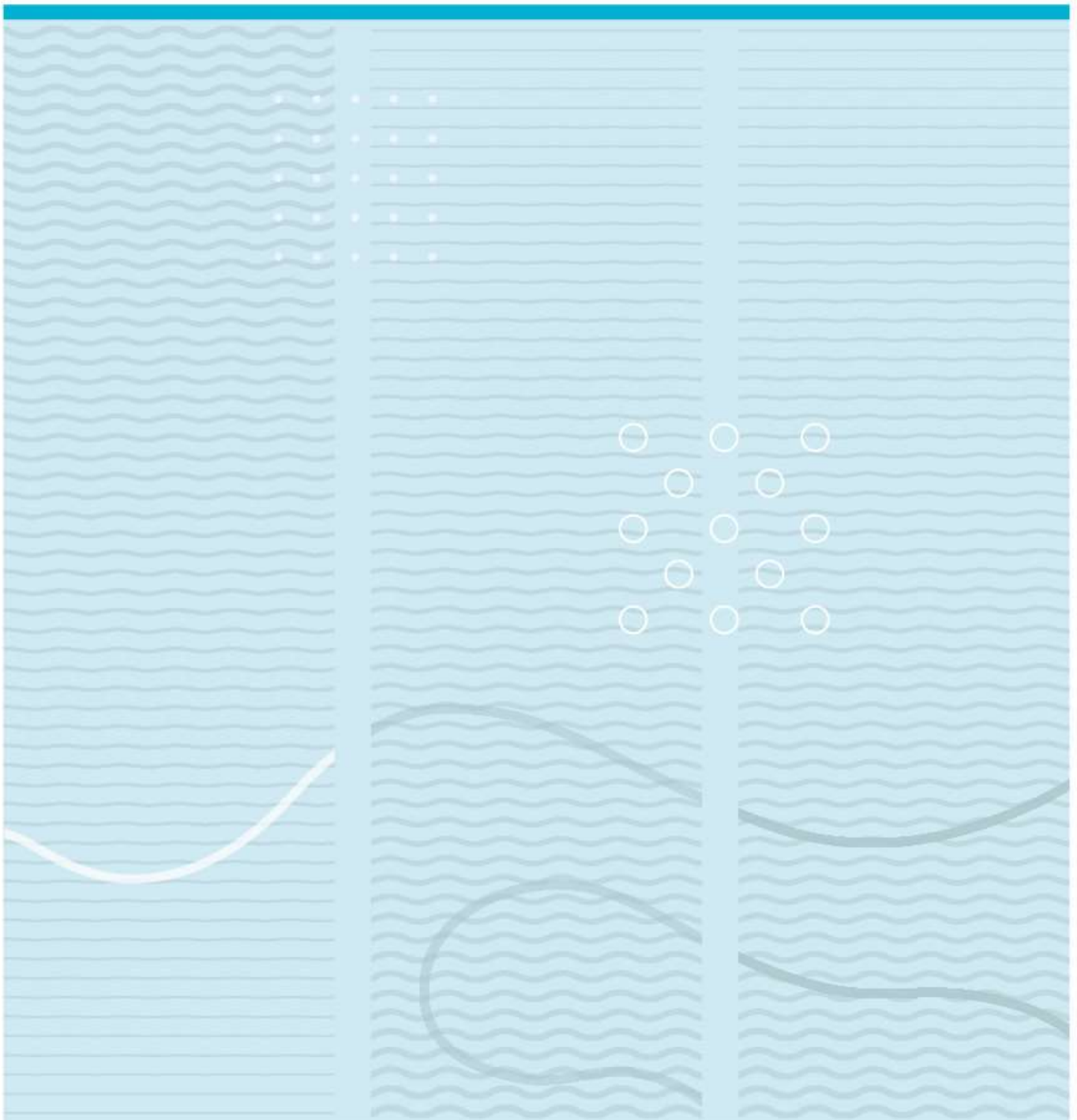Keisuke Kojima

Quiet Past, Loud Present: Japan's Unacknowledged Colonial History and its Reflection in Everyday Racism Against Koreans in Japan

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This thesis is worth 45 study points

Abstract

Racism and racial discriminations in Japan have been widely studied and, as a result, various explications as to what dynamics and power relations have been suggested. However, while racism is intricately tightly linked with the history of colonialism, racism in Japan does not seem to be often tackled within the framework of Japan's history of colonialism. This study, by doing so, examines the intricate interplay between racism and colonialism within the context of Japan, focusing particularly on the enduring repercussions of Japan's colonial history on contemporary racial dynamics. Drawing upon a multidisciplinary framework, the study employs theoretical lenses such as the Coloniality of Power (C.o.P.) and Critical Race Theory (CRT) to analyze manifestations of racism and power differentials evident in Japanese society, with a specific emphasis on the experiences of Zainichi Koreans. Specifically, through reflexive thematic analysis on racializing, racist remarks against Zainichi Koreans in the Japanese cyberspace, X in particular, the study unveils manifestations of racism targeting Zainichi Koreans and elucidates underlying power relations rooted in Japan's colonial past. Drawing on CRT frameworks such as "Colour-blind racism" and "Essentialism," the thesis examines themes and patterns of racialization, while the Coloniality of Power framework illuminates historical contexts and systemic inequalities perpetuated by colonial legacies. The findings underscore the significance of addressing Japan's colonial history in understanding contemporary racial hierarchies and advocating for social justice. The broad implication of this study is the importance to spotlight Japan's racism itself and the intricate link between that and Japan's history of colonialism.

Coloniality of power, Japan, racism, colonialism, Reflexive Thematic Analysis, Thematic Analysis, Racialization, Racial Hierarchy, Racial Hierarchization, Twitter, X, Online Ethnography, CRT, Critical Race Theory, Essentialism, Colourblind Racism, Racial Identity, Zainichi Koreans, Koreans in Japan, Social Media Analysis

Contents

Foreword

Writing this thesis came with a series of academic and personal enjoyments and challenges along the way, as it would for many people. To be honest, I feel like more personal challenges emerged than academic challenges. However, I have been incredibly lucky to have people who supported me throughout the journey, and thanks to their consistent presence, I have managed to achieve finishing this thesis, embracing the academic journey driven my pure intellectual curiosity and embodying it in writing. Therefore, I would like to use this space to express my gratitude to them.

While there are many people whom I would like to call out for gratitude, I would like to first express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Christian Stokke for his consistent support throughout the long time I have taken for this thesis. He always provided me with valuable and compelling insights. I would like to also thank my professors at the USN who also always supported me academically and personally throughout my years at the university.

I would like to also thank all my family and friends who, over and over again, supported me through the challenges I had in my personal life. Without a doubt, I would not have been able to complete this master. My gratitude to them go well beyond this thesis. You have all been the pillar of my strength, without which I cannot imagine how and what I would have ended up doing in general.

Lastly, I would like to state that I dedicate this work to my mother who has left this world during this academic journey. Whenever I faced a challenge — academic or personal — she in my memory was always what kept me going and will always be moving forward.

Drammen, Norway/May 2024
Keisuke Kojima

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context – Racism in Japan

Often, the myth goes "Japan is an ethnically homogenous nation." "Therefore, there is no racism in Japan" (Narzary, 2004; Li, 2014), but Japan is no exception, and it is as guilty of racism as, if not more or less than, others. According to Arudou (2021), racism and other forms of discriminations have been widely studied within the field of Japan studies. Arudou provides a comprehensive list of groups typically studied in relation to racism and discrimination: "*the Burakumin historical underclass, Zainichi Koreans (Korean diasporas), Ainu (the indigenous people from the northern Japanese islands), Okinawans (the indigenous people in the southern islands where there was a former Ryūkyū kingdom later annexed into Japan) , women, the physically and mentally infirm, ethnic and historical minorities, the elderly, children, former leprosy victims, crime victims, HIV sufferers, the homeless, ex-convicts, foreigners, and victims of human trafficking, North Korean kidnappings, and other forms of bullying and social abuse.*" (p.9) This list challenges the notion of Japan as ethnically homogeneous and highlights the diverse groups affected by racism and discrimination in the country.

In recent years, the issue of racism and discrimination in Japan has gained international attention, prompting scrutiny from organizations like the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Despite Japan's reputation for ethnic homogeneity, reports from CERD and other sources reveal pervasive discrimination against minority groups, including Zainichi Koreans, Ainu, and Ryukyuans.
The 2018 report by CERD highlighted concerns about hate speech and discriminatory practices targeting minority communities in Japan. For example, Zainichi Koreans, descendants of Korean immigrants who settled in Japan during the colonial period and stayed in Japan in the post-world war periods, face systematic exclusion from various aspects of Japanese society, including employment and housing (Robillard-Martel & Laurent, 2021, p.400).

When you look to the historical context, it becomes evident that Japan's colonial past has played a significant role in shaping contemporary racial dynamics. The annexation of Korea in 1910, the occupation of Taiwan, and the marginalization of indigenous peoples like the Ainu and Ryukyuans have left a lasting impact on Japan's social fabric.

Understanding this historical backdrop is crucial for comprehending the roots of discrimination against Zainichi Koreans and other marginalized groups in Japan. Taking Zainichi Koreans for example, in addition to the ones mentioned above, they face systemic discriminations that involve complex political, legal, and historical backgrounds and context. For instance, the ethnic schools for Zainichi Koreans are the only ethnic schools that are defunded by the government of Japan (Kayama, 2018) and they are not considered as part of the official educational institutions in Japan, meaning the graduates have significantly limited opportunities after graduation for applying higher education (Motani, 2002, p.231). As will be discussed in detail in the subsequent chapter, these barriers derive from Japan's colonial and postcolonial policies singlehandedly imposed on them. It shows a clear connection between their oppression and the Japan's history of colonialism. By exploring the complexities of Japan's colonial history, we can gain insights into the structural inequalities and systemic injustices that persist in Japanese society today.

1.2 Research Problems

1.2.1 Identifying the Research Problem - Japan as a (Former) Colonial Power

To address the pervasive issues of discrimination and racism in Japan, various scholarly approaches have been taken. Some scholars take legal approaches and focus on analyses of domestic laws regarding citizenship and nationality, while others delve into sociological examinations of racialization processes at the micro level. While these perspectives offer valuable insights, what is needed more in this field is to frame issues of racism in Japan within postcolonial and decolonial lens, that is, the understanding of racism in Japan as a former colonial power, shedding light on Japan's history of colonialism as a contributing factor to contemporary racial dynamics.

Many studies tend to focus on specific aspects of discrimination without necessarily fully considering the broader historical context of Japan's colonial past. While these perspectives offer valuable insights, they may overlook the underlying societal structures that perpetuate discrimination against certain groups, including Koreans in Japan without historical contextualization of how the structures have come to be.

Therefore, there is a need for research that examines racism in Japan within the framework of its colonial history.

This study attempts to do so with the focus on racialization elements in the way racism is carried out on individual levels. It is essential to recognize that just as colonial histories have contributed to the establishment of hegemony by white populations globally, Japanese colonialism has similarly conferred privilege upon Japan and the Japanese people, particularly over racialized others who were once colonized by Japan. By examining Japan's colonial past and its impact on contemporary racial dynamics, this study seeks to provide an understanding of racism in Japan within a postcolonial/decolonial framework. By spotlighting Japan as such, this study aims to bring Japan on the table of the discussion more as the former aggressor responsible for its postcolonial/decolonial reflections in the broader academic dialogues.

1.3 Research Question: Objectives and Focus

1.3.1 Research Question

Therefore, I would like to formulate my research question as follows:
How does Japan's history of colonialism manifest in racialization dynamics against Zainichi Koreans in contemporary Japanese society?

1.3.2 Research Focus and Objectives: Breaking Down the Research Question

The research focus of this study is to examine the perceptions and discriminatory attitudes of Japanese online users towards Zainichi Koreans. Through the lens of decolonial theory, the Coloniality of Power (C.o.P.) proposed by Anibal Quijano as the broader theoretical framework, the study aims to achieve the following objectives: Positioning Japan within the space of postcolonial criticism,

1. **What are the key themes and patterns in online discourse surrounding Zainichi Koreans, particularly in relation to Japan's colonial history?**
2. **How do unequal power dynamics rooted in the colonial period influence racializing attitudes, behaviours, and discourse towards Zainichi Koreans in online spaces?**

3. **To what extent/how do historical narratives and stereotypes shape perceptions of Zainichi Koreans in contemporary Japanese society, as reflected in online discourse?**

1.3.3 Theoretical Framework

Grounded in the decolonial theory, particularly the Coloniality of Power (C.o.P.) framework proposed by Anibal Quijano, and colourblind racism by Bonilla-Silva and essentialism by Sayer and Delgado & Stefancic within Critical Race Theory (CRT), this study provides a theoretical lens to understand how colonial histories continue to shape contemporary racial power dynamics. Specifically, this study will explore how racial hierarchy established during Japan's colonial period persists in shaping attitudes, perceptions, and interactions towards Zainichi Koreans in contemporary Japan, by first examining the patterns of racialization expressions with the two CRT theories, and then historically delving and exploring how the manifestations have come to be so, illuminating the enduring broader power structure using the framework of C.o.P.. By applying these two frameworks, the study seeks to uncover the nuanced intersections of race, power, and identity within Japanese online discourses on X (previously known as "Twitter") posed against Koreans, providing a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which colonial histories continue to impact contemporary racial dynamics, with particular focus on the "race" element out of the C.o.P. matrix.

1.3.4 Selection of Koreans in Japan as the Focus Group

As this study delves into some putative connections that colonial legacies of Japanese colonialism have with contemporary racism and its nuanced dynamics, I would like to choose a group of people with the heritage of once being colonized by Japan. Of all such groups, I have chosen specifically Koreans in Japan, or more specifically **Zainichi Koreans**, for the following reasons:

1. **Connection to Japan's Colonial History**
   Korea was colonized and annexed by the empire of Japan from 1910 to 1945, during which a series of colonial acculturating-assimilationist policies (Japanization, 皇民化 - *kōminka*) [1] were imposed, including, for example,

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[1] More on this on page 18-19 with the sources

the effacement of language and forced loyalty to the Japanese emperor (Pak, 2011). Zainichi Koreans refer to those Koreans who remained in Japan even after the war and the colonial period officially ceased. This historical relationship offers rich potential for examining the impacts of colonialism on contemporary racial dynamics. While quantifying the extent of victimhood is challenging due to diverse scholarly perspectives, the depth and breadth of the historical interaction between colonizers and the colonized provide fertile ground for analysis.

2. **Personal Connection**

Zainichi Koreans as the ethnic group to focus my analyses on offers an additional potential to enrich depth and authenticity to the study, because of my own personal background and experience as a former consumer of the anti-Korean sentiment in the online space. While this introspective and retrospective layer to the interpretation in the study raises some considerations in reflexivity in my methodology, it can at the same time provide additional specificity and depth in the exploration of a nuanced dynamics in everyday racism, particularly in cyberspace.

1.4 Methodology

This research is online ethnography in nature. In this study, I employ a rigorous methodological approach to investigate the intersection of racism and colonialism in contemporary Japanese society, particularly in relation to Zainichi Koreans. Drawing upon reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2022), my research design is characterized by its commitment to methodological rigor, reflexivity, and ethical considerations. By purposively sampling online discourse from social media platform X (formerly known as Twitter) containing racializing expressions against Zainichi Koreans, I aim to uncover key themes and patterns reflective of Japan's colonial history. As a native Japanese individual with past exposure to anti-Korean/Zainichi sentiment in online communities, my positionality informs various aspects of the research process, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation. While subjectivity is a valuable assent due to the nature of reflexive thematic analysis, throughout this study, I maintain a high level of self-awareness and reflexivity to

mitigate potential biases and ensure the credibility and transparency of the findings at the same time. Ethical considerations also play a central role, as I strive to uphold the privacy and anonymity of users whose postings are sampled. By integrating theoretical frameworks and academic literature, I aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the racialization dynamics affecting Zainichi Koreans in contemporary Japanese society

1.5 Significance of the Study and Motivation

1.5.1 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is intended to add context to contemporary dynamics of racism in Japan, hoping to encourage more postcolonial and decolonial climate to the general academia of Japan Studies. By contextualizing everyday racism within the historical framework of Japan's colonial history, the thesis can provide a nuanced examination of the roots and the said history's manifestations, enriching the understanding of racism in Japan beyond just sociological examinations of it.

1. This study introduces and applies Quijano's coloniality of power as the broad theoretical framework. This theoretical framework allows for a critical analysis of racial hierarchies established during Japan's colonial era and their persistence in shaping contemporary dynamics.

2. Opening doors to further broader postcolonial/decolonial explorations in Japanese contexts: the study attempts to lay part of the groundwork for future research in the field of Japan Studies, inviting more scholars to delve into the interplay of racism in broader contexts, including that of everyday racism and Japan's colonial history, like this thesis attempts to do.

1.5.2 Motivation

The motivation I had in the first place for writing about racism, Japanese colonialism, and their connection comes down to my positionality as a Japan-born/raised, male individual and the responsibility I assumed for having consumed the privileges that came with it. Mainly, the motivation stems from the former victimizer-hood and the lack of de-/postcolonial narratives in Japan in general that comes in tandem with it. I was once an active participant and consumer of anti-Korean hatred pervasive in the Japanese cyberspace built upon selective, distorted, or even completely falsified

historical views. In other words, I was not only just complicit just by being an "ordinary" Japanese citizen who just does not have extensive knowledge about historical disputes with a neighbouring country. Rather, I was a discriminator more active than part of such a complicit mob. Consuming hatred towards, in particular, Koreans, is partly a form of entertainment for online users. When I was going through some difficulties of life in my early teenager years where I did not have any other mental stress outlet, finding something or someone that I could just join others insulting without having to actively speculate legitimacy or ground for it myself, offered me a sense of superiority that functioned as a form of mental relief or outlet that helped me in my real life.

Now, retrospectively, I feel that I need to take it upon myself to do a form of redemption one way or another. That is not the entire reason for being a human rights student, but as an academically educated person in the field, academically deconstructing the worldview I once shared with the discriminators online is (hopefully) going to work as a form of redemption.

The lack of historical narratives in Japan to see themselves (or ourselves) as an aggressor and not just as a victim, mainly with the emphasis on air strikes and two atomic bombs from the US, comes in tandem with the feeling of redemption. Not only individually for having consumed anti Korean contents, also as a person in the collective society of Japan, I was complicit in the dynamics of racism that has created the anti-Korean sentiment online, as a result of my complicity. Japan lack such said narrative and retrospectively I felt that through my compulsory education quite vividly.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Outline

The overall aim of this chapter is to contextualize the intersection of racism and colonialism in Japan and lay the groundwork for the adoption of the C.o.P. as the theoretical framework to be discussed in the subsequent chapter. This Literature Review section consists of three sections. First, I delve into the construct of race, highlighting its socially constructed nature. This discussion sets the foundation for understanding race and racialization for the rest of the paper. Next, I offer a brief overview of Japan's colonial expansion, providing some policies and practices during this period and the regions affected. By showcasing those, I intend to spotlight Japan's colonial history in general for readership and, more importantly, to underscore Japan's efforts to consolidate dominance over colonized territories. These examples provide insight into the oppressive nature of Japanese colonial rule and are intended to justify the application of postcolonial and decolonial perspectives to understand colonial legacies. After pointing out the intricate links between colonialism and racism, the third section finally addresses the research gap by discussing Japan's general attitude towards racism and colonialism across governmental, academic, and societal levels and how in each level the intricacy of the links is generally overlooked or underappreciated. By foregrounding the intertwined nature of racism and colonialism, this literature review seeks to illuminate the complex dynamics shaping Japan's racial landscape and the urgent need for critical engagement with its colonial past in tackling racism.

2.1 Race as a Social Construct: Racialization as an Arbitrary Tool for Hierarchization

First and foremost, race is a social construct and not a set of scientifically or biologically substantiated "differences" (Arudou, 2021, p.3). This is not to overlook and say that there are not peoples who are, for instance, differently pigmented from one another. It is to say, instead, that "race" is basically the end product of (a) attributing the differently pigmented-ness and/or any other perceived differences to alleged socio-politico-economic "differences" and then (b) establishing that those "differences" are "scientifically" related to the pigmented-ness and/or any other perceived difference and

that they inherently exist in the genes responsible for the pigment and/or any other perceived differences one has. Racial discrimination is thus an act of abusing and manipulating the "differences" to marginalize the people with the differences, often in the interests of dominant group(s) to maintain their advantageous status in the power hierarchy in that society they all reside (Arudou, 2021, p.3)

The academic consensus in social science generally rejects the idea that we *Homo Sapiens* possess inherent characteristics that can allow to distinctively categorise ourselves into groups of traits, tendencies, and types (Arudou, 2021, p.2). Arudou cites a variety of other scholars who have debunked such biology-based, typological understanding of race to showcase that, if race really was something by which all humans can be objectively classified into, we would have seen in this time of modernity a strict classification system of humans applied all uniformly worldwide across cultures, and it simply does not exist (p.3).

Spickard (1992), for example, discusses the case of the arbitrary fluidity of the definition of "race" and how it comes to be defined depending on the society the defining takes place and how such ideation of race is only so that those with power in that society can maintain their dominance over the others of the ideated race(s). In 20th-century's the United States, Spickard brings up as an example, the notorious racial classification system called "One-Drop rule" asserted that any individual who had any, even a single known African ancestry in their lineage, along with the other several Caucasian counterparts, was black, and it even applied to the individuals who at the first glance could "pass" as a white but with any one African ancestry (and not the other way around as to state that individuals with any, even a single known white ancestry along with the other several black counterparts was white). In the white-dominated society, this rule was a component of the social construct favouring the maintenance of the whites' perceived superiority attached by the whites themselves to their own 'genes.' Spickard also cites the census data throughout centuries in the U.S., England in 1981, South Africa, and Brazil as a way to further depict how racial categories shifted over time in need of reflecting the contemporary socio-politico landscape just so the power of the privileged could be maintained (Spickard, 1992, p.18).

In 1870, the U.S. Bureau of the Census divided up the American population into races: White, Coloured (Blacks), Coloured (Mulattoes), Chinese, and Indian (U.S. Department of Interior, 1872, pp. 606-609). In 1950, the census categories reflected a different social understanding: White, Black, and Other. By 1980, the census categories reflected the ethnic blossoming of the previous two decades: White, Black, Hispanic, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, American Indian, Asian Indian, Hawaiian, Guamanian, Samoan, Eskimo, Aleut, and Other.

In England in 1981, the categories were quite different: White, West Indian, African Arab, Turkish, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladesh, Sri Lankan, and other — because sociopolitical landscape in England demanded different divisions (Banton, 1983, pp. 56-57).

In South Africa, there are four racial categories: White, African, Coloured, and Asian (Fredrickson, 1981).

In Brazil, the gradations between Black and White are many: preto, cabra, escuro, mulato escuro, mulato claro, pardo, sarará, moreno, *and* branco de terra *(Degler, 1971, p.103).*

Clearly, these distinctions are accorded not at all with somehow uniformly facilitated skin colour-based criteria. People are categorised rather in fusion of un-uniformly tied up bundles of populations by which they were othered: skin colour, nationality, class, indigeneity, and mixed race or gradations of colours, though these were all moulded into what was termed as "race." "White" is consistently as simple as just "white" regardless of where the division takes place or what other categories juxtaposed to it are; nationality, regionality, indigeneity, and ethnicity along with that colour "white."

This shows two essential points I intend to illustrate. First, the dominant, most privileged group(s) in the respective society gets to take the measure of such racial divisions while fixing their own as the stationary, central one in constancy with the power over others. Second, the making of the divisions are done not necessarily aligned with what pigments may make one look like to the eyes of the privileged. Instead, they blend the category with other non-phenotypical, non-biology-based socio-political

factors for the maintenance of their dominant status, demonstrating the constructed nature of race and the arbitrary nature of racialization. In other words, it is the dominant's making of "difference" between groups and ascribing the sense of inferiority in the difference to whom they have or want to have power over based on not just phenotypical differences but any other perceived socio-political differences just for that purpose. Racism is therefore not the matter of colour at all. Essentially, it is **racial hierarchization** based on any made-up difference. It follows, therefore, that racism does apply in Japan, whether or not it is an ethnically homogenous society (which I would like to emphasise it is not).

2.2 Japan's History of Colonialism

After establishing the construct of race as a socially constructed phenomenon, it becomes imperative to examine how such notions intersect with historical contexts, particularly within the framework of Japan's colonial expansion. Japan's colonial history offers a compelling case study where racial ideologies were not only constructed but also actively employed to justify domination and exploitation. By exploring Japan's colonial endeavours, we gain insight into how racial hierarchies were established and perpetuated, shedding light on the complex interplay between race, power, and colonialism.

Let us now first delve into a brief overview of Japan's colonial expansion, highlighting policies and practices employed during this period to consolidate dominance over colonized territories and populations.

Modernization – Meiji Restoration

In late 19th century, Japan under a feudal societal system was experiencing a period of rapid modernization. This transformation period was primarily driven by external pressures from the West, instigating Japan to rush to take on a nation-building project. In the face of the west's colonial powers being an encroaching threat to its sovereignty, Japan sought to 'catch up' and fend off powerful colonizing nations by industrializing, militarizing and economically strengthening itself. These efforts were to demonstrate in the global relations that Japan was a powerful nation. In doing so, Japan largely emulated to the models of nation-building from the West, and one essential factor learned in that process was the practice of territorial expansionism and colonialism to

build an empire. (Zohar, 2020; Tsutsui, 2020, p.30; Robillard-Martel & Laurent, 2020, p.395; Oguma, 2014, p.2).

Expansion and Annexation, and Assimilation Policies

Hokkaido the northernmost parts of Japan, Ryukyu archipelago the southernmost parts, Taiwan and Korea were amongst the major territories annexed or colonized by Japan during its colonial expansion (Vries, 2023, p.6). Additionally, Japan expanded their influence in Southeastern Asian countries under a political initiative concept called "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" which is meant to promote a collective militaristic, economic, and political unity in Asia, with Japan at its leading central position, in defence to the western colonial powers that had colonial powers over them (Miyawaki & Momose, 1990; Miyawaki, 1989; Nakao, 2008). This section describes the reality of the Japan's operation of the Sphere despite the intention of it, to add to the emphasis of the oppressive nature of the Japanese colonial administrations.

Hokkaido

Previously called "Ezo" or "Emishi" which mean "barbarian," Hokkaido was the first one to be annexed and served as one of "the starting testing grounds for the colonization…, along with Ryukyu (Okinawa) (Tsutsui, 2020, p.28-30)." This marked the beginning of the Japan's nation-building project, one of whose goals was to establish clear territorial boundaries and assimilate indigenous populations into the greater 'Japan.' (Tsutsui, 2020, p.30-35)

Historically, the indigenous Ainu people inhabited not only the Hokkaido islands but also the Tohoku area located slightly southward from Hokkaido and the border regions between Japan and Russia (Tsutsui, 2020, p.28). For thousands of years, Ainu were maintaining distinctive cultures and ways of life. Over the subsequent centuries, however, Japanese militaristic activities progressively pushed the Ainu people northward, subjecting them to economic exploitations and their land appropriation. (Tsutsui, 2020, p.28-35).

"Despite their systematic subordination of Ainu, the mainlanders did not aggressively try to change their culture, more out of contempt than respect (Tsutsui, 2020, p.30)." However, with the onset of modernity, the Japanese government officially incorporated

the entire Ainu-inhabited region (ibid). During the modernizing efforts, oppression against the Ainu persisted, encompassing not only economic exploitations and land appropriation but also cultural suppressions, assimilation, and forced loyalty to the emperor (p.31-35).

Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands

Okinawa, comprising numerous maritime islands collectively forming Ryukyu archipelago, is another region in the southernmost parts of Japan. Similarly to Hokkaido, in the late 19th century, Ryukyu archipelago was annexed as part of Japan's efforts to strengthen its military and economic power (Oguma, 2014). As Japan embarked on its nation-building project, series of Japanization policies were imposed, such as forced cultural assimilation and mandated language education (Oguma, 2014). Furthermore, forced loyalty to the emperor were enforced, undermining their autonomy and reinforcing Japan's control over the region (Oguma, 2014).

As is the case with other annexed territories, these oppressive measures were aimed at homogenizing the peoples and making them "become Japanese" and integrating the Ryukyu islands into the Japanese nation-state sphere, expanding geopolitical influence of Japan in the region (Oguma, 2014). This exemplifies Japan's systematic colonization strategies aimed at subjugating indigenous populations and asserting dominance over colonized territories, underscoring the profound impact of colonialism on regional power dynamics and cultural identities.

Taiwan

Taiwan was a territory Japan acquired from China by the effect of the treaty signed at the end of the Sino-Japan war in 1895 (Vries, 2023, p.6). Annexed into the Empire of Japan, local Taiwanese people and cultures were over time assimilated and Japanized largely by the means of educational reforms aimed at ultimately integrating the colonial subjects into the Japanese identity for military and economic purposes (Peng & Chu, 2017). This process involved various measures, including forced loyalty to the Japanese emperor in the mainland, encouragement of changing name to Japanese, and promotion of the use of Japanese language in media gradually displacing the local ones, and religious indoctrination used as a means of fostering allegiance to the Japanese state (Peng & Chu, 2017, p.446-447).

Through these efforts to solidify the colonial subjects' allegiance to the Japanese emperor, Japan aimed to instil in the Taiwanese people a sense of belonging to the "family of Japanese." This concept emphasized communal cooperation and self-dedication within a familial hierarchy, with the emperor at its pinnacle, turning the mind of the Taiwanese to that of Japanese. Such assimilationist policies were strategically employed to strengthen Japan's national power in both military and economic realms, exemplified by the mobilization of Taiwanese youth in support of Japan's goals (Peng & Chu, 2017).

Korea

Up until 1895 when China lost the Sino-Japan war, Korea was a tributary state subordinate to China, then Qing dynasty, where the hierarchical relationship was maintained by the tokens of submission sent from the subordinate state to the superior power (Oguma, 2014). Part of the agreements of the treaty signed at the end of Sino-Japan war included China's total cession of Korea under its lordship, and as soon after as 10 years later in the year 1905, Japan made Korea its protectorate, and then totally annexed into the empire in 1910.

Similarly to Taiwan, the overall objective of assimilation policies in Korea was to ultimately manufacture allegiance to Japan to the militaristic and economic interests of Japan (Peng & Chu,2017). Specific measures included the enforced use of the Japanese language, compulsory adoption of Japanese names, and economic segregation and discrimination in various socio-economic sectors. For instance, access to higher education was restricted to Japanese individuals, while Koreans were often relegated to vocational training or manual labour (Tsutsui, 2018; Yuh, 2010). This was on the basis of the ascription of inferiority to the Koreans and the Japanese "expected them to be content with this subordinate status (Yuh, 2010, 140). Additionally, Yuh argues that educational narratives in Korea were crafted to uphold the superiority and hegemonic status of the Japanese. Textbooks portrayed Korean customs and practices as primitive, emphasizing the necessity for Korean students to adopt supposedly modern and progressive Japanese customs (Yuh, 2010). These practices aimed to manufacture loyalty to Japan, facilitate military mobilization of Koreans, and secure a compliant labour force.

The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (GEACPS)

In late 1930s to mid-1940s until the defeat in the war, Japan upheld the concept GEACPS in which Japan promoted the collective Asian unity for militaristic, economic, and political development under the banner of Pan-Asianism (Miyawaki & Momose, 1990; Miyawaki, 1989; Nakao, 2008). Pan-Asianism was an ideological movement aimed at fostering the all-Asian solidarity, with Japan positioned as the central leader, in defence to western imperialism and colonialism present at that time. The aim was to instigate and exploit the sentiment of the local populations who had suffered from the exploitative colonial relationships with the western colonizers (ibid.). Upon the rhetorical pretext of 'liberating' them from the 'evil' western colonialism, Japan founded military outposts in southeastern Asian countries, including Philippines, Indonesia, Malaya (present day Malaysia), and Singapore (ibid.). However, the true intention was to appropriate land resources and local manpower to bolster their own military strength while suppressing latent independence movements (ibid: Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, n.d.). Additionally, forced language education was part of the practices conducted imposed upon local populations to ensure loyalty to the Japanese and the emperor (Miyawaki, 1989, p.23). Ultimately, the Japanese efforts to "decolonize" southeast Asian countries from western colonial rules were no different from imperialism that western powers enforced in how the local populations were affected, contradicting their portrayal of themselves as saviours (Nakao, 2009, p.23).

2.2.1 Intricate Link Between Colonialism and Racism

As exemplified in these instances including the calling the Ainu barbarians or the portrayal of Korean customs and practices as backward or primitive and Korean people as inferior, the policies and practices of the Japanese colonial administrations came with the narrative-making of the hierarchization between different groups. In this case, the Japanese had the desire to maintain the superiority over the colonial subjects. This was indeed the process of racialization discussed in 2.1. To maintain the hegemonic status over whom they colonized and justify the dominations, the Japanese constructed "difference" to craft out of it the inferiority in the colonial subjects and in turn the superiority in themselves, and perhaps assumed the inherent biologicality as the source of the differences substantiating the inferior and superior attributes. Colonialism has tight connections with racism.

I argue that this points to the intricate links between colonialism and racism and thus the sufficient groundwork to apply postcolonial and decolonial theoretical frameworks in examining issues of racism in the context of Japan. For instance, as will be displayed in the data analysis chapter later in this study, the narrative which the online users with anti-Korean sentiments frequently employ include one in which they racialize Koreans and ascribe biologically derived inferiority to them. This highlights how values and ideologies once active in the colonial period outlive the end of colonialism as the formal political administration. It is crucial to acknowledge this inherent link between colonialism and racism.

Postcolonial scholarly discussions have widely explored the ways in which colonial projects relied on racial hierarchies to justify domination, exploitation, and cultural assimilation. For instance, Frantz Fanon, in his works "Black Skin, White Masks (1952)" and "The Wretched of the Earth (1961)," examines how colonialism perpetuates racial oppression and psychological trauma among colonized peoples. Similarly, postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said and Homi Bhabha have highlighted the ways in which colonial discourses construct racialized 'others' and reinforce power differentials (Said, 2003; Bhabha, 2010).

Despite these insights, Japan's colonial legacy and its implications for contemporary racism, and, moreover, the recognition that racism itself exists, are often overlooked or downplayed within academic and public discourse. This lack of recognition hinders efforts to address systemic inequalities and perpetuates the marginalization of affected communities. The next Subsection 2.3 briefly addresses this general landscape, wherein the link between colonialism and racism, and the recognition of issues of racism existing in Japan are not given the attention they deserve, contributing to the persistence and prevalence of racial discriminations.

2.3 Japan and Racism, Colonialism, and their Intersection

This section examines perspectives on racism, colonialism, and their interconnections within the context of Japan and how they are perceived across three distinct levels: governmental authorities, academic discourse, and the general populace. By shedding light on the prevailing attitudes and landscapes towards these issues and their oft-

overlooked connections, the aim is to underscore the importance of framing discussions on racism within postcolonial and decolonial perspectives within Japanese context.

Governmental Attitudes towards Racism/Discrimination

Despite some efforts and gradual progress over the last few decades, the Government of Japan (GOJ) has faced criticism both at the global stage and domestically for its seemingly reluctant attitudes towards strengthening its anti-racial discrimination frameworks (Arudou, 2021, p.31; 日本弁護士連合会 [Japan Federation of Bar Associations], Statement on the Government of Japan's Attitude Declaration during the 4th Universal Periodic Review (UPR)[2], n.d; Kitayama, 2018; United Nations Human Rights Council, 2018). This reluctance by the national central authority has been underscored by the lack of comprehensive legal measures addressing racial discrimination and Japan's response in UN hearing that they do not need to legislate an anti-hate speech/discrimination law and that existing legal frameworks are sufficient, despite the presence of victims and their urge (ibid).

Academic Invisibility of Japan within Postcolonial Criticism

When it comes to the scholarly level, it comes down to Japan's invisibility in postcolonial criticism and the Japan's academe not thoroughly engaging in its own postcolonial roles (Choi, 2003; Arudou, 2021, p.6). Both Choi and Arudou posit this

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[2] To contextualize JFBA's significance: the Japan Federation of Bar Associations (JFBA) serves as the national bar association in Japan, comprising members from 52 local bars across the country, including both Japanese bengoshi and foreign lawyers. The JFBA operates as a self-regulating body with statutory authority to supervise lawyers and ensure their compliance with established rules. Its independence from both the government and the courts underscores its role in safeguarding the autonomy of the legal profession. The JFBA's activities can be understood from three perspectives: regulatory, representative, and civic. In its regulatory capacity, the JFBA manages the registration and supervision of foreign lawyers, particularly amidst international trade negotiations regarding legal services. However, it has been criticized for its defensive stance against pressures to liberalize Japan's legal market for foreign lawyers. The JFBA also serves a representative role by supporting lawyers involved in cross-border matters and those practicing abroad. Additionally, it functions as a civic organization, actively advocating for legal system improvements and human rights protections both domestically and internationally, as exemplified by its collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency and its statements on legal matters in foreign jurisdictions (Katayama, 2018).

general academic landscape about Japan's inactive presence in postcolonialism based on the critique of Edward Said's postcolonial discourse that essentializes the West as the only bloc guilty of colonialism. It excludes other non-western colonial powers.

While Edward Said's work has profound foundations on the postcolonial developments, postcolonial scholars such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi Bhabha have aspects in their works that would also go against Said's reductionist oversimplifying representation of colonial experiences which ignores or overlooks more nuanced experiences of colonialism. Spivak (1988), for instance, emphasizes the importance of considering the voices of intersectional and subaltern subjects, particularly women, whose perspectives are overshadowed by the hegemonic West-centric postcolonial discourse. Highlighting the intersectionality of colonial oppression, Spivak calls for a more nuanced understanding of colonialism that acknowledges the diverse experience and voices of those subjected to colonial rule. Her emphasis on this nuance would cast a critique to Said's portrayal of colonial experiences overly simplifying and failing to capture the complexity of colonial power dynamics which Choi and Arudou argue. In the similar vein, Homi Bhabha (2010) also emphasizes the need to gain nuanced perspectives of colonial experiences, adding to the analysis of the complexity of colonial dynamics. In challenging the binary representation of the colonizer/the colonized experiences inherent in Saidian essentialization, he explores the concept of hybridity and the ways in which colonial subjects negotiate their identities in the intersections of colonial power structures. He argues that colonial subjects either wholly incorporate nor completely reject cultural influences into their identity formation, instead of taking either the colonizers' or the colonized's pre-colonial ones clear-cut exclusively to the other.

Choi(2003) and Arudou(2021, p.6) place Japan's absence from postcolonial discussions within the same context of the criticism about the Saidian essentialization, which is that only the West is the colonial powers ever present. Said's discourse on colonialism primarily draws from Western experiences, resulting in an oversimplified portrayal of colonial dynamics that fails to capture the complexities of non-western colonial powers. Specifically, the models and formations of colonial power are predicated upon specific sets and patterns of cultures, values, and philosophical frameworks inherent in the west, which are then expanded to be generalized to characterise any country deemed a

colonial power. While Said acknowledges this limitation, it nonetheless has inadvertently caused other non-western colonial powers to be excluded from being counted as a colonial power – such as Japan (Choi, 2003; Arudou, 2021, p.6). Consequently, Japan's colonial history and its intricacies and cultural/historical specificities in their colonialism remain inclined to be overlooked and underexplored within academic discussions on colonialism and postcolonialism.

"Racism" Obscured in the General Mass

Kawai's work (2015) suggests that the lack of recognition and understanding of racism in the Japanese populace can be partly attributed to the linguistic and conceptual distancing facilitated by terms such as "minzoku" (ethnicity) and "jinshu (race, "types of humans")." She explores how these terms, which are often operating as equivalents to "race" in Japan, have been linguistically deracialized and stripped of the connotations and implications associated with the term "race". This deracialization creates a conceptual distancing from the realities of racism and racial discriminations, causing the general populace to fail to recognize that racism exists in Japan (Kawai, 2015). Despite this linguistic deracialization, the discriminatory practices associated with "minzoku sabetsu" or "jinshu sabetsu"(sabetsu = discrimination) remain deeply entrenched within Japanese society. Kawaii's exploration underscores the critical need to bridge this conceptual gap and recognize the underlying racial dynamics obscured by linguistic nuances (ibid.).

Additionally, Kawai's analysis reveals aspects of Japan's historical negotiation of racial identity which involved a complex process of association with Western ideals of civilization while simultaneously distancing itself from other Asian nations, based on biologically perceived notions of race and superiority/inferiority hierarchization (Kawai, 2015). This historical context underscores underlying themes of racial hierarchical perception and racial discrimination persistent in contemporary Japanese society, exemplified by online expressions of racism against groups, such as Koreans. Thus, the general populace's ignorance regarding racism in Japan can be attributed to both the linguistic distancing facilitated by terms like "minzoku" and "jinshu," as well as the historical legacy of racial identity formation within Japanese society.

Positioning Japan Within Postcolonial and Decolonial Perspectives for Racism

Central to the significance of this study is the framing of Japan's colonial history as a fundamental driving force of racial hierarchization. This positioning of Japan within a specific postcolonial light serves as the cornerstone of this thesis, allowing for a critical examination of racism in Japan. While existing research has offered valuable insights into racism from various disciplinary perspectives, there remains a notable gap in addressing Japan's complicity in perpetuating racial hierarchies stemming from its colonial past. By foregrounding Japan's colonial legacy as a key determinant of contemporary racial dynamics, this study aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of racism in Japan. It is imperative to emphasize the need for research that adopts this specific lens, shedding light on Japan's role in perpetuating systemic inequalities and acknowledging its culpability in fostering racial discrimination. In doing so, we can challenge prevailing narratives and foster critical dialogue aimed at dismantling racial hierarchies and promoting social justice.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Overview

In this section, I outline the theoretical frameworks that I have used for analysing the intersection of racism and colonialism in Japan. At the broadest level in this study, the concept of "Coloniality of Power" (C.o.P.) is used, which serves as a lens through which I illuminate the enduring power inequalities stemming from Japan's colonial past. Developed by scholars, particularly Aníbal Quijano, the C.o.P. framework allows you to elucidate how complex colonial legacies persist in shaping contemporary power dynamics. Additionally, two theories within Critical Race Theory are used: "Colour-blind racism" by Bonilla-Silva (2006) and "Essentialism" by Delgado and Stefancic (2023) and Sayer (1997). These theories are to explain the manifestations of racialization patterns seen in the data.

I will first briefly explain the intended roles of each of the said theories within this study, and then move on to the elucidation of the theories themselves. I will then explain my rationale and acknowledgement and limitations in using coloniality of power in the context of this study.

3.1 The Roles of the Theories

In this study, I have two levels of phenomenon that I am concerned about. The first one is the themes and patterns of racializing nuances the Japanese people may have against minorities in Japan. For this end, I have used two theories within the realm of Critical Race Theory (CRT): Colourblind Racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006) and Essentialism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2023: Sayer, 1997). The second one is the underlying power relations upon which those themes and patterns are occurring or manifesting. For this end, I apply coloniality of power to illuminate the power relations throughout the analyses and discussions. In a nutshell, I first use CRT to illustrate the patterns of racializing expressions, and then illuminate the theoretical possibility for coloniality of power by providing historical contexts to explore the sources of the manifestations.

For looking at the surfacing patterns of racializing expressions, I have collected and analysed data that are targeting at Zainichi Koreans, a particular minority group in

Japan whose minority status was born directly due to the policies and practices conducted by the Japanese authority during the colonial era. Here, by incorporating coloniality of power, I intend to illuminate the broader picture of the power relations within which those racializing patterns have manifested. In other words, I am going to use CRT to explain the manifestations of racism in Japan and use coloniality of power to accentuate that Japan's history of colonialism and all its implications are the source of the manifestations.

3.2 Coloniality of Power and Critical Race Theory

Coloniality of Power

Coloniality of power is the idea first presented by Anibal Quijano (Quijano, 2000: Restrepo, 2018, p.1). It is a decolonial concept that explains the system of dominations outliving the formal end of colonialism, on the axes of race and capitalism (Restrepo, 2018, p.1). Quijano (2000;2007) argued that coloniality of power operates through the continued imposition of Eurocentric norms, values, and ideologies onto formerly colonized societies, perpetuating systems of domination and oppression. Central to Quijano's concept is the notion that colonialism was not merely a historical event but a structural phenomenon that persists in shaping social, economic, and political relations (Quijano, 2007, p.169). The imposition of colonial hierarchies created a system of racialized domination, categorizing populations into hierarchies of superiority and inferiority based on perceived racial and cultural differences (Quijano, 2007, p.169: Restrepo, 2017, p.1). These biologically and structurally derived hierarchies were intertwined with capitalist modes of production, as colonial powers exploited colonized lands and peoples for economic gain (Restrepo, 2017, p.1: Quijano, 2017, p.171). Thus, coloniality of power illuminates how race and capitalism intersect to perpetuate systems of oppression and inequality. This framework highlights the interplay between race, capitalism, and colonialism, revealing how colonial hierarchies persist in shaping social structures and power dynamics. In the context of this study, coloniality of power serves as a lens through which to analyse the racialization patterns and power differentials evident in Japanese society, particularly in relation to Zainichi Koreans. By examining how colonial legacies continue to influence contemporary attitudes and behaviours, this framework offers insights into the enduring impact of Japan's colonial past on its present-day social landscape.

Colour-Blind Racism

"Colour-blind racism" was conceptualized by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2006) in the context of the United States to criticise the approach of the white people that race as in the skin colour is no longer relevant and that the way to end racism against the black people is by not making it relevant and ignoring it. This overlooks the power imbalance in the societal structure that is in fact operating based on skin colour and the associations with it, which cannot be overcome simply when the dominant white people pretend that the colour is irrelevant anymore, leaving the structure unaddressed (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). The key here is the dominant group's unawareness of the systemic nature of the racism and the attitudes that their behaviour without the awareness of it is righteous. I apply this theory in the Japanese context to refer to the attitude of overlooking the societal structure. In the context of Japan, colour-blind racism manifests in the societal attitudes and policies that downplay or ignore the significance of race and ethnicity. Despite the existence of racial hierarchies and discrimination, there is often a prevailing belief that Japan is a racially homogeneous society (Narzary, 2004; Li, 2014) and that race-based inequalities are not significant. This perspective overlooks the systemic nature of racism and fails to address the structural barriers faced by marginalized racial and ethnic groups, such as Zainichi Koreans. By applying the concept of colour-blind racism to the Japanese context, this study aims to shed light on the ways in which race continues to shape social dynamics and perpetuate inequalities, even in a society where racial diversity may be less visible.

Essentialism

Essentialism is another theory within the realm of Critical Race Theory, developed and discussed by multiple scholars, such as Delgado and Stefancic (2023) and Sayer (1997). It is the belief that there are inherent and unchanging qualities or characteristics that define a particular group of people (Sayer, 1997). When one essentialises about a group, they reduce and minimize the qualities of a particular group of people in question in a simplified or oversimplified way. It follows that it ignores the diversity and complexity within the group, leading to stereotypes and generalization. In the Japanese context, essentialism can be observed in the stereotyping and categorization of individuals based on perceived racial or ethnic characteristics. This can manifest in various forms, such as assumptions about the cultural practices, behaviours, or abilities of different racial or

ethnic groups. For example, Zainichi Koreans may be essentialized as inherently disloyal or untrustworthy due to their perceived connection to North Korea, ignoring the diversity and complexity of their experiences and identities. By examining the role of essentialism in shaping attitudes towards minority groups in Japan, this study aims to challenge these oversimplified narratives and highlight the need for a more nuanced understanding of race and ethnicity in Japanese society.

3.3 Acknowledgement and Limitations

Focus on Race

While I am aware that coloniality matrix of power is made of the trinity of racism, capitalism, and modernity and that it is not fitting to use the theory as the framework to analyse racism as the continuing legacies of colonialism only through the lens of racism and then argue that there is coloniality of power in operation, this study nonetheless focuses its approach on the race element for mainly the three reasons below:

Depth of Analysis

Focusing on race allows for a deeper and more thorough examination of racial dynamics in Japanese society, as it enables to delve into the specific mechanisms and manifestations of racism and more focused connection-building with historical contexts, within the coloniality of power framework.

Methodological Advantages

As briefly touched upon in *1.3.4 Selection of Koreans as the Group* and *1.5.2 Motivation* in the introduction chapter, I have personal past experience as an active consumer of anti-Zainichi/Korean discourse, particularly in Japanese cyberspace. It was full of racializing expressions with particular nuances and motives, and my past experience in retrospection can add to the depth of analysis. That way, I can aim to enhance and enrich the depth and authenticity of my analysis.

Practical Considerations

Considering time constraints and scope constrains, I have focused on race for conducting a more manageable as well as focused analysis without overextending into the complexities of the intersection of capitalism, modernity, and racism. I also believe

that if you are to take on such a grand analysis project, it would be beneficial to joint author in order to minimize the risk of biases in the overall research design. In that respect too, I believe it is beneficial to focus on one dimension to only open the doors for further research opportunities.

4 METHODOLOGY

Overview

In this chapter, I will discuss the methodology I have chosen for this study to tackle my research questions (reiterated below). In the first subchapter, I will first discuss my overall research design to address my specific research aims by each component in the following order: methodological approach, researcher positionality, and ethical considerations. I will then discuss each of them in details in the subsequent subchapters.

4.1 Research Design

The research design encompasses the overarching framework and methodological approach employed in this study to investigate the intersection of racism and colonialism in Japan, particularly in relation to Zainichi Koreans. As in any research, your methodology, research questions, and theoretical framework need to be in a coherent coordination with one another. For the purpose of further illustrating the clarity of the coordination in the case of this study, in this subchapter I will provide a broad overview of the structure of my research design.

To reiterate my research questions,

> **How does Japan's history of colonialism manifest in racialization dynamics against Zainichi Koreans in contemporary Japanese society?**

 My specific research questions are

1. **What are the key themes and patterns in online discourse surrounding Zainichi Koreans, particularly in relation to Japan's colonial history?**
2. **How do unequal power dynamics rooted in the colonial period influence racializing attitudes, behaviors, and discourse towards Zainichi Koreans in online spaces?**
3. **To what extent/how do historical narratives and stereotypes shape perceptions of Zainichi Koreans in contemporary Japanese society, as reflected in online discourse?**

Methodological Approach

The methodological approach taken in this study is characterised by its rigor, its reflexivity, and ethical considerations. This research is online ethnography in nature. Data collections involved purposive sampling of postings on X (previously known as Twitter) containing racializing expressions against Zainichi Koreans on the platform. It is followed by reflexive thematic analysis of the collected data using the framework outlined by Braun and Clarke (2022). Subjectivity, the foundational component of reflexive thematic analysis, influenced the entire process of it, therefore I maintained a high level of self-awareness throughout.

Researcher Positionality

As the researcher, I believe it is essential to acknowledge my positionality. My positionality as a native Japanese individual and my past experience as an active consumer of anti-Korean/Zainichi discourse in the Japanese cyberspace greatly informed the research process. This reflexivity was integrated into the study design to acknowledge and mitigate potential biases, while also recognizing the vale of personal subjectivity in the context of reflexive thematic analysis as a source of insight that can add depth.

Ethical Considerations

As well as the acknowledgement of my positionality as a researcher, ethical considerations were of paramount importance for me as it is for any researcher. I have conducted my research procedures on my own informed decisions regarding the privacy and anonymity of the users whose postings were collected and sampled.

4.2 Methodological Approach

4.2.1 Epistemological and Ontological Considerations

According to Bryman, Epistemological considerations are concerned with "what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge (2016, p.24)" or how knowledge is produced. Ontological considerations, on the other hand, are concerned with "the nature of social entities (2016, p.28)." There are mainly **interpretivism** and **positivism** for epistemological stance and **constructivism** and **objectivism** (p.24-29). In this

qualitative study, I define its epistemological stance as **interpretivism** and its ontological stance as **constructivism.**

Interpretivism is a view that emphasizes that the social world cannot be studied using a traditional scientific model and that methods of social science research should reflect the distinctiveness of human consciousness and experience (Bryman, 2016, p.26-28). Unlike positivism which is "an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of natural sciences to study social reality and beyond, (p.24)," it values how things are perceived and experienced. **Constructivism** "asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being polished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena are not only produced through social interactions but are in a constant state of revision (p.29)," contrary to objectivism that is characterized by the stance which advocates that "social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors" independent of human perceptions and experiences (p.28). By adopting an interpretivist epistemological stance and a constructivist ontological stance, this study acknowledges the subjective nature of social phenomena and seeks to understand how individuals perceive and construct their realities within the context of racial dynamics in Japan.

4.2.2 Analytical Method: Reflexive Thematic Analysis

In order to tackle my research questions, I have chosen Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) by (Braun & Clarke, 2022) as the analytical method. I have decided Reflexive Thematic Analysis is a fitting choice for the purpose of my research for the conceptual alignment of its core factors, theoretical flexibility and subjectivity as an asset, with the research objectives.

Theoretical Flexibility and Alignment with the Overall Research Objectives
Thematic Analysis aligns well with my overarching research objectives, which center on unravelling the themes and patterns of racism and its racializing expressions against Zainichi Koreans. By scrutinizing these themes and patterns as reflections of Japan's colonial history, RTA enables a thorough exploration of the underlying meanings and contexts embedded within the data. This method not only facilitates the identification of recurrent themes and patterns but also provides valuable insights into the socio-cultural dynamics shaping racial attitudes and behaviours in contemporary Japanese society.

Within the broad theoretical framework of coloniality of power, where 'race' intricately intersects with 'capitalism' and 'modernity,' RTA allows me to place my focal scope on 'race' for a deeper understanding of how the 'race' element operates in its manifestation. Furthermore, the theoretical flexibility of this analytical method RTA (Brau & Clarke, 2021, p.5) accommodates the complexity of this study's aim, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the intricate relationship between historical legacies of colonialism and present-day racial dynamics.

4.2.3 Subjectivity

The reason for the selection derives from its reflexive nature, where your subjectivity is an asset in this qualitative research, rather than a liability that risks undermining "objective truth" with the researcher's "biases," (p.12) both of which embodies what positivism and objectivism align with, as discussed above. Unlike the discipline such as psychology which Braun and Clarke come from, where subjectivity is viewed as "something problematic, something that disrupts the objectivity of …science, and needs to be controlled and managed," subjectivity is something that is fundamental and essential to RTA, without which it does not happen (p.12). Instead of such objectivism-based (or (post)positivism-based, as Braun and Clarke word it) "universal truths" that can be achieved independent of methodologies employed, RTA is concerned more with contextual and situated knowledge where each unique subjectivity can offer to the dialogues (p.228).

I would like to emphasize here that this subjectivity-centered approach both signals particular advantages and some potential limitations in the context of this study. The advantages stem in the fact that this study explores nuances of the phenomenon in the area that I believe is underresearched and overlooked, as discussed in Literature Review.
The work of Robillard-Martel and Laurent (2019) illustrates Zainichi Koreans' experiences and resistances building on how Japanese colonial periods have profoundly shaped the oppressions and the power imbalance the Zainichi have been placed within. These postcolonial experiences offer various unique and nuanced perspectives living in postcolonial Japan, which can only be attained if you place values on contextual and situated meanings, instead of quantitative research that seek positivism-oriented

objectivist truths that dismiss personal viewpoints into events and occurrences (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.12, p.228). The research objectives in this qualitative thesis aligns with this nature of subjectivity Braun and Clarke discuss as a valuable tool: exploring similarly nuanced dimensions of contemporary racism taking place in Japan against the ethnic group rooted in Japanese colonial policies. Due to the matter being framed and situated specifically within the context of Japanese colonialism, I have decided that RTA best meets my research focus.

The other advantage is that the online anti-Korean sentiment communities are something that I was a participant in myself in the past. This means that, prior to the onset of RTA, I was already familiar to a degree with the contents posted and the motives behind them. Coupling the retrospection and introspection with the academic insights I have gained about 10 years later since divorcing myself from the discriminatory online interactions, I would like to accentuate that my analyses would have richer and deeper nuance.

Interpretive Subjectivity

Nonetheless, as a potential bias and limitation, I would like to make an acknowledgement that my interpretive subjectivity influenced during the entire process of conducting RTA - from data collection, familiarization, coding, and theme-making as I engaged in those. While subjectivity is what enriches this study, it conversely means it can be 'biases' limiting other aspects and views that could also have otherwise been potentially enriching in data analysis.

With that in mind, for the academic rigor, credibility, and transparency sake, to keep track to the best of my effort of how my subjectivity has exerted impact on this research journey, I have kept taking notes in every moment of occasion where I realized or I reflected my subjectivity was particularly in charge. In the subsequent sections, I will describe how my subjectivity informed every step of the process in RTA — 1. Data collection, 2. Familiarization of yourself with the collected data, 3.Initial coding, 4. Developing Initial themes, 5. Reviewing and developing themes, and 6. Refining, defining, and naming themes.

I will first explicate the basic functions of how the chosen platform, X (previously known as Twitter) works, as in how users interact with each other and what kinds of engagement (Likes and Comment etc) you can have in the platform, because the nature of the platform is deeply intertwined with how my subjectivity affects my

understanding of inter-user dynamics, informing my decisions on, for instance, which data to sample. After offering the familiarization of the platform, I will then move on to the description of the roles and the influences of my subjectivity in each of the stated steps in RTA I have conducted.

The Chosen Site of Research: The Online Community Platform, X

X, or "Twitter" as known previously, is a social media platform where users can casually and light-heartedly make a posting consisting of up to 280 characters (140 previously) about their insights, thoughts, or reactions to highly mundane things to more existential topics, be it politics, cultures, entertainment, personal hobbies, or personal diary-like accounts. Users can be individuals or groups, and as of 2020, "192 million people were active daily users" of the platform (Mason and Singh, 2022, p.94).

On the platform, users can engage in various ways with each other. Similar to "Friends" on facebook, users can 'Follow' other uses so the contents of the Followed users will then appear in their Feed or Timeline. One difference between Follow on X and Friends on Facebook is that Follows do not necessarily have to be mutual for the content to appear in the Feed: on X, user A can Follow user B to make the contents of user B appear in user A's Feed without user B Following back user A.

While users on X can share their thoughts and insights through posts, the platform also facilitates interactions through various engagement features. These interactions play a crucial role in shaping the user experience and the visibility of content. Understanding how users engage with posts through actions such as Likes, Reposts, and Replies provides valuable insights into the dynamics of online discourse and community formation on the platform.

On X, users can engage in various ways. There are mainly "**Post** (or still dominantly conventionally referred to as "tweet." In this thesis I will use both terms interchangeably.)," "**Likes**," "**Reply**," "**Repost** (or **Retweet**)," and "**Quote Repost** (or **Quote Retweet**)."

- "Posting," or tweeting in itself involves composing and posting original content without engaging directly with another user. The Posted content then appears on the timeline of one's followers, much like a posting on Facebook you make on your own.

- Liking a tweet is a function that usually indicates approval or agreement, much like "Like" on Facebook.
- Reply is when you respond directly to another user's tweet, creating a threaded conversation, also similar to when you reply to a posting or a comment on Facebook. Reposting shares a tweet with one's followers. A Reposted tweet appears on the timeline of the Followers of the Reposter even if those Followers are not Following the user that has made that Reposted content, like Share on Facebook where a Shared content appears on the feed or timeline of the Friends of the Sharer.
- Quote Repost, finally, allows users to share the original tweet they want to share along with their own commentary or response as an independent, normal tweet and not a reply to another, providing context and facilitating conversation. This is also like Share on Facebook when you Share a content with your own commentary or a response as an unthreaded posting, to which users can then engage with others.

How My Subjectivity Influenced the Conduction of RTA

With the basic walkthrough of how X works in place, I will now share lay out how my subjectivity impacted my RTA. I will go through the phases in the following phases — 1. Data collection, 2. Familiarization of yourself with the collected data, 3. Initial coding, 4. Developing Initial themes, 5. Reviewing and developing themes, and 6. Refining, defining, and naming themes. This is the order tracing that of the phases Brau and Clarke lay out (2021). Although in this section each of these phrases will be sequentially treated, it is important to note that these are not to be thought of as a linear process. Rather, it is an iterative process in which the researcher is to go back and forth between these phases. That said, let us start with the phase one – data collection.

4.2.4 Data Collection – Sampling Strategy

The data collection strategy was purpose sampling in nature. As the elements that made the data collection purposive sampling, there are
1. Keywords and hashtags to search tweets by,
2. Timeframe,
3. Language, and

4. User selection – tone and sentiment consistency, mutual followers, and filter bubbles.

Keywords

I have used both my subjective-retrospective recollection and observations to identify the words that seemed to have particular relevance to anti-Korean/Zainichi sentiment:

1. **"在日** (Zainichi)**,"**

2. **"在日 AND 慰安婦 (***ianhu,* so-called "comfort women"**),"**

3. **"三国人** *(sangokujin,* a politically charged derogatory term to refer to Zainichi Koreans as**),"**

4. **"在日 AND 三国人,"**

5. **"特亜, 特定アジア**(*tokua, tokutei ajia,* another politically charged derogatory term)**,"**

6. **"朝鮮**(*chosen*, "Korea/Korean") **OR 学校** (*gakko*, "school"),"

7. **"反日** (*Hannichi* – "anti-Japan")**,"** and

8. **" #嫌いです韓国 (***kirai desu kankoku,* "I hate you, South Korea"**) AND 在日**.**"**

Amongst all the other plethora of words commonly used by anti-Zainichi sentiment users, I have used these words only to avoid overextending the scope, especially amid the time constraints I found myself in. As shown, some of those terms are politically charged. The political events those words refer to are the topics of contestations often involving historical revisionist [3] attitudes I recall these anti-Korean/Zainichi frequently displayed.

Timeframe

When it comes to time frame or date range of the tweets to sample, while I contemplated on the potential benefits for defining the range within which to filter search tweets by the aforementioned words, I have ended up not strictly setting the time boundaries. The reason is to secure the wide range of themes and patterns expected within what the keywords could capture. In my retrospection, the anti-Zainichi/Korean sentiment online within certain groups of such users has been so pervasive and persistent for as long as I could go back my memory for that I did not feel it was

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[3] Discussed in detail in Excerpt 2 in Theme 1, in the Findings chapter.

necessary to strictly set the timeframe. Occasional political disputes rose in the Japan-Korea. While those occurrences might have likely reinforced and reproduced the sentiment, I do not believe, however, that those events significantly altered the underlying patterns or themes in their expressions of racialization. In that consideration, I did not see any significant benefit in setting the timeframe. I have rather thought it could even be potentially unbeneficial to do so, as it could limit the chance of my exposure to more diverse patterns and themes in the search results, given my belief that the attitudes and themes underlying the anti-korean/zainichi sentiment in general seem unchanging over time.

Language

As I am a native Japanese individual myself, and I consumed the general anti-Korean/Zainichi sentiment I was exposed to before all in Japanese, the language of the tweets sampled was only in Japanese. In the subsequent analysis chapter, I have quoted some of the tweets but only shown translated to English by my own hand for ethical reasons discussed later in **4.4 Ethical Considerations**. The point about subjectivity here is to denote that in the process of translation, while I have the advantage to capture subtle nuances in the contents in Japanese, at the same time it is possible that there are some translation loss or some biased ways to interpret the content including but not limited to because of the vast linguistic differences between English and Japanese.

User Selection

During the process of choosing tweets to sample, I have taken in account some characteristics of the user of the tweets. This involved checking if the user has consistently been displaying noticeable anti-Korean/Zainichi sentiment in their past tweets and if certain users I have identified of the consistency are mutually Following one another. The reasons for checking those are mainly to streamline the process of data collection. These users have consistently showcased the tendency of only Following the like-minded people, meaning that fellow anti-Korean/Zainichi users almost only connect to each other. This behaviour forms the phenomenon referred to as filter bubbles, within which users are only exposed to the type of content they are likely to want to consume made easier to access than others by the function and the algorithm operating in the platform (Spohr, 2017, p152-153). This results in a highly personalized

experience in the platform "that fails to offer users a set of alternatives to choose from (Rader and Gray, 2015, p.175, as cited in Spohr, 2017, p.152-153).

Taking the advantage of this mechanism of filter bubble, I could enhance the efficiency of collecting data to a degree. These users who all possess like-minded anti-Zainichi/Korean sentiment are collectively referred to as "Netouyo," broadly speaking internet right wingers (Yasuda, 2015, p.25). While I acknowledge it also leaves some possibility of losing out other themes and patterns, I have streamlined sampling efficiency effectively accessing the type of tweet contents I was looking for, by immersing myself in the Netouyo filter bubbles.

Additionally, I have also conducted some keyword researching within each of the accounts identified to be in such a filter bubble for retrieving some data. Overall, across the accounts, consistent patterns and themes were developed collecting that way.

Reading of Racialization

In deciding the tweets to sample, I took the approach that would be the mixture of semantic-latent/essentialist-constructionist (Brau and Clarke, 2021, p.9-10). It is not a clear-cut distinction; it is rather a spectrum. Semantic/essentialist means you read the data rather descriptively, while latent/constructionist means you do so with some interpretation involved beyond what it descriptively conveys. For the former, I look for directly derogatory, insulting expressions like dehumanization (calling them vermin while for the latter I look for some nuanced racialization beyond politically charged topics being discussed).

4.2.5 Familiarization

In the Familiarization phase, I went through the dataset two three times in total, each time on a different day making notes on the tweets each day. The note taking was kept on the level just to organize the elements of the data without reducing any of it to undermine subsequent processes and it was to keep track of how interpretation and reading of data differed each time so as to reinforce familiarization of the data and to capture potential range of data it could offer: in reality, no significant difference emerged across the three times.

4.2.6 Initial Coding / Developing Initial Themes

Throughout the initial coding and theme development stages, my retrospection remained integral to interpreting the data. Similar to the data collection stage, I adopted an approach that encompassed a blend of semantic-latent/essentialist-constructionist perspectives. However, during initial coding, I leaned slightly more towards the latent/constructionist end of the spectrum.

To facilitate this process, I utilized techniques such as creating mind maps to visualize interconnections and color-marking codes with similar themes. It is important to note that my interpretation was not solely reliant on the data itself; rather, it was informed by a combination of data analysis and my own memory. This memory recall assisted in identifying intersecting or closely related codes, aiding in the collation and clustering of thematic elements.

4.2.7 Reviewing and Developing Themes/Refining, Defining, and Naming Themes

During the reviewing and theme development phase, I organized them under the same level of abstraction, ultimately leading to the formation of my final themes. Regrettably, due to time constraints, I was only able to develop two main themes, one of which comprised three subpatterns. Throughout this phase, as well as the entire process, I remained mindful of my theoretical frameworks to ensure relevance to the racialization interpretation of the data. This phase, like the Initial Coding / Developing Initial Themes stage, was guided by analysis and my own retrospective interpretation.

Throughout the whole process, as this whole process throughout is iterative, I have gone back to collecting data for some additions. When I reached the point where I saw saturation emerging, I stopped collecting more data.

4.3 Researcher Positionality

As the primary researcher conducting this study, it's essential to acknowledge my positionality and its potential influence on the research process and outcomes. As a

native Japanese individual who has been exposed to the general anti-Korean/Zainichi sentiment prevalent in certain online communities, my own experiences, perspectives, and biases unavoidably shaped various aspects of this study.

My positionality as a researcher with limited time constraints and the need for efficiency in data collection further influenced methodological choices, such as purposive sampling and reliance on retrospective recollection for identifying keywords and hashtags.

Throughout the research process, I maintained reflexivity, continuously reflecting on how my background and positionality might impact the interpretation of findings. Additionally, I strived for transparency and rigor in reporting methods and results, acknowledging the potential limitations associated with my positionality.

By explicitly addressing my positionality and reflexivity, I aim to enhance the transparency and credibility of this study, allowing readers to critically engage with the research findings within the context of the researcher's background and perspectives.

Acknowledging Absence: The Voice of Resistance

It is important to recognize also that the focus of this study primarily centered on capturing and analyzing racializing expressions directed against Zainichi individuals, the oppressed group within the context of Japanese society. Consequently, the dataset inherently lacks the presence of voices of resistance or counter-narratives against the prevailing anti-Korean/Zainichi sentiment. By prioritizing the worldview of the oppressor, the dataset predominantly reflects the perspectives and discourses perpetuated by individuals espousing discriminatory attitudes and behaviors.

The absence of the voice of resistance within the dataset underscores the limited scope of this study in capturing the full spectrum of social dynamics and responses to racialization. It is crucial to acknowledge that resistance movements, advocacy efforts, and counter-discourses challenging dominant narratives of oppression exist within society, yet may not be fully represented within the collected data.

In an effort to mitigate this limitation and enrich the analysis, academic literature and theoretical frameworks were utilized as a form of triangulation. Drawing upon existing scholarly work provided additional perspectives and insights, offering a broader context

for understanding the complex interplay of power dynamics, racialization processes, and resistance strategies within the socio-political landscape.

While the dataset may predominantly reflect the perspectives of the oppressor, the incorporation of diverse scholarly perspectives serves to contextualize and augment the analysis, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the broader societal dynamics at play.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

When it comes to ethical considerations, it essentially comes down to maintaining the respect towards the privacy of the users whose tweets I have sampled. My ultimate decision to keep my ethical standard is to only provide the translated versions of the tweets and not any other sources to avoid leaving any possibility of tracing to the original webpage with the tweet.

To my researching, it appears that the issue surrounding the privacy in academic settings has not been agreed-upon yet. Upon reviewing the discussions by Blazhevski (2022) and Mason and Singh (2022), the point of contention revolves around the disclosure of any identifiable information of the users, despite the X's official privacy policy that allows researchers to use user-made contents and that encourages users to only share the contents they are comfortable sharing with anybody (Mason and Singh, 2022, p.94). Given the high probability that many users do not even bother to read that part of privacy policy in registering an account (p.94), it follows that users sometimes share their contents without any intention of it being shared beyond their intended audience.

The risk of reaching outside the intended audience applies the same to researchers. The consequences of the users being identified are highly unpredictable, especially in a study like this where I handle tweets that contain disheartening, disturbing, and upsetting expressions and remarks to some groups, especially Zainichi/Korean people who are part of my intended audiences. While it is rather speculative, it is also theoretically possible that some of the audiences could go to the original tweets themselves, locate the account, and directly confront the users out of anger or other triggered emotions. While I would entirely show my empathy in such scenarios, it is not

at all my intention in this study to cause polemics between audiences and the sampled users.

The possibility of polemicizaiton is only an example such elevations of audiences and consequences can cause. Overall, my decision not to include any identifiable information is based in my belief that the fact that X's official terms do allow any external use such as for an academic project does not nullify the obligation that researchers still take ethical considerations in cautions and stay considerate of any possible outcomes, as Mason and Singh also assert (2022, p.106).

They also state that while it is important to uphold respect for privacy, altering the contents too much can now then "take away from the integrity and value of the data, which is often enhanced by retaining the original words of the author (Saundaers et al, 2015, as cited in Mason and Singh, 2022, p.108)." To balance out the privacy concerns and the data value, I have tried to translate the content in a way that is not too hinting of the original wording and sentence structure but does not take away the intended meanings and nuances.

Overall, my decision to not include any identifiable information stems from the ambiguous nature of the consensus when it comes to handling data on X specifically. With all things considered, I have decided to stick to maintaining respect to privacy of the users.

5 FINDINGS

As the result of reflexive thematic analysis on *X,* I have developed two main themes. The first theme is **"'It's not *sabetsu*, it's *kubetsu*.' Blindness to structural power inequality."** (*sabetstu* 差別 = discrimination; *kubestu* 区別 = differentiation, distinction) The second theme is **"Oh well, He has gotten a peninsular face…" – Japanese Superiority.** For the second theme, I have developed 3 sub-patterns as follows: ethnicity/racial/nationality othering, conflation of all Koreans, and negative portrayal.

5.1 Theme 1: "'It's not *sabetsu*, it's *kubetsu*.' Blindness to structural power inequality."

Overview

At the core of my theme-developing of this first theme is my problematization of the unequal power structure that exists between the Japanese and Zainichi Koreans and that it has been continuing to inform their power relations in contemporary Japanese society ongoing since the colonial periods. "Structural power inequality" here refers to the systemic disparities in power and privilege embedded within social, economic, and political structures, resulting in unequal distribution of opportunities, resources, and outcomes for different groups within a given society.

In this section 5.1, I will first provide the quotes of sample tweets that represent this theme and then highlight the specific cases the tweets are referring to, wherein the inequality is present to my analysing. After providing the analytical discussions of the racialization manifestations specifically in the tweets, I will then delve into historical and political backgrounds and contexts that have led to the asymmetrical power circumstances, in order to strengthen the analytical points for the racialization manifestations. By introducing the relevant historical contexts, I aim to set the stage towards applying the framework of coloniality of power within the context of the contemporary Japanese society, highlighting the continuity of the power matrix continuing to inform the asymmetrical relations since colonial and postcolonial periods, particularly between the Japanese and Zainichi Koreans. At the backdrop of this historical contexts, the ultimate aim of this Theme 1 section, and through the entire analysis reporting chapter as well as the entire thesis, is to illuminate that very coloniality of power matrix from the perspective of the racialization element in it.

5.1.1 Sampled Tweets and Their Racialization Patterns

Excerpt Tweet 1:

I have chosen two tweets as the representative of this main theme. Let us take a look one by one:

> *Reading it reminded me of Zainichi saying "Make Korean schools free too!" They're probably saying "Don't discriminate!" but I don't. I do make distinctions, though.*

Context of the Excerpt Tweet

This Excerpt Tweet Quote Reposts another tweet that expresses the essential basic needs of LGBTQ sexual minority communities in emergency situations. The Quote Reposted user perceives that the communities are making an entitled preferential demand and that it would be an unfair preferential treatment "privileging" the communities if they get granted access to the basic needs such as drugs like hormonal drug indispensable to their lives, while being in the post-disaster shelters. The Quote Reposted user is clearly displaying their unawareness of how essential those basic needs are to be met, painting out the expression of basic needs to be an unfair demanding and the attempt to have "privilege" over them. The Quote Reposted tweet brutally downplays the significance of having access to medicines, prominently displaying the ignorance of how necessary they are.

The user of the Excerpt Tweet Quote Reposts the tweet, expressing that their "entitled demanding attitude" resonates that of Zainichi Koreans calling for funding of Zainichi Korean schools (*Chosen Gakkō,* 朝鮮学校). These specific Korean ethnic schools have been defunded because they were excluded from the tuition fee program that grants subsidies to facilitate tuition fees (Brasor 2021). The reasons for that exclusion include ungrounded rumour that areas of school operations of these Korean ethnic schools are dictated by the state North Korea with whom Japan currently do not have a friendly diplomatic relation. The GOJ officially states it is the reason of this decision of the exclusion (Kayama, 2018).

Colour-Blindness

Bonilla-Silva's concept of colour-blindness (2006) would suggest that the user is masking the discrimination under the guise of neutrality, because they are overlooking and unaware of the underlying power imbalance historically developed between the Japanese and Zainichi Koreans (will be discussed subsequently) by suggesting that it is a legitimate distinction – *kubetsu* - of treatment upon the assumed absence of such power imbalance. Their explicit phrase *"I don't (discriminate). I do make distinctions, though."* clearly demonstrates the attitudes of dismissing that it is discriminatory or unfair and of asserting how legitimate it is if these schools stay defunded by the GOJ. Stokke (2023) cites Chesler's "sophisticated form of unawareness" to illustrate the epistemology of the dominant's side in colour-blindness in which they take for granted that their worldview is "objective and universal" (p.1547), thus it is the appropriate standard by which to make judgements. That attitude is evident in the excerpt tweet, with its explicit remark of the denial that it is discrimination and with its ostentatious assertion that it is a rightful differentiation.

Synthesizing the work of Bonilla-Silva, Doane et al, Stokke (2023) also tersely points out that this colourblind ideology also causes the invisibility of the experience of the oppressed side and invalidates the existence of other narratives than the one they take for granted. In the context of the United States, he writes, "by refusing to see race, Whites become blind to Black experiences, deny the reality of racism, and fail to understand Black perspectives (p.1547)." Building upon this specific aspect of colour-blindness that does not acknowledge the story of the oppressed side, I would like to introduce another excerpt tweet within the main theme, illustrating the denial or cancellation of the experience of oppression of the discriminated.

Excerpt Tweet 2:

> *Multiple figures … have publicly stated that Koreans were "forced" to have Japanese names and that they are "ashamed to be Japanese," and continue to make false claims such as "Japanese names were forced upon Koreans during the colonial period," and "they had to use 通名*

because of discrimination," but this only deepens division.

Regardless of which side you take, I believe that everyone

has the right to know the truth.

Context of the Excerpt Tweet 2

Using my retrospective reflexivity, I recall that one common pattern across the people who show anti-Zainichi Korean sentiment is to perceive Japan's history of colonialism in a glorifying, saviourism-like light, that is, the attitude that invalidates the oppressive nature of the policies and practices that took place during the colonial era and reframe it was all for the good, denying that there was and has been any discriminatory intention or outcomes. For the purpose of this paper, I refer to this attitude as revisionism or historical revisionism. Revisionism is present too when it comes to specific policies like the forced Japanese names during the colonial era, what is called "通名" (*Tsūmei*). Tsūmei is a Japanese-sounding alias name Zainichi Koreans are encouraged to use for avoiding discriminations and passing as Japanese (Robillard-Martel & Laurent, 2019, p.399).

As for the "Japanese names that were forced upon" in the excerpt, Tsūmei is alias name that has been the continuing legacy of the Japanese name that was forced upon Koreans during the colonial era, even after the formal end of the colonial administrations (Iwabuchi et al., 2016, p.223).

The Excerpt Tweet 2 embodies this revisionist attitude explicitly. They first frame the forced names and the existence of discrimination some Zainichi use Tsūmei to dodge as "false claims," and then proceed to express the determination and state there is a "truth" everyone has the right to know. It displays their highly solidified, firm belief about the forced name and discriminations Zainichi face, indicating that the "truth" is the Japanese names were not forced and there is not discrimination against Zainichi.

Colour-Blindness: Denying the Experience of the Discriminated

Now to shift to colour-blind ideology and how it leads to the denial of the perspectives of the oppressed, the excerpt dismisses the existence of discriminations against Zainichi, as discussed earlier. Stokke's paraphrase, "whites become blind to Black experiences, deny the reality of racism, and fail to understand Black perspectives" fits the colourblind attitude of the excerpt in the context of the Japanese for Zainichi's

perspectives. In their article in which they discuss Zainichi's resistance from the colonial era till present, Robillard-Martel and Laurent (2019) persuasively highlight the necessity of Zainichi to use Tsūmei to avoid facing discriminations in the society (p.399), where the Zainichi people's status was socially constructed and highly racialized against the Japanese (more on this later). Being kept by the racializing dynamics as the oppressed side in the social relationship between the Japanese and the Koreans (Zainichi) in postcolonial/postwar Japan, their Korean identity being known led to various unfair treatment in the areas such as education, welfare and pension, and employment (p.400). One coping strategy Zainichi adapted was to pass as Japanese using an alias, so that they could pass as Japanese, as they are physically indistinguishable (p.399). Being on the Japanese side themselves, on top of the aforementioned revisionist attitude, the user of the excerpt tweet effectively makes themselves literally blind to these experiences of Zainichi, discursively denying the reality of racism against Zainichi, and fail to understand Zainichi perspectives.

5.1.2 Historically Contextualizing the Power Imbalance - History of Zainichi: their Oppression and Resistance

The cases of Chosen Gakkō defunded by GOJ and the systemic pressure or imposition of Japanese-sounding alias name are only partial examples of the entire unequal power dynamics continuing since the colonial and postcolonial periods in Japan. For the purpose of illustrating a more comprehensive picture of it that includes wider aspects of the power asymmetry, I believe it is now worth introducing the history of Zainichi convering the birth of their status, their legal standings, and how those have been the continuing legacies of colonial policies and practices informing the contemporary power relations. By doing so, I am hoping to make an illumination that Japan's colonial power is still operating in disguise, which I refer to as Japan's coloniality of power, exemplified in the specific context of the present Japanese society.

So, Who are Zainichi Koreans, Exactly?
As briefly touched upon in the introduction chapter, Zainichi Koreans are the groups that came into being because of the Japan's history of colonialism. They are ethnic Koreans who are now mostly the descendants of the Koreans that migrated to Japan in the colonial era. They came to Japan either in pursuit of a better economic life or

because they were forcefully brought to Japan by the Japanese authority to fill in the labour shortage as the war was peaking (Tsutsui, 2018, p.85-86). By the end of the war, the number of Koreans living in Japan totalled over two million (p.85). Even in the years following the end of the war and the disbandment of the Japanese empire, as many as 600,000 Koreans found themselves remining in Japan for varying reasons, including those who left Japan but came back after witnessing the dire economic situation in Korea, those who decided to keep themselves away from Korean War in the Korean peninsula, and those who did not want to leave behind economic and social ties established in Japan (p.87). "Zainichi Koreans" today refer to these individuals themselves (First Generation Zainichi, *在日一世 Zainichi Issei)* and to their 2nd, 3rd, 4th and subsequent generations. Although the term "Zainichi (在日)" literally denotes "those that are in Japan," it has become a conventional nomenclature that refers specially to these Korean individuals unless specified otherwise (Tsutsui, 2018, p.85).

Zainichi Experience: In the Enduring Power

Over the postwar/postcolonial times in Japan, their experiences diversified in highly intricate and complex ways. It encompasses legal dimensions of their status in Japan, their resistance, the ramifications in approaches to the resistance against continuing marginalization of Koreans altogether, identity formations, political bifurcations and beyond.

Of various comprehensive dimensions of those experiences of Zainichi I could introduce to highlight power inequality, I have chosen the following elements, as I believe they are more directly relevant in this paper and the subsequent discussion: the statelessness of Zainichi Koreans and Zainichi's racialized social standing. The former involves complex historico-legal processes the Zainichi people were forced into and the latter is through the lens of Racial Formation Theory by Michael Omi and Winant and lived experience of discriminations as a result of that particular racialization dynamics.

5.1.2.1 Zainichi Statelessness

By default, Zainichi Koreans today are in fact stateless, meaning that they do not hold any nationality affiliated with any state including South Korea, North Korea, or not even Japan, despite their ethnic origin or having born and raised in Japan (Lee, 2010, p.170). This phenomenon is the result of complex postwar decolonization efforts that

took place without any consideration of the voices of the Koreans themselves (Robillard-Martel & Laurent, 2019, p.397). In the following I chronologically follow and explain the complicated mechanism of how this statelessness has come to be. Given this historical fact of excluding Koreans' voices and my positionality as a Japanese individual, here I would like to insert a short acknowledgement that I do so while maintaining my utmost caution and respect to their experience, striving not to reduce the complexity of it and avoid oversimplification to the best of my effort while simultaneously not overwhelming with excessive amounts of details that can undermine readership.

After the war ended and when American occupation was in control of some political aspects of postwar Japan for a brief period, the legal status of Koreans in Japan went loosely defined and ambiguous. In 1947, Koreans were required to register as "foreigners" while keeping the nationality of Japanese which they had had being citizens of the former Japanese Empire. It was already ill-defined enough, but then in 1952, GOJ stripped all the Koreans of the nationality, suddenly leaving them stateless, stranding them in a country that they were brought to (Tsutsui, 2018, p.87-88: Robillard-Martel & Laurent, 2019. P.397). The legal status that was then given to Koreans was "Chosen" (Tsutsui, 2018, p.88). "Chosen (朝鮮)" is an ethnonym that was and is used to refer to Koreans, as in "Chosen-jin (朝鮮人: 人 *jin* = people)". These policies also unilaterally stripped Koreans of "most of the fundamental rights accorded to Japanese citizens," "including suffrage and labour rights" (Tsutsui, 2018, p.88).

Fast forward till today, Zainichi Koreans in Japan have now three options regarding their nationality status: to naturalize to be a South Korean national, to naturalize to be a Japanese national, and to do neither of these and remain stateless (Lee, 2010, p.170). The reason why they cannot acquire North Korean nationality is that neither Japan nor South Korea officially recognize North Korea as a state, while North Korea themselves claim Zainichi Koreans to ultimately belong to them (Odagawa et al., 2017, p.138).

Contemporary Manifestations of Being Stateless Today: Zainichi the Racialized Others in Perceived Homogeneity
The motivation behind choosing to stay stateless varies. While some naturalize to be a South Korean national or to be Japanese, some have pioneered some alternative ways to

redefine themselves while maintaining statelessness in diverse approaches. Regardless of the motivation behind, however, this statelessness born out of the three-way historical complex matrix of legal jurisdictions has been imposing the stateless Zainichi Koreans a series of institutional and structural inequalities and discriminations. One prime example is the lack of full citizenship. While there have been some improvements in this area, the lack of suffrage mentioned earlier that took place in the immediate postcolonial periods, is still continuing until today – "even if they were born in Japan, and of parents also born in Japan." (Robillard-Martel & Laurent, 2019, p.398). Another example is an educational dimension, such as the defunding of Chosen Gakko which causes deprivation of the opportunity for identity formation of the Zainichi children going to the school.

Robillard-Martel and Laurent (2019) approach these treatments of Zainichi from the theoretical viewpoint of Racial Formation Theory by Michael Omi and Howard Winant. They suggest that, at the backdrop of the perceived racial homogeneity in the society, the dominant Japanese populations in Japan have held the power to define and dictate racial identity of the whole society and its structure in their favoured way of representing it. They argue that this means, despite the diversified ways in which Zainichi and stateless Zainichi have explored their identity positioning, the Japanese often lump Koreans in Japan altogether in the same category and make them "submitted to similar prejudices and discriminations (Robillard-Martel & Laurent, 2019. p.400)," and then execute their structural power correspondingly. Robillard-Martel and Laurent accuse this process of lumping Koreans in Japan altogether and socio-structurally influencing the society to their liking with the power to do so, of being assimilationist. Where race, ethnicity, and citizenship status are equated and merged to form one entity, blurring diverse unique Zainichi experiences. For example, in addition to the naturalization options mentioned earlier, Zainichi Koreans have found two other alternative ways to define themselves - "Third way" in which they "adhere neither wholly to the project of Japanese assimilation, nor wholly to affiliation with one of the two Korean regimes," meaning they redefine their identity separately from whatever citizenship status they may have; and "Fourth way" in which they "advocate for naturalization with the possibility of conserving one's Korean name, and without rejection of one's ethnic identity "(Robillard-Martel & Laurent, 2019, p.400).

While both ways reject to conform to the homogenizing project of Japan, I argue that cases like the defund of Chosen Gakko still serve as a powerful site of the homogenization. It structurally discourages such alternative identity explorations and the GOJ's reason behind the decision explicitly displays the rhetoric that is criticised by Robillard-Martel and Laurent for the homogenizing effect. For schools to receive defund is to be categorised as "regular academic schools" or "'一条校'(*ichijoko)*, schools that recognised by the first article of the Education Law. (Motani, 2002, p.231). GOJ establish that the reason for not recognizing is the suspicion of high influence of North Korean regime which Japan do not have a friendly diplomatic relation with (Kayama, 2018). This suggests that GOJ racialize students and employees there and lump them altogether into a single image of "North Korean supporters" or "upholders", equating the notorious reputations of unjust acts of the state (such as kidnapping of residents in Japan and elsewhere) with the individuals going to the schools. While it is true that the origin of the organization behind theses school management is North Korean affiliation (Beije, 2009) and Motani (2002,p.231) cites sources that these schools used to educated students as North Korean nationals, the schools have now adjusted the general curriculum more so that the students will be able to keep living in Japan, largely paralleling its specific teaching contents with those taught in other regular Japanese schools. Perhaps that shift is to accommodate the diversifying, unique experience of Zainichi's identity formation. Regardless, GOJ altogether do not recognize these schools to be part of the societal structure in the educational sphere and ceased the funding specifically to these schools, racially othering them all and exerting its structural power they hold over them.

In addition, practical barriers further exacerbate the challenges faced by Zainichi Koreans in Japan. For instance, students attending Chosen Gakko encounter significant hurdles in obtaining recognition for their academic achievements. Unlike students from other recognized Japanese schools, Chosen Gakko students are required to pass additional exams to certify their qualifications for graduation, just to qualify applying to, for example, higher education (Motani, 2002, p.231). This requirement imposes a double burden on Zainichi students, placing them at a distinct disadvantage and perpetuating educational inequities. Such barriers not only hinder academic advancement but also reinforce the racialization and marginalization of Zainichi Koreans within Japanese society.

Conclusive Remarks of Theme 1: Colonial Legacies in the Asymmetrical Power Relations

Throughout the exploration of Theme 1, "Blind to structural power inequality," departing from the racialization pattern, colourblind racism, in the sampled excerpt tweets, I have discussed the broader power structural disparity existing in contemporary Japanese society between the Japanese and Zainichi Koreans, the group of Koreans born due to Japan's colonial act themselves, and delved into its historical contexts for how the power first came to be and has been continuing to inform the contemporary relationship between them, outliving the end of colonialism. Some specific forms of the oppressions during the colonial time when Korea was annexed into Japan[4], mirror the specific cases discussed in this chapter so far, suggesting a continuity of power dynamics deeply entrenched in colonial legacies. The racialization pattern and colourblind racism evident in contemporary Japan are not isolated phenomena but rather manifestations of the enduring coloniality of power, which operates across multiple spheres of social existence (Restrepo, 2017, p.1). The historical experiences of forced assimilation, discriminatory policies, and systemic marginalization faced by Zainichi Koreans during the colonial era continue to reverberate in present-day Japan, contributing to the perpetuation of structural inequality. I have provided an examination with the focal scope specifically on race/racialization, as part of the intersecting nature between race, capitalism, and modernity altogether consisting of what Quijano (2017) conceptualized as "coloniality of power," the system of power control established upon racial classification of people (Quijano, 2007, p.171: Restrepo, 2017, p.1). These historical legacies highlight the inextricable link between past colonial practices and contemporary power imbalances, underscoring the need for a critical examination of coloniality's ongoing impact on Japanese society.

In the next theme Theme 2, "Japanese Superiority," I focus on how exactly the sense of racial superiority within the coloniality of power matrix could have evolved in the Japanese people and how it appears to manifest in contemporary expressions of racism in contemporary Japan against Zainichi Koreans.

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[4] See 2.2 Japan's History of Colonialism *"Korea"* in Literature Review Chapter.

5.2 Theme 2 "Oh well, He has gotten a peninsular face…" – Japanese Superiority

Overview

Central in this theme 2 is the subtle nuance of superiority in being Japanese over Zainichi Koreans underlying the racializing expressions, and the problematization that the racial hierarchization dynamics has also been a dimension continuing to inform the power relations between the Japanese and Zainichi Koreans in contemporary Japan since the colonial era. Within this main theme, I have developed three subpatterns in which the superiority was subtly nuanced: conflation of all Koreans, Racial/ethnic/nationality othering, and inferiorization.

Similarly to how I have done in Theme 1, I will first provide the sample excerpt tweets and their analyses incorporating a Critical Race Theory, essentialism. I will then delve into historical contextualization where I discuss Japan's racial identity formation against other nations, before and after their colonial enterprise took off. It involves Japan's first encounter with the Western Great Power at the time of the late 19th century and a series of adaptions of the western knowledge and value systems including the racial ranking system prevalent at that time. Throughout the entire discussion of this theme, my ultimate objective in this section is to suggest that these historical occurrences of Japan's racial identity formation has been still continuing to inform how the Japanese people today racially perceive themselves in the presence of racial others, exemplified through some real-time contemporary samples of racializing expressions manifesting against Zainichi individuals, and to demonstrate that its logic of racial hierarchization resembles that of the 'race' dimension of coloniality of power matrix.

5.2.1 Sampled Tweets and Their Racialization Patterns

Excerpt Tweet 3: Conflation of Koreans

> *"Expel them, we are returning them back to the*
>
> *Chosen (Korea, Korean) peninsula!! "*

Context of the Excerpt Tweet 3

This tweet is a reply to another tweet that is accusing a public figure often exposed in Japanese media known to be half American and half Korean, of expressing hate speech against Japan. What she does in fact is that she problematizes the ubiquity of public sexual groping in Japan and of calling the issue unique to Japan. She then connects the issue with how only Japan-assembled iPhones are designed to make a camera shutter clicking sound so a groper will be audibly spottable when committing digital voyeurism, the act of covert photography of a sensitive object, for example, in the crowded space such as on a highly populated train carriage. The parent tweet accuses this of being a form of hate speech against Japan, arguing that groping and other forms of sexual offense in public are prominent also in other countries like England and South Korea and that iPhones everywhere else also make the camera shutter sound. The accusation of hate speech seems to come from the perception that she is expressing her particularly personal anti-Japan sentiment by singling out Japan as the only site of the said issues while it is not the case, or so believes the user of the excerpt. The parent tweet then calls her a Zainichi Korean (which she is not) in a despising manner, seemingly out of contempt or a feeling of grudge for 'unfairly' criticizing Japan. The excerpt tweet echoes the parent tweet's narrative, calling for deportation to the Korean peninsula.

Essentialism

I would like to acknowledge here for maintaining methodological rigor that the analysis of this excerpt tweet has a noteworthy degree of subjectivity of myself. Thanks to my retrospective experience as once an active consumer of anti-Zainichi/Korean discourse, I was already aware of the essentializing nature prominent in the discourse. With that being said, I would like to call the behaviour of this excerpt and the parent tweet what Delgado and Stefancic call Essentialism (2023, p.64). Essentialism is the belief that there are inherent and unchanging qualities or characteristics that define a particular group of people (Sayer, 1997). When one essentialises about a group, they reduce and minimize the qualities of a particular group of people in question in a simplified or oversimplified way. It follows that it ignores the diversity and complexity within the group, leading to stereotypes and generalization.

I apply this essentialism theory to the behaviour of the tweets. They essentialize anyone with any Korean-ness to be just "one of those Koreans", ignoring their actual unique

and diverse heritage and background. In their mind, as soon as they detect or learn about any Korean element in the matter or the figure in question, they do not bother to know the differentiation. In this case, they do not bother to factcheck if she is actually a Zainichi individual but are only concerned with her "Korean"ness succeeded from her mother's side, which they then painting it all over her identity, calling her a Zainichi out of their anti-Zainichi/Korean sentiment. They ignore the factuality of her heritage and just call her a Zainichi, selectively picking out the Korean part of her heritage and falsely generalizing it to her entire identity to be a Zainichi.

This implies that anyone with any Korean association is viewed as having 'Korean-blood' and is subject to disdain, without distinguishing between different Korean identities such as Zainichi or South Korean nationals living in Japan.
One of Arudou's key arguments (2021) is that the laws' foundational ideologies influence how people in a jurisdiction perceive and form their beliefs. He delves into how the Japan's laws specifically manifest in everyday and structural racism in Japan, bringing cases and drawing parallels. Building on his concept of the law influencing people's thoughts and actions, one might argue that this conflation pattern reflects Japan's *jus sanguinis* citizenship model, where citizenship is based on 'blood,' i.e., whether one or both parents are Japanese (Arudou, 2021, p.116-117). It is also discussed in Section 2.1 [5] the dominant group takes the arbitrary measure of who belongs to the privilege and who does not, just like the "One-Drop" rule discussed there. The rule also has overlaps with the public figure being spotlighted in the tweets who could have been considered to have one drop of "Korean blood."

While the specific terms used here are 'Zainichi' and 'peninsula,' they both convey the same meaning in this context. This essentialization behaviour, conflating Koreans despite their differences, appeared in seven other tweets in the dataset, comprising roughly one-fifth of the total sampled tweets. The usage of the terms such as " 半島人" (*Hantou-jin*) = the Peninsular) and "チョン" (*Chon*, a racially charged derogatory term to refer to Koreans, much like the 'N-word' for African Americans (Robillard-Martel & Laurent, 2019, p.398)). *Chon* seems to have come from a stereotypically common

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[5] See p.15 "Race and as a Social Construct: Racialization as an Arbitrary Tool for Hierarchization" in Literature Review

Korean surname and then it was negatively loaded. I do recall in cyberspace often seeing active use of these derogatory terms used to refer to all Koreans collectively and pejoratively, condensed down to a single identity, in a way that resembles the Saidian essentializing effect that the "us" does towards "them."

Overall, by essentializing "Koreans" with a series of negatively loaded terms like those, the tweet is displaying their tacit desire to show how superior they want to believe they are over Zainichi or "all the Koreans."

To sum up this analysis, Zainichi Koreans are first otherised under the blanket of "we do not like any Korean-ness," and then they are essentialized and considered to be the same entity as 'other' ethnic Koreans, based on the assumed association of "blood" and the geography.

Excerpt Tweet 4: Racial/Ethnic/Nationality Othering

"This criminal has got a peninsular-like face."

Context of the Excerpt Tweet 4

This tweet is also a reply to its parent tweet. The parent tweet first cites a news article reporting a car accident that claimed the life of an individual (who happens to be a South Korean national). It first clarifies that the culprit is of stateless Zainichi, presenting the fact that he has his ethnic surname as well as his alias name (通名, mentioned in the Excerpt Tweet 2 in Theme 1 discussion). The charges to the persecuted are a vehicular hit-and-run and driving without a license. Upon citing the news and the face picture of him, the parent tweet goes *"Killing a Korean really drunk… You* (the persecuted) *also did a hit-and-ran, damn you. Offer your sincere apology and compensation to the victim and Japan." "Ugh this face* (and an emoji of throwing up)*."* The reason as to why the user of this parent tweet is demanding apology and compensation also to Japan will not go beyond speculation with my retrospection. However, the exact phrase the user uses for that particular part of the tweet (which I will not present the original text of for an ethical reason discussed in Methodology chapter) highly resembles an overused, templated phrase typically used for another pejorative

intention towards Koreans in general. It is the phrase that anti-Korean online users often use to mockingly portray and represent within the filter bubble the stance of the South Korean government and their spokesman claiming the proper apology and proportionate compensation for the wartime crimes of the former Japanese militaristic regime, regarding so-called comfort women or sexual slavery, forced labour, and many more. The parent tweet user could have intended to use that exact phrase in the tweet to draw an irony as they thought, in which the phrase is used "back at a Korean" who is usually the one using it against Japanese, as though the user is using their own tactics against Koreans. It is ironic because the phrase is typically used against Japan but is now directed towards Koreans. The excerpt tweet adds to the parent tweet's narrative by describing the individual as having a "peninsular-like" face, further othering them.

Essentialism: Racial/Ethnic/Nationality Othering

I will apply essentialism as the theoretical grounding for this excerpt tweet as well. In the dynamic of reducing qualities of a certain group into an oversimplified, monolithic perceived image, I have developed three dimensions of it which have othering effects all in its differently nuanced ways: racial, ethnic, and national.

Racial/Ethnic Othering

First, "This criminal has got a peninsular-like face" is racially othering the individual in question by suggesting certain biologicality in its rhetoric and linking it with criminality. Given the context of the parent tweet about the charged being a Zainichi individual and incorporating the pattern of conflating all Koreans shown in the Excerpt Tweet 3, it conveys biologically ascribed criminality, suggesting a logic along the line that an individual with any Korean element or blood is scientifically predisposed to committing a crime. It essentializes Koreans with criminal behaviours.

The very phrase "peninsular-like face" has a clear element of ethnic othering, much the same way the conflation of Koreans in Excerpt 3. As briefly mentioned at the end of the discussion of Excerpt 3, it effectively essentializes the identity of Koreans into a monolithically constructed image of what Koreans are like by associating the ethnicity with where they are geographically all perceived to come from. The "us" essentializes the "them" overlooking their unique and diverse distinctions.

Nationality Othering

The excerpt is otherising the individual in question involving some nationality nuances. the nationality element involves attributing certain characteristics, such as criminality, to individuals based on their nationality. Specifically, the tweet ascribes criminal behaviour to Koreans by lumping together all individuals with any perceived Korean element into a single category. This essentialization process ignores the diversity and complexity within the Korean community and reduces them to a monolithic image associated with criminality, as though to say they are criminals or latent criminals.

Furthermore, the tweet then essentializes 'Japanese-ness' by effectively absolving Japanese people of criminal behaviour and attributing it to Koreans based on their shared geographical origin ("the peninsula"). By linking criminality to Koreans and separating it from Japanese people, the tweet creates a narrative that portrays Japanese people as inherently non-criminal, reinforcing a sense of national superiority or moral superiority. This process of ascribing certain traits or behaviours to entire national groups based on perceived differences is an example of nationality othering.

Excerpt Tweet 5: Inferiorization

"...Hurry and prohibit the alias name systems for them, spread pesticide, and we have rid Japan of those Zainichi cockroach....please just return to your motherland"

Context of the Excerpt Tweet 5

This is also a reply tweet to its parent tweet which features another public figure with Korean heritage in her lineage. Based on the observation on other tweets in the dataset, it appears that this figure is also the subject to contempt or hatred from those with anti-Korean/Zainichi sentiment for regularly 'criticising' Japan, similar to the featured figure discussed in Excerpt 3. The parent tweet is portraying her as someone who would not be welcomed to have media appearances, appealing to their expected audience (who are the like-minded people who are not fond of people criticizing Japan) about her nature of critical attitude to Japan to fish for their support and agreement. Intersecting with the conflation of Koreans discussed in Excerpt 3 earlier and othering dynamics discussed in

Excerpt 4, the parent tweet and this excerpt seem to have the two layers of hostility against her; smearing her perceived 'Korean element' all over her entire person and consider her to be just a 'Korean,' overlooking her actual uniqueness. They then racially and ethnically other her as "one of those Koreans turning up against Japan" because of her perceived critical attitude to Japan and perceiving the critical stance as hostility. In this case, detaching the perceived disloyalty to Japan away from their imagined "Japanese-ness," suggesting that "pure" Japanese individuals are loyal and would not express opposing views.

Essentialization: Inferiorizationn/Dehumanization

The essentialization element in this tweet is quite explicit, straightforward, and dehumanizing. It first reduces the identity of the targeted individual and produces and reinforces stereotypes of the reduced, oversimplified identity. Excerpt 5, with its dehumanizing language and derogatory imagery, essentializes individuals of Korean heritage as inherently inferior and unworthy of belonging in Japanese society. By invoking terms like 'Zainichi cockroach,' the author reduces the complexity of human identity to a simplistic and demeaning caricature, and then concretizes the simplification with the inferiorising and dehumanizing effect, reproducing the negative stereotypes by portraying the individual this way by likening them to cockroaches that you have to eradicate. This reductionist perspective not only reinforces harmful stereotypes but also serves to justify discriminatory attitudes and actions towards the targeted group. It racializes the individual with more explicit nuances where the perceived difference is biologicalised and deemed inferior in that sense.

5.2.2 Historically Contextualizing Japanese Superiority - Japan's Journey to Racial Identity Formation

Having examined the contemporary manifestations of Japanese superiority in racializing expressions against Zainichi, we now shift our focus to explore the historical contexts that shaped Japan's racial self-identity. The presented sample cases are only showcasing the subpatterns of how Japanese superiority is manifested through racializing expressions against Zainichi. In this section, by delving into how Japan first

encountered the concept of racial hierarchization and how Japan learned, adapted, and reinterpreted its logic, we will gain insights into how this sense of superiority in being Japanese may have come to be and been used as the legitimate reason for practicing colonialism. The overall objective of this section is to draw parallels of Japan's racial identity formation processes with the patterns of Japanese superiority showcased in the sample tweets in the previous section, and then to illuminate that the logic once adapted by Japan in the past is still exerting the power to define implications of racialised relationships between the Japanese and others, in the context of contemporary world as exemplified in a specific empirical context of the tweets above. The broader ultimate end objective throughout this section is to illustrate the specificity of the "race" dimension of the coloniality of power matrix in Japanese context.

Modernization Era: Japan's Encounter with the West

The cornerstone of Japan's racial identity formation I want to focus on lies in the time when Japan was going through rapid modernization processes. As briefly touched upon in "**Modernization – Meiji Restoration**" in the Literature Review chapter [6]**,** it was the time, after opening up the country to the western visitors, when Japan encountered the powerful western colonizers. Pressed by the need to modernize themselves, Japan's approach was to rush adapt a vast series of "European and American practices, values, norms, ideologies and technologies (Zohar, 2020, p.2)" in order to catch up in the level of development and modernization with the other western great powers. Overall, the modernization effort was to discourage other great power nations from colonizing Japan, as they were on the colonialism race at that time and do so by becoming a colonial power themselves. (Zohar, 2020; Tsutsui, 2020, p.30; Robillard-Martel & Laurent, 2020, p.395; Oguma, 2014, p.2). As we know and is also discussed with some details in 2.2 [7], Japan did modernize and achieve their colonial dominion in the late 19th century till mid-20th century.

Japan and Their Racial Struggle

In this entire process of modernization/westernization effort of Japan, concomitantly happening was the effort to 'racially upgrade' themselves (Zohar, 2020, p.1, p.3, p.5). The adaptation of Western/American knowledge came with looking for the first time at

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[6] See p.18
[7] See p.18 "Japan's History of Colonialism" in the Literature Review chapter.

the western-made world racial overview with the hierarchy of races, in which Japan discovered where they were placed (Zohar, 2020, p.3).

At that time, racism was the normalized and accepted knowledge amongst the Western powers as they had the need to economically develop themselves by expanding territories and securing labour in those territories. This means that the modernization effort, or modernity, was always in tandem with the practices and the interests of capitalism, racism, and colonialism (p.2), the foundations of what forms coloniality of power by Quijano (2007, p.171: Restrepo, 2017, p.1). In the trinity, the role of racism was to justify capitalist/colonial exploitations. Europeans nurtured the "sense of superiority as the 'white man' over the 'natives' of colonized lands in Asia, Oceania, Africa, and America. (p.2)'

Adapting these logics, though, came with an obvious issue which conflicted Japan's interest in going about modernizing/colonizing: as they were not the "white man" race, Japan and the Japanese people were categorised with other Asian nations in the dominant European racial discourse (Zohar, 2020, p.3: Takezawa, 2015, p.17). Japan was categorised with other non- "white man" nations (Zohar, 2020, p.3), meaning that (racially) it was indicated Japan was considered as a place to colonize. As "race" was an inexorable element in acquiring modernity and becoming part of the (western) great power, Japan was at crossroads, grappling with its racial identity and striving to navigate through the complexities of racial hierarchies to avoid absorbed into the power and instead to become the one to absorb.

Redefining and Reinterpreting 'Race': Japan's Own Mode of Racism?

There is historical evidence that show that, internally in Japan, there was a series of attempts to redefine and challenge the logic of the racial hierarchy itself or reinterpret some of the specific details within the logic of the racial hierarchization, so that Japan could also have a point of entry in perceiving themselves to be racially superior. One notable figure prominent in this discussion surrounding race was named Yukichi Fukuzawa (Takezawa, 2015; Baibikov, 2020; Kang, 2022; Uchiyama, 2009). The European-made racial hierarchy consisted mainly of three stages: uncivilised, half-civilised, and civilised (Takezawa, 2015, p.10). Japan was considered half-civilised based on the perceived level of civility, associated with their racial category (Baibikov, 2020, p.4: Takezawa, 2015, p.17). Japan needed to circumvent their ontological racial

status indicative of the very racial status they wanted to distance themselves away from, by somehow re-conceiving the connection between race and the level of civility — the level of superiority/inferiority.

Japan's racial self-repositioning and Fukuzawa's Impact

Fukuzawa was a leading, prominent thinker in this very regard. He challenged the mode of racism in the western-made racial hierarchy, which was biologically confining according to the skin colour (Kang, 2002). He found out that the fixation of the biological phenotype as the indicator of the level civility/superiority seemed to have been conceived as a divine command in the west (Kang, 2002, p.135-147). Fukuzawa, having seen the potential of growing more 'superior' in the 'Japanese race' and unable to accept this divinity-based restraint, concluded that humans are not racially confined because they can all potentially 'evolve' by learning what made the white man the white man that they were (p.152). He ideated the way to prison break out of this racial confinement so that Japan could also conceptually be superior in theory.

It appears, however, that Fukuzawa did not specifically prison broke the confinement for advocating racial equality for other Asians. Rather, He did it just so Japan could be at the same ground as the west. If anything, his later works include expressions and negative portrayals of Korea and China calling them "backward, "" obstinate," "ignorant," "despotic," "corrupt," and "obsequious" (Uchiyama, 2009, p.75-76). To my researching, it does not seem to be generally agreed-upon whether Fukuzawa may or may not have had some change in his racial views after the said ideation of the possibility of 'racial evolution.' At least he did not explicitly go back to the biological model of the association of civility/superiority with race (Baibikov, 2020, p.4). Nonetheless, Uchiyama concludes that those works of his "in effect influenced the way the reader saw the world," disseminating the biology-based way of conceiving race, because his work was a rare informational access to the world for the general mass during that time (2009, p.73).

Fukuzawa was and still is a greatly influential figure, especially when it comes to Japan's journey to modernity. At the time of writing, he is still the figure graced on Japan's ¥10,000 note (Arudou, 2021, p.38). One tweet I came across was a picture in which Fukuzawa, along with other historical figures, was cited as having said "There is

an unsavable ethnic group, they are a lost cause: Koreans," to which the user makes a comment "We need to share the words of these great figures with more Japanese people today, or else we and our country are going to be made messed and chaotic with naturalized Zainichi" (more than explicitly displaying the discussed subpattern of conflating Koreans). Baibikov (2020) also criticizingly points out that there is a recent translation work, as recent as 2017, of Fukuzawa's work and that it has used his work to reconstruct his influential status in a way that supports an ideological agenda. The agenda is to implicitly reinforce Japan's superiority over those whom Japan colonized during the wartime. These facts show how much Fukuzawa is still the figure of reference today when it comes to Japan's racial identity.

Moreover, when you turn to the voices of resistance, both Choi (2003, p.334) and Robillard-Martel & Laurent (2020, p.395) explicitly assert that the underlying racial concept Japan used as the legitimizing rhetoric for colonialism was Social Darwinism. Robillard-Martel & Laurent even acknowledge Japan's struggle over racial positioning against the West including what is discussed above but proceed to emphasize those detailed conceptual roads "did not mitigate the fact that Koreans and other colonized groups were perceived as inferior by the Japanese. (p.395)" It appears, therefore, that by the time Korea was annexed into Japan, the racial rhetoric had already become the biology-based conception in reality.

Using the internally (re-)developed racial hierarchical map which Fukuzawa probably had a great influence over, Japan eventually did racially reposition themselves away from Asian others and closer to and did become one of the white man's western powers, approved by the west. For Japan, this racial movement was two-fold as such, perceptually moving away from the Asian and identifying itself with the West (Zohar, 2020, p.1, p.3-4). However, when it comes to the very nuance of the racialization employed during Japan's colonial periods, I argue it is safe to conclude here that it was the one where colonial subjects were considered biologically inferior and in turn the Japanese superiority was endorsed, striking a great extent of similarity to the one used by the "white man" that justify economic, capitalistic exploitations of the colonised for their own project of modernization (Zohar, 2020, p.2). Whatever Fukuzawa's true detailed intention was in racializing Koreans and other colonised groups, his words were and have been nevertheless used to support their preexisting ideological agenda

today to reproduce the sense of Japanese superiority by in turn inferiorising Zainichi with certain biological nuances, as showcased in the three subpatterns in tweets analyses.

5.2.3 Conclusive Remarks of the Theme 2

In exploring Theme 2, "Oh well, He has gotten a peninsular face..." – Japanese Superiority, the discussion has delved into the subtle nuances of superiority exhibited by Japanese individuals over Zainichi Koreans through racializing expressions. The analysis revealed three subpatterns: conflation of all Koreans, racial/ethnic/nationality othering, and inferiorization. These patterns underscore the enduring power dynamics between the Japanese and Zainichi Koreans, rooted in historical colonial legacies.

The sampled tweets exemplified essentialism, reducing the diverse identities of Zainichi Koreans to oversimplified stereotypes. This essentialization reflects a historical struggle within Japan to redefine racial identity, particularly during the modernization era. Japan's encounter with Western racial hierarchies prompted efforts to redefine racial superiority, exemplified by figures like Yukichi Fukuzawa. Fukuzawa's ideologies, while challenging Western racial hierarchies, also perpetuated notions of Japanese superiority and inferiority of other Asian groups.

Moreover, the analysis highlighted how Japan's colonial history shaped its racial discourse, endorsing the superiority of the Japanese over colonized groups. This historical context illuminates the contemporary manifestations of Japanese superiority, perpetuated through racialized expressions against Zainichi Koreans.

In the broader context, these dynamics are situated within the framework of the race as part of the coloniality of power matrix. This framework, proposed by scholars like Aníbal Quijano, emphasizes the interconnectedness of race, capitalism, and modernity in perpetuating systems of power and oppression. Given how Japan largely adapted the trinity of racism, capitalism, and modernity, my intention here was also to illuminate that Japan's historical colonial enterprise and its subsequent racial identity formation are integral components of this matrix within the context of Japan. The enduring hierarchies and racialized expressions observed in contemporary Japan are manifestations of this

coloniality of power, whereby racial classifications and hierarchies are used to justify and maintain social, economic, and political dominance. This section delved into the specificities of the race element and how Japan negotiated it to make it more fitting to their needs of rising as a colonial power themselves in the global society.

In conclusion, the discussion of Theme 2 underscores the entanglement of historical legacies and contemporary power dynamics in Japan's racial identity formation. The enduring hierarchies rooted in colonial histories continue to inform attitudes and behaviours, exemplified by the racializing expressions observed in the sampled tweets.

6 Conclusion

This thesis delves into the intricate intersections of racism and colonialism within the context of Japan, shedding light on the enduring impact of Japan's colonial history on contemporary racial dynamics. Through a multidisciplinary approach, the study employs theoretical frameworks such as the Coloniality of Power (C.o.P.) and Critical Race Theory (CRT) to analyse the manifestations of racism and power differentials evident in Japanese society, particularly in relation to Zainichi Koreans.

The thesis begins by establishing the historical backdrop of Japan's colonial expansion, highlighting policies and practices employed during this period to consolidate dominance over colonized territories and populations. By examining Japan's colonial endeavours, the study uncovers how racial ideologies were constructed and utilized to justify domination and exploitation, emphasizing the complex interplay between race, power, and colonialism.

Moving forward, the study explores the prevailing attitudes and landscapes towards racism and colonialism across different levels of Japanese society. It critiques governmental reluctance to address racial discrimination effectively and the academic invisibility of Japan within postcolonial criticism and points out the linguistically obscured barrier towards conceiving racism in Japan, highlighting the need for a more nuanced understanding of Japan's colonial legacy in framing racism in Japan.

Through empirical analyses, the thesis reveals the manifestations of racism in Japan, particularly focusing on the racializing expressions targeting Zainichi Koreans. Drawing on theories within CRT such as "Colour-blind racism" and "Essentialism," the thesis first explicates the themes and patterns underlying those racializing remarks in detail. Shifting its theoretical frame to the race element forming the coloniality matrix of power, the thesis then delves into discussions of the historical contexts that are intended to explain that those manifestations are derived from historically established unequal power relations that are persisting in contemporary society.

By highlighting the connections between the specific aspects and dimensions of Japan's colonial history and the patterns and themes of how they appear to manifest in

contemporary Japan, the study aims to underscore the significance of framing discussions on racism within postcolonial and decolonial perspectives. This nuanced approach reveals how Japan's colonial past continues to shape contemporary racial hierarchies and power dynamics, challenging oversimplified narratives and advocating for a more comprehensive understanding of systemic inequalities in Japanese society.

Furthermore, through this study to attempt to position Japan within this specific postcolonial and decolonial light, the thesis contributes to broader discussions on racism, colonialism, and power dynamics within Japan and beyond Japan's borders. Highlighting the enduring legacies of colonialism and the complexities of racial dynamics, the study is also meant to convey my message that scholars and practitioners could consider examining broader implications of colonial histories of Japan on contemporary societies domestically and worldwide.

In conclusion, this thesis serves as a call to action for acknowledging and addressing the deep-rooted inequalities perpetuated by Japan's colonial legacy. Through its interdisciplinary approach and empirical analyses, the study provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between race, power, and colonialism, ultimately advocating for social justice and equity in contemporary Japan and beyond.

6.1 Recommendations

In this final section, I would like to list-mention some potential recommendations for future analysis, including some specific directions for how discussions on the intersection of racism and colonialism in the context of Japan could unfold to. They also serve as my communication that those are also limitations of this study, as they are the areas uncovered that I wished I had had time and space for.

More Comprehensive Examinations Incorporating the Other Element of Coloniality of Power

While this thesis has provided valuable insights into the racial dimensions of Japan's colonial legacy through the lens of the Coloniality of Power framework, future research could extend this analysis by incorporating the other central dimensions of coloniality: capitalism and modernity. By exploring how these dimensions intersect with racial dynamics, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the enduring impact of Japan's colonial history on contemporary society.

Other Areas of Influence Japan's History of Colonialism Has Exerted

Expanding the scope of analysis to include the influence of Japan's colonial history on indigenous communities, such as the Ainu and Ryukyuan peoples, presents an opportunity to examine how colonial hierarchies have shaped identity formation and knowledge production. Drawing on scholars like Walter Mignolo, who emphasize the importance of reclaiming subaltern knowledges overshadowed by colonial hegemony, future research could explore the experiences and narratives of marginalized communities in Japan, shedding light on their historical and contemporary struggles for recognition and representation.

Intersectional Perspectives on Zainichi Identity

Further exploration of Zainichi Korean identity within the framework of coloniality of power could provide valuable insights into the complexities of racialization and belonging in contemporary Japan. By adopting an intersectional approach that considers the intersecting influences of race, ethnicity, nationality, and class, researchers can uncover the multifaceted nature of Zainichi experiences and challenge dominant narratives of ethnic homogeneity in Japan.

Exploring the Japanese People's Ambiguous Racial Self-Perception in Contemporary Society

Part of the analysis discussion in Theme 2 was to highlight how Japan racially and thus politically repositioned themselves and claimed their status in the global society at that time, where they tried to assert they were part of the western great powers consisted of "white man's" nations. By racially perceiving themselves as "white" this way, Japan tried to display how "superior" they were.

While the superiority assumption still appears to be the case today as illuminated in this study, at the same time I also often see another racial discourse in contemporary Japan where they often portray and perceive themselves as the victim of white man's colonial power, often exemplifying the narrative through the historical events such as atomic bombings and other political implications in postwar periods. In other words, in some cases people seem to think as though they are 'superior white,' and in some other cases they reserve to their 'actual' race － non white, east Asian. This oscillating movement of racial self-identity can be drawn in parallel with Japan's racial identity formation during the Meiji modernization era and explore if there is any connection between the two. This process could involve relevance with the reasons why Japan seems to lack its own postcolonial reflections and is full of victim narratives.

By interrogating the connections between Japan's historical positioning and contemporary self-perceptions of race and power, researchers can contribute to a deeper understanding of how colonial legacies continue to influence Japan's racial dynamics and national identity. This inquiry may also offer insights into the ways in which Japan navigates its place within the global community and constructs narratives of resilience and victimhood in response to colonial histories.

Intersectional Analysis

Expanding on the framework employed in this study, future researchers could adopt an intersectional analysis, as proposed by Crenshaw (1991), to further examine the experiences of Zainichi Koreans in Japan. By integrating considerations of gender and sexuality, scholars can explore how these intersecting axes of identity compound and exacerbate the oppressions faced by Zainichi Koreans and other formerly colonized groups in Japan. This approach offers a more nuanced understanding of the multiple

forms of marginalization experienced by individuals within these communities, both historically and in contemporary Japanese society.

International Comparison

Additionally, scholars could undertake comparative analyses by juxtaposing the themes and patterns of racism elucidated in this study with those observed in other global contexts. For instance, Mandani's (2004) discussion of essentialism in post-9/11 depictions of Islam offers a parallel to the essentialization of racial and ethnic groups in Japan. Muslims are essentialized and depicted as "terror," while non-Muslims, mainly whites are "those in favo[u]r of a peaceful, civic existence. (p.17-18)" By examining similarities and differences in colonial attitudes and racial hierarchies across diverse locales, researchers can gain insights into broader patterns of racism and colonialism and their implications for contemporary societies. This comparative approach facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between racism, colonialism, and power dynamics on a global scale.

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