

Abstract of Doctoral Dissertation

Title: Cultural Policy and Peruvian National Identity
Building: A Study on Perspectives of Diversity Inclusion
of Young Nikkei

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The Nikkei community in Peru continues to struggle to be included in the imagined national identity. Recently, there is also evidence of a shift in the definition of Nikkei identity by the younger generation compared to traditional perspectives. There are several studies about the Nikkei identity formation and its evolution within the Latin American context, including Peru. However, few studies focus on understanding new experiences of the Nikkei identity, particularly among young artists. This study posits the following research question: *As cultural producers, how do young Nikkei artists (re)interpret the position of the Nikkei ethnic minority within the diversity-based Peruvian national identity?*

This research aims to provide a more complex understanding of the contemporary Nikkei community including evidence of their needs and expectations regarding their participation in the citizenship project based on the state's current stance on cultural diversity. Thus, this study seeks to clarify the needs of minorities that do not fall under the "vulnerable" classification in the context of the intercultural approach adaptation for diversity management in Peru.

The present research followed a mixed methodological approach which included an online survey with 43 respondents, 6 group interviews with 15 participants, and 2 individual interviews. During the data analysis, the main concepts investigated were collective identity, ethnicity identity, national identity, sense of belonging, social relationship, and representation. The online survey produced general findings regarding the above-mentioned concepts. Later, an in-depth analysis of those concepts was performed through a content analysis of the interviews which focused upon linguistic aspects such as lexical units, argumentation schemes, and syntactical means.

The following are the main findings of this research. The analysis of the data indicates that participants feel fully entitled to call themselves Peruvian without disregarding their Japanese heritage nor any other component of their multiple background. Their position in the diversity-based Peruvian national identity is as a component of the complex diversity of the country. Participants' involvement in the Peruvian diverse society as ethnic minorities is not as a closed, isolated group but open to establishing kinship connections and participating in the Peruvian mixture of cultures. Moreover, participants established meaningful connections of respect with other Peruvian minorities' traditions by studying these other groups' art techniques and history to create projects that explore and spread their knowledge among the audience. Through their artwork, participants are also creating awareness of other minorities. Considering themselves legitimate Peruvians and participating in the Peruvian society in such an interconnected way appears to encourage these young Nikkei artists to pursue a narrative of the Peruvian identity that includes the Nikkei minority uniqueness.

This robust identification with the Peruvian national identity and the relationships built between participants and other social stakeholders contrasts with participants' perception on broader Peruvian society and the government not having a correct understanding of the Nikkei minority participation in the Peruvian national diversity. The misunderstanding from the broader Peruvian society is perceived to come from a lack of knowledge and the prevalence of stereotypes about the Nikkei community in society. In the government's case, some allocated the lack of attention to a perceived advantageous societal situation of the Nikkei community compared to other marginalized communities. In this context, as producers of identity narratives about the Nikkei community, participants identified a positive impact of art in reshaping the audience's perception of the Nikkei community. Therefore, participants considered being a "Nikkei Artist" implied a social commitment to open the dialogue regarding topics of interest concerning the Nikkei community.

It suggests art as a political action for visibility and an action of representation of the younger generations in the discussion about Nikkei identity and Peruvian identity. This plus the general agreement on the importance of creating more awareness about the Nikkei community among Peruvian citizens, emphasized in the necessity of including the Nikkei community in the state's reflections on minorities' challenges beyond the economic participation and the access to fundamental rights.

These findings suggest a context leading to a limited understanding of the Nikkei minority's needs by the Peruvian state. The study indicates that the government's current intercultural approach overlooks the broader challenges faced by minorities like the Nikkei. The findings highlight the significance of analyzing the social participation of ethnic diversity beyond economic participation and fundamental rights, urging a reexamination of diversity enhancement policies. This study also emphasizes the role of art in creating alternative narratives for overlooked minorities, suggesting it is a valuable tool for enhancing social relations and encouraging cohesion within and among minority groups. Finally, these results imply a theoretical contribution to studying art as a tool for shaping collective narratives and its potential impact on national identity construction.

This research findings led to the next recommendations. The government should revise its adaptation of the intercultural approach to the Peruvian context. Thus, it will develop a more exhaustive comprehension of all the different minority communities' experiences as part of the diverse Peruvian society, beyond their economic situation and more focused on their relationships, which is necessary to work on policies for diversity enhancement, inclusion, and social cohesion. On the other hand, since these results suggested that art reinforced Nikkei group identity and encouraged people to continue exploring and complexifying the representation of the Nikkei community through their artwork, it is recommended that the state promotes projects that invite people to create cultural products by drawing into their reflections on national identity. In this way, the dialogue produced in the community will allow them to find common ground and become more aware of the different voices within society. This could be done through the creation of contests for funding this type of specific projects or through the creation of categories that encompass this type of projects in the contests for funding that already exist, such as the "Economic stimulus for Culture" by the Ministry of Culture.

Lastly, as for future research, consideration should be given to employing a gender approach to analyze the self-perception of the Nikkei minority in the context of a Peruvian diversity-based national identity building. The gender aspect was a cross-cutting topic in several interviews; however, it was not analyzed in this opportunity because it was beyond the focus of this study. Future research to account for the particularities of the female experience regarding the misconceptions and stereotypes the Nikkei minority endures, as well as future research analyzing the intersections among non-normative gender identities, the Nikkei ethnic identity, and Peruvian identity are needed. These kinds of research findings would contribute to a better understanding of the Nikkei minority and, in general, would give some insights into the complexity and particularities of minority identities in Peru. This is essential for thinking about strategies for integrating and promoting intergroup relationships.