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Kinship Paths To and From the New Europe: A Unified Analysis of Peruvian Adoption and Migration

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Abstract

This article compares migrants and adoptees of Peruvian origin residing in Europe by focusing on their respective movements out of and return to the sending country of Peru. First, it analyzes family-based reunifications by drawing on a framework from studies of adoption and kinship. Juxtaposing the experiences of adoptees with those of migrants reveals how migration, too, may be steeped in concerns about kin ties. Next, it analyzes returns of adult adoptees using a template modeled on migrant returns, focusing on the centrality of the notion of contribution. The article shows how migrants and adoptees contest the constraints of European nation-state definitions of kinship intended to limit migration. It is based on recent research with Peruvian migrants and adoptees in Spain, as well as longer-term research in Peru on migration and adoption.

Keywords

kinship; adoption; migration; law; Peru; Andes; Spain; Europe

In both adoption and labor migration, people cross borders, making them equally transnational phenomena. In both cases, bodies depart from one nation and are incorporated into another, yet frequently, different valences are attached to these relocations. As Briggs and Marre note, “sometimes the targets of anti-immigrant racism and the adorable babies of transnational adoption come from the same places on different kinds of visas” (2009:14). Demographer Peter Selman, noting how transnational adoption in Spain has corresponded to an increase in immigration, has called for “more analysis of the similarities and dissimilarities between intercountry adoption and child immigration” (2006:189). This article responds to his call by exploring local interpretations of bodies that originated in Peru and crossed borders to European nations before ultimately returning to Peru.

By making this comparison between migrants and adoptees of Peruvian origin, both as they arrive and as they leave their European destinations, I aim to contrast two mobility patterns, migration and adoption, that are normally analyzed separately. My purpose is to show how and along what axes the two patterns align, and to discover what information or insight the study of each can offer that of the other. It is part of a broader project that compares adoption and migration in order to ground a better understanding of each. This article’s focus on how adoptees and migrants arrive at and leave from their respective receiving countries reveals that ideas of kinship and relatedness are implicit within European immigration policy and are contested by both migrants and adoptees in their transnational movements.

The first half of this article analyzes family-based reunifications by drawing on a framework from studies of adoption and kinship. Juxtaposing the experiences of adoptees with those of migrants reveals how migration, too, can be steeped in concerns about kin ties. The analysis

of family reunification demonstrates both European concerns about what makes real kin, and the surveillance of the home employed to produce or constrain that real kinship. As migrants directly face these issues in *reagrupaciones* (family reunifications), adoption ethnography urges a consideration of what migrants experience via a kinship lens. The second half of the article analyzes returns of adult adoptees using a model drawn from migration studies. Scholarship on migrant returns to their country of origin focuses on what the returnee contributes (remittances both economic and social) as well as the reasons for returning (political, social, or economic). When adoptees return to their countries of origin, for short visits or longer stays, migrant returns offer a template for analyzing the circumstances under which they return and the ways that the notion of contribution is central to their doing so. Using the experience of migrants returning to Peru to reconsider adoptee returns completes the loop, revealing how adoption is not necessarily a one-way ticket, as legal constructions of the project imagine it to be, but rather a transnational phenomenon similar in many ways to migration.

The analysis presented here is mainly based on research conducted in Spain between 2009 and 2011 with Peruvian migrants and adoptees, and with professionals involved in both fields. I began working with Peruvians in Spain after witnessing the importance of transnational migration while conducting fieldwork in Peru during 2000-2007 on child welfare and internal migration (Leinaweaver 2008a), research which I also draw upon here. In Peru, I knew several people who had already migrated or were in the process of migrating to Europe (Leinaweaver 2009a, 2010). Meanwhile, through research on adoption I met foreigners who had come to Peru in search of a child, as well as the occasional adoptee returning to familiarize herself with her country of origin. In Spain, I drew on those earlier connections, asking migrant friends to introduce members of their networks. I also accessed Peruvian migrants in the classic settings of migrant research—Peruvian restaurants and bars, national celebrations, and formal settings such as the consulate. I made contact with adoptive families with the assistance of adoption professionals, researchers, and listservs. Most of the migrants and adoptive families I spoke to were middle-class (although they did tend to cluster at opposite ends of that category). My methods consisted of participant-observation and semi-structured interviews, as well as the analysis of textual and visual materials drawn from the news media, and analysis of legal documents.

Background: Peruvian Migration and Adoption to Spain

In the 1980s and early 1990s Peru was a major sending country for both migration and adoption. Transnational migration from Peru grew sharply in the 1980s and early 1990s in part due to high unemployment and political crisis in Peru under the governments of Alan García and Alberto Fujimori (Takenaka et al. 2010:5). Spain, Italy, and Japan received the bulk of Peruvian migrants during those years, as US immigration policy tightened while those nations encouraged labor migration (see also Escrivá 2000; Takenaka et al. 2010:6).ⁱ

Many scholars of international adoption have noted that adoption appears where war or natural disasters have occurred (Kapstein 2003) and Peru was no exception. The violent conflict between Shining Path and Peruvian government forces provoked illegal or “irregular” international adoptions from Peru, which reached a peak in the early 1990s and diminished considerably after Peru passed a 1993 adoption law (Law 26981) that implemented numerous safeguards and controls over the adoption process. Currently Peru sends around 30 children to Spain per year, fewer than to Italy but more than to the United

ⁱOn migration from the Andes, see also Ávila Molero 2003; Escrivá 2005; Leinaweaver 2010; Miles 2004; Pribilsky 2007; Tamagno 2003.

States (at present, the top three destinations for Peruvian children adopted internationally).ⁱⁱ These numbers are significantly down from the highs of the early 1990s.

Migration to Spain is of ethnographic interest due to the great rapidity with which it has transformed Spanish demographics (Bledsoe 2004). Under Franco, Spain was a (purportedly homogeneous) nation of emigrants—people fled the dictatorship in search of political freedom and, perhaps even more importantly, a chance to make a living (Paerregaard 2008:48, 63). The social and political changes unfolding over the last few decades spurred the rapid growth of a migrant population now estimated at over 6 million (14.1 percent of Spain's total population) (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development 2010). A similar, though smaller-scale, shift occurred in the field of adoption: Spain sent adoptable children overseas earlier in the twentieth century (see, e.g., Junquera and Duva 2011), and only recently has it become a receiving country for adoptable children (Howell and Marré Cífolá 2006; Marré Cífolá 2007, 2009).

Reagrupación Familiar: Regrouping

Reagrupar: (tr.) Agrupar de nuevo o de modo diferente lo que ya estuvo agrupado.
—La Real Academia Española, Diccionario de la Lengua Española, 22nd. ed

This section considers bodies moving across borders in the “expected” direction: from Peru to receiving nations, with a focus on Spain. I analyze adoption practices and migrant family reunification from the perspective of kinship studies. In adoption, just as in migrant family reunification, ideas about what kind of kinship “counts” and about what kinship should imply are articulated and enforced. Following kinship scholarship, I attend to ideas about family, both explicit and implicit, that appear in legal, administrative, and private spheres, and analyze them to determine how kinship is modeled and contested.

Of course, on the face of it the legal differences between adoption and migration are vast. As Giménez notes, “While in immigration judicial precariousness rules the day, in adoption there is an extraordinary degree of juridical security” (2008:110).ⁱⁱⁱ That security is articulated in the Ministry of Justice’s statement that adoption is juridically equivalent to birth for the purposes of citizenship, and that minors adopted by Spanish persons are considered to be of Spanish origin (*españoles de origen*).^{iv} However, the conferral of Spanish citizenship on children adopted by Spanish parents is not wholly automatic, as it would be if the child were born to Spanish parents. Typically, adoptions are made legal in the child’s country of origin, and must then be formally recognized by Spain, whether at the Spanish Consulate in that country, or upon the family’s return. The former is preferable, “because in this way the child enters Spain as a Spanish citizen;” the alternative is that “the child has to enter Spain as a foreigner [*extranjero*] and then do the paperwork” (Berástegui Pedro-Viejo et al. 2006:55). At the consulate, the adoption is legally registered and the child is granted a family reunification visa.^v

ⁱⁱ“Niñas, niños y adolescentes adoptados según país de procedencia de los adoptantes.” Available at <http://www.mimdes.gob.pe/estadisticas-de-adopciones/1639-ninas-ninos-y-adolescentes-adoptados-segun-pais-de-procedencia-de-los-adoptantes.html>, accessed September 13, 2010.

ⁱⁱⁱAdoption is not actually a judicial matter but rather falls under the purview of Spain’s Ministry of Health and Social Policy. Spain’s Autonomous Communities (rather than the central government) are designated the Central Authorities for the purposes of the Hague Convention. There are 17 *comunidades autónomas*, but 23 authorities for purposes of adoption because both the Islas Baleares and País Vasco have three authorities, one for each island or province (Diana Marre, personal communication).

^{iv}http://www.mjusticia.es/cs/Satellite?pagename=Portal_del_Derecho/Page/FichaFaq&idTematica=1070283376284&idFaq=1070283376061&cid=1070283376284&c=tematica&p=1151913189133&menu_activo=1151913189133&lang=es_es&idPreg=1161678414816#1161678414816. Accessed 1 September 2010.

^vImmigration is governed by the Ministry of Work and Migration. <http://www.mepsyd.es/politica-social/familias-infancia/adopciones/adopcioninternacional/procedimiento-adopcion/etapas-tramitacion.html>, accessed 1 September 2010.

The bestowal of a family reunification visa upon an adopted child suggests two things. First, it indicates that adoption does in fact imply migration. This is a different kind of migration than what is usually supposed by the term—the child becomes a citizen upon entering Spanish territory—but it is a form of migration nonetheless. Second, it indicates that the child is being *re-unified*, *re-grouped* in Spanish (*reagrupado*), drawing upon the idea common to adoption discourse that the adoptee is “meant to be” in her or his current family and that she “came home” when she was adopted.^{vi} (One can see this clearly in the Real Academia’s definition of re-group, seen in the epigraph to this section: “to join again or to bring together in a different manner that which was previously joined.”) For the purposes of an analysis of migrant family reunification, there is a third set of implications: that kinship is a valid reason for permitting migration, but simultaneously, that there are particular norms governing kinship relations that must be met or adhered to in order for this kind of immigration to be valid.

These norms governing kinship relations include both understandings of the very nature of family, as discussed above, and of what a family member must provide to the “re-grouped” relative. For example, prospective adopters of Peruvian children must document “living conditions that guarantee that the child’s basic needs will be met.”^{vii} The current legal requirement is somewhat vague: prospective parents must show the “ability to meet the needs of child-rearing, health, and development of the family, particularly the adopted child or adolescent.”^{viii} Visual documentation of the conditions of the home has been required for at least a decade.^{ix} The 2001 “Guía de Adopciones” issued by Peru’s adoption secretariat included explicit language about the house. The adopters must possess a “stable home, whether owned or renting, which they directly administer and which is in good condition (basic services, spacious, adequate light and ventilation) and comfortable. It should be located in an area with numerous resources” (Promudeh 2001). The guide goes into further detail about how the social worker should evaluate the home: “Describe the environment of the neighborhood where the home is located; the home itself—construction type, finishing, number of rooms, open space, furnishings and appliances, and a sense of the degree of order, cleanliness and general comfort” (Promudeh 2001; see also Leinaweaver 2008a:191, n2).^x The specificity of these housing requirements shows the significance of the home to Peruvian and international models of kinship. The home is where kinship takes place, and, at least in the case of adoptive kinship, where it is actively produced; it must be adequate to that challenge. This focus on the middle-class specifics of the home required to make good parents and families is something that will also be seen in the analysis of migrant family reunification, below.

It may seem unremarkable that adoption is concerned with the establishment and regulation of kin ties, given that adoption is explicitly a family formation process. However, applying this kinship lens to migration reveals that important state ideologies about kin ties are present in this sphere as well (see also Rytter 2010).^{xi} The remainder of this section analyzes migrant family reunification, considering the law itself,^{xii} the ideas that were circulating about the law during my time in Spain, and some examples from fieldwork. It does so from the perspective of the kinship studies that inform adoption research and highlights the ideas and norms about kinship that emerge through these discussions and practices. What counts

^{vi}See, for example, Simon 2010.

^{vii}<http://www.mimdes.gob.pe/preguntas-frecuentes.html>, accessed September 8, 2010.

^{viii}MIMDES Decreto Supremo N° 010-2005-MIMDES, Article 11.i. See http://www.mimdes.gob.pe/archivos_sites/daff/compendio/iv_normatividad_adopciones/Decreto_Supremo_010-2005-MIMDES.pdf. Accessed June 16, 2011.

^{ix}MIMDES Decreto Supremo N° 010-2005-MIMDES, Articles 14.m and 16.n for domestic and international adoptions, respectively.

^xIn an international setting, local authorities are expected to ensure the adequacy of the home (Diana Marre, personal communication).

^{xi}Family reunification has become increasingly important both for policymakers and for scholars (Bledsoe 2006; Bledsoe and Sow 2011; Collard 2009; Hautaniemi 2007).

as real kinship and what house-related expectations are families subjected to or produced by?

In the 2000 immigration law, family reunification is treated as a right: “foreign residents have a right to a family life” (Cap II, Art 16.1). However, only certain kinds of family life are included in this right: migrants are only entitled to the presence of certain relatives. These “*reagrupables*” or regroup-able family members are defined in Article 17: spouses (as long as they are not separated, fraudulently married, or polygamous); children (as long as they are under 18 or disabled; unmarried; and—where relevant—that their other parent has renounced legal authority); and parents (as long as they are over sixty-five and ‘there are reasons that justify the need to authorize their residence in Spain’”).

State anxieties about fraudulent marriage show the centrality of authenticity to kinship ideology. As in adoption, where prospective parents are scrutinized in a manner from which parents who bear their children are exempt, certain marriages between migrants and Spanish residents or citizens are open to doubt. One Peruvian I met in Madrid had contemplated marrying her Spanish boyfriend as a tactic to help her become a citizen and bring her children from Peru, but they had been told that because she had held her residence card for less than two years, twice the usual amount of documentation would be required of them. In other words, the government would act on the assumption that their marriage was by contract rather than “authentic.” But anxiety about authenticity can also be found deep in the heart of kinship: recall recent news stories about a proposed French policy to test the DNA of migrants’ family members to prove family relationships for reunification processes (see Hautaniemi 2007; Yngvesson 2010:24).^{xiii} While adoptive migration does not invite the same level of scrutiny with regard to testing the veracity of the relationship, there is intensive scrutiny of both parents and child (see Leinaweaver 2009b) prior to the completion of the adoption, along with the perpetual questioning of adoptive relationships brought on by North American and European allegiance to the “as-if” model of adoptive kinship. The idea of ‘as if’ comes from Judith Schachter’s path-breaking work on adoption in the US, which has historically encouraged adoptive families to emulate the structures of birth families (what she calls ‘as-if-begotten’) (Modell 1994).

A particular model of the nuclear family—more accurately depicted as the lineal and consanguineal family—is prioritized in this legislation. The ideal family includes spouses and minor children, with a continued but increasingly grudging acceptance of parents over the age of retirement. Unsurprisingly, this model of the family does not conform to most of the Peruvian migrant families I met, many of whom actively prioritize siblings. Of course, siblings and other collateral kin are family members in the eyes of Spanish citizens and authorities, and yet they are not considered by migration policy as family members whose presence is required as a right by the immigrant. The exclusion of siblings from reunification is a clear instance where practical ideologies of Peruvian kinship (in the sense of Bourdieu 1990 [1980]:168–170) contrast with those more limited models imposed by the Spanish state.^{xiv}

^{xii}The law is on the verge of changing. At the time of writing, the relevant law was Ley Orgánica 4/2000, de 11 de enero, sobre derechos y libertades de los extranjeros en España y su integración social. This law was modified in December 2000, September 2003, November 2003, and December 2009. Available at <http://www.mir.es/SGACAVT/derecho/lo/lo04-2000.html>, accessed September 11, 2010. The law is actually put into practice through a *reglamento*, or regulations: Real Decreto 2393/2004, de 30 de diciembre, por el que se aprueba el reglamento de la ley orgánica 4/2000, de 11 enero, sobre derechos y libertades de los extranjeros en España y su integración social. The regulations were modified in September 2006, February 2007, July 2009, and July 2010. Available at http://www.mir.es/SGACAVT/derecho/rd/rd2393_2004.html, accessed September 11, 2010. A new law was passed in December 2009, but the regulations have not yet gone into effect at the time of this writing, so the quotes in the article are taken from the 2000 law and 2004 reglamento.

^{xiii}<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/11/world/europe/11france.html>, accessed September 11, 2010.

Canny Peruvians had clear plans for circumventing the limits on the *reagrupación* of siblings, using the tool of the work contract. Work contracts are the main way that migrants come to Spain: a Spanish company or individual must formally offer the prospective migrant a job. If a migrant wishes to bring to Spain a relative who is not included in the state's model of regroupable family, he or she must find someone willing to offer a work contract to that relative. For example, Irene, the eldest of several siblings orphaned during the violence in Peru, migrated to Spain to work as a domestic.^{xv} Irene then invited her younger sister to join her in Spain, arranging for a friend of her own employer to create a live-in domestic work contract for her sister.^{xvi} This example demonstrates a Peruvian ideology and practice of closeness to siblings, and shows how Peruvians are able to circumvent the rules of *reagrupación* through work contracts. I also saw this strategy used to bring more distant collateral relatives, including nieces, nephews, and cousins—some of whom were charged a few thousand euros, illegally, for the “simulated work contract” obtained by their distant relative). The anxiety mentioned above with regard to fraudulent kinship and affinal relations has its parallels in labor immigration, where the stiffest fines are reserved for “simulating a work contract.”

Aside from setting down who counts as legitimate family for the purposes of migration, Spanish migration policy also specifies what family sponsors are expected to do for their migrant relative. Anita, a Peruvian migrant, explained that if one wishes to bring a family member, the government requires proof that you are financially able to support him. She added that they even come to the house to make sure a spare room is available. This sounded so much like the pre-adoption process that I almost doubted it could be true. But indeed, in Article 42 of the 2004 regulations, it is stated that the application must include proof that the soliciting immigrant has work or sufficient economic resources to cover the family member's needs. There is a financial component to family support, in other words, as there is in adoption. The article states that migrants must also include “proof of an adequate home to meet the needs of the petitioner and the reunified family member(s).” Namely, a local government representative must document the resident's right to occupy the home (a title or a contract), the number of rooms, what each room is used for, how many people live there, and the home's conditions of “habitability” and its furnishings.^{xvii} Attorney Sonia Castillo, a Peruvian migrant herself, remarked that the regulations require just one “family unit” per household for the purposes of family reunification. She criticized the policy as ethnocentric and discriminatory against struggling migrants, arguing, “Two families can live in a house.”^{xviii}

Many Peruvian migrants in Spain are unable to take advantage of the *reagrupación* strategy, because they wish to bring a relative who is not included in the Spanish vision of the appropriate migrant nuclear family, or because their home or apartment does not meet legal standards. Adopted Peruvians, of course, also cannot use *reagrupación* after their own arrival to Spain—they are an entire category of migrant ineligible for bringing family members from the country of origin. This is because adoption is plenary, per the Hague Convention—that is, adoptees are no longer legally related to persons in their family of

^{xiv}Denmark has also recently limited family reunifications, prohibiting migration for spouses with insufficient “national attachment” to Denmark over some other country (Rytter 2010:302).

^{xv}This and all names of Peruvian migrant participants are pseudonyms.

^{xvi}This is not a new tactic; Paerregaard cites the case of a woman in the early 1990s who grew her network by strategically finding people willing to apply for *cupos* for the migrant's relatives (2008:99).

^{xvii}Pisarello and Valiño note that the very specificity of these requirements for migrants contrasts with the vagueness of the law regarding the kind of lodging to which migrants have a right (2006:192).

^{xviii}: The specificity about the dwelling for the re-grouped migrant may draw not only upon kinship ideologies of the house being where families are formed and constituted, but also upon anti-immigrant sentiments that manifest in discourses about unsuitable housing. Peruvian migrants in Madrid complained about Chinese migrants who, they said, housed multiple occupants in a single room and charged exorbitantly for these exploitative conditions.

origin. They are only adoptable in the first place because of this characteristic—what Howell calls social nakedness (2006:6) and Yngvesson describes as a “clean-break model [that] involves an exclusivist, either-or approach to adoption in which the integration of a child into an adoptive family (and adoptive nation) is premised on the complete severance of ties with the biological family, and the reconstitution of its national identity” (2000:171).

In either of these cases, for migrants who wish to bring other Peruvians who do not fit into the official kinship model, the work contract is a valuable tool. Thus, even for state ideologies regarding labor migration that explicitly are not about kinship, kinship may still be at the core. In other words, many work contracts may actually mask migration that is motivated and engineered partly through kinship ties. Furthermore, and interestingly from the perspective of kinship studies, some kind of connection to a Spanish resident remains key even in the work contract. While it is not defined in terms of genealogical or affinal connection, as is the case for *reagrupación*, work contracts nonetheless require a specific sponsor of a specific migrant, laying out a fundamental person-to-person dyad and highlighting the importance of relatedness and connections even in a labor-based situation. In other words, studying migration from a kinship perspective brings new insights even to non family-based immigration, revealing how the work contract, too, both enables (through letting migrants bring siblings and other “prohibited” relatives) and produces (through establishing ties between new migrants and established Spanish residents) relatedness.

Retorno Voluntario: Returning

In this section I review ideas about return, in cases when migrants and adoptees decide to return from Europe to Peru. I begin with migrants, who may be encouraged or compelled to return, and consider how these returns are evaluated before exploring what “return” means in the adoptive realm. In discussions of migrant returns, the analytical focus tends to be on what the returnee can contribute to the home country and community (Levitt 2001; Pessar 1990) and the reasons for returning (such as political pressures from the receiving country, or economic shifts that disadvantage migrants more than other groups, as is currently the case in Spain). This focus on the idea of contribution and on articulating political-economic reasons for return will be useful in the second part of this section, which considers adoptee returns. This section makes a novel contribution to a broader literature that—if it compares immigrants and adoptees at all—usually does so in terms of how they relate to the “host” country (e.g. Leiter et al. 2006; Yngvesson 2010) rather than the sending country.

The contribution of the returned migrant is the centerpiece of Spanish government discourse on “voluntary return.” The website of the Ministry of Work and Immigration’s Plan of Voluntary Return, instituted in 2008 as part of a Europe-wide effort, states that those who opt in had to return to their home country (along with all reunified family members who did not have their own independent right to live in Spain), and not return to Spain to live and work for a three-year period, but would recuperate their previous legal status after that point should they choose to return. Upon leaving Spain, they would receive their accumulated social security payments and a lump sum unemployment payment, as well as a one-way ticket home and travel expenses. The website exhorting migrants to consider this option noted, “With your return, you will be contributing to the development of your countries, able to work near your families and with better work options or possibilities to form a business thanks to the experience and skills you have obtained working in Spain.”^{xix}

The notion of “voluntary” return encompasses the idea of contribution to the home country’s development, the chance to be close to family again, and the possibility of using new skills

^{xix}http://www.planderetornovoluntario.es/index_uno.html, accessed 31 August 2010.

gleaned while in Spain for personal and occupational achievement in the home country. Certainly, migrants send monetary remittances and “social remittances” as well (Levitt 2001:59), but it is not clear to what extent migrants contribute more broadly to the development of home countries upon their return (Pessar 1990). The desire to help in some way is often evident; for example, the Federation of Peruvian Associations (FEDAP) in Spain raised money to support community libraries in Peru.^{xx} Even a more diffuse sense of contribution was present; Flora told me that one of her Spanish friends criticized her for not going out more and taking advantage of the museums and educational resources Madrid had to offer, asking her, “when you go back to Peru, what will you bring?” Similarly, an attendee at a congress on Peruvian migrants in Europe remarked that “Spain gives us an opportunity to take classes and learn, and when we go back we can contribute. But we don’t take advantage of this --- we need to encourage people to educate themselves so they can contribute to Peru when they return.” Other migrants, however, pushed to emigrate because of desperate economic or political conditions, resent the idea that they should then contribute to their home countries (Berg 2010).

The idea of contributing to the country of origin’s development is itself situated in the larger political economic context that gave rise to the governmental return plan in the first place: migrants come from underdeveloped nations and enter developed ones, materializing with their transnational movements a national hierarchy in which development is deemed positive. The global economic crisis has affected the possibilities for migrants to Spain: migrants face even higher unemployment rates (28.4%) than the population at large (17.4%) (Instituto Nacional de Estadística 2009). Spanish attitudes and policies toward immigration have also suffered. However, ultimately, the numbers of migrants taking up the government’s offer were (from the government’s perspective) disappointingly low.^{xxi} Some migrants may have misunderstood aspects of the program; those I spoke with said that in exchange for the payment, they would have to leave Spain, renounce their hard-won legal status, and never return. The permanence gave them pause. This suggests that while a successful return to Peru is a central purpose of many migrants’ journeys to Europe, the return must be on their own terms and it must preserve the possibility of leaving Peru again if necessary.

However, even if migrants did not take the government up on the voluntary return program – wary of the strings that might be attached – they nonetheless designed their own returns, whether for visits or more permanently. For example, Flora’s friend and housemate Valery decided to return to live in Peru. Acquaintances assumed Valery was getting married to her boyfriend who still lived in Peru, but as Flora explained to them, Valery just had “things to do.” In Madrid, Valery had a comfortable routine: she worked at several different child-care and housework jobs, each one for a few hours, and had time still to continue via distance education the nursing studies she had begun in Peru. She had dutifully sent money home each month to purchase and furnish an apartment in Lima and to secure an agricultural plot south of the city. After several years living legally in Spain (having originally come when her cousin obtained a work contract for her), she had recently obtained Spanish nationality, allowing her to travel freely. Valery had decided to return to Peru in the fall of 2010, where she would live in her Lima apartment with two sisters who worked as domestics. Valery planned to look for work as a nurse’s assistant in a hospital, clinic, or nursing home. If she did not find work after six months, she would come back to Spain.

^{xx}http://www.fedap.com/INFORME_FINAL_LIBROTON.pdf, accessed September 13, 2010 (see also Paerregaard 2010:55).

^{xxi}La crisis provoca una caída del 43% de la emigración a España. Susana Pérez de Pablos, July 13, 2010, El País. http://www.elpais.com/articulo/espana/crisis/provoca/caida/43/emigracion/Espana/elpepiesp/20100713elpepinac_15/Tes, accessed 31 August 2010.

Valery's Spanish friends had mixed opinions about her plan. Lourdes was impressed with Valery's acumen and applauded the way she efficiently got citizenship, saved money, and promptly returned. Lourdes said she had never seen anyone respond so successfully to the opportunity of coming to Spain; it was as if for Lourdes, a successful return to Peru was a central purpose of coming to Spain. But Lourdes's friend Paula was disappointed that Valery was going to go back to Peru—she did not want people to go back. Perhaps she felt it was a wasted opportunity, or that there was no point to returning. And indeed, several months after Valery returned to Peru, she still had not found the kind of work that she hoped for; yet her friends reported that she was content and had no desire to come back to Spain.

In Valery's case, going back was a contested decision, one which had to be defended. The themes raised by the government's voluntary return plan came out in her discussion, but with different emphases. There was no sense that Valery would contribute to Peru's development. Instead, she would be more comfortable in Peru, possessing the capital and the real estate necessary to live well. She could be with her sisters (a closeness to family that the government's plan also prioritized) and, ideally, work in the profession she had trained in prior to migrating. Migrating to Spain had given Valery the means to have the life that she wanted in Peru, which she temporarily had to leave, rather than the ability to make Peru into the kind of place she wanted it to be (see also Takenaka and Pren 2010 on "leaving to get ahead"). It is a subtle difference, but a telling one.

How do these ideas of voluntary return, contribution to development, and "things to do" transfer to adopted Peruvians on their return? On one hand, some see this as an "empty set:" why would adoptees "return," given the ideology—referenced above—that they were being re-unified, re-grouped, *meant to be* together with their (adoptive) parents in their (adoptive) country?^{xxii} In a 2002 radio interview with Ayacucho's adoption office coordinator, the DJ asked her whether there were examples of adopted children wanting to return. She replied that there were not: "they're already in other conditions, the child's being personally attended by his parents. In an institution like the orphanage, it's one attendant for twelve children." She highlighted the dyadic love between child and parents as something distinguishing the family from the orphanage (eliding the question of the home the child was born into, if one existed) as well as something more obscure, "conditions"—perhaps evoking the above-mentioned descriptions of spacious households and yards. The resistance to contemplating adoptive return is also grounded in the plenary nature of adoption considered above—that adoption legally severs kinship ties with family members in the country of origin, and in some cases it also severs or at least attenuates ties of nationality. The Peruvian social worker's words indicate the contradictions opened up by a return perspective: return questions the whole idea upon which adoption is based. Return, in Yngvesson's words, sparks a "tension between a legal discourse of adoption focused on closure ... and a cultural discourse of adoptive families as 'as if' (genealogical) families" (2010:146).

Nevertheless, "return" is not an unheard-of notion among adoptive families, though clearly it is contested, complicated, and ambivalent (Kim 2007, Yngvesson 2003). The idea of "return" is complicated, as adoptees often do not remember the country they are returning to, so the very premise of return to a familiar place or people is flawed (as was the premise of "reuniting" with adoptive parents at the moment of migration). This ambivalence is not unlike the experience of that group referred to as "second-generation migrants," who are actually children of migrants and thus have never known the country that they are

^{xxii}This is the attitude reported by Howell for Norwegian transnational adoptees, who reportedly "have no desire to visit the place they were born" and resent the assumption that they would develop relationships with and connections to their countries of origin and people in them.

nonetheless associated with on a daily basis.^{xxiii} Yet some adult adoptees overcome their ambivalence and return to Peru not only to visit but to create or recreate more permanent ties, echoing the mandate of development seen in the Spanish government's voluntary return materials. Some of the same ideas about contribution and return resonate among adopted youth as they do among labor and family migrants, showing again the utility of a comparative analysis of adoption and migration.

Alanya's story is a compelling example of this pattern. I first heard of Alanya, who had been adopted to Holland when she was a baby, when I was living in Peru in 2002. In the interview on the radio with the social worker who headed Ayacucho's adoption office branch, the same interview where she denied the likelihood of adoptees returning, Alanya's story was shared with the Ayacucho public:

Last year she came with her parents, and she was able to find—[here, the DJ interrupts to clarify: "Adoptive parents."] Yes, adoptive parents. She found her father's mother in a nearby community. Her biological parents had died; the father had disappeared, the mother died, and she had been placed for adoption by the father. We haven't been able to find the mother's relatives but we did find the father's. And she came to do a project here, this year. It's a project to work with children—street workers ... She said, "I'm going to come back to my country," and she got her birth certificate, so she could get ... the documents she needs as a Peruvian.^{xxiv}

I later interviewed Alanya, who told me that as a child she wondered "why am I living here in Holland? Why do I have another color of skin than my parents? Why don't my parents, biological parents, why don't they want to take care of me?"^{xxv} Ultimately, her unhappiness culminated in her decision to run away from home at fifteen. She was homeless for three years, a period during which she and some friends proposed—then navigated the government bureaucracy to create—a night shelter called NoiZ. One of the politicians she met during that process had adopted two Andean children herself and correctly identified Alanya's Peruvian origins. Through this contact, Alanya joined an association of Peruvian adoptees which organized a trip to Peru. In 2000, the group visited Peru for three weeks, and Alanya and her parents—with whom she had reconciled—went along. There, Alanya learned from the social worker quoted above that her father and her brother had both died, but that she had aunts and uncles who resided in a village outside the city.

As she recalls it: "The three weeks [in Peru] changed my life, and I made the decision that I wanted to do something for my country and, especially, for the children here. So when I went back to Holland I ... looked for information on the Internet, and met other people who wanted to help me to think how can I do something. The woman who had adopted the two children said to me, 'why don't you do the same thing that you did with NoiZ ... why don't you establish another foundation for the project that you want to do now?'" Alanya did exactly this,^{xxvi} returning to Peru a second time in 2002 to create a night shelter for working children.

^{xxiii} Though I do not have space to consider it here, several of the Peruvians I spoke with commented on adopted youth choosing as adolescents to join Latino gangs. Diana Marre has also noted this, suggesting that parents believe the youth are "looking for 'their people' or seeking a sense of belonging, speaking like them and adopting their mode of dress" (2009:240).

^{xxiv} A birth certificate proved her Peruvian citizenship under Peruvian law. With this document, she could obtain her DNI (national identity card) and passport.

^{xxv} This interview took place mostly in English. I have not changed Alanya's name since she is a figure of public record. However, the name I use for her is one that she legally acquired to reflect her Peruvian roots, replacing the Dutch name she had been given, which itself, of course, had been substituted for the name she was given at birth.

^{xxvi} See also "History." <http://www.loscachorros.nl/over-los-cachorros/geschiedenis>, accessed 1 Sept 2010; and www.mambapoint.nl, accessed 22 September 2010.

Although Alanya emphasized the importance of personal factors in bringing her to Peru—first, her sense of not fitting in in Holland or “living between worlds” (see Hübinette and Tigervall 2009) and, more importantly, her desire to find out what her natal kin were like, echoed also in the kinship focus in the plan of voluntary return—she also remarked that the fact of having been adopted, despite the difficulties, made it possible for her to return and be useful. In her words, “I think I am glad that I spent my life in Holland. Even if I had these problems, I am glad that I learned a lot of things in Holland and that I can go now to Peru and do this project. [If I had stayed] in Peru, I wouldn’t have had the chance ... maybe I would be married with children ... so I am glad I spent my life in Holland. It was a very difficult time, but I am much, much stronger, very independent and ready to help other people.”^{xxvii}

Alanya’s gladness evokes a notion widespread among adoption professionals in Peru that the adoptees themselves should be grateful for the opportunity they have been given (Yngvesson 2010:116). In 2001, I exchanged e-mails with a US mother of two Peruvian children, who wrote a message for me to bring to the adoption office, greeting them with news about the children’s progress. As I finished translating it and hearing the stories that the mother’s recollections had sparked among the staff, the social worker asked me to tell the mother that “we never tire of thanking her family,” because their having adopted the girls meant “a change in the girls’ destiny.” She hoped that the daughters would one day appreciate everything their parents had done for them, and would treat their parents as well as they deserve.

There is a sense, then, that adoptees owe something to their parents, or, by extension, to society at large, much in the way that migrants should contribute something to their home countries (as Flora’s friends and the voluntary return program both suggest). This sentiment differentiates adoptees from non-adopted youth, and migrants from non-migrant youth. The assumption that adopted children should feel grateful is set primarily within a political-economic context in which nations and the associated opportunities are ranked hierarchically. It also bears traces of the micro-inequalities and disparities of age and socioeconomic position that exist between child and adults (Dorow 2006:62). Perhaps the gladness Alanya felt is infused with the sense of debt that Yngvesson describes: “adopted adults increasingly go back and find that it is they, not the country that gave them away, who are expected to be (or feel that they should be) doing the giving” (2010:165). Yngvesson found that many of the adult adoptees she interviewed limit their contributions to members of their birth families (2010:168) rather than to national development projects (see also Dubinsky 2010:126). This is similar to the ways that labor migrants’ returns, like Valery’s, are phrased in terms of self- and family-improvement (Leinaweaver 2008b) rather than nation-improvement.

Of course, most international adoptees do not engage in permanent returns to their countries of origin. But although Alanya’s case is unusual, it shares similarities with other cases in which adoptees and adoptive families feel, develop, or produce active connections with their countries of origin that are framed in terms of development, aid, or support. Dorow has compared the gifts of adoptive families to charities supporting their children’s countries of origins to migrant remittances (2006:277), yet many families go far beyond charitable donations. For example, Peruvian adoptee Ana Dodson, adopted to the US, also started a foundation, Peruvian Hearts, to support orphans in her country of origin.^{xxviii} Recalling the

^{xxvii}: Presently, Los Cachorros remains active in Ayacucho, supported by a Dutch foundation. It involves many aspects of assisting working children, including a residence, a shelter, and outreach (“The work in Peru”: <http://www.loscachorros.nl/ons-werk/het-werk-in-peru>, accessed 1 September 2010). Alanya is still at its helm, living there with her Dutch partner and their two children.

^{xxviii}: <http://www.peruvianhearts.org/Ana%27sVision.html>, accessed September 13, 2010.

work contracts Peruvian labor migrants obtained for their siblings, an adoptive mother I met in Segovia arranged a contract for the Peruvian social worker who had aided her adoption in Peru. And in terms of general diffuse solidarity, another adoptive mother made the point at a public talk on adoption and birthparent searches that “We have a greater social responsibility.” As parents of racially different children, she meant, adoptive parents must commit to anti-racism and must actively respond when their child or others are harassed on the basis of racial difference (see also Yngvesson 2010:121). These cases are illuminating: the overlaps between adoption and migration extend, so that adoptive families themselves recognize the similarities that I have drawn in this analysis. Marré has argued that adoption professionals and scholars, as well as children and parents, are also coming to realize that the overlaps are not inconsequential (2009:240).

Conclusions: Arrivals and Departures

Reagrupación and return are spaces in which ideas of kinship are contested. European nations, politically inclined to restrict immigration, narrow the definition of family by only allowing entry through certain forms of relatedness. They place further obstacles in migrants’ paths by specifying only particular models of home life as appropriate for reunification. Adoption policies, grounded in international conventions, also restrict migration: because adoption severs old ties and creates new ones, it cannot lead to further migration. Within these constraints, however, both migrants and adoptees challenge received definitions of family and home by arranging work contracts for friends and kin in the case of the former, and by different forms of returning and contribution in the case of the latter.

Both *reagrupación* and return reiterate connections between sending and receiving countries, and between people, ideas, products, and other things that flow between them. In other words, they highlight transnational ties (Appadurai 1991; Brettell 2000; Clifford 1997; Kearney 1995; Morris 1997) by identifying the “social fields” that immigrants and adoptees create to connect their origins and present homes (Glick Schiller et al. 1992:1) and the border-crossing and transformation that are simultaneously involved (Ong 1999).

Broadly, then, this work joins that of other scholars of transnationalism in the continued problematization of the nation as an organizing trope in the contemporary world (Malkki 1992). The kinship analysis presented here underscores the point that “nation” is a genealogical metaphor: like “nature,” the word itself comes from the Latin *natio* or birth (Herzfeld 1997:41). “Naturalization” occurs when a migrant obtains citizenship to a new nation. Thus, nationality means, metaphorically, belonging to the same family.^{xxix} Where dual nationality is not permitted, one may only belong to one “family” at a time, as in plenary adoption, which Dorow defines as a “kind of ‘serial monogamy’ of national/familial kinship” (2006:209). As John Terrell and Judith Modell have argued, “a study of adoption can shed light on definitions of and criteria for ‘citizenship’: What does it mean to belong to a group or nation, and is this linked with ideas about what it means to be a family?” (1994:159).

Analytically, we can use adoption to better understand migration, and migration to better understand adoption. This article has placed international adoption and international migration into the same analytical framework to show the richness that their comparison can bring to both areas of study. Both internationally adopted children and international labor migrants cross borders, leaving their countries of origin and moving to new homes. The

^{xxix}Rytter applies David Schneider’s (1980) approach to Denmark, arguing that “real” Danes belong to the national territory, and are thus substantially Danish, whereas immigrants and their children are there only because of law (2010:311). See also Coutin, who notes the paradox that naturalization can strengthen a migrant’s ties to a home country (2003:511).

ways in which they do so, and the consequences of their doing so, are of course diverse and varied. However, the similarities are instructive, and speak volumes about how nation, origin, and belonging are conceptualized in ways that themselves can transcend borders, both national and intellectual. In the two cases discussed here—reunifications and returns—material from adoption shows how kinship is both meaningful and actively constructed in family reunification procedures, and material from labor migrants' returns suggests that adoptees, too, negotiate powerful emotional terrain relating to contribution and connection emerging from politically and economically unequal settings.

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