

Nikkei Peruvians' Circularity between Japan and Peru: Building Peruvianness, *Nikkeiness* and Japaneseness

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I. Introduction

At the beginning of the nineties, when the *dekasegi* phenomenon started, Latin American *Nikkei*¹ flocked “back” to Japan, and since then they have been settling there as blue-collar workers to be employed in Japanese factories. This flow of *Nikkei* immigrants that initially was a household emergency strategy adopted in order to cope with an adverse temporary economic scenario in their homelands, has changed into a permanent residence of nuclear and extended families of Japanese ancestry in Japan. However, as they settled with their families, children, occasionally accompanied by one of their parents, were sent back to their homelands because they could not adjust to the Japanese educational system or Japanese lifestyle, or because their parents preferred them to receive their homeland education.

The data collected through questionnaires, interviews and a psychological test conducted in 2008-2009 and follow-up surveys from 2010 to 2013 at *Nikkeijin* schools in Lima, and two surveys to higher-education graduates from 2014 to 2016, revolves around their adaptation process in their parents' homeland, and it sheds light on the transnational differences of identity building in Japan and Peru, and their intergenerational divergence. While in Japan, the second generation of *Nikkei* Peruvians tends to “camouflage” their Peruvian identity in Japanese society, to the extent their physical traits allow them, once they are back to Peru, they enter Peruvian society by first embracing their “Japaneseness” and then their *Nikkeiness*. In Japan, they go through a process of Japanese acculturation, which is allowed by the very weak Peruvian identity of the first generation that prefers to “capitalize” their *Nikkei* identity in Japan. Besides, the analysis of the results of the surveys mentioned above provides findings on higher-education

continuation and Japanese language retention.

Current and structural changes across the Pacific Ocean in the new millennium have had an impact on pull and push effects between Japan and Latin America. Three decades ago the economic conditions in South America operated as a push force that motivated the *Nikkei* South Americans to emigrate to Japan, where pull forces worked synchronically. Afterwards, on the one side the protracted economic crisis in Japan, the financial crisis of 2008, and to a lesser extent the triple disaster of March 2011, and on the other hand, one decade of sustained economic growth in South America, have turned these two forces to work in the opposite direction. As a result the number of *Nikkei* of South American origin in Japan has shown a continuous declining trend in the last decade. In this returning flow, Japanese-born or Japanese-raised Peruvian children “returned” to Peru, and experienced an adjustment process in their parents' homeland.

Due to certain similarities shared by Peruvians and Brazilians, such as their Japanese ancestry and geographical proximity, and the overwhelming number of Brazilians compared to Peruvians in Japan, current research on this first group is abundant while for the second group have simply been inferred by extrapolating the results of academic investigations that targeted Brazilians in Japan. In spite of their apparent common points, there are several differences between these two groups that have become extremely important when conducting a deep analysis on work, family, education and future perspectives of each immigrant group in Japan. Considering that low-birth rate and aging population are now the main features of Japanese contemporary society, in the last years it is not uncommon to hear that immigration could offer an exit

to Japanese demographics, and *Nikkei* immigrants have been quoted not only as part of this new inflow, but also as an example of previous immigrant groups, from whose experiences in Japan the new flows can learn.

II. Circularity and identity building

The Japanese and their descendants have been shaping their own identity by retaining from their ethnic legacy all they continue considering culturally meaningful or utilitarian for negotiating in the host society, and disregarding from the previous generations' inheritance, all that no longer makes sense or cannot serve them favorably in their interaction with other members of the host society. Likewise, considering the same rationale, new components from the host society have been added to their identity. Japanese and their descendants embrace new values and practices to the extent these values and practices either become meaningful in the common imaginary or can be associated with the attainment of advantageous conditions for negotiation in the host society. This is an individual and personal process of constant calibration and confirmation for the Japanese and their descendants of their own values and practices, that acquires more significance as it is shared with their ethnic-cultural peers.

1. *Nikkei* Society in Peru and its *Nikkeiness*

The Japanese immigration to Peru is the oldest in South America and the second oldest among Latin American countries after Mexico. It dates back from 1899 when 790 Japanese arrived in the *Sakura Maru* to the port city of Callao. This is the beginning of a flow of Japanese immigrants who reached Peruvians ports in more than 200 vessels, until the onset of the WWII. From 1899 until 1923 Peru received 18,347 Japanese immigrants, most of them males (87 percent), who came as contract laborers to work in coastal sugar cane fields (Fukumoto, 1997). In the following years other Japanese also moved to Peru as they reunited with a father, husband or brother, who was already there. Also not few Japanese women came as picture brides. Extended family members, relatives in general and people from the same hometown were part of this chain migration

that was known as *yobiyose*. As the Japanese extended their period of stay in Peru and family reunification became widely common, they began to put down roots in Peru, turning into a permanent settlement right after the outbreak of WWII.

a. The Japanese and their descendants

The history of the Japanese immigration in Peru shared certain commonalities with the Japanese migration to other Latin American countries, but it certainly has a set of characteristics that make it unique in terms of time and space, in which it took place. While in Japan before coming to Peru, during the settling upon arrival, and throughout *Nikkei* community building, the Japanese had to face certain circumstances that have shaped its uniqueness. The large majority of the *Nikkei* Peruvians is of Okinawan ancestry. Also they are mainly concentrated in coastal urban areas, particularly in the capital city, Lima. Almost all the ancestors of the *Nikkei* Peruvians came before the WWII, and unfortunately they experienced one of the worst anti-Japanese sentiments that was evidenced by the prewar devastating riots against Japanese businesses and the large number of *Nikkei* Peruvians who were deported to US internment camps. The government and groups of interest related to it, through the media orchestrated this animosity that was backed by some sectors of the general public, who were waiting for an opportunity to vent their frustration against the relatively fast economic success of a group of immigrants. Also, the *Nikkei* associations were seen as a part of a very united and solid entity that only served their own members, creating further hostility. As a consequence of this anti-Japanese attitude, the *Nikkei* adopted a low profile in Peruvian society, in which they tried to live inconspicuously, avoiding any political participation beyond the *Nikkei* society, and finding other ways of expressing themselves, in order to take part in the host society, such as arts and sports. Living unnoticeably was not only adopted by an unspoken consensus, but also it was clearly suggested by the Japanese government through its Embassy in Lima, and in unison with the *Nikkei* organizations in Peru (Fukumoto, 1997).

According to Morimoto (1991) out of 11,147 households, approximately 47 percent is of Okinawan origin. Considering that fertility rate among Okinawan families is higher, in terms of population the number of Okinawans in Peru exceeds the half (53 percent). Although it is difficult to have a grasp of the number of *Nikkeijin* in Peru, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, it is estimated that there are 100,000 *Nikkei* Peruvians in Peru and other 50,000 living in Japan, totaling 150,000, which represents approximately 0.5 percent of the entire Peruvian population. The areas of larger concentrations of *Nikkei* Peruvians lie along the coast, particularly in the capital city, Lima and surrounding areas, such as the Constitutional Province of Callao and the so-called Norte Chico, and the northern cities of Chimbote, Trujillo and Chiclayo.

b. *Nikkei* community cohesion and positive minority

Being not only physically distinctive in Peruvian society, but also culturally, and showing relatively high levels of social capital among them has created an image of the *Nikkei* society in Peru. This apparent cohesion among the *Nikkei* institutions is more strongly perceived by non-*Nikkei* Peruvians, who since the eighties have started displaying a more positive attitude toward the *Nikkeijin*. This change of attitude went along with the Japanese economic miracle that was initiated right after the WWII, took off in the seventies, and reached an unexpected dimension when Japan threaten the US economic supremacy in the eighties. Although most of the *Nikkei* do not hold Japanese citizenship, the non-*Nikkei* Peruvians perceived *Nikkeijin* as Peru-born Japanese or even as just Japanese, so that the arise of Japan as an economic power is fully associated with the *Nikkeijin* in Peru. Mirroring the economic success of Japan, the *Nikkei* community also experienced a postwar recovery, while pre-war animosity against the *Nikkei* had enough time to cool off. In this new scenario, the *Nikkeijin* can be considered a positive minority in Peru.

The implicit and explicit messages in the 1990 electoral campaign of the former president Alberto Fujimori that led to three consecutive victories as elected president (1990, 1995, 2000) can be associated

with this positive perception toward the *Nikkei* population. Fujimori's election established a new era in the *Nikkei* community in Peru, as their members could openly participate in the country politics. Appealing to his ethnicity was a clear asset for him. His daughter and son were elected as members of congress with one of the highest number of ballots, and in the 2016 presidential elections, Fujimori's daughter, Keiko Fujimori, was beaten in a second round achieving a little less than half of the valid ballots. This the second time for her to contend with other presidential candidate in a second round, and the second time to be defeated. Keiko Fujimori did not resort to her ethnic traits in her electoral campaigns, but since these are physically evident, her ethnicity as a positive factor among the Peruvians constituents cannot be easily disregarded.

According to Morimoto (1991) the *Nikkei* Peruvians are more diverse in terms of occupation and socioeconomic status, and their living spaces. Onetime concentrated in certain areas, the *Nikkei* population has increasingly sprawled across cities and its districts. Some *Nikkei* do not participated at all in the activities and events organized by the *Nikkei* associations. However, the existence of pillar institutions and the relatively cohesion among the *Nikkeijin* and their associations brings the image of a unified *Nikkei* community, whose members find more motivation to keep this apparent unity as positive minority as they can benefit from their "good image" among non-*Nikkei* Peruvians. There are conditions in the recipient society that has made possible for the *Nikkei* Peruvian to create a unique community of overseas Japanese that differs substantially from other *Nikkei* Latin American communities.

c. *Japaneseness* vs. *Nikkeiness*

As it was mentioned before, there was no postwar emigration from Japan to Peru and that made possible the formation of a very compact group regarding their settlement process in Peru. In less than 40 years almost all emigrants reached Peruvian coasts and settled there. Their compactness can be translated into cohesion that is especially notorious from outside the community.

Non-*Nikkei* Peruvians perceived *Nikkei* society as a monolithic entity, in which everybody is related, and they know each other. This perception of relative cohesion is supported by the presence of two main organizations: Asociación Peruano Japonesa (APJ) and Asociación Estadio La Unión (AELU), both of them work together in order to build a *Nikkei* society, along with other organizations. This strong institutional existence and the perception as positive minority supports each other, so *Nikkei* Peruvians use their *Nikkei* identity to negotiate in Peruvian society as it offer some advantages in a racialized society such as the Peruvian. Even the “peripheral” *Nikkeijin*, the ones who do not participate in the *Nikkei* society events or do not attend *Nikkei* schools, use their *Nikkei* identity that is granted by sharing physically distinctive traits with the *Nikkei* who actively participate in the *Nikkei* community. This free-rider behavior is often observed among *Nikkei* Peruvians. Finally, due to the long history of the immigration, the historical developments before and after WWII, the anti-Japanese movement, the closure of the main *Nikkei* institutions and the efforts for keeping a low profile in Peruvian society, *Nikkei* society have failed to preserve Japanese language. As *Nikkei* identity serves the *Nikkei* to negotiate favorably in Peruvian society, they zealously and collectively preserve it, but as Japanese language did not serve the same purpose, the *Nikkei* have failed to retain Japanese language as a distinctive cultural trait.

2. *Nikkeijin* in Japan

For the *Nikkeijin* in South America, particularly for the Brazilians and Peruvians, “returning” to their ancestors’ homeland was part of a household economic strategy, in order to face the economic downturn of the eighties and its effects. As Tsuda (1999) has mentioned, rather than “absolute deprivation,” it was “relative deprivation” that drove these *Nikkei* populations to scape from unfavorable economic conditions in their countries of origin that threatened their socio-economic status as lower-middle class, middle or even upper-middle class. The *Nikkei* Peruvians went to Japan, leaving their white-collar worker jobs, their small businesses, their

studies at prestigious private universities, or their offices and consultation rooms in the case of the professionals (Tamashiro, 2000), thinking that Japan was not only their ancestors’ country but also theirs. During the first years of the *dekasegi* phenomenon, the *Nikkeijin* succeeded in convincing themselves that it was not really an economic migration, but an opportunity to go back to “their” roots. If they had wanted to migrate for economic reasons, they could have done it before to US, whose proximity is one of the main reasons for being the most popular destination among Latin Americans. Undoubtedly, ethnic ties, an important component of this “remigration,” not only gave the *Nikkeijin* the legal right of obtaining a visa to work in Japan without any extra condition or restriction, but also it confirmed those ties, so the *Nikkei* thought they legitimately had the right to participate in the Japanese economy and Japanese society “again.”

a. Peruvianness vs. *Nikkeiness*

As more *dekasegi* crossed the Pacific Ocean and settled temporarily in Japan, they realized that their participation in the homeland of their ancestors was from a marginalized position, and that their ethnic ties just provided the legal framework for working in Japan, but they were treated as any other foreign group, in spite of sharing common ethnic roots with the members of the host society. On the other hand, this “backdoor immigration policy” implemented by the Japanese government targeted the *Nikkei* population, in the hope that their similar physical and cultural commonalities with the Japanese, including the Japanese language, could helped them go unnoticed in Japan, and therefore buffered the effects of their foreign presence. However, as it is pointed out as one of the main characteristics of the *Nikkeijin* in Japan, their lack of Japanese language proficiency poses serious challenges to their protracted stay in Japan.

According to Takenaka (1999) “the Japanese Peruvian community has been transformed in such a way to accentuate its distinct ethnic identity. ... Transforming their ethnic identity from Japanese to *Nikkei* is the key to maintaining, and even strengthening,

this later generation immigrant community despite its growing distance from Japan. ... The transformation of Japanese Peruvians' ethnic identity first involves the denial of their Japanese identity in return migrating to Japan." As we can see, the *dekasegi* experience have help the *Nikkeijin* to realize the distance between their culture and Japan, but at the same time to reinforce that identity as it helps to differentiate themselves from the non-*Nikkei* in Japan. Also Takenaka states that rather than resorting to their national identity (as Peruvians), as the Brazilians did after understanding they were not Japanese but *Nikkei*, the *Nikkei* Peruvians preferred to maintain their *Nikkei* identity, even in Japan, and remains strong even after they are back to Peru. For the first generation or *dekasegi*, preserving their identity as *Nikkeijin*, before, during and after their stay in Japan is a distinctive and important feature.

b. The *dekasegi*'s children

One difference between South American immigrants and the other main immigrants groups in Japan is the relatively large number of children among Brazilians and Peruvians. Once temporary immigrants, the South Americans have extended their period of stay and more than the half has adopted the status of permanent resident, and even some have acquired the Japanese citizenship. Their permanence in Japan is reflected in their population more evenly distributed in each age bracket, while the Chinese, Filipinos and Vietnamese concentrate in the working-age group or tertiary education age, considering that many of them come to work as *kenshusei* or trainee in Japanese companies or farms, or enter Japan as foreign students, respectively.

At present the Peruvian children aged between 0 and 14 years, who either joined their parents or were born in Japan mainly since the beginning of the chain migration period, total 11,598. If we extend the age range up to 19 years, the number of Peruvian children and teenagers reaches 14,573. Differently from the Brazilian education in Japan, there is only one Peruvian school that is located in Hamamatsu city, Shizuoka prefecture. However, along with the declining in the number of Peruvians in Japan and the much larger

number of Brazilians in that region, it has become a Brazilian school. In the past when the number of Peruvians reached its peak, there were other Peruvian schools in other areas where there is a concentration of Peruvians, such as Isesaki city in Gunma prefecture, but those schools did not have the approval to operate as educational institutions by either the Japanese or the Peruvian Ministry of Education. Until 2015 Peruvians in Japan had two different programs for long-distance education provided by a Peruvian company and a Peruvian school, both of them covered from pre-school to upper secondary education. Currently, only one of these programs is available. However, due to the decrease in the number of Peruvians in Japan and their plan to permanently live and work in Japan, Peruvian education became a factor of less importance in their future projects.

Amongst the Peruvian children who attend elementary and junior high schools, most of them are enrolled in Japanese public schools, where they receive Japanese language education as a second language when it is needed, and when it is available. Elementary education and junior high school in Japan are administered by each municipality and therefore depends on the priorities of each local government, which causes clear geographical disparities in their educational policies. Pertaining to high school, which is not compulsory in Japan, in the prefecture of Tochigi, still more than the half of Peruvian youngsters attend public schools, but many of them also have to choose private high schools or night schools, either because they could not enter a prestigious public high school or they have to work as part-timers to pay the fees for their studies. Although most Peruvian children in Japan were born in this country or came at very early age, there is still a significant number of those children of school age that does not have the Japanese language proficiency required to conduct a proper learning process. This is one of the issues of main concern regarding Peruvian children in Japan posed by several scholars (Kojima, 2006; Miyajima, 2006; Tamaki and Sakamoto, 2012; and Tamaki, 2013).

As a large number of *Nikkei* Peruvian children are

Japan-born or came at very early age, they have not been exposed either to Peruvian or *Nikkei* society in their parents' homeland, which they just know through their parents' sparse conversations. While the life of the *dekasegi* or the adult generation of *Nikkei* Peruvians in Japan is job-centered, the *dekasegi* children or second generation's is school-centered. The *dekasegi*'s socialization in Japanese society takes place at Japanese factories, where other *Nikkei* Peruvians or other foreign workers become their peers, and they communicate in basic conversational Japanese, in their own language or in a mix of Spanish and Portuguese. The *dekasegi* children, differently from their parents, by using almost exclusively Japanese language address their peers at Japanese schools, where they also interact with other Japanese adults and day by day learn the explicit and implicit codes of the host society. Japanese schools offer them a real window from where they can take a peek at Japanese society. This generational difference among the first and second generation increases over the years, as the second generation participates more actively in Japanese society by joining extracurricular activities (*bukatsu*) during junior high or engaging in part-time jobs after the age of 15.

In spite of being in the IT era, there is a lack of information among the second generation regarding their parents' homeland. This happens mainly due to the divergent lives of the first and second generations in Japan as it was explained above, and therefore few opportunities for communication between parents and children, the first too occupied working and the second, to occupied trying to fit into Japanese society. However, there is another important reason. Even if the *Nikkei* children consider themselves bearers of their homeland culture, Japanese society does not offer properly enough space for the foreign populations to participate in it while they show or make use of their ethnic traits. On the contrary, doing so can make foreign children a target of bullying (*ijime*) at Japanese schools. It is observed, certainly not exclusively among *Nikkei* Peruvian children in Japan, a Japanization process that serves them well in their negotiation within the host society. This process is reinforced by the fact of having

more Asian traits, Japanese last names or first names written in Japanese characters, so that *Nikkei* Peruvians can camouflage their real origin and be unnoticed in Japanese society.

III. Re-adjusting to the "homeland"

Despite many *Nikkei* Peruvians have indefinitely extended their stay in Japan, others have already returned to their homeland as soon as they reached their economic goals such as saving certain amount of money that allowed them to pursue their dreams and lifestyle as middle class in Peru. Buying a house, starting up a business or paying their own tuition fees or their children's were the main reasons for them to defer consumption in Japan. For these *dekasegi*, as working and living in Japan was only a temporary household strategy, postponing their plans to have children was also part of their family plans. Some other *Nikkei* Peruvian households remained in Japan until their children were about to start elementary or lower secondary education. However, after the second half of the nineties, when family reunification took place or Peruvian families have more school-age children, there were not few children who could not adjust to the Japanese educational system due to the lack of language proficiency or because they just could not fit into the Japanese education system. The alternative to Japanese public schools was long-distance education or sending them back to Peru under the care of a relative who in the best case were the grandparents. Peruvians schools were an alternative only for those who lived in certain areas, such as Hamamatsu city in Shizuoka prefecture or Isesaki city in Gunma prefecture. Since the beginning of the 2000s there are isolated cases of "returnee" students from Japan, many of them continued studies at *Nikkeijin* schools or public and private schools in Peru. By mid 2000s this trend kept growing, and onetime scattered cases became waves of "returnees" from Japan who have changed *Nikkeijin* schools' education, and had an impact on *Nikkei* society and its institutions. These Peruvian children who have spent significant part of their developmental lives in Japan, after returning to Peru, their parents' homeland,

have their first contact with Peruvian society through their nuclear and extended family, friends, and then in many cases through *Nikkeijin* society, by attending *Nikkeijin* schools or events organized by its different institutions. However, pretty soon they realize there is a mismatch between their preconceived idea or image of *Nikkeijin* society they had before coming to Peru and what they perceive when they become a member of that *Nikkeijin* society. By using the contents of the interviews, those mismatches will be explained and how they trade-off their Japaneseness for *Nikkeiness* in order to build their identity, which is linked to Japanese language retention. Particularly, this section intends to shed light on *Nikkeijin* identity building and Japanese language retention, and show how paradoxically they are not always associated to each other; on the contrary, they usually exclude one another in Peruvian *Nikkei* Society. Differences between first and second generation of Peruvian returnees from Japan regarding their *Nikkei* identity building in Japan and in Peru were observed, and those differences explain its contradictory disassociation with Japanese language retention.

1. The “return” of the “returnee” children

The term “return” and “returnee” have been extensively used in both, the study of the *dekasegi* phenomenon from Latin America to Japan, and in the study of the children of the *dekasegi* upon arrival in the homeland. In the case of the latter who has come back to their parents' homeland, are also called “returnees,” but according to our survey results, only half of them were born in Peru, the other half were born in Japan, and it is important to mention here that many of them travelled to Japan when they were preschoolers, so they could start their education in Japan and live with their parents. For most of these children, the only country they knew was Japan, and for many, the only language they could speak was Japanese. Obviously, upon arrival in Peru, many “returnees” experienced different degrees of cultural shock that were mainly related to their new environment security, safety and hygienic conditions. Pertaining to their home lives in both countries from a comparative point of view, returnee children show a

preference for their home life in Japan. More than 70 percent said they “like” or “like very much,” and when they were asked about Peru, less than 60 percent gave the same answer. Specifically children's comments on why they like their lives in Japan were as follows: “Japanese cities and streets are clean,” “there is no garbage on the streets,” “cities are safe,” “there are no thieves,” “I can freely go out, because cities are safe,” “people follow the rules.” On the other hand, regarding their Peruvian home life: “Peruvian cities and streets are dirty,” “there is nothing but garbage on the streets,” “cities are dangerous,” “there are a lot of thieves,” “I cannot freely go out, because cities are not safe,” and “no one follows the rules.” Other reasons they gave were similar in their home lives in both countries: between 40-50 percent said because they have friends, and similar percentages for these responses: “Japanese or Peruvian food,” “speaking Japanese or Spanish,” and “Japanese or Peruvians school.” On the other hand, as many of them could not speak Spanish fluently or did not have enough Spanish proficiency to conduct a learning process in that language, the anxiety caused by the lack of Spanish language proficiency has been ameliorated by attending *Nikkeijin* schools and *Nikkeijin* associations, where they met other children who also came back from Japan.

2. Spanish proficiency and adjustment in Peru

The results of the survey conducted in 2008-2009 showed that there is 38 percent that cannot conduct a proper cognitive process in that language, and almost 30 percent can only communicate using conversational basic Spanish. However, the results of the psychological test Tamai shows that there is no significant statistical evidence of self-perceived disadjustment, therefore it can be stated that the sample has a good degree of adjustment at individual, school and society level. Even the lack of language proficiency does not become a source for disadjustment at schools, but it does at individual and social level, according to our results. The reason for this outcome can lie on the fact that all subjects were from *Nikkeijin* schools, where most of the other students, teachers and administrative staff have

some knowledge of the *dekasegi* phenomenon and understanding of the hurdles that *dekasegi*'s children face upon arrival in Peru, and therefore they are tolerant towards them. At these *Nikkei* schools, where Japanese language is taught at very basic level and the Japanese events calendar are celebrated, non-returnee students admire Japanese culture, including Japanese language, but unfortunately they cannot speak, read or understand it. It is important to mention that all *Nikkeijin* schools were established to serve the *Nikkei* community, but over the years, many *Nikkei* have moved their children to other schools looking for a better quality and more competitive education that emphasizes English language. By 2012, the *Nikkei* population enrolled in *Nikkei* schools ranged from 10 percent to 70 percent, and *Nikkei* and non-*Nikkei* pupils attended those schools because they or their parents had a particular interest in *Nikkei* culture. The enrollment of "returnee" pupils in *Nikkei* schools is perceived as very positive by non-returnee pupils, *Nikkei* and non-*Nikkei*, because the returnees are seen as the true bearers of Japanese culture, including Japanese language. "Returnee" pupils can count not only on the acceptance of non-returnee pupils as their peers, but also as peers who deserve their admiration. Non-returnee pupils, as many other Peruvian youngsters, yearn for Japanese popular culture that is a fad taking also place at that part of the world.

3. *Nikkei* society: a transitional step toward Peruvian society

Through their schools and different recreational and cultural associations, the *Nikkeijin* society serves as a transitional step between Japan and Peru for Peruvian children who come from Japan. *Nikkeijin* schools have played an important role in the adjustment process of "returnee" children in Peru, by serving as a socializing agent that offers a safety network along with other *Nikkei* organizations. In *Nikkeijin* schools and *Nikkeijin* associations, "returnees" can continue recreating their Japanese-school life, because they can use Japanese language, celebrate Japanese events, practice the same sports they did while in Japan, eat similar food, etc. Also in these institutions, "returnees" are accepted

by their peers and adults (school teachers, principals, coordinators and the association leaders), and this makes possible multiple emotional and functional benefits, such as understanding of reciprocity, sharing, and rules and authority. The cultural affinity between Japan and the *Nikkeijin* schools and associations provides a proper socialization channel, in which group belonging and social cohesion can be experienced. The more similar to the old surroundings the new surroundings are, the easier the adjustment process.

Students were also asked about their school life preferences in Japan and in Peru and contrary to their previous answers to the questions about home life in both countries, they were more positive towards their school life in Peru than in Japan. One of the reasons for this is the bullying that frequently occurs at Japanese schools, and the strict and sometimes incomprehensible Japanese school rules. Approximately 30 percent said that they had experienced bullying or discrimination in different ways, and a little less than 20 percent said that Japanese school rules were too strict or the rules too difficult to understand. However, merits of Japanese schools include their sport facilities and their wide range of club or extracurricular activities (*bukatsu*). Students at the junior high school engage in common activities that range from hobbies, such as music, sports, embroidery, comics, and even activities that enable them to make specific contributions to their local community or in a broader sense to foreign communities. As it can be seen, in spite of the merits of Japanese schools, "returnees" find a very favorable school environment in *Nikkei* schools, some pupils even said that "I like everything," regarding Peruvian schools when they were asked what do they like or dislike about them. Here there are some testimonies from the interviewees, who expressed their longing for the Japanese educational system, and found a "proxy" in *Nikkei* schools. *Nikkei* associations such as Asociación Estadio La Unión (AELU), Asociación Peruano Japonesa (APJ) and Asociación Okinawense del Perú (AOP), all of them located in Lima, and Sociedad Japonesa de Auxilios Mutuos in Chiclayo also offer spaces for "returnees" socialization outside *Nikkei* schools. It is common for

the pupils who attend *Nikkei* schools in Lima to go to this *Nikkei* associations after school or during weekends, so they can continue experiencing Japanese culture or practicing sports, and gathering with other pupils who have lived in Japan before. The most popular *Nikkei* associations among “returnees” are AELU and APJ. The first one is the largest sport facility of the *Nikkei* community, it is a membership-based organization, and it is very well known in Peruvian society as they even have a professional first league soccer team. “Returnees” are affiliated at some specific sport club such as soccer, volleyball, basketball, baseball, softball, and Japanese martial arts. As baseball and softball are not very popular in Peruvian society, most of the athletes in the Peruvian national teams of these two sports come from AELU. However, even for the “returnees” who are not interested in practicing sports, AELU is a good space for socialization and a place they just can hang around with their friends. The second one is a cultural center, where Japanese language and Japanese arts and crafts are taught. There are also Japanese restaurants where “returnees” like to gather with their friends. These two associations offer more than spaces for recreation and entertainment, both provide a safe environment for the “returnees”, where they can experience freedom, which they are deprived of once they arrive in Lima. For Japan-raised “returnee” children, *anzen* and *anshin* are very important concepts, both are similar and connected, and they mean safety and security, but the first one refers more to the environment (macro) and the other, to the self (micro). Without a doubt, “returnees” feel that AELU and APJ are *anzen*, where they can feel *anshin*, therefore the anxiety caused by the Peruvian environment can be abated and feel free and act freely.

4. “Returnee” children and *Nikkeiness*

Very often when *dekasegi* parents attempt to convince their children to go to Peru, they proudly mention the existence of a very institutionalized *Nikkei* community, in which they can continue experiencing Japanese language and culture. However, as soon as children arrive in Peru, they realize that the *Nikkei* community is not what they were expected before

coming to Peru. The first shocking impression is the lack of Japanese language proficiency among *Nikkei* Peruvians, even among the ones who are at the top of the *Nikkei* institutions. This disassociation between Japanese language and *Nikkei* culture is very difficult to understand for children who return from Japan, to whom Japanese language should be part of *Nikkei* culture. As most of the *Nikkei* Peruvians are of Okinawan ancestry, sometimes what is considered as Japanese culture, Japanese food and Japanese rites, correspond to the Okinawan legacy and not to Japanese culture. Besides what remains from that Japanese culture dates back from the prewar period, which is very distant from the current Japanese culture that the “returnees” are very familiar with.

Even if “returnee” children are enrolled in *Nikkei* schools and after school attend *Nikkei* associations, which accommodates them very comfortably, “returnee” children still do not have an understanding of what *Nikkeijin* means. In the interviews, it could be observed that the longer they were in Peru, the more they realized that being *Nikkeijin* could be considered an asset in Peruvian society, and that they can use it in order to negotiate in favorable terms with other *Nikkeijin* and non *Nikkeijin*. Also related to the first one, the lower their Japanese proficiency level, the more *Nikkeijin* they can become. Since Japanese language education stops when they come back to Peru, when “returnee” children arrive in Peru at early developmental stages, even as young adults their Japanese language proficiency level remains at that developmental stage. However, even if they instrumentalized their *Nikkei* identity because it serves their purposes, their profile does not suit the *Nikkei* profile. While the *Nikkei* Peruvians, after living and working in Japan, have reassured their *Nikkei* identity; the “returnee” children have a Japaneseness that clashes with the *Nikkeiness* they observed in Peru. The *Nikkei* society has been very beneficial to the “returnees”, as it has supported their adaptation process through their different organizations, and served as a “proxy” of the Japanese society they unwillingly left behind. The possibility of having a direct contact with Japanese culture through the visits to their parents who

are still working in Japan, the communication they keep with their Japanese friends or the internet resources that are ubiquitously available, allows them to keep their Japanese-ness while still be admitted in the *Nikkei* circles.

IV. Final remarks

In more than 100-year span the Japanese and their descendants in Peru and Japan have built a bridge between these two countries. They have moved back and forward on their own driven by the achievement of better living standards. Each generation has instrumentalized their Peruvianness, Japanese-ness or *Nikkei*-ness, trading-off among them or complementing each other, according to the circumstances so they can better negotiate their role in the host society. From the prewar period until the fifties, anti-Japanese feelings among non-*Nikkei* Peruvians represented a call for the Japanese and their descendants to embrace Peruvian values and accept the acculturation process they went through. During the sixties and seventies, the *Nikkei* society in Peru experienced a period of economic recovery and also of strengthening of its institutions that coincided with the economic take-off Japan. The geographical distance between Peru and Japan, and the time span since the Japanese immigration started, make the Japanese and their descendants redefine themselves from a Japanese society to a *Nikkei* society in Peru, whose more numerous members were precisely the second and third generation. However, in Peruvian society both, Japanese and *Nikkei* were not only used interchangeably, but also *Nikkei*, was just an equal term, meaning “Japanese” according to the non-*Nikkei* Peruvians. In the eighties and nineties, the *Nikkei* became clearly a positive minority in Peru, where they used their Japanese-ness and their *Nikkei*-ness or also what they thought as Japanese-ness within the *Nikkei* society. In the nineties during the *dekasegi* phenomenon and after their life and work experience in Japan, the *Nikkei* reconfirmed their identity again. The Japanese-ness they brought with them from Peru was replaced by their *Nikkei*-ness in Japan, where they generally disregard their Peruvianness. However, the

second generation or the children of the *dekasegi* in Japan were more prone to reject both, their parents’ Peruvianness or *Nikkei*-ness and to live as any other Japanese, which is not exactly what they parents’ once embrace as Japanese-ness. Finally, upon their return from Japan, in Peru the *Nikkei* adults took back their *Nikkei*-ness, which they already knew could not be confused with Japanese-ness and their children started trading off their Japanese-ness for *Nikkei*-ness in Peru.

This paper has shed light on the transnational differences of identity building in Japan and Peru, and their intergenerational divergence among *Nikkei* Peruvians that evidences once more the importance of analyzing each generation batch separately so we can have a better grasp of its needs and possibilities in the host society, Japan or Peru. It can be observed now in Japan a new batch of *Nikkei* Peruvians going to Japan to work, still very few certainly, but it will be very interesting to explore the differences regarding their identity building compare with the *Nikkei* who already live in Japan. Regarding the “returnee” children, in the last ten years they have already become adults in Peru, and currently many of them are pursuing tertiary education, others working at Peruvian or Japanese firms in Peru. Also some others decided to go back to Japan, where they are continuing further studies or working in qualified jobs, and others doing the same job as their parents did. Having both, relatively high Japanese and Spanish language proficiency, and knowing the explicit and moreover the implicit codes of conduct in Japanese and Peruvian society provide them with the possibility of building up transnational careers, in which they could use their different identities. These two topics, the new *Nikkei* Peruvians in Japan and the “returnee” children back to Japan as adults, are venues for further research.

¹ The term *Nikkei* or *Nikkeijin* applies to the overseas Japanese emigrants, their descendants and spouses of non-Japanese ancestry.

² Norte Chico is a current expression for the valleys located north of the capital city, Lima. Geographically speaking it is an area that encompasses some provinces of the department of Lima (a department is an administrative political subdivision in Peru).

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日本とペルーにおける循環移住 －ペルー人らしさ・日系人らしさ・日本人らしさの形成－

スエヨシ・アナ

概要

100年間以上、日本とペルーにまたがる日本人移民と彼らの子孫は、受け入れ社会の地位を交渉しながら、世代により異なるアイデンティティを形成することとなった。本研究ノートは、2008年から2016年の間に行ったアンケートと聞き取り調査の結果に基づき、日本とペルーでは受け入れ社会として、日系人デカセギの一世と二世が、ペルー人らしさ・日系人らしさ・日本人らしさを交換することを明らかにした。デカセギの二世は一世と異なり、日本から持ってきた日本人らしさを、日系人らしさで交換しながら、ペルー社会に編入する。

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