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## Hardships Experienced by Second-Generation Peruvian Migrant Workers in Japan : Interviews and Analysis

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# Hardships Experienced by Second-Generation Peruvian Migrant Workers in Japan: Interviews and Analysis

Jakeline Lagones

## Abstract

This article analyzes the lifetime achievements of two generations of Japanese Peruvians (*nikkei*) to discover what the Japanese Peruvian community has achieved and what limitations to social mobility in Japan remain for the community. The article considers the employment status of second-generation *nikkei* in Japan. Some previous quantitative analyses claim that there are significant differences between factory and non-factory workers and that the main differences between these two groups involve their civil status, age, level of education, and social aid. This study provides a qualitative approach to previous findings. This study employs interviews and case studies conducted in Japan. The study sites were in rural and urban spaces of Japan, where most Japanese Peruvians live and work. The results show that despite how their marital status, age, level of education, and social aid may influence their employment status in Japan, their language abilities in Spanish and English have helped some of the second-generation *nikkei* to attend college and have aided them in seeking employment, even when their proficiency in Japanese was not optimal.

**Keywords:** Japanese Peruvian, migrant, *nikkei*, employment, Japanese proficiency

## 1. Introduction

Since 1990, Japan has accepted an increasing number of migrants, especially from Brazil and Peru. This increase is due to the revision of immigration law in 1990: “The revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act allowed individuals of Japanese descent up to the third-generation (*sansei*) [to get] renewable visas, with unlimited access to Japanese labor markets” (Mc Kenzie and Salcedo, 2014: 68). After just two decades, in 2008, the global financial crisis occurred: “Japanese Peruvian families had a dilemma: whether to stay in Japan and overcome the consequences of the crisis or return to Peru” (Lagones 2016: 28).

Although the economic situation in Peru has improved in the two decades since the Japanese Peruvians migrated to Japan, this did not influence their decision to stay in Japan.

“The economic factor of their country of origin did not influence the decision of the Japanese Peruvian families to stay in Japan” (Lagones 2016: 18). Rather, marital status, Japanese language ability, number of children, and age had a significant influence on whether they decided to stay in Japan (Lagones 2016: 17).

When the Japanese Peruvians of the first and second generations decided to remain in Japan, they encountered a new dilemma: how to climb the ladder of social mobility. As Takenaka has pointed out, “the extent to which foreign migrants achieved upward socioeconomic mobility, as well as who does and how they do it, poses a critical question of how ethnic, in addition to the class, backgrounds matter in mobility patterns” (Takenaka 2009: 221).

The second generation encountered many educational difficulties, which became serious limitations for some, and challenges in terms of social mobility. Additionally, they often spoke Japanese at school and Spanish at home; therefore, they were unable to “maintain their mother tongue at a sufficient level, and [...] they could not reach a more advanced level of Japanese either. This would become a limitation for the second generation in terms of their employability within Japanese society” (Lagones 2015: 267).

In a previous article (see note 1), I raised two questions concerning Japanese Peruvians in Japan. First, what are the main characteristics of the second generation of young Japanese Peruvians in Japanese society after the financial crisis? Second, what are the main variables that influence the employment status of the young second generation? In that article, I provided a quantitative explanation. In this article, I would like to provide a qualitative explanation of the results. The aim is to discover what the achievements of the Japanese Peruvian community are and what limitations it faces regarding social mobility in Japan. I focus on the question of how sociodemographic traits such as marital status, age, level of education, and social aid influence the employment status of second-generation Japanese Peruvians living in Japan.

I adopted a qualitative methodology to understand thoughts and experiences of Japanese Peruvians and to dive deeper into the Japanese Peruvians problems while living in Japan. I employed interviews with and case studies of Japanese Peruvians living in Japan. The study sample included two community leaders, a first-generation family, and members of the second generation with diverse employment statuses, all of whom resided in Japan at the time. These in-depth interviews granted me access to the experience of the interviewees from their perspective. The interviewees were selected based on referral sampling and

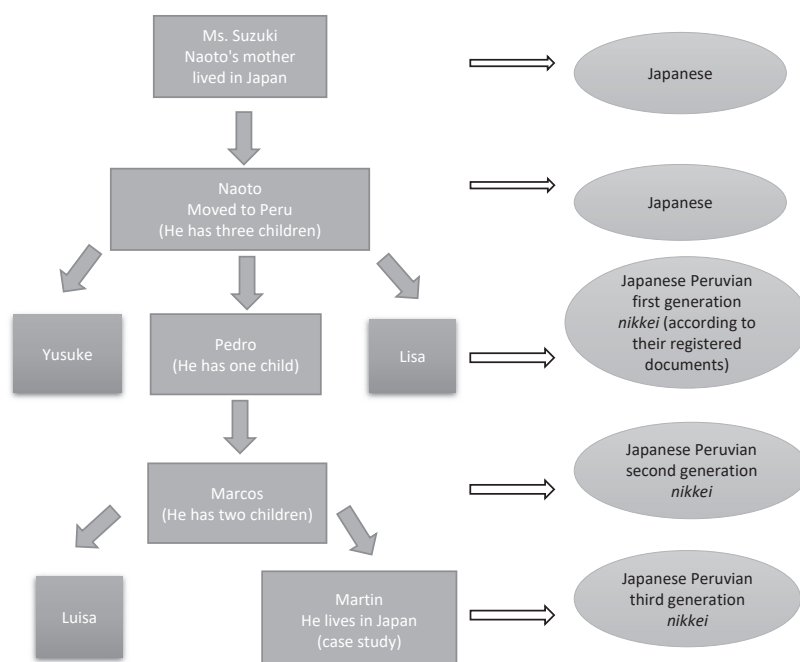
through their networks. The interviews took place at their homes, in Peruvian restaurants, at Latino parties, in Japanese coffee shops, and at the Peruvian Consulate.

The data sought through the interviews included biographical details (birthplace, age), marital status, gender, family information, place of residence, visa type, education status, language, economic situation, and religion. These questions were the starting point from which the interviewees discussed many detailed aspects of their life and employment status in Japan. The research sites were in rural and urban areas of Japan, where most Peruvians live and work. The first series of interviews were conducted with the Suzuki family, a typical example of a Japanese Peruvian family.

Section 2 presents a case study on the profile of first-generation Peruvians in Japan, describing the social and economic situation of Japanese Peruvians before they came to Japan. Section 3 provides an overview of second-generation Japanese Peruvians in Japan in terms of their employment status. In Section 4, I will discuss the findings and, finally, conclude this study in Section 5.

## 2. A profile of the first generation of the Suzuki Family to live in Japan: A case study

Figure 1: Suzuki Family Diagram



Source: author

After the revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1990, the extended Suzuki family was able to come to Japan. The new policy permitted the Suzuki family to overcome unemployment and economic instability in Peru. The odyssey of the Suzuki family as *dekasegi* (see note 2) is representative of many others who migrated to Japan. The history of the Suzuki family started a century ago when Naoto Suzuki migrated to Peru because of his family's difficult economic situation in Japan. He was 18 years old and from Okayama City; he settled in the city of Piura, in northern Peru. His first challenge when he started to work as a farmer was the Spanish language. Later, he married Elsa, a Peruvian woman, and they had three children: Yusuke, Pedro, and Lisa. Ultimately, Naoto decided to settle in Piura for his children's sake.

During World War II, Peru was an American ally and Japanese people were regarded as prisoners of war in Peru. Naoto was sent to the United States as a prisoner of war and later repatriated to Japan. When he was 11 years old, one of Naoto's sons, Yusuke, was sent to Japan by his family while Naoto continued to be held as a prisoner in the United States. In Japan, Yusuke's grandmother was waiting for him. When Yusuke met his grandmother, he could not communicate with her, nor the rest of the family, because he could only speak Spanish while his grandmother and other family members only spoke Japanese. Eventually, though, Yusuke learned Japanese and remained in Japan, never returning to Peru. At the time of the study, he was 84 years old.

Yusuke's brother and sister, Pedro and Lisa, settled in Peru. Later, Pedro married Rosa, a Peruvian woman, and they had a baby named Marcos Suzuki, who was born in Chincha, southern Peru. When Marcos was two years old, the family moved to the Callao district of Lima. Callao is the main port in Peru, and people who live near the port are usually fishermen like Marcos. Marcos had two children of his own, Martin and Luisa.

Martin Suzuki grew up in Peru and completed his tertiary education there, studying to be an industrial electrician. After he graduated, he obtained a job in one of the best companies in the country. The first year he was a contract worker and thereafter switched to permanent employment in the same company. In 2000, Martin got married to Maria, and they had two children. Unfortunately, Martin's company went bankrupt and he was fired. Consequently, Martin decided to travel to Japan. Now, Martin is a *nikkei* Peruvian (see note 3) living in Japan, and he and his family have helped me to connect with the Peruvian community over the past seven years.

## 2.1 The Suzuki family's decision to migrate to Japan

In Japan, one of Martin's sisters was working and living in Aichi Prefecture. Martin contacted her and asked her about the job situation in Japan. Martin decided, ultimately, to quit his job in Peru and travel to Japan. His family in Japan helped him obtain a job in a car parts factory and he began working the day after he arrived. Martin worked eight hours per day, Monday to Friday, and his salary was approximately 208,000 yen per month. Every month, he sent his family in Peru about 50,000 yen. His rent and living expenses were approximately 70,000 yen per month because he was living with his aunt. His family in Japan supported him while he saved money to bring his family to Japan as soon as possible.

Martin was working as a contract worker through an intermediary. When Martin explained to his contractor that he wanted to bring his family from Peru, the contractor helped him to find a new apartment with low rent for him and his family. In Japan, this responsibility is part of a contractor's job description. After living in Japan for one year, Martin could finally bring his wife María and two older children over, but their baby had to stay in Peru with Maria's grandparents and aunt. Even though Maria did not speak Japanese, she eventually managed to get a job at the factory. A Brazilian intermediary company helped her to find a job. After their hard work and saving, she and her husband could finally bring their daughter from Peru. They had a stable life until the global financial crisis began in 2008.

Ever since the Suzuki family made the decision to move to Japan as *dekasegi*, they have faced socioeconomic and family problems in Japan. They had to overcome family separation, the pressure of debt, the fatigue of unskilled work, and the Japanese employment system. Moreover, their children had to adapt to the Japanese education system and acquire proficiency in Japanese. The Suzuki family, like other Japanese Peruvian families, had to face and overcome not only the difficulties mentioned above but also Japanese culture codes, which are quite different from those in Peru. Maria told me that, during her first year in Japan, she believed all the Japanese people she encountered were very kind because they always smiled. Some years later, after she learned more Japanese, she told me that, in fact, bullying against minorities is prevalent in Japan. Now that Maria understands Japanese better and knows more about Japanese culture, she realizes that the meaning of a Japanese smile is different from that of a Peruvian smile. Japanese customs dictate that people should always smile and show their kindness, even when they are not happy, because it makes other people happy. Japanese customs dictate that people should always display kindness and respect towards others in public, regardless of their true feelings, in order to avoid conflict and confrontation.

This custom is called *tatemae*, which means only showing positive emotions in public.

## 2.2 A profile of the second generation of the Suzuki family to live in Japan

During the global financial crisis of 2008, Martin was fired from the factory and began working at another Japanese company, which processes recycling. Maria retained her job during the crisis. Between 2008 and 2014, they sometimes had to use their unemployment insurance while looking for a new job. Finally, they were able to overcome the problems that the financial crisis caused their family. Then in 2014, they bought a new house because Martin was a regular worker, a so-called *shain*, at his company and because Maria could work more hours at the factory with the children being older and attending school. Their three children, Ciro, Edgard, and Ana, continued their schooling. Ciro will complete elementary school in 2021. He hopes to get good scores in junior high school so that he can enter a prestigious high school. Maria has been gathering information concerning the future education of her son. She has listened to the experiences of other second-generation teenagers, and she has realized that she should be more involved in Japanese society if she wants to settle in Japan with her whole family.

The Suzuki family built their social network among friends, and in comparison, with other Japanese Peruvians, they seem to have a broader social network. Instead of distancing themselves from the community, they try to extend their social network further to make their life easier and solve any problems they might encounter by learning from the experience of other Japanese Peruvians who came to Japan before them. At the time of writing, the Suzuki family was receiving a child-support allowance, *jido teate*, from the Japanese government, as did many other second-generation Japanese Peruvian families.

## 3. Overview of the second-generation Japanese Peruvians in terms of employment status

Nearly all first-generation Japanese Peruvians who came to Japan in the 1990s work in factories, even when they have college degrees from Peru. The lack of Japanese proficiency was the first limitation they had to face. However, most second-generation Japanese Peruvians understand Japanese better. Therefore, the employment status of the second generation is better than that of the first generation.

In this section, I describe the employment status of second-generation Japanese Peruvians in terms of non-factory versus factory workers. Each subsection below consists of

case studies of individuals who exemplify the differences in these two employment statuses.

**Table 1: Typology for the second generation (Japanese Peruvian Immigrants to Japan)**

Typology	Description
A	The second-generation Japanese Peruvians who were born in Japan and came to Japan at a young age (0-6 years old)
B	The second-generation Japanese Peruvians who came to Japan when they were in elementary school
C	The second-generation Japanese Peruvians who came to Japan when they were in junior and senior high school
D	The second-generation Japanese Peruvians who moved back and forth between Japan and Peru

Source: author

### Typology A

#### **NSG11 (Nikkei Second Generation, interviewer number 11): 20 years old, single**

NSG11 was born in Japan. His family told me that he was bullied at school – not by his classmates but rather by one of his teachers. NSG11 said that his teacher always complained about his physical appearance and indirectly forced him to change his hair style so that it will be the same as other Japanese boys. Sometimes, NSG11 did not want to attend school, and when his parents noticed this problem, they complained to the school and talked to NSG11's teacher. The situation improved after that.

Nevertheless, NSG11 dropped out of high school in his second year when he was 17 years old. NSG11's mother was disappointed because she was worried about his future in Japan. NSG11 can speak Japanese well, but he said that starting to work was a better choice for him. He felt too much pressure at school, and he did not feel happy enduring the bullying and pressure of high school. NSG11 did not want to work part-time or become a “job-hopping part-timer” (*freeter*). He wanted to work longer hours than his parents and become independent, so he started to work in a factory as his first-generation parents did (NSG11, personal communication, January 27, 2015).

### Typology A

#### **NSG16: Job-hopping part-timer, 25 years old, single, not in school**

He is an only child, and he came to Japan when he was five years old. NSG16 has been living



in Japan for about 20 years and has never returned to Peru. For him, Peru is something his family has told him about and something about which he reads in the news: a dangerous place with no job opportunities. Spanish is his native language, but his Japanese proficiency is superior. When I talked to him, I observed that his behavior (gestures, speech patterns, shyness) is Japanese, a result of growing up and being educated in Japan. However, at home, he spoke only Spanish with his mother. After finishing high school, he wanted to go to college, but he also wanted to help his mother because she was single. He is working as a job-hopping part-timer and frequently changes jobs. He was working for two years in Nagoya. After moving to Tokyo and then Osaka, he is finally working in Nagoya again. What I observed was that he wants to become independent; he does not usually feel comfortable at work because of the high pressure in Japanese companies. Like many *nikkei*, he cannot withstand the rules, and as a result, changes jobs constantly. Once, he told me that he would like to have his own business. Because of his unstable work situation, however, it would be difficult for him to save enough money (NSG16, personal communication, April 14, 2015).

## Typology A

### NSG13: Regular worker, 24 years old, single, not in school

NSG13 was born in Peru, but his parents brought him to Japan when he was two years old. His parents came to Japan in 1993, and he does not have any siblings. His parents wanted to improve their economic situation and then return to Peru. However, unfortunately, during their stay in Japan, they had family problems, and in the end, they divorced. NSG13 lived with his mother and received visits from his father on weekends.

As with NSG13's family, many Japanese Peruvians have similar family problems, and their original goal of saving money and returning to Peru changes while they are living in Japan. NSG13 has studied in Japanese schools since kindergarten, so his social network and Japanese proficiency are the same as those of a Japanese national. Even though his parents divorced, they always supported him in his education. NSG13 graduated from high school with a good command of English because English as a Foreign Language instruction was part of the curriculum at his high school. During junior high school, he had good grades and was allowed to enter a prestigious high school, which had an English program.

After graduating from high school, NSG13's good grades helped him enter the language program of a prestigious university. During college years, he worked at cram schools as an assistant teacher because his academic achievement in university was good. After four years

of studies, NSG13 graduated and found a job at a large Japanese company because of his language abilities. He was hired directly as a regular worker because of his good academic background. At the time of writing, NSG13 was receiving all the subsidies offered by the company because of his status as a white-collar worker (NSG13, personal communication, December 10, 2014).

### Typology A

**NSG12: contract worker (*keiyakushain*), 23 years old, single mother, not in school, receives aid**

NSG12 was born in Japan after her parents came to Japan in 1990. Therefore, her education, social network, and cultural background are based in Japan. She speaks very good Japanese, while her Spanish ability is poor. She had no problems until she entered high school. High schools in Japan push students to obtain high scores if they want to be admitted to a prestigious college, and the difficulty is high even for students whose parents are also native-born Japanese. Therefore, many parents support their children by paying for expensive cram schools so that their children can improve their grades. For NSG12, this was doubly difficult because NSG12 is one of three siblings, and both her parents worked full-time in factories.

While NSG12 was in high school, the global financial crisis of 2008 affected her family's economic situation. In the end, NSG12 finished high school, but she could not go to college. NSG12 decided to help her family and was able to find work at a store thanks to her Japanese proficiency. Later, when she was 20 years old, she became pregnant and had to stop working. NSG12's parents support her because she is a single mother. Currently, she receives regular child benefits and special aid for single mothers from the Japanese government to support her three-year-old child. During the economic crisis, NSG12 attended a training course for unemployed people offered by the Japanese government, and after finishing the course, she applied for a job. Because of her fluency in Japanese, she found a better job in which she was able to utilize the skills learned in the training course, and she also applied for municipal housing and obtained a unit.

Currently, NSG12's economic situation has improved, and she is working at a Japanese company as a contract worker. NSG12 said that she prefers to work as a contract worker rather than as a regular worker because becoming a regular worker would mean longer hours without extra pay, and her responsibilities as a single mother would make it difficult for her to obtain such a job. Her parents agree with her on this point, and they want NSG12

to spend most of her time with their grandson instead of working full-time. NSG12's parents think that family is more important than high wages. They said that they had already missed opportunities to spend time with their family because of their factory jobs, but they had no other option (NSG12, personal communication, April 10, 2015).

## Typology B and D

### **NSG14: contract worker, 31 years old, divorced, not in school**

NSG14 is a second-generation Japanese Peruvian born in Peru. He is Catholic, but he does not attend any church meetings. He has a nine-year-old daughter. NSG14 lives in Japan with his two brothers. He came to Japan in 1993 when he was ten years old, and since then, he has been to Peru only once when he was 20 years old. NSG14 wanted to explore job opportunities in Peru because he was tired of the hard work in factories. He believed that he might find a better job in Peru, but unfortunately, after six months, he realized that life in Peru would be harder for him because of the lack of jobs.

In Peru, in order to find a good job, one must graduate from university and have a high level of Spanish proficiency, but because NSG14 left Peru when he was ten years old, his Spanish reading and writing skills were poor. NSG14 stated, "I like living in Peru because most of my family is there, but I prefer to work in Japan. Even though I still believe that working in Japan is hard after visiting Peru, working in Japan is better" (NSG14, personal communication, July 15, 2015).

Regarding his education in Japan, he said, "I entered Japanese school when I was ten years old. I could not understand any lessons. I only attended the school, but I could not learn anything. My classmates thought I was stupid because I did not talk at school. [...] How can I talk if I do not speak Japanese? I felt embarrassed in front of them. It was a hard time for me." Because junior high school is compulsory in Japan, he went to a public junior high school. However, the stress from the classes depressed him, and his motivation for studying never improved. He said, "Even though I did not study, I finished junior high school, so I thought I would be able to attend high school, but my teachers told me that I could not go to high school" (NSG14, personal communication, July 15, 2015).

Ultimately, he had no option but to work in a factory. So, he began work in the factory where his mother was working when he was 17 years old, but he could work only 40 hours per week because of his age. He worked at the factory for nearly ten years before changing jobs and transforming his work experience. One of his Japanese friends offered him a position

in an office and his motivation for work increased markedly. NSG14 was more proficient in Japanese than other foreigners, which allowed him to work as a translator. For NSG14, not only did his perseverance and diligence help him overcome many of the difficulties he faced in Japanese society, but the cohesion and support of his family were also an important factor in his success.

At this point, NSG14 has been working as a contract worker for ten years, and he would like to have his own company. He has learned about the demands of the Japanese job system and endured many difficulties, in part because of his strong motivation to improve his social status. He believes that, if Japanese Peruvians make an effort, they can access better jobs with greater opportunities. Still, some Japanese Peruvians find it challenging to accept the high-pressure work environment common in Japanese companies. NSG14 thinks that most second-generation Japanese Peruvians working in factories can speak at least two languages, but some of them, do not use this skill because they do not want to make a greater effort to improve their employment status. As a result, when they feel humiliated by the strictness of their supervisors at jobs, they change jobs constantly. On one occasion, NSG14 wanted to help a young Peruvian friend, so he sent him to work as a helper at an office because his Japanese was good. Unfortunately, however, the young man could not endure the pressure the Japanese manager of the office gave him. In the end, the friend decided to continue working in a factory as an unskilled worker.

As a contract worker, NSG14 must occasionally work at the factory when one of the other employees is absent, working more hours and sleeping less as a result. NSG 14 states that most Japanese Peruvians do not understand how much efforts he makes. Rather, they believe that, as a regular worker, he is fortunate. As a consequence of this difference in perspectives and attitudes, NSG14 does not have many Japanese Peruvian friends. When they meet, they usually tease him because they think his situation is better than theirs (NSG14, personal communication, July 22, 2015).

## Typology C

**NSG7: part-time worker (*arubaito*), 21 years old, single, receiving loan aid**

NSG7 came to Japan when he was 15 years old and started Japanese school in the third year of junior high school. He had no Japanese ability, but while in Peru, he studied English for many years. NSG7 attended a seven-month Japanese class in a municipal program in his residential area; the course is offered to the majority of *nikkei* who live in the area.

Compulsory education in Japan is provided until junior high school. NSG7 had no problem attending the Japanese course instead of the third year of junior high school. After his Japanese improved and he completed junior high school, he entered a high school near his home where approximately 50% of students were foreigners like him. In the last year of high school, he took TOEFL. His score was very high because he had already been studying English for a considerable period of time. After one interview, his high TOEFL score gained him admittance to a Japanese university in the English as a Foreign Language department. NSG7 also applied for a scholarship from the government. He received about 120,000 yen per month. He also had a part time job, an *arubaito*, every weekend at a small shop. NSG7's strategy of obtaining an undergraduate degree could serve as a good example for some *nikkei* families. NSG7's family reside in a location where many other Japanese Peruvians live and study. The local government there assists young foreigners with Japanese courses (NSG7, personal communication, June 30, 2015).

### Typology C

#### **NSG10: part-time worker, 33 years old, married, not in school, no aid**

NSG10 came to Japan in 2002. After he finished high school in Peru, he did not want to attend college because his family's economic situation was unstable. He came to Japan because his extended family in Japan encouraged him and his siblings to come to Japan where they could earn higher wages and save money. NSG10's plan was to use the visa he already had as a Japanese Peruvian to move to Japan where he would save some money and then return to Peru to attend college, paying tuition with the money he saved in Japan.

When he arrived in Japan in 2002, he was 19 years old and could not speak Japanese. His cousin, who had lived in Japan since 1990, found a job for him at a car parts factory. The first month in Japan was not difficult for him because he was living with his cousin, who financially supported him for one month. However, when he became independent and left his cousin's house, he no longer received any financial support and had to cover all of his rent and living expenses on his own. He realized that it would not be easy to save enough money in one year's time, so he continued working in Japan. While he was working in the factory, his sister and two brothers decided to come to Japan as well because they had finished high school in Peru but could not go to college. With only a high school diploma, job opportunities in Peru are scarce.

Although he is a blue-collar worker in Japan, NSG10 used to live a middle-class lifestyle

in Peru. When he first began working in Japan, it was not easy for him because he had never done an unskilled job in Peru. However, the high wages in Japan encouraged him to continue. After his siblings came to Japan, they believed that living together would make it easier for them to save money. However, this plan did not work. Because they were young, they spent money attending parties and buying cars and expensive clothes. Eventually, NSG10 decided to stay in Japan longer, working in a factory as a temporary worker. In 2008, when the global financial crisis occurred, NSG10 lost his job, and he had to apply for unemployment insurance. He received 60% of his last salary for six months and then found a new job in another factory. Despite the global financial crisis, NSG10 preferred to stay in Japan because if he returned to Peru, his economic situation would be even worse. In Japan, he had the hope of finding a job, and while he was job-hunting, he could survive with the aid of unemployment insurance (NSG10, personal communication, April 13, 2015).

In 2013, NSG10's civil status changed when he married his Japanese girlfriend. Therefore, his previous goal (before coming to Japan) changed to one of settlement in Japan because of his new family. NSG10 realized that he had to improve his employment status to support his new family. NSG10's wife is an office worker in one of the municipalities of one prefecture in Japan. She works as a civil servant, and she encouraged him to attend vocational training. He studied to become a home helper and learned Japanese as well. Ultimately, NSG10 was certified as a home helper and also passed the third level of the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test. Afterwards, his level of Japanese proficiency helped him to find a new job at an *izakaya* (Japanese bar), while he also worked as a home helper. Technically, he had become a job-hopping part-timer. In 2014, NSG10 and his wife had a child, so working at part-time jobs was no longer sufficient. For the six months after the baby was born, however, he continued doing part-time jobs because his wife received maternity benefits for the baby, and she could take a six-month leave. Additionally, NSG10's wife received a subsidy to pay their living expenses (rental apartment).

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

The aim of this study was to discover what the Japanese Peruvian community has achieved and what limitations on their social mobility remain, and to answer the following question: How do second-generation Japanese Peruvians' marital status, age, level of education, and social aid influence their employment status in Japan?

The findings are as follows.

First, during the first *dekasegi* migration to Japan, Japanese Peruvians had to overcome many barriers, such as the Japanese language and Japanese culture, customs, and social rules. However, the most difficult barrier was that they could not use the skills and knowledge they acquired in Peru to achieve social mobility in Japan, when they became unskilled factory workers. However, some families, such as the Suzuki family, overcame the barriers that they encountered in different ways in order to settle in Japan. Just as this family did, many Japanese Peruvian families decided, in the end, to settle in Japan despite the 2008 global economic crisis. Also, factors such as marital status, Japanese proficiency, number of children, and age generated significant influences on their decision to stay.

Second, this study categorized the group of interviewees into four categories (A, B, C, and D): A (born in Peru and came to Japan at an early age), B (came to Japan when they were in elementary school), C (came to Japan when they were in junior high school or high school), and D (back and forth migration between Japan and Peru). Based on this categorization, this study contextualized the results of the interviews, and analyzed the variables that influence the employment status of the second-generation Japanese Peruvians.

Third, this study showed that there were some differences between factory and non-factory workers among second-generation Japanese Peruvians. The interviews revealed that some second-generation Japanese Peruvians who work in factories are single, very young, and receive fewer benefits than non-factory workers. One interviewee (NSG11) dropped out of school because of bullying, his economic situation, and his parents' long work hours, which made it difficult to spend time with him. The other small percentage of interviewees who work in factories and are over thirty years old stopped working as company employees because of low salaries and unpaid overtime. Therefore, the social mobility of the young second generation has decreased.

Furthermore, some of the case studies (NSG7, NSG12, NSG13, NSG16) show that they receive more benefits because of their employment status as non-factory workers and that they are not currently in school because a proportion of them are salarymen and have already finished their college education. Additionally, their schedule will not allow them time to continue their studies. Nevertheless, in most cases, this group of interviewees receive many benefits from their companies because of their *shain* status. This group has overcome many difficulties and arising from the differences between two cultures, including bullying and discrimination. They persevered to obtain their place in Japanese society.

The first-generation Japanese Peruvians were employed as unskilled workers (factory workers). For their children, the second generation, there were significant differences between factory and non-factory workers, and some differences had to do with marital status, age, level of education, and social aid. Therefore, below, I summarize the results of interviews with the younger second-generation Japanese Peruvians in terms of these differences (Table 2a and 2b).

Table 2a: Summary of the interview

Interview	Age of arrival in Japan	Typology	Marital Status	Age	Level of education
NSG11	Born in Japan	A	Single	20	Junior High school in Japan
NSG16	5	A	Single	25	High school in Japan
NSG13	2	A	Single	24	University in Japan
NSG12	Born in Japan	A	Single mother	23	High school in Japan and training course from the government program during the 2008 economic crisis
NSG14	Born in Peru came to Japan at 10	B D	Divorced	31	Junior high school in Japan
NSG7	Born in Peru, came to Japan at 15	C	Single	21	High school in Japan Studied English in Peru
NSG10	19	C	Married	33	High School in Peru and attended Japanese language school in Japan

Table 2b: Summary of the interview

Interview	Social Aid	Employment Status	Level of hardship in adapting to Japanese society
NSG11	No	Factory worker	Great hardship
NSG16	No	Not a factory worker job-hopping part-time ( <i>freeter</i> )	Muddling through overcoming some problems as discrimination
NSG13	No	Not a factory worker (Japanese company)	Smooth settlement
NSG12	Yes	contract worker ( <i>keiyakushain</i> )	Muddling through overcoming some problems as discrimination
NSG14	No	Factory worker ( <i>keiyakushain</i> ) and interpreter	Muddling through overcoming some problems as discrimination
NSG7	Yes scholarship from the government	Part-time worker ( <i>arubaito</i> ) and university student	Muddling through overcoming some problems as discrimination
NSG10	No	Part-time worker ( <i>arubaito</i> )	Muddling through overcoming some problems as discrimination

Source: author



Finally, some interviewees' language abilities in Spanish and English seemed to help them attend college and benefit them while they sought employment. An interviewee who did not initially have high proficiency in Japanese (NSG7) was able to succeed in gaining a university education by using his English language abilities. He was unique among the interviewees in that he received economic support from his parents (who worked in Japan) while he was living in Peru, allowing him to study English before coming to Japan. Another finding is that second-generation *nikkei*, like NSG12, may have benefited from completing training courses organized by local governments, which appears to have contributed to the opportunity to change their employment status from factory worker to non-factory worker.

## 5. Conclusion

This study is a further exploration of my research into the lives of Japanese Peruvians (*nikkei*) (see note 3). This paper is a qualitative counterpoint to earlier quantitative studies. I discuss two generations of Japanese Peruvian migrant workers: the first generation is described through the case study of one family and the second generation through an analysis of interviews with young Japanese Peruvians. Though there is a diversity of experiences in this community in terms of age, marital status, level of education, and government welfare, the main factor that distinguishes the lifestyle of the interviewees was their employment status, specifically, whether they worked in a factory or in an office job. The main trait that aided the interviewees' social mobility was proficiency in a foreign language, particularly in Spanish or English.

Most Peruvians who live in Japan belong to the *nikkei* group. Therefore, the study of Japanese Peruvian migration in Japan will help understand the problems they face as a migrant community in adapting to the culture and work ethics of Japan. Furthermore, the legal situation of *nikkei* families helps them obtain different types of government welfare that does not exist in Peru.

Most first-generation Japanese Peruvians work at factories and have limited social networks consisting mainly of other immigrants; however, as the interviews presented here have demonstrated, second-generation Japanese Peruvians have different types of employment status and broader social networks, including many Japanese people. Most second-generation Japanese Peruvians received Japanese education from elementary school. To be sure, this study had some limitations in the sample size regarding the second

generation. Some Japanese Peruvians of the second generation use different strategies to enter Japanese universities, but there are no data regarding their employment status after graduation compared to Japanese graduates. These data would reveal useful strategies for *nikkei* families who remain in Japan. Therefore, future research is necessary to explore the difference in job-hunting between Japanese Peruvians and Japanese citizens.

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### Notes

1. The previous article regarding quantitative findings refers to Lagones, 2015.
2. In this article, *dekasegi* refers to ethnic Japanese Peruvian or Brazilian migrants who came to Japan for a short period of time.
3. *Nikkei* refers to the descendants of Japanese citizens who immigrated to foreign countries and came back to live in Japan, such as Japanese Peruvians or Japanese Brazilians.

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