

# Introduction

In 1893, Chicago hosted the World's Columbian Exposition to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the Americas. It was here, at an American Historical Association meeting, that Frederick Jackson Turner introduced his seminal frontier thesis in an essay titled "The Significance of the Frontier in American History."<sup>1</sup> Turner's thesis heralded the end of American westward expansion and underscored the frontier's pivotal role in shaping U.S. culture and societal norms.<sup>2</sup> Concurrently, in San Francisco, Japanese Consul Chinda Sutemi was visited by a member of the Brazilian delegation to the same event in Chicago. This Brazilian envoy was investigating the condition of Chinese neighborhoods on the Pacific Coast. Given the First Republic's renewed invitation to immigrants from Qing China and Meiji Japan, he met with Chinda to discuss the prospects of Japanese immigration to Brazil.<sup>3</sup> This encounter marked the first dialogue on the topic of immigration between Japanese and Brazilian officials. This set in motion Japanese migration to Brazil in the twentieth century, turning Brazil into the home of the largest Japanese-descent population outside of Japan, the number of which now has surpassed two million.<sup>4</sup>

The co-occurrence of the closure of the frontier in the American West and the start of Japanese emigration to Brazil was by no means a coincidence. The great success of U.S. settler colonialism in the nineteenth century, which simultaneously involved the influx of European immigrants and massive emigration from the east side of the Mississippi to the American West, was studied by aspiring empire builders in other parts of the world. Among them were leaders of both Meiji Japan and independent Brazil. What the Japanese and Brazilian expansionists saw in the American westward expansion were two distinct but indelibly entwined modes of settler colonialism—one driven by emigration and the other by immigration.

Elites in Meiji Japan chose to embrace the former because they were convinced that emigration would be a central means of colonial expansion through which the Japanese, people of a superior race just like the Anglo-Saxons, would claim their rightful share of power, wealth, and land in the world as a modern empire. Educated Brazilians, on the other hand, believed that an influx of superior races through immigration was crucial not only to improve Brazil's racial composition but also to claim and utilize the vast land in the country's interior in the mode of the American westward expansion.<sup>5</sup>

Unsurprisingly, imperial visionaries of Japan and Brazil also saw the World's Columbian Exposition in the United States, which celebrated both modes of Anglo-American settler colonialism, as a perfect opportunity to present their own colonial accomplishments.<sup>6</sup> In a booklet that advertised Japan's exhibition in Chicago, the prominent Japanese scholar and politician Nitobe Inazō praised Meiji Japan's recent colonization of Hokkaido as a *mission civilisatrice*. Though the land of Hokkaido was endowed with "magnificent natural resources," he claimed, it was wasted in the hands of "a barbarian folk known as Ainu" and "untouched" until the Meiji government brought civilization to this frontier.<sup>7</sup> The Brazilian exhibition, on the other hand, demonstrated the new republic's technological development and contrasted it with exotic dances performed by "live Indians" from its interior.<sup>8</sup>

Through the lens of Japanese migration to Brazil, this book uses the concept "collaborative settler colonialism" to capture the complex connections between migration and settler colonialism in the modern world.<sup>9</sup> One may rightly argue that *all* forms of settler colonialism are collaborative, especially when considering the partnership between the colonial state and non-state actors such as farmers, merchants, intellectuals, and religious groups that participate in Indigenous dispossession in one way or another. However, by "collaborative," this book refers to three levels of collaboration exemplified by the history of Japanese migration to Brazil in which migration and settler colonialism became intertwined.

At the first level, Japanese immigration to and community building in Brazil revealed the often-unintentional collaboration between the two settler colonial regimes in Japan and Brazil. Both strove to turn migrants into vanguards of colonial expansion and saw migration itself as a means of improving the racial stock. At the second level, Japanese immigrants served as collaborators of the Brazilian state in the latter's efforts to colonize Indigenous land. Existing literature has well documented the indisputable fact that Japanese immigrants were victims of Brazil's ethnic nationalism.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, however, Japanese immigrant laborers and farmers were also contributors to and beneficiaries of state-led Indigenous dispossession in Brazil. At the third level is the partnership between Japanese immigrants and Japanese colonialism, which I examine by placing the origin, development, and transformation of the Japanese community in Brazil in the context of the fate of Japan's colonial empire in Asia. I explain how Japanese colonial expansion had

continuously influenced the identity-making process of the Japanese community in Brazil. Japanese Brazilians, in turn, participated in Japan's project of empire making in Asia. Through analyses at these three levels, this book aims to provide new insights into our existing understanding of the Japanese empire, the history of immigration in Brazil and Latin America, and settler colonialism in the modern world.

#### COLLABORATION OF SETTLER COLONIAL REGIMES: MIGRATION STATES AND IDEOLOGIES OF RACE

On the first level, the concept of collaboration captures the fact that Japanese migration and community making in Brazil were a product of interactions between Japanese and Brazilian settler colonialism. While both were deeply inspired by the U.S. westward expansion, Japan and Brazil exemplified two different modes of settler colonialism. These were the emigration-driven expansion and the immigration-driven expansion, which became closely entwined in Brazil during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This was a period that saw waves of European and Asian immigration into Brazil, on the one hand, and the escalating appropriation of Indigenous land, on the other. Japanese migration and the subsequent process of community formation in Brazil were part of this historical convergence, when emigration-driven Japanese settler colonialism mingled with immigration-driven settler colonialism in Brazil.

By "collaboration," I do not refer exclusively to the diplomatic cooperation between the Japanese and Brazilian governments, though negotiations between Tokyo and Rio de Janeiro constituted an important part of the story. Instead, I also refer to the convergence and interactions between the Japanese empire and Brazil in their respective processes of settler colonial expansion. Usually without explicit intention, these two processes developed in tandem. At the heart of this collaboration were the interactions of two "migration states" and two shifting ideologies of race.

Here "migration state" means a government that has devoted itself to the promotion and management of migration through diplomacy, laws, social policies, and financial aid.<sup>11</sup> The critical roles played by a modern government in facilitating and controlling migration at both the sending and receiving ends have been extensively discussed.<sup>12</sup> The concept of migration state in this book, though, refers specifically to the role of the state not only in facilitating migration but also in turning migration into an essential act of settler colonialism. This research joins scholarship in recent decades that has begun examining the cooperation and comparability of modern empires. A number of scholars have analyzed how empires learned from one another in terms of policies, strategies, and ideologies to consolidate their colonial rule.<sup>13</sup> However, these connections and collaborations among settler colonial regimes remain insufficiently examined and largely West-centered.<sup>14</sup>

Through the concept “migration state,” this book aims to contribute to the existing scholarship by exploring the intersections between Japan and Brazil, two non-Western regimes of settler colonialism.

The decades between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the rise of migration states in both Japan and Brazil. On the one hand, Japan’s migration state played a crucial role in promoting and managing emigration that was central to the development of Japan’s emigration-driven settler colonialism. On the other hand, the migration state of Brazil at both the central and local levels was pivotal for the influx of immigrants, the essential force of Brazil’s immigration-driven internal settler colonialism. As the primary engines of settler colonialism in Japan and Brazil, both migration states functioned according to the modern logic of race and a racialized ideology of expansionism.

Meiji elites were quick to embrace the modern concept of race from the West and the worldview on which it was centered. An example can be found in the widely circulated book *Sekai kunizukushi*, by Fukuzawa Yukichi, one of the most prominent intellectuals of modern Japan, that was published right after the formation of the Meiji government. Based on a wide range of history and geography books imported to Japan in recent years, Fukuzawa divided different human races into four categories and ranked them according to the evolutionary narrative of human history. At the bottom were Indigenous peoples such as those in Australia and Africa. In his view, they were the most backward and inferior, as many of them still lived in a cannibalistic and lawless manner. At the other end of the spectrum were civilized people who engaged in farming, arts, and academics; they were moderate in their emotions. Examples of the latter were white Europeans and white Americans. Between these two categories were those he termed barbarian and half-civilized. The entire world, in his description, was organized according to such a racialized hierarchy of civilizations in which white Europeans and Americans were at the top and Indigenous people were at the bottom. Not only was this book a best-seller, but it was later used as a geography textbook. It became a fundamental part of the Japanese understanding of race and racial hierarchy in the world.

The Meiji categorization of race was simultaneously rigid and fluid. It was rigid in the sense that the hierarchy of civilization was strictly arranged according to color lines. As Fukuzawa famously proclaimed, Indigenous people in the Americas were red; Pacific Islanders, brown; Africans, black; Asians, yellow; and Europeans, white. Later, this classification was adopted by generations of school textbooks in modern Japan to illustrate the global hierarchy of human beings.<sup>15</sup>

The Meiji perception of race was fluid because it allowed for ambiguity when it came to categorizing the Japanese themselves. For Fukuzawa, the location of the Japanese in the global racial hierarchy was yet to be defined; that is, the Japanese occupied a liminal space between Asians and whites. While he was confident in Japanese racial superiority over the Chinese and Koreans, who he defined as half-civilized, he believed that the Japanese had to lift themselves up in order to



FIGURE 1. This image was featured in *Chikyū sanbutsu zasshi*, an illustrated book translated from French in 1872, which aimed to familiarize Japanese students and the general public with the world's geography and human races. This image ranked white people as the first class, yellow people as the second, and Black people as the third. Source: Horikawa Kensai, trans., *Chikyū sanbutsu zasshi* (Tokyo: Izumiya Hanbei, 1872).

join the white people's ranks.<sup>16</sup> Many Japanese elites of the day shared this view, and racial improvement (*jinshū kairyō*) became a central topic in public debate. For example, in 1884, Takahashi Yoshio, a student of Fukuzawa, published *Nihon jinshū kairyōron* (On Japanese Racial Improvement). Based on the logic of Social Darwinism, this book not only emphasized the absolute necessity for the Japanese

to improve their racial stock but also presented a wide range of methods to achieve this goal. These included promoting physical education and body training, avoiding consanguine marriages, and engaging in racial mixing with white people, though the last idea had rarely been practiced in modern Japan.<sup>17</sup>

As a natural extension of his call for Japan to join Western civilization and leave Asian traditions behind, Fukuzawa saw emigration-based overseas expansion and settler colonialism as a means of racial improvement. In particular, he urged his countrymen to migrate to North America as this would allow them to join white Americans and participate in the settler colonial construction of the American West. He further envisioned Japanese migration to the United States as the first step to establish new settler nations across the globe.<sup>18</sup>

The Meiji leaders sought to establish Japan's racial superiority in Asia first through emigration and settler colonialism. Around the same time that Fukuzawa populated his racial categories and hierarchy, the imperial government rolled out its very first project of expansion, a state-sponsored campaign that sent declassed samurai to Hokkaido as colonial settlers. These migrants were promised free land and farming tools after completing a certain period of stay in the empire's newly acquired northern territory. The Ainu, the Indigenous people of Hokkaido, were deprived of their ancestral land. The Meiji leaders justified this policy by contrasting the supposed inferiority and backwardness of the Ainu with the racially superior Japanese settlers who were armed with scientific knowledge, the capitalist spirit, and a laudable commitment to national expansion.<sup>19</sup>

To be sure, racism against Indigenous people in Japan was—and remains—a complex and sophisticated issue. In addition to the ideas and acts of exclusion, it involved assimilation and integration. Inspired by the General Allotment Act of 1887 in the United States, the Imperial Diet passed the Hokkaido Former Natives Protection Act in 1899. Modeled after U.S. policies regarding Indigenous peoples, this act aimed to assimilate the Ainu people by encouraging them to engage in agriculture and learn Japanese language and culture. In effect, the government sought to transform the Ainu people into loyal and productive Japanese subjects by eradicating their language, customs, and values.<sup>20</sup>

Beginning in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Tokyo began to officially allow overseas emigration; it negotiated diplomatic treaties and agreements that enabled Japanese subjects to immigrate to various destinations in Asia and the Americas. Japanese policy makers and intellectuals promoted emigration-driven expansion for a variety of reasons, including solving the nation's perceived overpopulation problem, increasing remittances, and expanding Japan's international trade networks. At the same time, the issue of race remained critical. As Japan's leaders designed emigration policies and diplomatic strategies, two of their central concerns were rejecting the notion of Japanese racial inferiority to the whites while asserting their superiority to nonwhites.<sup>21</sup>

On the other side of the globe, as soon as the Empire of Brazil declared its independence from Portugal, its migration state started to take shape. Without taking the existence and rights of Indigenous people into consideration, the Brazilian elites deemed this newly independent empire underpopulated and called for immigrants to work the land. In their minds, immigrants would not only help defend the empire's territory but also expand its smallholding agricultural economy.<sup>22</sup> Its constitution, promulgated in 1824, made the empire's commitment to immigration clear; though a Roman Catholic state, it allowed people of all religions to practice their faith in private. It also extended citizenship to all people born in Brazilian territory and to any woman who married a Brazilian citizen. Offering subsidies, Rio brought in immigrants from Europe, the Middle East, and Qing China by working with plantation owners and private immigration companies.<sup>23</sup> The empire's eventual transition to a republic and the abolition of slavery brought Brazil's migration state into its new phase, creating new demands for immigrants in Brazil both as plantation laborers and as land colonizers. Rio not only allowed people the freedom to practice their religions in public but also partnered with state governments, making governmental financial subsidies and land grants much more attractive than before. This ushered in the era of mass immigration that saw 2.6 million immigrants arriving in Brazil between 1890 and 1919.<sup>24</sup>

The concept of race was crucial to the operation of Brazil's migration state. Similar to their Japanese counterparts, the Brazilian elites saw race as both a fixed and a fluid concept. On the one hand, they embraced the idea of white supremacy and the rigid racial hierarchy it created as scientific truth. In their minds, the centuries-long practice of racial mixing among white colonists, African slaves, and Indigenous peoples had made the Brazilian race inferior to pure-blood whites. On the other hand, like their Japanese counterparts, they believed that Brazilian racial stock and the position of the Brazilians in the global racial hierarchy were changeable. Similar to the Japanese case, the supposed inferiority of Brazil's Indigenous people served as a foil to the superiority of the Brazilian race. In 1910, the Brazilian government established the Indian Protection Service (IPS) under the influence of Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon, a Brazilian politician and military officer who accompanied Theodore Roosevelt during what became known as the Roosevelt-Rondon Scientific Expedition to the Amazon.<sup>25</sup> While it had the stated goal of protecting Indigenous peoples' right to land and preventing further violent conflict between them and settlers, IPS's programs in fact facilitated the central government's penetration into the hinterland. They also reduced the diverse and heterogeneous Indigenous peoples in Brazil to a generic and state-created "Indian" category. They reinforced the racial hierarchy between Brazilians and Indigenous peoples and sought to assimilate the latter into Brazilian nationhood through the mission of civilization.<sup>26</sup>

Between the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the elites in Brazil, as well as other Latin American nations, also embraced the ideology





FIGURE 2. *Ham's Redemption (A Redenção de Cam)*, painted by Modesto Brocos in 1895. The painting depicts three generations of a family. At the center sits the mother of mixed African and European descent with a white baby in her arms. Her husband, a white man, sits next to her. On the other side, the African grandmother raises her arms to express her gratitude for the baby's whiteness. Source: Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro.

of racial whitening (*branqueamento*), a combination of Social Darwinism and eugenics. In their minds, the Brazilian racial stock could and should be improved by white immigrants from Europe and North America. Perhaps one of the best illustrations of this idea was the 1895 painting *Ham's Redemption* by Modesto Brocos, which won a gold medal at Brazil's National Salon of Fine Arts. It showcased



the contemporary belief that generations of the same family could be gradually whitened through marriage with white Europeans. Brazil's policy makers and immigration advocates expected that immigration would "whiten" the existing Brazilian race through interracial marriage, thereby improving Brazilians' racial quality.<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, the start of Japanese migration to Brazil was a joint product of these two migration states and marked the convergence of Japanese and Brazilian racial ideologies. In order to pacify anti-Japanese sentiment in the United States, Tokyo voluntarily ended U.S.-bound labor migration. To the Japanese expansionists, Brazil then became an attractive alternative: the Japanese would join white Europeans as a master race and colonize the land of the racially inferior Indigenous peoples.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, Brazilian leaders initially equated the Japanese with the Chinese as people of the Mongolian race and deemed them undesirable due to their racial inferiority. However, Japan's quick rise in East Asia as a modernizing and expanding empire altered the Brazilian elites' perception of the Japanese race. After Japan's stunning victories in the Sino-Japanese War and, more importantly, the Russo-Japanese War, the Brazilian elites began to see the Japanese as the white people of Asia, believing they could contribute to Brazil's ongoing process of racial whitening.<sup>29</sup>

Some Japanese expansionists too justified Japan's migration and settler colonialism in Brazil and other Latin American countries by the idea of racial mixing. Fukuhara Hachirō, a Japanese businessman who played a central role in starting Japanese migration to the Brazilian Amazon, claimed after an investigative trip to the Amazon that the Indigenous peoples there looked "exactly like the Japanese" and that the two peoples bore a close resemblance in manners and customs.<sup>30</sup> Since Indigenous Brazilians had Asiatic or Mongol origins, miscegenation between Japanese and Brazilians would only strengthen the Brazilian race.<sup>31</sup> Around the same time, Japanese immigrants in the Andes were exploring a possible link between themselves and the ancient Inca civilization. After witnessing the architectural artistry of the Inca ruins, the settlers thought that the Japanese were potentially the progenitors of the Inca people.<sup>32</sup> Aoyagi Ikutarō, who spearheaded Japanese migration to both Brazil and Peru, even described Peru-bound migration as a homecoming for the Japanese.<sup>33</sup>

While most of the Japanese immigrants started out as contracted plantation laborers, more than half of them had become independent farmers by the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941. The continuation of immigration and social changes in the Japanese community in Brazil depended on the work of both migration states. Japan's central and prefectural governments played a vital role not only in mobilizing Japanese subjects for emigration and transporting them to the Brazilian shores but also in securing farmland for them in Brazil. Likewise, both Rio and state governments in Brazil were instrumental in distributing land to Japanese immigrants. The late 1920s marked a turning point in Japanese migration to and community

making in Brazil. On the one hand, stimulated by the Great Kantō Earthquake and the racial exclusion of the Japanese from North America, the Japanese government undertook a series of structural changes to maximize its capacity to mobilize its subjects for Brazil-bound emigration. On the other hand, the global economic depression and the sharp drop in coffee prices on the international market substantially reduced the demand for immigrant labor in Brazil. Rio, accordingly, began to restrict immigration. This shift in policy was formally institutionalized by the constitution of 1934, which imposed a 2 percent immigration quota based on national origin. However, through diplomatic negotiation and compromise, Tokyo and Rio agreed to delay the restriction on Japanese immigration for two years. Even after the quota took effect and the number of Japanese immigrants sharply declined under the ultranationalist regime of Getúlio Vargas, the Brazilian government at the central and local levels continued to see Japanese immigrants as instrumental to Brazil's ongoing process of settler colonialism.<sup>34</sup>

#### COLLABORATORS OF SETTLER COLONIALISM: RELOCATING JAPANESE IMMIGRANTS IN BRAZIL AND LATIN AMERICA

At the second level, the concept of collaboration explains the role played by Japanese immigrants in facilitating Brazil's own settler colonial expansion. The bulk of existing scholarship on the Japanese community in Brazil has been written through the lens of ethnography and generally falls into the domain of ethnic studies in Latin America. It has documented how Japanese immigrants, through their industry and perseverance, successfully proved their worth in Brazil and turned themselves from unwelcome foreigners into what Takeyuki Gaku Tsuda calls the "positive minority."<sup>35</sup> To this day, this narrative continues to dominate the ways the history of Japanese immigration has been told in the realms of both academic research and public history.<sup>36</sup> While the approach of ethnic studies remains necessary, this book moves beyond national and disciplinary boundaries and reexamines migration and community building in the context of settler colonialism in Brazil and Latin America in a broader sense.

In 1906, two years before the *Kasato Maru* reached the Port of Santos, the state of São Paulo signed a financial agreement in the city of Taubaté with coffee producers in the state.<sup>37</sup> In the agreement, the state government promised to buy excess coffee; in exchange, the coffee producers had to restrict the production of low-quality beans.<sup>38</sup> This marked an important step in the São Paulo state government's intervention in and management of the state's coffee production and trade. The state's intervention in the coffee economy was also part of the overall expansion of state power, which spearheaded railway construction and land distribution in its hinterland. Japanese immigrants, like their counterparts from Europe, participated in this process as collaborators of the state.

By recognizing the partnership between Japanese immigrants and the Brazilian settler colonial state, the concept of collaborative settler colonialism allows us to reposition Japanese immigrants in Brazilian society by moving beyond the framework of ethnic studies. Seeing Japanese immigration and community making as part of the development of Brazilian settler colonialism by no means takes away from the fact that Japanese immigrants were targeted and victimized by racism in Brazil. It is undeniable that the Japanese community suffered from various forms of Brazilian ethnic nationalism throughout the twentieth century, from that of racial whitening to the ideology of racial democracy.<sup>39</sup> Racial discrimination against the Japanese undergirded the Brazilian government's legalization of the immigration quota on Japanese immigration in 1934, as well as its ban of Japanese-language schools and newspapers by the beginning of the Pacific War. These policies were also a result of what Erika Lee calls "hemispheric Orientalism," namely, the trans-American anti-Asian racism that revealed the impact of white supremacy in North America on rising ethnic nationalism in Latin America.<sup>40</sup>

However, starting the history of Japanese immigration to Brazil with orientalism and ending it with the celebration of their status as a "positive minority" according to the ethnic studies framework is insufficient to capture the complexity of Japanese experiences in Brazil. Viewing Japanese immigrants only as victims of Brazilian ethnic nationalism, for example, cannot explain why only two organized anti-Japanese political campaigns in Brazil at the national level existed in the first half of the twentieth century—and why only the campaign in the 1930s, amid an upheaval of the federal government itself, succeeded. Nor can the ethnic studies framework explain why the Brazilian elites who imposed a quota on Japanese immigration uniformly denied their racism against the Japanese. Instead of referring to the Japanese as racially inferior, they rationalized the quota primarily by the argument of the Japanese failure to assimilate.<sup>41</sup> Brazilian elites' disavowal of their racism against the Japanese as well as their rather abrupt and delayed success in legalizing the quota can only be understood by acknowledging the more consistent pattern of collaboration between Japanese immigrants and the Brazilian state. In other words, the history of Japanese migration and community building in Brazil was marked by a long-term partnership between Japanese immigrants and the Brazilian government in the latter's land colonization efforts. The two notable anti-Japanese campaigns in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as Rio's wartime policies against the Japanese community, were in fact anomalies in the long history of collaboration.

Aside from being victims of Brazil's ethnic nationalism and contributors to its economic prosperity and cultural diversity, Japanese immigrants benefited from Brazil's ongoing process of settler colonialism. Like other groups of immigrants, they acted as the Brazilian state's agents by occupying and farming appropriated Indigenous land. By the same process, over half of the Japanese population in the Brazilian countryside became landowners by the beginning of the Pacific War.

The Brazilian government's land policies were also crucial for the economic success of Japanese coffee and cotton cultivators in São Paulo and Paraná as well as jute farmers in the Amazon.

The convergence of Japanese and Brazilian settler colonialism was further revealed by the ways the Japanese settlers identified themselves. Before the end of World War II, the settler elites saw Japanese immigrants in Brazil as *shokumin*, literally, "colonists."<sup>42</sup> It resonated with the discourse of emigration-driven overseas expansion (*kaigai hattenron*) in the Japanese empire that equated emigration with settler colonialism and defined Japanese emigrants abroad as trailblazers of the empire's expansion.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, the Brazilian elites commonly called immigrant communities *colônias*, which can be translated as "colonies."<sup>44</sup> The double meaning of this term, immigrants and colonists, reflected the fact that immigration and land colonization were two sides of the same coin in the history of Brazilian settler colonialism. In the 1950s, Japanese settler elites in Brazil embraced the term "Nikkei koronia" to refer to their community. This was their strategy to improve the image of the Japanese community in Brazil, which was severely damaged by the crimes and violence committed by ultranationalist settlers who refused to accept Japan's defeat in World War II. By adopting this new term, the settler elites exploited the historical convergence between Japanese and Brazilian settler colonialism by celebrating the settlers as contributing members in the national histories of both Japan and Brazil.

The experience of Japanese migration to Brazil mirrors the overall history of Japanese migration to Latin America. Admittedly, Brazil was unique not only as the sole Portuguese-speaking country on the continent but also as the home of the largest number of Japanese immigrants in Latin America. Brazil stood out as a highly attractive destination because of its vast territory, abundance of natural wealth, and prosperous, agriculture-centered economy. On the other hand, Brazil resembled other Latin American countries that were also destinations of both European and Asian immigration such as Peru, Mexico, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, and Uruguay before World War II. Japanese migration to all of these countries started in response to anti-Japanese campaigns in North America. The vast majority of Japanese immigrants arrived in Latin America as contract laborers. In one way or another, they fell prey to ethnic nationalism in their host countries.<sup>45</sup>

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a critical era for Latin America in general. At a time when waves of immigrants from Europe and Asia reached their shores, the newly independent Latin American nation-states escalated their appropriation of Indigenous land.<sup>46</sup> Japanese immigration and community building in Latin America as a whole were a result of the convergence of these two historical processes on the continent. Immigrants from Japan and other countries served as effective agents of Latin American regimes' own settler colonialism. Recent scholarship on Japanese history and Latin American history has critically engaged the Anglo-American-centered literature of settler colonialism.<sup>47</sup>

However, scholars of Japanese settler colonialism and those of Latin American settler colonialism have rarely been in conversation with each other. The concept of collaborative settler colonialism, then, allows one to bring these two innovative yet separated academic endeavors into serious dialogue.

More specifically, through the experience of Japanese immigration, this book joins recent scholarship in Latin American history that has begun to revise the definitions of *settlers* and *indigenes* in the scholarship of settler colonialism in Latin America, which traditionally drew a clear line between immigrants and settlers.<sup>48</sup> This conceptual separation of immigrants and settlers was derived from the conventional wisdom of settler colonialism in the British and American experiences. In both North America and British Australia, for example, the formation of the colonial states took place hand in hand with the seizure of Indigenous land. The settlers were defined as those who arrived during the formative period of the colonial states, while those who arrived later were categorized as immigrants.<sup>49</sup> In Latin America, while the settlers' exploitation of and violence against the *indigenes* had taken place since the very beginning of the colonial period, the massive appropriation of Indigenous land happened long after the formation of the colonial states.<sup>50</sup> This was because unlike the Anglo-American colonial settlers who saw Indigenous land as their primary target from the start, colonial settlers in Latin America initially focused on exploiting Indigenous labor and wealth, only targeting land centuries later. The systematic dispossession of Indigenous land did not happen until there was an influx of European and Japanese immigrants.<sup>51</sup>

Thus the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this study argues, were a turning point in the history of Latin America: collaborative settler colonialism emerged and developed across the continent at around this time. This process was marked by the confluence of the experience of immigration and that of settler colonialism, as foreign immigrants effectively acted as colonial settlers who deprived the Indigenous peoples of their land. This was also the period when empire builders of both East Asia and Latin America turned to U.S. settler colonialism in the American West for inspiration. Japanese and Brazilian leaders' efforts to reproduce the two modes of settler colonialism derived from American frontier expansion were shared by elites of other modernizing powers in East Asia and Latin America.<sup>52</sup>

During the last decades of the Qing empire, China's own expansionists shared the Meiji elites' enthusiasm for emigration. The iconic reformer Kang Youwei, for example, envisioned the establishment of a new China in Brazil through emigration as a means of survival, as the Qing empire was in danger of being partitioned by Western and Japanese powers at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>53</sup> Post-independence nations in Latin America such as Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile also utilized foreign immigration as an effective means to expand the government's control over interior land and borders.<sup>54</sup> In 1858, the Republic of Chile introduced a law that defined lands to the south of the Biobío River and to

the north of Copiapó as unowned, offering them to foreign immigrants for free.<sup>55</sup> Juan B. Alberdi, who drafted the Argentine constitution of 1853, forcefully called for European immigrants to populate and civilize the primitive land in Argentina, much like what they had done in the American West.<sup>56</sup> It was during this period that Japan's emigration-driven expansionism became deeply entwined with the immigration-driven mode of settler colonialism in Brazil. For this reason, this book uses "immigrants" and "settlers" interchangeably when referring to the Japanese community in Brazil.

In addition to redefining the concept of settlers, the study revises the term "indigenes" in the context of Latin America. Centuries-long practices of racial mixing among white settlers, African slaves, and Indigenous peoples on the continent have complicated the conventional narratives of settler colonialism in the British and American contexts, which were centered on the binary of white settlers versus Indigenous peoples. Before the colonial governments carried out systemic appropriation of Indigenous land, a large portion of land in Latin America was occupied by squatters without legal titles, who were usually independent farmers of mixed European and Indigenous ancestries. Known as *caboclos* in Brazil, these squatters obtained their own plots on the periphery of large plantations by burning down forests; there they would cultivate subsistence crops and form interdependent relationships with the plantations nearby.<sup>57</sup> While the practice of intermarriage may be seen as what Patrick Wolfe called racial "elimination" of the indigenes, the *caboclos* also carried biological features of Indigenous people and were critical for the survival of Indigenous identity and culture.<sup>58</sup> In addition, similar to the Indigenous people, the *caboclos* were victims of both state-sanctioned white supremacy ideology and land dispossession. Because of these connections and similarities, this study treats the land squatted on by the *caboclos* also as Indigenous land and *caboclos* themselves as victims of settler colonialism.

The Brazilian state dispossessed the *caboclos* and the Indigenous peoples of their land by means of a thorough transformation of land tenure, a process in which the European and Japanese immigrants were both catalysts and beneficiaries. During this process, governments at both the federal and state levels were able to substantially expand and consolidate their control over land in the interior. During the long colonial period and the early phase of the empire, *sesmaria*, or land granted by the crown, was the only title to land recognized by the courts.<sup>59</sup> Because of the very limited government control over the vast land in the country, it was common for plantation owners and individual farmers to occupy new land without legal titles. The Land Law of 1850 marked a major shift in land tenure by banning further royal land grants. Under this law, one was only allowed to obtain a legal land title through purchase.<sup>60</sup> Though it served as a critical step in the capitalization of land that allowed it to be traded, the law's actual impact was limited at best. While some large landholders managed to purchase legal titles for the land they occupied, most impoverished and isolated squatters did not due to



poverty and illiteracy.<sup>61</sup> As the government remained small and incapable of exerting effective control over the bulk of land in its territory, squatting continued to be a common practice. The caboclos who lived and farmed around the borders of the legally titled land were the primary beneficiaries of squatting.

Brazil's Proclamation of the Republic in 1889 turned once nationally owned land into the property of individual states, making state governments the primary agents of land colonization. This institutional shift took place around the time the southeastern states, led by São Paulo, embraced modern capitalism. Centered on coffee cultivation and trade, this capitalist economy was marked by three interconnected aspects: transportation modernization, land exploration, and immigration. In all three aspects, state governments played a decisive and central role. First, in order to gain greater access and control over the interior land, the state governments encouraged railway construction. Second, in order to expand coffee cultivation, state governments granted interior land to land-developing companies and railway companies, tasking them with its development and redistribution. Third, in order to attract immigrants, including the Japanese, who constituted the backbone of this state-driven land colonization, state governments provided subsidies. Some immigrants started out as plantation laborers but later became farmers; others arrived as farming settlers. Most of the Japanese immigrants belonged to the former category. Either way, they served as agents to enforce state power by taking interior land from the caboclos and the Indigenous peoples.

#### BRAZIL AND A NEW CHRONOLOGY OF JAPANESE SETTLER COLONIALISM

In addition to explaining the role of Japanese migrants as collaborators of the state-led land colonialization process in Brazil, this book recognizes migration as a part of Japan's emigration-driven settler colonial expansion.<sup>62</sup> It analyzes the connections between the Japanese community in Brazil and the evolution of Japan's colonial empire and its transition to a nation-state after World War II.<sup>63</sup> By transcending conventional temporal and geographic boundaries, this book revises the existing understanding of the Japanese empire in a number of ways.

First, it joins a recent body of scholarship that examines the impact of white racism on Japanese colonialism.<sup>64</sup> More specifically, this book demonstrates how racial exclusion of Asian immigrants in the United States propelled Japanese expansion into Latin America. The closure of the frontier in the American West, observed by Turner, took place hand in hand with the closure of the American gates to Chinese immigration. The Chinese exclusion campaigns on the U.S. West Coast stimulated Meiji elites to cast their colonial gaze on Latin America. Fearing that Japanese migrants in the United States would suffer the same fate as the Chinese, Japanese diplomats in Tokyo and San Francisco turned to countries south of the U.S. border as alternative destinations for Japanese migration. It was in this

context that Meiji Japan began diplomatic negotiations with several Latin American countries, such as Brazil, Peru, and Mexico, at the end of the nineteenth century. A notable product of these efforts was the short-lived “Enomoto Colony” that the former minister of foreign affairs, Enomoto Takeaki, and his followers established in southern Chiapas, Mexico, in 1897.<sup>65</sup>

The history of Japanese migration to Brazil is especially illustrative of this connection. While Chinese exclusion in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century brought Tokyo to the negotiation table with Rio, it was the Gentlemen’s Agreement in 1907, which effectively ended Japanese labor migration to the United States, that finally jumpstarted official Japanese migration to Brazil. Less than a year after the signing of the Gentlemen’s Agreement, the *Kasato Maru* reached the shores of Santos with 781 Japanese subjects on board. They became known as the first official group of Japanese immigrants in Brazil. The U.S. Immigration Act of 1924 that formally terminated Japanese immigration to the United States marked another turning point in the history of Japanese migration to Brazil. It propelled a series of changes in Japanese policies that substantially increased the government’s capacity to manage Brazil-bound migration. Tokyo’s political and financial supports not only led to a sharp increase in the annual number of migrants but also accelerated the Japanese community’s socioeconomic transition from laborers to owner-farmers in Brazil.

Second, looking at migration to Brazil from the lens of the Japanese empire allows us to recognize the roles played by individuals associated with the migration and community formation in Brazil in Japan’s own process of empire building and its transition to a nation-state. Leaders of the Japanese community in Brazil, throughout different periods, actively participated in political and intellectual debates within Japan; they connected their efforts of community building in Brazil with the agenda for Japanese expansion in Asia. First-generation elites such as Saibara Seitō, Nagata Shigeshi, and Koseki Tokuya returned to Asia in the 1930s and 1940s. They advocated for accelerated imperial expansion and sought to build Japanese settler communities in Southeast Asia in order to support Japan’s war in Asia-Pacific.

On the other hand, in the years immediately following World War II, new Japanese Brazilian leaders closely associated their efforts to rebuild their community in Brazil with the reinvention of Japan’s identity as a “cultured nation.” These included first-generation intellectuals such as Yamamoto Kiyoshi and Suzuki Tei’ichi, as well as second-generation elites like Saitō Hiroshi. They joined both Japanese and Western scholars in the collective invention of Japan’s cultural and national identity during the Cold War, which laid the intellectual foundation for the popularization of the theory of the Japanese in the 1970s. *Nihonjinron*, as it was popularly known, celebrated the unique cultural and racial character of the Japanese as the key to the nation’s splendid success in economic growth and modernization.

Third, the book offers a new chronology of Japanese settler colonialism. Most existing scholarship of Japanese settler colonialism has adhered to the formal

timeline of the Japanese colonial empire, which itself has been in question. Conventional wisdom defines Japan's annexation of Taiwan as the starting point of the empire and sees the empire's collapse at the end of World War II as its historical conclusion.<sup>66</sup> More recent scholarship has extended the timeline of the empire by dating its origin to the early Meiji era, recognizing the colonization of Hokkaido and the annexation of the Ryukyu Islands as the initial chapters of the Japanese empire.<sup>67</sup> Scholars have also begun to acknowledge the historical continuity before and after the collapse of the colonial empire by examining the complicated process of decolonization in East Asia.<sup>68</sup> Such revisions, though immensely significant, are still confined by the territory-bound narrative of the Japanese empire that is centered on the relationship between the colonies, both informal and formal, and the metropole.<sup>69</sup>

A focus on Japanese emigration to Brazil allows us to reevaluate the significance of Japanese expansion beyond the relationship between the imperial metropole and the colonies. By not taking the temporal and geographic boundaries of the empire for granted, this book presents a new chronology of Japanese settler colonialism. My examination of Japanese settler colonialism starts with its colonial migration to Hokkaido at the beginning of the Meiji era and concludes with the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of Japanese migration to Brazil in 1978 in São Paulo. As Patrick Wolfe so powerfully declared, settler colonialism "is a structure not an event."<sup>70</sup> A history of the Japanese empire through the lens of settler colonialism is, therefore, a history of the present and does not have an endpoint. Nevertheless, the event of 1978 marked the cultural separation of Japan and Japanese Brazilians, the largest Japanese population outside of the archipelago. As the last anniversary held by the Issei, this celebration also symbolized the end of the community leadership of the Issei, the first generation of settlers who carried the personal ties and collective memories of the empire. The end of Issei leadership in the Japanese community in Brazil was coupled with the demolition of Japan's emigration-centered migration state in the same decade.<sup>71</sup> As Japan's rapid economic growth generated a huge demand for labor, it quickly changed from a migration-sending into a migration-receiving country. While this is the concluding point of the book, as a "structure" Japanese settler colonialism does not end here. Instead, Japanese settler colonialism entered a new phase with new connections between Japan and Japanese overseas communities. It was marked by the migration of people of Japanese ancestry from Brazil and other Latin American countries to Japan as laborers, a topic beyond this book's coverage.

The history of Japanese settler colonialism in this book is divided into four periods. In the first period, the Meiji empire reproduced the mode of the U.S. westward expansion in its own colonial frontier in Hokkaido. The colonial migration of declassed samurai to Hokkaido in early Meiji laid the intellectual and material foundation for subsequent Japanese settler colonial projects in Asia and across the Pacific.<sup>72</sup> The decades between the 1880s and the 1900s constitute the second

period. In the conventional narrative of the empire, this period is more commonly known for the empire's triumph in the Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War and for its colonization of Taiwan and Korea. However, these years were also crucial for the confluence of Japanese overseas emigration and settler colonial expansion. In particular, the 1880s marked a turning point in Japanese settler colonialism because they saw the beginning of Japan's emigration-driven expansion abroad: the Japanese government officially lifted the ban on overseas emigration, resulting in an exodus of laborers, students, travelers, and political exiles to Hawai'i and North America, on the one hand, and merchants to the Korean Peninsula, on the other. This immediate increase in the outflow of Japanese subjects and their endeavors on both sides of the Pacific also ushered in the convergence of emigration and settler colonialism.<sup>73</sup> In response to the Chinese Exclusion Act and the rise of anti-Japanese sentiment in the United States, Japanese expansionists, both in and outside of policy-making circles, cast their gaze to the South Seas and Latin America as alternative destinations for Japanese emigration. It was precisely in this context that Tokyo established diplomatic relationships with several Latin American countries, such as Mexico (1891), Brazil (1897), Chile (1902), and Peru (1909). Japanese emigrants also began to reach Latin American shores in the same period.<sup>74</sup>

The sailing of the *Kasato Maru* to Brazil marked the beginning of the third period (1908–36) of Japanese settler colonialism. Apart from the rise of farmer-centered Japanese settler colonialism in both Asia and the Americas, this period saw the expansion of state power into the field of emigration promotion and management. The Gentlemen's Agreement led to a paradigm shift in Japanese settler colonialism, from the migration of laborers to that of farmers. Japan's empire builders learned two important lessons from their setbacks in the United States. First, they concluded that farmers, not temporary laborers, were the most suited to putting down roots for the empire in foreign countries because they had an intrinsic desire to acquire land. Second, they urged Tokyo to take a bigger role in promoting, managing, and financially supporting the emigration process as well as the emigrants' community formation abroad.<sup>75</sup>

This paradigm shift was clearly seen in Japanese expansion in the Asia-Pacific region, especially with the formation of the semigovernmental organization Tōyō Takushoku Gaisha (Oriental Development Company, or Tōtaku) in 1908 and its subsequent migration schemes in Northeast Asia.<sup>76</sup> Across the Pacific, Brazil-bound emigration was similarly illustrative of this change. Not only was it conceived with the goal of establishing a Japanese farming community; the migration process was also carried out with increasing involvement by and support from the Japanese government. The formation of the Kaigai Kōgyō Kabushiki Gaisha (Overseas Development Company, or Kaikō) and the enactment of the Overseas Emigration Cooperatives Law, for example, were two important government measures directly aimed at promoting and managing Brazil-bound migration.

TABLE 1 Annual number of Japanese emigrants to Brazil, 1929–1938

	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
Number of emigrants	15,597	13,741	5,565	15,092	23,299	22,960	5,745	5,357	4,675	2,563

SOURCE: Gaimushō Ryōji Ijūbu, *Waga kokumin no kaigai hatten: ijū hyakunen no ayumi, shiryōhen* (Tokyo: Gaimushō Ryōji Ijūbu, 1971), 140.

A closer look at Japanese expansion and community building in Brazil in the 1920s and 1930s also challenges the conventional view that the Manchurian Incident in 1931 and subsequent formation of Manchukuo was a turning point in the history of Japanese expansion. The formation of Manchukuo had little effect on the existing pattern of Japanese settler colonialism. Several attempts by the Kwangtung Army to relocate Japanese subjects to Manchuria in the first half of the 1930s proved unsuccessful.<sup>77</sup> In the meantime, as table 1 illustrates, the volume of Japanese emigration to Brazil continued to grow after the Manchurian Incident and reached its zenith in the following years. The watershed moment came only in 1935, when the volume of Brazil-bound Japanese emigration declined sharply due to an immigration quota imposed by the Brazilian government a year before. In 1936, Tokyo launched a state-led mass migration program to Manchuria, marking a true geographic shift in Japanese settler colonialism.

In addition, the focus on Brazil in the 1930s offers us a better understanding of the economic vibrancy of Japan's wartime empire. The decline in Japanese emigration took place hand in hand with Japanese economic expansion into Brazil. After the delegation from Japan's Chamber of Commerce and Industry visited Brazil in 1935, Japanese importation of raw cotton from Brazil skyrocketed. This crop, largely cultivated by Japanese settlers in São Paulo, allowed many Japanese immigrant farmers to finally become independent landowners in rural São Paulo. After India restricted raw cotton exportation to Japan, Brazilian cotton became essential for the empire's textile industry.<sup>78</sup> In fact, increased trade between Japan and Brazil was critical to sustaining Japan's manufacturing industries during the second half of the 1930s, a period when Japan urgently needed alternative sources of raw materials as well as markets in the face of mounting trade embargos imposed by the United States and the Commonwealth nations.<sup>79</sup>

The fourth and final period of discussion in this book (1936–78) is from the beginning of Japan's total war in Asia to the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of Japanese immigration in São Paulo in 1978. The experience of the Japanese community in Brazil during World War II and its aftermath offers a unique prism through which to analyze Japanese settler colonialism during the empire's transition to a nation-state. The bitter split among the Japanese settlers in São Paulo did not stop at the end of the war; in fact, the rift only deepened in the following decade. On the other hand, the repatriation of Japanese colonial settlers in Asia proceeded

concurrently with the resumption of Japanese migration to Brazil and other Latin American countries; the migration state's apparatuses established during the time of the empire were revived for this purpose.<sup>80</sup> This series of events jointly challenge the usefulness of the year 1945 as a dividing line of history. Examining the largely neglected role of the Japanese Brazilian community in Japan's national reinvention during the Cold War also offers a new endpoint of Japan's empire-to-nation transition itself. This process concluded with Japan's consolidation of its position as the second-largest economy in the world and its cultural separation from the Japanese overseas communities. This separation occurred together with the termination of the Japanese government-sponsored programs of overseas emigration.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

This book, organized chronologically, contains eight chapters that are divided into four parts, and each part examines one of the four periods in the history of Japan's collaborative settler colonialism. Part 1, comprising the first two chapters, examines the origins and the initial period of Japanese collaborative settler colonialism in Brazil. Chapter 1 illustrates the surprising parallels between the two countries' historical trajectories in the nineteenth century in terms of empire building. It explains how both Meiji leaders and Rio de Janeiro's political elites, inspired by ongoing U.S. westward expansion, associated the notion of migration with that of colonial expansion. At the turn of the twentieth century, the convergence of Japan and Brazil in their processes of migration-driven expansion brought the two countries together to negotiate the start of Japanese migration to Brazil. Chapter 2 explains how the sailing of the *Kasato Maru*, the ship that brought the first official group of Japanese immigrants to Brazil, was a joint product of several historical processes happening concurrently across the Pacific Ocean: the Japanese expansionists' push for overseas emigration, the rise of anti-Japanese sentiment in the United States, and the rapid expansion of Brazil's coffee economy all served as indispensable factors at the start of the migration.

Part 2, comprising chapters 3 and 4, analyzes the emergence and growth of Japanese settler villages in southeastern Brazil in relation to Japanese colonialism in Asia during the critical period of the 1910s and 1920s. Chapter 3 details the origin, development, and expansion of Japanese farming villages in southeastern Brazil through the end of World War I. I explain this process by placing it in three distinct but interconnected contexts: Brazil's railway construction and new policies of land distribution in the state of São Paulo, the development of Japanese colonialism in the Korean Peninsula and the South Seas, and the emergence of a new world order following World War I. Chapter 4 examines how the historical rise of Kobe as a military and commercial port of the empire developed concurrently with the growth of Brazil-bound emigration. A series of structural changes



within the Japanese government maximized its capacity to promote and manage the emigration. These changes not only led to a golden decade of Japanese migration to Brazil from the 1920s to the early 1930s but also established the institutional foundation for the Japanese government's relocation of its subjects to Asia during the late 1930s and the 1940s.

Part 3, comprising chapters 5 and 6, examines the minds and lives of Japanese Brazilian leaders and illustrates how they associated their ideas and activities in South America with contemporaneous Japanese colonial expansion in Asia from the 1930s to the end of World War II. Chapter 5 analyzes the process by which Japanese Brazilian opinion leaders created and cultivated a settler colonial identity among ordinary Japanese farmers in São Paulo. They did so through newspapers, school textbooks, and public events in the Japanese community with support from Tokyo. Individual settlers, men and women, first generation and second, rural and urban, began to connect with one another through a new imagined collective identity. Chapter 6 examines and compares the regimes of ethnic nationalism in Japan and Brazil in the decade right before World War II and explains how they worked together in unexpected ways to plunge the Japanese settler community into an identity crisis. It analyzes the different choices and actions of Japanese Brazilian elites, some of whom called for returning to Japan and joining the empire's expansion while others advocated for staying and pledging their allegiance to the flag of *Estado Novo*. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the impact this split had on the course of the Japanese empire in Asia and the Japanese community in Brazil.

Part 4 consists of the last two chapters. It sheds light on the continuity of Japan's collaborative settler colonialism before and after World War II. Chapter 7 delves into the details of the often-overlooked but critical history of Japanese migration and investment in the Brazilian Amazon and emphasizes both the transnational and transwar nature of Japanese collaborative settler colonialism in the rainforest. It not only illustrates its connections with Japanese colonial expansion in the Asia-Pacific region but also puts Japanese presence in the Amazon in the context of Brazil's own settler colonialism and U.S. expansion in the same region. The Brazilian Amazon was also the restarting point of Japanese migration after World War II because of the continuity in the ideology and practice of settler colonialism in both Japan and Brazil. Chapter 8 explains the close relationship between the cultural reinvention and socioeconomic transformation of the Japanese community in Brazil and Japan's reemergence onto the world stage as a member of the Western bloc during the Cold War. It further illustrates the social and political transformation of Japanese settlers into a "model minority" in Brazilian society in the context of Japan's rise as an economic powerhouse. The past and present of the Japanese Brazilian community became a central site for Japanese and American social scientists such as Izumi Sei'ichi, Robert Smith, and

John Cornell to conduct ethnographic research. Their scholarship served as the prelude for the discourse known as *Nihonjinron*, the theory about the Japanese. This discourse, which became popular in the 1970s, focused on the unique character of Japanese cultural identity as the key to Japanese ethnic and national success. It continues to influence how Japanese history and culture are understood around the world today.