

# Imagining Latinidad

# Critical Latin America

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# Imagining Latinidad

*Digital Diasporas and Public Engagement  
Among Latin American Migrants*

*Edited by*

David S. Dalton  
David Ramírez Plascencia



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# YouTube Channels of Mexicans Living in Japan: Virtual Communities and Bi-Cultural Imagery Construction

Yunuen Ysela Mandujano-Salazar

## 1 Introduction

As of 2018, Japan had a population of 127 million people, counting 2.7 million medium- and long-term, as well as special permanent residents of foreign origin, most of whom were Asians and Brazilian *Nikkei* (Japanese descendants). Of these foreign nationals, only 2,696 had Mexican nationality, making them one of the minorities with less representation (Statistics Bureau Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2020). Despite an increase in the number of foreign residents and the rising flow of international tourists to Japan, the country remains relatively closed and is often perceived by the Western world as exotic and enigmatic (Nakasone, 2015; Vogel, 1979; Yoshino, 2005). Similarly, the dominant imageries Japanese people have of other cultures and nations are heavily influenced by media representations and discourses (Mandujano-Salazar, 2015; Ngoro, 2004). In Mexico, where there is a Japanese diaspora of about 32,000 people (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2019), the dominant ideas regarding Japanese society are molded by the labor culture perceived by Mexicans working in Japanese-owned transnational corporations in Mexico and by the stereotypical representations found in popular media products of Japanese origin, such as *anime*, *dorama*, and J-pop (Mandujano, 2013; Nakasone, 2015).

However, these ideas have been challenged in recent years by Mexicans living in Japan. Since the mid-2000s, as YouTube became popular and the cost of devices with digital cameras decreased, many Mexicans living there have been making use of this and other social media and digital platforms to share their experiences in this country and, as a consequence, they have attracted other Mexicans who are interested in Japan, forming virtual communities where dominant representations and discourses regarding both cultures are either reinforced or contested, but mostly, were Mexicans with a shared interest in living in Japan have built imagined communities.

The objective of this chapter is to analyze how the contents created and shared by the Mexican diaspora in Japan through digital platforms—in particular,