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The Stacked Bar Model: Japanese-Peruvians' National Ethnic Identities Across Peru, Japan and the United States

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
RIVERSIDE

The Stacked Bar Model:  
Japanese-Peruvians' National Ethnic Identities Across  
Peru, Japan and the United States

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

by

Shigueru Julio Tsuha

December 2011

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Alfredo Mirandé, Chairperson

Dr. Lane Hirabayashi

Dr. Scott Brooks

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2011

The Dissertation of Shigueru Julio Tsuha is approved:

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is, first and foremost, dedicated to my grandfather, Julio Jikko Tsuha (R.I.P.). Thank you, Ojii, for having the vision, strength, courage and work ethic to bring our entire family to Los Angeles. I have often thought about you during the development of this project, especially during the most difficult parts to help me find the strength to continue moving forward. The pride I take in this work will always be remembered with all your sacrifices.

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Stacked Bar Model:  
Japanese-Peruvians' National Ethnic Identities Across  
Peru, Japan and the United States of America

by

Shigueru Julio Tsuha

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Sociology  
University of California, Riverside, December 2011  
Dr. Alfredo Mirandé, Chairperson

This project has two intertwined goals: 1) to understand the formation of Japanese-Peruvians' national ethnic identities across Peru, Japan, and the United States of America, by analyzing data from 40-indepth interviews with Japanese-Peruvians living the United States, and 2) to develop and explain the Stacked Bar Model of Ethnicities and Ethnic Identities as a new analytical system by which to understand the national ethnic identities of migrants. In order to do this, Japanese-Peruvians' ethnic identities are treated as working outside of a zero-sum context and shown to function as multiple ordinal variables that can grow and shrink independently of each other. National *ethnic requirements* and *ethnic othering qualifiers* are then identified as ideal types of ethnic traits that govern the identities that are restricted and made available to Japanese-Peruvians in each country.



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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

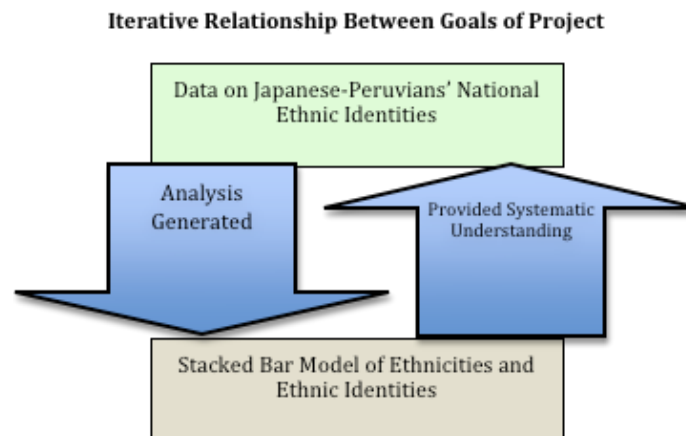
This is very important... I hope you take this with you... what's called "half" doesn't exist.... My term, and that's what I am now, there exists what is called "double".... Why double? Because it is true that I'm Peruvian, and it is true that I'm Japanese. You understand? ...[A] Japanese can't talk to you about a Peruvian because he is Japanese. He can only talk about Japan. A Peruvian can only talk about [Peru]. Not me. I'm "double". So it can't be... it's not "half". It's "double".

Pedro, a 39-year-old male born in Peru of Japanese and Peruvian descent that migrated to Japan as a temporary worker before settling in the U.S.

### Goals

This project has two intertwined goals: 1) to understand the formation of Japanese-Peruvians' (JPs') national ethnic identities across Peru, Japan and the United States (U.S.), and 2) to propose and develop the Stacked Bar Model (SBM) of Ethnicities and Ethnic Identities, as a new analytical system for understanding the national ethnic identities of migrants. These two factors are caught in an iterative cycle whereby the analysis of data on Japanese-Peruvians' national ethnic identities generated the SBM, which provided a systematic analysis of the data on JPs' national ethnic identities.

**Figure 1.1**



The iterative relationship between these two goals makes the structure of this thesis a unique one in which theory and data are simultaneously presented throughout the chapters in order to 1) present data describing the experiences of JPs, and 2) progressively build upon the SBM from its simplest to most complex theoretical forms.

This project's goal in its inception was simple: to find out "How JPs living in the U.S. make sense of their national ethnic identities?" This led to the broader question of, "How ethnic identities are formed in general?" The most promising answer to this came from Barth's (1969) work showing that they are formed by the construction, reformulation, and destruction of ethnic boundaries. Ethnic boundaries are subjectively formed to include and exclude individuals based on subjective criteria that may or may not include cultural components such as language and religion. However, in order to make sense of the data on JPs' national ethnic identities, it was clear that a more systematic approach was necessary to answer questions regarding the nature of how ethnic groups are categorized in different racial structures as they migrate. This required that I develop new theoretical tools to study ethnicity and ethnic identity. The result of this was the formulation of the SBM with different sets of ethnic traits differentiated by their functions in the process of the formation of ethnic boundaries.

In order to truly appreciate this thesis, the reader must first understand this project as an endeavor to create new theoretical tools to understand the unusual ethnic make-up of Japanese-Peruvians living in California, the unique situations they have faced, and the complicated ethnic identities that emerged from these experiences. We might say that this project is data driven and theory oriented. Yet, it is not theory oriented in that it

draws direction from a given theory that is being tested, but it is theory oriented in that it is in search of a theory to make sense of its unique data set.

Metaphorically speaking, we might think of this project as a long road trip in a malfunctioning automobile in search for the right mechanic. In this road trip, the malfunctioning car represents the data, and the right mechanic is the right theory that will make sense of the data. Now, imagine that this car is a very unusual car. It is made up of parts from different corners of the world. Let us say it is composed of Japanese parts, Peruvian parts, and American parts. Through this long road trip, the driver is able to find different mechanics that specialize in American parts; he can find mechanics that specialize in Japanese parts; and mechanics that specialize in Peruvian parts. However, she/he cannot find a mechanic who specializes in figuring out how all these different parts work together. In the end, after driving many roads and after talking to all the different mechanics, the driver realizes that the “right” mechanic does not, in fact, exist. So the driver decides to try to fix the car her/himself. Yet, in order to fix the car, the driver realizes that the tools available are not the proper ones for the task at hand, and thus, the driver develops and builds new tools to fix the car. In the end, the driver not only fixes the car, but also ends up inventing new tools and producing new understandings of how to fix cars. What began as a simple journey to find the right mechanic (theory) ended up becoming a journey to develop or become a new type of mechanic (new theory). Now, if this driver that became a mechanic were asked by other mechanics, “How did you fix this car?” The mechanic would not be able to easily explain what the problems were to begin with, as most mechanics might never have heard

of the unique problems this car had. This mechanic would have to first explain the different parts of the car, their relation to each other, their (in)compatibility, the reasons why the existing tools were not sufficient to fix the car, the logic behind developing the new tools, their functions, and only after all that, would the mechanic be able to fully explain just how the car was fixed.

This is the nature of this research project. It is a data driven project that originated by trying to find the right theory to make sense of such data, and ended up having to develop new theoretical tools in order to achieve its goal. Because of this, this thesis takes on an unorthodox organization. The SBM is not presented in its entirety until the end of the fifth chapter, which deals with JPs' identity in the U.S. Instead, pieces of the SBM are presented progressively as the data is able to illustrate the logic behind these parts and additions. As the data is progressively added to the model through the chapters, the model itself progresses from simple to more complex. Presenting the SBM in its most developed and complex form without the illustrations provided by the data would be confusing and counterproductive at the beginning of this thesis.

This project identifies as a data driven one not only because of its focus on deriving knowledge from the words of its respondents, but also in that it emerges from the principles of Chicano Sociology that "refuse[s] to separate the individual from his social milieu" (Mirandé 1985: 214). This thesis also embodies the spirit of Chicano Sociology and the emergence of a Chicano paradigm as argued by Mirandé (1982). In making the distinction between the sociology of Chicanos and Chicano Sociology, Mirandé criticizes the former because it "simply took existing perspectives and applied



them to Chicanos, and failed to ‘develop new paradigms or theoretical frameworks consistent with a Chicano world view or responsive to the nuances of Chicano culture’” (1982: 502). As illustrated through the metaphor above, I found it difficult to address the issues of JPs living in the U.S. with the existing theories and paradigms on identity. Instead, I found myself following the principles of Chicano Sociology, which intends to “develop a Chicano sociology with its own distinctive theories, methods, exemplars, and paradigms; that is, a Chicano perspective not only on Chicanos but on sociology and science” (Mirandé 1982: 503). Chapter 2 outlines the methodological changes and challenges to assumptions on how identity works that the SBM employs. These theoretical innovations are more than a reflection of the need to approach studies of minority groups through the principles of Mirandé’s argument for Chicano Sociology; in fact, they work as resounding evidence of this need. This project was not guided by the principles of Chicano Sociology in its inception; it was well into the data analysis phase where it became clear to me that the standing academic assumptions about identity and the theories developed from them were not sufficient to understand JP identity in a satisfactory way. In other words, it was not planned that the principles of Chicano Sociology would guide this project; it was the actual data that forced this project to employ the principles of Chicano Sociology.

This project also finds at its core the understanding that identities, while ultimately subjective in nature, are shaped by the social environments in which they exist. I seek to understand the effects of the migrations on JPs’ identities by paying particular attention to the subjectivities of JPs in forming and choosing their ethnic identity. The

factors affecting their identity will be seen as a result not only of their situations, but their agency as well, because the ways in which individuals act and are allowed to act is greatly dependent on how this identity is interpreted both by the individual her/himself and by those who surround such an individual (Brooks 2004).

### **Sample and Methods**

Forty JPs participated in this study as respondents in semi-structured in-depth interviews regarding their histories of migration and ethnic identities. The range of length of the interviews lasted from 40 minutes to eight hours, but most lasted on average between 90-120 minutes. The 40 respondents for this study were identified as Japanese-Peruvian if they were the descendants of at least one Japanese national who had resided in Peru for at least ten years. All respondents were currently residing in the U.S. permanently at the time of the interviews in 2010. Twenty respondents were women and twenty were men. Fifteen respondents were between the ages of 19 and 29, eleven were in their 30's, six were in their 40's, four were in their 50's and four were 60 years old or older. Nine respondents identified as Nisei (second generation), twenty-seven identified as Sansei (third generation), three identified as Yonsei (fourth generation), and one identified as "other" on the generation variable. Thirty respondents identified their descent as completely Japanese and ten identified as multi-racial. Twelve of them were born in the U.S. or immigrated before the age of 18; 12 migrated to the U.S. directly from Peru during their adulthood; 12 migrated from Peru to Japan and lived there longer than one year before migrating to the U.S.; and four experienced unusual migrations distinct from the other migration patterns.

## **Migration to Peru and Peru's Racial Formation**

### *Migration to Peru*

The history of Japanese immigration to Peru begins in 1899. Japan was undergoing the Meiji restoration period of modernization that increased taxes for landowning people, putting much economic pressure on farmers, and pushing many of them off shores as sojourners (Ng 2002). While originally the destination of many of these contract laborers was Hawaii and California, immigration restrictions such as the Gentleman's Agreement of 1907/1908 redirected the migration patterns to countries like Peru that were experiencing problems regarding shortages of labor. The Japanese laborers migrated to work in Peru's sugar and cotton industries, numbering more than twenty thousand by 1923. Most migrants originated from the agricultural prefectures in Japan with Okinawans making up the biggest proportion (20%) (Morimoto 1999).

As agricultural contract labor, the Japanese population suffered horrendous working conditions with unfair contracts. Despite such obstacles, many Japanese workers began moving away from the agricultural sector and settled in urban centers of Lima and Callao where they established themselves into the middle class as small entrepreneurs.

However, during the World War II era, the anti-Japanese hysteria that swept the western hemisphere created problems for the Issei<sup>1</sup> and Nisei<sup>2</sup>. During this time, a

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<sup>1</sup> Issei is the Japanese word for first generation Japanese migrant outside of Japan.

<sup>2</sup> Nisei is the Japanese word for the sons and daughters of Japanese migrants who are born outside of Japan

number of attacks were launched against the Japanese community paralleling those in the U.S., including the closing of Japanese schools, persecution and incarceration of community leaders, freezing of bank accounts, a riot in 1940 where hundreds of Japanese family-owned businesses were attacked, and finally, the collaboration of the Peruvian and U.S. governments in the rendition of more than 1800 Japanese living in Peru to be placed in U.S. concentration camps to be used in prisoner of war exchanges with Japan (Daniels 2004; Gardiner 1981; Higashide 2000; Ng 2002; Takenaka 2000).

The Japanese community had developed up to this point to become a middleman minority. They followed many of the patterns described by Bonacich (1973) and originally entered the Peruvian labor markets not as settling residents, but as sojourners. They built institutions that heavily centered on internal ethnic solidarity such as banks and associations, while at the same time facing the racism that climaxed with World War II.

These factors contributed to the Issei and Nisei's strong identity connection to Japan, even though to many the dreams of returning were giving way to the realities of the lacking opportunities of a Japanese country devastated by war. For the Nisei, life in Peru was now a permanent reality, and as such, the Japanese community flourished in Peru as Japanese organizations, clubs, and institutions emerged to complement the growing integration of the population into the Peruvian economy. As Takenaka (2000)

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<sup>2</sup> Nisei is the Japanese word for the sons and daughters of Japanese migrants who are born outside of Japan and hold the nationality of the host society (Peru in this case); as such, this generation is the first generation not born in Japan, and the second generation residing in a new country.

argues, the first ethnic institutions created by Nikkei<sup>3</sup>, mainly centered on moving forward their community's economic interests. This became the basis for building Nikkei communities. In addition, external factors such as the hostility that the Japanese experienced forced the Japanese community to coalesce into a cohesive population with a strong Japanese ethnic identity and with its own institutions.

While JPs make up a small minority in Peru, because of their middle class status (Thompson 1979) they have been seen as “passing” whites (de la Cadena 1998), and have become a rather visible and important part of Peruvian economics and politics. Today, JPs retain a relatively privileged social status in Peru. Along with this, they hold an image of being hard working, intelligent, and honest, a fact that was most strongly reflected in the ascendancy of a JP, Alberto Fujimori, to the office of Peru's presidency in 1990.

### *Peru's Racial Formation*

The Peruvian national, racial, and ethnic formations are historically interwoven with each other. After Peru won its independence from the Spanish in 1821, the task of forming a national ethnic and racial image in Peru was complicated by the fact that the majority of the Peruvian population (i.e. indigenous and mestizos) was not the most powerful (whites) as was the case in the U.S. The racial formation of the U.S. developed into a caste system with highly impermeable boundaries in which the majority of the white population occupied the top strata of the racial hierarchy. The Peruvian racial formation had developed differently due to the large number of indigenous people and

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<sup>3</sup> The word Nikkei refers to a Japanese descendant who was born outside of Japan.

the growing segment of mestizos. This fact complicated the creation of a national racial image. On the one hand, the majority of the population that was not white could not be ignored by the white elites, and on the other hand, this elite group (i.e. the white *criollos*<sup>4</sup>) would delegitimize itself as a ruling class if it based the entire Peruvian national ethnic image on the image of the Inca. Genocide as a strategy of colonization in Peru was not a solution with consensus, as it posed economic disadvantages to the white elites who favored cheap racialized labor, as Manrique notes:

For the [*criollo*] elite and the *mestizo* sectors that shared their values and world vision, the constitution of the nation passed, for the most backwards, by the vanishing of the Indians: their pure and simple extermination... - a position broadly agreed upon by fractions of the *gamonales*, that apparently could not repair the contradiction that desired the elimination of the social sector that produced the economic excesses that allowed them to exist.  
(1999:18)

The economic role of the indigenous in Peru was simply too vital to the white elite to destroy the entire population. This was a condition entirely different to the U.S. where Indian genocide became the policy of colonization of Indian lands, and slave labor was used to fill the resulting labor void.

The solution to the *criollo* elites' internal differences became changing the racial composition of the Peruvian population. Peru was understood to be an under-populated developing new nation in dire need of labor migration during the era following its

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<sup>4</sup> The term "*criollo*" was originally created to identify the descendants of Spanish blood that were born in Peru. As these Europeans were born in Peru, their culture was viewed as having become polluted and therefore decaying from what were thought of as authentic European values or virtues. Thus, being or becoming *criollo* was meant to indicate a fall from a moral high ground from the Old World's point of view during the time of colonization, and therefore it was perceived to be inferior to the native Spaniards' culture.

independence in 1821, and the white elite strongly preferred that the new immigrants be white Europeans. Fukumoto notes:

The majority of the writings from this epoch reflect a clear bias in favor of European migration. [Hidelbrando] Fuentes<sup>5</sup> [in 1892] wrote: “Only immigration to Peru of the European, white race, strong by nature, agile in education, rich in virtues, hardworking by necessity and tradition, courageous by instinct, progressive to death, will be an effective remedy to the defects we have touched on. This immigration will unify the Peruvian population creating a new nation with virtues of the Latin<sup>6</sup> or Saxon race and the advantageous qualities of the American race. (1997:79)

As preferences for white European immigrants emerged, disfavor towards immigration from Asia and Africa simultaneously surfaced among the discussions within the *criollo* elite. Manrique quotes Jose Carlos Mariategui (1886-1935), a prominent socialist intellectual:

The *chino*<sup>7</sup> and the *negro*<sup>8</sup> complicate the coastal *mestizaje*. Neither of these two elements has brought, yet, cultural virtues nor progressive energy to the formation of the nation... the *chino*, instead, seems to have inoculated in his heritage fatalism, apathy, the defects of the decadent Orient. (1999: 66)

Luis Brayce y Cotes, a Peruvian academic of the time also writes:

The entry of the *chinos* instead of the *negros*, produced also a new, much inferior mix, especially physically, that due to its own weakness tends to vanish before it reaches its full development, and it brings with itself the defects of both components, confirming the sociological principle that says that, “when inferior races are mixed, the result is an average that sums up the defects of both races from which such average originates”. (1899: 14)

While the Peruvian racial project of *mestizaje* can be seen as progressive when compared to the U.S. racial projects of caste and segregation, it is in fact just as racist in principle.

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<sup>5</sup> A prominent Peruvian intellectual writing in the late 1800's.

<sup>6</sup> The term Latin is used here to indicate a type of European immigrant such as Spanish or Italian for example. It does not describe what we contemporarily understand as Latin (referring to Latin Americans) in the U.S.

<sup>7</sup> *Chino* is the Spanish word for Chinese.

<sup>8</sup> *Negro* is the Spanish word for Black.

The difference is not the existence or absence of racism, but the shape of its materialization. *Mestizaje*, as a racial project, was rooted on ideas of “bettering the race” (Callirgos 1993; Fukumoto Sato 1997; Manrique 1999; Quijano 1980) away from its indigenous origins and towards white race and culture. The project of populating Peru had the objective of doing so with Europeans, but this project failed despite the offering of strong incentives to Europeans to migrate to Peru, and as a result the remaining labor void was partly filled by Asian immigrants that included Japanese labor. Asian labor was largely seen as a necessary evil in the process of national formation and economic development. Because *mestizaje* as a racial project involved the mixture of races and creation of new racial categories, it is difficult to pinpoint a single race that embodies Peruvianness, the same way that whiteness represents Americanness. Therefore, race in Peru does not signify national belonging as much as in the U.S., but like in the U.S., it determines positions of inferiority and superiority. In Peru, whites, *mestizos*, and the indigenous all have a claim to “authentic” Peruvianness. Whites have granted themselves that privilege as they have had the power to do so in their own advantage, and as they were the leaders of revolutions that won Peru’s independence from the Spanish; *mestizos* have a claim to this privilege as their racial mixture symbolizes the emergence of the Peruvian nation as a mixture of the Incan and Spanish heritages; and the indigenous have a claim to such privilege as they are the direct inheritors of the Incan race and culture that originally inhabited Peruvian land. However, in the case of the Japanese and other Asian descendants (and possibly to a lesser degree African descendants as well), “authentic”



Peruvianness is an unreachable claim, as the Peruvian racial national image never deemed it either necessary or desirable in its own formation.

## **Return Migration to Japan and Japan's Racial Formation**

### *Return Migration to Japan*

The return migration of JPs to Japan at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century created a shift in JPs ethnic identity. Japanese-Peruvians were forced to realize that they were not considered to be Japanese by the Japanese natives. An unlikely opportunity appeared for JPs in the late 1980's in the face of a Peruvian economic crisis of inflation and a Japanese crisis of labor shortage (Tezuka 1993). The Japanese government opened its doors to Nikkei to come back to Japan to work in its factories (Tsuda 1999). This has been called the *dekasegi*<sup>9</sup> phenomenon, in which many of these workers of Japanese descent travel to work in Japan with plans of returning to their countries of birth after saving money.

The push factors (Todaro 1969; Todaro and Maruszko 1987) stimulating Nikkei emigration from Peru included economic inflation, political instability, and terrorism, all of which made Peru's future political and economic stability uncertain. The pull factors involved Japan's offering of higher wages, which were almost unimaginable even to the educated middle class JPs living in Peru. The economic advantages that Japan provided were made even more attractive to JPs by their preconceived notions of Japan as an ideal migratory destination. Morimoto (2002) discovered through a survey that JPs positively viewed the Japanese as having good work ethics and values. This and the ethnic connection JPs already had to Japan made it seem like an ideal migratory destination.

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<sup>9</sup> *Dekasegi* means migrant worker in Japanese, and is used as a label for many return migrants.

In the 80's, Japan began to experience labor shortages in the unskilled work areas. This was strongly due to its low birthrate and its aging population (Mori 1997). In addition, younger Japanese generations were unwilling to take these low-paying jobs. This created a labor vacuum that threatened Japan's manufacturing industries, productivity and competitiveness. Furthermore, Japan's need for labor was complicated by the Japanese people's unwillingness to accept outsiders who are imagined to be impure and likely to pollute Japan both culturally and racially (Reischauer and Jansen 1995).

The 1990 Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act of Japan helped ameliorate this problem. This act expanded immigration rights to Nikkei; it allowed them (up to the third generation) to become long-term residents of Japan with options for becoming permanent residents and obtaining unlimited visa renewals (Brody 2002). By passing this policy, the Japanese were able to open what Brody (2002) describes as a "side door" for foreign unskilled labor. The policy was not officially created to generate an influx of cheap immigrant workers, but it was nevertheless designed with the labor shortage problem in mind. This "side door" allowed the Japanese to receive migrant cheap labor without having to officially change Japan's anti-foreign unskilled labor stance. From this point of view, JPs were allowed to return to their ancestral homeland, and their status as cheap labor was understood as an accidental convenience. As such, the policy was meant to circumvent the Japanese phobia of racial and cultural pollutants. The Japanese thought that Japanese-Peruvians would be able to assimilate into Japanese society rather smoothly because of their shared Japanese heritage (Brody 2002;

Yamanaka 1993). As Tsuda (2003b) shows, the Japanese equated race with culture from their ideology of homogeneity and applied this to the Nikkei, believing them to be culturally Japanese, a mistake they would have to recognize once the return migration began.

The high influx of Nikkei return migration to Japan after the enactment of the 1990 act was led in numbers by Brazil, and was followed by Peru, but Nikkei from many Latin American countries found their way back to Japan. A total of 274,000 registered South Americans had arrived in Japan by 1998 with the majority being Brazilians. Peruvians numbered 54,000 (Yanagida 1997).

The migration to Japan was not without its costs. For JPs, this included losing the relatively high socioeconomic status of their home country and adopting a much lower status in Japan comparable to that of other minority populations such as the Koreans (Hicks 1997; Lie 2001). The Japanese Immigration Cooperation Agency conducted a study that found that 4 out of 10 Nikkei migrants were university educated, and 8 out of 10 were employed in factories in Japan (Masterson 2006:156). Nikkei were concentrated in “crafts and manufacturing [sectors], including assembly, repair and machinery operation. Some 80 percent of both genders... have jobs in these categories and the rest perform clerical jobs or manual labor such as long shoring, loading and janitorial work” (Yamanaka 1993). Japanese-Peruvians accepted their situation as a short-term sacrifice as most JPs traveled to Japan with the goal of saving money and returning to Peru. This mindset mirrored the intentions of the first generation of Japanese immigrants in Peru. However, with time, “...the pattern of low repatriation rates that characterized their

forebears' emigration to Latin America was being repeated in reverse" (Masterson 2006:153).

### *Japan's Racial Formation*

The history of Japan's identity as a nation can be traced back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century when the Yamato state emerged. While research has shown that Japan's native population finds its origins in southeast and East Asia, with the emergence of the Yamato state "...a legend of a single, unmixed Yamato people of unique, indigenous origin was developed" (Murphy-Shigematsu 1993: 66). The Yamato people were thought to descend from an unbroken lineage directly traced to the sun goddess. From its origins, such an identity was based on a divine exceptionality that made the Yamato people uniquely special. However, such an identity was reserved only for people from the main island of Japan, as was seen in the case in Japan's oppressive incorporation of the Ainu people and the Ryukyans. It is through reviewing Japan's dealing with its ethnic minorities, incorporated peoples, and immigrants that its modern racial context must be analyzed.

The Burakumin find their origins in Japan itself. However, they have been historically distinguished as an outcaste group associated with occupations dealing with death (e.g. animal slaughter, disposal of the dead). Nevertheless, they have been rather indistinguishable both visually and culturally from the rest of Japanese society. This has led some to speak of them as an "invisible race" (De Vos 1966; Shimahara 1971). De Vos' work (1966; 1974) treats the Burakumin as a caste because of their ascribed status passed down through the descent of the group. They are thought of as descendants from

the *Eta*, an occupational group with tasks that are passed down generationally, and who have been spoken of as being “unjapanese” and “biologically inferior”. However, De Vos’ argument of the Burakumin being a caste has not gone unchallenged, as social mobility out of the group has been documented (Shimahara 1991; Taira 1971). What is interesting about the case of the Burakumin is the ambiguity regarding their status as a race. While they might not constitute a race (as it is commonly understood in the West), as they are phenotypically indistinguishable from the Yamato, the literature shows that they have been treated as a race “caste” and that Japanese scholars have attempted to prove the Burakumin’s biological differences academically (Fowler 2000). The Burakumin have been thought of as being genetically inferior and even subhuman (Hicks 1997: 7). While the Burakumin were legally emancipated in 1871, they continue to experience discrimination in different areas of the Japanese social world.

The case of the Burakumin finds relevancy in the discussion of JPs’ experience as it provides a historical precedent of a racializing process that is not based on one’s phenotype. This case provides a precedent suggesting that racism in Japan is not necessarily tied to the concept of race as a phenotypical demarcation, as it is imagined in the West. The racial discrimination that JPs’ experience in Japan, then, can be understood as transcending phenotypes.

Japan had had centuries of economic contact with the Ainu people from Hokkaido, a northern neighboring island, until through military incursions, the island and its people fell under the domain of the Japanese. The Kunashir-Menash Revolt of 1789 was the last military stand by the Ainu against the Japanese after 300 years of conflict.

Before the revolt and during this time, “[t]he Ainu were considered a separate race; politically they were *kegai no tami* (people whom the emperor’s teachings had not reached).... They were not allowed to own fields for agriculture, and socially they were assigned to the lowest class which also contained beggars, outcasts and lepers” (Kohei 2004:214). The Ainu were considered completely distinct from the Japanese, as they had their very own language and culture.

The Ryukyuan kingdom was made up of many islands, of which the largest and most important was the now prefecture of Okinawa to the south of mainland Japan. Okinawa had been a tributary state shared both by China and Japan. As such, the kingdom of Ryukyu maintained relative cultural and political autonomy despite having to defer to Japan and China. This lasted until Japan annexed Ryukyu in 1872, turned it into a prefecture in 1879, and renamed it Okinawa. The case of Okinawa is different from that of Hokkaido in that while Okinawan people and culture were considered markedly different from that of the Yamato, they were regarded as closer to the Japanese in terms of race and culture. While Okinawans had their own separate language and culture, these were interpreted as having common archaic origins through philological and anthropological studies done by the Japanese (Christy 2004; Smits 2004). Although imagined to be culturally and biologically closer to the Yamato, Okinawans were still perceived as inferior. Both the Ainu and Ryukyuans were submitted to oppressive assimilationist policies that incessantly attacked their languages and cultural practices. In addition, discriminatory institutional practices within mainland Japan have continued to this day in areas like the labor market. By now, the Ainu and Okinawans have become

very assimilated despite continuing efforts to this day to retain their respective languages and cultures. The assimilationist policies of Japan were so intense that many Okinawan interest groups and institutions are now highly invested in their Japanese identity as discussed by Christy (2004) and Smits (2004).

The cases of the Ainu and Ryukyuans are examples of how the colonized people of Japan have been categorized as peripheral and inferior. The review of the status and experiences of these minorities in Japan helps us understand it as a country whose identity is based on the main island territory at its core. The Japanese policies towards people not from this core has generally been an aggressively assimilationist one in which non-Japanese cultures are understood as pollutants. Targeting cultural pollutants, the Japanese have often resorted to racial explanations for these cultural differences.

Japan annexed Korea in 1910. The Korean population in Japan has increased dramatically since then. In 1920, there were 30,000 Koreans in Japan; by 1930 this number had grown to 298,000; by 1940, 1.2 million; and by 1944 almost 2 million (De Vos and Lee 1981). “During the colonial period (1910-1945), Koreans living on both the Japanese archipelago and the Korean peninsula were Japanese imperial subjects” (Lie 2008: x). As imperial subjects, however, Koreans never received the “true” Japanese citizenship reserved for the Japanese. Most Koreans found work in mining, railroad construction and stevedoring. They were not only subjected to substandard wages and exploitation, but were stereotyped, criminalized, and experienced housing discrimination into ghettos. From 1939-1945, as Japanese expansion created labor shortages, Koreans

were brought involuntarily to work in Japan in unattractive, dangerous, low paying jobs such as mining.

Thus, Koreans were always subject to intense discrimination despite being Japanese nationals until after World War II when the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1952 was passed and the Japanese regained their sovereignty and Koreans' legal status changed to being foreign residents in Japan. Currently there is about 700,000 Koreans in Japan, most of which are born there. As other communities, Koreans have suffered from the assimilationist policies of Japan forcing them to drop their language, culture and change their names for employment and naturalization, a sacrifice many refuse to make despite the economic and political disadvantages extending from this "choice". As a result, Koreans are concentrated in lower paying jobs, subjugated to strict immigration control, and cultural discrimination in their everyday lives. Koreans are different from the Ainu, Burakumin and Okinawans in that the latter are seen, to a certain degree, as subcultures of Japan, whereas Koreans are viewed as completely distinct (Hicks 1997), making them subject to more intensive and extensive forms of discrimination.

Taking the case of Korean migrants, the Burakumin, the Ainu and the Okinawans, the discrimination that JPs experience in Japan was not spontaneously formulated through the interaction between these JPs and the native Japanese. Instead, JPs arrive into a situation where immigrants and their offspring (like Koreans) are strongly discriminated against, and where having a Japanese phenotype and last name do not protect one from being othered (as the Burakumin, Okinawans and Ainus). As JPs enter Japanese society, they do so as targets to discrimination due to their foreign status, their



inability to speak Japanese, and their cultural differences. In Japan, all these factors are important in defining the claims to Japanese ethnicity. Japan has a very restrictive definition that emerged from a myth of homogeneity.

### The Japanese Myth of Homogeneity

Virtually every piece of academic literature on the topics of Japanese racism and ethnicity begins by discussing the Japanese myth of homogeneity. Japan has imagined itself as a country without minorities in which its people are characterized by a unified race, language, and culture, and at times the Japanese have used this in explaining their nation's emergence as a world economic power (Hicks 1997: 5). Although Japan is relatively homogenous when compared to countries such as the U.S., ethnic minorities including the Ainu, Okinawans, Burakumin and Koreans make up 6 million people or 5% of its population; and play more than a significant role in Japanese history and its national formation. The mythical nature of Japanese homogeneity is unearthed not only from current demographics, but also from historical analysis in ideological changes. Japan's expansionist imperial efforts in Hokkaido, Okinawa and Korea from the beginning of the Meiji Era to the end of World War II were compounded by conveniently held beliefs that these different peoples' racial or ethnic proximity to the Yamato qualified them as subjects to the Japanese emperor (Doak 2001; Yonezawa 2005). In the case of the Ainu, their proximity to the Japanese was used as an argument against the contending Russian colonial forces, and in the case of the Ryukyans, their proximity to the Japanese was used as an argument against Chinese colonial forces. Thus, emphasizing Japanese heterogeneity was a strategic imperialist tactic that was never meant to equate to any

notion of egalitarian ethnic pluralism. Yonezawa (2005) borrows heavily from Eiji Oguma's (1998) work to show that the end of Japan's military expansionist project with World War II marked the shift from this heterogeneous ethnic ideology back to a homogenous one.

At the core center of the homogeneous myth stand the Yamato people and their imperial line descending from the sun goddess (Amaterasu Omikami). This was all part of the mythology that gave birth to the Shinto religion that was institutionalized as the national religion in the Meiji Era (1868-1912) (Yonezawa 2005:118). Using this as the basis for a national ideology of race, nation, ethnicity, religion and language, the Japanese nation began to define itself in counter position to the "other" non-Yamato people. As such, Japan's racial formation was based in its strong entanglement of race, ethnicity, and culture, a fact that has been very well documented (Armstrong 1989; Doak 1997; Kohno 1988; Lie 2001; Reischauer and Jansen 1995; Watts and Feldman 2001).

While the Japanese have long thought of themselves as a unique racial group of people, the understanding of themselves as a race must be placed in the context of the emergence of the concept of race and racism in the West. Sakamoto (2004) understands the creation of the Japanese race as the result of adopting the Western concept of race (as a human categorizing tool and a colonizing ideology) as a reaction against the western orientalization of China. This orientalization characterized China as backwards, archaic and culturally stagnant. The creation of the concept of a Japanese race was in part a result of the Japanese desire to distance itself from the "yellow race" as designated by the west.

In the early articulations of 'race', then, neither the 'Japanese race' nor the 'nation' figured clearly. However, in time, the ambiguous positioning of Japan was replaced with a clear articulation of the 'Japanese race' through the idea of the nation. This happened as Japanese Enlightenment elites appropriated the discourse of 'race' and 'civilisation' to construct a subject position of Japan, negotiating the Orientalist gaze, which was implicated in these 'originally Western discourses.'" (Sakamoto 2004: 185)

Although Japan adopted the concept of race from the west, it had begun to categorize people along similar concepts prior to western contact. This adoption served to articulate in modern terminology the preconceived notions of people-hood that the Japanese already attributed to themselves. Before "race" existed in Japan, Japanese identity, as mentioned above, was already based on notions of purity in blood descent that linked the entire nation to the emperor, who in turn was divinely connected to deities that legitimated his power and position. This connection between the emperor and his subjects was furthermore solidified through a family metaphor in which he was the father and his subjects were children in what was conceived to be the Japanese family. Thus, while race itself might not have existed until its importation from the west in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the building blocks to understand it already did: family metaphors, ideas of blood purity, lineage and descent. The idea of homogeneity that existed before Japan's colonizing efforts (which was dropped for a Japanese heterogeneity argument to justify its expansion over the Ainu, Ryukyans, and Eastern Asia) was revived at the end of World War II, as Japan redefined itself as a nation again.

Japanese elites and intellectuals worked to redefine Japan as a homogeneous nation, pure and unpolluted, both racially and culturally, for the purposes of unifying and winning the loyalty of its subjects. Intellectuals, state officials and the imperial line created this myth, and forged the national identity of Japan as a single one whereby race,

ethnicity and nationality came to be understood as the same concept, both synonymous and indivisible.

Yoshino (1992) correctly criticizes the argument that groups use ethnicity to self-define and race to define the “other”. He emphasizes that race in Japan was used to define itself as a unique nation with a homogenous population to subdue ethnic divisions and unify its people and their allegiance to the state. This fact is readily apparent in the aggressiveness of Japanese assimilationist policies against any other racially or culturally different population in its territories. In regards to boundaries, the idea of the “other” is usually discussed in terms of “their” difference in Western race studies, whereas the Japanese discussion centers more on ideas of “our” difference (Yoshino 1992: 11) from the rest of the world. The strength of such a myth lies in the consistency by which race, culture and nation are welded into a single concept. One must be Japanese in these three categories in order to be Japanese at all. We discuss this notion as a myth because the cases that prove otherwise (the Ryukyuans, the Ainu, Koreans, and more recently the South American Japanese return migrants) are hidden, neglected, discarded and misrepresented in favor of such myth. The result of this is that Japan sees itself as a nation without minorities (Hicks 1997; Lie 2001). These minorities, while being racially similar, have found their cultural distinctiveness to be a target for discrimination (Tsuda 1998). Within this racial formation that excludes minorities and migrant groups from Japan’s national ethnicity, JPs’ cultural distinction from the Japanese also became a target to discrimination.

## **Migration to the United States and the United States' Racial Formation**

### *Migration to the United States*

The least researched part of the migration patterns of JPs has been their migration to the U.S. We know very little of the patterns of migration and settlement. However, Takenaka (2000) provides an introductory piece of work on these matters in her dissertation. Japanese-Peruvians migrate to the U.S. both from Peru and Japan. She finds that many of the JPs migrating to the U.S. are pushed out by the racist doctrines of Japanese culture and are pulled into the U.S. not only by their perception of the U.S. being a country of cultural pluralism, but they also see U.S. culture as more similar to their own than Japanese culture. Takenaka argues that this migration pattern has resulted in creating an ambiguous ethnic identity for JPs whose cultural traits are incongruent with their phenotypic racial traits in the eyes of the larger society. This is a complicated case in which confusion and shock are the main responses to social interaction with JPs. The racial stereotypes that people use to guide their behavior in social interaction cannot guide interactions with JPs. At the same time, JPs in the U.S. have to make sense of their race and ethnicity in a new place in which race and ethnicity work differently than Peru or Japan.

### *The United States' Racial Formation*

The racial formation of the U.S. begins with the colonization of the Western hemisphere, which was the beginning of the largest racial project in history (Omi and Winant 1994). As Europeans colonized what is now the U.S., they created new racial categories for Indians whose humanity was questioned and who were reduced to savages

to be civilized through European religion and culture. The same paternalistic and exploitative ideologies were employed on Africans forced into the U.S. as slaves, and later on to Mexicans and Asians as the project of Manifest Destiny marched on. The U.S. was a racial dictatorship that positioned whites above all the other races they catalogued. This consequently positioned whiteness at the very center of the American national identity (Omi and Winant 1994).

The racial boundaries of the U.S. were founded on the one-drop rule that intended to unequivocally divide African descendants as the black population that stood in contrast to the privileged whites. While the Mexican population was by law defined as white after the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, in reality this population suffered pressure to assimilate, dispossession of land, and exploitation, rendering them to a second-class-citizen status. In addition, their categorization as an ethnic group was reduced to Hispanic, a label imposed by the U.S. Census, which has been rejected by many for its attack on the identities of Chicanos and Latinos (Gimenez 1989; Rojas 1989). The result has been that while being legally considered white, the Mexican and Latino populations have always been treated as second-class citizens to be exploited as cheap labor. They have been homogenized into a single category both by institutions and the public, and ultimately stereotyped as migrants without regard to the long-standing history that Mexican and other Latino populations have in what not always was U.S. territory.

Asian migrants in the U.S. also suffered at the hands of white racism that kept them at the fringes of U.S. society. This began with the migration of Chinese workers and their exploitation in the mining and railroad building projects under Manifest

Destiny. Their migration was heavily restricted and eventually terminated. This led to the influx in Japanese migrants to the west coast that was also restricted and eventually terminated. Both Asian groups were used as strike breakers by white capital and despised by white labor (Daniels 2004; Ng 1995). The different Asian communities in the U.S. were arguably the most excluded from the American national ethnicity because they did not hold the long-standing histories in the territory that Mexicans, African descendants and the Indians did. As a result, they have been discussed as being “perpetual immigrants” (Ng, Sharon, and Yoon 2007).

The U.S. racial formation has been based heavily on race, and consequentially it has created an American national image in which whiteness sits at its center and people of color have never been fully integrated into the different national institutions or been truly accepted as Americans.

In response to this, different social movements of people of color have demanded recognition, and gains have been made in order to understand the vast ethnic diversity of the U.S. more thoroughly, although much work still needs to be done on this issue. The development of discourses on race in the U.S. has been different than in Peru or Japan. The difference lies in the centrality that the concept of race plays in the discourse. I am not challenging the importance of race as a driving force that has shaped the social structure of all three countries; I am only emphasizing the centrality in using the concept of race to explain and understand differences in economic and political privileges between different ethnic groups in the U.S. What we find in Peru and Japan is that race itself takes a back seat in the racial discourse to concepts like culture, class and

nationalism. The differences between these three countries' discourse on ethnicity strongly affects the ethnic identity formation of JPs.

The unusual pattern of migration of the JP population to the U.S. makes them an intriguing population for studies on immigration and ethnic identity. As they move from country to country, JPs are forced to reformulate their ethnic identities in response to the particular socially constructed racial and ethnic categories of each country. The uniqueness of their situation is accompanied by a variety of strategies used to navigate racial structures and formulate ethnic identities. The combination of JP migration patterns and the relative central role of race in the U.S. racial structure (as compared to Japan and Peru), place JPs in an interesting position in which unique ethnic options emerge. These ethnic options are similar to those found in Waters' (1990) study of white individuals' situational ethnicity in that JPs can enact different ethnic identities at different times to their own benefit, as at some point they may "choose" to be more Peruvian, Japanese, Latino, Asian or Asian-American. The difference between Waters' study and this project is based on the origins of these options. White individuals opt to enact their ethnic identities from a place of privilege in which their Americanness is not questioned. In contrast, JPs are able to employ their ethnic identities from two sources; the first source is their variegated cultural background, and the second is the inability of U.S. society to place them in a specific ethnic or racial categorical "box". Also, unlike white situational ethnicity, JPs' options are not without their limits, as their ethnic "authenticity" can and is at times questioned by some of those who may believe themselves to be "authentic" ethnics. Even more importantly, in the U.S., while JPs have



the Japanese and Peruvian ethnic options, like all other people of color, they experience limits to their American ethnic identity due to the cultural ideological correlation between Americanness and whiteness.

### **Defining Ethnicity**

Outside academia, ethnicity is simply thought of as a social group that shares a historical or cultural background. Within academia, those that support this view are called ethno-symbolists who believe that ethnic groups exist and are held together by their historical and cultural commonalities as expressed through symbols, rituals, traditions and norms that date back to antiquity. However, social constructionists have challenged this view by arguing that ethnicities are subjectively constructed and that the origins of many existing ethnic groups have been manufactured by nation states rather than having emerged organically. The most famous proponent of this view in the field of anthropology has been Fredrick Barth who has shown that the norms of a society that dictate belonging into an ethnic group are in a relative state of flux. These fluctuating norms are used to create and define ethnic boundaries that indicate the belonging of people into ethnic groups.

Barth's challenge has been echoed in studies of national ethnicity that have shown that the ethnicities created by nation states often disregard the requirements of a shared history or culture. This is evident in the numerous ethnic conflicts that occur within nation states where people of the same nationality (national ethnicity) come into conflict with each other as they belong to different ethnic groups based on other factors such as religion or language.

This thesis adopts the Barthian understanding of ethnicity as a socially constructed and malleable concept whose boundaries can (and usually do) change in different times, places, situations and contexts. The following chapters will provide sufficient evidence for this position. This Barthian understanding is then applied to the way in which the Peruvian, Japanese and American states create their national ethnic boundaries that exclude JPs as legitimate Peruvians, Japanese and Americans respectively.

While this thesis uses the Barthian definition of ethnicity as its departure, it also finds it necessary to go beyond his definition in order to fulfill its purpose. Barth, ethno-symbolists, and social constructionists do not address the issue of ethnicity at the micro level in which individuals choose to identify with a certain ethnicity. Individuals do this many times throughout their lives as they indicate their ethnic identification in surveys and applications. However, most people not only speak of an individual's ethnicity as a form of identification, but also speak about an individual's ethnicity as their possession of traits that are associated with an ethnic group. Thus, the way in which the term ethnicity is commonly used can have meanings of both ethnic belonging and/or possession of ethnic traits. Yet, one's possession of certain ethnic traits and their belonging to the corresponding ethnic group may be incongruent. For example, many JPs possess most Peruvian ethnic traits such as language, religion, food, taste in music, citizenship, and nativity, but are not be considered ethnically Peruvian in Peru. This requires us to differentiate between the two meanings of the term ethnicity at the micro level. Throughout this thesis, the term ethnicity will be used in a Barthian fashion to

specifically refer to issues of belonging and ethnic boundaries. To refer to issues of the possession of ethnic traits, the term *ethnic composition* will be employed. As such, a JP living in Peru may have a large Peruvian ethnic composition as she/he may possess many Peruvian traits, but at the same time, be of Japanese ethnicity, as they are not considered Peruvian in Peru.

An individual's ethnic composition is made up of all the qualities they possess that are associated with their ethnicities. We will refer to these qualities as ethnic traits. These ethnic traits are derived from their association to different ethnic groups. For example, JPs possess both Japanese ethnic traits (e.g. phenotype/race, food, etc.) and Peruvian ethnic traits (e.g. language, religion, food, etc.). In fact, if it were possible to list and juxtapose all of a JP's Japanese ethnic traits and Peruvian ethnic traits, we would be more than likely to find that their ethnic composition is mostly Peruvian rather than Japanese, a logical result of living most of their lives in Peru rather than Japan. Yet, many, if not most, JPs are not considered and do not consider themselves Peruvians in Peru. This is because it is not the number of ethnic traits that dictate one's ethnic identification or ethnic belonging, but rather, it is the weight of importance that society and individuals place on certain ethnic traits. In other words, all ethnic traits do not hold equal weight in the process of drawing ethnic boundaries. Even though the ethnic composition of most JPs is heavily Peruvian, their ability to belong and identify as Peruvians in Peru is limited because Peruvians interpret their Japanese phenotype as non-Peruvian. In this case, JPs' Japanese ethnic trait of race nullifies their numerous Peruvian

ethnic traits and creates an ethnic boundary that categorizes JPs as Japanese and not Peruvian.

There are different ways in which societies qualify different ethnic traits according to their functions in the process of drawing boundaries. The functions that these ethnic traits serve in the ethnic boundary drawing process are four. Ethnic traits could serve as *national ethnic requirements* that limit one's acceptance into a national ethnic group; as such, these ethnic traits are necessary but insufficient to be considered part of a national ethnic group. Ethnic traits could also serve as *othering ethnic qualifiers* that categorize one as part of a national ethnicity other than the host society's national ethnicity; as such, these ethnic traits are unnecessary but sufficient to be considered part of a different national ethnicity. Ethnic traits could also serve as *ethnic indicators* that while associated with a national ethnicity neither limit one's acceptance into an ethnic group nor are enough to categorize one as part of that group; as such, these ethnic traits are unnecessary and insufficient to be considered part of an ethnic group. Lastly, ethnic traits could serve as *ethnic absolutes*, which are single traits that alone identify one as part of a national ethnic group; as such, these ethnic traits are necessary and sufficient to be considered part of a given national ethnicity. Chapter 2 will explore these concepts in detail, as they are vital to the development of the SBM.

Furthermore, for the purposes of this project, and for the sake of clarity, I qualify ethnicity as ethnic boundaries that are created and maintained specifically by the host society. As such, Peruvian ethnicity in Peru (i.e. who is considered Peruvian) is determined by Peru as the host society. However, Peruvian ethnicity in Japan is

determined by Japan as the host society, not Peru. In the following chapters, this will be illustrated as JPs' experiences show that they are not considered Peruvian by Peruvian society; yet, they are considered Peruvian in Japanese society. This is because each host society (Peru and Japan) holds the institutional power to draw the ethnic boundaries that define Peruvianness, and use that power to define Peruvianness differently. For JPs in Peru, being born in Peru is not enough to be considered Peruvian; yet, it is enough to be considered Peruvian in Japan. In this thesis, using the term ethnicity to refer only to the ethnic boundaries drawn by the host society is done only for the purposes of clarity, and not as an attempt to redefine the term throughout academia. This author recognizes that minority ethnic groups have a relative amount of power and agency in defining their own ethnic boundaries. However, in the context of this study, the data shows that the situations in which JPs find themselves in as they migrate to different countries, and their ability to identify themselves as part of an ethnic group are largely governed by the ethnic boundaries drawn by the host societies, and not their own. My use of the term ethnicity is geared only to reflect such dynamic rather than to advocate for a new definition of the term.

Thus, for the purposes of this thesis, a national ethnicity will be defined as a group whose boundaries are constructed subjectively by the host society's state and population to arbitrarily categorize groups and individuals as legitimate members of a given national community.

The section below reviews the important academic theoretical developments on the topic of nations and ethnicity. More specifically, it shows how the Barthian treatment

of ethnicity (as a construction that is subjectively defined by drawing ethnic boundaries) is echoed in the way by which nations create their own national ethnicities to give their citizens a sense of unity and loyalty to the state. In order to achieve this goal, states must be able to instill in their subjects a sense of belonging and togetherness that may contradict the cultural and historical diversity of the entire country's population.

### **Review on Theories of Ethnicity and Nation**

As this thesis' main focus is ethnicities and ethnic identities of the national type, it is necessary to review how these ethnicities are formed. In trying to investigate the nature of nationalisms, scholars have debated the emergence of nations. They are divided between those who believe that nations are not new phenomena and that they date as far back as antiquity, and those who believe that nations are a particularly new phenomenon attached to the period of modernity. The members of the former group are called ethno-symbolists, who believe that nations are constituted by memories, symbols, and cultures, and that it is important to remember the continuity of these from pre-modern to modern times in the shaping of nations. Members of the latter group are called the modernists, and they connect nations with the rise of bureaucratic states (Guibernau and Hutchinson 2001a). While the emergence is in dispute, both groups realize that important changes happened beginning with the 18<sup>th</sup> century that transformed nations from being simple collectivities (whether based on particular interests, culture, etc.) to being collectivities represented by a formalized state bureaucracy.

In order to explain this change, Hobsbawm (1992) takes on the task of tracing the emergence of such nations since 1780. By reviewing dictionaries and encyclopedic

material, he finds that the word nation was not connected to the idea of a bureaucratic state until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The idea of nations (and nationalism) was originally based on other sources such as language and particular interests of given collectivities. He traces French nationalism to show that the idea of nationalism in France was originally based on a revolutionary attitude of liberation. Groups from different religious, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds could share one national identity if they affiliated themselves to their one idea of revolution, but in order to bring these different groups together, creating one unifying language became ultimately important. This was achieved through the emergence of print-capitalism (Anderson 1991). Creating such a vernacular, and using new printing technologies, it became possible to unify subjects and have them identify in unison under a single language. The unification of different nations under a single language, this vernacular network, gave rise to the societies we now understand to be nations. However, these “nations” that were created were actually composed of other nations, each with their own separate cultures and identities.

Understanding this previous point is crucial to our conceptualization of the state because we must make a clear break between the nation and the state (one being a culturally identifiable group and the other being a formalized bureaucracy). This gap creates many problems for the state, and there are two ways to understand its role in this context: the state may be the field of political interaction between the different ethnicities within its boundaries (Smith 1995), or the state’s role could be to homogenize its population into one culture/identity (Hechter 2000; Hobsbawm 1992; Tilly 1990a) in order to legitimate itself and organize its own power.

Smith (1995) reduces the state to its utilitarian functions. He sees the nation as the grounding for culture, security and fraternity. From this point of view, the role of the nation-state is to carry out the will of its members. Because there are different nations within the state, these different nations can politically interact with each other through this bureaucracy. To these different nations “[t]he aim of nationalism is to make the civic or ethnic nation the mould and measure of the state, to make the state bend to, and express, the will of the nation” (Smith 1995: 113).

An important distinction between different types of nationalisms emerges from this, that of a civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism. A civic nationalism is highly institutionalized by the state and attempts to centralize people’s loyalties towards itself; and an ethnic nationalism is grounded on cultural factors (language, religion, etc.), and is at times employed in resistance to overarching governing institutions. Hechter (2000) has gone as far as talking of civic nationalism positively and ethnic nationalism negatively because (in his opinion) the former inhibits conflict within a nation-state while the latter exacerbates it. From the point of view of the state, this would be accurate; but from the point of view of resisting nations, the state can be seen as an oppressive force.

While the idea of different ethnicities being in conflict with each other within a nation-state is accurate and useful, its centrality to the nature of nationalism is questioned by others who see it as being grounded on its usefulness to mobilize power and unite people’s identities to their state, in turn, to legitimate itself and organize its own power (Breully 2001; Guibernau and Hutchinson 2001b; Hobsbawm 1992; Tilly 1990a).

Hobsbawm (1992) argues that a national myth is created in order to solidify the power of



the state. Having made the case that nationalism is not based on a common heritage, or unified culture, he argues that the writers and politicians of a state create this national myth that is constituted by a unified history that is glorified so that a sovereign, proud identity that is loyal to the state may germinate within its citizens. As Breully writes, “[t]he formation of the specialized, sovereign, territorial, public state is the institutional context within which the idea of nationalism appears appropriate as ideology, both in intellectual terms and as a way of mobilizing support” (2001: 51). Tilley (1990) has also discussed the ability to use nationalism to garner support for the states that he sees as being fundamentally warlike. For citizens of a nation to be willing to spend major resources in a war and be willing to die for their country, high levels of civic nationalism would be required. This is why “[c]lassical nation-states have invariably sought to homogenize their populations and instill in them a sense of common national identity” (Guibernau 2001: 258). This is done through tactics ranging from repression to genocide. Guibernau spells out the different strategies used to homogenize the population: 1) construction and dissemination of the dominant nation or ethnicity’s image, 2) use of symbols and rituals, 3) the creation of citizenship providing rights and duties to the citizen, 4) the creation of common enemies, and 5) the use of education and media to make the other 4 strategies possible (2001: 258). The next chapter explains how states’ need to harness the loyalty of its subjects leads to a *pie-chart-mentality* of identity where multiple ethnic identities are imagined to be in natural conflict with each other.

In the case at hand regarding the struggles of identity for JPs, the data gathered focused heavily on the ethnic nationalisms as opposed to civic nationalisms. Japanese-

Peruvians, as we will see, mainly experience a lack of acceptance by the country that hosts them. For example, in Peru, this made their ethnic nationalism (Japanese) more salient than their civic nationalism (Peruvian). This study is not an attempt to refute the argument that nation states invest heavily on harnessing the loyalty of their subjects by spreading nationalistic sentiments across people of different cultures within its boundaries. Instead, it views national ethnicities in different countries functioning to serve contradicting interests that are ultimately incompatible. The first interest is the state's need to promote patriotism and loyalty from its subjects by unifying the collective identity of the citizens under a flag. The second interest is the desire to protect certain privileges that are disproportionately granted to its citizens across racial and ethnic lines. These two goals oppose each other as the first demands assimilation from minorities in an attempt to homogenize the nation and solidify patriotism, and the second impedes the full integration of these minorities at many different levels (e.g. economic, residentially, politically, etc.). This paradox is not difficult to understand if we conceive these two goals as emerging from, in the case of JPs, xenophobia. The xenophobia that JPs encounter in each different country demands that minorities abandon their loyalties to the countries of origin, and so immigrants are pressured to abandon their cultures and identities in favor of the host society's. At the same time, the host society's fear of cultural pollution is accompanied by a refusal to accept these minorities as truly loyal, and this refusal manifests itself as one of the reasons why full integration tends to be denied to minorities.

At this point, it is necessary to ask how minorities are defined in each country. As the following chapters will show, each country defines its minorities in different ways, according to different factors. This calls forward Barth's (1969) concept of ethnic boundaries being drawn up arbitrarily by nations. Barth steps away from understanding ethnicities as something defined by shared heritages, rituals and symbols, in favor of a social constructionist perspective in which ethnicities are created subjectively by nations. This is supported by the different ways in which national ethnicities have been created in the past.

We can first borrow from Hobsbawm to understand that nationalism could be organized to be a collection of values. Tracing the history of French nationalism, Hobsbawm shows that it was constituted by a set of values pertaining to ideas of the Enlightenment. The ideas of freedom and progress that germinated from this period were a strong part of the French Revolution and French nationalism: "[W]hat characterized the nation-people as seen from below was precisely that it represented the common interests against particular interests, the common good against privilege..." (1992: 20). However, values can be used to ground collective identities and also for purposes of liberation and oppression. Values can be used as nationalistic components to justify expansion of the state and imperialism. Kohn (1944) shows us that the universalism of empires, such as the Roman Empire, pushed for the homogenization and "enlightenment" of foreign subjects and cultures. Such universalism was based on ideas of superiority that called for improvement of other cultures and groups by demanding their assimilation to the cultures of empires.

Religion can also be the basis of nationalism. Grosby (2001) refers back to Durkheim (1915) to explain the connection between society and religion as being that of one and the same; people's worship of gods and practice of religion is really the worship of their own society, of which gods are a symbol of (Grosby 2001: 97). This connection between nation and religion is furthermore apparent when looking at Confucianism's principle that rulers must have the "mandate of heaven" in order to preside over the land (Grosby 2001: 100). Thus, religions have also been used as a form of collective identity that has been formed along lines of territory and political power, and constituting values, norms, rituals, etc. to provide an identity attached both to the gods and to the state at the same time. This historical connection between religion and nationalism is furthermore analyzed by Hastings (1997) who connects the emergence of vernacular language and print that Anderson (1991) had previously discussed, to religious scripture like the Bible. He argues that religious unity emerged alongside the nation and national sentiment of England where we see a rise of Protestant Nationalism fueled by publications such as the *Book of Common Prayer*.

All this shows that the different forms of nationalisms are related to each other, and this is best exemplified by the connection made between language and religion that Hastings discussed. Also, Anderson's work on the *Imagined Communities* (1991) is of particular importance in explaining the emergence of nations and nationalism in Europe in the eighteenth century. This was achieved through the improvements in print media that helped universalize the vernacular languages of Europe and bind them to territories. However, using language as a unifying force is not without its challenges from below.

As Williams (1994) shows in his discussion of the fight for bilingual education in Wales and the conflict of the French speaking people of Quebec in Canada, language minority movements have a national character that is linked to their ethnic identity. Breton (1978) has commented that the unwillingness of English-Canadians to collaborate for the claims of French-Canadians would help maintain the level of nationalism we see today in French-Canadians. Ethnic and civic nationalist tensions can, thus, emerge on issues of language.

Ethnic nationalism takes a form that emphasizes symbols and culture in order to unite collectivities suffering the same political domination and economic exploitation. The ethno-symbolists discussed above are the fervent defenders of this camp. The strongest proponents are Anthony D. Smith, John Armstrong and John Hutchinson (Ozkanli 2000). Ethnicity plays a central part in their argument of the development of nations and nationalism. Unlike the modernists who believe nations and nationalisms are a product of modernity, they argue for the long time existence of these concepts. Pre-dating the bureaucratic states of nations, ethnicities existed, and with them nationalisms whose continuing importance shaped the institutionalization of such identities by the state. This continuing importance of ethnic nationalisms is evident today when we pay attention to the seemingly unending ethnic conflict occurring within nation-states' boundaries around the world. For example, the fall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the Serbian program of ethnic cleansing (Calhoun 1993), and the continuing ethnic conflict that reaches genocidal proportions in Africa (Young 2001) serve as constant reminders of the still strong powers of ethnic nationalism.

In the future chapters, it will be shown how the experiences of JPs are best understood under the definition of ethnic boundaries that Barth created. Their ethnicities will be redefined with each migration, and so will their ethnic identities. Yet, these identities are shaped not only by outside forces that define ethnicities, but also by the agency of JPs as well. Identity is as much a function of self-ascription (Waters 1990), as it is imposed on a group from outside forces as has been argued by Espiritu (1992). Thus, some national identities (i.e. loyalties to state-bureaucracies) are imposed on people by states and institutions, whereas other national identities may be voluntarily adopted and self-ascribed by groups as they find strength and unity to resist oppressive forces through their own culture, identity and symbols.

The views on how globalization is going to impact the ability of states to sustain high levels of nationalism in their population are variegated. Some, like Hobsbawm (1992), view civic nationalism as losing strength as a form of identity in the contemporary world. He sees a supra-national identity being created in which national identities can no longer define people. This supra-national identity is accompanied by the strengthening of mini-nationalities that have been emerging and becoming increasingly important.

Smith disagrees with this view, claiming that while there are some signs of emerging mini-nationalities, a supranational identity is unlikely to happen due to the foundations and necessity of nationalism:

“The argument I have been advancing is that attempts to create large-scale unity in Western Europe or elsewhere, whereas in most other areas of the world great multinational empires and states are dissolving into their own constituent ethnic parts, result less from different levels of economic and political development than from the

sheer variety of historical trajectories and the very different ethno-historical cultures of various regions and peoples.” (1995: 144)

His sentiments are echoed by Hutchinson (2001) who does not find the idea of supra-nationality viable.

These mini-nationalities that are becoming increasingly important have gained some legitimacy as states have been forced to take new strategies to gain the loyalty of their citizens. The visibility gained through technological advances has made the actions of nations more transparent. Thus, open, direct coercion used to homogenize populations into a singular culture become highly criticized at a global level (Guibernau and Hutchinson 2001b; Hechter 2000). Guibernau (2001a) uses the examples of how the Spanish state was forced to redefine itself as a nation in order to deal with its ethnic divisions. Since its coercive tactics were publicized and criticized around the world, Spain was forced to change its tactics and redefine itself as to accommodate ethnic nationalist groups within its boundaries. Similarly, the Mexican government has been forced to proceed with extreme caution as the eyes of the world look at Chiapas' EZLN movement, which has truly become a global movement because of their remarkable use of information technology to share their message with the world (Castells 1997). The case of JPs will also be shown to provide multiple formulations and understandings regarding what it means to be a JP that transcends national identities and to identify as Nikkei.

In our conclusion as to how globalization may affect identities, let us turn to the ideas that Stuart Hall (1996) has provided to us and have been shaped by Hirabayashi et. al. (2002). Five possibilities exist to the effects of globalization on ethnic identities: 1)

we may find that there is no impact, meaning that the reproduction of ethnic identities continues as usual, 2) we may find that globalization intensifies ethnic identities, 3) we may find that globalization erodes ethnic identities, 4) we may find that globalization creates greater consciousness of and identification with the world as a whole, and 5) we may find what Hall calls the creation of “hybrid” identities. As such, JPs’ identities that transcend the Peruvian, Japanese and American identities must also be taken into consideration.

While the research on ethnicity is still developing, enough research has been done to reach the conclusion that states can construct their national ethnicity through a variety of ways that are not necessarily based on a sense of cultural unity that dates back to antiquity. Because of this, this thesis moves forward in the conceptualization of national ethnicities as malleable social constructs that can be subjectively created, maintained, transformed and disappeared instead as constant factors dating back to antiquity.

### **Organization of Chapters**

The second chapter in this dissertation presents a description and rejection of what I have labeled a pie-chart-mentality of ethnicity and ethnic identity, in favor of the SBM. The following three chapters (Ch. 3 Peru, Ch. 4 Japan, and Ch. 5 U.S.) are organized in three sections: 1) Racism, 2) Agency and Identity, and 3) Stacked Bar Model formulation.

The sections on each country’s racial structure will provide a profile of how each country defines its national ethnic boundaries. These boundaries, in turn, play an important role in shaping the formation of JPs’ ethnic identities. They will also provide a



history of racial formations in order to provide a deeper understanding of the emergence such racial structures and the mechanisms through which the racialized national ethnic boundaries are imposed.

The sections on agency and identity will discuss how JPs formulate their identities in each given racial context. These segments will focus on how JPs defy the different constructions of ethnic boundaries, how they other the host society, and how they make use of the ethnic options available to them.

The third section of each chapter will compile and analyze the data on the first two sections of each chapter into the framework of the SBM of ethnicity and ethnic identity. The data will be organized to show how it both reflects the premises of this SBM and how it informs it as well. This third section will also work as a conclusion to each chapter.

The concluding Chapter 6 brings together the analysis of the data from the previous three chapters to provide a comprehensive SBM of JP ethnicity and ethnic identity, and points to directions of future investigations on the subject.

## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **EMERGENCE OF THE STACKED BAR MODEL OF ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY**

The stacked bar model of ethnicity and ethnic identity is designed to analyze how national ethnic boundaries are created, and how ethnic identities react to these definitions. It follows four principles that are simultaneously the four main theoretical contributions of the SBM and also its four goals:

1. Rejection of the pie-chart-mentality
2. Treatment of ethnicities as ordinal variables
3. Understanding ethnicities as made up of four ideal types of ethnic traits based on their function in defining ethnicities and drawing national ethnic boundaries
4. Understanding ethnic identities as being governed by the functions of *ethnic requirements* and *othering ethnic qualifiers*

#### **Principle 1: Rejection of the Pie-Chart-Mentality**

The SBM rejects the pie-chart-mentality as the only model by which ethnic identity functions. While it recognizes that many, if not most people adopt this mentality in understanding their own as well as others' ethnicities and ethnic identities, it rejects the notion that within a multi-ethnic individual the growth of one identity must automatically result in the shrinking of another one and vice versa.

The pie-chart-mentality is a form of thinking that reduces ethnic identity to a zero-sum game. In adopting the pie-chart-mentality, it is assumed that within multi-ethnic individuals the natural dynamic between ethnic identities is conflictive. In this

conflict, one ethnic identity must gain territory at the expense of the other competing ethnic identities. As one ethnic identity is affirmed, the competing ethnic identities must be denied.

Within the pie-chart-mentality, there are two distinct ways of approaching the issue of ethnic identity. First, ethnic identity can be thought of as a nominal variable with separate possible categories or attributes. When treated this way, ethnic identity is assumed to be similar to variables like sex or birthplace, which are generally conceptualized as having different possible attributes that are clearly distinguishable from each other, and from which, only one is valid. This first type will be referred to as the discrete approach as it treats ethnic identity as a nominal discrete variable. The second approach assumes ethnic identity to work through the dynamics of a continuum in which the competing ethnic identities sit at opposite sides of each other. Within the spectrum of this continuum, a person's ethnic identity can only be placed in one single place. However, this one single place can rest anywhere within the ethnic identity spectrum of the continuum. This will be referred to as the continuum approach. The difference between these two approaches is that the former treats the ethnic identity categories as different and separate, whereas the latter allows for a viable ethnic middle ground between the competing ethnic identities.

### *The Discrete Approach*

In the case of JPs, it is apparent that some adopt the pie-chart-mentality's discrete approach towards ethnic identity. Alfredo, for example,

[In Peru] I always say that I'm Peruvian. I really identify as Peruvian... I'm Peruvian, really. In the U.S., I also say that I'm Peruvian.... I might not have Peruvian blood, but I

have the customs. I was born in Peru. I know [and] I like Peru. I miss it, too. But, I can't say I'm Japanese, right? Because I don't know Japanese, nor do I have Japanese customs. I always say that we're like gypsies. We are not fully Peruvian, nor fully Japanese. So I consider myself Peruvian because I was born in Peru.

Alfredo, 41

In this interview, Alfredo presents us with one of the main contradictions that JPs confront in formulating their ethnic identities. He is struggling in the effort to reconcile two distinct ethnic backgrounds. He rationalizes that his Japanese background does not allow him to be “fully” Peruvian, and compares the JP population to Gypsies in that they seem to be people without a home or place to which they truly belong. At the same time, Alfredo is adamant about his Peruvian ethnic identification consistently through his interview. The fact that Alfredo rationalizes that he is not “fully” Peruvian because of his Japanese background, should make us wonder why he chooses to only identify with his Peruvian background. Alfredo has adopted the discrete approach of the pie-chart-mentality in which one's ethnic identity is reduced to a singular category, and whereby the existence or addition of one ethnic background or identity, automatically results in a detracting from another ethnic identity. Thus, while it is clear that he sees himself in either some type of middle ground, or an ethnic nowhere land (as Gypsies without a home), he opts to identify himself as Peruvian in an obdurate manner.

Another example is the case of Omar,

[I identify as] Peruvian. Hispanic. I stick with Latino. Just because that's what I am, majority. My majority is Hispanic. Even though I'm half. I'm closer to Hispanic. Just 'cause my parents speak Spanish well, you know. It's like they're Hispanic. I grew up thinking that. I know I'm Japanese, too. I don't ever cancel that out, but I lean more towards the Hispanic side because of what I know.

Omar, 23, Japanese and Peruvian descent

Omar presents us with a similar case to that of Alfredo in that he recognizes that he has a multi-ethnic background. However, he identifies as Latino. He reduces his identification to one single category. We should recognize that his Latino identification does not mean he denies his Japanese heritage, which he makes very clear in the interview excerpt. Yet, when asked about his ethnic identity, he reverts to the discrete approach of the pie-chart-mentality in which ethnic identity is reduced to a single category.

### *The Continuum Approach*

While some JPs employ the discrete approach to ethnic identities, others employ the continuum approach as a strategy to situate themselves in a middle ground between the ethnic identities through which they have to navigate. Cristina is a 19-year-old female born in the U.S. whose parents were born in Peru. Her father is racially Peruvian and her mother is of full Japanese descent. She discusses her ethnic identity:

I like having both [Japanese and Peruvian backgrounds] because at times I'm quiet, and at times I'm really loud and really outspoken and crazy. That's what I think I am sometimes. When I think most of the families and my parents, I feel like I'm completely half and half of them. I do act like my father sometimes, and I act like my mom sometimes. I freak out. When I stress out, she doesn't let anyone see her cry. [It's an], "I usually don't cry in front of people" kind of thing. So I feel like I have complete half of them. Then, at times, I think maybe I'm like my dad more. So it's always a fighting thing. Because I'm trying to make what I am between both of them, and I don't know so much about their background. So I have to make up my own thing, because that's what I'm supposed to do, and identity is a tricky thing.

Cristina's experience and strategies in formulating her ethnic identity touch on many points of the continuum approach of the pie-chart-mentality. This is first apparent in the fact that she talks about her identity using statistical language making reference to subdivisions of a whole. She uses the words "half and half" to explain her ethnic composition. Using fractions, proportions and percentages is a sign that respondents are

focusing heavily on how things such as identity are subdivided. Cristina displays more characteristics of the pie-chart-mentality with her opinion that the dynamic between her two ethnic identities is that of conflict: “So it’s always a fighting thing”. Furthermore, in the statement, “...I’m trying to make what I am between both of them...” Cristina uses each parent as a symbol of the two ethnic identities “fighting” with each other in the continuum, and she’s trying to find her place “between” them.

Throughout the interviews, respondents referred to statistical terms such as “halves”, while others used percentage figures (e.g. 50%) to describe their ethnic identity; this is interesting in that they are using the fundamental statistical tool applied to interpretation of data in pie charts: percentages. Take the case of Akira, a 39-year-old man who states, “I keep saying the same thing. I’m not one [ethnicity], nor the other. I’m simply me. If you want to put a title on me, I’m Nikkei. You can’t be one 100%, nor the other 100%, because you have both”. In Akira’s case, the use of percentages to explain how ethnic identity works clearly indicates an employment of the pie-chart-mentality. He rationalizes that the existence of two ethnic identities within him does not allow him to be purely one ethnicity or the other. The emphasis in his statement is on the idea that there is a whole unit that must be divided into different parts. Because he finds himself unable to fit completely into one of his two ethnic backgrounds, he uses the continuum approach to formulate his identity that he locates somewhere in between Japanese and Peruvian, and names this identity *Nikkei*.

The complex migration history of JPs in the U.S. helps us highlight the identity conflicts that they confront. Most JPs’ (and arguably most people’s) adoption of the pie-

chart-mentality is founded on the assumption that this is the only way in which ethnic identity functions, and some adopt the discrete approach, while others adopt the continuum approach. These dynamics become naturalized and normalized in their thought process and questioning such a mentality is something that rarely occurs. To understand why this is the case, we need to explore, or at least begin to hypothesize where the pie-chart-mentality emerges from.

#### *Origins of the Pie-Chart-Mentality*

While the origin of the pie-chart-mentality is a topic that needs to be studied more thoroughly in the future, this paper will begin to provide some direction for such academic endeavors in the future. We can expect there to be a sociological debate regarding at what level of social analysis this origin may be found, with the possibilities being 1) at the macro structural/institutional level, or 2) the micro level where everyday social interaction takes place. While the level of analysis of the origins of the pie-chart-mentality may be debated, it is important to explore the possibility that the shaping of the pie-chart-mentality happens at both levels, each influencing the other.

We can gain some insight into this problem by reviewing the literature on how ethnicities themselves emerge. Ethnicity is not an easily defined term. Within the discipline of sociology, the “ethnicity paradigm” emerged in the 1920’s and 30’s with a focus of studying the culture and assimilation of immigrants in the U.S. (Omi and Winant 1994). This was best exemplified by the studies of Robert E. Park (1950), Glazer & Moynihan (1963) and Milton Gordon (1964). Ethnicity was originally seen as a collection of values, goals, traditions and symbols. However, in the field of

anthropology, Fredrick Barth's (Barth and Bergen 1969) work challenged this idea and proposed that ethnic groups were not defined by the common values and traditions of a given group, but instead by the creation and maintenance of boundaries. These boundaries are determined by whatever factors are deemed significant. Thus, ethnic groups need not necessarily be defined by culture itself but by other factors such as political interests (Cohen 1974) as well. More significant to the purpose of this paper, ethnicity can be imposed by the elites of a society onto its members as Benedict Anderson (1991) shows in his study of how national identities emerge in Europe. Ethnicity, then, can be invented by the powerful to consolidate political power from the population they rule. In modernity, such ethnicity is grounded on loyalty towards a bureaucratic state, and these states demand complete loyalty from its citizens (Breully 2001; Guibernau 2001; Hobsbawm 1992; Tilly 1990b). If ethnicity can be invented by bureaucratic states for the purpose consolidating power by obtaining the complete loyalty of its subjects, it follows that a state would create pressures and mechanisms to keep its subjects from being loyal to anything else other than itself. From this, we can derive that people with multiple cultural backgrounds will experience pressures from states for loyalty in such a way that loyalty to other states or ethnicities would be discouraged.

If national ethnicities can be thought of as emerging from national loyalties, then ethnic identities may be reduced to a zero-sum game in which as one's loyalty to one nation increases, the loyalty to another nation must decrease. I do not argue here that this is the only process by which national ethnicities are formed, but that this one process provides a powerful explanation for the origins of the pie-chart-mentality of ethnic



identity. People adopting the pie-chart-mentality, whether conscious of it or not, might have come to understand their ethnicity as something that could not be subdivided because loyalties to a state or country are meant to be absolute.

In the history of Japanese Americans, we find a perfect example of this in the internment camps where prisoners were asked to fill out forms in which they forfeited all loyalties to the Japanese emperor and devoted their complete national loyalty to the U.S. government (Daniels 2004; Ng 2002).

At the micro level, JPs feel these pressures to choose one national ethnicity over another in their everyday lives. Jesus is a 52-year-old male living in California. He discusses his first day in college:

I enter the classroom and I see in one corner the African Americans, and I saw another little group of Asians, and another little group of Latinos. And I said... "Where am I going to sit?" I went to the Hispanics... and one guy told me... he started laughing at me, "Hey Chinese, you're in the wrong place". He said, "the Chinese are over there, African American are over there, the Whites are over there, the Hispanics are over here", he tells me. And I said to him: "Then I'm in the right place, compadre". I told him. "Yo soy Hispano. [I'm Hispanic]". Their jaws dropped. "Tu eres Hispano? [You are Hispanic?]" In Spanish. "Claro que si, compadre. Tengo acento? [Of course, man. Do I have an accent?]" I told him. "No", he told me. "OK. Vengase para aca. Vengale vato. Sientese con nosotros. [OK. Come here. Sit with us.]" And I sat with him.

Jesus' narrative is a clear example of how JPs are faced with ethnic options in their everyday lives in which they feel pressured to choose between one ethnic group and another, even if no one is directly applying this pressure. If students in Jesus' classroom were not sitting in a segregated arrangement, Jesus would not have been faced with this situation to begin with. Because individuals experience everyday situations like this throughout their entire lives, we can start to appreciate why they might adopt a mentality of having to be part of one group or another, but not both. Take the case of Cristobal, a

Peruvian national of Japanese, Chinese, and Peruvian descent who moved to Japan at an early age, and then migrated to the U.S. during his high school years. He discusses the dilemmas he faced in college in choosing friends:

...[E]ven in college, when I had to hang out with my friends, the South Americans or my Japanese friends... some of my Japanese friends didn't know how to speak English. It was kind of hard to mix them together. So yeah, I felt like I had to choose, and I chose my Peruvian friends.... [It was hard for me]. You do feel bad. Ultimately, that's what I identify with the most. I mean, you're not gonna go dance salsa with your Japanese friends.

By looking at the everyday situations of individuals such as Jesus and Cristobal, we can begin to understand how individuals develop the pie-chart-mentality. When faced with these situations, the choices the individuals make inform themselves and others around them about their ethnic identity. For neither Jesus, nor Cristobal did these choices mean that they denied their Japanese ethnicity completely. In fact, through their interviews, both had much to say regarding their pride and connectedness to Japanese values and heritage. However, it is reasonable to think that these types of situations may lead JPs to believe that as one ethnic identity is asserted the other must be denied, if not completely, then at least relatively. Thus, ideas that inform the pie-chart-mentality may come from different sources such as institutions as well as everyday experiences.

While most people adopt the pie-chart-mentality, in the interviews of JPs, we find narratives that contradict the logic of this model. It is in these contradictions that the limits of the pie-chart-mentality become apparent.

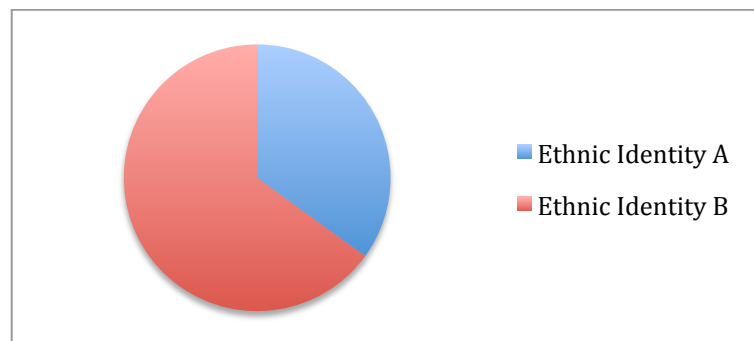
#### *Limits of the Pie-Chart-Mentality*

The pie-chart-mentality is flawed in that it reduces the relationship between the ethnic identities that may exist within an individual into one characterized by conflict and

competition (i.e. a zero-sum game). The logic here is that as an individual asserts his/her Peruvian ethnic identity, then their Japanese ethnic identity must be denied and vice versa. Thus, if we visualize ethnic identity as a pie chart, then these dynamics seem logical, if not natural. Figure 2.1 shows a pie chart dividing an individual's ethnic identity. In this chart, if an individual asserts one ethnic identity then the logical conclusion is that the other ethnic identities must decrease.

**Figure 2.1:**

**Pie Chart of a Multi-Ethnic Individual's Ethnic Identities**



The dynamics of the pie-chart-mentality are not necessarily wrong. However, we would be incorrect to think that this is the only way in which ethnic identities may relate to each other within individuals. Let us take the example of Angel, a 36-year-old male born in Peru of Japanese descent who traveled to work in Japan in his late adolescence. Regarding the effect that experiencing racism in Japan had on his ethnic identity, Angel states, “It’s not so much that you felt more Peruvian in Japan. You just... felt less Japanese in Japan.” In two sentences, Angel muddles the logic of the pie-chart-mentality. Figure 2.2 attempts to chart such a change of ethnic identity in a pie chart graph.

**Figure 2.2:**

**Angel's Ethnic Identities in Peru and Japan in Pie Charts**

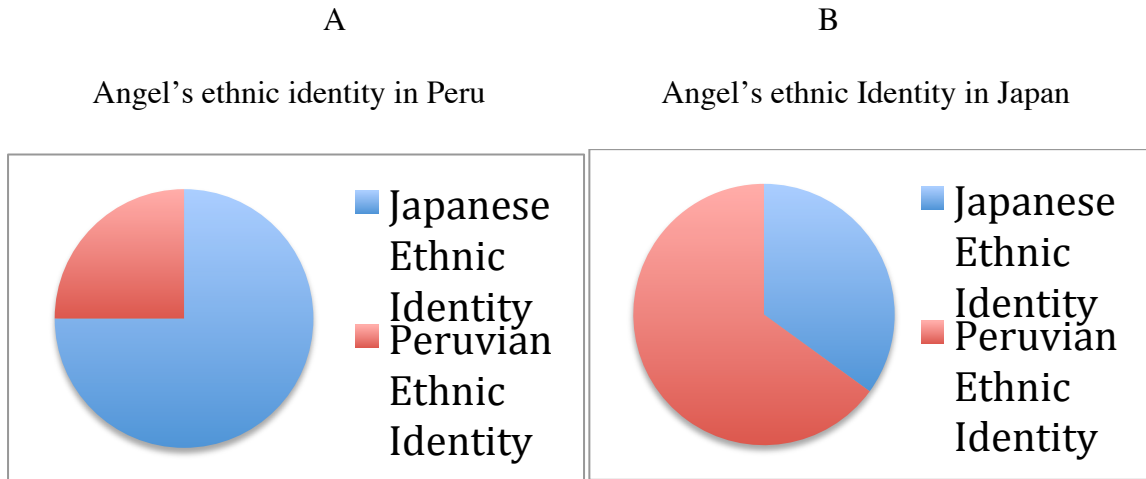


Fig. 2.2 unsuccessfully attempts to show the change in Angel's ethnic identity with the use of pie charts. Fig. 2.2A, shows Angel's Japanese ethnic identity in Peru, where it is largely Japanese. When Angel experiences racism in Japan, he states that he felt "less Japanese", and in Fig. 2.2B, his Japanese ethnic identity is shrunk. However, the unavoidable result of using pie charts is that a shrinking of Japanese ethnic identity must result in growth of his Peruvian ethnic identity, which is incongruent with Angel's testimony; thus, revealing problems with the pie-chart-mentality.

Another example is that of Juana, a 29-year-old female of full Japanese descent who migrated to the U.S. at the age of 24.

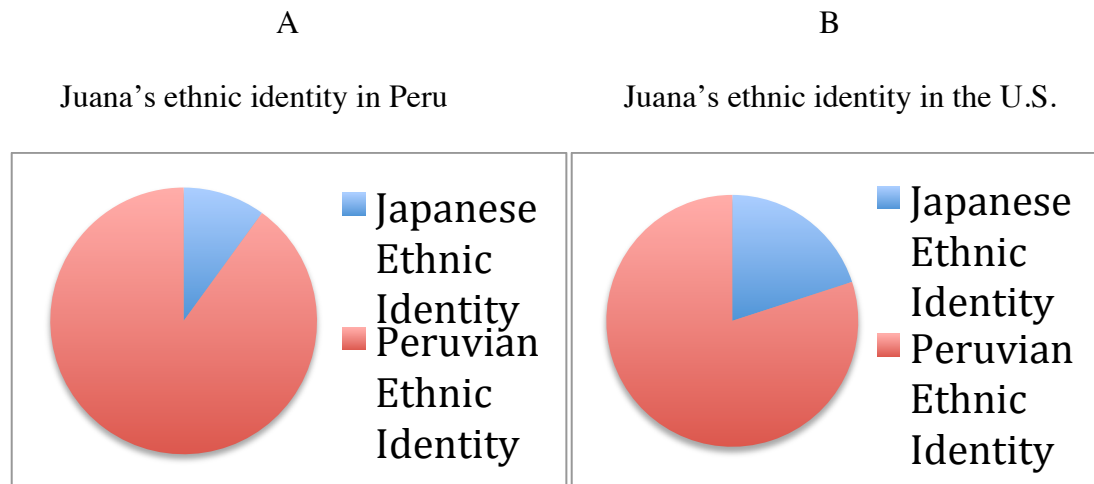
[I've learned more Japanese things in the U.S.]. I'll give you an example. Eating with chopsticks. I've learned that here... [and] if you compare it. It's the same. I feel Peruvian. But if you compare the Japanese [things I knew] from Peru and here... Yes, I probably feel more Japanese here.

Juana's experience is that she has adopted more Japanese customs and habits in the U.S. than she had in Peru, and she asserts that this makes her feel more Japanese, but that this

does not affect her Peruvian ethnic identity. She states, “It’s the same. I feel Peruvian” and “I probably feel more Japanese here” in the same breath. We attempt to show the changes from Peru to the U.S. on her ethnic identity with the use of pie charts.

**Figure 2.3:**

**Juana’s Ethnic Identities in Peru and U.S. in Pie Charts**



Juana states in her interview that her ethnic identity in Peru was very strongly Peruvian. In the passage above, she states that her Japanese identity grew in the U.S. In the failed attempt to show this change accurately, the pie charts above fall into the same problem of showing a growth in Japanese ethnic identity, and this inevitably resulting in the shrinking of Peruvian ethnic identity.

What Angel and Juana’s statements reveal is that one ethnic identity can grow and shrink independently of other ethnic identities that an individual may possess. In conclusion, as one ethnic identity grows, the others do not have to shrink. There is nothing natural or essential about ethnic identities that would make them work as a pie chart within individuals. Instead, we must understand that there are factors that either

force individuals to adopt the pie-chart-mentality (e.g. nationalism, patriotism) or that convince them that this is the only way to think about their ethnic identity (e.g. Jesus' and Cristobal's everyday experiences).

Because of this flaw, we are faced with the task of resolving this problem and developing a new approach towards ethnic identity that surpasses the limits of the pie-chart-mentality by turning our treatment away from the pie chart model.

### **Principle 2: Treatment of Ethnicities and Ethnic Identities as Ordinal Variables**

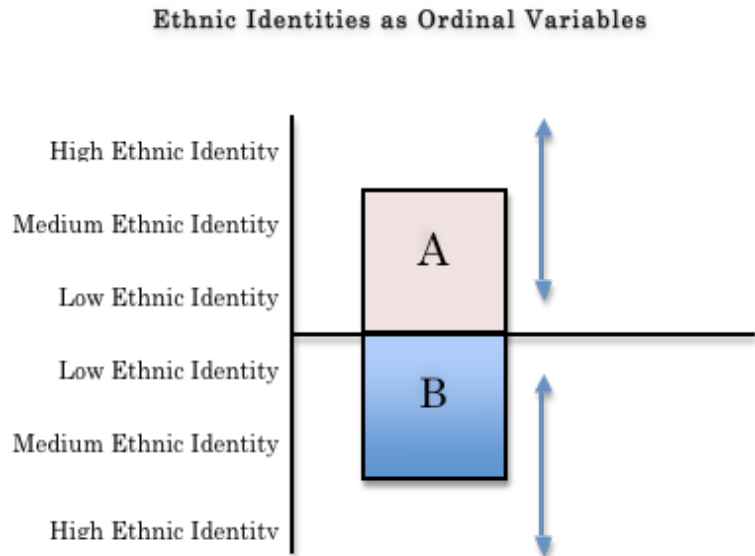
The SBM treats each singular ethnic identity and/or ethnicity within an individual or within a community as an ordinal variable in its own right. The discrete approach of the pie-chart-mentality treats ethnicity and ethnic identity as nominal variables, while the continuum approach treats them as variables whose entirety is subdivided into the possible categories within the "100%" context. Whereas research instruments like the U.S. Census treat ethnicity as a nominal variable with many different ethnicities as possible attributes (e.g. Hispanic, African American, etc.), the SBM treats each one of these attributes as ordinal variables. While other research designs might ask a respondent, "What ethnicity do you identify with?" A SBM approach would ask, "How strongly do you identify with ethnicity A? Ethnicity B? C?" And so on.

The SBM drastically departs from the pie-chart-mentality by treating each possible ethnic identity and ethnicity as a variable in itself that can grow or shrink independently from fluctuations in other ethnicities and ethnic identities. Therefore, if we speak of American, Peruvian and Japanese ethnicities or ethnic identities, these are not treated as three possible attributes for a single variable. Instead, these are treated as

three different variables, each in their own right. The SBM avoids the limits of the pie-chart-mentality by making this important methodological adjustment.

The nature of stacked bar graphs may wrongly lead the reader to think that the SBM is a measuring tool in which ethnicity and ethnic identity are treated as interval-ratio variables. Yet, ethnicities are very difficult variables to measure because they cannot be quantified, and this leads us to treat these variables as ordinal and not interval-ratio. The SBM is not a measuring tool. Instead, it is meant to be utilized as a comparative tool that helps us visualize the relationships between ethnicities and ethnic identities as well as track the changes in ethnic identities observed for JP migrants. In this sense, instead of being a readily measurable interval-ratio variable, ethnicities are treated as ordinal variables because while not being able to measure them, we can track their growth and shrinking throughout time to a certain degree. Through this model, we may compare how a person's ethnic identity changes with shifts in social situations and migrations. Thus, when a respondent states that they felt less Japanese in Japan, than they did in Peru, it is not critical to pinpoint exactly how much less Japanese they felt. Instead, simply tracking that it was less than in Peru is significant enough to proceed with analysis.

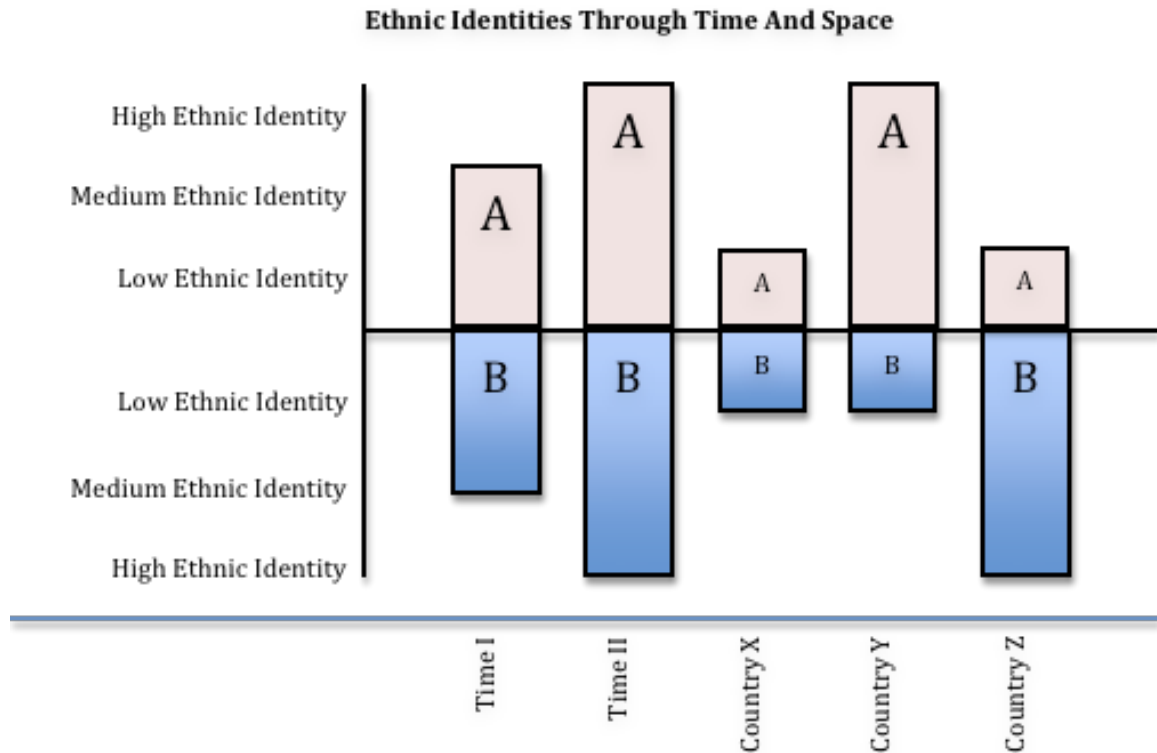
**Figure 2.4**



The graph above exemplifies how the stacked bar helps us visualize the dynamics of ethnic identities. Bars A and B represent different ethnic identities formed in a stacked bar. These bars can both grow and shrink independently from each other as individuals move through time and space, and this avoids the limits of the pie-chart-mentality.



**Figure 2.5**



It is in this context where the comparative power of the stacked bar model manifests itself. As this project follows the migration trajectories of JPs, it will be able to track the changes in ethnic identities visually to better comprehend the reactions of JPs as they enter different racial structures.

### **Principle 3: Four Ideal Types of Ethnic Traits as Building Blocks of the Stacked Bar Model**

The SBM categorizes ethnic traits according to their different functions in the creation of national ethnic boundaries. Then, it graphs these ethnic traits as building blocks of a graph that resembles a stacked bar to help visualize the shrinking and growth

of ethnic identities as they relate to the racial structures and ethnic boundaries individuals are confronted with.

Ethnic traits are singular characteristics possessed by a person or community that carry significant weight regarding a person's inclusion into, or exclusion from, a defined national ethnic group. Some of these ethnic traits might be ascribed (e.g. birth place, phenotype, etc.) or attained (e.g. language, citizenship, etc.). Within an individual, these ethnic traits make up an ethnic composition that can be thought of as an inventory of ethnic traits that are not limited to, but include cultural ones that indicate belonging to a national ethnic group that is assumed to share an either historical or cultural background. As such, a JPs' Peruvian ethnic composition will refer to the collection of all the ethnic traits she/he possesses that can be characterized as Peruvian, for example. However, most JPs' Peruvian ethnic composition is not enough for them to be considered Peruvian in Peru. This is because their Asian phenotype is not accepted as part of the Peruvian ethnicity. This lack of an acceptable Peruvian ethnicity (indigenous, mestizo & white phenotypes are accepted as Peruvian) makes their Peruvian ethnic composition incomplete. A complete Peruvian ethnic composition will be referred to as "Full ethnic composition", and will indicate that one is accepted completely as Peruvian by Peruvian society in Peru.

#### *Four Ideal Types of Ethnic Traits: the Building Blocks of the Stacked Bar Model*

Ethnic compositions can be made up of 4 types of ethnic traits: *ethnic indicators*, *national ethnic requirements*, *othering ethnic qualifiers* and *ethnic absolutes*.

Each of these types of ethnic traits is defined by their functional relationship to the process of ethnic boundary drawing. These functions are differentiated on two levels, their necessity and sufficiency in the ethnic boundary drawing process. Here, it is specifically referring to how the possession of each type of ethnic trait affects the inclusion of an individual into an ethnic group. *Ethnic indicators* are ethnic traits whose possession is both *unnecessary and insufficient* (-N,-S) in order for a person be considered part of an ethnic group; national *ethnic requirements* are ethnic traits that are *necessary, but insufficient* (+N,-S) in order for a person to be considered part of an ethnic group; *othering ethnic qualifiers* are *unnecessary, but sufficient* (-N,+S) in order for a person to be considered part of an ethnic group; and *ethnic absolutes* are both *necessary and sufficient* (+N,+S) in order for a person to be considered part of an ethnic group. These types of ethnic traits are meant to be treated as Weber's (1978) concept of ideal types as the categories may or may not completely reflect the real, empirical world, but may serve as analytical tools that help us organize information. In this sense, certain ethnic traits may not completely fit into one type, but instead may approximate them.

#### Ethnic Indicators

The ethnic traits that are associated with a given ethnic group, but that are relatively inconsequential in providing or denying access to such ethnic group will be discussed as *ethnic indicators* that are *unnecessary and insufficient ethnic traits* (-N,-S) by function. These are traits that an individual does not have to possess to be considered “fully” part of an ethnic group, and yet possessing them alone would not be enough to be considered “fully” part of that ethnic group either. For example, in the social

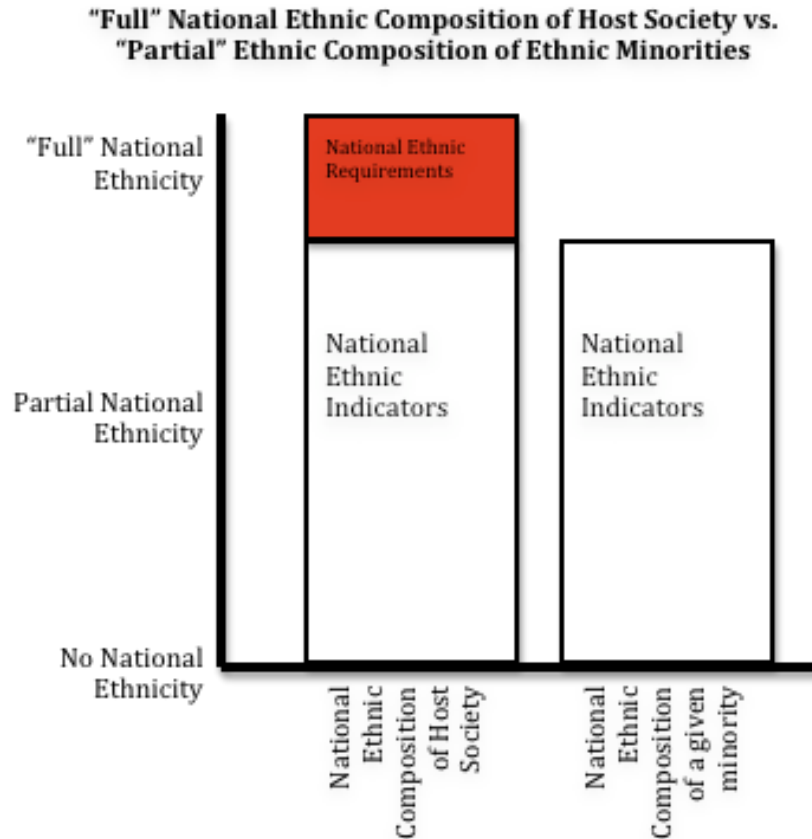
construction of Peruvian ethnicity in Peru, being Catholic (while associated with Peru, as it is the national religion) is an ethnic trait unnecessary to be considered “fully” Peruvian. Yet, if one were Catholic, this would not be enough on its own for one to be considered “fully” Peruvian. Because of this, this type of ethnic trait tends to not be as imperative as the *national ethnic requirements* or the *othering ethnic qualifiers* in the ethnic boundary drawing process discussed next.

#### National Ethnic Requirements

The ethnic traits that each country reserves to circumscribe its national ethnic boundaries will be discussed in terms of *national ethnic requirements*, which are by function *necessary, but insufficient* ethnic traits (+N,-S). These are traits that an individual must possess in order to be considered “fully” part of an ethnic group but that alone do not grant one “full” national ethnicity. Every single *ethnic requirement* is necessary to be considered a legitimate member within the national ethnic boundaries, but each single one by itself does not guarantee this right.

In a stacked bar graph we can visualize how a given nation creates its national ethnicity as it is composed of *ethnic indicators* (-N, -S) that while associated with said national ethnicity, hold little bearing on the inclusion or exclusion of members into its boundaries. Stacked on top of these indicators, we find the *national ethnic requirements* (+N,-S), which are the gate-keeping ethnic traits that must all be possessed in order to be considered “fully” part of the national ethnicity.

Figure 2.6



The graph above compares how the national ethnic composition of a host society compares to that of a given minority in that society. In the case above, a “full” ethnicity of a national ethnic insider is composed of the *ethnic indicators* (-N,-S), and also of the national *ethnic requirements* (+N,-S). These two types of ethnic traits, may be said to give the insider “full” national ethnicity. This “full” ethnic composition is compared to that of a minority who may possess many *ethnic indicators* of the national ethnicity, but may lack the *ethnic requirements* necessary to be considered a “full” member of said national ethnicity. For example, in the U.S. we may think of a set of *ethnic requirements* that work to create the country’s national ethnic boundaries. We might include in this

(non-exhaustive) list, speaking English, being born in the U.S., and possessing white skin. In this example, brown skin Mexican descendants that speak English and are born in the U.S. would not have a legitimate claim within the national American ethnic boundaries although they possess two of the three *ethnic requirements*. Their lacking of that single *ethnic requirement* of whiteness would disqualify them from what is normatively considered ethnically American by U.S. society.

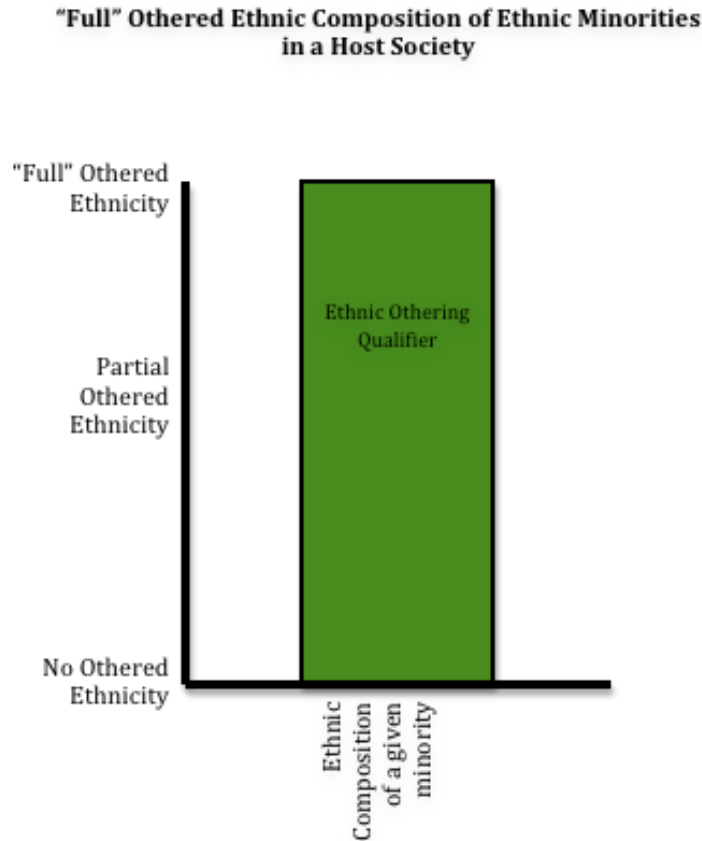
#### Othering Ethnic Qualifiers

The ethnic traits that dominant groups use to other those it wants to exclude from its national ethnic boundaries will be referred to here as *othering ethnic qualifiers*, which are *unnecessary, but sufficient* ethnic traits (-N,+S) by their function. These are traits that an individual does not have to possess, but if so, such ethnic trait is enough to be considered part of an ethnic group that is being othered. For example, in the social construction of Latino ethnicity in the U.S., being born in a Latin American country is unnecessary to be considered Latino by the larger society, and this is evident in the fact that many Latinos are born in the U.S. Yet, being born in a Latin American country is sufficient to be relegated to the status of Latino in the eyes of the U.S. society. Thus, being born in Latin America is an unnecessary (-N), but sufficient (+S) ethnic trait that is used to other Latin Americans (different *othering qualifiers* would include brown skin, for example).

Dominant groups can identify an othered ethnic group into a particular category in an absolute sense or they can be uninterested in placing limits on the othered group's identification with such categorization. Because of this, I specifically use the word

qualifiers in order to stress that othered individuals would not necessarily be considered as fitting within the ethnic boundaries of the group they are being categorized as. The individuals and groups being othered may or may not identify with the group they are categorized into, but the dominant group doing the othering may find this irrelevant. The SBM explains ethnic formations that are always created in a given social context where the dominant group that holds the institutional power in the society is predominantly able to use such power in creating ethnic categories. Being placed into one of these categories can (and usually does) happen without the consent of those being categorized. This is the reason why ethnic traits that are sufficient (+S) in nature are used to other and not to include. The creation of ethnic boundaries by the powerful mainly follows the logic of protecting the privilege of their own group, and as such, entry to that group is based on placing limits. If sufficient (+S) ethnic traits were used to include, instead of to other, dominant groups would have a difficult time protecting their privilege. Thus, in graphing what the use of *othering ethnic qualifiers* looks like, it is important to keep in mind that once an individual or group is qualified as an “other” by the dominant group, the othered group is usually “fully” othered in the sense that their desires to be identified as anything else are typically irrelevant.

Figure 2.7



While the national *ethnic requirements* bar graph included *ethnic indicators* (-N,-S) and *ethnic requirements* (+N,-S), the graph showing the othered ethnicity of minority/migrant groups only shows *othering ethnic qualifiers* (-N,+S) as ethnic traits that make up the othered groups ethnic composition. This is done to show the totality of a sufficient (+S) ethnic trait used for othering. For example, a Mexican descendant's skin color may be an *othering ethnic qualifier* that categorizes her/him as Mexican even though it is not clear that this person would be considered Mexican her/himself in Mexico if they did not speak Spanish, understood Mexican culture, etc. Because the dominant U.S. society might not be interested in this person's actual identification as Mexican,



Mexican descendants would be simply considered Mexican in the totality of the category by the dominant society. In this example, a Mexican descendant's race would be considered an *othering ethnic qualifier* as it qualifies them as Mexican without regard to her/his actual identity and without regard to the degree of her/his actual acceptance as Mexican in Mexico. They are simply considered Mexican in the eyes of the host society.

#### Ethnic Absolutes

These are ethnic traits that an individual must possess in order to be “fully” ethnic, and at the same time, if possessed, grant one “full” ethnicity. By nature of their function, they are *necessary and sufficient ethnic traits* (+N,+S). For example, the social construction of Black ethnicity in the U.S. was at one point rooted in the one-drop rule, which mandated that having just one African ancestor relegated one to the same status as a person of full African descent. While examples of *ethnic absolutes* are relatively difficult to find, it is more likely that they will be found as having an othering function as opposed to a requirement function. This type of traits can also be found in the beginning stages of the nation building process, as shown by Hobsbawm (1992) and Anderson (1991). It is possible that these traits would be important depending on the cases one scrutinizes, but for the population of this study, *ethnic absolutes* were non-existent and will therefore not be discussed at length further.

#### **Principle 4: Understanding the Effects of the Ideal Types of Ethnic Traits on Ethnic Identities**

The SBM understands ethnic identities as able to grow and shrink as a response to the functions of the ideal types of ethnic traits that work as national *ethnic requirements*

and *othering ethnic qualifiers*. The model seeks to understand the formation of ethnic identities by juxtaposing them to ethnic compositions and “full” national ethnicities. The host society’s national ethnicity (e.g. in Peru, Peruvian ethnicity) is always governed by *national ethnic requirements* (+N,-S), and the ethnicities that are othered by the host society are governed by *othering ethnic qualifiers* (-N,+S).

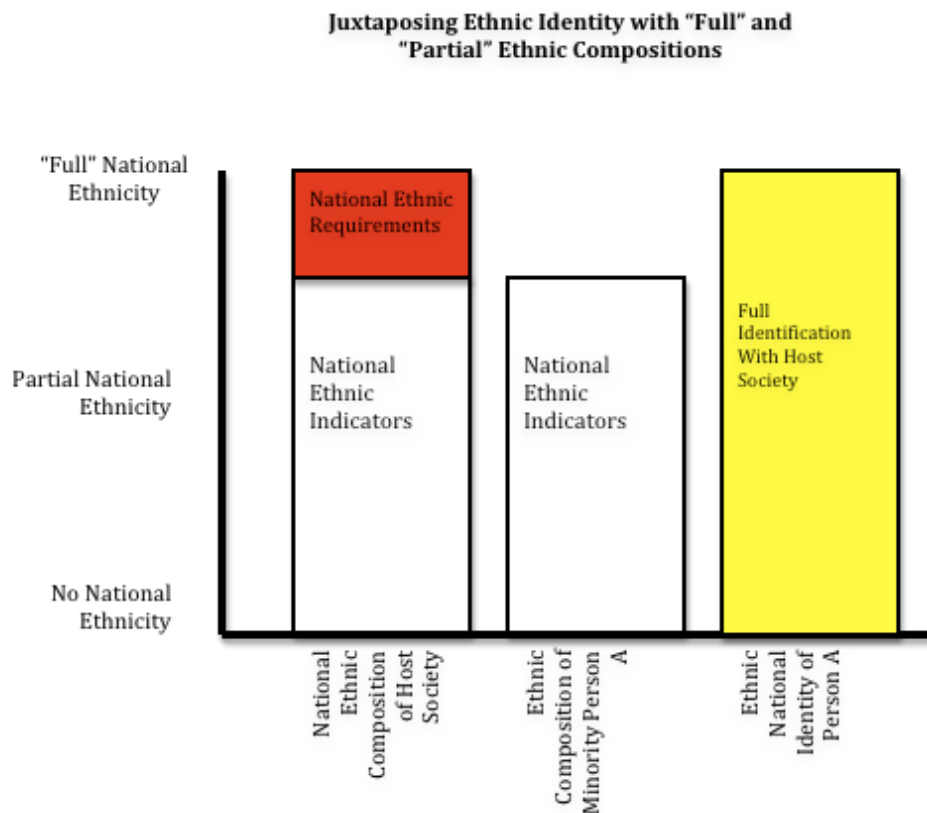
The final step of the stacked bar theory model brings together the concepts of 1) national ethnicity, 2) ethnic composition, and 3) ethnic identity to visualize the dynamics between the three. An ethnic identity is an individual’s self-categorization as part of an ethnic group. Ethnic identities are subjective by nature, and may or may not be (although they usually are) influenced by one’s “objective”, ethnic composition (i.e. the summation of her/his ethnic traits). As such, JPs may completely identify as Japanese in Japan even though their Japanese ethnic composition may be incomplete, as they are not considered to be “full” Japanese by Japanese society because they lack many *national ethnic requirements* such as being born in Japan. In this endeavor, our main intention is to view how the gaps between what are defined as the national ethnicity and a minority individual’s ethnic composition influence the ethnic identity of these individuals. This relationship, however, is not deterministic. As explained above, ethnic identities are subjective, and what we refer to as ethnic compositions in the SBM, are treated as objective. Ethnic identities are treated as subjective specifically because they do not always abide by the ethnic boundaries defined by the host society in creating its national ethnicity.

*National ethnic requirements* by nature govern the construction of the ethnicity of the host society. Host societies define their own ethnicity with intentions of protecting privilege from others by making it difficult for outsiders to be accepted as insiders. As such, the nature by which *ethnic requirements* govern the national ethnicity of minorities is by restricting it. For example, in American society, Americans have constructed its definition of American ethnicity through the use of *ethnic requirements*. One of these requirements is whiteness, and the lack of whiteness of people of color restricts or limits their American ethnicity. Thus, the American ethnicity of people of color is governed by *ethnic requirements* (whiteness) that restrict access to “Full” American ethnicity. In contrast, *othering ethnic qualifiers* govern the constructions of the ethnicities that are othered. Minorities usually lack the institutional power to define their own ethnicity, and in turn, those that do have power define their ethnicity. The dominant society constructs the ethnicities of minorities through *ethnic othering qualifiers*, which by their sufficient (+S) nature qualify minorities as the other, and thus, govern such ethnicities by removing limits to their corresponding identities. For example, one way in which the Japanese define Peruvian ethnicity in Japan is by using the *othering ethnic qualifier* of being born in Peru. In this case, being born in Peru is an *othering ethnic qualifier* (-N,+S) that completely identifies those born in Peru as Peruvian even if they might identify as Japanese. Thus, the *othering ethnic qualifiers* govern Peruvian ethnicity by identifying those born in Peru as Peruvian regardless of how they actually identify. This has the important effect of removing limits to Peruvian ethnicity. As such, JPs in Japan, if they

desired, may identify as “fully” Peruvian although they could not do so in Peru (where Peruvian ethnicity is governed by *ethnic requirements*).

### Graphing the Stacked Bar Model

**Figure 2.8**



In the graph above, as we compare the national ethnicity of a host society and the ethnic composition of minority individual A, we would imagine that the limits on her/his ethnicity (the *national ethnic requirements* she/he does not possess) would have a similar effect on her/his ethnic national identity. Yet, this graph shows her/his identification with the host society as surpassing the limits set by the national *ethnic requirements*. In such a case, we might hypothesize that this person has enough agency to identify him/herself

with a nation that does not completely accept her/him as belonging within its national ethnic boundaries.

For example, while Peruvian society at large may not consider a JPs to be ethnically Peruvian (or at least “fully” ethnically Peruvian), a JP individual may claim “full” Peruvian ethnic identity by redefining for her/himself what it means to be Peruvian. It is because of cases such as this that the SBM finds it useful to think of ethnic composition as an objective concept. This allows the model to juxtapose the concepts of ethnicity (belonging) and ethnic composition (collection of ethnic traits) with the subjective identities of individuals. To reiterate, this is not meant to claim that the SBM takes the position that ethnicities are created according to objective criteria whereby cultural differences between masses of people automatically create different ethnic groups. The SBM takes the position that while ethnic boundaries are created subjectively, once those ethnic traits are used by society at large in defining what lies within and outside of ethnic boundaries, we can objectively observe whether individuals meet those criteria or not.

### **Peru, Japan, the United States and the Stacked Bar Model**

In the following three chapters, the data gathered from the 40 interviews with JPs will be used to provide more examples on how the SBM can be utilized to present a systematic understanding of the forces that create national ethnic boundaries and the modes in which ethnic identities form in reaction to them. The SBM is presented in this chapter in its least intricate form to allow the reader to become familiar with its assumptions and building blocks and because moving further on would require a certain

grasp of the data that delivered this model. The data presents itself in a progressive quality that drives the SBM to evolve accordingly and become increasingly complex. With each migration to a new racial structure, JPs develop new modes of understanding and formulating their ethnic identities that not only adjust to new contexts, but that also take into consideration previous understandings and formulations. This makes the development of the SBM is not only progressive, but retroactive as well in that each chapter must review the SBM formulations in previous ones in order to offer a comprehensive analysis of how ethnic identities are generated through time and space as opposed to in a snap shot. Therefore, it can only be expected that the SBM will reach its full form and potential merely after all the data has been imparted and analyzed.

## CHAPTER 3: PERU

### Racism

#### *Chino*

Most JPs that lived in Peru had repeatedly confronted the imposed racial term *chino*, which literally means Chinese in Spanish. Twenty-five of the respondents asserted having been called *chino* at one point or another, and verified the fact that this was a very common practice in Peruvian society (at least in Lima where most of the respondents had lived). Only three respondents did not speak on this subject despite having lived a significant amount of time in Peru. Twelve of the respondents had not lived in Peru long enough to comment on this subject. Thus, 25 out of 28 (89%) respondents that lived a significant amount of their lives in Peru spoke on this subject and noted that they had been erroneously labeled as *chino*.

The 25 JPs who spoke on this subject were divided in their reactions to and interpretations of *chino* as a label. Nine respondents (36%) were clear in their views that this label was offensive; eight respondents (29%) were clear in their views that this label was not offensive; and 7 respondents (28%) provided statements that were either ambivalent or contradictory in regards to the offensiveness of the label<sup>10</sup>. The division in attitudes towards *chino* as a label is confirmed by the numerous conversations I have had with JPs in the duration of this project, as well as throughout my entire life. Because of

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<sup>10</sup> One respondent of the 25 acknowledged the wide use of the label *chino*, but did not comment further on its offensiveness.

this, I am confident that my data set is a good indicator of the multiple attitudes of the JP community towards this label.

When JPs who take offense at the label *chino* were probed for the reasons for their strong reactions to this term two functions of the label consistently emerged: 1) a homogenizing function and 2) an othering function.

### *Chino* as a Homogenizing Label

The label *chino* works as an umbrella term that homogenizes all the different Asian ethnic groups in Peru, and becomes a synonym for Asian. Some JPs find it problematic, as they do not identify themselves as Chinese. For JPs whose exasperation was rooted on this label's ethnically homogenizing effect, the denial of their Japanese ethnicity had to be constantly embattled, and asserting their Japanese ethnicity became an unwinnable struggle:

...When I first went to my school, I didn't like it because they would call me *china*. "*China, china*," ...and I would get mad, and I would cry, "but I'm not *china*, I'm Japanese"... and then, 'til I was like ten, maybe, I would feel like, "No. I'm Japanese". I would get mad at them, and I actually wanted to go to La Union<sup>11</sup>. I actually wanted to switch to that other school, and I would tell my parents, "please change me, change me, transfer me to that school, I don't want to be in that school anymore. They're all white. They all hate me."

Maria, 39

...In Peru, all Oriental [women] are called *china*. So when they called me *china* it would bother me, and it bothers me until now. I don't like being called *china*. I don't like it because in Peru, they say it in a derogatory manner. They don't do it because they see you different. They do it in a derogatory manner, I think. That's all I think. Maybe it's just ignorance. To them, all Asians are Chinese.

Sara, 45

The use of the term *chino* as a homogenizing identifier for Asians in Peru probably finds its origins in the fact that Chinese migration to Peru preceded Japanese

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<sup>11</sup> La Union is a Japanese school in Lima where students are almost exclusively of Japanese descent.



migration. Fukumoto states that “[t]o solve the problem of labor shortage, between 1849 and 1874 between 90,000 and 100,000 Chinese arrived in the Peruvian coasts” (1997:74). In fact, the immigration of Chinese and Japanese labor migrants to the U.S. and Peru are similar not only in that aspect, but also in that restrictions of Chinese labor migration in both countries contributed to the increase in Japanese immigration. Hence, succeeding the Chinese migration, Japanese migrants fell victim to the unwillingness or inability of many, if not most, Peruvians to distinguish between the two distinct Asian populations and were stuck with the term used to describe the initial Asian immigrants from China. The affliction that JPs derived from being mislabeled as *chino* denied the proper recognition of their Japanese ethnicity.

#### *Chino* as an Othering Label

Instead of standing in relation to Japanese identity, *chino*’s function as an othering label stands in opposition to Peruvian ethnicity. Respondents that rationalized *chino*’s function as an insult emphasized the power of the word to make one feel different. The underwriting of *chino* denotes a denial of the right to be part of the Peruvian national ethnicity, which (not so) silently accuses those labeled *chino* of foreignness and therefore international intrusion. It is an overt mechanism of boundary drawing that communicates a denial of the privilege to belong that appertains to “true” Peruvians.

...There’s a group of men that say to you, “ay, *china* mamacita linda... [hey, pretty Chinese little mama]” and stupid things [like that]. The sole fact that they call you “ay *chinita* linda [hey pretty, little, Chinese girl]” or whatever, at that moment, you feel that you’re not the same as them because they’re not calling you simply, “mamacita linda [pretty little mama]” or, “how pretty you are”, I don’t know... instead they call you “ay *chinita* [hey little Chinese girl]”.

Miranda, 55

...I couldn't feel 100% Peruvian because you would go to school, and everybody calls you "*chino, chino*". And then, there's something that stays with you from that.

Jorge, 34

In the street they would tease you. *Chinita*. Yeah, I remember that. It's like if one doesn't have... like wherever you go, you don't feel at home... because they don't treat you like if you were Peruvian, but as Chinese.

Beatriz, 28

Being identified by one's racial features verbally in Peru is a rather common occurrence. Mestizos and the indigenous will be called *cholos*; Blacks will be called *negros*; and Asians will be called *chinos*. This has apparently been normalized through the streets, bars, schools, and the general public life of Lima. The word *chino* is different from these other labels in that (while ultimately racist in nature) it more literally describes a nationality as opposed to a race the way the *negro* and *cholo* labels do. This distinction is important because it reflects the Asian population's inability to ever be considered truly "Peruvian". Being called *cholo* or *negro* indicates otherness from whiteness, whereas being called *chino* indicates otherness from Peruvians. This label is loaded with the power of notions that determine a particular type of belonging within Peruvian national ethnic boundaries. Its main function in the Peruvian racial structure is different in that (as it is contemporarily used) its ability to mark social positions of inferiority or superiority is compounded by its power to mark exclusion from Peruvianness. Therefore, if one is called *cholo* as an insult, the accusation is based on one's perceived inferior race or culture, whereas if one is called *chino*, the accusation is one of foreignness and national intrusion (and possibly inferiority if it is a white person doing the labeling).

### Chino as a Non-Offensive Label

The power of the term *chino* lies not only in its ability to homogenize Asians and exclude them from Peruvian national ethnicity, but also in its pervasiveness in everyday life. The ever-present use of this term has normalized its racist effects for many JPs. In fact, 13 out of the 24 respondents who discussed this issue asserted that being called *chino* was something of little or no consequence to them. One of the respondents who actually was offended by the term explains how this happens:

...I get to the airport in Peru, and they say to me “*Chino*, come this way”. That’s the manner in which the Peruvian tends to speak in. Basically, they disrespect you. He could say to me “gentleman, sir, come this way”. Because it’s common, normal. But the guy simply says “*chino*, come this way”. So, you don’t feel... I don’t like being called *chino*. Because they’re discriminating against you... It’s not that they are treating you bad. It’s that the Peruvian, as I told you, comes with the *criollada*<sup>12</sup>. Calling one *chino* doesn’t mean he’s treating you bad. In his mind, he’s treating you well. But instead of calling you by your name, because he doesn’t know it, he calls you *chino*. Now, as a person, you decide if it offends you or not. There’s many people that don’t get offended. And others, including myself, dislike it.

Miguel, 31

Miguel has to struggle with the discordant interpretations of the label between the labeler and the labeled. As a Peruvian, he has come to understand the intentions of the person using the word *chino* are not necessarily malevolent, but instead, many times those using such terms are simply following a normative way of speaking. While the etymology of such term is as racist as its social ramifications, the intentions of the labeler her/himself might not be to offend. This, in fact, might make being labeled *chino* much more frustrating to many JPs who abhor such branding because confronting the labelers may result in a presentation of themselves as “problem makers” or as condescending. However, for others, such labeling was completely unproblematic:

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<sup>12</sup> A way of being later discussed in more detail.

*Interviewer:* In Peru, did they make fun of you?

*Alfredo:* I've never felt that.

*Interviewer:* They never called you *chino*?

*Alfredo:* Yes. But that kind of thing never affected me.

*Interviewer:* So when they called you *chino* was it to insult you?

*Alfredo:* ...No, I never took it in an offensive way, no. I don't take it like that. I take it, like, they call all of slanted eyes *chino*. To me, it's... I really don't take it like that. I think that really they call *chino* all the Orientals, but not in an offensive manner.

Alfredo, 41

*Interviewer:* In Peru, for being Japanese, many people say that people make fun of them, call them *chino*...

*Adrian:* To me, with my friends it was, "*chino, chino*". I was indifferent.

*Interviewer:* So, you didn't take it as an insult.

*Adrian:* No. I felt normal.

*Interviewer:* Being called *chino*, did it make you feel different?

*Adrian:* Not really. Like... I never took it like that, different, racial. It wasn't like that.

Adrian, 22

Being called *chino* is at times, even, interpreted positively by some JPs,

*Interviewer:* Were you ever called *china*?

*Claudia:* Yeah, they would call me that, but it didn't offend me.

*Interviewer:* Did it happen a lot?

*Claudia:* Yes.

*Interviewer:* In Peru, does it bother people?

*Claudia:* I don't think so, because they say it to you endearingly. They don't say it to you in a bad manner. Generally, no. I mean... it's like an endearing nickname.

Claudia, 54

The interpretations and reactions to the label *chino* are conflicting. These views may be classified as racist, neutral, or endearing. The discordance behind such interpretations is not simply a result of individual choice of tolerance towards a Peruvian normative way of speaking, but is also the result of the socio-economic position that JPs hold as a community in the Peruvian racial hierarchy and the effects this has on their understandings of anti-Japanese racism.

### *Anti-Japanese Racism*

While many JPs may feel that anti-Japanese racism exists in Peru, the majority of them sense that it does not really affect them if it even exists at all. This is

counterintuitive to the fact that experiences with the labeled *chino* are virtually universal. When speaking on the subject of anti-Japanese racism, very few asserted that this indeed was a prevalent problem for JPs, including those that were offended by the label *chino*.

No. I have never felt [racism], because in the end, I'm Peruvian. I might have slanted eyes, but I'm Peruvian. I mean... I was born in Peru. I speak the same language as them, and I use the same slang as them. I hang out with them. I could think like them. I can talk to them. I don't have an accent. I mean... I'm the same as them. The only difference is that my eyes are slanted.

Marcos, 28

*Angel:* I never thought that there was racism in Peru.

*Interviewer:* So in Peru you didn't feel discriminated against? Or felt racism?

*Angel:* No.

Angel, 36

*Interviewer:* In Peru, you never experienced racism?

*Jorge:* In Peru, no. So strong, strong, no. The only thing is that they call you *chino*, but no.

Jorge, 34

In Peru, Sara joined a theater group in which she played the role of an Indian woman in a play. Her Japanese phenotype became a subject of commentary in a review.

*Interviewer:* When the thing in the theater happened, did it affect you positively, or negatively?

*Sara:* I thought it was funny. We thought it was funny that it happened, but it didn't affect me positively or negatively. I let it go. There was a commentary. A review in the newspaper that said it was curious seeing a Japanese woman playing the role of a *cholita*. They showed us the review. We laughed, but it didn't affect me in any way. I didn't see it as an attack. I didn't see it as a compliment. I just thought it was interesting. It was interesting, kind of funny. Nothing more.

Sara, 45

These respondents stated that racism either was not a factor at all in their lives, or if it was, it was a minimal factor. Even when speaking about experiences that clearly define them outside of the Peruvian national ethnicity, like Sara, the respondents did not seem to view themselves as victims of racism. The issues for this lie heavily in the fact that JPs

have been able to establish themselves as part of the Peruvian middle class, and therefore hold a rather positive image in the eyes of the general Peruvian public.

There isn't a racism against the Japanese in Peru so overt like it is against the indigenous or the blacks. I mean, one can, in Peru, as Japanese, you can access any space. It doesn't matter if it's a whites' bar or not. Well, sometimes they don't let you in when they're super white. But you are allowed to go anywhere. In fact, it might even help you. It's better to be Japanese than *cholo*. You have a better social status even if you don't have money.

Roberto, 30

No. It's the opposite [to racism].... Maybe the Peruvians consider us cold, but deep inside, they admire us.

Jesus, 52

Class is a very important issue to take into consideration when analyzing JP's experiences of racism in Peru. While the position and image of JPs is similar to that of Japanese Americans in the U.S. in that they are both highly considered part of the middle class and rank favorably in education and entrepreneurship, JPs have more prestige than Japanese Americans because of one factor; the majority of the population of Peru is not white. While both in the U.S. and Peru, the Japanese are considered more successful and prestigious than those of black and brown skin, in Peru this translates into a social position below whites who make up only 15% of the entire Peruvian population. This places them above the rest indigenous and mestizos who make up 82% of the Peruvian population<sup>13</sup>. In contrast, in the U.S. the white population makes up 66% of the population, which means that if we assume that Japanese Americans hold a stratum immediately below the white population, this would place them only above 34% of the rest of the population at best. In essence, JPs in Peru have relatively more privilege than

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<sup>13</sup> Congress, Library of. 1992. "A Country Study of Peru." vol. 2007.

more people in Peru than Japanese Americans do in the U.S. With this much privilege, JPs in Peru have won the admiration of a sizable section of the Peruvian population.

The difficulty in recognizing racism against JPs (and in general) in Peru can also be understood as a manifestation of a particular form of Peruvian racism described by de la Cadena (2000) as “racism without race”. Racism, in Peru, is ultimately not understood as a set of immutable biological traits, but instead, as a set of cultural attributes and social conditions. In the Peruvian racial hierarchy, the boundaries of the racial casts between the indigenous population and the mestizo population (which make up the majority of the nation) are blurred, as an indigenous person can achieve the status of a mestizo through education as well as through social and economic accomplishments. In other words, mestizo can be an attained status by the indigenous instead of an ascribed one. This shift in focus in the racial order from skin color to culture and education has allowed such racial order to function similarly to what we have only recently identified in the U.S. as color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2003). The similarities between these two academic understandings of racism are rooted in that in both, a racial hierarchy is allowed to remain intact despite ideological changes that condemn racism at the local, national and global levels. States and racially dominant groups are able to spout rhetoric that upholds democracy and equality, while at the same time inhibiting political movements that demand racial equality in the cultural, social, economic and political spheres of social interaction. The hegemonic result of this is the blanketing of a population under a sheet of denial of the racial cleavages that remain as scars from a history of colonization. This is one of the reasons why many Peruvians believe that racism does not exist in Peru.

Whatever inequalities persist in the society are therefore understood to be the natural results of the “cultural deficiencies” of the oppressed, not the structural obstacles that disadvantage them. However, while in the U.S., the rise of color-blind racism is rooted in the post-civil rights era of the 60’s, Peru had developed such ideology soon after its independence was won from Spain in 1821. De la Cadena (1998) argues that the Peruvian racial order is maintained through a form of “silent racism”, a “...practice of ‘legitimate’ exclusions, based on education and intelligence while overtly condemning biological determinisms” (1998: 143). The idea of “racism without race” is also echoed by Van de Berghe’s (1974) conclusion that one’s class in Peru can strongly affect the way in which one’s identified racially or ethnically.

Because the JP community’s social and economic accomplishments have been relatively high, JPs are less likely to see themselves as targets of racism. The type of racism they have experienced has not translated into the same economic disadvantages and access to opportunities to the degree that the indigenous, mestizo and black populations have experienced. However, JPs’ inferior position to the white elites is still relevant as one of the respondents discusses experiencing racism:

I haven’t felt it myself, but I think it exists. I’ve heard it. Especially from the upper class. From the Peruvians who are white. And maybe it’s because I came to the U.S. at 19 years of age. It hasn’t happened to me that you go to a club and they don’t let you in because you’re not white. But it does happen in Peru. A lot. Even now. At [the beach] Asia, there’s clubs that, no [shakes head].... When I went back to Peru, I went to Larcomar and I would see that there were closed doors and the people would go in and they would say that they don’t let you in there. I think in Peru, being an immigrant [from Japan], you do feel kind of superior, but when things like that happen to you, you don’t anymore....

Erika, 41



Japanese-Peruvians' understanding of racism in this sense occurs in relation to the general Peruvian non-white population, whom they perceive themselves to be more privileged than. Taking this into consideration, the racism that becomes the most significant is that which originates from the stratum above them, the white elite. This fact was exacerbated by Alberto Fujimori's (a son of Japanese immigrants that became president of Peru) climb to the Peruvian presidency in 1990. It is on this topic where most JPs, whether they believed anti-Japanese racism in Peru existed or not, had the most to say regarding experiences of racism.

### *Fujimori*

Alberto Fujimori ran for the presidency of Peru and won the election in 1990. His candidacy was full of controversies surrounding his Japanese descent, of which, the most notable one regarded the documentation of his Peruvian nativity. Fujimori's victory was largely the result of a reaction against his white opponent, Mario Vargas Llosa's, right leaning politics, as well as his race. He was ushered into power by the strong support of the indigenous and mestizo populations from the provinces outside of Lima. It has been commented that this population saw in Fujimori the stereotypes attached to Japanese descendants of being trustworthy, hard working, and honest. In addition, Japan's economic success in the 80's made this Japanese descendant a symbol of progress. Simultaneously, Vargas Llosa, as a white man, symbolized the colonization and racism that characterized the indigenous population's experience of oppression for many Peruvians.

It is in this particular topic that racism becomes highly relevant to the respondents in my sample. From it, two important issues of racism are unearthed: 1) the distinctiveness and importance that white racism (as opposed to the general Peruvian population's) plays in circumscribing JP's opportunities and access to institutions and 2) the unfortunate realization that the same racism of World War II was not just a memory of the past, but a threatening danger that had only laid dormant ready to awake the moment a Japanese descendant audaciously dared to break the ethnic boundaries that locked the Japanese out of any definition of Peruvian ethnicity.

One respondent's recollections of these events were especially informative in bringing the themes of Fujimori, white racism, and the memories of anti-Japanese World War II racism together. Kenji noted,

Yes. At least in the time when Fujimori ran for presidency, there were many problems against the Japanese descendants... and the problem was that one's parents tell you the stories from the time of the war. There was a riot, so many things, and they were afraid that Fujimori winning the presidency would make the same things happen again. That because of one Nisei<sup>14</sup>, they would come and take it out on the entire colony<sup>15</sup>, and that was rather intense. Because in that time... to us Nisei, they would kick us out of many places, at least from the zones of the upper class. Because in that time, I remember that Fujimori ran and Vargas Llosa supposedly was Peruvian, but upper class... with money. And that class was in favor of Vargas Llosa. And if you went to a place of that category, they would kick you out. For example, in [one upscale restaurant], there was once an incident... that a group of Nisei went in and the people started to bang on their tables to kick them out.... Things were very intense, and I, too, had problems in Miraflores... Around that time, I went with a friend to do some shopping, and they started yelling at us, "Hey, Chinese thieves! Get out of here". And I had a separate incident. We almost got in a fight. The police came. They had to take us out of the place. So yeah, there were many problems for the colony. ...How are you gonna feel Peruvian, if they're practically kicking you out? They call you a thief. Even though one has nothing to do with it, right? One concludes... one blames the ignorance that exists. Because that is ignorance, what they did. They should see that it's not me that is running for president. But they already

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<sup>14</sup> Although incorrect, it is rather common for JPs to use the word Nisei (literally, second generation) as a synonym for Nikkei to mean all the Japanese descendants living outside of Japan without differentiating for generational status.

<sup>15</sup> Japanese-Peruvians often refer to the Japanese-Peruvian community as the "colony"

made generalizations, and... "*Chino*, go back to your country"... so many things they yelled at you. To one of my friends, they threw rocks at his car only because they saw the little hanging [Japanese] ornament on the mirror. Because of that. They saw it, and they threw rocks into his car. It was intense at that time, when Fujimori ran. Because of that there was a time when the colony refused Fujimori's candidacy for presidency. Not so much because they doubted his ability, but because of the problems that were being created.

Kenji, 41

Kenji's narrative first brings into focus the lingering memories of racism from World War II, especially the incident of the anti-Japanese riot in 1940, and connects the events during Fujimori's campaign to those WWII memories in order to explain that many voted against Fujimori out of fear from anti-Japanese racist retaliation. However, here my data raises contradicting points. While it is clear that this fear was strongly prevalent in the JP community, my data suggests that the events and details of racism from the war are largely absent from respondents' memories. Out of the 40 interviews, 11 respondents discussed the racism World War II in any detail at all. Of these 11, 2 had been raised in the U.S. and had learned of the subject in college by their own efforts, 2 had lived in the U.S. their entire lives because their parents were part of the 1800 Japanese brought to the U.S. camps from Peru during the time, and 3 were young kids who actually lived through the experience. This leaves 4 respondents who were part of the Peruvian community until their adult years who had anything to say at all about these events, Kenji being one of them. The other three had not much to say about these events other than being aware that there was a riot and that Japanese schools were forced to close down. It is evident from my interviews and from informal conversations that as significant as the events of World War II were, most JPs know little to nothing about them. The respondents who attended Japanese schools in Peru never reported learning about JP history, and one

stated that the subject was never taught. The teaching of this subject was never institutionalized in the JP community, and the oral histories transmitted appear to be limited. It is possible that a silence surrounds the tragedies of the period that is similar to the silence that surrounds issues of internment around Japanese Americans in the U.S.

This silence helps explain in part why, with the strong history of anti-Japanese racism in Peru, many JPs would feel that racism either does not exist or has limited effects on the Japanese community. When JPs speak about racism being of little or no effect in their lives, the image of racism held is one of open acts of discrimination that are independent of each other, not of a structural problem.

In the case of anti-Japanese racism during Fujimori's campaign, it is helpful to think of racism in Peru as a structural problem in which groups of different races are thought to occupy given social positions in a racial hierarchy with whites at the top, blacks and indigenous at the bottom, and the Japanese somewhere in between. In this structure, incidents of open acts of racism may not be abundant as long as the structure is not challenged. Because of this, many JPs did not feel that racism was very relevant in their lives as such incidents were minimal. However, the moment in which this structure was challenged by Fujimori's candidacy to presidency, stories of the racist occurrences spread virally throughout the JP media and community. This understanding of racism as a structure is much more coherent and useful to explain the JP experience of racism in Peru. In this sense, anti-Japanese racism always existed in Peru. Metaphorically, we may understand it as a dormant virus, a disease whose symptoms are open acts of discrimination, and the lack of manifestation of these symptoms does not equate to the

disease being cured. This dormant virus, the disease of racism, was always there, but was difficult to recognize until its symptoms manifested, and Fujimori's candidacy triggered these symptoms, which proved that the virus of racism had never completely disappeared.

Fujimori's challenge to the Peruvian racial structure not only proves that racism had always existed, but also directs our attention to the root of this racism in the Peruvian white elite. When Fujimori ran for president, he infiltrated a restricted political white space causing a racist reaction from the white elites.

...Because the people with money in Peru are like, white people with money. And they're so power hungry, and for them to see a little Japanese dude is going to become president of Peru, I think they were just, I don't know... there's a lot of racism, or there was during that time when he became president.

Maria, 39

Peru is divided into so many different parts. A person from the working class would think that a Japanese is the best. You ask the same thing to someone from the upper middle class and they'll tell you that the Japanese is crap. [People] from the provinces and from the city will tell you different things. To those of the upper class with capital we're bad. We have an image from Fujimori, who did a lot [of good things]. But people remember the bad. [Yet] in the provinces, they adore him because those people's needs were addressed. Those people adore him and will continue to. They love the Japanese. You're Japanese and over there they treat you like a king because they made highways, restrooms, schools, potable water, electricity. Those people appreciate it, but those of the city, no. [Fujimori] ended terrorism, and they're happy. Now they can invest more... but then [the political controversies] of Montesinos, Fujimori, and the whole world is against that. Because they go along with what's convenient. If you ask me what do social classes think of that, I say to the lower classes, people from the provinces, we're the best. We're the people they could trust, keep our promises, we're straight, [there] to help people. But if you ask a Limeño<sup>16</sup>, someone from the high class, they'll tell you that we're thieves. That we've imported things we shouldn't, like bad medicines. They'll remember all the bad things, the things that the people of the provinces never cared about.

Dolores, 37

White racism becomes a central factor to experiences of racism against JPs because it is the one racism that most limits their opportunities. If JPs have a positive image in Peru, it is because those who hold that image are placed in the lower strata of

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<sup>16</sup> Limeño is a person from Lima, the capital of Peru

the Peruvian racial hierarchy, the indigenous and mestizos. If JPs have experiences in which they are discriminated against or made to feel inferior, it is logical that this would come from the racial strata above them, not below them. The fact that JPs “begin” to feel racism the moment that the white position of superiority is challenged (by Fujimori) supports this logic.

#### *Summation on Racism in Peru*

While Peru has had a strong history of anti-Japanese racism, most JPs felt that racism either did not exist, or that its effects were minimal. This section has touched on important points explaining the nature of racism in Peru and JP’s experience of it.

The label *chino* is a label that designates JPs’ Asian phenotype as an *othering ethnic qualifier*. Simultaneously a Peruvian racial image exists that includes primarily whites, mestizos and the indigenous. Having an Asian phenotype that qualifies them as “others”, JPs simultaneously lack the Peruvian *ethnic requirement* of fitting within the Peruvian racial image. Thus, one of the main ethnic boundaries that deny JPs an acceptable claim to Peruvian “full” ethnicity is race.

There is a lack of (formal and informal) education about anti-Japanese racism from World War II, which may lead many contemporary JPs to view anti-Japanese racism as irrelevant. In addition, the dynamics of Peruvian racism are often understood in terms of class and education. Because the JP community has attained a relatively high status in both areas, anti-Japanese racism is perceived by many to be a non-factor. And lastly, racism in Peru is strongly a function of the ruling white class. Because of this, JPs

are more likely to experience racism when they challenge the position of whites as Fujimori's case showed.

### **Agency - Preserving Japanese Ethnic Identity**

#### *Image of the Japanese in Peru*

The racism against the Japanese community in Peru is only one factor that helps maintain the distinct ethnic boundaries and identities of JPs. As discussed above, many believe that anti-Japanese racism either does not exist or has little effect on the community. It would be expected that the perception of absence of racism should diminish ethnic boundaries in this case. However, the JP community has actively maintained very strong ethnic boundaries distinguishing themselves from the Peruvian population. The reasons for this lie not only in the desire to retain Japanese heritage, but also very strongly, on JPs' relatively privileged socio-economic racial status in the Peruvian racial and class structures.

Despite the JPs having been discriminated against for their Asian phenotype, this community's image is largely a positive one. Twenty-one respondents strongly affirmed that most Peruvians respected and admired the Japanese; 1 respondent argued that the community's image was negative due to their foreign associations; 1 respondent argued that it was both positive and negative; 3 respondents did not speak to the matter; and 14 respondents' lived experience in Peru was too short to form an opinion. Not counting these fourteen, 81% (21/26) of the respondents were in strong agreement on this particular topic.

Well, in my time, the Japanese was highly respected. Because that's how it was instilled in them. The Japanese is a hard worker, doesn't lie, and they've always had, including

the Peruvians, that image. And in Peru, the Nisei has proved that. He has been a hard worker.... He hasn't lied, always tried to be honest. They have been very straight as they might say. I think that the colony, or the Japanese, has always been seen in a positive light. Very rarely in a negative one.

Kenji, 41

The Japanese are highly regarded. Every Peruvian girl wants to be with a Nisei boyfriend. Because when I would go to the houses of the Peruvians, they would tell me, "why don't you get with my daughter? Wow, look at my daughter. One of my sons is with a Nisei girl, how great! A niece of mine is with a Nisei". They're very highly regarded.

Jesus, 52

The Japanese in Peru? An image of hard workers, honest, and smart. Without a doubt, the same image they have in the U.S.

Miguel, 30

The positive image that the Japanese in Peru hold is described through three pillars of being hard working, smart, and trustworthy. This is a big shift from the original ideas of the *criollo* intellectuals that saw the Asian race as a decadent one. Certainly, such a shift was strongly influenced by the economic success that the JP community has achieved since their original migration at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ultimately reinforcing this stereotype was Japan's ascendancy as an elite global economic power in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is highly conceivable that Japan's world economic status and JPs' middle class status solidified the generalization that there was something inherent in Japanese genes or culture that propelled their success, an idea that many, if not most, JPs themselves believed as well as the general Peruvian population. One respondent commented on how this may even have affected Fujimori's victory:

[Peruvians think] that [the Japanese are] very smart. That they're honest and straight. A very good image. Very positive. That's why Fujimori was elected. I mean, nobody knew him and he ends up being president. That's because the whole world has that image, that the Japanese are hard workers. Because they have the technology.... So it also has to do with Japan's success.

Tomas, 30



Japan's image around the world changed when new technology in the household electronics and auto industries became abundantly Japanese. Ideas of technological advancement and economic progress took on ethnic connotations that were associated with the respective individuals and communities embodying such ethnicity, and the JPs reaped the benefits of such newly found social capital in Peru.

For many, the strong positive image of the Japanese was also cemented in their economic role in Peruvian communities themselves as one respondent commented on the origins of such image:

...To me [the image] has been very positive... I think that [it] was created by our parents and us. Many of our generation would have our corner store. The restaurant... we've been very close to the people of the neighborhoods. We weren't whites who had their *haciendas* and buildings and they would recede to San Isidro<sup>17</sup>.... We've been in the neighborhood.... We have lived through all that. "The *chino* from the corner", they would call us, because in every corner there was a store, and that store would serve you every day of the week from 6am to 8pm. That's not something that people forget because they would come ask you for two cents worth of sugar and you would sell them that. The kids from the neighborhood would come and tell you they needed a soccer ball. So this year, "ok, a soccer ball". A family would come, and they would have problems because the father was a drunk. They would come, "could you front me some... I don't have money." "OK, what do you need? Rice? Beans? Here, take this." Those sorts of things. And they were always treated very nicely. That's the legacy of the Nikkei.

Aurelio, 68

This image translated to privileges in the spheres of education and work for many:

I always received special treatment in my two schools... maybe for being Japanese because they do give special treatments to the Japanese in Lima. But in both schools I had, like, some privilege from the principals and the teachers.... I even went to the houses of the principal and they would feed me.

Sara, 45

I think that the Japanese, we have an image of being intelligent, hard working. When I started at my job... I was the only Japanese... and when I quit, I got my cousin hired there. What happens is that the boss would say that there always has to be a Japanese in a company. And she was Peruvian, but she always had the idea that the Japanese are hard

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<sup>17</sup> San Isidro is considered a neighborhood of people from the upper classes.

workers and honest in their work, and that they're responsible. I always heard that. I think so. I think we have a good image.

Juana, 30

These stereotypes of positive character, were derived from and reinforced the middle class image of the JP community:

In the time that I lived in Peru, the Japanese were highly regarded because of their economic status. They had businesses. Because even though they were from the lower middle class, they had businesses. The people in the neighborhood didn't have businesses. They were the clients. But we were the ones that had the restaurants.

Jesus, 52

Amelia Morimoto estimates that in 1980, 60.2% of the Japanese population in Peru was business owners, with restaurants making up about half of all businesses (1991: 133).

The Japanese success also had some negative consequences as one respondent commented:

The Japanese has been, before the eyes of the Peruvian, at a superior level. And because of that, I think that they have that derogatory manner of calling them *chinos*. I think that deep inside there's envy... Of course. If you're indigenous, and other people come to your country, and they're your boss... it has to bother you. Because the majority of the Japanese that are there have stores and have employees, and they're Peruvian. Then, it's logical to say "this *chino* comes from outside and is my boss? He is the one that feeds me?" So I would consider some of it jealousy.

Sara, 45

This would seem supported by the attacks on Japanese businesses during the World War II era. However true, comments such as this were largely absent from the testimonies of the respondents, which primarily focused on the positive.

While there might be some economic resentment, some JPs believed that the nature of the JPs' low profile inhibited such animosity as Marcos explained: "The Peruvian respects the Nikkei. Why? Because the Nikkei doesn't start problems with anybody. They have a low profile.... He's quiet, reserved, hard working. When they get together they have clean fun, they're not criminals, murderers". Still, the "low-profile",

however, has also translated into an image of submissiveness for JPs in which conflict is always to be avoided. Because of this, being taken advantage is of some concern for individuals in the community.

*Interviewer:* Do you know of any negative stereotypes that Japanese people may have in Peru?

*Maria:* Maybe that trustworthy stuff, they could be so trustworthy that they just become stupid... You know what I mean? ...[L]ike you're [naïve], you know... oh, you know, he's gonna believe everything that you say... I feel like my mom was totally pushed around when she had her restaurant.... It was like, "Oh, we'll pay you tomorrow". My mom had like, I don't know how many IOUs from those stupid people. She never got the money back from them, you know. I think it's just too nice, or too naïve, I don't know. They just got taken advantage of.

Maria, 39

The stereotypes of JPs, in the end, solidified into a JP image adopted both by the Japanese and the Peruvians that was worth protecting and investing in. Such an image stood in contrast to the stereotypes of the Peruvian as being that which the Japanese was not. If the JP was hard working, the Peruvian was lazy; if the Japanese was smart, the Peruvian was either stupid or ignorant. The negative stereotypes of the Peruvian were not applicable to the white elite who made up a minority of the Peruvian population, but were applicable to the indigenous and the mestizo. Thus, being considered Peruvian, for JPs was always meant to indicate assimilation to the mestizos and indigenous who were seen as inferior to the whites. This assimilation would have assumed losing the image of being hard working and honest for one in which they would be considered lazy and dishonest. From a utilitarian point of view, it would have been against the interests of JPs to be considered the same as the most oppressed ethnic groups of Peru. In this sense, it was better to be Japanese than to be Peruvian because being Peruvian for the Japanese

would have never meant being treated the same as the white elites, but as the oppressed mestizo and indigenous poor and working classes.

### *Othering Peruvians: Criollismo as an Ethnic Boundary*

One of the concepts most used by JPs to describe the difference between them and Peruvians is *criollismo*, an incredibly complex term to define. *Criollo* was the term created to refer to white Spaniards born in Peru during colonial times. It was supposed to indicate both a social position below Spanish natives in Peru, as well as a cultural degeneration from what was considered the superior and pure Spanish culture. While in its origins a negative label, with Peru winning its independence in 1821, the meaning of the term took on positive connotations that were created in opposition to the Spanish enemies, and gave rise to a Peruvian ethnic identity of which the *criollo* was a big part. In the context used by respondents, being *criollo* has a multitude of both positive and negative meanings that describe one's character and behavior.

### Criollismo as Virtue

Well, what I like is that the Peruvian is sagacious. He is a smart person in the sense that he knows how to get ahead. He is not a dumb person that stays in place waiting for things to come. He is more audacious and more, how you say, *criollo* in doing things. He knows how to do business... like, if you're alert, you can do business fast, and I think that's the Peruvian: the *criollada*, as they say. One way or another, he knows how to get things done. It seems to me that it is a positive thing, because if you really want to, you can get ahead. Using the *criollada*, as they say in Peru.

Kenji, 41

*Criollos*, are cooler... the Peruvian is more criollo, friendlier, more of a party guy. Cooler.

Marcos, 28

What is a Peruvian like? I don't know because I didn't have Peruvian friends, but the idea that one takes from like... comments you hear? Yes. That Peruvians are

*conchudos*<sup>18</sup> per say. So you come out with the idea that you're not *conchudo* because you're not Peruvian. In the end... I consider myself a Peruvian that's been *criollized*. I mean, with those little things that the Peruvian has. They always say, the Peruvian is savvy, he's like... he knows all the tricks. He wants to be *vivo*<sup>19</sup>.

Tomas, 30

Thus, *criollo* can take on positive meanings based on the ability to achieve one's goals.

From the testimonies above, we can derive that JPs understand *criollismo* as an empowering force that liberates one from timidity and social norms that may inhibit one from being successful both in social spaces as well as in business. The *criollo* derives many of her/his virtues from the street. As such, she/he is characterized by being street-wise, quick witted, having an ability to think on their feet, and not being bullied around or taken advantage of. The image of the Peruvian described by the respondents, however, is highly influenced by their geographical location in Lima as an urban center. Because of this, ideas of *criollo* do not apply to the indigenous Peruvian who is, much like the Japanese, conceptualized in opposition to *criollismo*. As such, an indigenous person coming to Lima from rural provinces might not be considered *criollo*, as they are perceived as uneducated, unintelligent, and easily taken advantage of. This is the difference that exists between the *serrano* and the *cholo*. As Quijano (1980) describes, the *serrano*, is an indigenous person (as defined in opposition to an urbanized mestizo, or *cholo*) that goes through a process of *cholification* through urbanization in which she/he not only obtains education and learns city culture, but at the same time loses her/his

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<sup>18</sup> *Conchudo* is a term used to describe a person that habitually oversteps social boundaries to get ahead. It also involves a sense of having a "tough skin" and not becoming embarrassed by one's actions.

<sup>19</sup> The adjective *vivo* derives from *vivaz*, which is loosely translated into sagacious, or audacious. In this context, it is being used to describe a person who audaciously or sagaciously tries to "get away" with things habitually.

“nobility” and innocence in the process of becoming corrupted by city life. In this sense, JPs may see themselves similarly as they may describe themselves as being too proper, timid, submissive and easily taken advantage of. An important difference is that JPs on average are relatively highly educated and have achieved relative social and economic success. These achievements, however, are rationalized as products of their hard work and intelligence (but not the street-wise kind), as opposed to their audacity and intrepidity, which are associated with the *criollo*.

Part of this *criollismo* includes the ability to be extroverted and assertive, qualities that stand in opposition of JP character of being introverted and restrained as respondents mentioned.

I think that Peruvians are a lot more extroverted. They have less prejudice. The JP is full of prejudice. He thinks he always has to be careful of what he does because of what people are going to think. Everybody knows each other. At least inside the colony, everybody knows each other. You have to be careful what you do, who you hang out with... the Peruvian is much more *conchudo*, but not in the negative way. More open to things, more open to be friends with whomever... so you do see that. We're very enclosed. That's true... I would like to [be more open]. I think that with time, I have become much more open than what I was before. I used to be super *cerrado*<sup>20</sup>.

Tomas, 30

Peruvians are happier, it could be said. More open. They can hide their feelings less. The Japanese always hide their feelings. They're more quiet, reserved. They might think something, but they won't say it. Things like that. They're always like that. I think that's how it is everywhere... [The Japanese think] Peruvians are more *conchudos*... meaning they might ask you for more favors, things like that. Japanese, not so much. That's what they say.

Roberto, 30

The Nikkei is more timid. Less likely to go out and dance. Completely boring. That part, I hate. They don't want to dance, to sing.

Dolores, 37

But I also think that the Nikkei has that bad thing. Very little courage [too shy].

Aurelio, 68

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<sup>20</sup> *Cerrado* translates into closed. In this context it is used to describe an inability to open up to Peruvians.

For many JPs, Peruvians' extroversion was a point of envy. Their expressiveness and confidence in social situations were highly admired. Instead, JPs felt that their being raised to be more reserved, quiet and introverted could be a handicap for them in social situations, as was the case that many faced when they attended college and were outside the Japanese community, an issue that will be discussed in more detail in the next section. *Criollismo*, in this positive light, characterizes one with the ability to be socially competent by being warm, open, quick-witted, street-smart, and having the ability to defend oneself from being pushed around or taken advantage of; more importantly, it includes having the intelligence, audacity and sagaciousness to get ahead as Kenji and Tomas explained. Thus, the part of being *criollo* of the Peruvian that JP admire is not only the ability be street-smart and savvy in order to get ahead, as they have come to understand that it is not enough to be (book) smart and hard-working, but also having the extroversion, assertiveness and openness necessary to make *criollismo* effective as both a tool of social interaction and economic and social advancement.

#### Criollismo as Vice

The negative views against Peruvians that JPs hold are rooted in the development of the Peruvian racial hierarchy. As Callirgos notes, racist stereotypes towards the indigenous perceive them to be servile and docile, the racism against the *cholo* includes that of being *acriollado*, threatening, aggressive and lacking respect of boundaries (Callirgos 1993: 173). For JPs, *criollismo* is a coin with two sides. Whereas JPs may find virtues in it, they simultaneously associate this concept with moral and behavioral flaws, the vices that Callirgos addresses. The same positive qualities that can be admired

of the *criollo* can be flipped with a moral switch. The extroversion and assertiveness that characterize the *criollo* can also be interpreted as rudeness or impoliteness, and the savvy and street smarts that the *criollo* uses to get ahead can be interpreted as dishonesty and trickery.

The criollismo, to me, is a person who always tries to take advantage. Lives by that. In my case, I think that I've been raised in the Japanese style of being more serious. One has to be honest. One has to work hard to get what they want. Things that should be instilled in every home, I think. But, yes. *Criollismo*, to me, has always been about taking advantage of people. And that part, I don't have it. And I don't like being around that kind of people.

Miguel, 39

The Peruvian always tries to take advantage in one way or another. A little selfish, perhaps.... The Nikkei, I always think, is not as selfish as the Peruvian.... The Japanese is more honest. More trustworthy. If you help somebody, it's not because it's going to benefit you. That's the idea that I have. Maybe it's not like that anymore, but I always thought that the Peruvian is about selfishness, *criollismo*.

Erika, 41

The Japanese is very respectful... I've always considered the Peruvian to be too fresh, too *conchudo*, unlike the Japanese. So, in that sense, I lean more to the other side. Trying not to be as shameless as the Peruvian and things like that... The Peruvian is more *conchudo*. Tries to take advantage of whatever he can. The Japanese is not like that. The Japanese, when he should take advantage, doesn't do it.

Sara, 45

For many, this view of Peruvians as people who one needed to be careful of and suspicious about, led to living in a what might be called a bubble. In this bubble, ethnicity can be defined as something based not on culture, but on the relationships one has. One respondent, Roberto, explained his experience as a JP as circumscribed by this ethnic bubble:

...A bubble. Where Spanish is definitely spoken. I mean, it was more, we would eat Peruvian food, speak Spanish, everything. Soccer was watched, arguments were had, but... there were no Peruvians. We were all slanted. Everybody was Nikkei. Like you're Peruvian, but you're Japanese-Peruvian. Because Japanese [culture]? Practically very little. Traditions? Almost nothing. What traditions were there? Very little. It was a Peruvian culture, but... It wasn't a Peruvian culture, neither... it's complicated.

Roberto, 30



Roberto is speaking of his Japanese ethnicity not as rooted in culture or character, but as a function of social circles. He sees the most important factor of ethnicity not as part of what one does or believes, but WHO things are done WITH. Ethnicity to him is more relevant to the associating with people who are Japanese, as himself.

The bubble is strongly characterized by both the number of relationships one has to people outside the Japanese community and by the nature and strength of these social bonds. Thus, many JPs might have many social ties outside the bubble, but the nature of these relationships might be completely superficial as it is the case for many entrepreneurs whose regular clients were Peruvian and with whom familiarity was established, but never to the level of an intimate friendship. At the same time, many JPs may have made very strong connections with Peruvians, yet these might have been very few in number.

Growing up in a bubble is in strong part the result of JPs' parents' decisions to protect their children from the "corruption" of *criollismo*. For children growing up, the bubble is reduced to ethnically controlled spaces, of which the home and the school were the main ones. The home is used as a shelter to the *criollismo* that one can learn or become a victim of in the neighborhood streets. Kenji was one of the respondents who grew up in a bubble and was not allowed to spend time outside in the streets:

...The way in that they didn't want us to play in the street. That we would play with *callejoneiros*<sup>21</sup>. [Parents] would say, "I don't want you to turn out like *callejoneiros*", things like that. It means, "we don't want you to turn out like a thug, learning bad behavior". You know, sometimes one hangs out in the street and learns how to steal, to do certain things. A lot of it depends on one. But always, the parents, because you're

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<sup>21</sup> The term *callejoneiros* is derived from *callejón*. As in people who lived in *callejones*, a specific type of apartment complex where poor people live.

still young, fear those problems. It was more to avoid those problems. To avoid that, they wouldn't let us out. We would mainly play inside the house with other Nikkei.

In order to further protect their kids from the dangers and vices of the street that were associated with Peruvians, many parents matriculated their children in Japanese private schools where the vast majority of students were Japanese. In fact, only three respondents who attended Japanese schools could be considered to have had lives outside the bubble. One of them did so by spending time with her Peruvian father's side of the family, and two of these made friends in their neighborhood as children. This suggests a strong relationship between a JP parent's decision to matriculate their children in a Japanese school and not allowing them to spend time on the street. Living in this bubble created problems for many of these respondents adjusting to college life as they entered new spaces in which JPs were not the majority:

... You distrust everybody. I don't know... You close yourself in. It is difficult to make friends that aren't JPs. At the end, in the university, my group ended up being four Nikkei Peruvian and one Peruvian. In the end it was the same thing. The bubble continues, we would find each other and I imagine they would try to find you, too. I think I would like to have been more open. Maybe study in a different [non-Japanese high] school. The school is good, but at least have a different circle outside of school, maybe in the neighborhood. That changes one's story completely. Because in the neighborhood, you run into everybody [of different races], and that opens your eyes. In my case, I was never in the neighborhood. I never left the house. So I didn't have that [circle]. It's something I would have liked.

Tomas, 30

If there were Nikkei, it was OK, but with Peruvians.... If there was some kind of group work, oh, man... "I hope I'm [not] in that group". It was difficult for me to make friends with people I didn't know, being that I wasn't like that. I had never been like that. But in the university, it changed me a lot.

Erika, 41

Once I graduated [high school], like, you don't have a choice, and you have to make [new] friends. But at least for me, since I had never been in that circle, certain things shocked me.... Maybe it's something that they've always put in your head about being careful, that people might take advantage of you, but it's not the same thing with Nikkei. Like, all those things you were taught, at least, it was my mom more than anything. I think that inside the school, you could leave your stuff lying around and nothing would

happen, and when you were outside, like, you would think, “I have to be careful with my wallet”. I mean... there was that sense of distrust. That was at least how I felt.

Patricia, 31

Unlike these respondents who had lived in the bubble, respondents who attended non-Japanese schools and spent time in their neighborhoods befriending Peruvians were more likely to identify as Peruvian, or at least less likely to reject Peruvian ethnicity as strongly. Maria explains how this happened for her in a private school where most students were Peruvians:

I feel like I’m Peruvian, and I don’t consider myself Japanese at all... [W]hen you grow up and you start making friends... I started hanging out with my friends from school more and then it was like I was accepted, you know. And then, I just loved it. I mean... I felt Peruvian. We would go out with my friends, and I don’t know, it was just... I don’t know when that changed, and I guess, when I was accepted by them I was like one of the cool ones in high school. Then, yeah, you know, then I realized I am Peruvian; I’m not Japanese.

Cases like Maria’s where a Peruvian identity was unwaveringly and strictly adopted were rare even among those who did not live in the bubble. A Japanese distinction from Peruvians was virtually always present. Roberto, who above, spoke of a bubble where everything done is Peruvian, but where Peruvians are not present is an example of one who considered himself Peruvian, yet had to qualify what he meant by that. While these cases like Maria’s were rare, it is worth mentioning that this is an example in which a JP had enough agency to disregard the *ethnic requirements* necessary to identify as Peruvian. Yet, most JPs’ agency was used to identify more with their Japanese heritage than their Peruvian heritage.

The othering of Peruvians previously discussed existed universally across all these interviews. Living in a bubble for the most part affected the strength or intensity of this othering behavior, not its presence or absence. This was also true for those JPs who

did not live in a bubble. Living outside the bubble made respondents' othering of Peruvians less intense, but not disappear. While a minority of respondents asserted never being directly told not to befriend Peruvians, most spoke to the fact that it was a general understanding that one could not trust Peruvians in the same way that they could trust members of the Japanese community. This understanding was derived not only from the prejudiced othering of Peruvians, but also from a sense of safety created through ethnic solidarity of the JPs in Lima. Many who attended Japanese schools spoke to this sense of safety stemming not only from a stereotype that the Japanese were more honorable and trustworthy, but also from the fact that it was rather common for JP parents to know or be familiar with the parents of other JP students as part of the Japanese community. This lived experience in the bubble created a culture shock for many once they graduated from high school and were forced to interact more closely with Peruvians. This shock created, if not highlighted, the ethnic boundaries that existed between them and Peruvians. As such, it made respondents feel less Peruvian and simultaneously closer to their Japanese backgrounds. Thus, the fear of *criollismo*, not only developed attitudes that strengthened the Japanese identity of JPs, but also led to the active creation of a very real separate social world (the bubble) in which young JPs were "protected" from *criollismo*. The ethnic boundaries being discussed here, then lead to very real social boundaries based on the JP community itself othering Peruvians.

While *criollismo* can be interpreted both positively and/or negatively, it is in fact a coherent concept based on extroversion and *conchudez*. *Conchudez* is a loose attitude towards norms of propriety as conventions that need not be taken too seriously, and

extroversion is the proactive approach that makes the bending and trespassing of such social norms possible. As JPs define their own character against the definition of *criollismo*, we might say the opposite, that propriety is a rigid attitude towards social norms as conventions that need to be taken strictly seriously, and that their introversion is simply the manifestation of such attitude.

**Table 1**  
**Oppositional Definitions of *Criollismo* and Nikkei Character  
by Positive and Negative Connotations**

CRIOLLISMO AS VIRTUES		CRIOLLISMO AS VICES	
NIKKEI (NEGATIVE)	CRIOLLO (POSITIVE)	NIKKEI (POSITIVE)	CRIOLLO (NEGATIVE)
INTROVERSION (COLD/SHY/ SUBMISSIVE/ PASSIVE)	EXTROVERSION (WARM/ CONFIDENT/ PROACTIVE)	INTROVERSION (RESPECTFUL/ POLITE)	EXTROVERSION (OVERBEARING/ RUDE/ DISRESPECTFUL/ CONFLICTIVE)
PROPRIETY (MEEK/NAIVE/ INNOCENT)	CONCHUDEZ (INTREPID/SAVVY/ STREETSMART)	PROPRIETY (POLITE/HONEST)	CONCHUDEZ (SHAMELESS/ DISHONEST)

As JPs interpret *criollismo* either positively or negatively, they simultaneously define their own character. Thus, when JPs define *criollismo* positively, they simultaneously define Nikkei character negatively. Whereas the extroversion in the *criollo* characterizes Peruvians positively as being warm, confident and proactive, the introversion of the Nikkei characterizes the Japanese negatively as being cold, shy, submissive, and passive. At the same time, whereas the *conchudez* of Peruvians characterizes them positively as being intrepid, savvy, and street-smart, the propriety of the Japanese characterizes them negatively as being meek, naïve and innocent. Conversely, JPs that define *criollismo* negatively, simultaneously define Nikkei character

positively. Thus, whereas the introversion of the Nikkei characterizes them as respectful and polite, the extroversion of the Peruvian characterizes them as overbearing, disrespectful, and conflictive. At the same time, whereas the propriety of the Nikkei characterizes them as honest and polite, the *conchudez* of the Peruvians characterizes them as shameless and dishonest. However, it is important to note that although there are JPs that strictly define *criollismo* as either positive or negative, most of them fall somewhere in between.

Whether JPs interpret *criollismo* positively or negatively is secondary to the fact that they are actively involved in the process of othering. By defining *criollismo* as something to be admired or condemned, they place this quality at an ethnic distance from the center that is their Japanese identity. Thus, *criollismo* itself may be qualified as a marking ethnic boundary based not on traditions, culture, or race, but simply as a formulated notion of otherness as Barth (1969) would suggest.

The othering of Peruvians that Nikkei engage in based on the negative notions of *criollismo* is probably a result not only of JPs adopting the Peruvian notions of racism against the *cholo*, but also a result of grouping for the purposes of ethnic solidarity and security as well as of a history of anti-Japanese discrimination that includes taking advantage of the “naïve *chino*”. This ethnic othering has materialized by the creation of their own educational, economic, and social institutions, which added to the JPs’ image of prestige, propriety and foreignness an aspect of being enclosed and separated from the Peruvian community.

### *Summation on Identity and Agency in Peru*

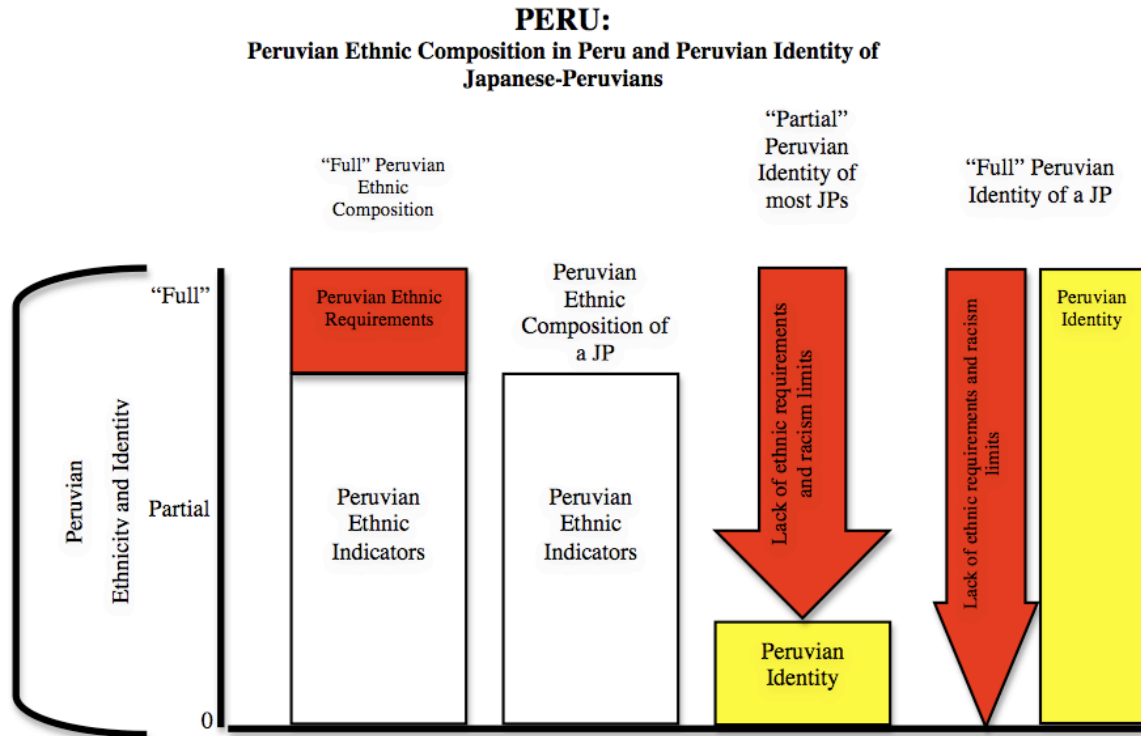
The JP community is actively involved in maintaining an ethnic boundary between themselves and the general Peruvian populations because JPs own an image of relatively high social and class status in comparison to the majority of Peruvians (i.e. the indigenous, mestizos and blacks), which is worth protecting and maintaining as it provides them a relatively high amount of privilege in Peruvian society. This functions as a reason to become highly invested in their Japanese identity.

Also, the negative stereotypes related to *criollismo* created historically by the white Peruvian elite create an impetus for JPs to distance themselves from Peruvian ethnicity. As such, JPs contribute to the strengthening of the ethnic boundaries drawn between themselves and Peruvians along the lines of *criollismo*. Many JP families raise their children in a bubble where interaction with Peruvians is severely limited. This is done from fear of *criollismo* and to strengthen their internal ethnic solidarity. This, furthermore, solidifies the ethnic boundaries between themselves and Peruvians. As JP teenagers must face the world outside of that bubble when they enter college, whatever cultural differences are encountered with Peruvians are magnified, and along with the pre-existing reservations against *criollismo*, it becomes difficult to interact with Peruvians, thereby reinforcing ethnic boundaries.

## Stacked Bar Model in Peru

*Peruvian Ethnic Composition in Peru and Peruvian Identity of Japanese-Peruvians*

**Figure 3.1**



The first step of the SBM is a bar graph that juxtaposes the ethnic composition of what is considered to be “Full” Peruvian Ethnicity to a JPs’ Peruvian ethnic composition. It is important at this point to remember that ethnic compositions are being treated as sets of ethnic traits that determine one’s inclusion or exclusion from a national ethnicity; in this case, Peruvian. On the left, the bar representing the social construction of “full” Peruvian ethnic composition is made up of two ideal types of ethnic traits, the *national ethnic requirements* (+N,-S) represented in red (e.g. speaking Spanish, having an acceptable Peruvian phenotype) and the *ethnic indicators* (-N,-S) represented in white



(e.g. being Catholic, dancing salsa). When we juxtapose this to a JPs' Peruvian ethnic composition, we can visualize how it can only be partial, as it does not include an *ethnic requirements* section. This represents JPs' Peruvian ethnic composition as lacking the *ethnic requirement* of possessing an acceptable Peruvian phenotype. Although JPs in Peru possess as many *ethnic indicators* (-N,-S) as other Peruvians, as they spend their lives eating Peruvian food, going to Catholic Church, watching Peruvian soccer, etc., Peruvian society has subjectively determined that JPs (and other Asians) simply do not have a Peruvian phenotype, making their Peruvian ethnic composition “partial” or “incomplete” as this is a Peruvian *ethnic requirement*. I find it necessary at this point to clarify that the SBM does not view JPs as “less” Peruvian than other Peruvians; instead, it tries to display how Peruvian society *itself* understands JPs to be “less” Peruvian. These requirements are coded in red to represent the “stop” or “limit” function of *ethnic requirements*.

The third bar shows the Peruvian identity of most JPs. At this point it is understood that JPs' Peruvian ethnic composition faces limits in Peru. The mechanisms by which these limits are communicated to JPs can be drawn from our data. Japanese-Peruvians face the alienating racial term *chino* on an everyday basis; there is a history of anti-Japanese racism beginning with their migration, peaking during World War II, and peaking again during Fujimori's presidential candidacy. The red arrow that pushes down on JPs' Peruvian identity represents these mechanisms by which their status outside of Peruvian national ethnic boundaries are communicated. The result of this is the low levels of identification as Peruvians that most JPs' expressed in the interviews. The last

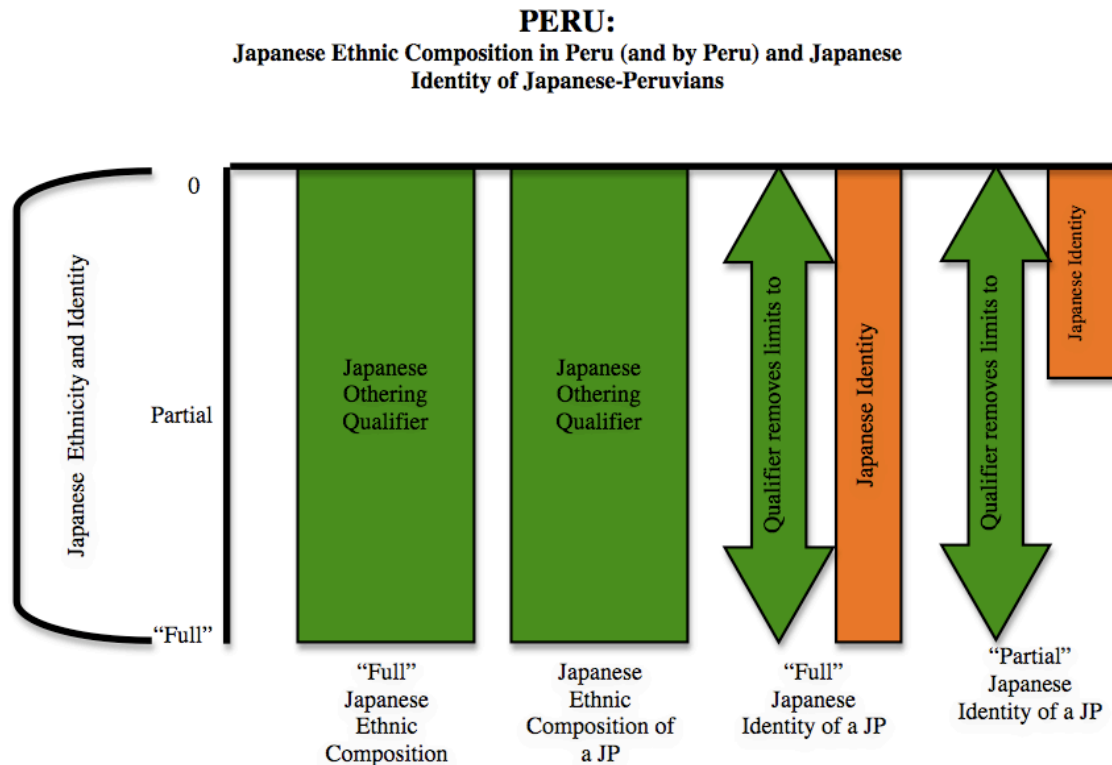
bar on the right represents the Peruvian identity of a JP who identified her/himself completely as Peruvian.

Ethnic identity is treated as subjective by the SBM in that the individual arbitrarily decides it. It is not determined by the functions of the ethnic traits defined by the construction of a “full” national ethnicity. Thus, the red arrow (racism communicating *ethnic requirements*) pushing down on a JPs’ ethnic identity carries incredible force but is not absolute. Here it may become clear to the reader why the SBM treats ethnic compositions as objective and identity as subjective.

Some JPs identify as Peruvian, and they may or may not be aware that the society in general does not consider them Peruvian. Identity in this sense is subjective. Conversely, a JPs’ self-identification as Peruvian is not enough to have Peruvian society consider them Peruvian due to their lack of a “Peruvian” phenotype. In this sense, their Peruvian ethnic composition is objective as it has been predetermined by Peruvian society.

*Japanese Ethnic Composition in Peru (and by Peru) and Japanese Identity of Japanese-Peruvians*

**Figure 3.2**



It is important at this point to make note that while this graph discusses Japanese ethnicity, it does so from the point of view of Peruvian society. It answers the questions, what do Peruvians think is Japanese in Peru? And, whom do Peruvians consider Japanese in Peru? This parallels the social construction of Peruvian ethnicity, which basically answers the question, who do Peruvians think is Peruvian in Peru? As such, the SBM, in its journey to explain how ethnic boundaries are created, prioritizes those who hold the most power to create such boundaries. In this sense, the model is less concerned with

how minority groups create and retain their own ethnicities, and more concerned with how they navigate the restrictions and categorizations placed upon them by the powerful.

The bar graph representing the construction of “Full” Japanese ethnic composition in Peru is governed by an *othering ethnic qualifier* (-N,+S). The particular ethnic trait at hand is having a Japanese phenotype. Here, the nature of a Japanese phenotype is sufficient (+S) to qualify one as Japanese, and it is enough to other a JP as such. In other words, the facts that JPs were not born in Japan, do not speak Japanese, and do not act Japanese, are irrelevant to Peruvians as they construct Japanese ethnicity (i.e. how these ethnic traits are taken into consideration by Japanese society in deciding who is Japanese). A Japanese phenotype is *sufficient* because it is enough to categorize someone as Japanese in Peru.

Using a Japanese phenotype as an *ethnic othering qualifier*, Peruvians do not necessarily truly think that JPs are completely Japanese (although some might). Instead, they consider their lacking of other Japanese ethnic traits as irrelevant. In other words, JPs’ qualification as Japanese in the eyes of Peruvian society is reduced to the mentality that “if someone looks Japanese, then they must be”.

Juxtaposed to the Peruvian construction of Japanese ethnicity is the Japanese ethnic composition of a JP. Both bars reach the “full” Japanese ethnicity level to reflect the *sufficient* nature of the *othering ethnic qualifier* (-N,+S). Since the Peruvian host society defines “full” Japanese ethnicity as depending on one’s Japanese phenotype, the JPs who have this phenotype must all be considered to possess “full” Japanese ethnicity. The two bar graphs reaching the same level represents this relationship.

The third bar shows us the “full” Japanese identity of some JPs. Because most JPs in Peru identify as Japanese, this bar is shown to reach the “full” extent of Japanese ethnicity. Again, we must keep in mind that identities are subjective, and in reality most JPs in Peru know very little about Japanese history, language and customs. Yet, this is largely irrelevant in Peru, where there are very little restrictions on how much a JP can identify as Japanese. *Othering ethnic qualifiers* (-N,+S), which govern Japanese ethnicity in Peru are *sufficient* (+S) in nature, and are not concerned with limits or restrictions (-N). The use of *othering ethnic qualifiers* is indifferent by nature to the actual identification of those being othered. In the case of JPs, Peruvian society holds no investment in limiting how much JPs identify as Japanese. The characteristic of *othering ethnic qualifiers*, then, can be thought of as an ethnic range or field in which one may situate oneself wherever one desires because there are no limits. Because of this, the nature of the *othering ethnic qualifiers* is graphed as a double-headed arrow that allows the Japanese ethnic identity of JPs much mobility. This double-headed arrow also allows JPs to identify only “partially” as Japanese as is shown in the last bar. Thus, JPs can identify strongly with Japan or not at all, but this is irrelevant to Peruvian society, which has already othered them as Japanese in a process that does not take into consideration JPs’ actual self-identification.

The data on JPs’ Japanese identity in Peru shows that JPs are highly invested in their Japanese ethnicity and identity. They reap the privileges of being both a model-minority and middle-class minority over a large segment of the population that is mestizo and indigenous. Peruvians perceive JPs to have a very strong, positive image that largely

benefits them in the worlds of business and employment. They are perceived as honest, smart and hard working. This makes it completely logical from a purely rational choice (cost-benefit) perspective that JPs would choose to identify as Japanese. At the same time, JPs perceive themselves to be different than Peruvians along the boundary lines of *criollismo*. While some see the positive angle of *criollismo*, their final conclusion is the same as those who see the negative angle of *criollismo*, that it is a Peruvian trait, and that the Japanese are different from that. Some would like to be more *criollo*, but understand themselves not to be as they have been “raised Japanese”. In the end, even those who see the positive sides of *criollismo* fear its negative sides, leading to families raising their children in an ethnic bubble to be protected from such *criollismo*, but this results in many of the JP teenagers bursting out of that bubble as they enter college and the job market with undeveloped social skills necessary to fully adapt to a Peruvian world. All these factors contribute to the high levels of Japanese identity found in the respondents’ testimonies.

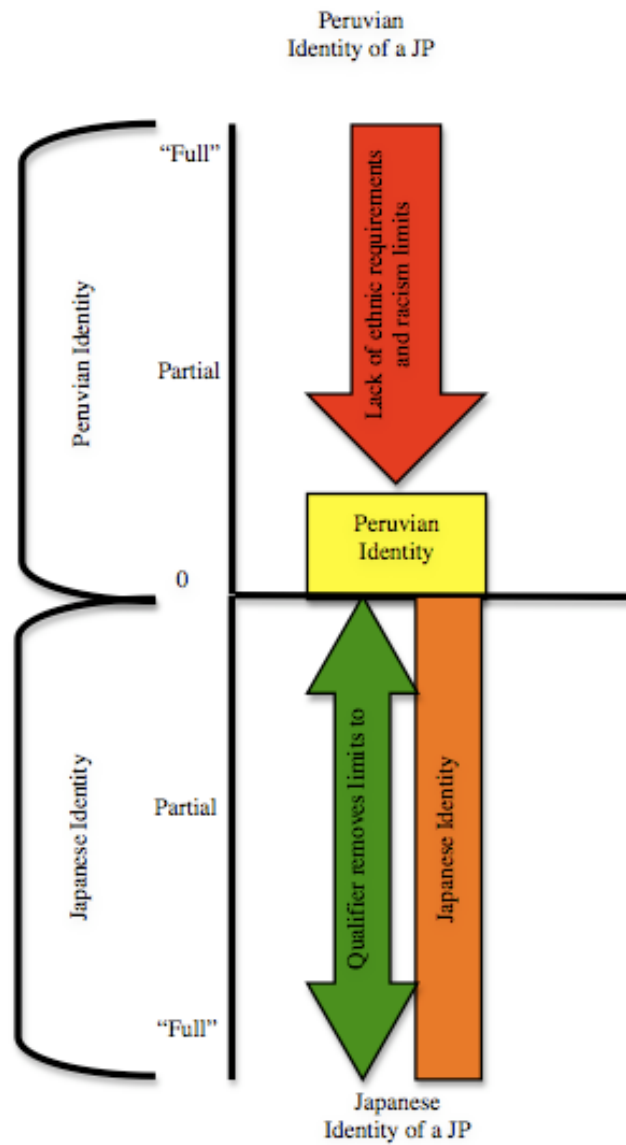
Yet, the important thing to be drawn from this section is the nature of *ethnic othering qualifiers* of categorizing minorities as “others” without much regard to the levels at which these “others” identify with the category they are placed in. This does not quite force them to identify as such, but gives them the freedom to do so, and JPs do so to a very high level. The absence of *ethnic requirements* on their Japanese identity completely facilitates this.

*Coalescing the Stacked Bar Model of Japanese-Peruvians in Peru*

The next step in the SBM compares the Peruvian identity with Japanese identity of JPs.

**Figure 3.3**

**PERU:**  
Peruvian and Japanese Identities of Japanese-Peruvians in Peru



This SBM shows how requirements and qualifiers govern JPs' two identities, Peruvian and Japanese, respectively. The Peruvian identity of a JP is governed by Peruvian *ethnic requirements* (+N,-S) that function to limit or restrict JPs' Peruvian identity in Peru. The red arrow represents this. The Japanese identity of JPs is governed by Japanese *othering qualifiers* (-N,+S) that remove limits to the identity and allow it to grow with relative freedom. The double-headed green arrow represents this. Thus, for JPs in Peru, it is difficult to identify as Peruvian given that their being othered is constantly communicated through racism and the label *chino*. These pressures (the red arrow) push down and limit growth of JPs' Peruvian identity. However, their Japanese identity knows no bounds as an *othering qualifier* governs it. Japanese-Peruvians can identify very strongly as Japanese in Peru, and this identity is rarely denied.

These dynamics shape the identity of the JP community in Peru to be strongly Japanese. However, taking into consideration that ethnic boundaries are subjectively drawn by different societies, we should not assume that such identity remains intact. As JP's migrate to Japan, the changes in the racial structure and the racial formation of this new country affected JPs' ethnic identification quite significantly.



## CHAPTER 4: JAPAN

Of the 40 participants in this study, fourteen lived in Japan for a significant amount of time. The shortest period of time lived in Japan by a respondent was two years and the longest was eighteen. Four of these respondents traveled to Japan as children (under the age of 18) and ten traveled as workers. Although the sample is rather small regarding experiences in Japan, the experiences communicated in the interviews find validity in the already existing literature of JP return migrants in Japan. The main themes emerging from the respondents' narratives are reflected in most of the studies of not only JPs in Japan, but also of Japanese-Brazilian in Japan, which has been the group most studied in the subject of Nikkei return migrants.

### **Racism in Japan**

#### *Gaijin*

The most prominent theme across the stories of all JPs in Japan was the social status of *gaijin*. As one respondent explained, "You get to Japan and they treat you like a foreigner. They call you *gaijin*. It means a person from the outside. *Gai* means outside, and *jin* means person". The status of *gaijin* was unavoidable to every respondent upon arriving to Japan without speaking Japanese nor having a strong handle on Japanese culture. Despite being racially Japanese, most JPs found it impossible to become ethnically invisible due to many factors, as another JP reported:

When you have a foreign name, it is written differently<sup>22</sup>.... When you write things that are foreign, you use *katakana*. So right there, they know that you are a foreigner.

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<sup>22</sup> The Japanese writing system offers a *Hiragana* alphabet made up of characters used for the traditional Japanese language. Foreign words and names are written using characters from the *katakana* alphabet.

Sometimes, [they treat you differently]. Sometimes when we went to buy something somewhere, as long as we didn't speak, it was ok. When we started speaking Spanish, they'd be right behind you because they thought you would steal something.

Jorge, 34

However, these easily discernible foreign cultural differences such as language and names are not the only ways in which JPs stand out in Japanese society. Much more subtle cultural differences are also easily noticed as another JPs narrated:

*Interviewer:* But if you are from the same race, how do they know that you are not Japanese?

*Roberto:* Because you dress different. You don't walk the same.

*Interviewer:* So, if you saw a Japanese-Peruvian, you could identify him without hearing him speak Spanish?

*Roberto:* Yes, of course. By everything... I mean, they know, and you know. You look at them from behind and [you know] they're from a different country. In the end... they walk differently.

Roberto, 30

Identifying JPs in Japanese society can be easier than one might imagine. Takeyuki Tsuda (2003a) opens his book on Brazilian Nikkei in Japan describing riding the train and noticing these “not quite” Japanese train commuters:

Compared to those who preceded them, these Japanese appear quite different. Their demeanor is casual and leisurely. Two of them are dressed in shirts of bright, mixed colors and jeans with a stripe down the seam. The third wears a T-shirt that says **Brasil**. They continue their conversation speaking loudly in Portuguese...

Instantly, the three men become the objects of peculiar glances from the surrounding Japanese... Two Japanese women sitting beside me turn their eyes away from the men and look at each other. They exchange one word.

“*Gaijin* (foreigners)”. (Tsuda 2003a: ix)

Latin American *dekasegi*, including Peruvian ones, always face the possibility of being identified as *gaijin* whether they try to hide their ethnicity or not. This *gaijin* label was central to the redefining of JPs' identity. While the respondents provided several different forms in which they experienced racism, their particular focus on *gaijin*

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This fact makes Japanese-Peruvians easily distinguishable in settings such schools, work, government agencies, etc. where paper work is involved.

provides a reflection of Yoshino's (1992) understanding of Japanese ethnicity as one focused on the majority's uniqueness or difference as opposed to defining the "other".

While every respondent had at one point experienced the power of the *gaijin* label, one respondent's explanation was especially powerful; from Dolores' interview:

[I identified] as a Peruvian. Not as Japanese-Peruvian. More as a foreigner. I was *gaijin*. *Gaijin* are all the foreigners, which for them it's all the same. For them, it's not that you're Peruvian, Chilean. They don't identify who is Peruvian, Brazilian. For them it's all the same. Thai, Chinese, we are all in the same group. [You are either] Japanese or *gaijin*. Over there it doesn't mean anything to be Peruvian. I mean, it's not going to make a difference. So, I think that I have always been considered *gaijin*, and I remained a foreigner.... Because the Japanese, in that sense, even if your eyes are slanted, you are always going to be a foreigner. You might be Japanese-Peruvian, but you're a foreigner. The Japanese person is pure. Japan does not consider you Nikkei for having the two [Japanese] last names. They consider you a foreigner. [It affected my identity]... because over there you're simply a foreigner. You're not Nikkei, you're not half and half, nothing like that. You're not even someone with a [Japanese] last name.

Dolores, 37, Japanese and Peruvian descent

*Gaijin*, as a label, functions as a homogenizing term for that which is not Japanese, and this function is relatively coherent with scholars' understanding of the Japanese myth of homogeneity regarding its national identity. The nature of the myth of homogeneity places the focus of race and ethnic relations not on the other, but on the subject performing the othering (i.e. Japan and the Japanese). Therefore, in the case of JPs, in the eyes of the Japanese natives it is less important that JPs come from Peru, and more important that they were not born in Japan. Simultaneously, it is less important that they act Peruvian and speak Spanish than it is that they do not act Japanese and do not speak Japanese.

#### *Ethnicity and Racism at Work*

Japanese-Peruvians had, for the most part, traveled to Japan as *dekasegi*, sojourners without the intention of permanently settling in Japan. Their goals were to

work in Japan, to save money, come back to Peru and use that money to either finish their education or to start businesses. This very fact was important in JPs' recognition of the economic disparities between themselves and Japanese workers at the same factories in which they worked. In addition to this, JPs' understanding of their own economic situation had been based on a comparison to their families in Peru, not to the Japanese in Japan. Because of this, JPs' narratives on racism at work focused more on the disparaging treatment they were subjected to as immigrant employees and less on issues of monetary compensation. Take for example Roberto's understanding of pay differentials between immigrant workers and native Japanese workers in the same factory he worked in:

I think [the Japanese] get paid more. The Japanese come in as direct employees. They are called *shain* in Japan, and the foreigners are *arubai*. *Arubai* is everything that might be like part-time. So, it's like there are employees that are employed directly by the factory, they are called *shain*. So there are workers employed directly by the factory and they get more money, like a salary, and *arubai*... were part-timers, and they were paid by the hour.

Roberto, 30

While Roberto recognized that there was a pay differential between immigrants and native workers, he never discussed this issue at length. When talking about money, his focus was on saving and moving back to Peru, and when talking about discrimination, it focused more on mistreatment. Thus, for Roberto, the pay differentials were not invisible, but their relevance to his understanding of racism did not figure strongly in his narrative of experienced racism. Instead, the respondents' narratives complaining about racism at work focused on the disparaging treatment.

The treatment that the Japanese have with the foreigners is somewhat like the way we treated the *cholitos* in Peru... Although, at least, the experience that we had in our house in Peru, my mom and my dad... always with the employees... we had two employees, it was always "please, can you..." and "thank you". With respect. In Japan, for being a

worker, ...it was the way they talked to you. It was very bossy and rude. And it was not only me, but to the whole group that were there. We were all *gaijin*. It made us feel like mice.

Miranda, 55

This sense of inferiority resulting from the treatment faced at work was rather prevalent through most JPs' experience as laborers in Japan. Angel provides a more descriptive and detailed example of how he experienced this, and how he was affected by it:

Eventually, you start trying to be part of the community you live at, but you see people looking at you like, "how come you look Japanese, but you don't speak Japanese?"... and that made me feel bad. It was frustration more than anything else. "I would like to kick your butt right now, and I would like to tell you that I have a Japanese passport", but uhhh... I didn't have the means to tell them that. ...They used to call me *omai*, which is like saying "you". Meaning "you", but it's disrespectful. So this guy who was supposed to be my immediate boss kept calling me *omai*, with this derogative tone to it. It's like saying "boy". I just grabbed him, pushed him against the wall, "My name is Angel! I'm not *omai*". So that got me in trouble. All the supervisors are talking to my auntie, "You better watch out for your nephew, he's like...". Well, I'm trying my best, and for you to... I don't know... maybe I took it out of context. I just reacted.... I don't pick up fights like that. I'm not an aggressive person. I don't know how it got me. They make you feel like you're inferior, that they can use you for whatever, to wipe their butts, but I'm thinking, "I went to school. I may not be able to speak Japanese, but I'm not stupid. So don't get it wrong, please. Right? And on top of that, I think I can kick your butt". And I don't know. Eventually I learned a little bit of Japanese, so I got a little bit of consideration. After that, the bubble burst in Japan. Work got more scarce, so then... they go, "We promised you the bonuses last year but we're not gonna be able to give it to you". I go like, "No, no, no. You promised us the bonus. That's why we worked and we didn't miss a day. That's why we worked overtime when you guys asked us". I don't know how they said it. [Maybe,] "Well, you know...you gotta understand the economy is bad". I didn't understand too well, and it was like, "No". They were trying to force me to sign a new contract. I was like, "No. I already signed this contract, so you guys follow it". And my brother asked me why I was trying to create problems? He was getting mad at me. I thought it was bullshit. He said, "Why do you have to complain, they're giving you a job". He was more Japanese back then. He was more assimilated into their customs. You say "Yes, yes," to whatever. He was pissed at me. "Why are you reacting that way?" I said, "Fuck that shit. I'm not gonna sign it".

Angel, 36

Angel's case provides a multidimensional example of discrimination at the work place. First, he is very aware of the discriminatory treatment through the use of labels such as *omai*, and second, he understands that he is being taken advantage of because of his ethnicity by being forced to sign a new contract that was unfavorable to him.

Furthermore, it is important to notice the distancing he is actively involved in by comparing himself to his brother whom he sees as “more Japanese” and complacent. His view and his brother’s view of the appropriate solution to the situation were diametrically opposed to each other. Pinpointing these differences in views is rather important as JPs were less likely to complain about issues of pay and compensation in the interviews, but more likely to complain about the lifestyle differences that were demanded of them in a Japanese society. Japanese-Peruvians were also more likely to complain about their inability to have anything resembling a real life due to the long work hours demanded by their employers. They were more likely to complain about their transformation from human beings to automatons in the Japanese factories.

Most JPs in this study had lived in Japan at a time in which their labor was severely needed by the Japanese economy, and finding work was too difficult. Being hired by a company often depended on the workers’ willingness to work overtime (and at times on their agreeing to work mandatory overtime in their contracts). As Japan’s economy has slowed down, the first to have their hours and benefits cut or be laid off have been immigrant workers. This has made the ethnic distinctions along economic factors at work increasingly salient in contemporary Japan.

### *Racism at School*

Four respondents in this entire study migrated to Japan before adulthood with their job-seeking parents and experienced racism and isolation in school settings. Their experiences are strikingly similar to each other regardless of the age at which they migrated, and were arguably quite severe given the fact that falling victim to anti-

immigrant youth violence in schools was an omnipresent danger. In addition, as children, these migrants lacked the psychological defense mechanisms that their parents had already developed, and this produced rather traumatic experiences for them. Take Jorge's example, "As an adult, you can take that [mis]treatment. It's like you can think about it more. You have grown up. But as a kid, like something affects you, and you grow up with resentment. For that resentment to disappear, a lot of time has to pass".

The norms and expectations of a school setting differ greatly from that of a work setting for JPs in Japan. Bullying and violence are expected parts of the student experience. When this bullying and violence of the school setting are contextualized in the Japanese racial structure, of which the myth of homogeneity is a strong pillar, the result becomes a bullying that is both rooted in and intensified by the racial and ethnic prejudice of the larger Japanese society directed towards immigrant students.

*Ijime* is part of the culture of school. It's like they say... bully... bullying is part of the culture in the school. There's always that. And for that, the kids in that time... easy target. Easy target. I'm a foreigner. I'm the minority. Easy target. And then for a time they wanted to get me, but no. I learned something from my friends that taught me how to throw rocks. The *criollismo*, so then, it stopped. But yeah, I fought a lot.

Cristobal, 29, Japanese, Chinese and Peruvian descent

And Japan is hard. Because over there, there's a lot of racism. They marginalize you a lot. They treat you bad. And for the simple fact that you're not Japanese, they treat you bad. And you get into fights. They marginalize you. They insult you. They hit you. Many things.... I fought many times. Afterwards, we stayed there until I finished grammar school. In Japan, I did have a hard time when I first got there. To learn Japanese. I learned it fast, but it didn't take away the fact that they were racist. That you learn Japanese to perfection doesn't mean you stop being Peruvian [to them].... "It's so cruel", I used to say. I cried. I got angry. But you would get used to it. You become stronger.... You would fight. Over there, there's no man or woman. It's the same. You fight. You fight.

Beatriz, 28

Needless to say, such treatment is accompanied by ostracizing:

I mean, that's where I felt the racism, because in Peru I never felt those things. To be separated from people, or to be in the same classroom, but that nobody would talk to you,

no. That was shocking.... They would tell you, "Go back to your country".... There was a time when us six [cousins] separated ourselves from them and it was always [just] us.

Jorge, 34

Such ostracizing could be so strong that many desired to (and some did) change schools or stopped studying. Claudia spoke of her younger brother's case, "My brother, the last one... they put him with the little kids. He didn't want to study because they picked on him, the kids. They insulted him. He didn't like it, so he didn't study". Kenji recounts trying to explain to his daughter why she was being picked on in school:

Well, when she was younger... she felt very Japanese. "No, dad. I was born in Japan. I'm Japanese". I would say to her, "You were born in Japan. You should be Japanese, but your papers say that you are Peruvian. That you were born in Japan does not make you Japanese". [The other kids] called her foreigner in school. [They knew] because when you enroll in school in Japan, you fill out paperwork where it says what your first language is. So that was Spanish for her. Because at home, she first spoke Spanish. The first thing we spoke to her was Spanish. When you fill out the paperwork you have to put where you're from, and what's your first language. Spanish.... She didn't know any Japanese, and the girls would call her, "foreigner, foreigner". We would tell her to stay strong and not pay attention to them, to keep going forward.... [It was hard for us], we didn't know if to stay in Japan or go to back to Peru.

Kenji, 41

### *Racism and Identity*

Most JPs who migrated back to Japan to work thought of themselves as Japanese in Peru. Yet, the way in which they were perceived and treated in Japan changed many JPs' identities. This is because identity is constantly in flux, and this is affected by the way in which others perceive one. Scott Brooks explains,

One's identity, then, is not simply what she or he claims but, more to the point, what others claim it to be. In this way, an individual does not have a single identity but at least as many identities as the number of groups to which he or she is a member. How a person is seen by others has real implications for social relations; people act toward others based upon an interpretive process that determines meaning and prescriptions for action. Still, identity is not static; it is in a state of flux to be worked out through one's social interaction with others. (2004: 80)



Whether at work, school, or in the community, the mistreatment that JPs receive from the native Japanese universally affected the identities of all respondents in this study. While each respondent spoke of this effect differently, respondents were mostly consistent in their new understanding of Japaneseness and their awareness of their exclusion from such group. The nature and power of the status of *gaijin* made it quite clear to JPs that regardless of what ethnicity they had conceived themselves to be in Peru, such claims lacked any validity in Japan. In Japan, the Japanese were Japanese through a combination of factors that included race, culture, and nation that had to be infallibly congruent with each other. Japanese-Peruvians, by virtue of being Peruvian, were by definition not Japanese. Having experienced this ethnic roadblock to their preconceived Japanese identities, JPs were forced to react and reconfigure their ethnic identities. While such reconfiguration led some to identify more strongly with their Peruvian ethnicity and others to simply reject Japanese identity, it always started with the processing of othering the Japanese culture, people, and society that had rejected them.

Beatriz's case above, where she had to fight bullies at school and endure the labeling of *gaijin* illustrates how difficult it is to be accepted as Japanese. Beatriz's attempts to assimilate and become Japanese were in vain. They did not make her "less Peruvian" after all. The fact that she was born in Peru was a Peruvian *othering qualifier* (–N,+S) ethnic trait that relegated her to "full" Peruvian ethnicity by Japanese society. These changes in the social construction of ethnicities led many JPs to reconfigure their ethnic identities as they migrated.

Miranda, the 55-year-old woman born in Peru of Japanese descent traveled to Japan as a worker. She discusses the effects that racism in Japan has on her ethnic identity:

...and then when I went to Japan... [identity] changes because I felt Peruvian. Because that is how the Japanese made me feel. I was *gaijin*... that was a very strong word. You feel it strongly. I think that many [JPs] that live in Japan feel that way. At least my friends I knew over there felt like that. They felt like foreigners in the land of their grandparents, or their parents.

With the migration to Japan, there is a shift in ethnic identities from Japanese to Peruvian in the case of many JPs.

#### *Identity of Non-Migrants Affected by the Dekasegi Experience*

The experience of the JP *dekasegi* does not only affect the ethnic identity of the migrants themselves but also of the JP community in Peru as well. Those who migrated left parents, children, and friends in Peru, and through communication with them, the community in Peru quickly learned of the realities of racism in Japan. By living the *dekasegi* experience vicariously through these relationships, those in Peru began to reformulate their own identities in accordance with this new information. Sara and Tomas speak to what they have heard about the JPs' experience in Japan:

I heard that the Japanese are very racist with their own people and that they are considered third class citizens. They Japanese are not considerate of the Sanseis that are working over there. They are not considered Japanese working there.... Over there, you'll never be considered one of them. [I heard] that the Japanese is very proud of having been born [in Japan]. That's what I used to hear. I don't know if even now is like that, but I heard that before.... If you go to Japan, you are not Japanese, and if you go to Peru, you're not Peruvian.

Sara, 45

They are simply considered one more foreigner that goes to Japan with the end of money to work and that they are treated bad. I mean, the treatment that the Japanese give you... the Japanese in Japan is very bad. "You suffer too much," is the thing that I've been told from things that other people have lived. Now, I've been talking to someone that said that life in Japan as a Peruvian, well, you don't have a life. You don't have a future. So you go to work and save a lot of money. I mean, staying there forever is not what you

want. The Japanese treat you like a *cholito*. As a worker, you do what you have to do and that's it. There is no special treatment or anything like that. You are one more foreigner. [You are] exactly the same [as the foreigners]. You are one more worker; one more worker and that's it.

Tomas, 30

Thus, while the *dekasegi* began to learn that they were not accepted as Japanese in Japan, many in Peru began to understand that they were not as Japanese as they once thought, and just like with the *dekasegi*, a process of othering the Japanese begins for those back in Peru:

*Interviewer:* Have you been told what Japan is like and how [JPs] are treated?

*Marcos:* ...To the Japanese, even if you are Nikkei, you are not Japanese. You are an immigrant. Yes. You are not Japanese even if both your last names are Japanese. You are not Japanese.

*Interviewer:* How did you react?

*Marcos:* I couldn't believe it. [I thought], "Japanese pieces of shit".

*Interviewer:* It made you upset.

*Marcos:* Yes. They do have the right because it is true. You are [not] Japanese. Your grandparents, yes, but you are not. But don't come to me with that stuff. "You are not [Japanese]". It pissed me off.

Marcos, 28

Ultimately, this leads to the reconfiguration of what it means to be Japanese for those in Peru.

*Tomas:* In the end, you realize that... maybe it affects you.... It's not going to help you. In Japan, it's not going to help you, the fact that your eyes are slanted. It changes you. It makes you think that you are more Peruvian than Japanese. I think that the people who have lived there and that have been treated in such manner, in the end come back saying, "I am Peruvian. I am not Japanese. I'm more Peruvian and that's it. The last thing that I have of being Japanese is my last name and period."

*Interviewer:* Do you think that that experience of the *dekasegi* affects the JPs who never went to Japan?

*Tomas:* Yes. Because when they come back and they tell you that experience, what I think is that the only way I go to Japan is to make money. That's it. Not to live over there. I go with a mentality that whatever happens, I'm not going to let it affect me. Simply, I go with the purpose of working, work like shit, get my money and come back. Period.

Tomas, 30

The image of pride regarding what Japan stands for begins to break down for many JPs like Tomas. To a certain degree, Japan ceases to be an ethnic homeland, and becomes

primarily an economic option. The connection that JPs once had to Japan is blurred by the resentment towards a Japanese society that reduces JPs to their economic labor value. In this sense, the understanding of the *dekasegi* situation by both the Japanese and the JPs is quite consistent – the relationship of *dekasegi* to Japan is not cultural, or racial, but solely economic. Japanese society reduces JP individuals to labor, and JPs begin to reduce Japan to capital providing employment.

#### *Summation on Racism in Japan*

Racism in Japan is heavily focused on the concept of *gaijin*. This concept is applied to all foreigners and their descendants. Japanese-Peruvians, having been born in Peru, are considered *gaijin*, and so are their children. In the process of othering, this label focuses more on describing the “us”, than it does the other. As such, it relies heavily on the logic of Japanese *ethnic requirements*, without putting too much focus on labeling the “other” in relation to itself (as non-Japanese natives), as opposed to the “other’s” national/cultural background. The racism that JPs experience at work, school, and the community is strong enough to deny JPs any sense of truly belonging to a Japanese heritage. No respondent who had lived in Japan reported being able to identify themselves with modern Japanese society. For most, this resulted on their identities shifting towards a Peruvian one. As experiences of JPs in Japan are communicated to JPs in Peru, the latter’s understanding of their own Japanese identity begins to change. Learning that their claim to Japanese identity is not legitimate in Japan requires a reformulation of their own Japanese identity.

## **Agency – Developing a Peruvian Identity**

Japanese-Peruvians are placed in the very particular position that balances itself along the boundaries separating the outside of Japan from its inside. As a country, nation, race, and culture, Japanese consciousness breathes the airs of a homogeneous myth with a fragrance of ethnic purity that conceals a repugnant fact: Japanese culture is not the byproduct of Japanese blood. It was not only the Japanese natives who believed this myth, but many, if not most JPs in Peru had unquestioningly believed this as well. The idea that a Japanese way of being is rooted in Japanese genes was believed both in Peru and Japan until the *dekasegi* phenomenon, whereupon contact, JP return migrants and Japanese natives simultaneously realized their cultural differences. It would not be a stretch to state that Japanese culture and character are strongly believed to be (somehow) derived from one's body, anatomy, and DNA. In Japan, this was easily believed since there was no point of comparison until the last 20 years, and in Peru, this was also easily believed, but for a different reason. Peruvians and JPs in Peru both attributed Japan's economic success in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to something inherently Japanese. The success of Japanese migrants in Peru (in comparison to most of the population composed of the indigenous and mestizos) was interpreted as evidence, which proved that the Japanese were inherently smart, capable and driven to be successful. As a result, Japanese ethnicity in Peru became a type of social capital that provided certain advantages to the Japanese descendants. It would have been irrational from a utilitarian point of view for a JP not to believe that Japanese culture, character and abilities were all

inherently part of their Japanese bodies, minds, and DNA. As such, both the Japanese in Japan and the JPs outside of it have been highly invested in this homogeneous myth.

This homogeneous myth influenced the 1990 Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act that opened the “side door” to Japanese Latin Americans’ migration. The assumptions behind this act imagined the JPs to be Japanese in character and culture based on their Japanese blood (Tsuda 2003b). Adhering to Japanese principles of cultural and racial purity, JPs were “welcomed” back as non-polluting elements.

However, this assumed cultural affinity did not translate into an unprejudiced attitude towards the Japanese Latin Americans. Tsuda’s (1998) interviews on Japanese attitudes towards Nikkei unearth the stigma that Nikkei migrants must carry. First, those who left Japan were considered to be incompetent and were assumed to emerge from the lower levels of society. This was in part true as most Japanese migrants in Latin America came from these sectors, a fact that is reflected in this study’s interviews as well. Thus, these migrants were already viewed as social or economic failures, and their emigration confirmed such image in the eyes of the rest of Japan. Second, the idea of leaving Japan itself is gazed at unfavorably. Leaving the country is seen as improper and cowardly when done in the face of the adversities the country faces as a whole. Because of this, return migrants are perceived as emerging from the lower classes and as the descendants of cowards who left Japan unwilling to strive through the hardships of the day. This negative perception is furthermore compounded with an image of being conveniently opportunistic as the *dekasegi* are perceived to return to reap the profits of an economically and technologically resurrected post-war Japanese nation.

### *Upon Arriving*

For most of the respondents that lived in Japan, the realization of cultural differences between themselves and the Japanese upon arriving was quite shocking and difficult to adapt to. This was especially true because the behavioral and psychological adjustments involved in the process of migration were compounded with a drastic reformulation of ethnic identity. For most of the respondents, dealing with their own issues of ethnic identity was almost an immediate struggle. Roberto explains:

To a certain extent, one always thinks that you're Japanese. Because of your race. But when you get there, you realize that you're not Japanese, and that to them you're not Japanese. And you're not Japanese because you don't act like the Japanese. You don't even act Japanese. Maybe you're of the same race, [but] you don't walk... your physical expression is not the same. First of all, you don't speak the same language. You don't think like them. It's totally different. And on top of that, they kind of discriminate against you. You're not Japanese to them.

Roberto, 30

Jorge also experienced the disillusion,

[It was] bad. I mean... one goes with a different idea to Japan.... Something new, something good, the way that your grandparents always talked to you about Japan. All those things, you thought that it was something good, something different. One did not think that it was going to be so racist.

Jorge, 34

Jorge and Roberto's first reactions to living in Japan are narrated in a pre and post migration context that is ultimately indispensable to understanding the changes experienced by JPs in their struggles with their identity. They speak of ethnic boundaries being drawn passively along the lines of observed cultural differences in Roberto's case and more aggressively through the enforcement of racist practices in Jorge's case. Japanese-Peruvians are forced to reconfigure their notions of Japaneseness as their self-identity (self image) and social identity (society's perceived image of one) are discovered to be of an incongruous nature, a notion that was radically different for most JPs in Peru

where their Japanese identity was reinforced both from outside and within the Japanese community (except for those of mixed blood).

### *Othering the Japanese*

Understandably, the treatment and discrimination that many JPs experience in Japan for being foreigners translates into a readjustment of identity and a redefinition of what it means to be Japanese. Ultimately, whatever cultural differences do exist between the Japanese and the JPs become emphasized.

...I have always hated Japan. The Japanese, too. I felt that I was different from them. I thought I was a better person [than them]. I had very good friends, good co-workers, good teachers, but because of those things that happened to me, I always felt that I couldn't get used to it. That it was not a place for me. It was like one doesn't belong in that place. So, like... maybe my place is not here, it's in Peru. I was never able to confirm that because I only went back to Peru for two years. Of course, I felt OK, but every time I went back to Japan, "I'm here again. One day I'm going to go back [to Peru]. My kids are going to grow up over there [in Peru] because everything I lived through, [I'll make sure] my kids are not gonna go through that".

Beatriz, 28

*Interviewer:* What do Nikkei think of the Japanese in Japan?

*Jorge:* That their culture is very different. That Japan is only for the Japanese. The treatment... all those things are nothing good.

Jorge, 34

Jorge and Beatriz connect their discussion regarding differences between the native Japanese and the JPs with concepts of mistreatment and discrimination. Their narratives shed light on the fact that such mistreatment, for many, leads to an emphasized interpretation of cultural differences. For the most part, the othering by JPs of the native Japanese involved negative connotations regarding the Japanese character as cold.

Yeah. I think it's probably the culture. They're not allowed or allow themselves to show emotion, or be friendly or touchy with other people. That could give the impression of being cold. I think that's a cultural thing. So, you know, bow, shake hands. We still kiss on the cheek to say "hi", or we like to hug.... So, I don't know, [they're colder].

Angel, 36



Yes, [you feel closer to Latinos] because of the language, the customs. The Japanese-Japanese is colder. He's different. It's that we have a little bit of Latino [culture in us]. The dancing, the music. Those little things.

Claudia, 54

In Tokyo, the people are more reserved... I remember an occasion when we were taking a picture together and we invited a guest from the dorms, and we invited the pure Japanese guys. And before taking the picture it occurred to someone to extend his arm and hug him. If you would have seen the face of that the Japanese guy made. Like he was grossed out. Like, "What's going on? Why are you touching me?" It was an incredibly funny expression. We are all smiling in the picture. The Japanese does not smile in a picture. The tendency of the Japanese in a picture is to be serious, and if you pay attention to details, that's one of the things you'll notice. Maybe if he's alone he'll smile. But in a group, the Japanese does not smile in pictures, unless you tell him to smile. And even less if it has to do with work. Serious faces. I don't know why. And that has something to do with culture.

Miguel, 39

Japanese-Peruvians associate the native Japanese peoples' character with coldness and their own Peruvian character with warmth (Morimoto 2002). In this dichotomy, JPs view having a warm character in a positive light. Having been stripped of any claim to Japanese identity in Japan, JPs resort to the stereotypes used against them in Peru where they were the ones viewed as cold by Peruvian society. In the preceding chapter, many JPs spoke of a desire to be as open and warm as Peruvians. In the Japanese context, the JPs are the ones who possess the warm character. Seeing themselves as "warmer" people "rehumanizes" JPs after being stripped of the positive Japanese stereotypes they held in Peru such as being smart, hardworking, and honest people. As a result, JPs tend to lean more towards the Peruvian qualities they view positively such as being open and warm, and they rely on these to put a positive spin on the foreign status and identity forced on to them by the Japanese. In this sense, it is good not to be Japanese because that means that you are not cold; it is good to not be Japanese because you're not a mechanized robot as Kenji and Angel describe:

The Japanese is more than anything a mechanized person. He will do everything as the rules say to. If they tell you, “do this, but turn it like this”, your whole life, you’re going to do it like that because that’s how they told you. That’s the Japanese. The Japanese does not look for the easiest way of doing things. Like, “turn it like this”, the Japanese has been told this way, and that’s how he will do it. His whole life, and he doesn’t ask himself, “Why? Why that way?” They do it because that’s how they have been told to. They are more mechanized in doing things. It doesn’t seem to me that they are smarter. That there are intelligent people, there are intelligent people, but in this new generation it seems to me that the majority is more dumb rather than smart. Like I’m telling you, they are more mechanized. [The new] generations that have come out from Japan, I don’t know. That is what I became disillusioned with the Japanese about. When I was a kid, they would tell me, “The Japanese is hard working, honest”. In the time that I went to Japan to work, I noticed that it was the opposite. Now, coming up with my own conclusions, either the Japanese has always been like that, or in the time of my grandparents, [the Japanese] was hard working and honest, and he has changed from generation to generation.

Kenji, 41

*Interviewer:* What made you not want to be Japanese?

*Angel:* I don’t want to be this very military, socialist, based society. It worked for them. You have a 30-year mortgage that you can never pay. You can drive a brand new car from your house to the train station. At 7AM when you go to work, and 11PM when you come back from work. Sometimes you have to work 6, 7 days a week.

*Interviewer:* So you meant you didn’t want to be Japanese in terms of the work, or in terms of the cultural stuff?

*Angel:* I think both.

*Interviewer:* Culturally speaking... what made you not want to be [Japanese]?

*Angel:* I guess I came across a lot of assholes. People that I, I don’t know, I was surprised. I was expecting the Japanese society be more innovative, I don’t know. You think Sony, Toyota, you gotta be super advanced in technology, right? But when we went to work I went to work for Toyota. The way they do things are so traditional, and so stupid that they do things in a certain way. They don’t change it. They don’t try to make your job easier. Thinking... trying to make our job easier is not seen well in Japan. It’s a sign of laziness. Which is maybe that I’m lazy, but no, “you have to do it this way, because...”, “No. But this way is easier”, so I showed them. “Oh, it is easier”. It’s a very highly advanced country with so much traditional background. You see all these very high quality products. But the way they do things is so archaic. It opens your eyes.

Angel, 36

Thus, many JPs make sense of their differences with the Japanese by asserting a *criollismo* that was talked about in the previous chapter. They assert a Peruvian ethnicity understood to be better in some ways than the Japanese. The Peruvian is not mechanized, the Peruvian thinks outside the box. The Peruvian is not conformist or obedient; the Peruvian is savvy and finds the best, easiest or most efficient ways to do things. The

Peruvian is thought to have a mind of her/his own, something that is perceived as missing from the contemporary Japanese.

This distinction between old and new Japanese also emerged in other JPs. It is possible that JPs make this distinction as a form to reclaim the Japaneseness that contemporary Japan has denied them due to their being born outside of Japan. Take for example, Dolores' understanding of her Japanese identity in Japan when asked how Japanese she felt:

It made me feel like a different Japanese type of woman, and I understood that I was one of the ones that think more like the older Japanese, not modern. I mean, I am... a Meiji Japanese. I'm not a modern Japanese. So when I got there I was so disappointed of how scandalous the women are. Then in all the corners you see hotels where you go in and out.

Dolores, 37, Japanese and Peruvian descent

While only two respondents voiced the sentiment of distinguishing the old from the new Japanese, it is clear that there is a disillusion with modern Japan and a rejection of it. It is difficult to assess how much having been discriminated against fuels such sentiment, but it is clearly a reaction towards feeling out of place in a country that one expected to be a part of and could not. It obviously stems from feeling culturally different. It is important to note as well that the othering that all JPs engage in against the Japanese always places positive virtues on the Peruvian side as opposed to the Japanese side. Saying that the Japanese are cold, robotic, full of vice, and scandalous are ways of rehumanizing the JPs. In this sense, it is a defense mechanism that values the differences observed as opposed to producing a sense of remorse for not being Japanese enough.

*Summation on Agency: Asserting a Peruvian Identity*

Japanese-Peruvians are quick to recognize the cultural differences that exist between themselves and the Japanese as they first arrive in Japan. Recognizing these differences provides most JPs with a new understanding of their Peruvian ethnicity and ethnic identity. For most, this new understanding is accompanied by a new appreciation of Peruvian culture and identity.

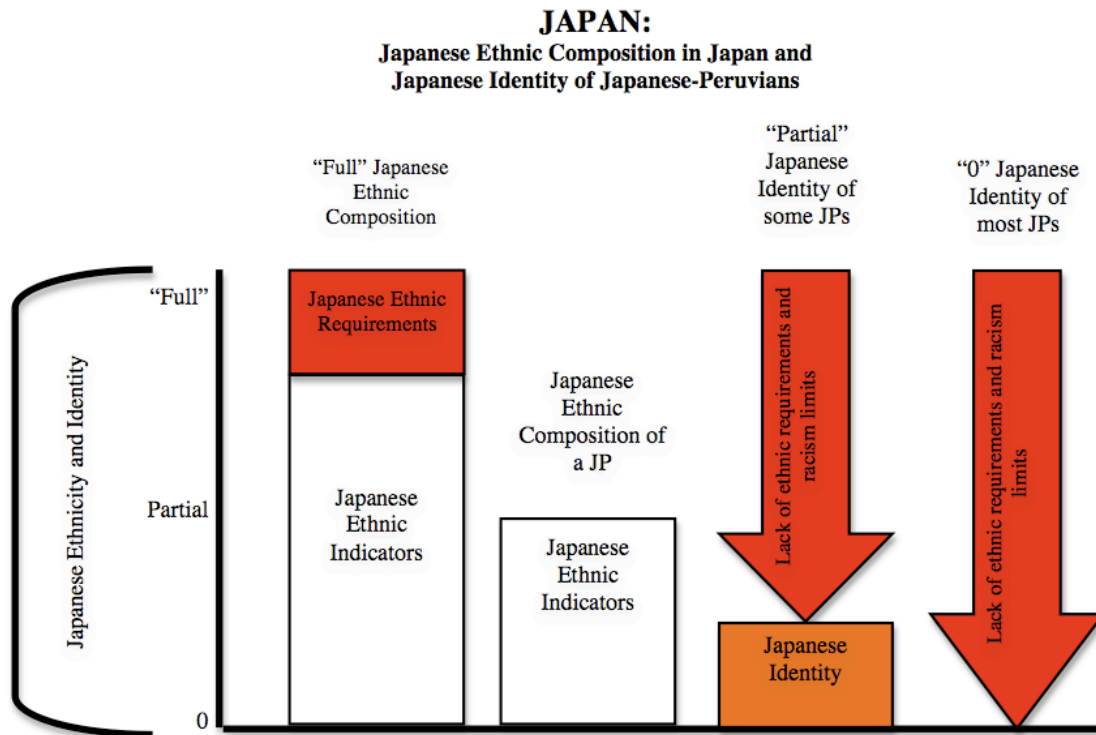
Japanese-Peruvians at times interpret the Japanese culture and way of being negatively. The Japanese person is at times seen as too traditional and unquestioning. Some JPs compare this to their own resourcefulness, which they associate with Peru, and in the othering process they identify more as Peruvian than Japanese. The racism that JPs experience is the driving factor behind much of the othering that JPs embark in. The othering of the Japanese is, in many forms, a way by which JPs rehumanize themselves by othering the Japanese as “robotic”.

Some JPs also redefine the boundaries of Japaneseness in order to qualify themselves as being “old” Japanese as opposed to modern Japanese. Simultaneously, the modern (or young generations of) Japanese people are understood to be different than what was imagined by JPs. In such a framework, JPs can imagine themselves to be a better version of Japanese, as the younger generations are thought of as having become corrupted and lazy.

## Stacked Bar Model in Japan

*Japanese Ethnic Composition in Japan and Japanese Identity of Japanese-Peruvians*

**Figure 4.1**

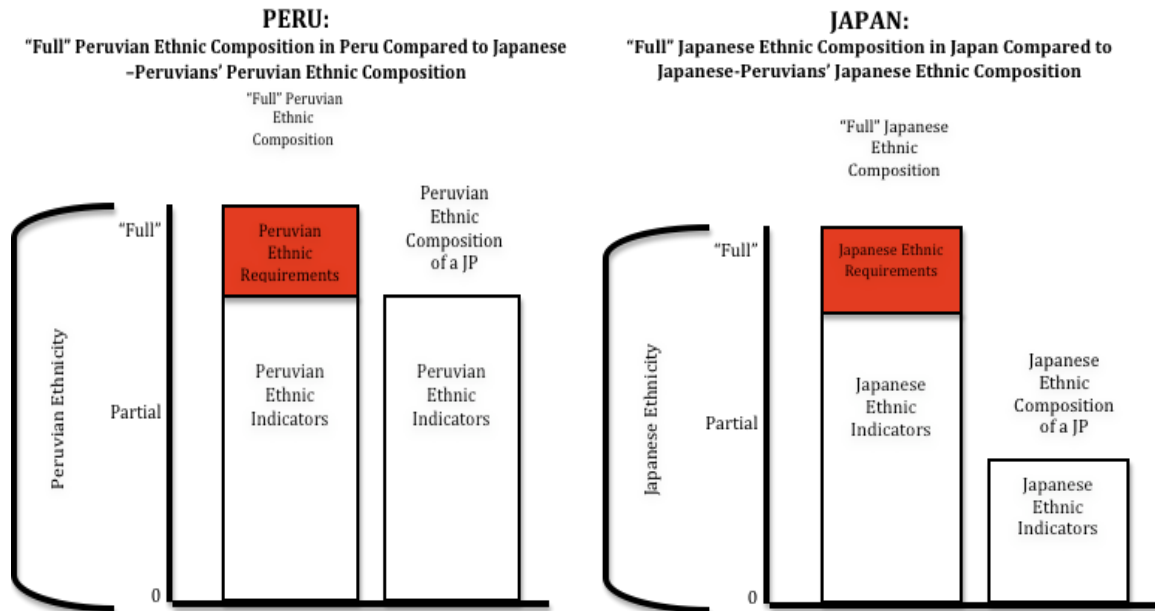


This SBM looks very similar to the stack bar model that represented the social construction of “Full” Peruvian ethnicity in Peru (Fig. 3.1). The construction of “Full” Japanese ethnicity in Japan is similar to the construction of “Full” Peruvian ethnicity in Peru in that in each country the host society creates its own national ethnicity through the use of *national ethnic requirements* (+N,-S). In this stacked bar, we juxtapose a “Full” Japanese ethnic composition (first bar) to a JPs’ Japanese ethnic composition (2<sup>nd</sup> bar). In this case, the Japanese ethnic composition of a JP is shown to be partial, but well below the *ethnic requirements* mandated by Japanese society. This reflects JPs’ actual distance

from Japanese culture in that they mostly do not speak Japanese, and do not act Japanese like so many of the respondents reported. They do have some Japanese qualities such as their last names and their phenotype, but culturally speaking, they do not possess many *ethnic indicators* (-N,-S). Notice how this is different from the SBM that compared the “Full” Peruvian ethnic composition in Peru to JPs’ Peruvian ethnic composition (Fig. 3.1). In that model, the Peruvian ethnic composition of JPs was shown to rise all the way up to where the Peruvian *ethnic requirements* limited their ethnicity. This is because JPs in Peru possess most of the *ethnic indicators* (-N,-S) that are associated with being Peruvian (e.g. playing soccer, cooking Peruvian food, being Catholic, etc.). In the SBM above that represents “Full” Japanese ethnicity, JPs do not possess many Japanese *ethnic indicators* (e.g. listening to Japanese music, practicing Japanese religions, etc.), and this is represented by the short size of the JPs’ Japanese ethnic composition bar. Thus, if we were to compare JPs’ Peruvian ethnic composition in Peru and Japanese ethnic composition in Japan, we would be able to visualize that JPs’ are more Peruvian than Japanese if we simply looked at ethnic traits instead of ethnic boundaries.

Figure 4.2

## Peruvian Ethnic Composition in Peru vs. Japanese Ethnic Composition in Japan



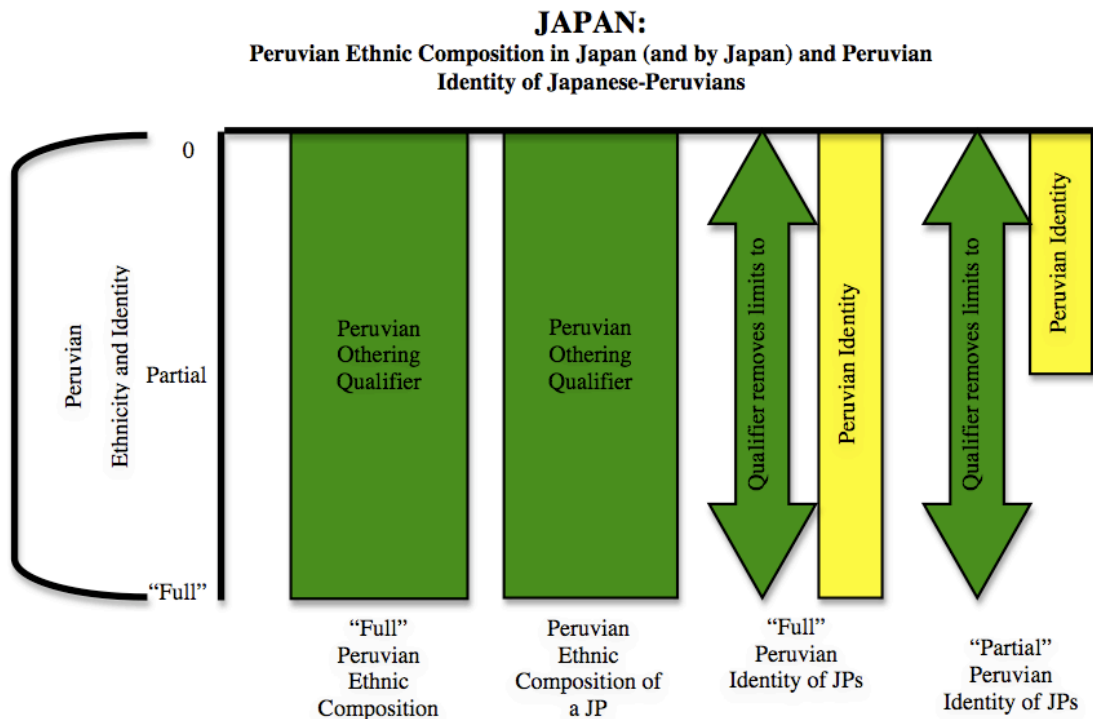
Looking at the stacked bar graphs above, Japanese ethnic composition of a JP in Japan is a lot smaller than the Peruvian ethnic composition of a JP in Peru. Thus, when JPs arrive in Japan, they not only feel the pressure from the Japanese *ethnic requirements* (in red) that restrict any claim they have to be considered to fit within the boundaries of Japanese national ethnicity, but they encounter a cultural clash that makes them realize their cultural distance from the Japanese (graph above, right), and simultaneously realize how Peruvian they actually were (graph above, left). These realizations, along with the way in which Japanese society constructs what counts as Peruvian ethnicity (in Japan) create a formula that leads many JPs to reconfigure their ethnic identity away from the Japanese.

The Japanese ethnic identity of JPs in Japan is governed by Japanese *ethnic requirements* (+N,-S). It is shown as a "partial" identity in the third bar of Figure 4.1, as

pressured down towards zero (0) by the racism that JPs experience in Japan. This racism is experienced in different forms at work, as *arubai* (part-time workers), at school, and in every day life, as *gaijin*. This racism is the communication of the ethnic boundaries that separate JPs from the Japanese themselves. In other words, the racism experienced serves as a form of communicating to JPs that they do not meet the Japanese *ethnic requirements* (+N,-S) to be considered “full” Japanese ethnic members in Japan. For many, the racism and the cultural shock experienced in Japan are so strong that some JPs completely reject any previous attachment they had to Japanese identity, as represented by the fourth bar in Figure 4.1.

*Peruvian Ethnic Composition in Japan (and by Japan) and Peruvian Identity of Japanese-Peruvians*

**Figure 4.3**





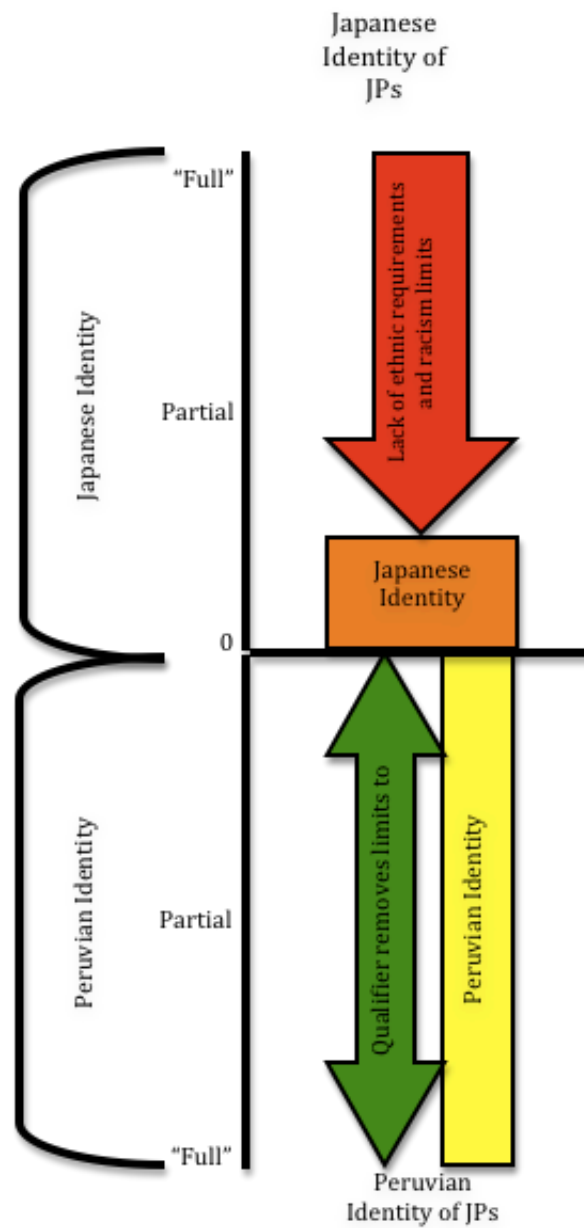
This chart graphs the Japanese conceptualization of who is Peruvian in Japan, and the traits they possess that qualify them as Peruvian. In this case, having been born in Peru, or having been born to Peruvian parents is enough to qualify a JP as Peruvian in Japan. Having a Peruvian birthplace in this case becomes the Peruvian *othering qualifier* (-N,+S). Many JPs never quite identified as Peruvian before migrating to Japan, but in Japan they are qualified as Peruvian regardless of their actual identification. While many JPs thought that being born in Peru alone did not mean that they were Peruvian, as they entered a Japanese racial structure, they encountered this complete recategorization as Peruvian and simultaneously as not Japanese. This, of course, affected their Peruvian identity.

Because Japanese society completely qualifies JPs as Peruvian in Japan, the Peruvian ethnicity of JPs in Japan becomes absolute as it is governed by the *othering ethnic qualifier* (-N,+S) of being born in Peru. This qualifier has the function of removing limits to Peruvian ethnic identity. While it defines what counts as Peruvian in Japan, the Japanese are quite uninterested in placing limits to JPs' Peruvian ethnic identity. Japanese-Peruvians have been identified as Peruvian, and the creation of Peruvian ethnicity by the Japanese does not contain stipulations as to how Peruvian JPs really are. This absence of limits is represented by the double-headed green arrow (third bar in Figure 4.3), which provides the room for Peruvian identity to both grow and shrink. The data shows that, indeed, Peruvians embark in their own boundary drawing between themselves and the Japanese. They characterize the Japanese as “robotic” and “cold” as a way to characterize themselves in opposition as “innovative” and “warm”.

The rejection of JPs as Japanese in Japan is so strong that for most, this results in a drastic complete adoption of Peruvian ethnic identity in Japan. Thus, if we bring both halves of the SBM together, we can appreciate the ways in which both the function of the Japanese *ethnic requirements* and the Peruvian *othering qualifiers* create a context where Peruvian ethnic identity is allowed to grow for Japanese-Peruvians.

**Figure 4.4**

**JAPAN:**  
**Japanese and Peruvian Identities of Japanese-Peruvians in Japan**



The SBM above brings together the dynamics of racism in Japan that label JPs as *gaijin*, and restrict JPs' ability to identify as Japanese in Japan (red arrow pushes down orange box). Whereas the Peruvian identity (yellow box) is given room to both grow and shrink by the natural function of the Peruvian *othering qualifier* (-N,+S – double-headed green arrow) that Japanese society uses to other them.

In the analysis of what has happened to the identities of JPs as they migrate from Peru to Japan, we must focus on the way their ethnic traits have changed from the Peruvian racial formation to the Japanese racial formation. In Peru, the ethnic trait of being born in Peru was an *ethnic requirement* (+N,-S) that did not guarantee entrance into the Peruvian conception of Peruvian ethnicity as it was not sufficient (-S). Yet, in Japan, the same ethnic trait of being born in Peru was an *othering qualifier* (-N,+S) that imposed a Peruvian ethnicity on JPs, as it was sufficient (+S). Inversely, in Peru, JPs' phenotype was an *othering qualifier* (-N,+S) that imposed Japanese ethnicity on JPs as it was sufficient (+S); and in Japan, the same ethnic trait of having a Japanese phenotype was only an *ethnic requirement* (+N,-S), as it did not guarantee them the acceptance as Japanese. Most JPs had traveled to Japan thinking that their Japanese heritage would be a qualifier (+S) that would grant them Japanese acceptance, only to find out that such a trait would only be a requirement (+N).

## **CHAPTER 5: UNITED STATES**

### **Racism**

The JPs interviewed in this study experienced racism in a multitude of forms in the U.S. They experienced it both culturally and racially; as Latinos and as Asians; as children and adults; as direct (from Peru) and indirect (through Japan as a midpoint passage) immigrants; and as U.S. natives. These factors combined produced a variegated collection of understandings of racialized lived experiences that complicated the attempts to speak of these experiences in a framework of causes and effects. This is further complicated by the fluidity with which respondents changed their racial and ethnic identification throughout their narratives. This has made it difficult for this chapter to take the shape of pinpointing a single collective experience that represents that of all JPs living in the U.S. However, there is a collective experience that emerges from the position of being simultaneously Asian and Latino in society where whites are the majority and hold the political and economic power. Thus, the shared experience of JPs in the U.S. must not be understood by the end result of their ethnic identity, but instead by their being forced to deal with an unusual situation that most immigrants in the U.S. are not held subject to. To understand this, it is helpful to think about the process by which undeclared students in a university finally decide what their major will be. While the majors that students finally decide to study will be many, these students will all have the shared experience of having to make this decision. The point of this chapter, then, will be different than the previous two. While in Peru and Japan, it was not difficult to pinpoint a general racialized experience leading to, respectively, Japanese and Peruvian

ethnic identities as the most common end points of the ethnic identification process, in the U.S. this will not be possible. This is further supported by Ayumi Takenaka's (2000) conclusion that the ethnic identity of JPs in the U.S. is "ambiguous". However, I would clarify that while for many individuals, their ethnic identity is ambiguous, it would be wrong to generalize this to all JPs, as a substantial amount of respondents in this study had very solid ethnic identities. I borrow her use of the term "ambiguous" to describe the entire, collective ethnic identity of the JP community, not the individuals themselves. Interestingly enough, because of the nature of the snowball sampling method used in this study, many of my respondents were close friends who did not see themselves as ethnically different from each other, yet through their interviews identified themselves completely differently. This suggests that for many of them, the way in which they ethnically identified and made sense of their racialized experiences was just a detail in their shared experiences of dealing with the issue of ethnic identity. Based on this, I remind the reader that this chapter will be different than the previous two in that it focuses more on the process of ethnic identification and less on producing a cause and effect argument for the ethnic identification choice of the respondents.

### *Dodging Racism*

The narratives of lived experiences in the U.S. manifested less instances of racism than the narratives from Peru and Japan. This was unexpected as one might suspect that being both Latino and Asian simultaneously would make JPs vulnerable to the racism experienced by both ethnic groups. Many factors, however, contributed to the amelioration of such experiences. First, most JPs interviewed had lived in major

metropolitan areas in California with the large majority living in the greater Los Angeles area where there were large Asian and Latino populations as in Torrance, Gardena and Alhambra. Take the case of Mariam, who was born in the U.S. and grew up in Gardena:

...I always thought it was good to be Japanese in Gardena. And so, you get a weird view of the world where, you know... you think it's always gonna be like that, but then when you get out into the bigger world where there are no minorities, because my husband's white. So when he goes to the Midwest, and... in Middle America, and if I go with him, they look at me like, "Oh, my God! Do you speak English?" I didn't experience any [racism] growing up. It was only when I got older and was going to different places outside of Gardena, Torrance, South Bay area.

Mariam, 49

That I felt [racism], no? And it's kind of odd, but maybe it's because we live in LA. I can't remember now...

Eric, 27, Japanese and Peruvian descent

There must be [racism]. [In] other parts of the country. I haven't seen hardly anything [in San Francisco]. There must be, but I don't know of any particular incidents.

Shinji, 60's

In the U.S., you don't worry about those things... especially in California, which is very multiracial. You don't feel it as much. You'll feel it more if you go to a state where there's more whites or blacks, etc.... The fact that I live in Torrance, there's every [race], so you don't feel it. There's no pressure against this group. If you go to the Museum of Tolerance, you'll find a map that shows that Orange County is where there's the most racism. Why? Because there's more whites. Sometimes they're whites that are called "white trash". They're too close-minded. So if you see problems of racism, and they're not from your same [race] group, keep your distance. Go with your group, which would be in Torrance, where there's more Japanese and Asian culture, etc. and then you don't have problems with anybody.

Miguel, 39

These ethnic enclaves provided an indispensable form of protection for JPs. In addition, it is important to note that while highly diverse, not many of the respondents lived in areas in which a white population formed a strong majority. This contextualized respondents in environments where those surrounding them did not possess a strong, institutionalized racial power (i.e. all people of color are relatively equally disempowered). In Mariam's case, she grew up thinking that it was "good" to be Japanese in Gardena, which might reflect the favorable status of being Japanese to being

Latino or African American in Gardena. We can see how when her context changes to the Midwest U.S., to places where whites make up the majority, her being Japanese is not as favorable.

This geographical protection has strengthened the view of some JPs that the U.S. is truly a multicultural space where immigrants and people of color are welcomed and respected.

That's why I feel so comfortable here, because there's no prejudice of where you are or where you're coming from because everybody here came from somewhere else, and we sort of understand that... you come from Uganda, or Japanese from Brazil, or Chinese from Argentina. Everybody has a different background. We all have problems that we're having still, but [we're] very well trained or used to seeing people from different backgrounds. Nobody judges you for our accent, or the ways your eyes are configured, or your passport, or the way you look.

Angel, 36

Japanese-Peruvians' unique racialized histories also play a part in shaping their understandings of their experiences of racism in the U.S. One of the main forms in which this manifests is by comparing their experiences of racism in Peru and Japan to their experiences of racism (or lack thereof) in the U.S.

Here, it's not a question of race. It seems to me that that type of discrimination of where you come from doesn't exist.... In Peru, as I told you, they always call you "*chino*, *chino*". They don't let you feel Peruvian. You go to Japan, and it's the same, you're a foreigner and that's it. Here, there's not much of that "because you haven't been born here [you don't belong]". That discrimination doesn't exist here.

Kenji, 41

No, [I've never felt racism]. In fact, it's interesting that when I went to school, all my friends were Latinas. Me, that never [made friends with Peruvians before]....

Erika, 41

In both Kenji's and Erika's cases, the past experiences of Peru and Japan are used as points of reference in framing experiences of racism in the U.S. While in Peru and Japan their legitimate belonging to the native ethnic population was always denied, in the U.S., such ethnic boundaries are perceived to break down, and their identities seem to be more



readily accepted. Erika's case is particularly telling of how by referencing race relations in Peru her views about racism in the U.S. are shaped. When she is asked about instances of racism in her life in the U.S., she immediately directs her answer to the issue of being able to connect with Latinos in the U.S., something she was not able to do with Peruvians in Peru. This ability to connect outside of the Japanese community informs her ideas of there being less racism in the U.S. when compared to Peru.

Japanese-Peruvians' unique ethnic situation also creates a framework by which these respondents navigate the racism that they do experience by emotionally protecting themselves. Being both Asian and Latino at the same time, some respondents were able to distance themselves from anti-Asian racism or anti-Latino racism, thereby dodging it.

Like, high school. I remember freshman, sophomore year. Someone called me a *jap*.... Some stupid guy.... [I]t was the first day of school, and they were calling roll. They didn't see me, but they heard my [Japanese] name, and they called it out.... I didn't really care because I don't even feel Japanese. I bet they didn't even know what they were talking about.... I mean, because in the first place, I don't consider myself that much Japanese. I consider myself more Peruvian. I was kind of happy because someone thought I was Japanese, 'cause if someone would call me Asian, I would be glad, because I like Asians.

Kikujiro, 19, Japanese and Peruvian descent

Kikujiro's middle position as a JP provides him certain fluidity in ethnic identification that allows him to dodge being emotionally affected by racist attacks. Yet, the ability to dodge racist attacks expands beyond the emotional realm into very concrete real life experiences. Take the cases of Sara and Roberto,

...at work, they don't consider me Latina. My bosses don't consider me Latina. They don't even consider me Japanese. I don't know what they consider me, but I know that they don't consider me because they make comments to me. "These people..." in a derogatory manner. "That these people..." Then, I know.... The racism, even though they don't say it, there's a lot of discrimination. And regarding that, my Japanese side comes out. I notice that they don't treat me as a Latina.

Sara, 45

I think I consider myself to be so little Japanese that it doesn't matter. It doesn't affect me.... I don't feel bad, discriminated, nothing like that. I don't have many problems. Because if a Japanese treats me as less Japanese, it's the same because I don't feel very Japanese. And if a Latino treats me as less Latino, I feel more Latino than them. I could trump them. Just by speaking and saying, "I'm from Lima. Where are you from? From here, Los Angeles? What are you talking about?" Meaning, I'm more Latin American than you.

Roberto, 30

Or the case of Miguel, when asked if he had experienced racism, "No, because I'm a Japanese descendant. It doesn't affect us directly. When they say Latino, they don't mean us directly. We're not Latinos. Why? Because they see us and they see an Asian". Thus, the experiences of JPs with racism in the U.S. are ameliorated by geographical factors because they tend to live in diverse cities where instances of racism are either less likely to occur, or at least are less visible/noticeable. Compounding this, possessing an ethnic mobility between being Asian and Latino provides them the ability to take advantage of one side of their ethnicity to avoid attacks against the other side. If this fails, it is possible at times to protect oneself from being emotionally affected by these attacks by acknowledging that in fact, they are not the typical Latino or Asian, but that they are something different.

### *Experiences of Racism*

When JPs did experience racism, the racism they were the most likely to recall or recognize was anti-Latino racism. Their understanding of their Japanese ethnic identity was always seen more as an advantage than a burden. This could very likely be due to their living and working in places where whites were not the majority, and the racial hierarchy placed Asians as a favorable race over Latinos. Thus, their point of reference tended to be Latinos and African Americans over whom they usually had some privilege,

and not whites, under whom they would be underprivileged. While their Asian phenotype allowed many JPs to avoid being targets of anti-Latino racism, they did experience it indirectly through the media.

...because I've always heard it. I hear it in the news, in the commentaries, everywhere. [Latinos are] one of the groups that are most affected.... And when I see the shows about gangs, I think, how are [Americans] not going to hate us, and how many things have been heard that the perpetrator is a Latino, and they use that as justification, "Why do they come from other countries to do things like that?" But [Latinos] are not the only ones who commit crimes, but unfortunately, in the news, that's the people that you see. So in a certain way, it's sad to be part of the group. At least that is my take on it. I think it's ugly. I see a lot of discrimination.

Sara, 45

Most JPs like Sara, who are of full Japanese descent, can avoid the anti-Latino racism that criminalizes them based on appearances. However, they cannot completely avoid the nativist type of racism that targets them as foreigners. Their Asian phenotype subjects them to the "perpetual foreigner" status.

...the only incident I can even remember is that my first boyfriend in college was a gambler, so I was with him at a race track, and we were standing in line to make a bet, and I think we had simply switched positions, so instead of being in front of him, I was behind him, and there was this little Black lady behind me saying, "hey, where'd you come from?" Because she thought I had just cut in front of her, right? And she went off, "Why don't you go back where you came from?", and blah-blah-blah, and I turned and looked at her and said, "I was born here, where were you born?" And she just went, "oh". And she just stopped.

Mariam, 49

The majority of people [at work] who have high positions are Black people. The opportunities for Latinos or Asians are very limited. But if there's a Black person or a Latina or Asian person, the favoritism is not for the Latino or Asian, just because of their race and their immigrant status. I was up for a promotion, and my ex-boss calls me and tells me to transfer to her new office because there I'd get the promotion. I told her, "No", because this office was closer to my home. And she tells me, "You know how things are. Here you'll get the promotion". And she was Black. She was not a Latina.... So I had to fight for my promotion, but in the end, I got it.... But even now, I have to keep fighting because there's a lot of discrimination. If it's a question of, is there discrimination? There is.

Miranda, 55

When asked if she thought her experience was based on her race, Miranda responded, "It's because you're a foreigner; for being an immigrant". The immigrant status is

further enhanced for those who are not fluent in English, or those who speak it with a heavy accent. In this aspect, many JPs were simply not able to avoid the racism targeted towards Latinos and immigrants.

I remember my dad saying when he had to do his driving test. There was this lady and he had his accent, and he couldn't really speak really well at the time. She directed him to perform the test, and he didn't understand and he did something wrong, and she said... when you learn descent English, you come back and was kind of nasty about it.

Joana, 23

In this country, more than for being Asian, it's because of language. The accent, I'm gonna have it my whole life. The fact that they hear you speak in a certain manner, the treatment is a little bit different. I mean, you're not American, so they treat you differently. Anyways, they treat you differently.

Tomas, 30

In the end, it could be difficult at times for JPs to figure out if the way in which they are treated has more to do with their race, culture, or immigration status as these three are usually conflated together in the incidents of racism that they experience. It is because of this that, at times, the respondents have difficulty explaining whether they have experienced racism or not, as some may interpret their experiences as having more to do with factors such as immigration and language instead of race.

The form in which JPs spoke of racism often had much to do with their identity. However, in the U.S., unlike Japan and Peru, JPs of full Japanese descent found their identities more easily accepted by others. Being Asian was easily proven by their phenotypes, and being Latino was easily proven by either their names or their ability to speak Spanish. Where they found racism to affect their identity was not the issue of being accepted as Latinos or Asians, but instead of being homogenized into the majority of Latinos in California (i.e. Mexicans).

It's not that I've felt marginalization, or being excluded, but I have been asked when I speak Spanish, "Are you Mexican?" I've experienced racism in that way... the American

thinks that only America and Europe exist. They don't know that Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay exist. They're all Mexicans [to them].

Marcos, 28

Like I said, being labeled as one race, being associated with just one race. "Oh, you're Mexican, you're Mexican, stay with your Hispanic people side". That's always been. The majority of this state, in California, are Mexicans. So when you try to explain that they say, "No, you're Mexican anyways". That's racism, off the top.

Omar, 23, Japanese and Peruvian descent

Furthermore, as most of the respondents' phenotypes were Asian, they were more likely to feel fortunate of having the Peruvian culture without having to deal with the anti-Latino stereotypes. Almost invariably, the respondents of full Japanese descent spoke of being able to take advantage of this factor and being glad that they did not appear to be Latino, as that would make them targets to things such as racial profiling by the police.

### *Discrimination From Latinos*

Japanese-Peruvians experienced discrimination from Latinos rarely. This mainly happened when Latinos assumed that JPs were only Asian and made derogatory remarks in Spanish about them without realizing that they are being fully understood.

Yet, interestingly enough, in such occasions, most JPs do not experience a retraction in their Latino identity, but rather a surge of it. As JPs confronted these Latinos and revealed their Latino heritage, most Latinos were taken aback and put into awkward positions. This created a sense of control of the situation and empowerment in JPs.

...It makes me feel powerful. Because if they're Latinos, and they say some kind of bullshit at me or about my family or whatever, I just look at them and I go, in Spanish, "What the fuck's wrong with you? I speak Spanish, I understood every single word that you said..." We were waiting in line... my friends and me. This Latina girl was behind us, and I was with my friend, and we were with Japanese American people.... So these girls started saying, "Oh, my god. Estos chinos, carajo, que, para que vienen aqui si esto es para bailar salsa" [These Chinese, why do they come here, if this is for Salsa dancing]. It was a salsa club. "Estos ni siquiera saben bailar salsa" [They don't even know how to dance salsa], and I don't know what else. So I just turned around and said, "Excuse me,

yo hablo español y he entendido todo lo que has dicho, y soy de Perú. Soy mas Peruana que la mazamorra morada y te puedo bailar una salsa que no te imaginas, asi que no seas tan bruta y pienses que todos los chinitos somos de China” [I speak Spanish, and I heard everything you said, and I’m from Peru. I’m more Peruvian than you can imagine, and I can dance salsa like you can’t imagine, so don’t be so stupid to think all “Chinese” are from China]. And she was like, “Oh, my god, I’m sorry”. I said, “too late”. So yeah, it makes me feel powerful, like I have like a secret weapon.

Maria, 39

I was at a concert waiting for a ride, and these Latino guys started making gestures at me in Spanish thinking that I didn’t understand Spanish and I told them in Spanish saying I knew what they were talking about, and they just gave me like a look. At the same time that they were making these dumb gestures to me in Spanish, I understood what they were talking about the whole time. In that regard it's an advantage for me in making them feel stupid.... It feels empowering... because they don't know that I know, ...they were just in shock, they didn't have any response because they were just like, “whoa”.

Maricela, 30

Given these types of interactions with Latinos, the nature of the encounters functions in such a way that JPs’ Latino identity is usually boosted, helping explain the strong Latino identity that many JPs develop in the U.S.

There was also some instances in which JPs experience some hesitation from Latinos in recognizing them as truly Latino. Patricia and Aurelio give us examples,

So I say, “Do you speak Spanish?” She says, “No. I don’t Speak Spanish”. Then, when I came back [to the market] she was speaking to a girl that I knew in Spanish. So I said [to the girl I knew], “Te acuerdas de mi” [Do you remember me?].... in front of that other girl. We were speaking in Spanish, and she didn’t talk... her face was red because she had told me she didn’t speak Spanish, and I had caught her speaking Spanish.

Aurelio, 68

It’s funny my friend’s husband is Salvadorian... and I spoke to them in Spanish only, and he would ask her, “why does she speak to us in Spanish?” He’d say, “Why does she keep practicing her Spanish with me?”

Patricia, 31

In these cases, the JPs interpreted the situations as not being accepted as Latinos. Yet, despite these cases, these types of interactions are not quite strong enough to make JPs feel less Latino, as they mainly feel in control of these situations and secure in their Latino identity. Instead of being made to feel less Latino, JPs relished in their “power” to

catch Latinos off guard, and this produces a surge of Latino identity instead of a withdrawal from it.

### *Discrimination From Asians*

There were very few instances where JPs felt racism from Asians in the U.S. This is quite logical, as most of JPs interviewed had Asian phenotypes. Because Asian immigrants speak many different languages, their inability to communicate with them was never something they were looked down upon for. The JPs who did experience some type of exclusion or discrimination from Asians were those of mixed racial backgrounds whose phenotypes were not so clearly Asian.

They wouldn't believe [I'm Japanese]. For them Japanese is ranked very high. Within just the Asian community itself, Japan is ranked very high, probably the highest. So they were very non-accepting to it. The only way they would accept it is when my mom probably came for performances and they had to see your face. I can show to prove that I was. Even if I did have the last name... it's like, "You don't know the characters. You don't know this. You don't know anything about Japan. How could you be Japanese?"

Carrie, 24, Japanese and Peruvian descent

When I tell my Asian friends, they're like, "No, you're not. You can't be. They don't want to accept me, that I am [Asian]". Until I show my mother. It's like I have to show them something, or I have to be like, "This is my mom's last name", something like that. [I think it counts as racism], they don't want to accept me. That's like their first initial thing. Like they don't want to. [They think,] "You don't look like me"... They used to never believe me that my mom spoke Spanish, and they never believed that I had an Asian mother. I was like, "You don't understand, she was born in Peru". They were like, "What's Peru?" Everyone is like, "If you speak Spanish, you're Mexican".

Cristina, 19, Japanese and Peruvian descent

Some people don't [believe I'm Asian], which I find a little bit ignorant. At the same time, I don't care. "You want to meet my mom?" She's all I need. You see my mom, you have to say she's Asian. She looks more Asian than anything else. That bothers me when people don't believe me, but it's just like, I don't care.

Omar, 23, Japanese and Peruvian descent

One time, in a Japanese restaurant that's only for Japanese, one day I wanted to take all my people there and they went in and they told them that there weren't any tables. So I went in and spoke to them in Japanese. They told me, "Sorry, please sit here". After that, every time I go there, I don't have to wait one minute.

Dolores, 37, Japanese and Peruvian descent

Although there are some narratives of this sort, they mostly emerge from multiracial JPs' narratives. While these situations affected young JPs in their understanding that they are not completely Asian unless they have the phenotype to go along with it, most JPs did not report any case of racism from Asians.

### *Reactions to Japanese-Peruvians and Exoticizing*

The experiences of racism that JPs have are difficult to interpret also due to the main reaction that others have when they meet people who are phenotypically Asian but speak Spanish or have Spanish names. This immediate reaction, is almost always one of surprise.

People react with surprise because they had no idea that such thing existed, that there were Japanese in Peru.... But the great majority is surprised. "How rare, I had no idea". They think it's rare that there be an Asian speaking Spanish. They think it's out of this world. I always tell them, "But if there's Asians that speak English, why do you think it's rare that I speak Spanish?" It's the same. I was born in Peru. There's Asians here who are surprised and ask me why I speak Spanish, and I tell them, "You. Why do you speak English?" [They respond], "Well, I was born here". "Well, I was born in Peru."

Roberto, 30

The reactions that Americans (not including Asian and Latino ones) have in meeting a JP complicated the understanding of JPs' experiences with racism. As indicated above, most JPs' experiences with racism seem to be non-existent, indirectly experienced, or relatively minor when compared to their experiences in Peru and Japan. An exploration of how Americans in general react to JPs revealed the key practice of exoticizing the rarity of an Asian that speaks Spanish. Respondents mainly reported on how white people reacted when asked, "how do Americans react?" The reactions of white people are paramount in JPs' understanding of how they are received in American



society, being that it is white people who hold the political, economic and cultural privileges in the U.S.

[With others it's more] normal.... And with white people, at least at my work, it's weird. They don't have the least idea of who you are... it's that for them, it's a very rare thing. It's something that, "Wow, what a trip. How extravagant." It's something like that, very weird.

Tomas, 30

I think white people are the most surprised. Normally they are the ones who are the most surprised.

Patricia, 31

The JP ethnicity of the respondents immediately becomes a topic of interest to most Americans, who are curious about the ethnic origins of JPs. Again, being thought of as interesting and special, most JPs rejoice in the explaining of their ethnic background and take pride in it. While Americans are genuinely impressed and express this reaction quite openly, many JPs tend to be genuinely proud during this type of interactions. Because most interactions with Americans take this shape, instances of racism are less likely to be interpreted as such.

I consider myself unique and in a certain way, I like it. I like it when people ask me, "Where are you from? And why do you have a Spanish accent?" I tell them that I was born in Peru, but my parents are Japanese. I have liked that. "Exotic," my friend used to call me. [He would tell me] that I was very exotic, and I liked it.

Beatriz, 28

Me, I have liked it. Even here, when they ask me if I'm Japanese or Hispanic, I'm proud to say that I'm a mix of both. As my friend told me, "It's very exotic that you are [an Asian that speaks Spanish]". So in the environment that I'm in, I'm unique, and I like it.

Sara, 45

To reiterate, this does not mean that JPs do not experience racism in the U.S., or that they fail to recognize it. In fact, many of them do, as explained above. This just partly helps explain why JPs may have less experiences of racism or fewer experiences that can be quickly recognized as such. This is the case with the exoticizing of JPs. Their ethnicity

becomes a topic of interest, and to a high degree, an object to be revered for its rarity.

The nature of the interaction is many times, if not most of the times, interpreted as highly positive by both parties, which hides the racial underlying created by the othering function of such revering. Here, we are basically referring to Said's work on Orientalism (1978) where the racism towards the not normal (i.e. exoticizing) is at times disguised as praise, when in fact the basic function at work is the othering that is taking place. Some JPs (a minority of them) do, in fact, recognize the problems with this type of interaction and are bothered by it.

Now people look at me from other races, and, "Very exotic", you know what I mean?  
"You speak Spanish. You look Japanese. You're Japanese Peruvian... very cool. Hot. Sexy". That's how now I think people see me. And that's just... I'm just me. Leave it. Leave it alone. Don't try to change it, and don't try to argue it, you know?

Carrie, 24, Japanese and Peruvian descent

What we derive from all this is that JPs' experiences with racism are relatively few because the uniqueness of their ethnicity commands a reaction of surprise and intrigue that makes most JPs feel positively about their ethnicity. The experiences of racism that JPs have in the U.S. do not quite affect their ability to identify as Japanese, Peruvian or Japanese-Peruvian. Instead, what they affect is their ability to identify as American, but since most of the respondents arrived in the U.S. as adults, the desire to identify as American was never very strong. However, this was different for JPs who were born in the U.S. or were young migrants when they arrived.

#### *How Young Migrants and the U.S. Born Experience Racism*

Japanese-Peruvians born and/or raised in the U.S. experience racism differently from the JPs that migrate as adults. Their experiences with racism tend to highlight the

ethnic boundaries that exclude them from a “full” American ethnicity. As such, their narratives focus more on issues of whiteness.

It was more than one time. Any time I got pulled over in LA, or got questioned by the police, I was always worried about something happening. Always. You're never quite secure when you're not white. You never know how the police is going to take you. I've known that ever since I was little. Since Rodney King, all that stuff stayed in my head. Riot police back in '92. Seeing first hand how they treated my dad. As a kid, I saw that there's a language barrier, my dad didn't speak English, so they treated him a little hostile. Because my dad's kind of a loud person, they always treated him with caution. That, to me, is a form of racism. They always had them with his hands where they could see them. They cuff him before they question him, you know. Things like that.

Omar, 23, Japanese and Peruvian descent

For others, the boundary that separated them from American ethnicity was highlighted as their phenotypes were used as reasons to question their English fluency.

I worked [at a fast food restaurant] since I was sixteen. Because people will start talking to me in Spanish, and I'm like, “No. I don't speak Spanish”. ...[T]he thing that I don't like the most is when I come in and I go to work. People come in and assume that I don't speak English, that's what makes me very upset.

Cristina, 24, Japanese and Peruvian descent

The JPs who were born or raised in the U.S. experienced many of the types of racism that JPs that migrated as adults did, but the way in which this related to their identity was different. Most JPs who have not learned or are just learning to speak English in the U.S. would never really consider an instance where somebody questions their English fluency an episode of racism. For JPs who have been raised in the U.S., in contrast, the questioning of their English fluency can only be interpreted as such. These episodes are a form of communicating to them that their phenotypes (whether Asian or Latino) clearly mark them as immigrants (who might not speak English) and therefore distance them from what is commonly conceptualized as American ethnicity. Because they have spent their formative years in the U.S., and because they have been socialized in American society, those who are born and grow up in the U.S. are more likely to interpret their

experiences with racism as a denial of an American identity that they might desire to claim. Those who migrated to the U.S. as adults already had well developed ethnic identities. For adult migrants, an American identity is not part of their process of formulating an identity. Yet, the racism experienced by JP young migrants and the U.S. born is quite important as it reminds them that in the U.S. there are American *ethnic requirements* that JPs do not possess. This is a key part of developing the SBM and in fact, helps us understand the development of JPs' Latino and Asian identities in the next sections of this chapter.

#### *Summation on Racism*

Japanese-Peruvians report fewer instances of racism in the U.S. than Peru or Japan. This is strongly due to their living and working in racially diverse areas where whites are not the majority. Japanese-Peruvians are also able to emotionally “dodge” the damaging effects of some racist attacks against Latinos and Asians by identifying with the ethnicity that is not being attacked. Japanese-Peruvians experience anti-Latino racism indirectly through the media. When they do experience racism, most cases refer to their inability to speak English and to their immigrant status in the U.S. Japanese-Peruvians' experiences of discrimination from Latinos usually fortify their own Latino identity as they are well equipped to establish such identity by speaking Spanish. Experiences with racism from Asians were only reported by multi-racial JPs who had to prove they were Asian. The reaction that most Americans have in meeting JPs is one of surprise and exoticization. This reaction makes many JPs derive pride in the uniqueness of their ethnicity, and thus the racist element of othering in the exoticizing process is rarely

recognized as racism. This helps explain the relatively few instances of racism that JPs experience. The experiences of JPs raised in the U.S. are different and special as they tend to focus more on the denial of American ethnicity.

### **Agency – Identity and Ethnic Options**

#### *Latino & Peruvian Identity*

The acceptance of JPs as Latinos by the Latino community is, as would be expected, a very strong factor in fortifying the Latino identity of JPs. When JPs reveal their ability to speak Spanish to Latinos, the reaction is almost invariably interpreted as highly positive. Latinos tend to have a welcoming reaction as they find something in common with JPs. The interaction that follows immediately becomes one focused on the commonalities shared on their Latin American background.

I do deliveries... and most of the workers are Latinos.... I speak to them in Spanish. "Hey, how do you speak Spanish?" ...That's why I get along with all the cooks and the dishwashers. I always say "Hi" to all of them. "Good evening. How are you? Happy New Year!" ...The cashiers, for example... there's a couple of Peruvians that work in the market, and I saw them speaking Spanish, and one day, I said, "Where are you from?", they respond, "from Peru", "what part?", etc.... And after that, all the Mexicans also say "hi" to me.

Aurelio, 68

The key to this is that JPs surpass the expectations of the Latinos they encounter, and they become impressed by JPs. To a certain extent, this creates a situation in which JPs are praised for their Latino ethnicity. It is easy to understand how this, being the main type of initial interaction JPs have with Latinos, creates in JPs a sense of being accepted by the Latino community. Furthermore, the praising that takes place gives JPs a certain amount of pride regarding their Latino heritage, and this is something that enhances their Peruvian/Latino identity.

Here, they are impressed. They say, “If you’re Asian, why do you speak Spanish?” That curiosity of the Latinos.... Then one takes pride and says that, “I’m Peruvian...” It’s not like when you’re in Peru, “No, I’m not Peruvian” you say it with some reservations. Here, one can say it openly, “I’m Peruvian. I speak Spanish”. ...You let them know that you have that double culture, and you say it with pride.... It’s like you feel better about it. You begin to identify with both races.

Kenji, 41

For most JPs who arrive in the U.S. as adults, Latin American identity becomes more pronounced. It is important to remember at this point that many JPs did not take on a Peruvian identity in Peru. The relative positive image that the Japanese community had in Peru as intelligent, honest and hard working provided an impetus for strongly retaining a Japanese identity, and this, coupled with the anti-Japanese racism experienced in their daily lives as well as during Fujimori’s emergence solidified the boundaries by which their Japanese ethnic identity formed. Even most of the JPs who did identify as Peruvian in Peru often did so with qualifications as not being “completely” Peruvian. Altogether, those who held an uncompromising Peruvian ethnic identity were the rare exceptions. Yet, in the U.S., many JPs were surprised of the shift in their identity towards a Latino one. One respondent, Tomas, explained this shift at length,

I, in the U.S., feel more Latino than anything else. I feel more Latino than in Peru because here there are different races. In Peru, everybody is a Latino, so then you can feel a little more Japanese. Here, there’s everything. There are the Japanese; there are Latinos; there are Americans; and I... I feel like one more Latino. One hundred percent. I don’t know if it’s that I’ve worked so long with Latinos and talked to them, and in a restaurant, all the waiters are Latino, and everywhere there are Latinos, and you identify with them because you have done those jobs [as well]. I mean, working as a waiter, washing dishes, working with those things that maybe a Latino has done. At least, I have done them. And you identify with them, and you know that I, too, am Latino. I don’t have any privileges, or anything. I came [to the U.S.] to suffer and that’s it.... The people that know me [see me as Latino]. At work, they know that I’m one hundred percent Latino. I don’t identify at all with the Japanese, and with the Americans either. I’m Latino, and that’s it. ...Where I work now, they’re all white. But at my other job, forget about it. They know that I’m Latino because of the things I talk about, and from the way that I talk, a little bit *acriollado*... I don’t know. And friendships that I have, well, my friendships are with Latinos.... In the U.S., you open up more than you would

in Peru to a Peruvian. Yes, because you're outside of your country, and you identify with them. You know that they're of your same race; you're from the same country.

Tomas, 30

Tomas' Latino identity is more prominent because of three factors in this segment of his interview; 1) it is easier to identify as Latino when Latinos are the minority, 2) it is easier to identify as Latino when you're accepted as one by other Latinos, and 3) sharing a working experience with other Latinos helps one identify with Latinos.

When in Peru, where Latinos (i.e. Peruvians) are the majority, it is difficult to identify as Latino because JPs are seen as different based on their phenotype (i.e. they do not meet the Peruvian *ethnic requirements*). While, without question, all groups in the U.S. use phenotypes as indicators of ethnic commonalities, the importance of such a quality is less pronounced in the case of JPs. This is strongly due to JPs' ability to validate their Latino ethnic identity culturally, like Tomas explained that he was accepted as Latino because of "the things I talk about, and from the way I talk, a little bit *acriollado*". Here, he is pointing towards linguistic mannerisms that cannot be learned unless one is deeply imbedded in the culture. Thus, what happens from Peru to the U.S. is a shift in the ethnic boundaries that define Peruvianness. Whereas in Peru, being born in Peru and knowing the culture are not enough to be considered Peruvian, these two factors do validate Peruvianness in the U.S. Tomas' narrative shows that not only are JPs accepted by most Latinos in the U.S. as Latinos, but that even if they are not, JPs are well equipped with the nativity, language, and culture to defend their claim to such identity with confidence.

Spanish being their first language, JPs who arrive in the U.S. as adults are limited in their ability to create networks of support. Yet, their ability to speak Spanish also provides them an entrance ticket into the Latino community. This, in turn, influences JPs' identity towards the Latino ethnicity, making language one of the strongest factors in pushing JPs' identity towards the Latino side.

I think that language has a lot of influence. I think that I would feel more comfortable. If there's a group of Japanese and a group of Latinos, I think I go to the Latino side. For me, it's because of the language, as I'm telling you. Maybe if I spoke English perfectly [it would be different]. But because of language, I'm more inclined towards Latinos.

Juana, 29

[It was] because of the language. In the English classes, you would end up with the Latinas.... I think that they would look at me, and they weren't gonna hang out with me. I would hear them speak in my language, and I would go sit closer to them to make friends. It was easier [than trying to speak English to others].

Erika, 41

Although speaking Spanish was noted as the most important factor in connecting to Latinos, it was rarely noted as the only factor. The cultural pull towards Latinos itself was rather strong. Being in the U.S. provided JPs an opportunity to understand their Latino culture by triangulating their cultural distance to Latinos via American culture. By experiencing a different American culture, JPs are able to realize how much in common they have with other Latinos; this was something they were not able to do in Peru, as there was no other culture to be used for comparison.

Ultimately, JPs in the U.S. almost always expressed a cultural connection not just to the Peruvians in the U.S., but the Latino community as a whole. Erika explained, "I think [what we have in common with Latinos] is a lot. I feel identified with the Latinos. Number one, is the language, but the music, the food, etc. In Peru, you feel more Japanese, here, you feel more Latino.... Here you are warmer. You are more open".



Joel also explained, “What happens is that our customs, even though we’re Japanese, and we’re very Japanese, we’re really more Latinos in our customs. I think I feel more comfortable around Latinos. I identify more with the Latino community”.

The U.S. context that JPs find themselves in drives them to identify more with Latinos as Latinos welcome them. The othering they experienced in Peru is reduced or non-existent for many. In addition to this, their ability to relate to Latino culture is a very strong factor that solidifies this identification.

#### *Japanese and Asian Identity*

To understand the reactions of Asians to JPs in the U.S., we must first recognize that speaking Spanish is enough to connect to most Latinos in California. In comparison, the different languages that Asian migrants import to the U.S. make it difficult for Asians to connect to one another on one single factor as language does for Latinos. This single factor is quite important, as without a common language, it is difficult to establish communications that are free flowing and long lasting. The concept of an Asian pan-ethnicity, where a heritage is believed to be shared, is only really possible in the U.S. as the second and third generations of Asian immigrants communicate in one single language (English). Therefore, it is difficult for most Asian immigrants to automatically develop a connection with other Asians unless this language barrier is broken. Because of this, when JPs reveal their Latino heritage and Spanish as their first language to other Asian immigrants, the inability to connect with them does not have a great impact as

Asian immigrants do not expect to be able to communicate with other Asians simply based on their phenotype.

When JPs reveal their Latino heritage to Japanese migrants this also holds true, as Japanese migrants are accustomed to meeting Japanese Americans who do not speak Japanese. Thus, it is not rare for Japanese migrants to meet other Japanese who cannot speak Japanese. Yet, the reactions that JPs receive from Japanese migrants in the U.S. are a lot less negative than the reactions they receive in Japan.

Their way of thinking is different. It's not like in Japan. The Japanese who leaves Japan has a different mentality. They're more open-minded. The way they treat you changes.... I don't know if it's only with me, or with other [workers] as well. I think that because I have a Japanese last name, it gives me priority over others.

Kenji, 41

Now, I think I do more Japanese things. I mean, at school, all my friends are Japanese. We go out to eat Japanese food, and look for jobs with Japanese companies, etc....

Jorge, 34

It is interesting to notice that some JPs describe the Japanese migrants in the U.S. as being different than the Japanese in Japan. The Japanese migrants in the U.S. are seen as less hostile and more welcoming. It is possible that Japanese migrants in the U.S. are more likely to relate to JPs as both groups now share a migrant experience as Japanese descendants living outside of Japan. While the Japanese in the U.S. might still not accept JPs as truly Japanese, they might see them as an ethnic group that is closer to themselves, and therefore favorable over all the other ethnic and racial groups in the U.S. Furthermore, in the U.S., Japanese migrants do not have the institutional power to back up the prejudice they held not only against JPs, but other Asian immigrants such as Koreans as well. It is completely plausible that Japanese migrants begin to find

commonalities with other Asian immigrants in America as they share the migrant experience.

These JPs can identify more with Japanese migrants as many of them who lived and worked in Japan have learned to speak Japanese, and are more acquainted with contemporary Japanese culture. The cases of Jorge and Angel exemplify this.

At the beginning, they think that I'm Japanese. Then later, I correct them, ...but they're impressed that I speak Japanese, and if they hear me speak Spanish, they're impressed as well... I think [they see me] as a Latino. Even now, they think that if you are not born in Japan, you're not Japanese.... I don't think that they [would accept me more in Japan] because being here, it's like they are also foreigners, and they try to open themselves up more.

Jorge, 34

The Japanese people, "How come you speak Spanish? How you can speak Japanese, too? And good at English?" It's a way different response, reaction. In Japan, it's like, "How come you look Japanese and you can't speak it? There's something weird about you". Right here [in the U.S.], you're getting a certain level of appreciation. Here's like, "Yeah, I speak Spanish". Over there [in Japan] it's weird.... So when I used to go to adult school here, all the Japanese students, "How come you have a [Spanish] name?" And then they start talking to me in Japanese, and they're all impressed. So they have a way better reaction. Even working at my old job [a Japanese restaurant], right? "How come that guy took our order in Japanese and is giving the order in Spanish to the kitchen people?"

Angel, 36

These narratives are particularly telling as they are two migrants who lived in Japan before migrating to the U.S. They were able to experience Japanese culture and become more acquainted with it. As they were both able to speak Japanese, they were accepted more by Japanese migrants in the U.S. This was a quality limited to the few JPs who spoke Japanese.

Although the Asian and Japanese identities of JPs grow in the U.S., they do not grow as much as the Peruvian and Latino ethnic identities. In order to first understand this, it is important to remember that, while in Peru, most JPs (who were of "full" Japanese descent) never had their Japanese ethnic identity questioned. In fact, this

identity was thrust upon them as an immediate consequence of being denied a “complete” Peruvian identity. They could not adopt such a Peruvian identity exactly because they were Japanese. Thus, the denial of a Peruvian identity consequently superimposed on them a Japanese one. In addition to this, the migration pattern from Japan to Peru was never continuous throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and there was never really a sizeable Japanese immigrant (Issei) population to provide a measuring stick to show JPs what the Japanese from Japan were really like. In other words, there were not enough native Japanese migrants in Peru to compare the cultural differences between the Japanese and the JPs. Lacking such a measuring stick, it was easy for JPs to consider themselves Japanese. For those who migrated directly from Peru to the U.S., the only consciousness of the ethnic disparity between themselves and the Japanese from Japan was based on testimonies heard from family members and friends who experienced this ethnic gap in Japan as *dekasegis*. While those who never went to Japan were aware of the racism experienced by *dekasegis*, they never quite experienced such racism directly, and thus, could not be as strongly impacted by it. As a result, JPs who migrated directly to the U.S. arrive with a somewhat well developed Japanese ethnic identity. Yet, despite having such an identity, these JPs find it difficult to strengthen ties to the Japanese community due to the language barriers they encounter.

The connections that these JPs do make are often based on distant pre-existing family relationships in which the language barrier remains a major obstacle to overcome. Another way in which the connections to the Japanese community are made in the U.S. is through employment. Many are able to find jobs as laborers in Japanese restaurants,

markets and companies in the U.S. They are often seen as manual labor the same way in which Latinos in the U.S. are, but they are seen as favorable labor in that their Japanese heritage is perceived to dispel the stereotypes that employers might dislike and associate with Latinos. Thus, the same stereotypes of being honest and trustworthy that were held in Peru, are held in U.S. society to a certain degree. However, because of the remaining language barrier, it is difficult for JPs to connect with their Japanese employers at a truly intimate level.

Regardless of this, when JPs do encounter Japanese folks in the U.S., they do recognize a cultural difference between themselves and the Japanese. Patricia explained, “Maybe it’s because there’s more Japanese here. You see the difference here more than in Peru, because there’s not many Japanese in Peru for you to tell the difference. So here, I identify myself more as Peruvian”. Cristina also explained,

I don't think [I identify with the Japanese] because they're not JP. But they're nothing really close enough to me except that. They're Japanese, but even then, we're special. We lived in Peru, but we're Japanese. So I don't really expect them to kind of know. [They're] just like another person to me.

When JPs encounter Japanese Americans, it is difficult to relate to them as well.

Japanese Americans are for the most part understood to be more American than Japanese.

Thus, whatever connection might be made through a Japanese lineage tends to be

trumped by the distance JPs feel towards American culture and society. Take Erika’s

case, “I think there’s things like mannerisms that we have that are more like the Latino.

That warmth [of Latinos] is not found in a Japanese American. They are more American.

They’re colder, and less intimate”.

Japanese-Peruvians coming to the U.S. directly from Peru, while not encountering much resistance to their Japanese identities, do react to finding the ethnic measuring sticks by which to judge their own Japaneseness. They find Japanese immigrants in California who they cannot quite relate to or connect with largely due to the language barrier. Even if these JPs do learn how to speak English, it would be difficult to connect with Japanese migrants who do not. Yet, if there are Japanese migrants who do speak English, these are likely to be identified as Japanese Americans and not really as Japanese. All this makes it difficult for JPs to connect with the Japanese community in the U.S. and truly feel as if they are integrated into it. When comparing this to how JPs are a lot more readily accepted by Latinos in the U.S., it is easy to understand why their ethnic identities incline towards the Latino side more so than the Japanese/Asian side.

While issues of identity are definitely connected to the communities people are imbedded in, it is important to point out a disconnect between the two in the case of JPs. Japanese-Peruvians in the U.S. tend to identify more, or completely, with Latinos and the Latino community. However, while their connections to such a community have grown stronger with their migration to the U.S., it would be a mistake to assume that they have become completely integrated into the Latino community. The data gathered from the respondents is not consistent enough to make such claim. Although some JPs seem to have become more imbedded into networks with Latinos, most JPs speak of their ties to Latinos as having become stronger than they were in comparison to Peru. In reality, most JPs have not developed numerous intimate connections to the Latino communities. These ties to the Latino communities are for the most part secondary to the ties JPs retain

within their own ethnic group. Thus, JPs' connection to the Latino community must not be understood in absolute terms, but instead in comparison to their previous experiences in Peru and Japan. Just as well, while many JPs have become integrated in the Japanese community through economic ties and employment, their connection and identification with the Japanese and Japanese-American communities are relatively limited to that.

Most JPs who migrate to the U.S. experience a stronger connection to Latinos than they did in Peru. Their interpretation of what it means to be Latino changes in the U.S. as they are able to recognize the similarities they have to other Latinos in an American context (e.g. language, culture, etc.). Japanese-Peruvians who migrate to the U.S. via Japan find that they are more readily accepted by the Japanese in the U.S. than they were in the Japan, allowing them to identify more as Japanese. What we find, then, is that although not all JPs experience a growth in both their Japanese and Peruvian identities, both identities are emancipated from the limits placed on them by Japanese and Peruvian *ethnic requirements* in each country respectively. As such, their identification as Japanese, Peruvian, or both is highly a function of choice as opposed to limitations to and impositions of identities when compared to their situations in Peru and Japan.

### *Ethnic Options*

One of the most peculiar aspects of the JP experience in the U.S. is the mobility they exercise through a continuum between Asian and Latino ethnicities. Their claims to both ethnicities are based on their race and their culture respectively. Herein, we may refer to Mary Waters' (1990) work on ethnic options where ethnic identities are considered in flux according to the situation that a person finds her/himself in. However,

in Waters' work, the ethnic options of white individuals in the U.S. were based on privilege that allowed them to change identities. In the case of JPs, the ethnic options are available because they possess Asian qualifiers (i.e. phenotype) and Latino qualifiers (e.g. culture, language, birthplace, etc.). Thus, their options are not based on privileges, but on actual legitimate claims to these ethnicities in the U.S.

Japanese-Peruvians can present themselves as more Asian or Latino depending on the situations and people they encounter. They often take advantage of their Asian phenotype in situations involving work and business. Reaping the benefits of stereotypes of Asians being smart and good workers puts them in a position where they are seen as favorable over Latino workers who encounter stereotypes of being lazy and incompetent. Japanese-Peruvians have relatively more options to escape such stereotypes as they are literally seen as Asian. Cristobal and Claudia speak of how they can use their Japanese ethnicity to succeed in work and business.

*Interviewer:* You play it up?

*Cristobal:* Yeah. Yeah.

*Interviewer:* What do you do?

*Cristobal:* Yeah. When they ask what other [skills]? I bring that up. I speak Japanese, I can bring patients, talk to clients. People put computer savvy; I put Japanese savvy.

*Interviewer:* When you [go] to an interview you know you're gonna bring that up? Does it make you a lot more confident?

*Cristobal:* Yeah, and it has helped me, too. Because they look at you in a different way and I also bring up the fact that I lived in Japan. I lived in different cultures, and I guess they like to see that.

*Interviewer:* Because you're not just multilingual, you're multicultural?

*Cristobal:* Exactly.

Cristobal, 29, Japanese, Peruvian and Chinese descent

No. Because, I think, that apparently, he who sees us thinks that we're Asian. For example, my husband is a gardener, and he writes that he's a Japanese gardener because it's better accepted. And yes, the clients treat us well.

Claudia, 54



Yet, while being able to present themselves as Asian, they also hold the highly desirable quality of speaking Spanish in California. Employers may see JPs as a unique and ideal type of worker whereby they reap the benefits of hiring somebody who can interact with California's growing Latino population without having to confront the doubts and fears generated by anti-Latino stereotypes.

The ethnic options that JPs exercise can be put into use in many situations such as dating and socializing as well.

When you want to become friends with a Latino, you're more Peruvian. When I met my ex-girlfriend's family, I presented myself as Peruvian.... So I could feel the same as them. If I go into a Latina's house, I present myself as Latino. If I went out with Americans, I would present myself as Nikkei. But with Latinos, I present myself as Peruvian to be accepted.

Marcos, 28

When I'm with my Latino friends, they're all Catholic, so they're like, "You're Catholic, you should go to church with us". When it's Easter Sunday, they're like, "Do you want to go to church? And then we're gonna have a picnic". So when I was with them, I kind of felt, "I'm all about God", and then when I was with my Asian friends, it was like... "You should really look into Buddhism". It started becoming like if I'm with certain person, I had to change myself to be like them.

Cristina, 19, Japanese and Peruvian descent

Marcos is able to change his presentation of self from one ethnicity to another as he sees fit. This is an ethnic mobility that might be compared to culture as a tool kit whereby one's culture is used as a set of resources to be employed in different settings (Swidler 1986). In Cristina's case we also find that she can switch from one ethnicity to another. Although she expresses pressure to change herself as she changes social circles, her ability to do so exemplifies the ethnic option.

Understanding the relative freedom to adopt either an Asian or Latino identity at will also helps us understand why JPs may see the U.S. as the ideal racial context in which to live in. This freedom to exercise these options does not exist in the same way in

either Peru or Japan where each nation develops ethnic boundaries that exclude JPs from asserting their Japanese and Peruvian heritages respectively.

*American Identity: Young Migrants and the U.S. Born*

The JPs who grow up in the U.S. have a different experience that shapes their identity. Most JPs who are born in the U.S. and some of those who migrated as children have an investment in an American identity. Japanese-Peruvians who arrive as adults have already for the most part established their identities as Japanese, Peruvian, both, or neither. They hold little desire to be identified as Americans by U.S. society. For many JPs who grew up in the U.S., being identified as American is important and helps shape their ethnic identity.

...I'm an American because I was born here, first of all, and I grew up with... we don't celebrate 4th of July anywhere else, but here. Memorial day, same thing. A lot of the traditions that Americans grew up with, I grew up with. It's always been a part of my life, you know. I've always been a hamburger/hot dog kind of person, too. Watching baseball, football, you know, just be an American. It's hard to explain, I guess. I have always considered myself to be American, just cause I was born and raised here. But besides that, I'm Peruvian. My background... I'm Peruvian, but I was born here, so I say I'm American, you know. Because I could be the president because I'm American, I was born here. That's in the constitution. I was born here, educated here; I'm eligible to become president. You can't do that unless you're an American. That's the biggest thing. I could become an astronaut because I'm an American. That's what I identify with being American. I do consider myself an American

Omar, 23, Japanese and Peruvian descent

I wanted to be more Americanized when I was in high school. I think that was when, you know... when I saw myself... I knew that my parents didn't have money and the socio economic background, I felt very separated from my friends. And also, the language barrier of my parents, and the type of work that they did compared to what my friends' parents did. So I wanted to be more American and I wanted to be more white. So I started listening to different music and going to rock concerts and stuff like that. I think because I wanted to fit in with my friends more.

Maricela, 30

I guess, probably maybe in high school [I felt more American]. Yeah. When you try to belong, you know... 'cause I tried harder, and I felt like I accomplished it. Yeah, I think I did in high school, because I started hanging out with my Asian friends, and my friend that looks Hispanic, but since she doesn't speak Spanish, I'm hanging out with people

who spoke English now, and, yeah... Those were my close friends. So even the other friends I made we all spoke English, we didn't speak Spanish.

Mitsue, 25, Japanese and Peruvian descent

For young JPs being raised in the U.S., American identity comes not only intuitively as it does for Omar who identifies as American because he does American things, but also it becomes a goal that must be reached in order to be accepted as it does for Maricela and Mitsue. In each case, both are trying to distance themselves from their immigrant backgrounds. In Maricela's case, this happened as she was embarrassed of her parents' socio-economic status, and for Mitsue, this happened as she did not want to be considered an immigrant who did not speak English.

However, for JPs, being able to identify themselves as American is a task that demands that the mainstream definition of "American" be reformulated. In each of these cases, whiteness must be excluded from the definition in order to include themselves in it.

To feel American is to be part of the culture. Like, I can't think of one thing, like Myspace and texting, but pop culture. I'm really into pop culture.... I guess just being into pop culture. Watching movies. There's certain movies like *The Breakfast Club*. And like, that makes me feel American because I do a lot of those things, and I like American food, hamburgers, hot dogs... big country fairs, ferris wheels. I know I like things like that. To be American, it's hard to say because we're not supposed to be like... it's a country of immigrants, right? People think that being American is like being a hick. But that's not what American is. If you go anywhere, there's different people of color. It's a rainbow of people all the time. So the only thing that makes me American is that I was born here, and that I'm into the culture. That's what makes me American.

Cristina, 19, Japanese and Peruvian descent

The American that I am, of course, is a very different American than a white person is. But my definition of American is you're a mutt, and that's what you are and be proud of it.

Carrie, 24, Japanese and Peruvian descent

I don't feel American, but I know that I am. Maybe not mainstream American, or white middle class American, but I'm more American than I am Peruvian.... I speak the language. I probably had certain customs that most Peruvians don't. I wouldn't be able to name them right now, but I'm sure there's some.

Eric, 25, Japanese and Peruvian descent

From these narratives, we can derive that JPs are very aware of the limits to their American ethnicity. They qualify their definitions of American by clearly extricating its whiteness component because they understand that they cannot identify as American if the current definition of American is not defied. They exercise agency to identify as American and surpass the limits placed on their ethnic identity by the American ethnicity requirement of being white, and they do this by redefining American ethnicity for themselves.

Yet, not all JPs attempt to identify themselves as American. As they find Americanness as irrevocably tied to whiteness, attempting to identify with it is seen as a lost cause, as Carrie, a 24-year-old of Japanese and Peruvian descent explains, “[I didn’t identify as American] because I felt American meant white. I felt it meant blond and tall and skinny, and tanned”.

Many of them are only able to come to terms with their American culture and upbringing as they travel back to Peru and encounter Peruvian people and society. This experience takes the shape of a culture clash in which these JPs not only realize that they are a lot less Peruvian than they originally thought, and simultaneously a lot more American than they realized. This experience is quite complex, as some reported that while traveling to Peru forced them to recognize a cultural disconnect, it also made them feel closer to their roots. Many of the JPs who travel back to Peru come back to the U.S. with a sense that they are now closer to their Peruvian roots even if they had to realize how American they were. It is not difficult to understand that one who has actually been in Peru has a more legitimate claim to Peruvianness than one who has not. Having

touched Peruvian soil, been around Peruvian people, and experienced the culture first hand, one is able to learn more about one's Peruvian roots. Thus, objectively, we might say, one comes back as more Peruvian than before the traveling occurred. At the same time, subjectively, one is able to better gauge how much further they have to go in order to truly master Peruvian culture. Even though one learns more about Peruvian culture while traveling, one also learns how little they actually know about it.

The language barrier [makes me feel American in Peru]. I can speak Spanish, but not educated Spanish.... It's a different culture. It's so chaotic, the cars, the traffic, the kids selling stuff on the streets. It's just completely different than how it is here. That's where I feel very American because I don't see that every day.

Maricela, 30

[Going to Peru] was kind of weird that way. I didn't feel like I was Peruvian. That's when I realized I was more American than Peruvian, I guess, and that's when I became ok, with thinking ok, I'm an American.

Eric, 27, Japanese and Peruvian descent

For Carrie, going to Peru was not necessary to come to realize how American she was. Simply going abroad was enough.

I was born in Peru, and... I'm half Japanese, half Peruvian, but lived in America. So they're like, "ok, so you're American". "No, I'm not". So you try to identify yourself as who you want people to portray you, but in the end it's just like how other people look at you anyway. Really, what you think of yourself doesn't matter as long as it doesn't affect how you act, and things like that. So, when I was abroad, I was purely American. As to where they didn't see anything else beyond.... I was having this identity complex, and I said, "You know what? Alright you French people, I'm American, leave it at that. Leave me alone". It was just one of those things, "Yeah, I'm American".

Carrie, 24, Japanese and Peruvian descent

The topic of American identity exposes that while JPs who arrive as adults experience more freedom in their ethnic identification, it is not due to the inexistence of limits to ethnic identification in the U.S. What we learn from the experiences of JPs who grow up in the U.S. is that it is not that these limits do not exist, but rather that they are placed somewhere else. In the case of the U.S., there is relatively little privilege that is

gained by Americans from putting limits onto what counts as Latino and what counts as Asian ethnicities. The main privilege that is protected is whiteness, and this privilege is protected by creating a definition of American ethnicity that is strongly grounded on a white racial status. Thus, there are few institutional restrictions in place that limit JPs' claims to both Asian and Latino ethnicity. This is not to say that JPs have complete freedom to identify as what they wish without restrictions. This only compares the rigidity of the ethnic boundaries curtailing their ethnic choice in the U.S. as opposed to Peru and Japan. While we might be tempted to say that what the JPs experience in the U.S. is evidence that it is a less racist country than Peru or Japan, we should recognize that the ethnic boundaries that are relevant to JP identity have simply shifted with the new context. This is revealed by the experiences of JPs who grew up in the U.S., and their struggles with identifying as Americans by having to reformulate the meaning of the word.

#### *Summation on Agency*

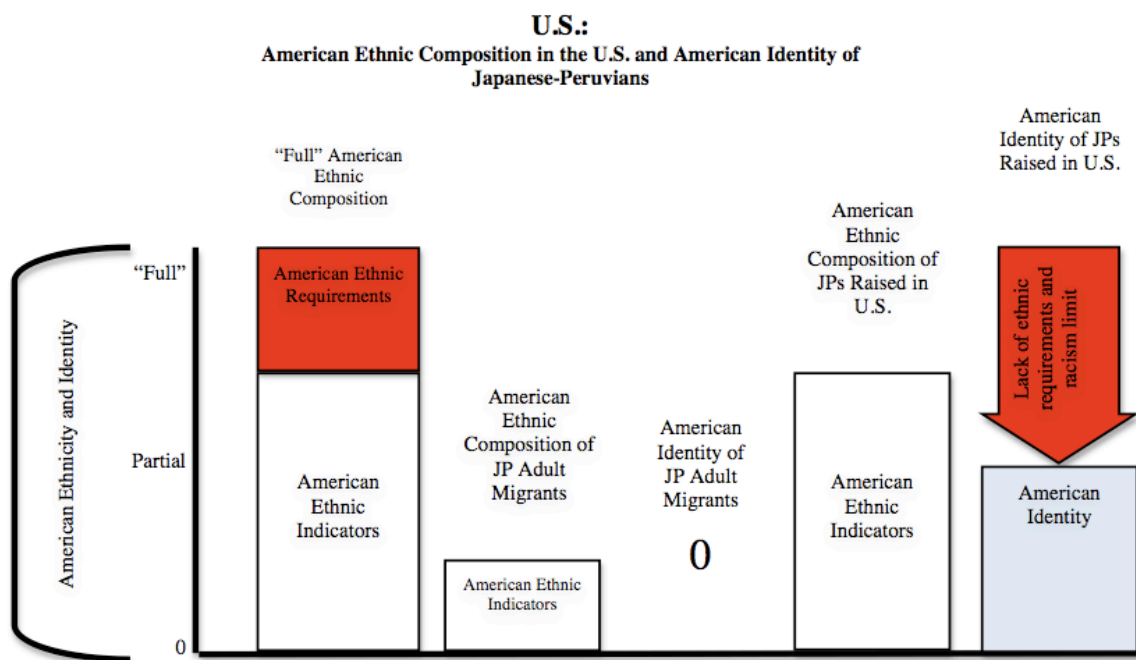
Japanese-Peruvians in the U.S. are more accepted as both Japanese and Peruvian by Asian and Latinos (including Japanese and Peruvian people) in the U.S. This facilitates their ability to identify more strongly with both ethnicities. Japanese-Peruvians tend to identify more as Latinos than as Asian in the U.S. This is strongly due to becoming aware of the cultural commonalities they share with Latinos in the U.S. Japanese-Peruvians have some ethnic mobility between their Asian and Latino ethnicities that produces opportunities to exercise ethnic options to further themselves in the spheres of employment, business and the social world. The experiences of JPs who are born in

the U.S. or migrate at a young age reveal that limits are placed on JPs' American identities.

### Stacked Bar Model in the United States

*American Ethnic Composition in the U.S. and American Identity of Japanese-Peruvians*

**Figure 5.1**



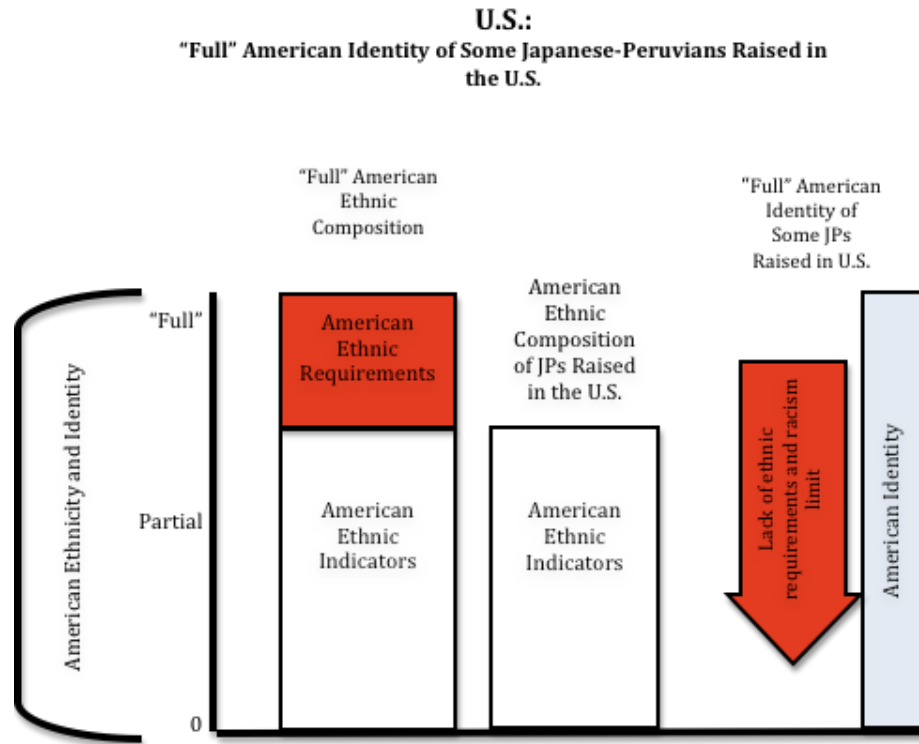
This bar graph compares the construction of “full” American ethnic composition to the actual American ethnic composition of JP adult migrants and JPs who were raised in the U.S. Japanese-Peruvian adult migrants are shown to have few American *ethnic indicators* (-N,-S) as it is more difficult for adults to become fully integrated into American culture, language and institutions. In comparison, JPs who were raised in the U.S. are shown to have most American *ethnic indicators* as they are thoroughly socialized in an American society. As such, they speak English fluently, understand

American culture and its institutions. Yet, their American ethnic composition is shown to be limited as they might not possess some American *ethnic requirements* (+N,-S) that impede their claim to “full” American ethnicity. In this case, the most notable *ethnic requirement* they lacked was whiteness.

The bar graph above compares the American identities of JPs to the construction of the “full” American ethnic composition and the individuals’ actual collection of American *ethnic indicators* (-N,-S). The American identity of JP adult migrants is shown as zero (0) to reflect their indifference towards claiming an American identity. Most adult migrants had pre-developed ethnic identities when they arrived in the U.S., which might explain why they do not identify as American if they follow a pie-chart-mentality in which if you identify with one ethnicity, you cannot identify with another. The American identity of those raised in the U.S. is shown on the far right of the graph being pushed down by the red arrow representing the American *ethnic requirements* (+N,-S) they lack. Of these, the data shows that, whiteness is the most prominent ethnic trait that inhibited their American ethnic identities. The range of levels of identifying as American for those raised in the U.S. was large. Some did not identify as American at all, which would change their identity bar to zero and would be similar to the identities of the adult migrants. Some identified as American, but had to redefine that definition to exclude whiteness from it.



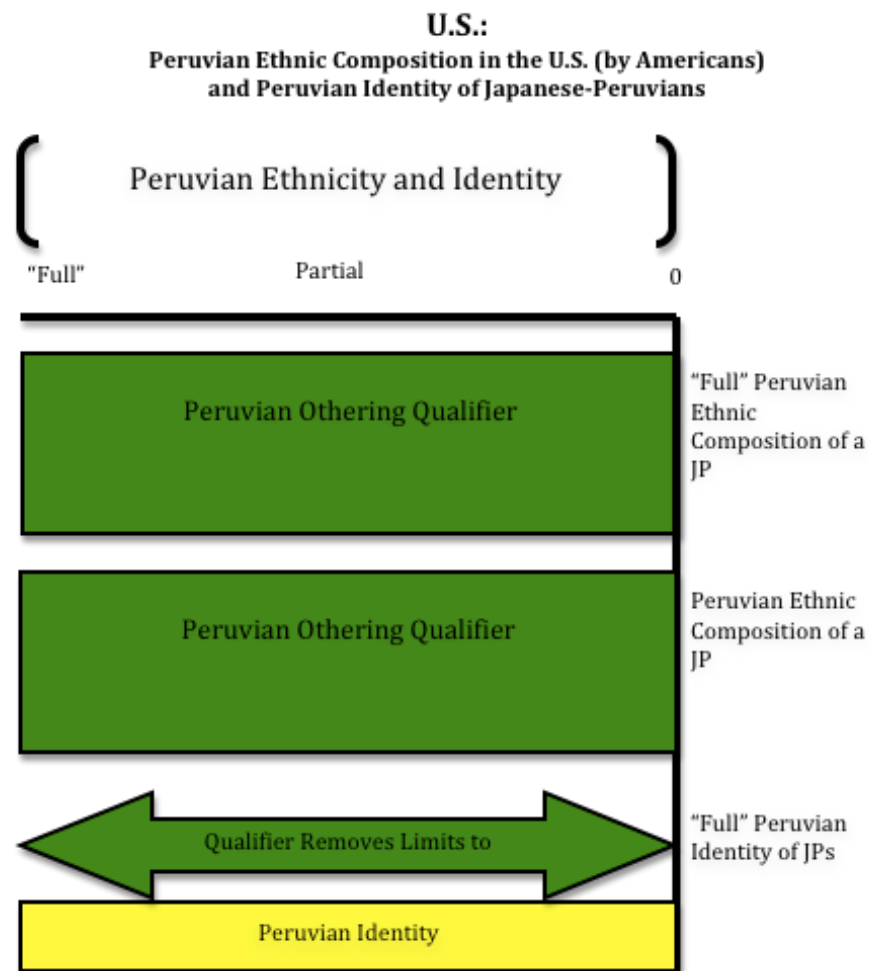
Figure 5.2



In their particular case, the identity of JPs who were raised in the U.S. and who identified as American is shown as surpassing their own American ethnic composition made up of *ethnic indicators* (-N,-S). Their American identities made up the gap created by their lack of American *ethnic requirements* (+N,-S) to reach "full" American identity potential. The red arrow pushing down on their identity represents the racism and the *ethnic requirement* limits being surpassed. The agency that JPs show in this graph is that of redefining American ethnicity for themselves in such a way that their lack of white skin becomes irrelevant to their American identity.

*Peruvian Ethnic Composition in the U.S. (by Americans) and Peruvian Identity of Japanese-Peruvians*

**Figure 5.3**



This bar shows that Peruvian ethnicity is constructed by American society to simply mean that one is born in Peru or to Peruvian parents in the U.S. The construction of Peruvian ethnicity in the U.S. is governed by *othering ethnic qualifiers* (-N,+S), which are represented in green bars. In reality, most of American society has very little knowledge of Peru and its culture, and therefore a clear conceptual image of what a

Peruvian looks like and how she/he acts is not well defined. Peruvian ethnicity in the U.S. is simply lumped into the Latino panethnicity. As such, Peruvians are understood to be Latino in the U.S., but this does not deny them a Peruvian ethnicity. Restrictions are not made regarding how Latino or what kind of Latino a person is within the *othering qualifiers* (-N,+S) of speaking Spanish or having a Latino phenotype. It is, in fact, relatively easy for JPs to claim a Latino heritage in the U.S. without having Americans question it.

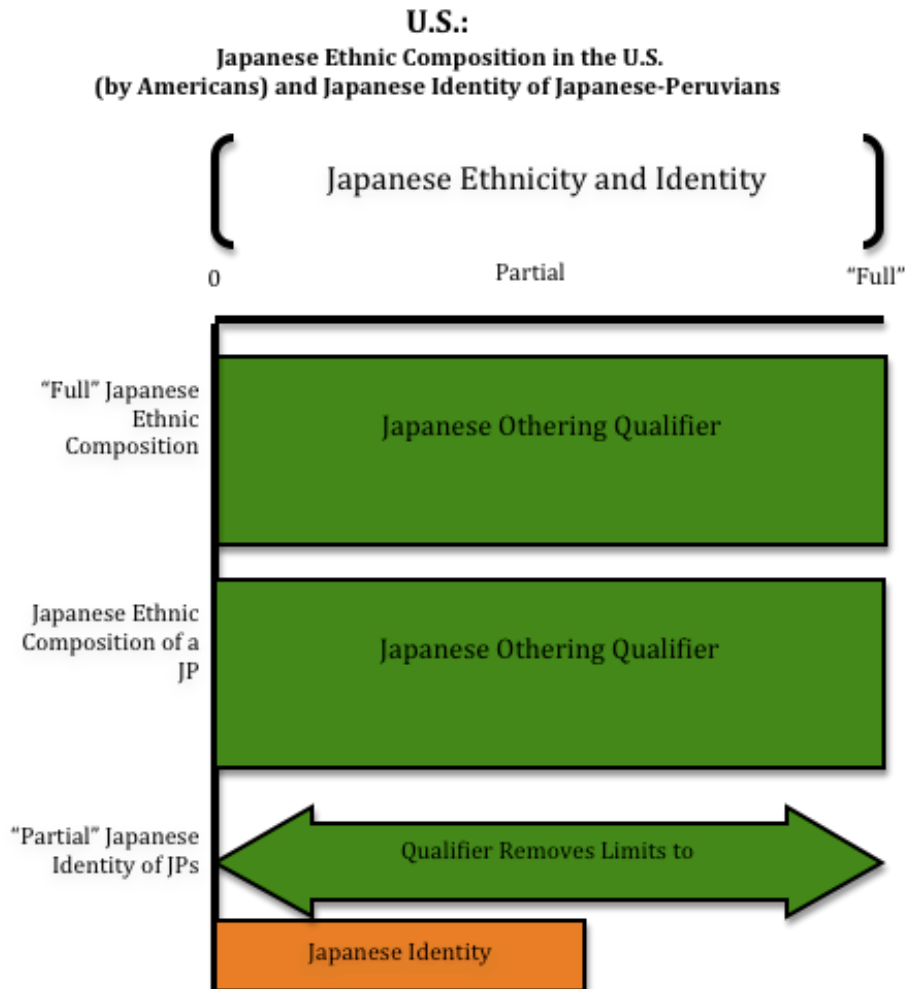
Because JPs do possess the *othering qualifier* of being born in Peru or to Peruvian parents, their Peruvian ethnic composition mirrors the definition of “full” Peruvian ethnic composition created in the U.S. They are both represented by green bars reaching the “full” potential because of the *sufficient* (+S) nature of the *othering qualifiers* that govern the definition of Peruvian ethnicity in the U.S. In other words, JPs are “full” Peruvians because they possess the othering qualifying ethnic trait of being born in Peru or to Peruvian parents. American society will basically accept/brand anybody with these traits as Peruvian.

The way this affects JPs’ ethnic identity in the U.S., is that it allows Peruvian/Latino identity to surge. Defining Peruvian ethnicity through qualifiers removes the limits to Peruvian ethnicity that JPs faced in Peru. Whereas in Peru, JPs were unable to meet the *ethnic requirement* of having a Peruvian acceptable phenotype, in the U.S. they can identify as Peruvian simply based on their birthplace or culture. Most JPs expressed that they strongly identified as Peruvians and Latinos in the U.S., something they were not able to do as freely in Peru. Furthermore, JPs reported being

easily accepted by Latinos in the U.S. In addition, as JPs migrated to the U.S., the distance they found towards American and Japanese culture solidified their identities as Latinos.

*Japanese Ethnic Composition in the U.S. (by Americans) and Japanese Identity of Japanese-Peruvians*

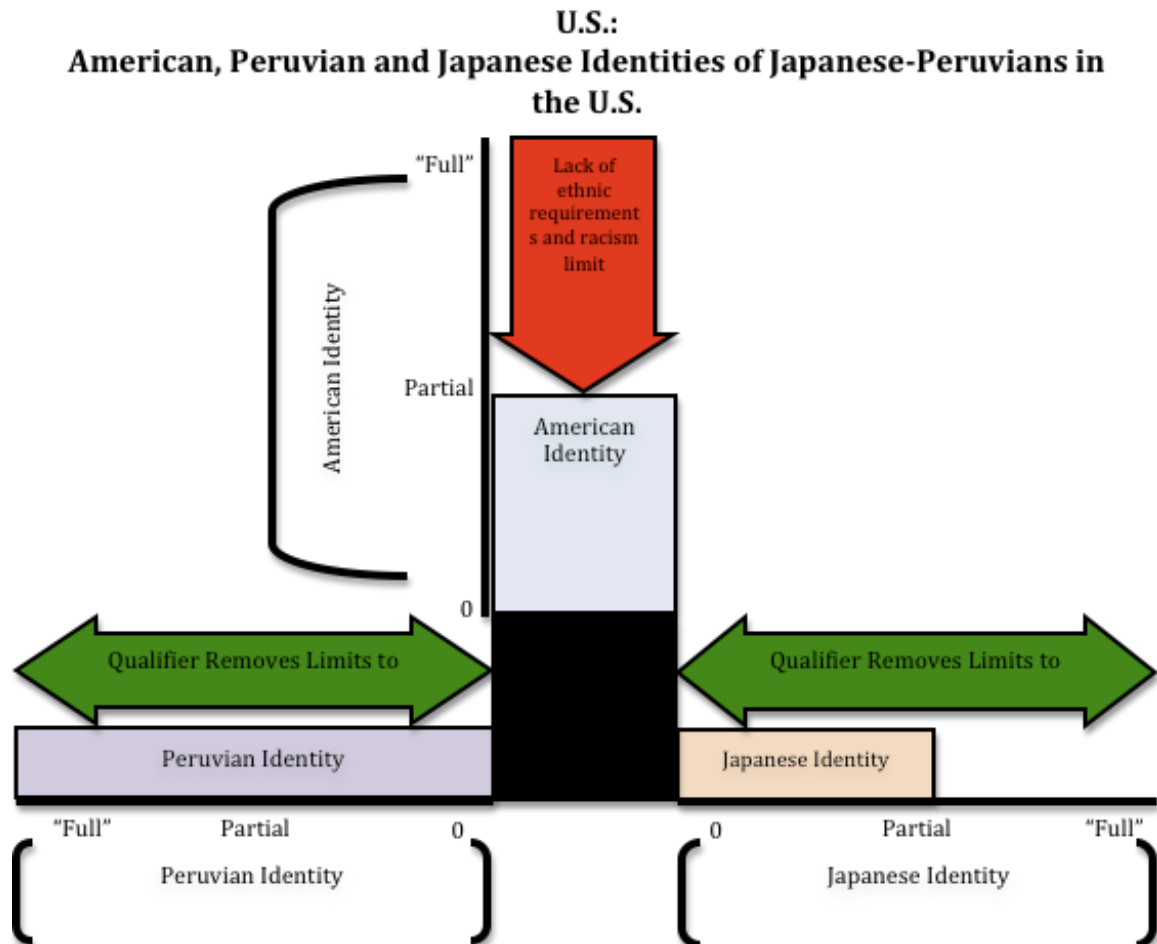
**Figure 5.4**



Similarly to the way in which Peruvian ethnicity is constructed in the U.S., Japanese ethnicity in the U.S. is also constructed through the use of *othering qualifiers* (-N,+S).

Japanese-Peruvians qualified as Peruvian simply due to one ethnic trait (birthplace), and they qualified as Japanese also through one trait, race. In the American construction of Japanese and Peruvian ethnicities, it is not difficult for JPs to identify as either since *othering qualifiers* (-N,+S), which are by nature inclusive, govern both ethnicities. The way in which this affected JPs' Japanese identity is that it allowed it grow or shrink at will. Most JPs did not experience an increase in their Japanese identity. This is partly due to their employment of the pie-chart-mentality that mandated that as they identified more as Peruvians, their Japanese identities would shrink. However, for JPs who migrated to the U.S. after Japan, a resurgence of Japanese identity was likely to be experienced as they find that in the U.S. they are more accepted as Japanese, something denied to them in Japan. Their abilities are praised as some are fluent in Japanese, English and Spanish. These migrants were more likely to experience a surge in both their Peruvian and Japanese identities as neither their Peruvian nor Japanese ethnicities faced ethnic restrictions as in Peru and Japan, respectively. This is a key finding, as it illustrates the fallacy of the pie-chart-mentality under which the growth of both identities simultaneously would be impossible.

Figure 5.5



This SBM shows the three identities of JPs living in the U.S. with the ethnic traits that govern them. American identity, in the middle, is governed by *ethnic requirements* (+N,-S) that limit the American ethnicity of JPs and pressure down their American identity. The Peruvian identity on the left is governed by *othering qualifiers* (-N,+S) that remove limits to Peruvian ethnicity and allow JPs to identify as Peruvian freely. As shown, JPs' Peruvian identity reaches its "full" potential as Latinos accept Peruvians in the U.S. and their Peruvian ethnicity is hardly questioned. The times in which it is

questioned, JPs are well equipped to defend their claims to Peruvian identity, and are able to maintain such identity intact. Japanese identity is also governed by *othering qualifiers* (-N,+S) that remove restrictions to their Japanese identity. However, most JPs do not “fully” identify as Japanese in the U.S. even though they actually can. Because of this, their Japanese identities are shown as partial. This consolidated SBM allows us to visualize the dynamics that give birth to a JPs’ ethnic identity in the U.S. It also helps us understand the reasons behind the “ambiguous” identity findings that Ayumi Takenaka (2000) first discussed. The ambiguity in the identity of JPs stems from the lifting of restrictions from their Japanese and Peruvian identities. With the removal of such limits, JPs obtain an unprecedented ethnic mobility that allows them not only to identify as they feel proper, but also to use their ethnicities as tool kits to their convenience in the social and economic spheres. Japanese-Peruvians in the U.S. discover they have ethnic options that were unavailable in Peru where they were not accepted as Peruvian and Japan where they were not accepted as Japanese. In the U.S., they are more likely to be accepted as both.

Being accepted as both Japanese and Peruvian creates a particular situation in which, unlike in Peru and Japan, their Japanese and Peruvian ethnicities are not in conflict with one another. Here is the main refute of the pie-chart-mentality. Most discussions on ethnic identity are contextualized between no more than two ethnicities at odds with each other; yet, the case of JPs in the U.S. presents a clear case in which Japanese and Peruvian ethnicities can fluctuate independently from each other.

The ethnic options that are available to JPs in the U.S. are a blessing as they solve the problems of exclusion that JPs felt in Peru and Japan. Yet, the only reason this is possible is not because *ethnic requirements* have disappeared, but because they have been transferred to protect the privilege of a different population that is neither Peruvian nor Japanese, but American. In regards to their ethnic identity, adult migrant JPs do not feel the effects of the transfer of these *ethnic requirements*. The American *ethnic requirements* put restrictions on an ethnicity most adult migrant JPs do not seek access to in terms of their ethnic identification (unlike some JPs who were raised in the U.S.). Ultimately, the bliss that JPs experience as restrictions to their Peruvian and Japanese identities are removed comes at the cost that the generations of JPs raised in the U.S. will pay as they are denied “full” American ethnicity.



## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION**

### **Summary of Japanese-Peruvian Ethnic Identities as Analyzed Through the Stacked Bar Model**

The goals of this project were:

1. To understand the formation of JPs' national ethnic identities across Peru, Japan and the U.S. by analyzing data from 40 in-depth interviews with JPs living in the U.S., and
2. To develop and explain the SBM as a new analytical system by which to understand the national ethnic identities of migrants

Through the previous chapters, this thesis has strived to accomplish these two goals simultaneously by following the migrations of JPs from Peru to Japan and ending in the U.S. Each chapter was written and organized to add to the complexity and comprehensiveness of the SBM. Each chapter also aimed to illustrate the employment of the four principles of the SBM to show not only how it operates, but what's more, to show why the development of the SBM was necessary.

The use of the SBM to analyze JPs' experiences in Peru was not very useful in refuting the pie-chart-mentality. It was most commonly found that JPs tended to identify as Japanese and simultaneously not as Peruvian. Because not much evidence against the pie-chart-mentality was found in this set of experiences, the treatment of ethnic identities as separate ordinal variables was only partly useful. What we find is that most JPs in Peru adopt the discrete approach of the pie-chart-mentality whereby one's identity is reduced to a discrete categorical variable, and whereby only a single attribute would

qualify as an acceptable value. As such, most JPs in Peru identified as Japanese, and this intuitively meant that they did not identify as Peruvian. The analyzing of JPs' ethnicity through the lens of ideal types of ethnic traits was fruitful. The Peruvian ethnic composition and identity of JPs in Peru was governed by the *ethnic requirements* that limited JPs' Peruvian ethnicity. The requirement they lacked was having an acceptable Peruvian phenotype. This was communicated to JPs by labels such as *chino*, and through the racist incidents from WWII, and more recently, Fujimori's presidential run. The *othering ethnic qualifier* of possessing a Japanese phenotype governed the Japanese ethnicity and identity of JPs in Peru. Thus, JPs were without restrictions to their Japanese ethnicity or Japanese ethnic identity. Japanese-Peruvians identified strongly as Japanese in part because of its positive image and the privileges that were derived from it. Thus, in the endeavor of identifying the *ethnic requirements* and *ethnic othering qualifiers* (principle 3), and the task of understanding how these affected the Japanese and Peruvian ethnic identities of JPs, the model was useful.

The use of the SBM to analyze JPs' experiences in Japan was slightly more useful in refuting the pie-chart-mentality, as we begin to see that with this migration some JPs do not identify more as Peruvian simply because a Japanese identity was denied to them. For examples such as this, the treatment of Peruvian and Japanese ethnic identities as separate ordinal variables was extremely useful as it allowed these identities to shrink independently of each other. In Japan, JPs' Japanese ethnic composition and identity were governed by *ethnic restrictions* based on their *gaijin* status as foreigners, and on their non-Japanese culture. The othering seemed to be absolute as most JPs reacted by

establishing a Peruvian identity and refusing to identify as Japanese in this context. The *othering ethnic qualifier* of being born in Peru governed the Peruvian ethnicity and identity of JPs in Japan. In Japan, this was all that was needed in order to be considered Peruvian. The result of this, in addition to being denied a Japanese identity was that a drastic shift towards identifying as Peruvian for most. This was possible without much difficulty, as in Japan the *ethnic requirements* that governed Peruvian ethnicity in Peru were non-existent. The data on Japan was able to move the SBM forward by providing data to reject the pie-chart-mentality, and by providing an example to show how the SBM helps track the dynamics that command changes in the identities of JPs.

The use of the SBM to analyze the data on JPs' experiences in the U.S. was the most fruitful. Inversely, the data of JPs' experiences in the U.S. was the most useful in bringing forward the SBM's theoretical and methodological strengths. First, the pie-chart-mentality was strongly refuted as the Japanese and Peruvian identities in the U.S. were able to simultaneously grow for many. This was mainly possible due to having these two identities be simultaneously governed by *ethnic othering qualifiers* that placed no restrictions on their Japanese and Peruvian ethnicities and identities. In the U.S., most JPs' Peruvian identity surged as they were able to identify with Latinos and be accepted by them. The Japanese identity did not grow as much, but for many who lived in Japan, it did as they were more accepted by the Japanese in the U.S. Most JPs did not report experiencing racism in the U.S., as they compared these to the racism they experienced in Peru and/or Japan. They did report having unprecedented ethnic options to identify as either Japanese or Peruvian and to use these ethnicities conveniently in social spheres as

well as in their businesses or employment. Japanese-Peruvian adult migrants did not possess an American identity to be governed by *ethnic requirements*, but JPs raised in the U.S. did. The data on these JPs showed that many found it difficult to identify as American, as they understood whiteness to be part of the common definition of American ethnicity. However, many JPs raised in the U.S. did identify as American, but were mostly able to do so by redefining for themselves the meaning of the term to exclude whiteness.

The SBM was born out of the analysis of JPs' experience in the U.S. It was this data set that demanded a new systematic form of analysis. After all, it is not difficult to understand why JPs would identify as Japanese in Peru and as Peruvians in Japan. The troubling question was why are their identities so ambiguous in the U.S.? The answer to this was found by scrutinizing the identities of JPs in Japan and Peru, we are not forced to break out of the pie-chart-mentality, because their identities make sense. Looking at the identities of JPs in the U.S. forces us to question the lack of a clear identification. This thesis uses Takenaka's (2000) concept of ambiguous identities only to describe the ethnic identity of the community as a whole, but not for individuals. The reason for this is that JPs can identify in many different ways, and do so with conviction. The result of this, paradoxically, is an ethnic community in which individual members identify differently from each other. Japanese-Peruvians can identify differently from each other in the U.S. because ethnic *othering qualifiers*, which by nature remove the limits to the ethnic identities they govern, govern their Japanese and Peruvian identities. Thus, while one JP may identify more as Peruvian and another more as Japanese, it is the shared experience

of occupying a unique ethnic location where they have ethnic options that is the most significant factor. In this location, JPs can choose to identify with one identity and not the other, but this is the result of a choice rather than a result of restrictions on one identity or the other.

The SBM finds a unique strength in its ability to help us analyze the ethnicities, ethnic compositions and ethnic identities of JPs both synchronically and diachronically. By graphing stacked bars to compare JPs' ethnic composition as it compares to "full" national ethnicities and ethnic identities, we can stop time and analyze the relationship between these concepts. We can see how an incomplete ethnic composition correlates with a low ethnic identity. However, by supplementing these SBM graphs with the words of the respondents we are able to track how these identities shift with changes of time and space in a diachronic manner. The bar graphs of the SBM show us the dynamics between JPs' ethnicity, ethnic composition and ethnic identity may look like at two different points in time, and the narratives of the respondents help us fill the voids between these two points in time. They help us explain the processes and reasons why ethnic identities change from the pre-migration point to the post-migration point while the bar graphs complete the picture by representing the changes in racial structures and racial boundaries. Ultimately, it is only by addressing the synchronic and diachronic aspects of JPs' ethnic identities that the SBM is able to provide a complete explanation of the shifts in such identities.

The SBM also contributes to the development of studying JPs' ethnic identity by helping us move further ahead from the Takenaka's analysis of the ambiguous identity of

JPs' in the U.S. While Takenaka's analysis is correct in that the situation in the U.S. creates ethnic identity crises for many JPs', it neglects the very strong Peruvian ethnic identity that many JPs' hold. Takenaka is correct in describing JPs' identity as ambiguous, but this is more accurate in describing the community's identity as opposed to the individuals'. As a community, there is an ambiguous identity because JPs identify in such different ways, but at the more micro level, many JP individuals hold very firmly to their Peruvian identity as it was validated in the U.S. in contrast to Peru. Furthermore, the SBM takes the analysis a step further by providing a stronger explanation that focuses on how the changes on the *ethnic requirements* of Peruvian and Japanese "full" ethnicities are removed in the U.S. because these limits are reserved for American ethnicity. Because *othering ethnic qualifiers* govern Latino and Asian ethnicities in the U.S. and not *national ethnic requirements* Peruvians are able to more easily identify as either Peruvian or Japanese. In the U.S., Peruvians hold the Asian *othering ethnic qualifier* of race/phenotype, but they simultaneously possess the Latino *othering qualifier* of language. Even if in the U.S. many Japanese may not accept JPs as Japanese and many Peruvians may not accept JPs as Peruvian, American society seems to accept them as both. Yet, the reality is that in the U.S., the Japanese and the Peruvians accept JPs more readily than in Japan and Peru respectively. It is through the SBM analysis that we are able to fill the voids in Takenaka's analysis of this ambiguous identity.

### **What the Future Holds for Japanese-Peruvian Younger Generations**

At the end of their interviews, respondents were asked for their opinions on what will happen to the JP community and how the younger generations of JPs will identify.

Most JPs were pessimistic about the outlook. Kikujiro stated, “I think it would disappear. There's not really that many of us.... I think eventually, we would disappear”. Kenji concurred, “There will be a time in which my daughter will think she is an American. She will be more American just in her way of thinking”. Finally, Marcos subscribed, “It’s definitely going to be lost. Definitely. It’s going to be hard”. Few remained hopeful, but realized that to retain JP culture and community, organizing was necessary.

I think it’s growing. With time there’s more of our businesses, more JP things. But we need to form a club, or we have to put together festivals. I don’t know. We have to do things that we did in Lima. We need to do those things here. It’s a question of having leaders coming together and proposing some type of action or organization.

Tomas, 30

It seems to me that it will maintain itself. Now, there has to be a change. Little by little, as people start having kids, if a plan is not created now... some kind of project where people can get together every now and then. If not, it could disappear. We have to have some kind of foundation to keep contact with Peru and Okinawa.

Aurelio, 60’s

## **Unresolved Issues and Future Studies**

The biggest flaw of this research project is that its methods do not match its theory. The formulation of the SBM did not take place until the project was deep in its data analysis phase. By this point, all the data from the interviews had already been collected, transcribed and coded. The research design of this project began with the unconscious employment of the pie-chart-mentality by the researcher. This must have been a product of approaching the topic of JP identity from a conventional sociological way as opposed to doing so by the principles of Chicano Sociology (Mirandé 1982). More specifically, it was an approach focused on the same questions of cultural assimilation established by the Chicago School and Robert Park (1950). The pie-chart-mentality guided the creation of the interview guide, the wording of the questions, the

probing of themes, and everything else. It was only in the middle of the analysis of data where this great flaw was discovered, and where the project was forced to take a completely different direction to become what it is. This is why the malfunctioning car metaphor begins by looking for a mechanic only to find that such a mechanic does not exist, and in order to fix the Japanese-Peruvian-American car, new tools had to be developed as required by the principles of Chicano Sociology. In retrospect, this research would have ideally presented questions to respondents that treated the multiple ethnic identities of JPs as separate ordinal variables. It is plausible that the data would refute the findings in this thesis, but the data would definitely be more valid as the methods used would have been much improved over those used in this project. It is in this sense that this study should be understood as a beginning point that can improve the methods, theories and research instruments that we use to study the national ethnic identities of migrants.

Another significant limitation of this study is its inability to study ethnic identities that cannot be classified as national ethnic identities. Thus, the SBM, as developed here, is designed to be used on ethnic identities based on nations with borders. It is questionable how it would work in the analysis of identities not based on nations with borders such as African-American identity, for example. While it is likely that some of the principles used for the SBM might be extremely useful, any research moving forward stemming from this one should do so with caution and without assuming that this model would work on every other case without making serious adjustments. The population studied in this project was very particular and unique. The unique set of experiences and



data demanded a unique approach to the subject. The unavoidable risk of exporting this analytic method to other populations is that the ability to generalize from its findings suffers.

One of the major unexplored areas of this study is the functions of *ethnic indicators* (-N,-S) and that of *ethnic absolutes* (+N,+S). In the case of *ethnic indicators*, it is quite possible that amassing a large amount of *ethnic indicators* may provide a person some legitimate claim into a given national ethnicity. In other words, it is possible that two *ethnic indicators*, when treated together, may in fact function as an *ethnic requirement* would, or an *ethnic qualifier* could.

Arguably the biggest pitfall of this project is its inability to thoroughly comprehend Nikkei identity and how it figures into the SBM. The sections below are an attempt to begin theorizing this area.

#### *Ethnicity as a Unique Location*

While the general result from the data is that most JPs in Japan experience a strong push against their Japanese identity and a compelling case that strengthens their Peruvian identity, this is not the case for everybody. The two comprehensive SBMs we have thus far created for Peru (Figure 3.3) and Japan (Figure 4.4) represent the effects of Peruvian and Japanese racial structures on JPs' ethnic identities.

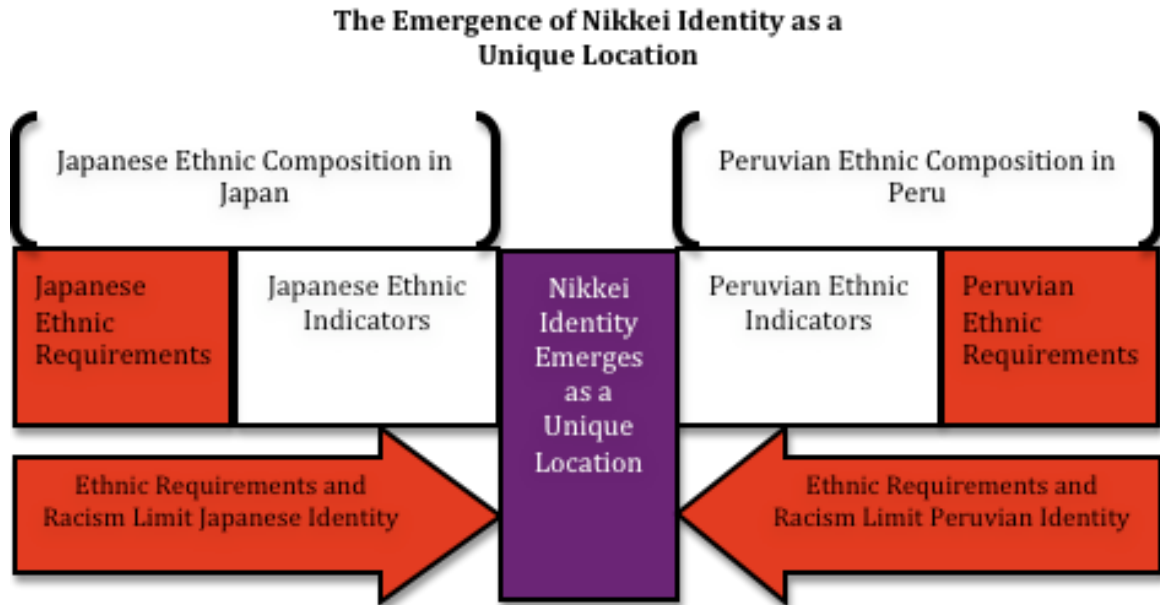
When we compare the SBMs from Peru and Japan, we see that there are similar dynamics in the ethnic boundaries that are drawn. For most JPs in Peru, a weak Peruvian identity is accompanied by a strong Japanese identity. Inversely, for most JPs in Japan, a weak Japanese identity is accompanied with a strong Peruvian identity. The pie-chart-

mentality works in these two cases where as one ethnic identity grows, the other must shrink. In the cases of most JPs', this indeed seems to be the case.

However, if we remember Angel's case, the pie-chart-mentality falls apart. Reviewing Angel's case (Fig. 2.2), where the limits of the pie-chart-mentality were exposed, he states while he always identified as Japanese in Peru, and that his experiences in Japan did not make him feel more Peruvian, just less Japanese. In trying to understand Angel's position, we find relevancy in that the Japanese place restrictions on JPs' Japanese ethnicity as JPs do not possess all the Japanese requirements, and this leads Angel to feel less Japanese.

Angel's identity at this point is heavily focused on the restrictions placed on his ethnic identity both in Peru and Japan. He understands his identity rationalizing that he is not Japanese, but that does not mean he is Peruvian (as in Peru, he could not be accepted as such). This leads to a formulation of ethnic identity that sees the location of JPs as occupying a completely separate space where one is not part of one ethnicity, nor the other, and this is based on the lacking of *ethnic requirements* to be part of either group. The following graph visualizes how Japanese and Peruvian *ethnic requirements* put pressures on identities at the same time.

Figure 6.1



The distancing from Japanese identity does not always lead to an emphasis of Peruvian identity. At times, JPs find themselves in a middle position between cultures that emphasizes the inability to fit in Peru or Japan.

So when I go to Japan, it changes because I felt Peruvian. Because that's how the Japanese made me feel. That I was *gaijin*. It sounds ugly, right? *Gaijin*. That was a very strong word. One feels it very strongly. I think that many Nisei that live in Japan feel like that. At least the friendships I had over there, felt like that. They felt like foreigners in the land of their grandparents, or their parents. It is a pain that you feel... Like that song by Alberto Shiroma. It says, "Many times I don't know what I am. If I'm in Peru, I feel more Japanese. If I'm in Japan, I feel like a foreigner. I don't know how to feel anymore. I don't know what I am".

Miranda, 55

Sometimes I would think that a Nikkei person had no country. Because you would be in Peru, they would treat you like, "chino, chino". You're in Japan, they treat you like a Peruvian. It's like you don't know where you belong.

Jorge, 34

[Nikkei] always said, "We're not from here nor there. In Peru we're Japanese, and in Japan we're Peruvian".

Claudia, 54

But I finally go to Japan where supposedly I'm coming from, and you get all this... different culture. Different way of looking at things, that uh... "Oh, shit. I'm not Japanese". Then you go back, and I'm not Peruvian still.... The fact that I realize that

I'm not Japanese doesn't make me a Peruvian, either. So... you get caught right in the middle. "What am I?" It wasn't like any personality or identity crisis, but it was more like "shit, what am I, right? Or do I have to be somebody? Do I have to put a name on what I am?" A label. I was like, "Oh, shit. I don't want to be Japanese. I don't want to work my ass off for this company."

Angel, 36,

They treated them like Peruvians, not like Japanese to begin with. That was probably the one sour thing one feels. Today in Japan [I'm not Japanese], in Peru, I'm not Peruvian. Then what am I? Maybe that displaces someone a little bit... Well, one has to be patient because over there they don't treat you as Japanese.

Aurelio, 70

When one was in Peru, they would tell you, "Chino. Go back to your country." When you're in Japan: "Hey foreigner, go back to your country". So basically, a Nikkei... does not have a nationality.... So in Japan, they don't consider you Japanese, and in Peru, they don't consider you Peruvian.... You go to Peru and you don't feel Peruvian, you go to Japan, and you don't feel Japanese. It gets to the point where the question is, "Well, then where am I from? Yes, I'm Peruvian. I have Peruvian documents, but I have the face of a Japanese".

Kenji, 40

What these examples of identity crises show is that while most JPs in Japan identified more as Peruvian, such identification was not absolute. It was, in fact, merely situated in the context of Japan. When JPs spoke more broadly about their identity and took into consideration their past experiences, the result was a type of identity crisis that forced a middle ground to start surfacing wherein a new type of identity emerged based on the inability to be accepted as Japanese in Japan or as Peruvian in Peru.

Thus, to make sense of JP ethnic identity in Japan, we might say that they identify as Peruvian in Japan, but that such identification is only a situated ethnic identity. There is a separate ethnic identity that we might call the internal core identity that exists both beyond borders and deep within individuals. This internal core understands that one's context changes one's identity, but tries to find something stable to attach this identity to. As JPs migrate from Peru to Japan and come to the realization that they are not accepted by either country, the identity crisis that emerges simultaneously begins to give shape to a

new identity situated both separate from and in-between Japanese and Peruvian ethnicities. This type of Nikkei identity is a “unique location”, in that the language used to describe it is heavily focused on the absence of *ethnic requirements* to be part of the Peruvian and Japanese national ethnicities in their respective countries.

### *Nikkei Ethnicity as a Combination of Multi-Ethnic Compositions*

In the previous section, Nikkei was understood as a unique location that was separate and in between Japanese and Peruvian ethnicities. This understanding focused heavily on the restrictions placed on JPs’ ethnicities at an international level. This can be grasped as a Nikkei identity that emerged through negative forces. Yet, in the U.S., we find that the negative forces restricting JPs’ ethnic identities are removed. In this case, JPs can shift from a Nikkei identity governed by *requirements* to one governed by *qualifiers*. A Nikkei identity governed by *qualifiers* focuses on the possession of ethnic traits from multiple sources. As such, the discussion shifts from being one focused on the ethnic traits one lacks to the ethnic traits one possesses.

I think that you have all the Japanese customs, but all the Peruvian desires. The desire to go out and dance salsa, things that you do in Peru. You like watching TV, the Peruvian jokes. But the customs, like being submissive, don’t be shameless. Things that we still have as Japanese people.

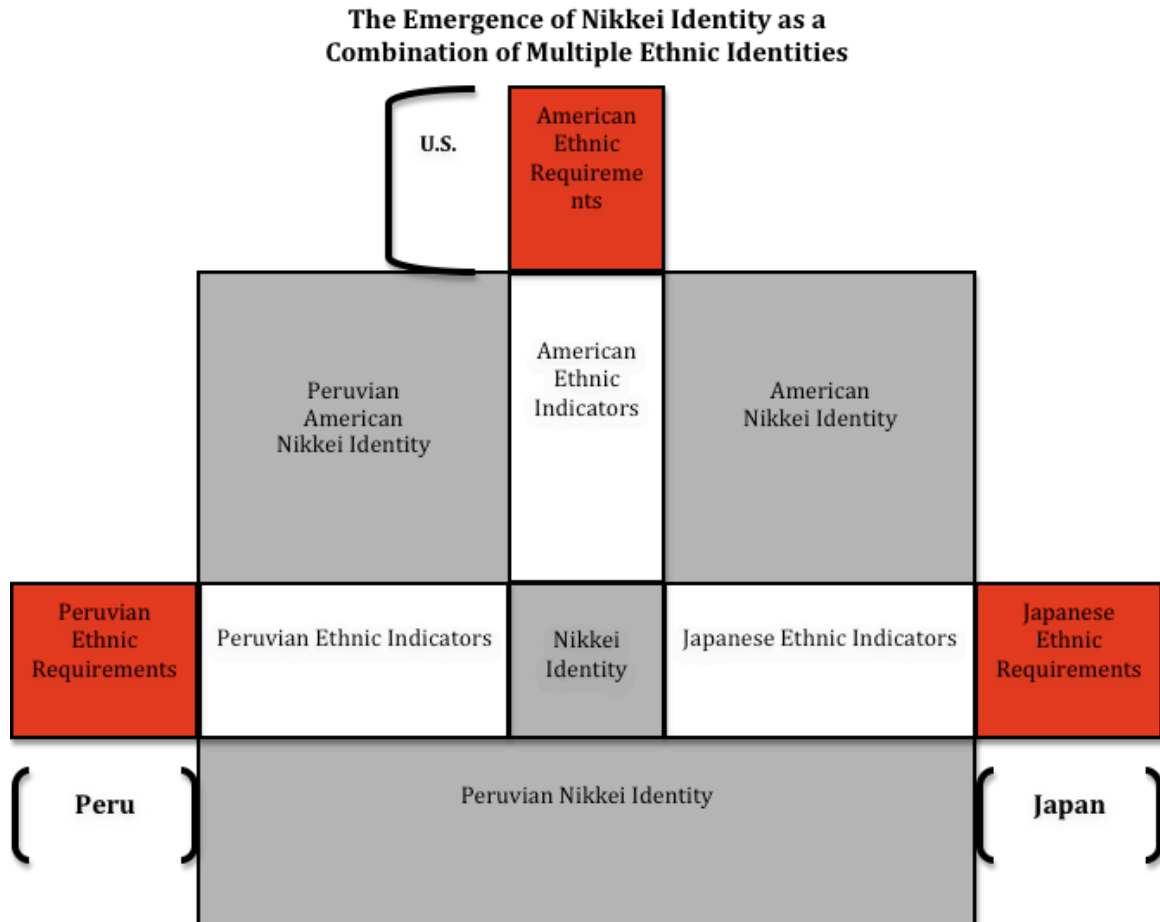
Erika, 41

Like, I had things from both countries. Certain things made me feel more Peruvian, certain things more Japanese.

Claudia, 54

The development of a Nikkei identity based on the possession of ethnic traits from different ethnicities as opposed to based on the lacking of them creates a Nikkei identity that is understood as multi-ethnic as opposed to a unique location. Thus, it must be graphed differently.

Figure 6.2



Nikkei identity (in gray) as a combination is graphed above to show that while JPs lack the *ethnic requirements* (+N,-S in red) to be considered “full” Japanese, Peruvian or American, they possess *ethnic indicators* (-N,-S in white) from different cultures that mix together to give birth to a new Nikkei identity (in gray encompassing different *ethnic indicators* from different ethnicities).

### Nepantilism and Nikkei Identity

Hirabayashi et. al. (2002) defined Nikkei as

... a person or persons of Japanese descent, and their descendants, who emigrated from Japan and who created unique communities and lifestyles within the societies in which

they now live. The concept also includes the *dekasegi*, or persons who returned temporarily to live and work in Japan, where they often had a separate identity from that of the larger Japanese population. “Nikkei” also potentially encompasses people of part-Japanese descent, to the extent that they retain an identity as a person of Japanese ancestry. Being Nikkei, in other words, has primarily, but not exclusively, to do with ethnic identity.” (2002: 19)

Hirabayashi et. al. are ultimately most correct in addressing the fact that “Nikkei” is mainly about identity and not necessarily about culture or belonging (although these are quite important). In discussing Nikkei identity as a unique location, respondents’ identities were not formulated on cultural grounds as a combination of cultures. Their identity was the end result of the processes of boundary drawing that excluded them from completely being accepted into Japanese or Peruvian national ethnicities. Their Nikkei identity was based on the process of exclusion. However, it is true that other JPs understood their ethnic identities as a combination of different ethnicities.

These different understandings of the label Nikkei support Hirabayashi et. al.’s assertion that the subject of Nikkei identity needs to be discussed in a plural sense. If the understandings of the label Nikkei are plural, as my data shows, then our discussion must also be of that nature. Furthermore, respondents’ held unforeseen understandings of what Nikkei meant, adding to the multiplicity of the meaning of “Nikkei”. Roberto understood Nikkei as a space where Peruvian culture was almost exclusively practiced, but it was done so in a social circle of JPs. The extension of this was the “bubble” metaphor discussed in the Chapter 2 (Peru). Again, in this case, Nikkei was not about the culture of the group, which Roberto understood as completely Peruvian, but about social ties.

The label *Nikkei*’s semantic multiplicity informs our quest to predict the effects that globalization will have on such identity. In working with the International Nikkei

Research Project, Hirabayashi et. al. (2002) proposed (as noted in Chapter 1) that globalization can impact Nikkei identity and have five possible outcomes in which this identity can intensify, erode, not be affected, lead to global identification, or lead to new hybrid identities. My contribution to the questions that Hirabayashi and the International Nikkei Research Project have made their mission to explore is that my data seems to support the creation of new hybrid identities. However, it is more accurate to state that my data reflects, not the creation of new identities, but rather new understandings and meanings of Nikkei identity itself. Thus, it is not the case that Nikkei identity is disappearing, but rather that its meaning is shifting and/or becoming multiple. One would be wrong to interpret these shifts or transformations as an erosion of Nikkei identity.

The reason for this is that Nikkei identity, much like Chicano identity, is difficult to anchor in contrast to national identities based on states and territories. These two identities are governed by a state of Nepantilism. In discussing Chicano masculine identity, Mirandé (1997) employs Leon-Portilla's (1990) interpretation of this Náhuatl term to mean "in the middle", while Anzaldúa (2007) interprets the same term as being "torn between ways". It is curious how they both mean the same thing, and mirror the JPs' "unique location" and "combination" interpretations of Nikkei identity. They both refer to the nature of the identities of Chicano/as as deterritorialized and constantly in flux depending on the contexts and situations of the individual. Thus, Nikkei identity, in its perpetual state of nepantilism, is not only characterized by inconsistencies, but what's more, its permanent state of flux is at the core nature of such identity. Nikkei identity is



born out of ambivalence and uncertainty. Thus, it is difficult to argue that an identity that is constantly changing could erode. We would not say that a caterpillar has eroded or disappeared just because it turned into a butterfly, would we? In contrast to Nikkei identity, national ethnicities and identities such as Japanese, Peruvian, Mexican and American are founded and are strongly anchored on territory, national histories, myths, rituals, and cultures. We may argue that as these foundations erode, their corresponding identities could be said to erode. But how could an identity whose nature is a state of ambivalence and fluctuation be said to erode? It is not impossible that such identity could erode or disappear, but we should be cautious not to interpret the changes and transformations of Nikkei identity as its erosion or dissolution.

This could be a rather easy mistake to commit. For example, many of my respondents unequivocally identified as Peruvian when directly asked to define themselves; yet, throughout their narratives, respondents referred to themselves as Japanese, Nisei, and Nikkei. This happened almost universally, and suggests that even if JPs do not categorize themselves as Nikkei or Japanese in surveys, they might, in fact, identify as such. Thus, respondents chose not to categorize themselves as Nikkei, but spoke of their experiences, world-views, and perspectives as Nikkei experiences. Of course, this begs the philosophical question of what came first, the Nikkei identity or the label Nikkei? In Peru, JPs use the term Nisei to really mean Nikkei in identifying themselves. Does this mean that they do not identify as Nikkei? Absolutely not. It means that one does not have to use the term Nikkei in order to identify as one. Furthermore, it is also possible that many JPs chose to identify with only one country

because they were following the pie-chart-mentality, not because they felt no connection to the other identities.

Nikkei experiences and identities are larger than the Nikkei label. Ultimately, the meaning of the word Nikkei has only as its root, Japanese ancestry; and the Nikkei experience is only that which comes after migration. The experiences that come after migration are multi-linear, and no one Nikkei experience can be said to be more or less Nikkei than another. A son of a Japanese and a Peruvian cannot be said to be more Nikkei than a JP with two Japanese parents. How can one be more or less Nikkei? One can be more or less Japanese because there is a pre-existing conception of what being Japanese is. However, there is no pre-existing conception of what a Nikkei is or should be. Thus, Nikkei identity follows the dynamics of nepantilism. It is constantly changing. It does not follow a linear/predetermined trajectory. It is torn between ways of different cultures while at the same time is rejected by those same cultures. It is from this dynamic that Nikkei identity emerges and exists. It is both none of the cultures and at the same time, all of them at once. Nikkei identity is simultaneously a unique location that is separate from other ethnicities and a combination of them. Hence, in answering the question of, “What the future holds for Nikkei identity?” and “How globalization will affect Nikkei identity?” we can only know two things for certain. It will continue to be multi-linear, and it will continue to change. One should be careful not to mistake these processes as erosion or disappearance, even if the Nikkei label stops being used as an identifier.

## Conclusion

As JPs develop a Nikkei identity based on their embodiment of multiple ethnicities, we can begin to move away from the language of the pie-chart-mentality. The pie-chart-mentality's language focuses on percentages and fractions to describe how an individual's identity is divided into different ethnic identities with the unavoidable result being the contextualization of these ethnic identities into a zero-sum game. By speaking of Nikkei identity as a combination of different ethnicities, JPs can speak of identities as being multiple as opposed to being divided. Thus, one can possess multiple ethnic identities as opposed to having their identity divided into fractions. Speaking of ethnic identities as being multiple, it is possible to treat each ethnic identity as singular variable capable of growing and shrinking independently of the other ethnic identities. Pedro was the last person interviewed in this research project. Serendipitously, the last words in his interview, the last words recorded for this project, exemplified why the pie-chart-mentality must be rejected in favor of a SBM in understanding ethnic identities.

Pedro's last statement in his interview,

This is very important... I hope you take this with you... what's called "half" doesn't exist.... My term, and that's what I am now, there exists what is called "double"... Why double? Because it is true that I'm Peruvian, and it is true that I'm Japanese. You understand? ...[A] Japanese can't talk to you about a Peruvian because he is Japanese. He can only talk about Japan. A Peruvian can [only] talk about [Peru]. Not me. I'm "double". So it can't be... it's not "half". It's "double".

Pedro, a 39-year-old male born in Peru of Japanese and Peruvian descent that migrated to Japan as a worker before settling in the U.S.

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