations. We thus demonstrate how the movement is produced based on a “native logic” (which we can now call a fluid ontology – I will speak of this later). In a series of examples we demonstrated how this logic operates on various levels. We reflect on the relationship between a couple that is organized at a distance, and how they structure the relationship by means of the transfer of money and goods. That is, we see how kinship is revised in a moment seen as passing and dangerous, the time that people are separated. The studies indicate that it is through the circulation of money that kinship is revised in periods of absence.

While the money from the transfers flow, the relationship exists. The first symptom of failure, of the end of a relationship, is the termination of the money transfers. Money thus organized the life of those who remain in Brazil: money is used to pay daily bills and should be managed to allow building a home of one’s own at the end of the adventure. In addition to “the money itself,” the circulation of goods (presents, appliances, etc.) also gives structure to the relationship, appearing as that which materializes the presence of those who are absent: the presents, such as computers, electronic games, clothes, appliances, “as if they were” those who are absent. The husband is in the furnished home, the father is at the computer, on the cell phone.

The sending of presents, which many see as mechanisms that “ruin” the children of the emigrants (as we hear from educators in the city), are, in reality, a way for kinship to be renovated in some form. A form that everyone

3 We establish a detailed relationship of this process with Levi-Strauss’ idea of house, showing how this is a type of radicalization of the principle of home by Lévi-Strauss (1999, 1986). This radicalization leads to a fragmentation and radical acceleration of the home in time and space. To produce nano-houses that last only the lifetime of the couple, until the children build their own nano-houses, and the couple returns to be “decentralized” by the relations of the children.

understands as limited, as a pallid reflection of the absence, but which is also the materialized proof of the relationship. We try to demonstrate how migration makes totems of the goods as signs of a relationship or of relations: consumption comes to be consumption of kinship, much more profound and intense than consumption for consumption's sake. The language of the goods is what maintains the presence of those who are absent, not that which "ruins" or "spoils" the children, wives and husbands.

We also see how children and wives experience migration in Valadares. That is, we present an ethnography of kinship "in parentheses," that renovation that organizes people's lives during the absence. We see that this process is supposed to be temporary, but often, the return does not take place as an abandonment of the form "between parentheses" to the "definitive" form (the ideal model of the nuclear family living in the same home). The form in parentheses can modify the relations of gender and the relationship between generations. Parents may no longer be recognized, grandchildren can become like children, couples may survive as couples only at a distance.

Our ethnography shows an "intense tension" in the order of kinship, implied in the movement that can be summed up as follows: the desire for the nano-houses, which implies a "traditional" kinship model, leads to immigration, the absence caused by immigration leads to a renovation of kinship, which is experienced in other ways, generating unexpected "products" that are potentially threatening to the traditional model (independence of women, children's affection aimed at others who are "not absent"); the return and reunion of the family requires updating kinship, a dialog between the "model form" and the "form between parentheses," which can result in multiple possibilities, from repression of the traditional model to the definitive structuring in the form between parenthesis (when the couple decides to live only in absence, disturbed by annual visits). This process presumes another concept of relationship based on the notion of relatedness (Carsten 2004), in an attempt to understand the practical result in the analyses of emigration from Valadares.

But this imbrication between kinship and migration in Valadares also reveals an option to effectively treat a native "point of view" as inclusive and structuring of reality. But later I also indicate that this perspective began to transform into another variation, influenced by the anthropology of Ingold (2007). Looking at the reality of migration from the perspective of

those who remain in Valadares, we can also understand a bit more about the processes that take place between immigrants from Valadares abroad, in this case, in Portugal (Machado, Reis and Almeida 2009). Using this option gave (or produced) meaning to the experience of those from Valadares in Portugal, which articulates an immigrant life very distinct from that of other Brazilians in Portugal.

We want to say that the internal variety of the “Brazilian experience” in Portugal makes more sense with an option inspired by the presumption of an inclusionary point of view. We can identify a type of genealogy of the Valadarenses experience in Portugal, when we look to the families who remained in Brazil. This genealogy is organized essentially by the “Valadarenses kinship” (at least that of the poorer classes). It was possible to establish a connection between the ethics of the economy and of the isolation of the Valadarenses in Portugal, the “kinship in parentheses” and also with the production of the nano-houses: to send money, to send presents, to quickly build a home, one must work intensely, one cannot spend wastefully or risk being arrested.

Thus, we can understand the fact that Valadarenses in Portugal (on the coast of Caparica) work two 8-hour shifts, share four-room homes with more than 10 people and do not circulate in their few leisure hours. Everything is geared towards the construction of the nano-house, to the maintenance of the relationship “in parentheses.” For this reason, we see how the dynamic of the immigrants’ lives changes radically when a loving relationship begins in the country of immigration (weakening the relationship in parentheses, decreasing the transfer of money and creating a spending pattern that is considered wasteful). That is, we can understand the ethics of the economy (or of being a tightwad, as they say) as one of the dimensions of Valadarenses kinship, producing a migrant Valadarenses existence in Portugal. To spend little is to maintain the family. To spend a lot is to abandon the family.

Japanese Kinships

The option for kinships as a means of analysis led us to a radicalization of the native perspective, steering towards a reflection about the diversity of the immigrant experience. But the development of this perspective about diversity only advances as a theoretical reflection from the second kinship route, that which we traveled when we studied the Japanese presence

in Brazil, which had strong references to the metaphors weaved by Ingold (2007). First we will return to the distinct forms of these studies: they are random and were not planned. In this situation, the relationship between kinship and immigration appears to have been decanted: it appears to be the unexpected result of other objectives.

On the other hand, it involves a migration that is different from that of the Brazilians from Valadares. It involves a migration that as of 2008 has been going on for over 100 years. Therefore, it involves the sediments of a process of movement, of those who did not return to Japan, as is obvious (at least not before they became *dekasseguis* (descendants of Japanese who migrated to Japan), but this is another story, which we intend to look at in the future). They are, therefore, distinct temporalities. What we perceive is that time does not produce homogenization and, to the contrary, stimulated differentiation. This diversity of the Japanese experience in Brazil became the object of reflection, which was already inspired in that diversity of Brazilian immigration in Portugal,⁴ an idea that in turn was enriched by the analysis of Valadarenses kinship in its imbrications with emigration.

Upon looking at Japanese descendants,⁵ we sought to overcome a certain “theoretical immobilization”: the fact that the dominant theoretical model and the type of situations analyzed operate as producers of a result that we already know: contrasting identities, models of the family, discriminations (negative and positive) and hyphenated ethnicities as synthesis. The idea of “Japanesicities” was established as an alternative, especially in that which involved other possibilities of considering the Japanese-descendent kinships. Lesser’s widely used model of “hyphenated-ethnicities” certainly has its advantages and offers an important explanatory framework. Nevertheless, we try other angles and perspectives to the “Japanese-descendent” issue, to raise other reflections and ideas to consider what we call the “Japanesicities” and not so much “the Japanese descendent identity.”

4 See Machado 2006.

5 We look at five distinct studies. Fábio Ribeira conducts an ethnography of gay Japanese descendants in São Paulo, based on a virtual community on a relationship site; Gil Vicente Lourenção analyzed the production of a “Japanesicity” related to the practice of Kendo, the Japanese “fencing;” Victor Hugo Kebbe analyzed the Japanese-descendent media and the commemorations of the 100 years of Japanese immigration in Brazil, and now works with “Brazilian” immigrants in Japan; Érica Hatugai conducted an ethnography of a Japanese association in Araraquara and; finally, Nádia Kubota studied the production of an Okinawan kinship in Campo Grande, MS.

The option to use “Japanesicities” stems from a concern with complex processes within something generic such as a “Japanese descendent identity.” It opens room for dissonance. In a certain way, this concern with dissonance is a central issue for the studies undertaken in this context. To see the dissonances as “Japanesicities” facilitated a de-hierarchization of the analysis: the homosexual Japanesicity (Ribeiro 2010) is quite complete, and as important as the Japanesicity of the “descendants” that create the social lives of the Japanese-Brazilian cultural associations.

That is, we speak based on the presumption of the sharing of experiences, moralities and meanings of these Japanesicities (even if this sharing is temporary and instable). We do not deal with fragments or “sub-identities,” “sub-cultures.” The way of being a “Japanese” of a non-descendant fighter of *Kendô* (Lourenção 2009) (without narrow eyelids) is as Japanese as the elderly ladies of *Odori* in the Japanese association in Araraquara (Hatugai 2010). By seeing Japanesicity as multiple allows us to not analyze the conditions of these subjects as “more or less” Japanese, but as Japanese in their own way. This does not mean to say that there are no hegemonic processes (there are) and that the Japanese themselves do not refer to their “co-ethnics” as more or less Japanese - they do so very frequently, and do so based on perspectives referring to their modes of being Japanese.

What I call Japanesicities, in reality, could be better described as a “tangle” of lines (Ingold 2007), of trajectories that are lived and traveled together, producing a tangle, a ball of thread of self-referred trajectories. These tangled paths produce something like ontologies, which are the fruit of sharing of perspectives along the path. These tangles are condensations (or precipitations as Roy Wagner would say 2010) of perspectives, within larger tangles, within still other tangles, in a type of woven fractalism. Tangles within tangles within tangles, each concentration corresponds to the precipitations that we can call differentialities (the Japanesicities are distinct differentialities, related to the tangles created by the Japanese presence in Brazil): they are shared modes of experiencing, seeing, thinking and feeling the world. In this sense, the tangles are totalities, but a type of totality that is like a ball of yarn: one only needs pull the thread to unravel it into new tangles.

The differentialities, of which the Japanesicities are our example, on the other hand, indicate a break with a notion of margins, limits and frozen distinctions between Japanese and Brazilians. There are situations and processes

that generate a certain encompassing that eliminates, subverts or destabilizes some presumptions. There are processes of production of Japanese that go beyond consanguinity – which is so important among the Japanese and their descendants, as various studies indicate – and racial characteristics. There are non-descendants who become “more” Japanese than descendants, according to the criteria of these Japanesicities. That is, there are non-consanguine kinships constantly operating, tangling a comfortable definition of the Japanese based on racial markers (narrow eyes).

The Japanesicities develop in relation to “race” and phenotype in complex ways from the Japanization of the non-descendent to the complete de-Japanization of the descendent. The look to Japanesicities allows a movement between race and ethnicity, or even “culture”: the Japanesicity has forms that can go beyond the universe of the descendants. The idea of the Japanesicities focuses, therefore, exactly on that which interests us: the production of kinship. When we can consider a different field of relations (not delimited by consanguinity) we find Japanese kinships that encompass various possibilities, and can even encompass non-descendants and exclude descendants. That is, we bring to the forefront the way that the subjects operate in their relations, constituting kinship networks that escape a more traditional look.

Sobá noodles from Mato Grosso do Sul are an example, as Kubota (2010) shows us. Sobá is now a traditional food in Campo Grande, recognized officially by the municipality as part of its cultural heritage. Is this a process of incorporation of Japanese practices (Okinawan) or an encompassing of a Japanesicity in the city? The election of an essentially Okinawan dish as typical food of Campo Grande inserts the “Japanese-descendants” in a local logic of which they are part as producers of “Campo Grandicity”. The set of relations derived from this fact organizes relatednesses (or kinships) that interlace the city to the descendants in a very special form.

There are, in this context of production and transformation of Japanesicities, cultural flows that permeate the experience of the generations of Japanese and their descendants in Brazil. Japanese pop culture since the 1990s, is one of these flows. As Winterstein (2009) discusses, the mangas and animes, are new processes of Japanization that reach Brazilian society and affect the lives of the young generations of descendants. Although the Otakus are not exclusively descendants – while many are, according to Winterstein – the sudden re-emphasis on Japan by means of this cultural production

undeniably affects the lives and the Japanesicities of these youth in Brazil.

The Japanesicities appear as bundles that condense practices and discourses, which constitute and are constituted by the subjects. They are unique forms of expressing the Japanese experience in Brazil. They choose for themselves unique mechanisms of agencying of subjectivity. They are all “Japanese,” “Japanese-descendants,” “Nikkeis,” but each in their own way. The macro-categories are only a reference to a constellation of Japanesicities, which are in movement and transformation. Deriving from this “Japanese presence” is even a form of “Brazilianness” precipitated by the Japanese processes, such as “Brazilian” Japanese food, as demonstrated by Hatugai and Kubota.

We use as an example the work of Lourenção (2010). We see that the Japanesicities remain powerful in the martial arts, such as Kendo, judo etc. Japanizing the Barbarians, it can be said. It is comparable to the Japanesicity of the old people in the villages, who give great importance to the substantiality of blood and food, as in the work of Hatugai (2010), but differently, by Japanizing the spirit, or that is, the spirit as substance. This passage from substance (blood and food) to the spirit is a way to make concessions to the non-descendent practitioners, the price of which is the uprooting of the spirit from the blood. That is, it is constructing a “Japanese” kinship among non-descendants. It is an expensive price to pay, which they try to sell cheaply by controlling the moral arts and favoring those who come from the colony. But it is inescapable that the (non-descendent) Japaneses produced by the machine, demand their share in this set of relations.

In the context of the descendants, the *iê*, the House, evaporates and new forms of kinship must be organized. Not that this does not establish dilemmas or that the colonies no longer try to survive as colonies. This Japanesicity of the colony, in the sense of a “pure” Japanesicity, wants in the first place to reproduce as a moral system – and as a living one – but that urban life and the very “success” of the social ascension lead to a dilemma: the loss of control, the opening to the non-Japanese and the processes of de-domestication that rise there. The children and grandchildren wind up living with other morals – forms of living – and construct other routes that are possibly “less” Japanese from the perspective of the colony. Meanwhile the “spirit” of Japanesicity like the martial art of kendo (for example) reverts, reJapanizes and rehierarchyzes, paying the price of Japanizing the non-Japanese. This

process, which also shifts the Japanesicities, also modifies that Japanesicity of the colony. The works undertaken by the research group were able to de-structure the notion of consanguinity always attributed to the Japanese descendants (Cardoso 1995, Vieira 1973, Willems 1951, 1956, Baldus and Willens 1941⁶), showing how the Japanesicities operate beyond the phenotype, creating Japanized non-descendants and also non-Japanese descendants.

Vieira (1973), for example, in his essential book about the Japanese community in Marília, in the interior of São Paulo, excludes from the “Nikkei community” families with Brazilian fathers, because this is the native rule. But what do the excluded think? Do they feel less Japanese? Is there a place for the mestizos with Japanese mothers? We think so, and it is possible to further this reasoning and think of Japanesicities and their kinships that escape physical substance (blood and food – the language of substance, of consanguinity) and shape themselves to the “spirit,” for example. We can even think of alternative forms of kinship, such as those analyzed by Ribeiro, among gay Japanese descendants. Ribeiro (2010) demonstrates how the relations are formed in a secret sphere, exactly because they confront the models that operate “at home.”

The work of Kebbe also reveals the infinitesimal difference that agencies the experience of the Japanese in Brazil. In his reflections on the 100th anniversary of Japanese immigration in Brazil, he demonstrates profiles of the positions concerning the different productions of Japanesicities. He identifies in particular a generational difference between political movements of “the elderly” compared with “youth” movements. He identifies characteristics imminently related to kinship, (generations) as crucial to the agencying of the Japanesicities.

Hatugai’s and Kubota’s examples demonstrate how the production of a co-substantiality can potentially produce processes that interlink migration and kinship: Hatugai conducts an ethnography of how the Japanesicity of an association/club is constructed around food, as a basic element of sharing and continuity. Although focused on a need for consanguine substance (or that is, a Japanesicity less open to fluctuations), the production of food can lead a non-descendent to “come close.” It is a way of constructing relevant approximations: “to know the right dose of things.” Food also operates as a

6 Woortmann (1995) indicates, however, various modifications in these standards, like the creation of systems for ritual kinship alliances (compradio).

“reviver” of “lost Japanese,” because it establishes the possibility for a substantive re-encounter with something that was previously shared. Someone Japanese can stop being so, but can also return to being so through food and through that which circulates with food: words and memory.

Obviously, Hatugai explores a connection between Japanesicity and kinship, articulated by food and by feminine hands, within a meeting space dominated by men. The co-substantiality agencied by the production and consumption of food (it is not enough to consume the food, the words and memory must also be consumed) instills an ontological logic based on consanguinity plus something else. This plus something else can be lost, and undo the Japanesicity. But it can be recuperated and redone. On the other hand, only co-substantiality can turn a non-descendent into someone almost Japanese, but the person will always lack something: the consanguine substance. In this sense, the personal example of Hatugai, who is mestiza, exposes the tensions of this process: she carries in part the consanguinity and can become more Japanese than she was (in the context and sense of Japanesicity of the Japanese cultural associations \), but it is still not clear if she can be completely “Japanized.”

Kubota reflects on the same problem in a larger dimension: what type of reflection can be made of the fact that soba noodles (a food typical of the Okinawans in Campo Grande) have been declared a cultural heritage of the city? Is soba Okinawaizing Campo Grande? Is the city becoming Okinawan, thus constructing a Campo Grandicity interlinked to the Japanese-Okinawa presence? We certainly have here an interesting discussion concerning the relationship between kinship and differentiality: it is exactly through an element of Okinawicity based in the co-substance (food) that the descendents are incorporated to the city, or incorporate the gaijins on their terms. The food, soba, serves as a link to the interlacing between Okinawicity and Campo Grandicity: it is kinship producing the infinitesimal differences, here making these Japanese (as they are seen in the city) unique in Brazil: they have an intense interlinking with the “non-descendent” world, marked exactly by that which appears as most intensely Japanese: the food.

The Otaku Japanesicity, analyzed by Winterstein, for example, articulates a moral aesthetic that tends towards kinship, when there is evidence of a desired Japanese physical type, interlinked to images of Japanese pop culture. A plunge into a Japanesicity that carries as a semantic universe the Japan of

today, a universe that is very different from that derived from the Japanese presence in Brazil: but these universes are found in the figure of the Otaku Japanese descendants. The encounter is mediated by other significations (such as knowledge of the mangas), but is “tied” to an aesthetic and desire that affect the descendants.

The provisory notion of differentiability helps us think of the processes involved with the Japanese presence in Brazil: we think of Japanesicities as inclusionary perspectives, offering infinitesimal differentiations in relation to a common set of symbols, signs, experiences, beliefs, morals, etc. These infinitesimal differences are points of view that express distinct ontologies, but they are evidently faced as moments in constant processes of differentiation. They are incomplete totalities, as it were: they express the way of being in the world of sets of people during some time (temporarily stabilized), but they are incessantly differentiating themselves.

Final Considerations: relating kinships

The recourse to differentiability appears to be helpful considering the enormous variation of Japanese experiences in Brazil, mainly by leading to a denial of the a priori group. This negation allows us to present something new, mainly concerning the extension and definition of who is considered to be Japanese. From a traditional point of view, the definition of who are the Japanese descendants is always mediated by a phenotypical appreciation: Japanese blood, a Japanese face. That is, it always relates, even when not declared, to a Japanese kinship. The group is always defined by biological forms, and only later considers other possible differentiations. To escape the biology allows us to think of the Japanesicities as fluid ontological processes that elude that population limited by blood. Non-descendants (we'll call them this way to be brief) can become Japanese. That is, it created the opportunity of also thinking of Japanese kinship without consanguinity, highlighting the notion of relatedness in a context without the need for a biological marking.

This analytical possibility produces interesting reflections that are indicative of a still unexplored horizon. The Japanesicities construct their Japanese, even if they are non-descendants. Obviously, there is no single way of being Japanese, we have shown precisely the contrary: there are as many forms as there are Japanesicities, or there are even Japanesicities that do not

permit the non-descendent or accept them as “nearly Japanese.”

We are, therefore, constructing a relationship between kinship and migration, supported by the idea of differentiability. As two products of the reflection that we have undertaken and of which we saw above a small genesis, we still feel the need to structure a systematic articulation, in order to advance in the reflection on migrant kinship. The question that we ask now is: does differentiability refer to kinship? What relations can we construct between these dimensions? Is kinship the force behind migrant differentiation, contrary to what can be supposed when considering it as a type of skeleton that structures social life, based on “Western” concepts of consanguinity? We imagine that yes, there are in fact possible crossings, connections and interlacings that are analytically interesting.

In these articulations among differentiabilitys and kinship, we see potentialities that have yet to be satisfactorily explored. What we can say at this point is that when we turn to the tangles, an element of kinship always remains, agencying the experience of the subjects. Food, words, images, bodies, all of these relate to the production of Japaneseness based on some Japaneseness. And the production – until now – has always appeared as kinship, as the essence of lived experiences. We can even risk saying as an articulator of differentiability in practice.

The Valadarenses kinship and the Japanese kinships that we analyzed have in common the production of differentiabilitys, nearly as structural expressions of these kinships. Whether in the path of the discontinuous Valadarenses ethnography, the data from which highlights an encompassing kinship, or in the route of the multiple ethnographies of the Japanesenesses, whose narratives decant the kinship, we have a complex imbrication between kinship (relatednesses), differentiabilitys and i/emigration. We see that the “group ethnography” in Valadares was able to demonstrate how to operate in detail the production of kinship and the consequences of this process: the home, migration, inflection in a moral concept of family, conflicts over the role of women, etc. We perceive a kinship in movement, articulating the circulation of people, of goods, of feelings, of ideas and of powers. We can say that this example shows us what kinship does in Valadares.

The “Japanese examples,” because of the contrast that they offer between themselves and between the research in Valadares, indicate various processes articulating the experience, which we have provisionally called differentiabilitys.

These studies indicate that these differentialities are intensely related to the Japanese kinships in Brazil: we still do not know if the differentialities are only another name for “kinship” or if they are an important dimension of its constitution. Still, we have only perceived the “complex imbrication” mentioned above, it is now necessary unroll this ball of thread over the years.

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