LIVING IN LIMBO:
WESTERN IMMIGRANTS' EXPERIENCES IN JAPAN AS A PRODUCT OF JAPANESENESS

By

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ABSTRACT

LIVING IN LIMBO: WESTERN IMMIGRANTS' EXPERIENCES IN JAPAN AS A PRODUCT OF JAPANESENESS

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How do Western immigrants make lives for themselves in Japan—where many do not feel they can ever fully belong? And how do they navigate that society to create the lives that they want while being so obviously, unavoidably, and permanently marked as outsiders? Through an exploration of the experiences of a group of migrants who, by definition of the society they have immigrated to, cannot fully assimilate, in this dissertation I examine the intersections between various personal characteristics and migrants' experiences and processes of adaptation. The objective of this study was to not only collect accounts of this group of migrants' experiences in Japan, but how and why those experiences differ; how migrants' decisions, the strategies they employ, and the effectiveness of those strategies are influenced by both their individual identities and the social and structural constraints of Japanese society.

Unlike many migrants elsewhere, Westerners in Japan must accept that by choosing to settle in Japan, they are constructing their lives there in a permanently liminal space. This limbo Westerners occupy, within but never truly "inside" Japanese society, is marked by both constraints (e.g. restrictive immigration policies; an exclusionary, ethnoracially based conception of Japaneseness) that prevent them from fully integrating into Japanese society (if desired), and freedoms that afford Westerners a remarkable degree of flexibility in crafting exactly the lives they wish to live and social and employment opportunities that would not exist if they lived elsewhere. The tension

between these two aspects of life in Japan simultaneously produces in them the desire to further integrate and resistance to further integration. Despite stark differences among migrants' lived experiences based on factors like gender, sexuality, ethnicity, country of origin, overall, those who chose to live long-term in Japan felt strongly that the good aspects of their lives there far outweighed the bad. Participants argued this was due to the fact that their obvious non-Japanese-ness both eclipsed characteristics (e.g., sexuality, religion) that marked them as different in their home countries and afforded them considerable freedom to shape their lives according as they wished.

Using a combination of common sociocultural anthropological research methods (participant observation, interviews, surveys, and document analysis), in this research I investigated how these migrants create lives for themselves within this liminal space, accepting—and in many cases enjoying—this aspect of their lives as immigrants in Japan. Surprisingly, I found that this freedom is a product of the way Japaneseness is defined; since they cannot become fully Japanese, they are freed from many of the restrictions and expectations that they would otherwise be expected to adhere to. This research therefore contributes to the recent efforts by migration scholars to expand the diversity of migrant groups and flows being studied, and further the development of more nuanced understandings of migrant adaptation strategies in relation to the societies they settle in.

To Dopey, who was the best of cats:

You were there from the beginning, and I'm so sorry you didn't quite make it to the end. I couldn't have gotten through it without you, that's for sure. Thank you for 20 years of purrs, cuddles, companionship, and protecting me from the evil red dot.

And to Juno & Josie, the opposite kittens:

You have some big pawprints to fill! Work on your red-dot-hunting skills, keep on being your cute, silly, curious selves, & you'll get there!

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On a more personal level, they say it takes a village to raise a child, but it *really* takes a village to successfully complete graduate school and produce a dissertation. And I truly wouldn't've survived this process with ~~all~~ most of my marbles intact without the many wonderful people who encouraged and supported me along the way. And provided shoulders to cry on, caffeine, advice, baked goods, space on their couches, tough love, pets of several species to pet and play with, a sounding board, alcohol, sympathy and empathy, brutal honesty, celebrations, near-infinite care and kindness, wonderful memories and friendships that will last a lifetime, and a few swift kicks in the pants, as needed. I cannot list every person who has helped me—the list would fill a dissertation by itself—but I especially want to thank Rachel Elbin, Seven Mattes, Helen Kaibara, Jonathan Smith, Zack Blount, April Greenwood, Emilie Diouf, Masayo Yoshida, Joseph Begley, Lee Wang, Molly Conley, Ruth Shillair, Jane Luksich, So

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And finally, to my wonderful husband, Ben: although I've said this many times already, I still don't think you really believe me, so I'm putting it down here in black and white—maybe now you'll accept that it's the truth! We didn't know each other when I began this crazy undertaking, but without you in my life for the last years of the grad school marathon, the outcome would have been *VERY* different. Without your support, encouragement, cheerleading, patience, logic, silliness, reality checks, advice, blunt observations, cooking, cleaning, brain to bounce ideas off of when I was hopelessly muddled up, help dragging myself out of bed on days I just wanted to hide, arms to hug me when things were too overwhelming to face, shoulder to cry on (literally and figuratively) whenever I encountered yet another roadblock or writer's block or blockheaded thing I'd done months before—I absolutely, positively, definitely undeniably, indisputably, most certainly, and without a question would **NOT** have been able to successfully navigate the writing process and complete this dissertation. Thank you for loving me, and for taking care of me, and for putting up with me and my dissertation during this incredibly stressful, hectic, stressful, difficult, stressful, chaotic, and stressful time. You have my never-ending gratitude. I love you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> *In the U.S., or at least in the Midwest, the "rules" for what men can wear, how they can act, what is manly, etc. are just so narrow and restrictive. Stifling. Here [in Japan], there's a lot more freedom. I can kind of take advantage of looking different already, and then just…. I mean, the fashion is just so fucking over-the-top here anyway, I can just take whatever little parts of it appeal to me, and kind of dress up however I want. And I know I'm going to stand out a lot for being a gaijin[1], but then at the same time in Tokyo I'm just another gaijin, so I don't worry about people seeing me. In America I would be more self-conscious, and people would look at me more critically. Whereas here, I'm already standing out and being looked at for being different, so what's a little more difference? That weird little contradiction—standing out and being anonymous at the same time—gives me so much freedom to just live my life the way I want to. If I wear somewhat effeminate clothing, or what would be considered effeminate in America, like a purple shirt or a fancy hair style, no one blinks an eye here. Purple is very popular for men to wear in Japan, totally normal, and in general a LOT of men here are very into grooming and self-presentation. So in that way I can be one of the crowd, even while being different…. One thing that's weird, though, is that I'll be feeling totally normal, not even be thinking about what I'm wearing, and then I'll see another gaijin and suddenly become self-conscious, maybe even feel a little bit of threat, thinking about how they might be perceiving me, how they might react to me…. (Steve)*

This quote is from my very first predissertation interview, conducted in the summer of 2012. I did not realize at the time how pivotal Steve's experiences and ideas would become in shaping my entire dissertation project, but it ended up being probably the most important thing that an interviewee said to me, or at least one of the most important things, and certainly the most impactful single response from any participant in this project. It encapsulates so many important points for me—it is almost a

[1] The word *gaijin* (外人) is comprised of two components: *gai*, meaning outside, and *jin*, meaning person. Thus a *gaijin* is an outside person, or a foreigner. A related word, *gaikokujin* (外国人), adds *koku*, meaning country, which specifies that the person is from an outside (i.e., foreign) country. Many people (both Japanese and foreigners living in Japan) consider the latter to be more formal than the former; a (very small) minority of Japanese and a (small) minority of foreigners consider *gaijin* to be a slur and prefer the longer and more specific term be used.

distillation of my entire dissertation. It highlights how their foreignness trumps other identities for Westerners in Japan; how LGBTQ+ (and racial/ethnic minority) individuals find it safer to live in Japan; how Japanese culture can be a comfortable place to be different; how people choose to live in limbo in Japanese society, because of the anonymity and the pre-defined identity it affords them; how Japanese society/culture tolerates difference, even makes space for it, despite also emphasizing conformity; how immigrants take advantage of Japanese preconceptions of and expectations for *gaijin*; and how *gaijin* are sometimes underestimated, overlooked, patronized, or infantilized, accepting what others project onto them and using it (supposed weakness) for their own benefit, to allow them to live life the way you want to (turning it into a strength). For years, throughout the process of designing, conducting, and writing up this project, this was my go-to example whenever I needed to give an "elevator pitch"-type explanation of my dissertation research.

The more I thought about it, the more interesting it seemed. While I reviewed and analyzed my data, Steve's words (and those of many other participants who shared similar ideas and experiences) came to feel like an infinite onion: the more I examined what he had said, the more I found to explore. It took a while to sort through all of those layers, focus my ideas, and then tweak my research design, but in the end, I owe my participants a huge debt of gratitude for highlighting such an interesting and fruitful area of inquiry.

In particular, I was extremely fortunate that I interviewed Steve so early in my research, and that he was so remarkably self-aware regarding his pick-and-choose attitude toward the aspects of Japanese society and culture he chooses to adopt or reject, and able to articulate his decision processes so clearly—in addition to his above

comments on fashion, he also discussed how he decided when to "act Japanese" at work and with his neighbors, and how his foreignness informed his behavior when out in public. If he had not been, I may not have realized how significant this flexibility, resulting from their inability to ever be recognized as fully Japanese, is to Westerners who immigrate to Japan at all.

Still, Steve was far from the only participant with this self-awareness, or the only person who acknowledged and discussed these kinds of active, deliberate choices. Many people talked about choosing when and in what ways they adhere to, or transgress, cultural and behavioral norms, and being extremely aware of exactly what lines they could and not cross as foreigners—and how their specific identity(ies) affected what they could do. Some examples included crossing the street against the light late at night/when there were very clearly no cars approaching, pretending not to speak Japanese to get out of paying the national public broadcaster's fees, or covering tattoos to gain entrance to *onsen* (examples discussed in detail below). These choices were also brought up in more general or abstract ways, such as when individuals chose to follow the Japanese procedure for doing a task at work, and when they felt it was worth doing it differently.

WHO & WHAT IS THIS DISSERTATION ABOUT?

Migration is not a new phenomenon. I am far, *far* from the first scholar to observe that humans have been migrating since the evolution of the first *Homo sapiens*, and international migration began as soon as the first nation-state borders were drawn. The rate of migration has waxed and waned, and there have been shifts in the specific

patterns of migration flows, but the basic fact of movement has been a constant in human history (Vertovec 2007).

As a result of the growing interconnectedness brought about by globalization, it is not only goods and information that flow between countries, but also people. And those migrants can have profound impacts on the societies in which they settle. Japan, a country not usually viewed (by itself or by others) as a destination for international migration, has long denied that its foreign-born residents are immigrants (i.e., people who move to Japan with the intent to remain there), classifying all non-citizens who enter the country as temporary visitors and imposing onerous regulations and requirements on the process of naturalization. With the dawning recognition that many people actually are immigrating to Japan, and that, in fact, immigration is a good thing for Japan in light of the falling birthrate, Japanese society is struggling to come to terms with the changes affected by globalization and reinterpret the definition of what it means to be Japanese.

Images of Japan as a homogeneous and unique nation and people have been cultivated for hundreds of years; the national conception of Japanese identity and belonging is firmly based on the notion of "one language, one culture, one race" (Brody 2002). Despite this image of Japan as historically exclusionist and exclusivist, it in fact has a long history of importing foreign people, ideas, and technologies. Like a pendulum swinging back and forth between conservatism and openness, Japan has at times rushed to embrace foreign concepts and viewpoints, and then moved just as quickly to a position of nationalism and extreme isolation (McConnell 2000). A prime example of this openness to foreign influences is seen in the 1880s and early 1890s,

when Japan hired thousands of Western experts to assist with its modernization efforts following the overthrow of the feudal Shogunate system (McConnell 2000).

Nevertheless, the conception of Japan as an isolated nation, and myths of Japanese ethnoracial homogeneity, have shaped postwar public and official attitudes toward immigration and immigrants (Morris-Suzuki 2010). The foundation of Japan's current, and comparatively restrictive, immigration policies was created during the post-WWII Allied occupation of Japan (Sakanaka 2005; Burgess 2012). These policies codified the ideology of Japan as a unique, self-contained, and ethnically "pure" nation, a conception which had not held as much prominence in the pre-war public imagination (Morris-Suzuki 2010). Even now, Japanese immigration policy continues to be explicitly shaped by the idea that Japan is a culturally and racially homogeneous society (Goodman et al. 2003).

WHY JAPAN? WHY WESTERNERS?

Westerners in Japan are an interesting case study, because they experience a fascinating, and uncommon (globally speaking), combination of privilege and discrimination, acceptance and intolerance. Japan is quite welcoming to short-term visitors, and yet makes it quite difficult (legally speaking) for people to stay long-term. At an individual level, most Japanese people are warm and open towards Westerners in Japan, regardless of their length of stay, and usually (eventually) accept them as members of their communities, yet many have negative attitudes towards non-Western immigrants. Japanese society, too, displays this contradiction—Western styles and popular culture are very fashionable, Western education highly valued, studying Western languages and travelling to Western countries considered marks of prestige, yet

it is widely accepted that Western people (as a group) cannot become Japanese or fully be accepted as belonging in Japan.

Unlike many migrant groups, most Westerners move to Japan out of personal interest, and have the means to leave anytime. Thus, their decisions to remain in Japan represent a choice to remain in a liminal state. This is comparatively unusual in the migration studies literature, which has generally operated from the perspective that migrants want to exit the liminal state as quickly as possible.

In Japan, the liminal spaces Westerners occupy, within but never truly "inside" Japanese society, are marked by constraints (e.g., restrictive policies, the exclusionary ethnoracial conception of Japaneseness) that prevent them from fully integrating into Japanese society, and simultaneously produce both the desire to further integrate and resistance to further integration. Rather than approaching this conflict from the usual migration studies viewpoint, presuming that immigrants want to assimilate as soon and as thoroughly as possible, in this research I investigated how these migrants create lives for themselves within this liminal space, accepting—and in many cases enjoying, even preferring—this aspect of their lives in Japan. I explored the reasons why these migrants make this unusual choice, and identified some ways in which their choices are constrained by higher structural and social factors.

Although migrating to a new country is never an easy transition, in some ways Japan seems to be an especially difficult country for Westerners to settle in permanently. Of course, the complexity of the Japanese language and the myriad legal complications are off-putting to many who might otherwise consider settling permanently in Japan; as are similar difficulties in many countries. However, "self-initiated" Western emigrants—those who elected to move abroad of their own volition –

often adjust more readily to life in Japan than those who go to Asia at the behest of an employer. Also, migrants who have experienced some form of discrimination in their home countries, whether racially based or otherwise, may be less affected by discrimination in the new location (Froese 2010). This is another reason that the experiences of this particular population are interesting and valuable to study.

One factor that is striking to me (and is frequently mentioned among my Western immigrant friends and acquaintances in Japan, as well as on internet bulletin boards for English teachers and other foreigners in Japan) is the sharp difference between Japanese attitudes toward foreigners who are there temporarily and those who have migrated permanently. Westerners who are temporary visitors are often welcomed eagerly for several reasons: English is seen as cool; "internationalization" is and has been an attractive goal for many decades (although the meaning has naturally shifted over time); many people are aware that both Japanese traditional and popular culture are fashionable in the West; and it is thought that when these temporary visitors return Japan's status will be improved through their knowledge and fond memories of their time living there. In contrast, when someone expresses their intent to remain in Japan permanently, they often encounter a rather sudden change in attitudes; where they were warmly welcomed yesterday, today they are seen as a threat and an unclassifiable element. Those whose stay has lasted longer than the typical English-teaching contract, and those with high levels of language ability and/or cultural knowledge, also often experience this type of unease or cold shoulder from some Japanese people, regardless of the foreigner's stated intention to leave Japan in the future.

This project builds upon literature in four main areas of anthropological and migration studies literature: the study of Western emigrants, assimilation theory,

understandings of migrants' adaptation processes, and the dynamics of the relationship between conceptualizations of Japaneseness and immigration into Japan. In particular, this research project investigated the apparent contradiction of migrants who are privileged yet excluded; this group that is welcomed yet unwanted provides a fruitful arena in which to challenge current conceptions of migrants' status and categorization, and explore new ways of conceptualizing migrants' (lack of) integration and migration experiences.

By considering a group of migrants the dominant society considers categorically unable to fully assimilate, a more granular analysis of this group's adaptation processes—the decisions they make, the motivations behind those choices, the strategies they employ, and the constraints shaping both their decisions and the effectiveness of the chosen strategies—is possible. My project therefore contributes to the recent efforts by migration scholars to consider a more diverse range of migrant groups and flows, and furthers the development of more nuanced understandings of migrant adaptation strategies in the 21st century by contributing an ethnographic case study of an unusual and under-studied group to the migration studies literature.

This research has demonstrated that Japan, by virtue of the race- and culture-based definition of "Japaneseness" which still holds considerable sway with both Japanese politicians and the public imagination, has not yet made a great deal of progress in developing a fully multicultural society. Currently, the Japanese public and government policymakers still lack a widespread belief in the value of immigration, viewing both immigrants themselves and foreign ideas more generally only in terms of the threat they are presumed to pose to Japanese culture and society. This has led to a distinct lack of support for policies that would facilitate immigration and immigrant

integration, and thus aid in the development of true multiculturalism in Japan. Even when such policies are put in place, they are frequently not widely implemented—or in some cases, such as the policy ending fingerprinting of foreign visitors and residents, quickly repealed. The growing interconnectedness of countries and peoples around the globe resulting from globalization, and the continued entry of more—and more diverse—immigrants into Japan, however, will sustain pressure on Japan to move toward a more genuine multiculturalism.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There is a considerable body of literature on discourses of Japaneseness (e.g., Yoshino 1992; Aoki 1999; Befu 2001; McVeigh 2004), which I explore in detail in Chapter 4. But explorations of the meanings of belonging in Japanese society from the perspective of non-Japanese residents of Japan are rare. Broadly speaking, this project examined different conceptions of belonging—who is allowed to claim, and prevented from claiming, certain identities (e.g., national, cultural, organizational, personal), and various meanings of "belonging" for Westerners in Japan. Specifically, I used an investigation of Westerners' experiences as immigrants in Japan, particularly how characteristics such as gender, sexuality, and ethnicity produce differences in their experiences and the adaptation strategies they employ, to explore these larger questions.

By studying a group of visibly foreign migrants, who are by default not considered to have the ability to fully belong in Japanese society, but who emigrated from nations viewed favorably by the Japanese (and thus whose presence within Japan does not automatically provoke negative biases as is the case with more commonly studied migrant groups from other Asian nations), we can gain a new perspective on the

discourse of Japaneseness, and the ways in which migrants' experiences in Japan reflect, and are a product of, the current conceptualization of Japaneseness. Through an analysis of Westerners' adaptation processes, the strategies they employ, and the outcomes of their efforts, this study contributes to current scholarly conversations in both anthropology and migration studies around ideas of national and individual identity, Western emigration and Western immigrants in Japan, and the structural and social factors influencing migrants' adaptation strategies and outcomes.

To address these topics of interest and gather the necessary data, I sought answers to the following four questions:

(1) What are Westerners' lived experiences as migrants to Japan, and how do gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, etc. cause differences in those experiences?
(2) What are their approaches to creating "spaces for belonging", or making a comfortable niche for themselves half-inside and half-outside Japanese society?
(3) When, and in what ways, do they seek to fit into Japanese social norms; conversely, when and in what ways do they either refuse to adhere such norms and expectations, or attempt to adapt them?
(4) How are their experiences and approaches connected to, and shaped by, conceptualizations of Japaneseness?

OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION

The rest of this dissertation is organized as follows. The next chapter contains an assortment of background information, including a brief look at anthropological studies in and of Japan to date, an overview of the history of immigration in Japan, and a discussion of several aspects of spatial organization in Tokyo, my primary field site in this study. Chapter 3 details my research methods and activities, including the study's design; predissertation research I conducted while developing this study; my own positionality; information on how I selected participants; and details of what data I collected, how I collected it, and how I then analyzed it.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I present both the literature and my findings on specific topics I investigated during this research project. The former examines international migration and identity, covering different ways to define migrants, theories on migrant adaptation and incorporation following immigration, how migration affects individuals' identities, and anthropological studies of international migration. It also presents findings from my research on the lack of individuality and identity instability Westerners experience after migrating to Japan, and how they often find themselves simultaneously just another anonymous foreigner and the object of intense curiosity within their community.

Chapter 5 tackles conceptualizations of Japaneseness—how Japaneseness is defined; who can and cannot claim the label of "Japanese" socially and legally; how culture, race, and nationality are interwoven in the concept of Japaneseness; and a particular form of Japaneseness scholarship and pseudoscholarship known as *Nihonjinron*—as well as Japanese immigration policy and the attitudes (both individual and institutional) that have shaped these policies since the end of WWII. This chapter

also contains my findings relating to Japaneseness and non-Japanese-ness: what Japaneseness looks like from the perspective of Western immigrants, how the inability to access social or cultural Japaneseness shapes their experiences as immigrants living in Japan, and the ways that they utilize their foreignness to control the expectations placed on them and make life easier for themselves.

The following chapter is primarily a discussion of how migrants' various identities intersect with each other, and how they function to shape individual migrants' lives as immigrants in Japan. In particular, I first look at the stereotypes around straight, white, male immigrants, then consider several areas in which the experiences of immigrants who are *not* straight, white men differ from this idealized image of *gaijin* life. Issues that were most salient for participants included Japan's specific forms of racism and xenophobia, as well as the low violent crime rate and resulting physical safety for people who belong to racial/ethnic, sexual, and/or gender minority groups. I also explore some reasons that living as an immigrant in Japan is preferable for many of these people, as it allows them to avoid many unpleasant or downright dangerous situations and expectations they had faced in their home countries. Finally, I explore the sense of freedom that results from these factors, and how Japanese society and the way that Japaneseness is defined make that freedom possible, and thus shape Westerners' immigrant experiences in Japan. Chapter 7 comprises some concluding remarks, including a summary of my arguments, some of the limitations of this study, and a summary of its contributions to the literatures on international migration and the anthropology of Japan.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES IN AND OF JAPAN

THE "TENACIOUSLY NORMATIVE TEMPLATE": THE CHRYSANTHEMUM AND THE SWORD

Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1969[1946]) is a central text of postwar anthropological studies of Japan, having had a significant and continuing influence on both popular and academic discourse about and perceptions of Japan for nearly 70 years. In this work, without ever having set foot in Japan, Benedict sought to "explain 'the Japanese' in terms of a timeless cultural profile fabricated from fragments of data" (Robertson 1998). Although the work has drawn substantial criticism for both Benedict's methods and findings—in particular, critics have highlighted the "ahistorical carelessness" of Benedict's characterization of Japanese society, her overemphasis on applying Western psychoanalytical frameworks to a non-Western context, heavy reliance on Japanese emigrants who had left Japan decades earlier and second-generation Japanese-Americans largely raised in the U.S., and the circular nature of her arguments and findings (Ölschleger 1996). Despite these criticisms, it is still important to study this work for two reasons: (1) because it is a valuable representation of a formative period in the history of our discipline and schools of thought (culture & personality; national character studies) influential at that time (Hendry 1996); (2) because its concepts have become part of both the academic and popular "vocabularies" for discussing Japan (e.g. shame vs. guilt cultures) (Nakane 1974); and therefore in a sense all anthropologists of Japan "have been writing footnotes to [*Chrysanthemum*] ever since it appeared in 1946" (Ryang 2002)—to this day it remains the "tenaciously

normative template" that anthropological studies of Japan either build upon or stand as alternatives to (Robertson 2008[2005]).

TRENDS IN THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY JAPAN

The topical interests and theoretical approaches within the anthropological study of Japan mirror the shifts and trends within the discipline as a whole (Kelly 1991). Theoretical approaches and frameworks within anthropology have moved from a concern with the structure of Japanese society as a whole to an interest in social actors' individual practices. This shift reflects the influence of postmodernism and cultural studies on Japanese studies (Ortner 1994[1984]). In accordance with these paradigmatic shifts, the object of analysis within Japanese anthropology has moved through phases: (1) from rural/village studies to urban/complex society and global changes, (2) from the study of "structure"/"pattern" to actor/agency and practices, (3) from harmony to conflicts and variations, and (4) from a monolithic Japanese society as a whole to understanding the multiplicity of voices belonging to marginalized segments of the population such as women and minorities in Japan (Linhart 1994, Stevens 2015).

By the 1980s, the dominant stream of Japanese studies was entrenched in the discourse of the well-organized and harmonized society of Japan (Benedict 1969[1946]). Many scholars, however, began to question the existing image of homogeneous Japanese people, culture, and society (Mouer & Sugimoto 1986; Steinhoff 1996; Befu 2001; Bestor, Steinhoff, & Bestor 2003). Some of these efforts have shed light on diversity and conflicts within the country. Despite the challenges to Orientalist views on Japan in current anthropological studies, Japanese studies have still been struggling with "the rhetoric of national characterization" (Kelly 1991). However, with the advance

of "globalization" or "internationalization," Japanese society is considered to be converging with Western counterparts (Hardacre 1998). Therefore, these expanded debates and materials about Japanese studies recently encourage anthropologists who study Japan to contribute to the development of anthropological theory, by considering the dialectic relationship between anthropological discourse and local issues (van Bremen 1986; Kelly 1991; Robertson 2008[2005]).

Prior to WWII, there was very little anthropological study of Japan. There were travelogues written by Westerners, such as Lafcadio Hearn's *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894), which contained a wealth of what we would now call ethnographic detail, but these were not in any way systematic anthropological studies. With the exception of Embree's classic village ethnography *Suye Mura* (1939), no systematic anthropological studies were conducted in Japan until after WWII.

In the first decades after the end of WWII, anthropological studies of Japan remained largely concerned with exploring the structure of Japanese society via "village studies", ethnographic studies in which a single community was studied as a microcosm or representation of the society as a whole (van Bremen 1986; Sofue 1992). This holistic focus on Japanese society as a monolithic, knowable entity echoed Benedict's approach in *Chrysanthemum*, establishing and perpetuating an influential, if erroneous, conception of Japanese society as ethnically and racially homogeneous (Linhart 1994).

With only a few exceptions (e.g., Dore 1999[1958]; Vogel 1963), social science research in Japan remained focused on mostly rural locations and village studies until the 1970s (Ölschleger 1996). In contrast to this monolithic, homogenizing view of Japanese society, in recent decades anthropologists and other social scientists have sought to differentiate and expand our knowledge of different groups and experiences in

Japanese society, and break down the myth that Japan is an ethnically, racially, linguistically, and culturally homogenous nation (Moeran 1993; Befu 2001). These developments have led to a shift in scholarly attention, including a larger number of studies located in urban communities, greater attention being given to individual actors and their experiences, and investigations of a much broader range of topics, including questions of gender, class, marginalization, agency, and conflicts within society, as well as subject areas such as the anthropology of work, education, medicine, and tourism (Kelly 1991; Moeran 1993; Eades 2000). Other current topics of particular interest in Japanese studies include Japan's position in the economically and culturally globalized 21st century world, especially negotiation of the tension between tradition and social changes that have resulted from this increasing internationalization and globalization (Robertson 1998; Steinhoff 2007).

MODERN JAPANESE IMMIGRATION HISTORY

"THERE ARE NO IMMIGRANTS IN JAPAN"[2]

Simon and Lynch (1999) state that in Japan, "the concept of immigration does not exist in law or fact". While this is somewhat of an exaggeration, as the concept of immigration is certainly understood by Japanese people and foreign nationals do legally move permanently to Japan, it is true that there is no legal way for foreigners to enter Japan as "immigrants". The reason for this is ultimately linguistic: the connotations of the word for "immigrant" in Japanese, *imin*, imply that the migrant made a conscious decision to move to a new country and settle permanently. Because Japanese government policy does not currently provide any visa status for migrants who wish to

[2] [Jenny/017]

settle permanently (Piper 2003), no migrants can legally be considered *imin* at the time of entry into Japan. Thus, this term is not widely used outside of academic literature. Other Japanese terms frequently used to describe foreign nationals in Japan include *zainichi gai(koku)jin* ("foreigners residing in Japan") and *gai(koku)jin rōdōsha* ("foreign workers"), which highlight both the non-belonging of the migrants and the supposed temporariness of their residency (Morris-Suzuki 2010).

Historically, Japan has allowed only a small number of labor migrants to enter the country, always on a temporary basis. Families were not allowed to accompany foreign workers, nor was there any provision for family (re)unification at a later date. Although there is a growing recognition among policymakers that Japan would benefit from an increase in immigration and allowing immigrants to legally settle more permanently, Japanese immigration policy remains tied to the idea of migrants as short-term, unaccompanied workers (Ishii 2010). In reality, however, both of these conceptions of foreigners in Japan are swiftly becoming outdated, and continuing misidentification of the immigrant population is creating greater and greater difficulty with regard to policy formation and implementation (Ishii 2010). The Japanese government also continues to hold a general policy of not admitting low- or unskilled workers (except South Americans of Japanese descent) (Kashiwazaki 2000).

SO HOW MANY IMMIGRANTS **ARE** *THERE IN JAPAN?*

These tensions between official policy principles and the reality of the immigration situation are reflected in the difficulties with quantifying, or even identifying, immigrants in Japan. The first dilemma is linguistic, as described above: no one enters Japan as an "immigrant", since the visas for all workers, students, and so on

are defined as temporary. It could be argued that spousal visas are "immigrant" visas, but I contend that they are not, because they must be renewed at specific intervals, and do not in and of themselves grant non-Japanese citizens unrestricted entry into or residency in Japan. Thus, statistics that show the number of foreigners who entered Japan in a given year, no matter how they are broken down (by visa type, residency status, duration, etc.), do not contain much (if any) useful information for counting immigrants to Japan.

The second quandary for describing the immigrant population of Japan is statistical: the Japanese census identifies individuals by nationality only, and no record is made of ethnicity, place of origin, and so forth. Those who naturalize therefore become invisible and un-countable in spite of their foreign origins. Conversely, second-, third-, and fourth (or more)-generation descendants of pre-war immigrants who chose not to naturalize continue to be counted as immigrants themselves, despite having never lived anywhere but Japan (Morris-Suzuki 2010).

Over the past few decades, the immigration landscape in Japan has changed dramatically. With the above caveats in mind, the most recent statistics available show the foreign population of Japan numbering just over 2.2 million, or 1.7% of the total population of Japan (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2011)—nearly 500,000 of whom are special permanent residents of pre-war Korean, Chinese, and Taiwanese origin (Ministry of Justice 2010). And although the foreign population of Japan has been increasing since the end of WWII, the number of foreigners residing in Japan, and the diversity of their origins, has been multiplying even more rapidly since the turn of the 21st century (Ishii 2010). Between 1990 and 2010, the total population of Japan grew by five million. Of that increase, 1 in 5 were registered residents of

foreign nationality, representing a 100% increase in the number of non-Japanese individuals residing in Japan over that period of time.[3] And while the majority of foreigners living in Japan are from other Asian countries, the proportion of those from North America, Europe, and Australia/New Zealand—broadly speaking, those who are labelled "Westerners"—remained constant during this period of rapidly increasing immigration.

POST-WWII IMMIGRATION INTO JAPAN

The portrayals of Japan since WWII as an ethnically, culturally, and racially homogeneous nation were reinforced by the small size of the foreign population (which only reached 1% of the total population of Japan in the early 1990s) and the fact that until the 1970s, the majority of the immigrant population were of pre-war Chinese/Taiwanese and Korean origin. Most of these "oldcomer" permanent residents used Japanese names in public life, spoke only Japanese in public (or at all), and for the most part were not visibly distinguishable from the mainstream Japanese population (Kashiwazaki 2000). Indigenous minority ethnic groups, while larger in number than the foreign-born population, are similarly invisible in Japanese society. This is due to their Northeast Asian origins, shared with the majority Japanese population, and their long history of intermixing with the mainland Japanese and subsequent loss or dwindling of their own languages and distinct cultural traditions (Sjöberg 1993). The fiction of racially and ethnically homogeneous Japan was thus not challenged until the

[3] The total population of Japan was 123.6 million in 1990; 128.1 million in 2010. The resident foreign population was 1.08 million in 1990 (0.87% of the total) and 2.13 million in 2010 (1.67%). All population data is from the Japanese census, reported in the Japan Statistical Yearbook (Ministry of Internal Affairs & Communications 2013).

late 1970s, when visibly foreign immigrants began arriving in larger numbers (Kashiwazaki 2000).

From the end of WWII to the mid-1980s, internal rural-to-urban migrations spurred the rapid shift of workers from agriculture to industry. These population movements, along with the existing pre-war and WWII-era oldcomers, were enough to satisfy the demands of the growing economy without requiring any significant influx of foreign workers (Weiner 2000). When labor demands began to exceed the local supply in the late 1970s, increasing numbers of visibly foreign male labor migrants and female sex-industry workers were drawn to Japan; as a result, people began questioning the ideology of homogeneity as a guiding tenet of immigration policy (Goodman et al. 2003).

The history of migration in Japan in modern times is usually viewed as having occurred in two distinct waves (Kajita 1998). The first was spurred by pre-WWII colonialism, with large numbers of Japanese emigrants settling throughout Asia, and voluntary, "voluntary", and forced movement of colonial subjects, particularly Koreans and Taiwanese, into Japan. This first period of migration came to an end with Japan's defeat in 1945. The second wave began around 1980 when internal rural-to-urban migrations, and the number of young adults annually entering the workforce, could no longer keep up with the growth of the Japanese economy (Morris-Suzuki 2010).

Although there was, by the 1970s, a long history of foreign workers in Japan, the arrival of the second wave ("newcomers") was perceived as a completely new phenomenon. This was due in large part to the fact that, in contrast to earlier waves of immigrants, the new arrivals were largely of non-East Asian origin, and thus were highly visible in Japanese society (Morris-Suzuki 2010). This new wave of immigrants did

include Brazilians and Peruvians of Japanese descent from 1990 on, but it also included Southeast Asians, Middle Easterners, and Africans. To demonstrate the rapid change in the makeup of the immigrant population: in 1985, 80% of foreign residents were Korean; by 2004, Koreans comprised just 30% of registered foreigners residing in Japan.[4]

NOTABLE POST-WWII NEWCOMER IMMIGRANT GROUPS

Iranians

In the late 1970s, following the oil crisis earlier in that decade, Japan waived visa restrictions for Iranians in a bid to develop better relations with the Middle East. This new unrestricted visa granted all Iranians automatic permission to enter Japan for three months upon arrival (Goodman et al. 2003). Even though it legally allowed Iranians to enter Japan, this visa did not provide any legal status for seeking employment. Nevertheless, many who entered on this visa did find work illegally in low-skilled industries (Morita 2003) or became involved in illicit occupations such as selling drugs (Friman 1996).

Although Japan imagined that this unrestricted entry would be utilized by only a small number of Iranian diplomats and businessmen, in fact tens of thousands of Iranians had entered Japan by the end of the 1980s (Goodman et al. 2003). Most Iranians who went to Japan were primarily economic, not political, migrants. Unable to

[4] Immigration statistics obtained from the Japanese Ministry of Justice's 2010 publication, *Basic Plan for Immigration Control, 4th Ed.*, available at http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/seisaku/keikaku_101006_english.pdf, and the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' *Japan Statistical Yearbook*, available at http://www.stat.go.jp/data/nenkan/index1.htm.

find jobs during and after the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) and subsequent economic collapse, and unable to travel to the West without claiming refugee status (which was risky since these applications were often denied), many Iranians felt that their best option was to search for employment abroad. There were few countries in which they could hope to find jobs, however; Japan was practically the only developed country that Iranians seeking work could legally enter (Morita 2003). The jobs that these new arrivals were able to find were mostly in the lower levels of the labor sector, such as the construction industry—many of which were jobs where the work was conducted outside, in view of the public. These jobs had previously been held by "invisible foreigners" such as Koreans and Chinese; the sight of large numbers of obviously, visibly foreign workers was a "huge cognitive shock" for the Japanese people (Goodman et al. 2003). The presence of this group helped to spur debate about immigration and hasten the development of local and national policy for dealing with new migrant populations (Goodman et al. 2003).

Iranian migrants to Japan were overwhelmingly male; religious restrictions on women's travel and recent changes in Japanese visa requirements preventing families joining those already in the country effectively restricted migration to young, single males (Morita 2003). Currently, though there are fewer than 6,000 Iranian nationals registered as foreign residents (Ministry of Justice 2010), the total Iranian population in Japan at any given time is estimated to top 40,000. More than half of Iranians who migrate to Japan eventually return to Iran (Morita 2003).

Southeast Asian Refugees

Although this group of refugees was not numerically large—less than 10,000 people in total—they had a substantial impact on the condition of all immigrants in Japan (Morris-Suzuki 2010). In addition to the arrivals of the Iranians mentioned above and the South American *Nikkeijin* who will be discussed below, the settlement of Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian refugees in Japan in the 1980s provided a strong impetus for reforming the rights and services afforded to all immigrants. Bound by Japan's 1981 ratification of the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, the Japanese government was required to grant certain rights and access to certain government programs and services to these refugees upon settlement in Japan. It was considered too difficult, politically, to provide these to one group of foreigners while continuing to deny them to others. Thus, in 1990, rights such as immigrants' access to national health insurance and other public services were included in the immigration policy reforms (Kashiwazaki 2000).

South American Nikkeijin

Speaking literally, the term *Nikkeijin* (日系人) means "people of Japanese descent". The term *Nikkeijin* technically refers to all people of Japanese descent residing outside of Japan—the Japanese diaspora. In Japan, however, it is most often used to designate South American "return" migrants, descendants of Japanese emigrants who have entered Japan for work. It is generally not used by Japanese people to describe emigrants who were born in Japan, or used by those emigrants themselves as a self-identification (Roth 2002).

Japanese emigration to South America began in 1908, and continued in significant numbers through the early 1960s. Emigrants originated from all areas of Japan; many were second- or third-born sons who did not receive an inheritance from their families. Initially, they intended to be only temporary migrant workers, but most eventually settled permanently in Brazil. By the early 2000s, the population of Japanese-descended Brazilians was nearly 1.3 million (Tsuda 2003b).

The "U-turn" or "return" migration of *Nikkeijin* began, slowly, a decade prior to the 1990 immigration reforms. Before this reform, second-generation *Nikkeijin* were allowed to enter Japan and reside for up to three years, although they were not granted work permission. Technically, with extensive documentation of their Japanese ancestry, third-generation *Nikkeijin* were also eligible for entry. In reality, however, this category of immigration was not often utilized, because the requirements for application were quite stringent and required a lengthy process to gain approval (Mori 1997).

By the end of the 1980s, the "foreign worker problem"—the contradiction between the government's long-held stance against admitting low- or unskilled foreign workers and the rapidly growing demand for workers in manufacturing, construction, and other 3K jobs (*kitanai* [dirty], *kiken* [dangerous], and *kitsui* [difficult])—was approaching a crisis (Brody 2002). The 1990 Immigration Control Act reform was accordingly intended to address this contradiction by providing, for the first time, a path for the legal entry of unskilled foreign workers into Japan through the creation of a preferred visa category for those of Japanese descent. This policy change was a compromise between government desires to curb illegal immigration and visa overstaying, the public's concerns over foreign workers disrupting social harmony and

diluting Japanese "cultural integrity", and industries' demands for low-skilled workers to keep up with economic growth (Brody 2002).

The 1990 immigration law revision thus preserved the "no low-/unskilled labor migrants" principle, while at the same time opening several "side doors" or "loopholes" through which to allow de facto admission of such workers (Brody 2002). The most significant of these is the creation of an immigration category for descendants of Japanese emigrants (up to the third generation), as well as their spouses and children. This visa provides authorization for three years' employment for these individuals, with no restriction on the number of renewals permitted (Brody 2002). The reforms also simplified and standardized the documentation requirements and application process for both second- and third-generation *Nikkeijin* (Mori 1997). Although this category is available to anyone of Japanese descent born outside Japan, it was primarily intended for—and has mostly been used by—South Americans, especially Japanese-Brazilians and some Japanese-Peruvians (Brody 2002).

Several factors led to a much smaller number of Peruvian *Nikkeijin* entering Japan than Brazilians. First, the Peruvian *Nikkeijin* population is much smaller than the Brazilian *Nikkeijin* community. Also, discrepancies in the way that Japanese names were transliterated on various Peruvian documents led Japanese immigration officials to reject many applications from Peruvian *Nikkeijin*.[5] Finally, reports of Peruvians without any Japanese ancestry using forged documents to apply for visas in 1992 caused

[5] There are multiple systems for writing Japanese in Roman letters—sometimes the preferred system of the Japanese government is used, sometimes others are employed. This can lead to different officials spelling names differently on various documents. For example, the surname 佐藤 can be spelled Satou on one document, Satoh on the next, or Satō, or Sato, or…. Likewise, the given name 千愛 might be written as Chie, Chi'e, Tie, Chyie, and so on.

immigration officers to be much more suspicious and critical of applications from Peruvians, leading to a further drop in visa approvals for *Nikkeijin* from Peru (Roth 2002).

By 1994, three years after the immigration reform allowing them to enter and work took effect, there were approximately 200,000 *Nikkeijin* employed in Japan (Kajita 1998). As of 2010, there are approximately 300,000 Brazilian *Nikkeijin* and nearly 50,000 Peruvian *Nikkeijin* residing in Japan. *Nikkeijin* of all nationalities represent just over 16% of all foreign residents (Ministry of Justice 2011). The vast majority of these so-called "return" migrants are between 20 and 40 years old, and are second- and third-generation descendants of the original Japanese emigrants to South America (Brody 2002).

Trainees

Aside from allowing *Nikkeijin* legal entry into Japan, the 1990 immigration policy reform also inaugurated an entirely new "trainee" system (Mori 1997). This system was established to facilitate the exchange of Japanese and overseas-based workers for training. It allows people to come to Japan to learn technology and acquire skills (e.g., industrial techniques, administrative knowledge) from Japanese companies, government offices, and other organizations. As of 1990, individuals were not permitted to apply on their own; they must be sent by an organization or company outside Japan to a Japanese organization for training.

The previous system, which had only been introduced in 1981, had by 1990 already become hopelessly corrupt: the majority of trainees were employed under dubious, if not blatantly illegal, circumstances; in terrible working conditions; and with

extremely low pay (Mori 1997). The reforms installed, for the first time, basic standards for trainee compensation and working conditions. This new trainee system distinguished two separate categories of trainee programs, each with its own set of regulations: those run by the government itself; and those operated by private organizations, further subdivided into those private programs which receive government support and those which are totally autonomous. The new system also installed a series of steep fines and strict punishments for employers found to be abusing the system or the trainees in their employ (Mori 1997).

The number of trainees entering Japan peaked in 2007, at 102,000, and declined slightly in the following two years, likely due to the effects of the global recession (Ministry of Justice 2010). Those participating in trainee programs are almost entirely from other Asian nations. On average, 75% of trainees are from China; those from Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam each represent 5% of the total; and all other nationalities fall into the remaining 10% (Ministry of Justice 2010).

Entertainers

The category of short-term "entertainer" visas was created in the 1970s in response to public protests in Southeast Asia, particularly the Philippines, against Japanese businessmen's sex tourism (Piper 2003). This entertainer visa allowed women to work legally in Japan in bars, clubs, and other similar nightlife-related industries (Suzuki 2007). The use of the term entertainer is purposefully euphemistic; there are separate "artist" and "cultural" visa categories for performing artists, actors, musicians, and so forth.

By 1979, over 10,000 Filipina women were working as entertainers; by 2003, when the government reformed this immigration category, 80,000 women from the Philippines alone were working in Japan on entertainer visas (Suzuki 2007). This reform of the criteria for the entertainer visa was prompted by concerns over human trafficking and women being forced to work as entertainers against their will. Following the reforms, the number of Filipina entertainers dropped to around 42,500, and has remained relatively steady since 2005 (Cortez 2009). Overall, the reforms to this visa category caused a drop of about 35% in the total number of foreigners entering Japan (Ministry of Justice 2010). Interestingly, Piper (2003) notes that although the entertainer visa was originally utilized almost solely by Asian women, applications for this visa by women from Eastern Europe and South America have recently been increasing.

Marriage Migrants

It is difficult to separate those who migrate to Japan for work and those who migrate specifically for the purpose of marriage, since the two categories are not exclusive: many foreign-born spouses also work, and many foreign workers eventually marry Japanese men and women (Piper 2003). Prior to the early 1980s, the majority of "international" marriages were between Japanese citizens and Korean residents who, though born and raised in Japan, did not have Japanese citizenship (Piper 2003). Since the 1980s, however, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of marriages between Japanese and non-Japanese: from only 1/100 marriages in 1980 to 1/22 by 2000 (Burgess 2008).

There is a significant difference, however, between the foreigners that Japanese men typically marry, and those whom Japanese women are marrying. Japanese women most frequently marry Korean permanent residents of Japan and men from industrialized Western countries; Japanese men most often marry women from less wealthy Asian countries such as the Philippines, China, and Thailand (Piper 2003). Japanese men most commonly find brides from other Asian countries in one of two ways: either by visiting establishments such as hostess bars where non-Japanese entertainers are employed, or through arranged marriages (Faier 2007, Burgess 2008).

Although women who enter Japan on an entertainer visa maintain that their motivations are economic, not matrimonial, a significant number of these women eventually marry Japanese nationals or permanent residents (Faier 2007). This is due to the conditions of their employment, where one of their main job requirements is to talk to male (mostly Japanese) bar patrons, and the low—and shrinking—numbers of young women in rural areas of Japan, which leads men to search seriously for potential wives among entertainers. In hostess bars and snack bars, female employees are expected to perform a number of different tasks. Not only do they serve drinks and food and engage patrons in small talk, they are also expected to encourage customers to purchase a certain number of drinks and snacks, coax them to sing karaoke and play drinking games, and flirt, flatter, and entertain them so that they will return frequently and request specific employees by name. There are significant financial incentives for women who are skilled at persuading patrons to spend money; this is frequently accomplished by establishing, or appearing to establish, a deep emotional connection with the men who patronize the bars. In many cases, these ongoing emotional relationships (both mutual and one-sided) result in marriage (Faier 2007).

In many rural areas of Japan, especially the northernmost regions of Japan, there is a severe "bride shortage" or "bride drought" (Faier 2007). For decades, young people have left these areas for education or employment in urban areas, and many young people, especially young women, are no longer willing to live in rural areas (Piper 2003). Yamagata Prefecture, located on the northeastern Japan Sea coast, has been especially active in bringing in foreign brides. Yamagata is located in a very rural region of Japan, with a population that is much older and more concentrated in agricultural occupations than the national average. It also has a very high rate of international marriages compared to the rest of Japan: one out of every 14 marriages in the region included a non-Japanese spouse in 2000 (Burgess 2008).

Due to concerns about the breakdown of agricultural life and the traditional household system, local governments in these depopulated rural areas began in the mid-1980s to assist their residents in finding foreign brides by organizing matchmaking trips to various Asian countries, especially China and Korea. Local governments have also helped to set up various mail- and internet-based matchmaking services. Yamagata Prefecture in fact pioneered programs to attract foreign brides; Asahi Town in Yamagata was the first place in Japan to recruit brides from abroad (Burgess 2008). These efforts to attract foreign brides in rural areas with declining populations, combined with the high rate of marriage between Japanese men and women working on entertainer visas, has led to a surprisingly large and diverse foreign population residing in rural areas.

TOKYO: CITY & PRIMARY FIELD SITE

ORGANIZATION OF SPACE IN JAPAN

In Japan, it is best to think of any given location as if it is the center a series of concentric circles, listed below from largest to smallest:

kuni (国, country)

to (都), *dō* (道), *fu* (府), or *ken* (県, prefecture)

gun (郡, district)

shi (市, city), *machi* (町, town), or *mura* (村, village)

ku (区, ward)

chōme (丁目) or *aza* (字; both mean district)

banchi (番地, land parcel number) or *gaiku* (街区, block)

bangō (番号, building number) and/or *heyabangō* (部屋番号, apartment/room number)

All of these designations are not included in every address—for example, the *gun–machi/mura–aza–banchi* series is usually used in rural areas, and *shi–ku–chōme–gaiku* more often found in cities—but the general broadest-to-most-specific-pattern of concentric identifications holds true throughout the country.

The nation of Japan is divided into 47 prefectures that, broadly speaking, function similar to provinces or states in other countries. The administrative reorganization that created the prefectures was begun in 1868, following the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate (the last military government of feudal Japan, which lost power

after being defeated by imperial forces in the Boshin civil war). Several waves of consolidation and redrawing of boundaries occurred in the decades that followed; the current 47-prefecture structure was established shortly before the turn of the 20th century.

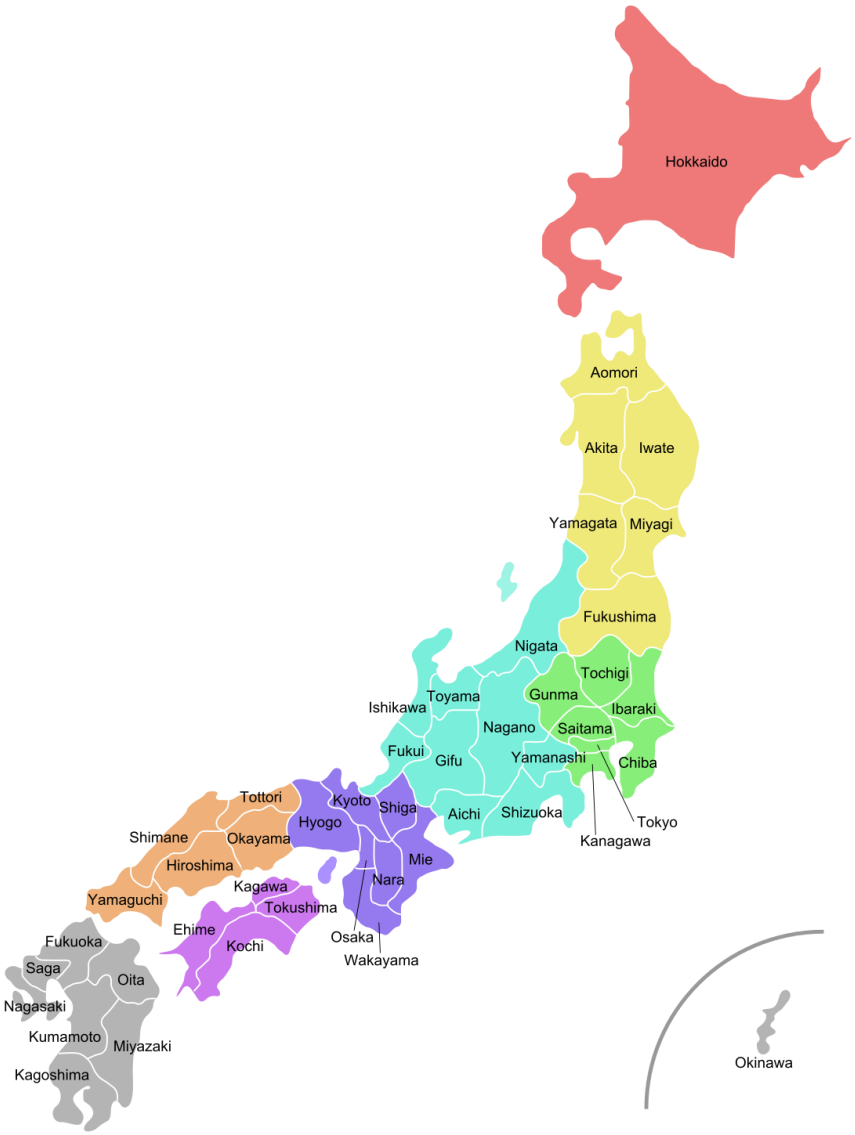

Figure 1: Prefectures of Japan

A map of Japan, showing the current prefectural divisions and locations of the 47 prefectures. Each region is shown in a different color: from north to south, Hokkaidō (red), Tōhoku (yellow), Kantō (green), Chūbu (aqua), Kansai (purple), Chūgoku (brown), Shikoku (fuchsia), Kyūshū & Okinawa (grey). Map by user Tokyoship, available via Wikimedia Commons under public domain.

Among the current 47 prefectures, 43 are designated as *ken*, or regular prefectures. The remaining four are *Ōsaka-fu* and *Kyōto-fu*, special "urban prefectures" that encompass the cities of the same name and their surrounding areas; *Hokkaidō*, the northernmost island in the Japanese archipelago which is classified as a "territory" and is divided into sub-prefectures due to its vast size; and *Tōkyō-to*, described below (officially translated as Tokyo Metropolis, but more commonly referred to as Tokyo Prefecture in English).

WHAT EXACTLY **IS** *TOKYO?*

In both Japanese and English, the name "Tokyo" is used to indicate many different things. Outside of Japan, it is the name used to refer to Japan's capital city. Administratively speaking, however, Tokyo technically no longer exists as a city. On July 1, 1943, the municipality of *Tōkyō-shi* ("Tokyo City") and the urban prefecture of *Tōkyō-fu* were abolished as independent entities, and incorporated into the newly formed *Tōkyō-to* along with a number of smaller neighboring municipalities and the Izu and Ogasawara Islands.

When the prefecture was created, the 23 wards of the former Tokyo City were designated as "special wards," confusingly referred to as "cities" in English, which today function as independent municipalities within the current *Tōkyō-to* prefecture (hereafter Tokyo Prefecture). In colloquial usage, however, these 23 wards are still referred to as the city of Tokyo by most Japanese people and are considered the "city proper," even though most of the current Tokyo Prefecture (in terms of geographical area) lays outside these wards to the west. For the purposes of this dissertation, the

name “Tokyo” should be read as indicating this 23-special-ward urban core unless otherwise specified.

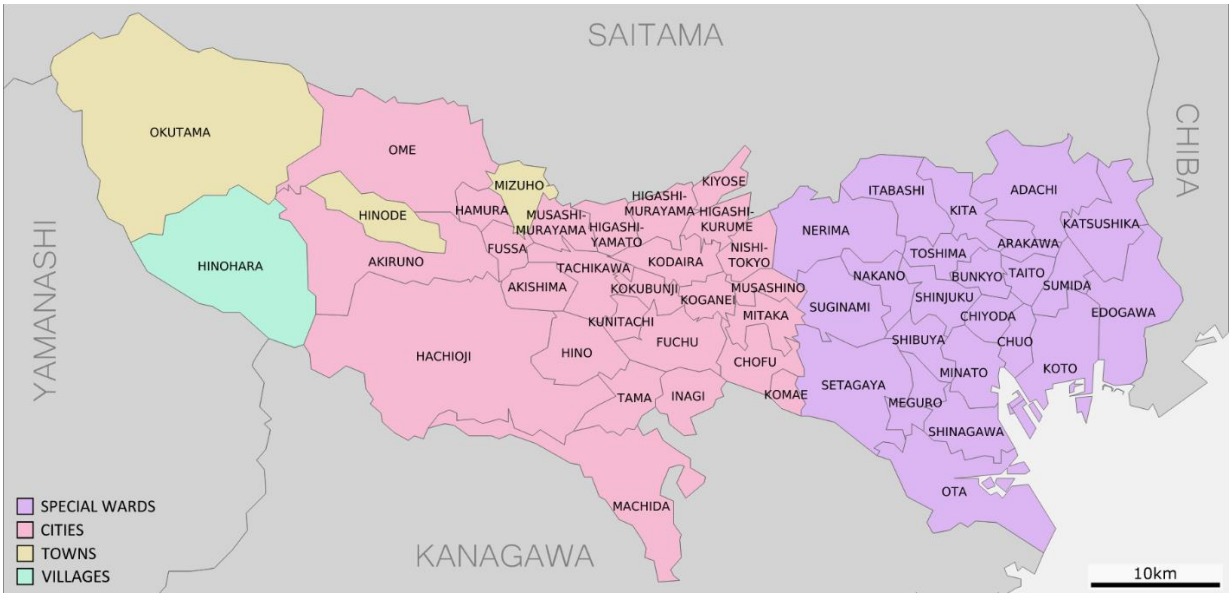

Figure 2: Tokyo Prefecture (Tōkyō-to, 東京都)

A map of Tokyo Prefecture showing the current ward, city, town, and village divisions. Each category is shown in a different color: from east to west, the 23 special wards that constitute what is colloquially known as the city of Tokyo (purple), the commuter cities of western Tokyo Prefecture (pink), and the few towns (yellow) and villages (green) within the prefecture. Map by user Tokyoship, available via Wikimedia Commons under public domain.

Within the *Kantō* region[6] of Japan, there are numerous areas that can be identified in some way as “Tokyo.” Some, like the Tokyo Metropolitan Employment Area (東京大都市雇用圏, *Tōkyō Daitoshi Koyōken*), are official designations used by entities such as Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry; others, like the labels “greater Tokyo area” and “Tokyo capital area” are used to refer to either a part of the

[6] The *Kantō* region refers to a vast plain by the same name and its surrounding foothills and mountains, located in the eastern part of central *Honshū*, Japan’s largest island. This region is comprised of seven prefectures—Gunma, Tochigi, Ibaraki, Saitama, Chiba, Tokyo, and Kanagawa—and is the most densely developed and populated region of Japan.

Kantō region or the entire region (Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba, Saitama, Tokyo, Gunma, and Kanagawa Prefectures) plus Yamanashi Prefecture. The English-language phrases "greater Tokyo area" or "Tokyo metro area" are often used to refer to either Tokyo Prefecture as a whole or the urban core of the 23 special wards plus the surrounding 'bedroom communities'—smaller cities in central Tokyo Prefecture and the parts of Saitama Prefecture, Chiba Prefecture, and Kanagawa Prefecture close to the 23 wards that are largely home to commuters who work in Tokyo. In this dissertation, I will be using "the greater Tokyo area" to refer to this latter definition.

In the greater Tokyo area, one of the major ways of conceptualizing the organization of space is in terms of proximity to train and subway lines.[7] Major arteries like the north-south Keihin-Tōhoku line (running from Ōmiya in Saitama Prefecture through the eastern side of Tokyo south to Yokohama in Kanagawa Prefecture) and the east-west Chūō-Sōbu line (originating in Chiba City, the capital city of Chiba Prefecture, passing through the center of Tokyo and terminating in Tachikawa, a large city in far western Tokyo Prefecture) each connect with dozens of smaller train and subway lines. The population in the greater Tokyo area tends to cluster around stations, extending out from Tokyo like tentacles following the various train lines, with the highest density near stations where rush-hour express trains stop. In fact, walking distance to the nearest station(s), number of connections between the nearest station(s) and a major hub station in Tokyo, and travel time to that hub are key factors in determining the cost and desirability of residential real estate.

[7] Public transit in Japan is famously punctual and convenient, but is also quite complex. In the greater Tokyo area alone, there are over 150 rail lines, operated by more than 2 dozen public and private companies, leading to transit maps that resemble a plateful of multicolor spaghetti (see Figure[#]).

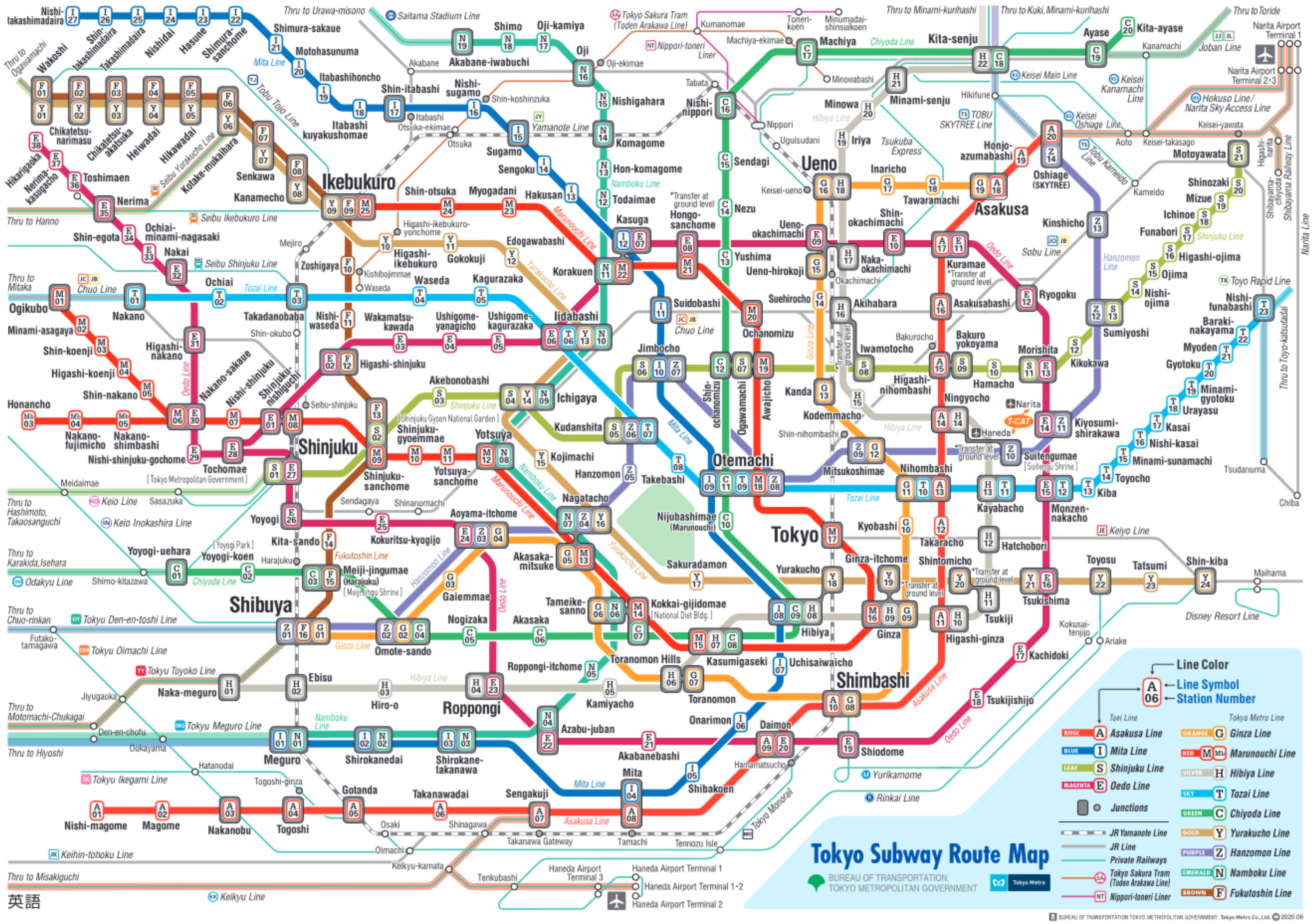

Figure 3: Tokyo Metro Subway Map

Map by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Transportation, available at https://www.tokyometro.jp/en/subwaymap/.

Figure 4: JR East Train Map

Map by East Japan Railway Company, available at https://www.jreast.co.jp.

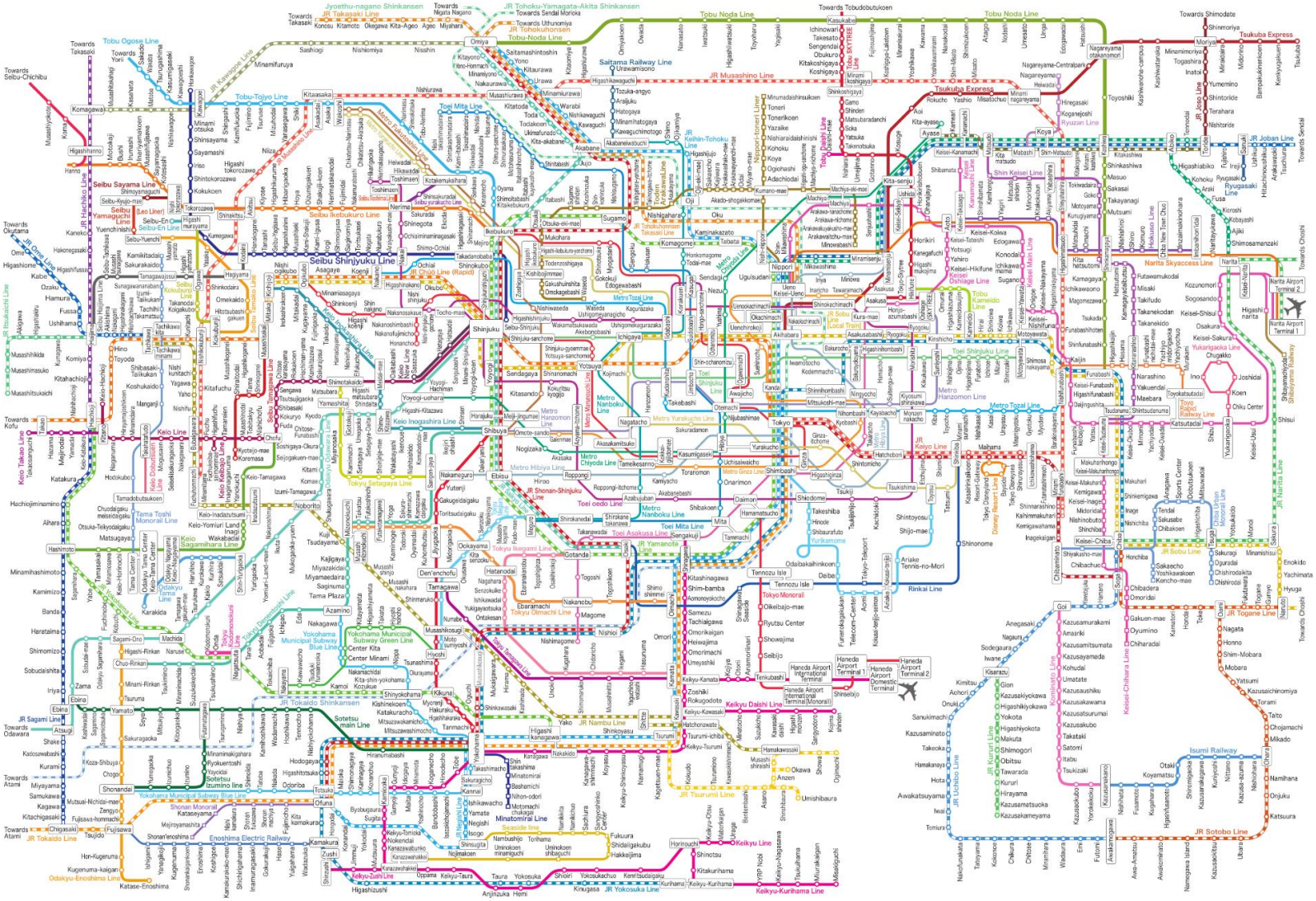

Figure 5: Combined Subway and Train Map of Greater Tokyo Area

Map compiled by reddit.com user AlexTeddy888, available at https://i.imgur.com/dUTdadv.png.

SPATIAL DIVISIONS WITHIN TOKYO

In Tokyo itself, both transit stations/stops and subdivisions within wards are vital identifiers for neighborhoods. The center of the city of Tokyo is enclosed by the Yamanote line, a 34.5 km-long loop line whose trains depart each station every 2.5-4 minutes from around 4:30 AM to 1:00 AM, seven days/week. Many of the most well-known parts of the city—Harajuku, Shibuya, Akihabara, Ueno, Shinjuku—are centered around stations of the same names on this line. And each ward (and many of their subdivisions) has its own identity in the minds of Tokyoites: those inside the Yamanote line, like Chiyoda, Chūō, and Bunkyō are thought of as "quintessential Tokyo", home to cultural icons like the Imperial Palace complex, commercial landmarks like the (former) Tsukiji fish market[8], and long-established *Edokko*[9] residential districts; those outside the loop line are much more varied in terms of public perception, from traditional & working-class Taitō to ultramodern Minato.

Within the 23 wards of Tokyo, neighborhoods often cut across ward divisions, a remnant of the towns, villages, and neighborhoods that existed before Tokyo became Tokyo. Just as each ward has its identity, so too are neighborhoods defined in different ways. Many sections of Tokyo are known as *the* place for a particular cultural or commercial pursuit: the Aoyama and Ginza areas are high-end shopping districts; Harajuku and Shibuya are the center of youth culture; Sugamo is home to old-fashioned covered shopping streets catering to the elderly; Ryōgoku is where the sumo stables and

[8] The Tsukiji fish market was closed in October 2018 due to space constraints; it was relocated near Shin-Toyosu station in Kōtō Ward, on the southeastern edge of Tokyo, and is now called the Toyosu Market.

[9] *Edokko* (江戸っ子) is a traditional label indicating that someone is a native of Tokyo (known as Edo until 1868), and that their family has lived in Tokyo for at least the past few generations; a person born in Tokyo whose parents were born elsewhere would not be considered *Edokko*.

competition hall are; Akihabara is "nerd heaven" with countless electronics shops, idol and maid cafes, and pop culture–themed stores and arcades; the Takadanobaba and Meijiro area resembles a college town, being near many universities and containing many bookstores and cheap bars and *izakaya*[10]; Odaiba is a daytime leisure area with lots of museums, themed shopping malls, and a beach; and so on.

CONVENIENCE: "NO ONE EVER APOLOGIZED WHEN TRAINS RAN LATE AT HOME!"[11]

While people in general are naturally inclined to complain about negatives, and there certainly are plenty of them for immigrants in Japan, there are a number of things about living in Japan that most immigrants consider positives. One that is almost always mentioned when I ask about the best aspects of living in Japan, or what they like about living in Japan, is the convenience, especially for people living in cities. (People in rural areas or smaller towns do point to some things that are nicer/more convenient/etc. than at home, but many things mentioned are mostly found in the big cities.)

The most frequently listed convenience for both rural and urban dwellers, though, are *konbini* (convenience stores). Japanese *konbini* are much different, and much more *convenient*, than those in Western countries—even chains like 7-11 and Lawson that originated in the U.S. In addition to snack foods and both non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages, these stores offer a huge variety of products and services. Their wide range of foods almost always includes pre-packed, fresh, comparatively healthy

[10] *Izakaya* are drinking establishments that also serve substantial snacks or meals, similar to pubs in the UK; they are a common location for get-togethers with members of a club or a group of friends, as well as a frequent place for colleagues to go drinking after work.

[11] [Jason/007]

and tasty boxed meals and salads, as well as typically Japanese snacks such as *onigiri* (rice balls) and an assortment of breads and sandwiches (e.g., soft white bread rolls filled with corn & mayo, curry, fried *soba* noodles, or sweet red bean paste; egg salad or ham and cucumber sandwiches). Many also offer hot fried foods (e.g., chicken, fish, corn dogs, potato croquettes), and in winter it is common to see a big pot of *oden* stew simmering away on the counter as well.

Their non-food products and services, though, are where Japanese *konbini* shine. *Konbini* carry a huge number of items that someone might need on the go, or in a hurry, or when other stores are closed: medicines, toiletries, household products like cleaners, socks, underpants, white button-up shirts, neckties, pantyhose, inexpensive umbrellas and ponchos, hats and gloves, newspapers and magazines, and a variety of stationery (notebooks, decorated envelopes for use at weddings, funerals, etc.), among many, many other products. Most utility bills can be paid at any *konbini*, and you can pay for online purchases at a *konbini* if you do not have a credit or debit card. And unlike bank ATMs, which are often shut down at night, *konbini* ATMs are open 24 hours a day. *Konbini* serve as an extension of all of the major delivery companies, where you can both send and receive packages, and you can designate a specific *konbini* as your preferred shipping address for online companies like Amazon. You can even use the delivery services to send your large suitcases to the airport ahead of you. *Konbini* sell tickets for sporting events, theme parks, concerts, and so on. They even provide free, open-access wifi, especially useful because wifi is much less freely available in Japan, even the big cities. Little wonder that most *gaijin* consider 24/7 access to *konbini* on nearly every block in cities, and at least one *konbini* even in the most rural towns, a huge plus of living in Japan.

Transit is also frequently highlighted as something that is especially convenient about life in Japan—the *shinkansen* (bullet trains), trains, subways, trams, streetcars, express liners, city buses, highway buses, ferries, etc. truly are amazing. Nearly always on time, nearly always stopping exactly where they should, so precisely that people can line up in advance to board easily (they can even line up for their preferred door on a specific train/subway car if they wish). Public transit goes just about everywhere except the most rural villages in the countryside, and while it is not cheap, it is not prohibitively expensive, either—especially to Westerners comparing the costs of using Japanese transit to the costs of insuring, maintaining, and operating a car in their home countries. And while some of the train and subway systems and procedures for buying tickets, boarding, etc. can take a bit of figuring out, on the whole the system is pretty straightforward and easy to use.

Another pair of commonly mentioned conveniences are the Japanese postal service and private delivery companies' services—deliveries can be scheduled, for specific 2-3 hour windows on specific days, and they will nearly always be delivered during the scheduled time—and the many non-mail-related services offered by Japan Post, such as their very good English-language customer service and website, life insurance, banking services, and system for making payments for government fees and applications/forms.

Health care is also frequently highlighted as being convenient, although not without its share of things that are "weird" or unintuitive to non-Japanese people. Americans in particular were quick to cite the Japanese health system as being a significant improvement on what they were used to previously, especially the ability to see a doctor quickly when sick, get appointments with specialists with ease and within a

reasonable time frame, and find English-speaking doctors in many fields, as well as the relatively low costs for all medical care (including visits with providers, tests, hospital stays, prescription medications, medical devices such as C-PAP machines, and dentistry).

Of course, conveniences of living in Japan cannot be discussed without mentioning the ubiquitous 100-yen shops. Found in nearly every town in Japan, and nearly every neighborhood in urban areas, these stores, in particular the Daiso, Seria, and Can Do chains, sell a huge range of inexpensive-yet-functional items: dishes and glassware, stationery, sandals & slippers, gardening implements, bath towels, sewing and crafting supplies, storage baskets and bins, DIY tools, food, cleaning supplies, kitchen utensils, toys, toiletries, laundry drying racks and hangers, holiday decorations, pots & pans, hair accessories, art supplies, tissues & toilet paper….

Pretty much all of the conveniences discussed above depend on being able to afford and access the services and/or products. And most Western immigrants are financially comfortable—in general they are fully employed and earn comparable salaries to Japanese people doing the same jobs (i.e., livable, middle-class wages)—meaning that such conveniences are available to them. For many non-Western immigrants, however, especially those who come from less-developed countries or work in lower-skilled, blue-collar, or part-time-only jobs, life in Japan may not be nearly as convenient. But for those who have the means—and adequate language skills (or friends/colleagues who can translate for them)—life in a Japanese city can be incredibly convenient and smooth.

ETHNIC ENCLAVES & THE WESTERN FOREIGNER COMMUNITY(IES) IN JAPAN/TOKYO

WHAT ETHNIC ENCLAVES ARE THERE IN JAPAN/TOKYO?

Surprisingly, the greater Tokyo area has relatively few true ethnic enclaves, as defined in classic migration studies literature: a location with a large and highly concentrated immigrant population from a particular country or ethnic background, in which residents and business owners largely work with and offer goods and services to their own group, participate in ethnic or national organizations, maintain strong ties with individuals and groups organized along ethnic or national lines, and where the *lingua franca* is often the home country's/group's language, often leading members of the enclave to have low knowledge of the host country's language or culture (Portes & Manning, 1986). The three areas that reach the level of concentration and cultural identity considered to define an ethnic enclave are the Korean neighborhood around Shin-Ōkubo station on the western side of central Tokyo, and the Chinatowns in the city of Yokohama and the Ikebukuro area in northwestern Tokyo.

There are several other areas in and around Tokyo that appear to be in the process of becoming a "Little _____", where certain populations are beginning to cluster. These newly developing areas, though, are in many cases just a few stores & restaurants scattered in an otherwise Japanese neighborhood, rather than an area becoming largely occupied by a particular immigrant group as in a traditional ethnic enclave (Gold, 2015). Burgeoning immigrant clusters include Chinese in Kita-Ikebukuro, Turkish & Arabs around Yoyogi-Uehara, Filipinos near Takenotsuka station, Thais close to Kinshichō station, Vietnamese in Kamata, Ethiopians in Katsushika, Burmese by Takadanobaba, Nepalese in Ōkubo, Bangladeshis around Ōyama, Indonesians near Meguro, and

Indians in the Ōmori-Ōimachi area. To be clear, though, in most cases these areas mostly feature just a few restaurants, stores, and other businesses owned by and/or offering products and cuisine from each group for Japanese consumption, rather than the characteristic residential and business clusters focused on serving a particular ethnic group (Ishikawa 2011); hence my argument that there are very few true ethnic enclaves in the Tokyo area.

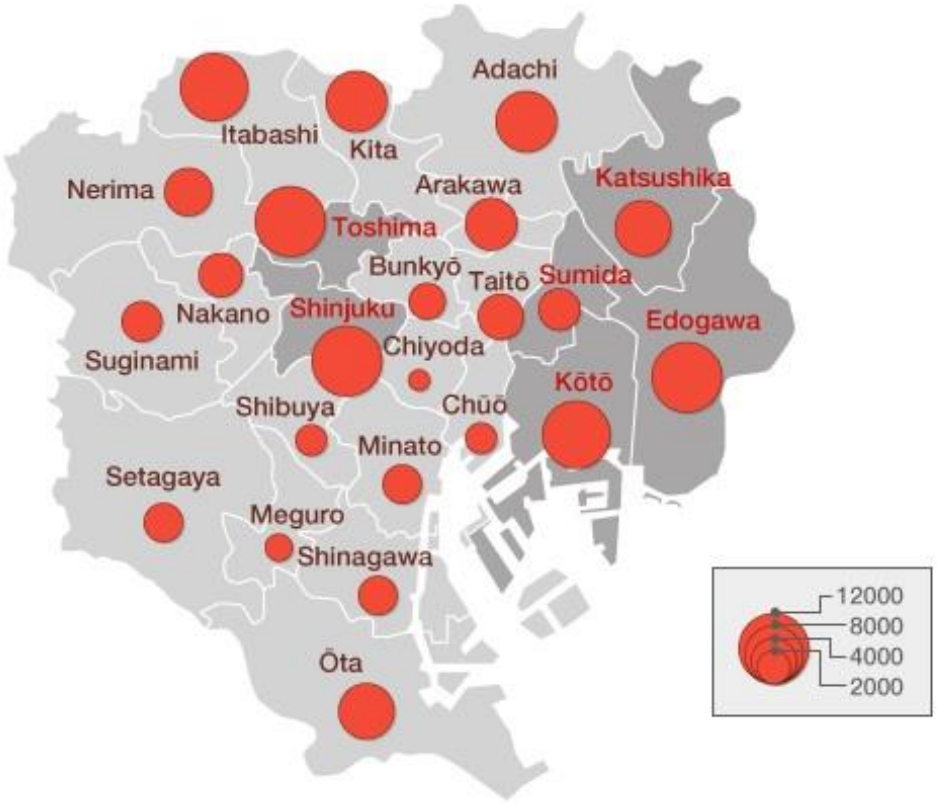

Figure 6: Distribution of Chinese Residents in Tokyo

Image compiled by Miki Takajirō of Nippon.com using 2015 statistics from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, available from https://www.nippon.com/en/features/c02403/new-chinatowns-take-root-around-tokyo.html

This pattern is similar to other cities around Japan; although there are usually some parts of the city that are identifiable as having a slightly higher concentration of

people or businesses from a specific foreign community, as above they cannot really be classified as ethnic enclaves in the traditional sense. In the few locations where there are ethnic enclaves they tend to be oldcomer communities, such as the Chinese population in Kobe. The exception is Ōizumi Town in Gunma Prefecture; there, a large community of South American immigrants of Japanese descent has become established as migrants have moved to take jobs in the manufacturing sector that was already located in and around Ōizumi, and a number of businesses have been established to serve the South American population.

This means that, while individuals might encourage their friends to move into their apartment buildings and the names of landlords who accept foreign renters tend to get passed around, leading to micro-clusters of people from a specific country or racial/ethnic group, there is no significant concentration of Westerners in any one area of Tokyo. Certainly, many who have white-collar jobs tend to work in places like the business districts near Shinjuku and Tokyo stations, but this is more a function of the sheer number of people who work for companies located in those areas, rather than a pattern that is specific to any particular group of foreigners. Likewise, although certain areas of the city are thought of as places that Western foreigners live (e.g. Meguro and Minato Wards) and play (e.g. the Roppongi and Shibuya areas), they are not truly real concentrations of Westerners: Meguro and Minato Wards are quite nice residential districts, so they *are* popular locations among both Westerners and Japanese who can afford them, but these immigrants are not concentrated in any specific neighborhoods within those wards; Roppongi and Shibuya are well-known as "nightlife districts" with numerous bars and clubs, and thus attract a large number of tourists as well as some foreign residents, but these areas are not actually that popular among most Westerners

living in Japan (e.g., those who are older than their ~mid-20s, those who have regular 9–5 jobs, those with children), and are not geared toward foreigners specifically.

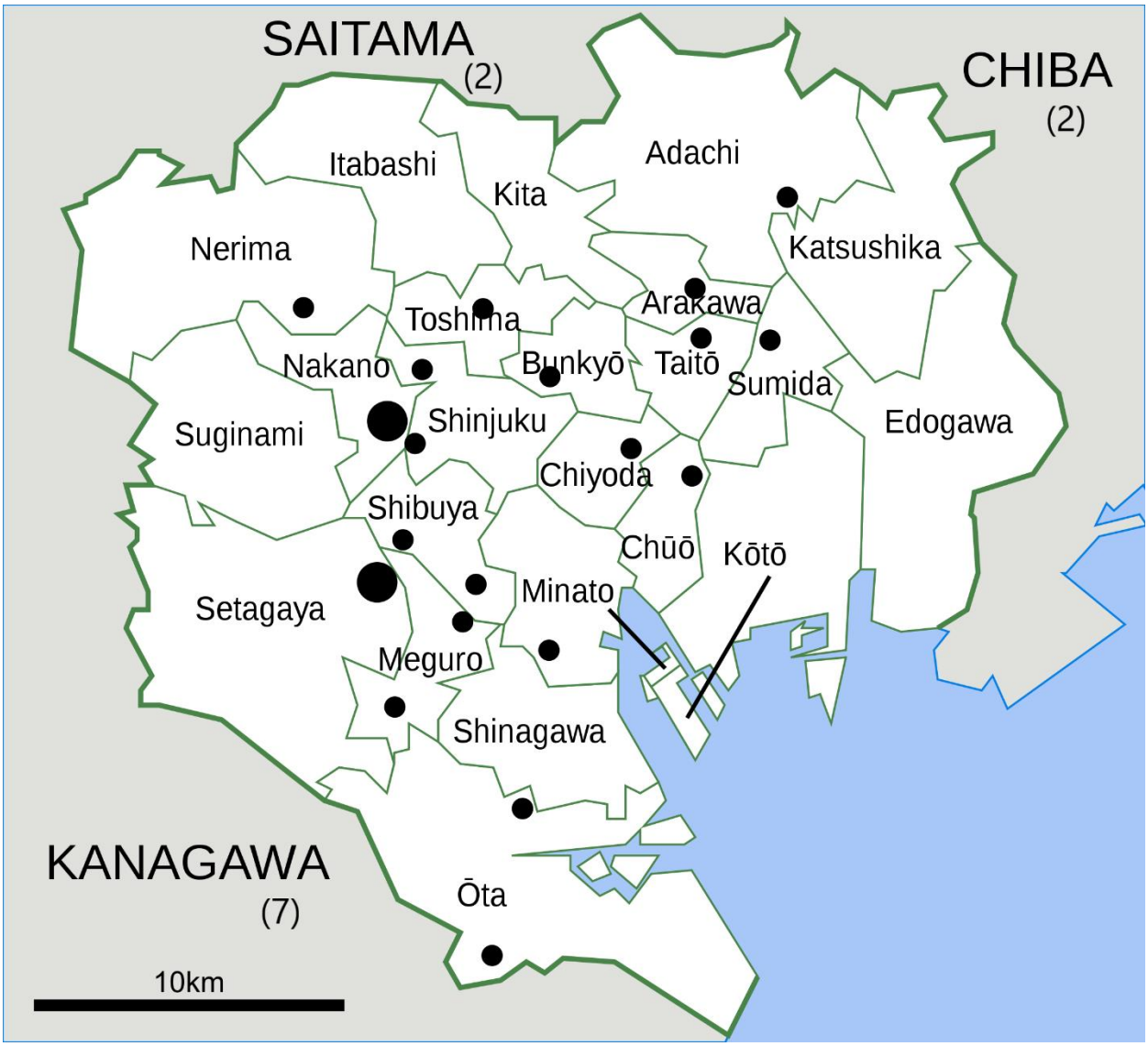

Figure 7: Locations of Tokyo Area Participants

Locations where the 22 interviewees in Tokyo proper were living at the time of our interview. Larger dots indicate the two married couples included in my study. Numbers in parentheses indicate how many interviewees were located in those prefectures around the greater Tokyo area but outside the city proper. Map by user Furfur, available via Wikimedia Commons under a Creative Commons license.

LGBTQ+ TOKYO

Shinjuku, one of the 23 special wards of Tokyo, is unusual because it has two distinctive identities: as a business and government district in the daytime, and a center of nightlife after hours. It is not uncommon, of course, for there to be bars and restaurants in an area with mostly businesses, nor is it unusual for there to be businesses located in neighborhoods that are primarily oriented toward nightlife. In the case of Shinjuku, however, what is notable is the contrast of the two distinct areas side-by-side. To the west of Shinjuku station (the busiest in Japan) is the business and government district, full of towering skyscrapers housing the Tokyo prefectural government and the regional headquarters of multinational corporations. To the east of Shinjuku station, however, is one of the seedier parts of the city, especially the neighborhood of Kabukichō (an entertainment and red-light district full of nightclubs, host and hostess clubs, and love hotels, many of which are reportedly owned and/or run by members of the Yakuza), the Golden Gai (a city block containing more than 200 tiny bars, many of which are themed, and most of which seat at most ~12 customers), and Ni-chōme (the city's main gay district).

Just under 1 km^2, Shinjuku Ni-chōme (literally "district #2 of Shinjuku Ward") is the hub of LGBTQ+ culture in Japan, in particular gay male culture. Full of gay bars, clubs, saunas, bookstores, host clubs, love hotels, and other establishments targeting a gay clientele, the area has long been a nightlife and entertainment district, and began to become known as the gay nightlife district in particular in the 1950s. There are, of course, bars and shops targeted at LGBTQ+ individuals in other areas of Tokyo, most notably near Ueno and Ikebukuro stations, as well as in cities large and small around

Japan. Ni-chōme, however, is by far the largest and most diverse collection of LGBTQ+ establishments in the country.

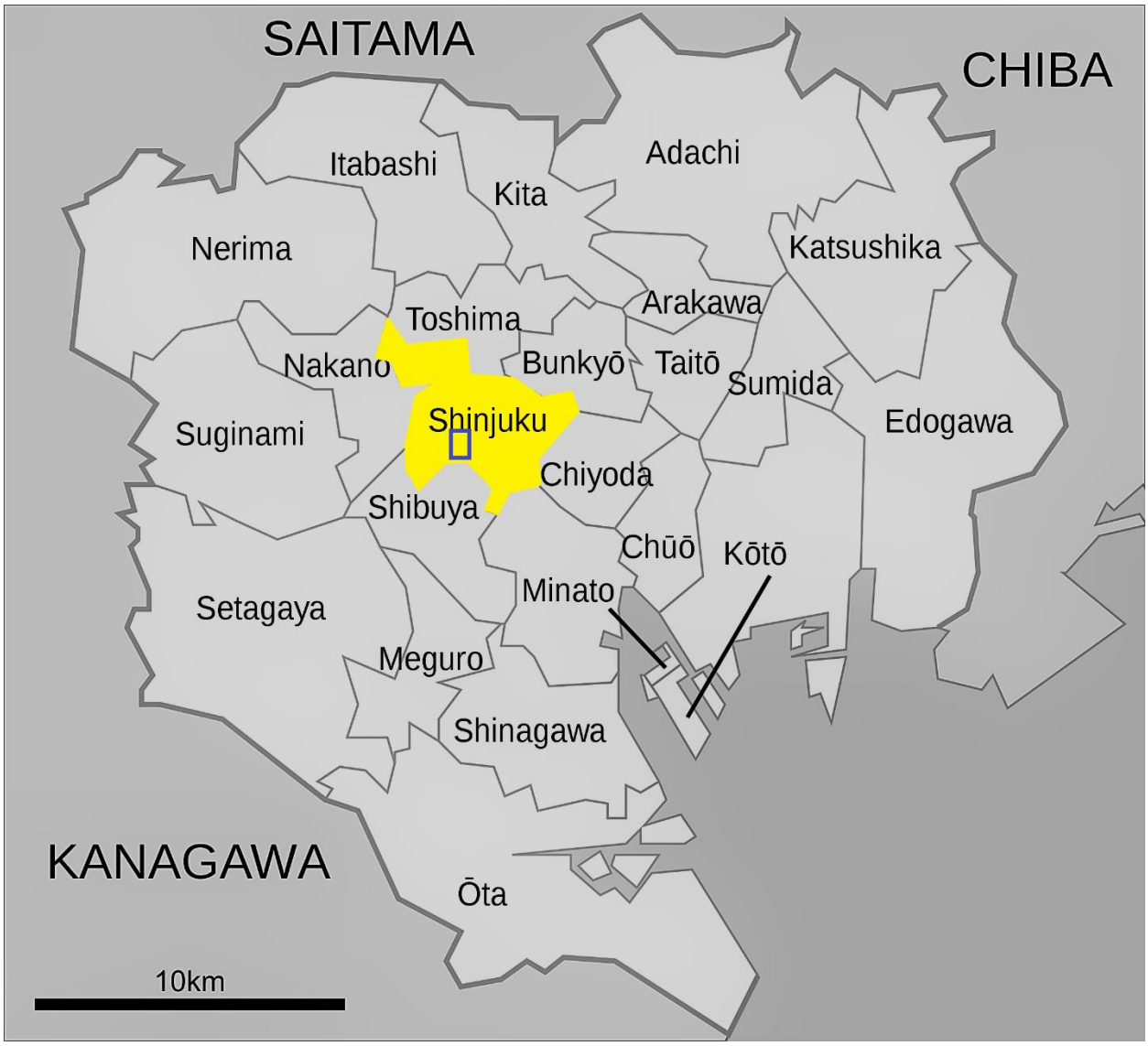

Figure 8a: Location of Shinjuku Ward

Map showing the 23 wards of Tokyo, with Shinjuku Ward highlighted in yellow. The square within Shinjuku Ward shows the location of ***Figure 8b*** in relation to the ward as a whole. Map by user Furfur, available via Wikimedia Commons under a Creative Commons license; changed to greyscale and highlighted by Jessica McLeod.

Figure 8b: Enlarged Map of Shinjuku Ward around Shinjuku Station

Map shows the area of Shinjuku Ward around Shinjuku station. To the north, on the east side of the train line, is the Kabukichō neighborhood, outlined in yellow. Within Kabukichō, the small red rectangle indicates the location of the Golden Gai. Due east of Shinjuku station is Ni-chōme, outlined in green. Map is a screenshot taken from Google Maps, ©2021.

As in the Golden Gai, mentioned above, the majority of the bars in Ni-chōme are small, seating less than a dozen customers, with a large number of them requiring new customers to be introduced by regulars. Many of these smaller establishments are also themed, targeting specific segments of the LGBTQ community (e.g., businessmen, bears & cubs, BDSM aficionados, those in/seeking May-December relationships). Unless they are specifically targeting LGBTQ women or nonbinary people, most of these small bars

allow only gay male customers; unless they are aimed at foreigners and Japanese men with an interest in foreigners, many do not allow foreign customers[12] (although some will make an exception for foreigners who demonstrate fluency in Japanese and an understanding of behavioral expectations). Within Ni-chōme there are also a number of large dance clubs and larger bars that freely admit all customers; some do charge a higher cover fee for non-gay-male patrons.

Given the state of LGBTQ+ acceptance and rights in Japan, many interviewees said that only in Ni-chōme do they feel comfortable approaching someone of the same gender in anything but the most oblique manner. While it is unlikely that they would experience a violent reaction elsewhere, as violent crime is generally uncommon in Japan and homophobia is far less virulent there than it is in many parts of the West, there is still a large degree of uncertainty about how advances would be received, and a high potential for finding themselves in uncomfortable situations. For many LGBTQ+ Westerners, especially bi and gay men, this means that they prefer to go to Ni-chōme when they go out so they can "just be myself" (Jeremy) and not feel like they have to constantly police or suppress their behavior. Hugh and Nabil, a married couple from the U.K., are a perfect example of this:

> *Ni-chōme "is the only public place in Tokyo where we can let our guard down and just act like a couple without worrying who might be watching. We never feel threatened in other parts of the city, but we have felt quite uncomfortable or unwelcome on several occasions. It's definitely an oasis for our community here."*

[12] This is not uncommon in Japan; there are many bars, restaurants, clubs, and other such establishments that refuse entry for foreigners. There are also many businesses that obliquely ban certain customers in ways that generally block most foreigners. *Onsen* and *sento* are notorious for this, by banning patrons who have tattoos—ostensibly, it is to keep out criminals, who traditionally had extensive tattoos, but in practice it mostly just keeps foreigners from entering. For more on this issue, see the website of activist Arudou Debito, www.debito.org.

Multiple participants also observed that it is the one place they have been in Japan that feels similar in atmosphere to gay bars or clubs in Western countries. For Dawn, it's a place that "if I'm feeling homesick, I can go out with my girlfriend or a group of friends in Ni-chōme—not even because I particularly like drinking or clubbing, I'm too old for that scene, but just because it's the only place where I can be really immersed in a queer environment—and just relax and feel comfortable." Similarly, Nora, who is a huge fan of drag performances, said she goes to Ni-chōme "because that's the best place to meet drag queens and see shows. There's some elsewhere from time to time, but there's multiple shows there every week or weekend. I miss my drag queen and king friends back home, but making new friends in Ni-chōme helps a lot." And for Kevin, Ni-chōme is

> *… the only place where people act as flamboyantly and openly as they do back home. Tokyo Pride is a family event, everyone is wearing t-shirts and waist bags instead of leather chaps and harnesses or whatever, and in straight clubs—regular clubs, I mean—the style is more kakkoii*[13] *than muscle Mary. Ni-chōme is the only place where I see bartenders in just boxers and a bowtie, people in leather, people in all sorts of gender-bending costumes, same-sex couples kissing in public without looking over their shoulders….*

[13] The word *kakkoii* (comprised of *kakko*, meaning "figure, shape, appearance" and *ii*, meaning "good"), is used to refer to people, more often men, who are cool, handsome, and stylish; who take care of and pride in their appearance; and who dress in trendy clothing, have a fashionable haircut, and so on. Think Elvis Presley circa 1956, or *Titanic*-era Leonardo DiCaprio.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS AND ACTIVITIES

STUDY DESIGN & RATIONALE

This study was designed as a cross between a classic ethnographic anthropological long-term field study and an exploratory case study. It was intended to serve several functions: (1) to demonstrate that the population in question, Western immigrants,[14] actually exists in Japan and merits scholarly attention; (2) to explore their lived experiences as immigrants in Japan, and what patterns can be identified in their experiences (i.e., how factors like race/ethnicity, gender, & sexuality affect their experiences; and (3) to determine what this group & their experiences can teach us about Japaneseness & globalization.

To systematically collect accounts of Westerners' lived experiences as migrants to Japan, and produce this ethnography exploring their experiences, I employed a qualitative research methodology that utilized multiple methods: participant observation, one-on-one interviews, written surveys, and document analysis (Bernard & Gravelee 2011).

This chapter will introduce the sites, participants, and researcher involved in this dissertation project. The majority of the fieldwork for this study was conducted in the greater Tokyo area. This choice was largely a pragmatic one. Tokyo draws in large numbers of both Japanese and non-Japanese people due to its size and the diversity of opportunities there, and since so many people choose to go to Tokyo, it only made sense for me to do so as well. I also had pre-existing ties there, which were useful in

[14] Please see the participant selection criteria section of this chapter for a more detailed operational definition for this group.

facilitating this research project. I did also collect data from some individuals in other parts of Japan, and I will include discussions of their experiences where possible.

PREDISSERTATION RESEARCH

I began preliminary research for this project in 2012, when I conducted 3 months of predissertation research[15] to establish a local research affiliation, identify and contact individuals and organizations to include in my research, assess the feasibility of my proposed project, and collect information to be used in designing interview & survey questions for the full study. During this period, I conducted interviews with 10 Western immigrants, and with the leaders of two immigrant-focused organizations—a support group for non-Japanese women in relationships with Japanese partners and a club that organizes social activities for immigrants from the U.K. and Ireland. I also engaged in participant observation at a number of different recreational and social events organized by various groups and organizations in and around Tokyo and attended English-language events held by several different Christian churches.

This predissertation research revealed stark differences among migrants' lived experiences based on factors like gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. Interestingly, many interviewees indicated a level of comfort with "being different" and "living in limbo"[16] that had rarely been reported previously. They attributed this to a sense of freedom they felt was unique to life in Japan, since their obvious non-Japanese-ness both eclipsed characteristics (e.g., sexuality, religion) that had marked them as different prior to

[15] Pre-dissertation research was funded by a Research Enhancement Award grant from the Graduate School at MSU and the Dr. Iwao Ishino Memorial Fellowship awarded by MSU's Department of Anthropology.

[16] Discussed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

migration and afforded them automatic membership and a sense of belonging within the foreign community. This material provided a solid foundation for designing my full study.

FIELD SITES

For most people outside of Japan, mentioning Tokyo brings to mind images of towering skyscrapers, endless neon lights, and stoic commuters being pushed into already-overcrowded trains by white-gloved station officials. And while these are certainly to be found in Tokyo, they are but a tiny fraction of the reality of daily life there. Furthermore, for residents of most places outside of Tokyo and other big cities such as Osaka and Kyoto, those sights are as unrelated to daily life as the *samurai* and *ninja* portrayed in daytime TV dramas. To gain an understanding of migrants' actual lived experiences, I therefore designed & conducted this study.

Tokyo was an optimal field site for this project. It is a magnet for migrants to Japan, given its size and position in the global economy. As a result, it has a large, geographically concentrated, and diverse population of Western immigrants. I also had prior experiences living in that city, and was therefore already familiar with and had many existing connections to community organizations and life. Tokyo thus made sense on many levels as the main site for the fieldwork for my dissertation research.[17]

I did conduct a small number of interviews with Westerners residing elsewhere in Japan, either while I was travelling outside Tokyo or via video chat. These participants were located in the cities of Kagoshima, Osaka, Sendai, and Sapporo, and in smaller towns or villages in Hiroshima, Shiga, Chiba, Niigata, Fukushima, and Hokkaidō

[17] See Chapter 2 for a detailed description of Tokyo as a city and field site.

Prefectures. Many of the survey respondents were also located outside of the Tokyo area.]

POSITIONALITY

As a white, American woman who was in Japan for a finite period of time to conduct a specific project, I occupied a liminal state within an already-liminal foreign population. I was not an immigrant, although I shared many of the typical experiences that immigrants encounter. I was not a tourist, since I was there for an extended period of time, and for a purpose other than leisure. I was not an expat, as that term is used to identify specific types of corporate and government employees in the foreign resident community in Japan.[18] I was not a student, not in the way that label is usually applied, because I was not attending classes at any university or language school while in Japan. I was not employed in Japan (although I had been previously), I was not at that time married or partnered, I was not a mother, I was not a J-pop/anime/manga/etc. fan, I was not studying traditional or martial arts… as an independent researcher, I was an un-labelable enigma to most people I encountered.

[18] For many Westerners in Japan, there is a sharp divide between "expats" and everyone else. Those considered to be expats are those who moved to Japan as a result of a government job (e.g., foreign service officers), employment in a multinational corporation, or other such high-status and usually temporary position. Expats are believed by non-expats to be receiving high salaries and cushy benefits, including having someone to make all the arrangements for their move and deal with Japanese governmental bureaucracy and unnecessarily large and fancy Western-style apartments. Since these postings are often of limited (and predetermined) duration, expats are thought to remain in a foreigner bubble, not experiencing Japan except for some tourist attractions. To be fair, there is a kernel of truth in these characterizations, but the bulk of these ideas no longer apply in the way they used to. This was indeed the situation of many executives and diplomats during the "bubble years" when Japan's economy was roaring in the 1980s and early 1990s, but since the bubble burst these are more apocryphal tales than a factual description of expats' experiences in Japan. Still, expats and non-expats do occupy separate social spheres, which in part result from differences in financial situation and length of stay in Japan, so it is not surprising that this lack of interaction keeps the tales circulating.

Most participants automatically assumed that, as fellow Western foreigners (or as white people in Japan, or women, or Americans, or whatever other things we had in common), we shared many experiences and received similar treatment from Japanese people, and thus were members of the same community. This assumption of similarity led them to feel comfortable confiding difficulties, frustrations, and negative experiences with me during both interviews and community events. To an extent they were correct—I have indeed had many of the same experiences they described (e.g., dealing with Japanese immigration processes, finding housing, dating, and following Japanese workplace norms)—but in other cases I had not had similar experiences (e.g., I speak Japanese, and had studied the language for years before first visiting Japan, so while I have of course experienced many, many difficulties with communication, I have avoided the frustration of being unable to ask for directions or buying salt or MSG when I meant to get sugar). Such assumptions nevertheless granted me access to, and acceptance in, foreign organizations and social spaces that would not have been available to a Japanese researcher; thus, being perceived by other Westerners as an insider in their communities was largely beneficial for me and my research.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION CRITERIA

To participate in my study, individuals had to be (1) age 20 (the age of majority in Japan) or older, (2) a native of a Western country, (3) a conversationally fluent speaker of English, and (4) an immigrant. For the purposes of this study, "Westerners" were individuals originally from North America (U.S. and Canada only), Europe (including the U.K. and Ireland), or Australia/New Zealand, because that is how the term is most commonly conceptualized in Japan. An "immigrant" was defined as someone who (at

the time of the study) intended to reside in Japan for the long term, without any definite plans to move to another country, regardless of how long they had already lived in Japan or their specific legal immigration status.[19]

The first three criteria were easily determined during recruitment of participants; the fourth often came up organically during discussions while arranging interviews, because many individuals demurred, arguing that they had not been in Japan long enough to have anything meaningful to contribute, had been in Japan too long to remember their early experiences clearly, had lives that were too boring to hold any interest for my project, and so on. I took such protests as opportunities to screen and select potential participants, but also to explain that, in fact, they were the kind of person I was most interested in interviewing—"regular people" living "normal lives" in Japan, not outliers who have had extraordinary or unusual experiences—a tactic that proved quite persuasive. When the topic of duration of stay and intent to stay did not come up in preliminary conversations, I asked about them near the beginning of the interview itself.

For participant observation, I did not apply these strict criteria, because these observations were carried out in casual environments where it was not feasible to confirm who did or did not meet them. I generally targeted organizations and events that I knew had, or were likely to have, participants from my population of interest. During observations, I made educated guesses about whether individuals could be considered part of my target population, and I kept these uncertainties in mind as much as possible both when recording my observations and interpreting that data.

[19] See the section headed *Who Is (Not) a Migrant?* in Chapter 4 for further discussion of this topic.

For surveys, I applied the same criteria used for interview participants; the only difference was that screening was done after responses were submitted instead of during the recruitment process due to the anonymous online format. Responses from individuals who did not meet the selection criteria were omitted from my analyses.

DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

My predissertation research indicated that some factors of migrants' backgrounds were more salient than others to their experiences migrating to, and living in, Japan. In particular, gender, sexuality, and race/ethnicity were highlighted by almost all interviewees during this preliminary exploration as having a significant influence on their experiences and opportunities.[20] Other things, such as nationality, marital status and nationality of spouse/partner, whether not an individual had children, age, and length of residence in Japan were also mentioned as being important for many migrants, but their effects did not appear to be as significant or universal for the group as a whole. Those three most influential factors, in addition to the "sense of freedom" and comfort with "living in limbo" mentioned above, accordingly became the foundation of the design for the full research study.

In late 2015, I began 15 months of fieldwork in Tokyo, funded by a Foreign Language and Area Studies dissertation research fellowship awarded by the Asian Studies Center at MSU. Data collection and management followed protocols approved by Michigan State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), including informing all individual with whom I interacted during all research activities that I was a researcher

[20] This is not completely surprising, as these are identities that are quite meaningful to and have a strong influence on life for all people. It was surprising, however, that other characteristics (e.g., nationality) were much less influential than expected.

and the purpose of my research, obtaining written consent from all interviewees and survey respondents, and utilizing pseudonyms or other non-identifiable indicators in all written research materials (e.g. participant observation notes, interview transcripts, and this dissertation) to maintain participants' confidentiality while preserving the authenticity of their responses and experiences. After receiving approval from the IRB, I began interviewing Westerners residing in Japan; in the end, I conducted 42 interviews with 44[21] individuals from 11 countries, ranging in age from 23 to 68, who had lived in Japan anywhere from less than one year to nearly 50 years. I also conducted extensive participant observation, and circulated surveys to members of several organizations and groups, as well as collecting documents from multiple city and ward offices and their websites.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Throughout the entire fieldwork period, I attended and observed meetings and events hosted by a wide range of social and community groups that were either organized by or targeted at foreigners, or that had a substantial number of foreigners among their membership. My goals for these observation activities were four-fold: to learn more about the foreign community(ies) of Tokyo; to observe immigrants' strategies for building social networks and "space" for themselves firsthand; to learn about the daily lives and experiences of immigrants living in Tokyo; and to identify and recruit potential interviewees. With the exception of the religious organizations, the link

[21] Two interviews were conducted with married couples who requested that I interview them together. In both cases, both spouses were foreign-born and of the same nationality.

to my survey was circulated among the members of all groups discussed below unless specified.

The groups and organizations I included in my participant observation activities can be loosely organized into five categories: groups that were focused around (1) religion, (2) sports and outdoor activities, (3) language and culture exchange, (4) identities (e.g., LGBTQ groups, women's groups), and (5) hobbies. I am an atheist, so I was only observing the events and meetings of groups in the first category; for the latter four categories, I participated as well as observed to some extent in most of the groups' events.

The majority of the *religious groups* I observed were affiliated with Christian churches in the greater Tokyo area. All of these groups were either run or co-run by Westerners, or had English-language services, events, and websites specifically targeting foreigners. To identify religious groups I could potentially observe, I visited a number of churches, initially attending an English-language service and speaking with fellow foreign attendees and the leader of the congregation (if possible) to learn more about any groups, events, or programs they offered in English or for foreigners. After my initial visit, in the churches that had such offerings—a Catholic church, a Lutheran church, a Baptist church, and a nondenominational Christian church—I attended various social events that were open to anyone and which did not have religious services as the primary purpose of the event, such as a tea and coffee hour following Sunday services or a weeknight English-language Bible study meeting, or a monthly fellowship potluck dinner held by a non-Japanese subgroup of a church's membership. I also attended a few holiday events at a Jewish community center, and at the Chabad House near where I was living during the first part of my research in southern Tokyo.

The second category of *sports and outdoor activity groups* was fairly small; I only observed three groups of this type. This is partly due to where my own personal interests lay—I am not an athlete myself, and I have never had much of an interest in watching sports either—and partly because I had difficulty finding these types of groups that were specifically for foreigners, or that had a large number of foreigners as members. From interviewees, I did learn about a soccer club that had, over time, gained a number of foreign members, becoming predominantly made up of foreigners from Europe, South America, and Africa by the time of my study. I attended several of their matches over my fieldwork period, and was invited to post-match celebrations at nearby *izakaya* on two occasions. Similarly, I learned of a badminton and table tennis club for gay men that had ~50% foreign members from another interviewee; I was invited to attend and observe a couple of their practices, although I did not participate. Finally, I joined a walking and hiking group that was run, and primarily participated in, by Western foreigners. That group held one or two walking events within the city of Tokyo each week—usually an afternoon walk along one of Tokyo's many rivers or other such greenspaces, or occasionally through a historically or culturally interesting neighborhood—and organized a day-trip hiking event in a prefectural or national park, nature preserve, or mountainous area near Tokyo each weekend. I participated in many of their weekday walking events, but due to schedule and financial conflicts, I was not able to take part in any of the weekend hikes.

Language and cultural-exchange groups[22] have long been popular in Japan, and are constantly being established and going defunct. Previously, when working in Niigata Prefecture in northeastern Japan, and when studying in Shiga Prefecture in central Japan, I have belonged to several such groups—for students, for Americans, for teachers on the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme, and so forth. During my fieldwork period, I identified two well-established language groups with relatively stable memberships comprised of approximately balanced numbers of foreign and Japanese people, and after securing the permission of the groups' leaders attended each group's meetings a few times purely as an observer (although I did converse with a few members after the formal meetings ended). For cultural-exchange groups, I identified three organizations—an *ikebana* (flower arranging) club, a tea ceremony circle, and a group that hosted both hands-on events and lectures covering multiple traditional arts according to members' interests—that also had stable memberships with a substantial number of foreign members; the latter was co-run by two women, one Japanese and one Canadian. I attended and participated in two events held by the *ikebana* club, and several events put on by the multiple-arts club; in contrast, I only observed the actual tea ceremony portion of two of that group's meetings, but I did chat with members during the second halves of the meetings dedicated to more casual socializing over tea and sweets.

Identity-based groups were the most numerous among my participant observation sites; this category can be subdivided into groups based on (a) gender, (b)

[22] I did not circulate my survey to members of the tea ceremony club; I was not able to ascertain whether most of its members could be considered immigrants under my definition, and of those who I was able to identify, most did not meet this criterion. Thus, it seemed like it would not be a good use of my time and energy to solicit responses from this group.

sexuality, and (c) American politics. In the gender subcategory, I observed a meeting of a society for foreign businesswomen in Japan, as well as joining their listserv during my fieldwork period; joined[23] several outings of a foreign mothers' group; participated in an online discussion forum for women with Japanese romantic partners[24] and joined two local outings of a subset of members[25]; and took part in several events organized by a foreign-women-only social group. I personally identify as queer, and thus I was already a member of a couple LGBTQ groups in Tokyo from my previous time in Japan. In addition to continuing my participation in these groups[26], I also attended several meetings of an LGBTQ book club that focuses on works of fiction by queer authors, and spoke with the leadership of an organization that supports gay and queer businessmen in Japan. Finally, I attended numerous events held by the national Democrats Abroad

[23] Although I do not have children, I have an acquaintance who is a member of this group; she invited me to join them on several outings—for a picnic in a park during cherry blossom season, to a water park in the summer, to a neighborhood festival in the fall, and to a couple more casual playground get-togethers. During these events, I took my turn along with the other women helping with food preparation and serving, watching the group's children, cleaning up, socializing, and so forth. Since I already knew two of the children taking part, and can speak Japanese and English, I was treated as a sort of aunt on these occasions.

[24] Although I did not have a long-term Japanese partner at the time of my fieldwork, I had previously had relationships with Japanese partners. I disclosed both my personal history, and my research project and aims, to the group's leadership, and after a thorough discussion of privacy concerns and how I would use the information I learned from the group, I was granted permission to join. It is a closed group, and all members are approved by the group's leaders; and being online, members choose how much, or how little, they wish to reveal about their identity, and can remain completely anonymous if they so desire. As we agreed upon prior to my joining, all information gained from my participation in this group is reported in aggregate, any potentially identifying details have been omitted, and no posts have been quoted or paraphrased in this dissertation. The link to my survey was circulated in this group, and some members did participate; those responses were treated the same as the other survey response data.

[25] As these get-togethers were being organized, I again disclosed both my personal relationship history and my status as a researcher to the organizers, and requested permission to join these events; subsequently, I shared this information with the other attendees upon arrival, and gained their permission to participate as both individual and researcher as well. Some attendees indicated that they did not want to be included in my study in any way; their wishes have been honored to the best of my ability.

[26] I shared information about my research with group leaders and members as needed, and similarly to the groups above, worked diligently to protect and omit members' information as requested.

Japan (DAJ) organization and the *Kantō*[27] Regional Chapter of DAJ—debate-viewing parties, monthly "speakeasy" gatherings at a foreign-owned pub in Tokyo, demonstrations, and so forth.[28]

The final category, *hobby-centered groups*, was the only category in which I fully participated in all of the organizations and events I observed. There were five groups in this category: two fiber craft circles, a food and restaurant exploration group, a weekly craft beer happy hour meet-up, and a neighborhood *taiko*[29] group. I have engaged in fiber crafts—knitting, crochet, sewing, and so forth—since I was quite young, and thus I was especially eager to join a crafting group with when I arrived in Japan. I was fortunate to see an advertisement for a knitting and crochet circle in Yokohama soon after arriving; the membership of this group was approximately two-thirds foreign, and they were extremely welcoming, and generously shared both their crafting expertise and contacts within their social networks. I later found a second group in Tokyo that was open to all fiber crafts—tatting, lacemaking, felting, sewing, weaving, macramé, etc., in addition to knitting and crocheting. This group, although only a minority of its members are foreign, is primarily run by a woman from England, and several of its most active members are foreigners who have lived in Japan for many years, so I chose to include it in my study.

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[27] *Kantō* is the region where Tokyo is located.

[28] Although I attempted to contact the Republicans Abroad group as well, I was unsuccessful—there does not currently appear to be an active chapter in Japan. On the main Republicans Overseas/Abroad website, the URL provided for the Japan chapter links to the website of astrologer Shankar Bhattacharjee, and I could not find any other information or contacts for the organization. I was also unsuccessful at locating any nonpartisan political organizations for foreigners in Japan that were having meetings or events I could attend.

[29] *Taiko*, literally meaning "big drum", are traditional Japanese percussion instruments. Ranging from cooking-pot-sized to large enough for multiple adults to sit in, they are played by an ensemble, although the specific instrumentation is quite flexible. They are commonly played at festivals and cultural events, and are a popular club and community activity throughout Japan.

The food and restaurant exploration group was organized via meetup.com, and had multiple events every week, as any member could set up an outing to any place they were interested in going. Although it was a large group, most of the outings were attended by just a handful of members, depending on the time of day and type of place chosen. I attended an event every couple of weeks, choosing events held at different times of day and a wide range of restaurants, to meet the widest range of the group's members. The craft beer happy hour group meets each Thursday, rotating among a number of regular bars and occasionally checking out a new one when someone found out about one they had not tried before. It is, perhaps unsurprisingly, a largely male group, and most of the members are Westerners in their mid-20s to early 40s who have white-collar jobs outside the English-teaching industry. I was initially introduced to this group via an interviewee, and joined them around half a dozen times over the course of my research period.

I discovered the *taiko* group purely through chance—during the weekend when the annual *Sanja* Festival was being celebrated in the Asakusa neighborhood of Tokyo where I was staying, I spent a lot of time walking around and watching the celebrations. During one of these walks, I encountered a *taiko* group that was taking a break between performances, and that had a number of Westerners among its members. I struck up a conversation with a couple of them to find out a bit about the group, and after I mentioned I had been in a *taiko* group during a previous stint in Japan, they invited me to join their practice the following week. After that, I attended practices semi-regularly for the rest of the time I was living in that neighborhood.

INTERVIEWS

I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a total of 42 Westerners living in Japan.[30] Of those, 34 were living in the greater Tokyo area (22 in Tokyo proper, seven in Kanagawa Prefecture [three in the city of Yokohama], two each in Chiba and Saitama Prefectures, and one in Hachiōji City in western Tokyo Prefecture), two were living in Osaka, and one each was living in the cities of Sapporo, Sendai, Hiroshima and Kagoshima, and in smaller towns and villages in Niigata and Fukushima prefectures.] With one exception, the Tokyo residents were interviewed in person, as was the individual in Sendai and one of the residents of Osaka; the one exception in Tokyo and the people living in the other locations listed above were interviewed via Skype. All interviewees gave their informed consent and completed a consent form at the beginning of the interview—in-person interviewees were provided a paper copy of the form, and Skype interviewees were emailed the form when we scheduled the interview, and returned either a photograph or a scanned version of the signed form when the interview took place. Interviews lasted on average around 1.5 hours, although the length varied considerably depending on how forthcoming the interviewee was and how much detail they chose to share. All interviews were audio-recorded for later review and transcription.

The purpose of these interviews was to gather detailed accounts of Westerners' experiences of life as migrants to Japan, and their perceptions of things such as issues of community and belonging, Japaneseness, and attitudes toward immigration. Interviewees were selected according to the criteria outlined in the section headed

[30] All of the interview documents, including the interview questions, are included as Appendix 1. Detailed demographic information for all participants is contained in Appendix 3.

"Participant Selection Criteria" above. My intention was not to select a statistically representative sample; rather, I simply wanted to select interviewees with enough variety in terms of their backgrounds and characteristics (gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, nationality, occupation, age, length of time in Japan, and so on) to enable me to capture some instructive examples of the variety of experiences Westerners encounter.

Semi-structured interviewing, utilizing a pre-determined interview protocol with both specific and open-ended questions, was utilized to obtain data comparable between participants and provide the flexibility to pursue in-depth explorations of each interviewee's perspective and experiences. I also conducted more casual interviews with the leaders of many of the groups discussed above about their group's activities, membership, and aims. These interviews did not follow a structured interview protocol, and were generally much shorter than the in-depth interviews discussed above, around 20–30 minutes on average. In these interviews, I also did not ask about individuals' personal information, merely about the groups they led, although some did volunteer details regarding their own lives. Two of these group leaders did participate in longer interviews about their personal experiences later, though. Data from these interviews were grouped with my participant observation data, and direct quotations have not been used in this dissertation.

SURVEYS

In addition to data collected in person via participant observation and interviews, I also gathered information via an online survey to broaden both the number of people's experiences I could consider, and the geographical distribution of participants in my

study. I recruited survey respondents in several ways, receiving a total of 168 responses. First, I personally shared the link to the survey with numerous people I met via participant observation activities, or whom I was introduced to by friends/colleagues/interview participants, especially those who indicated that they wanted to help me with my study but did not have the time or desire to participate in an interview. I also asked the leaders of some of the community groups (discussed in detail below) to share a brief message about my study and the survey link with their members. I also asked friends, interviewees, individuals I met during participant observation activities, and anyone else who I thought could be of help to share the link if they indicated that they knew (of) people who might be candidates for my study.[31]

I shared the survey with groups from all five categories listed above, but I did not distribute it evenly among all of the groups. I was particularly selective in circulating the link for my survey among groups in the first three categories: religiously affiliated groups, sports and outdoor activity clubs, and language- and cultural-exchange organizations. I did share my survey with some members of smaller groups within the various religious organizations (e.g., the foreign members of an English-language Bible study group), but I did not share my survey with the entire congregation or entire foreign membership of any church. I decided against doing so because of the size and diversity of these organizations' memberships—the cost-to-benefit ratio of sorting and screening the potentially high volume of responses indicated that my time and energy would be better spent on other research activities.

[31] I did not ask individuals I interviewed to complete the survey, since they had already answered largely the same questions (but in more detail), but if we were not able to schedule an interview, I did ask them to fill out the survey instead. I also asked interviewees to share the link to the survey with their friends and colleagues.

I also chose not to solicit survey responses from most of the sports groups I conducted participant observation in. I had already spoken individually to several of the Western members of the soccer club, and the majority of the remaining foreign-born members did not meet the selection criteria for my study. Likewise, many of the members of the badminton and table tennis club did not fit the criteria for my research. I did send a message with some info about my study and the survey link to the listserv for the walking and hiking group, though, with the leaders' permission, since it was a large group with many Western members.

For the two language-exchange groups, I arranged to have their leaders post an announcement about my study and survey on their sites. In both cases, however, I was told that they regularly had similar requests from other researchers, and that I should therefore not expect a high response rate. Additionally, many of the members of these groups were students, and thus did not meet the definition of immigrant used in this study. In the end, none of the survey responses I received from individuals who could be identified as members of these groups were eligible for inclusion in this study.

I shared my survey link with the foreign members of the *ikebana* and multiple-arts groups in person, when I attended their events. I did not circulate my survey to members of the tea ceremony club; I was not able to ascertain whether most of its members could be considered immigrants under my definition, and of those who I could identify, several did not meet this criterion. Thus, it did not seem like it would be beneficial to my study to solicit responses from this group.

Groups in the final two categories, identity-based groups and those organized around hobbies, were much more fruitful sources of survey respondents. In both categories, I circulated the link to my survey among the members of all of the groups I

observed/participated in, either in person or via posts on the group's website or listserv. I obtained permission from the group's leadership before posting about my survey, and did not post until after I had attended the group's meetings or events to be sure that their membership was a good fit for my study.

The survey was developed based on the data collected during predissertation research, and thus covered many of the same topics that I included in the interviews. In some cases, though, the questions were presented in a more simplified form or asked for fewer details, due to being a written survey. After developing the initial survey, I asked a number of Western friends and former Western coworkers in Japan to read it and highlight anything that was confusing or difficult to answer in written form, and the revised the survey based on their feedback.

The survey was conducted anonymously online. After respondents were presented with an overview of the project's aims and gave their informed consent to participate, they completed the three-part survey: (1) questions to collect basic demographic and background information, (2) a section on their experiences of life in Japan, and (3) a few questions on more abstract issues within Japanese society relating to concepts of Japaneseness and belonging. The survey concluded with a free-response space to allow respondents to provide additional details on anything they felt needed further explanation, or to discuss anything they thought was important that the survey had not touched on.

Although I received a total of 168 responses to my survey, unfortunately, I was not able to easily screen respondents prior to taking the survey, only via their responses to the questions, so of the total, only about half (89) met my selection criteria and were thus usable for the purposes of this study. Of those, 23 (25.8%) lived in the greater

Tokyo area; 37 (41.6%) lived in another city, and the remainder (29; 32.6%) lived in a town or village in a rural area.[32] Of those responses that met my selection criteria, nearly two-thirds (65%) were completed by women, ranging in age from 26–62 years old. The vast majority of survey respondents were white, straight, and married.[33] The largest number of respondents were from the U.S., followed by the U.K., Australia, and Canada; numerous other countries were represented by < 5 respondents. Responses were downloaded in spreadsheet form, and after those from participants who did not meet the selection criteria were removed, the remaining responses were analyzed as detailed below.

DOCUMENT COLLECTION

To examine how foreigner-friendly different areas of Tokyo are, and what the "official" attitude is toward foreign residents, I collected various English-language informational pamphlets and other documents provided for foreign residents by government offices in various cities and wards in Tokyo. These primarily included daily life guidelines (e.g., information on garbage sorting and disposal, advertisements for local-government-sponsored free or low-cost Japanese language classes) and disaster-related information (e.g., disaster preparedness guides and information on shelters, hotlines, and so forth that would be needed in the event of different disasters). In total, I collected 66 daily-life documents and 48 disaster-related documents from eight wards

[32] The questions and instructions from the online survey is included as Appendix 2. Detailed demographic information for all participants is contained in Appendix 3.

[33] This number was somewhat inflated due to my recruiting from group(?) for foreign partners of Japanese people, but in both the Japanese population in general and the foreign population, marriage rates are generally quite high.

and 12 cities throughout the greater Tokyo area. These materials were all digitized, either via scanning or photographing, and analyzed as described below.

In addition to collecting printed documents created and distributed by local governments, I also reviewed the English-language websites of the same city and ward governments. In addition to comparing the daily life and disaster info available there to what they make available in print, I was interested in what else might be available electronically, and how well their foreign- (specifically English-) language websites were designed and maintained; i.e., how informative and useful they were, which I consider as an indicator of attitudes toward foreigners in those locations. I also looked at the Japanese language sections of those websites for any information for foreign residents, Japanese-foreign cultural-exchange programs, foreign cultural festivals, or simply portrayals of foreigners by these government entities. All of this material was also analyzed as described below.

DATA ANALYSIS

I first re-listened to each interview recording, noting the timestamps where topics of interest were discussed. I then partially transcribed the interviews, focusing mainly on verbatim transcription of participants' responses to questions regarding the initial topics of interest, recording only notes with timestamps on other topics discussed for later reference if I needed to do further transcription. After transcription of each interview was completed, while it was still fresh in my mind, I coded the experiences and insights described in the interview text using an inductive approach—identifying the broad categories, or themes, that interviewees' experiences and adaptation strategies were related to, e.g., if they had some bearing on or relationship to their gender,

sexuality, race/ethnicity, nationality, and so on. I also made note of experiences that were shared among many respondents, regardless of their personal identities. After transcription was complete, I collected all of the text in each of these categories, and identified more specific themes, intersections of categories, and other interesting features for further analysis.

After transcription and initial coding were complete, I read through the survey responses and sorted them into those which were useful and those that were not. Many of them simply echoed what interviewees had shared, so while useful for confirmation and support of interviewees' statements, they were not particularly informative on their own. Those survey responses that did provide novel information or insights were coded using the same broad categories, and considered along with the interview texts during later analyses.

My participant observation notes, and field notes, were likewise coded using the broad categories mentioned above, and those excerpts were included in later analyses along with the interview texts and survey responses. The documents collected provided concrete examples of interviewees' descriptions of attitudes and treatment by Japanese officials but were otherwise not helpful. These were thus not analyzed further for this research project.

These interviews, surveys, and participant observations all contributed valuable information to this project. And using this iterative process of analysis for all of my data allowed me to include both rich narrative accounts of individuals' experiences as Western immigrants in Japan and observed community interactions to identify patterns and commonalities in their experiences and backgrounds. The interview and survey responses offered firsthand accounts of individuals' experiences as immigrants, and

their individual understandings of Japanese culture and society, while my own observations and prior experiences in Japan allowed me to incorporate my own perspective as both an anthropologist and a Westerner in Japan.

My own prior experiences in Japan allowed me to understand the things that interviewees and survey respondents shared in a more in-depth and nuanced way. This insider perspective gave me both a good deal of insight into the questions I should ask, and a deep understanding of the experiences they were describing, having experienced many of the same things myself. At the same time, I do have to acknowledge my own inherent limitations—while I have endeavored to apply the best practices of anthropological research to this project, as someone who has lived and worked in Japan and undergone many of both the good and bad experiences raised by participants, I do not have a fully neutral or objective perspective on the issues discussed in this dissertation. This study, however, was not designed to be objective or quantitative; the goal was to develop an in-depth understanding of selected individuals' experiences as immigrants in Japan, a goal that I did succeed in achieving.

CHAPTER 4: INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION & IDENTITY

WHO IS (NOT) A MIGRANT? WHO WAS (NOT) INCLUDED IN CLASSIC STUDIES OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION?

In any discussion relating to migration, it must be determined who, precisely, is considered to be a "migrant", and which migrants are actually being discussed. At its most basic, the verb "migrate" simply means to move from one place to another. But determining what counts as movement, and which movements are significant, quickly becomes complicated.

The United Nations characterizes a migrant as "someone living outside their own country for a year or more" (Koser 2007). In a broader sense, the label of "migrant" can also be applied to any individual that leaves their place of origin to settle in a new location (Berry 1997). It must be noted that in these characterizations, individuals such as students, guest workers, tourists, and diplomats are considered to be sojourners, not migrants, as even if they remain outside of their own country for an extended period of time, they ostensibly have plans to return. This is a key distinction—while many people move from place to place, migration usually refers to *settling* in a new place. And although many people live outside of their places of origin for extended periods, it is best to distinguish those who settle permanently (or at least long-term/indefinitely) from those who move someplace new for a relatively short period of time and then move again—especially if the subsequent movement is planned in advance. Furthermore, as the focus of this dissertation project is on *international* migration, many groups who can be labelled migrants—including nomadic indigenous groups, refugees who are displaced internally within a nation-state by events such as wars or natural disasters, or those who move from rural to urban areas in search of employment or education—are

not included in the migrant category presently under consideration. Likewise, cosmopolitans who move between countries rather than settling in one location are not considered in this study.

Despite their utility in focusing attention on specific groups of international migrants, broad definitions such as those given by Koser and Berry above cover individuals in a wide range of situations. It is therefore useful to further divide the category of "migrants" to allow for more specific classifications. The question of how to divide migrants into categories, though—by motivation for migration, by whether that migration was voluntary, by the legality of the migration, and so forth—has no obvious best or most correct answer.

Economically based theories of migration have been influential in the field since its inception (Massey 1999). These are often termed "push-pull" theories, due to the causal mechanisms they identify behind migrants' motivations. "Push factors", such as unfavorable changes in the home country's demographic, economic, or political situation, are those factors that cause people to choose to leave their place of origin. "Pull factors", in contrast, attract migrants to a particular society; these include things like economic opportunities, political freedoms, or pre-existing social networks (Kivisto & Faist 2010). While proponents such as Borjas (1989) claim that "this approach leads to a clear—and empirically testable—categorization of the types of immigrant flows that arise in a world where individuals search for the 'best' country", critics argue that it is too individualistic, simplistic, and ahistorical, assumes migrants have access to all relevant information, and overlooks important constraints on migration choices such as immigration laws and unequal power dynamics (Bartram 2005; Castles & Miller 2009).

International migrants are often divided using dichotomous pairs of classifications, such as voluntary/forced or legal/illegal. Voluntary migrants are those who chose to migrate without pressure from any outside factors. Forced migrants, by contrast, cannot remain in their current place of residence, due to environmental factors such as natural disaster or conflict. "Legal" migrants are those who possess proper documents and permissions to enter a country and work there; "illegal" migrants are those who enter without documents, use forged documents, or who enter legally but then overstay their visa or work permit.

Those placed in the "voluntary" category are most often labor migrants, further subdivided between temporary and permanent, legal and undocumented (Koser 2007), or low/high-skilled—the latter group having only recently attracted a significant amount of scholarly attention (Koser & Salt 1997). The "forced" classification is applied primarily to those who move for what can be broadly considered political considerations—refugees, asylum seekers, and diasporic populations (Clifford 1994).

It is important to note, however, that these dichotomies are fluid, and often gloss over nuances of migrants' individual situations. There is considerable overlap between the various categories: forced migrants could also frequently be categorized as economic migrants; voluntary migrants also frequently move for political reasons, etc. These strictly dichotomous divisions also obscure the rather blurry reality of migrants' multiple and layered motivations and circumstances (Al-Ali, Black, and Koser 2001). Very few international migrations are completely voluntary *or* involuntary, economic *or* political, etc.

What is more, any strict classification leaves out those who do not fit easily into one single category; static, inflexible categories also do not easily allow consideration of

transitions over time. For example, not included in the categories above are those whose primary motivation for migration could be described as social, such as individuals who migrate to reunite their families, or those who simply want to live elsewhere. Also, excluded are those whose categorizations change over time. Examples of this type of transformation include voluntary or economic migrants who become forced migrants if their home country's government changes and they are unable to return, and economic, voluntary, or legal migrants who overstay their work permit and/or visa and thus become political, involuntary, and illegal migrants (Koser 2007). Binary classifications also obscure and elide the variations within each category. While there is undoubtedly utility for scholars in grouping and labelling migrants based on shared criteria, there is a danger in opting for too-broad or -uniform generalizations instead of grappling with the nuance and complexity of lived human experience (Cohen & Sirkeci 2011).

Out of such critiques were born more holistic and systemic approaches to conceptualizing migration in many social science disciplines (Tilly & Brown 1967; Brettell 2000). Migration studies were also expanded to include a wider range of sending and receiving countries, and migrants' communities (including those who remain behind) as well as individual migrants (Lee et al. 2014). And migration scholars began to question the use of the nation-state as the default unit of analysis, including expanded analyses focusing on regional, supranational, and global phenomena (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2003). While analysis of economic conditions is important, and can provide valuable insights, migration is best studied as a *process*, in which many other factors (political, cultural, etc.) play important, and dynamic, roles. Thus, it is

best to study migration as a complex set of interrelated phenomena, for which there can never be a single cause (Kearney 1986; Kivisto & Faist 2010).

The following two examples illustrate the potential pitfalls of the earlier approach. The Filipina mothers doing domestic work in Los Angeles and Rome described by Parreñas (2001) and the Western English teachers in Japan in McConnell's (2000) work can both be classified as voluntary labor migrants, but their motivations and post-migration experiences have little in common. The former, although voluntarily choosing to go abroad for better employment opportunities, are often doing so out of severe economic necessity and extremely constrained options at home; many of the latter group seek employment abroad to facilitate the pursuit of new experiences, leaving behind many equal—or better—employment possibilities to pursue personal desires and goals. Also, many migrants (e.g., Ong 1999, Tsuda 2003b, Leichtman 2005, Fechter 2007, Favell 2008) cannot be fully placed in just one of these stringent, exacting classifications—and can arguably fall outside the definition of migrants altogether, depending on which definition is selected.

ASSIMILATION THEORY

ASSIMILATION THEORY: THE CLASSIC MODEL FOR MIGRATION STUDIES

Immigration, especially when large numbers of obviously different people arrive in a short amount of time, often leads to significant social change and strong reactions from the population already living in the location. Once the government of a nation-state has given certain migrants permission to enter the country and remain there (or once migrants have entered without permission), it is necessary for the long-time residents and the newcomers to find ways to adapt to each other. This process of

adaptation occurs at both the societal and individual levels; in this section we tackle the former.

The nation-state in its modern form has been conceptualized to varying degrees as a homogeneous social unit as well as a political entity (Anderson 2003[1986]). While often not reflecting the actual reality of a nation's composition, in countries with national identities framed around shared ethnic or cultural origin such constructions of identity have had a strong impact on both immigration policy and social attitudes toward migrants (Kivisto & Faist 2010). Incorporation of newcomers thus becomes a fraught process, in which there can be a great deal of tension between the desire to avoid changes to the national identity and the need to integrate them to avoid inequality or conflict.

Although the process of assimilation has been conceptualized and studied in many different ways across different disciplines (Alba & Nee 1997), a common theme has been the idea of the "melting pot"—that all migrants eventually "melt" (assimilate) into the dominant society, differences eradicated, while having little or no effect on the receiving society (Rumbaut 1999). It was defined by Park and Burgess (1969[1921]) as "a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life", a definition that remained largely unchanged for decades. They further stated that establishing primary, intimate social contacts, such as family relations, is necessary for the process of assimilation to be completed. In a later work, Park (1930) states that immigrants to the United States are considered fully assimilated once they have

acquired the language skills and knowledge of social customs necessary to participate in daily life without encountering prejudice or discrimination (Park 1930).

Assimilation was long assumed to be the default mode for immigrants to adapt to their new homes—and was frequently the sole possibility recognized. The classic assimilation model conceptualizes the process as a linear and inevitable progression, with migrants gradually improving their language and occupational skills, absorbing the new culture's values and shedding those of their original culture (Gordon 1964; Kivisto & Faist 2010). In this model, migrants' assimilation into the dominant culture of the new location was believed to be both unavoidable and preferable (Alba & Nee 1997) and it was assumed that all immigrant groups would fully assimilate over time, following the same progression. This idea has been criticized for assuming that the process of cultural change was exclusively one-sided, with migrants always discarding their original cultural practices and values in favor of those of the dominant culture in their new home (Rumbaut 2001), and having no effect on the society or culture in the new location (Mintz 1998). It has also been critiqued for conceiving of both the majority and minority groups' cultures as monolithic entities (Alba & Nee 1997).

But this view of assimilation as an unavoidable, inexorable and unidirectional process has long since been discarded (e.g., Glazer 1993; Alba & Nee 1997; Rumbaut 1999). Recently, opponents of the older model of assimilation have argued that for assimilation to occur, the migrant group must seek out a high level of daily interaction and identification with the majority group, while also de-emphasizing maintenance of their own distinct cultural identity; these two processes, however, rarely occur at the same time or in the same way. Migrants' processes of adaptation also depend on many factors over which they have no control or influence—structural factors, differential

access to resources, availability of networks, and so forth often determine to a large part the degree of flexibility and freedom migrants have for making choices (Gold 2001).

Assimilation is therefore generally viewed now as a much more piecemeal process, where changes in different domains of life occur at very different rates, and different individuals and groups move through the process at different rates and to different degrees (and end up at very different points) (e.g., Portes & Zhou 1993; Zhou 1997) and have widely varying degrees of agency and control in shaping how the process proceeds (e.g., Magat 1999; Bloemraad 2006; Hand 2006; Bhatia & Ram 2009). It is also recognized that different migrant groups have diverse, and sometimes quite significant, effects on the cultures and societies they settle in (for example, compare the migrant groups discussed in Ong [1999], Leichtman [2005], and Mandel [2008]).

There is often a question of whether the established population will want, and allow, newcomers to assimilate (e.g., Silverstein 2005; Entzinger 2006; Vertovec & Wessendorf 2010). But, as is the case in this study, assimilation is not always even seen as an option. In the case of Westerners in Japan, by definition of the society they have immigrated to, they *cannot* fully assimilate.[34] In such situations, the entire understanding of "assimilation" has to be questioned—what does it even mean to assimilate when any efforts the migrant makes to learn the language, culture, history, and so forth is not (and never will be) seen as being "enough"? Is it even possible to do so, and if so, how can that be achieved? Relatedly, what are the implications of a migrant population that does not wish to fully assimilate *or* remain isolated, for both that population and for the field of migration studies?

[34] This is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

MULTICULTURALISM: A BETTER MODEL?

In recent decades, the thinking on migrant incorporation has shifted from an automatic assumption of assimilation to a more nuanced view that is more accepting of diversity. The use of the term "multiculturalism" with its current definition dates to the early 1970s, when the Canadian government began using it to describe policies that were "intended to promote tolerance and respect… while simultaneously advancing the idea of a shared national project" (Kivisto & Faist 2010). It was intentionally developed to serve as an alternative to the assimilationist model. Although many nations have adopted a multicultural outlook in the creation of migration policy and social services, to date only Canada and Australia have officially included a multicultural approach in their constitutions (Kivisto & Faist 2010).

The idea of multiculturalism is best represented with the metaphor of a mosaic, rather than a melting pot. In this imagining, the "national portrait" is comprised of many distinct tiles, which together form the image of the nation (Vertovec 2007). The Canadian Parliament's objectives in developing a multiculturalist stance, as laid out in their summary report, explain the general idea of a multicultural society quite well: "(1) to help cultural groups preserve and nurture their identities, (2) to overcome barriers to full societal inclusion, (3) to facilitate intercultural exchanges, and (4) to prepare immigrants to succeed in Canada" (Kivisto & Faist 2010). Australian multiculturalism developed these ideas further, embedding the idea of diversity into the core of the national identity, shifting the conception of that identity from static and fixed in the prior status quo to dynamic and focused on the future (Entzinger 2006).

Multiculturalism as an approach to dealing with cultural and ethnic diversity is by no means uncontroversial. It has been argued that multiculturalist approaches are

divisive, and rather than bringing diverse populations together into a cohesive mosaic in fact represent the "ghettoization of marginalized populations" (Silverstein 2005). Multiculturalism has thus lost favor in many nations, especially in light of post-9/11 concerns about security and national unity (Vertovec & Wessendorf 2010). In many cases this loss of favor for multiculturalism has resulted in the reemergence (or emergence of new forms) of nationalism and renewed interest in the idea of facilitating immigrants' cultural assimilation (Entzinger 2006). Scholars, too, have begun seeking alternatives to multiculturalism.

LIMINALITY & MIGRATION

Migration, by definition, requires geographical separation from an individual's location of origin, which often result in psychological and social distance from their family and friends. Thus, migrants often find themselves in a liminal state, "betwixt and between" (Turner 1969), not quite belonging in either home or host societies. This type of social un-rootedness is disorienting and stressful; thus, migrants strive to create spaces though which they can find some sense of belonging and thus re-root themselves in the place they have chosen to settle (Ethier and Deaux 1994). These efforts, however, are constrained by structural, economic, and social obstacles that restrict the possible strategies available to migrants, and the effectiveness of the strategies they are able to employ (Smith 2005).

In countries like Japan where it is difficult for immigrants to fully integrate into Japanese society, many newcomers find themselves in a permanent liminal state (Tsuda 2003a). Unlike many migrant groups, most Westerners move to Japan out of personal

interest, and have the means to leave anytime. Thus, their decisions to remain in Japan represent a choice to remain in a liminal state.

In such cases, whether by desire of an individual migrant or migrant community, reluctance of the host society to truly incorporate outsiders, or both, migrants must find a way to be(come) comfortable living in limbo, so to speak. They can either basically ignore the host society and simply live in a foreigners' bubble, as it were, or they can create a niche for themselves in the in-between space, partly inside the host society (where possible and desirable) and partly outside (where desirable or necessary). In the case of Westerners in Japan, the former option is usually preferred by so-called "expats", those Western foreigners living there more short-term (e.g., there for a fixed period with a multinational corporation, diplomatic staff), who tend to socialize largely within their own foreigner community. In contrast, *gaijin* choose the latter path, residing in Japan permanently, or at least longer-term without a definite return date, and integrating at least somewhat into the social fabric in their local area or neighborhood.[35]

There is a recent, and still-growing, movement in studies of migration toward viewing migrants as active, engaged participants in a process whose choices shape their own outcomes (e.g., Boekestijn 1988; Ewing 1990; Cuba & Hummon 1993; Ethier & Deaux 1994; Magat 1999; Kibria 2000; Phinney et al. 2001; Sanders 2002; Ong 2003; Schwartz et al. 2006; Gordon 2008). While migrants cannot control every factor that

[35] The distinction I make between "expats" and "*gaijin*" is not really recognized by Japanese people. Of course, they are aware of the differences between different groups of foreigners—that some are in the country temporarily through jobs with a multinational corporation or foreign government, that others stay longer and work in different jobs—but all Westerners are generally just *gaijin* to Japanese society. I include this distinction because the group I focused on in this research are *gaijin* as defined by Westerners, those who are not in Japan temporarily or who do not interact with the Japanese community they live in.

affects their lives, their decisions can have tremendous impacts within the confines of both societal and structural constraints and the vagaries of their own personal circumstances. Studies of these issues conclude that migrants' efforts to create such spaces reflect the struggle between the structural, economic, and social barriers that they face (Rosaldo 2003) and the need to resolve the liminal state and create fulfilling lives for themselves (Oliver 2011).

In addition to being isolating and disorienting, migration is a highly gendered process (Donato et al. 2006), and people of different genders (as well as races, ethnicities, classes, ages, sexualities, and so forth) can experience highly diverse outcomes even in similar circumstances, which reflect and are reflected in the ways we conceptualize and investigate the effects of migration (Morokvasic 1984; Kofman 1999; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003). I see the consideration of gender and sexuality as vital components of my project, not merely as categories of variables or labels, but as factors that have had a fundamental effect on shaping the experiences of the migrants who participated in this research. Many scholars (e.g., Mahler & Pessar 2006) have argued that there is much more to gender than just "adding women" or considering women's roles and experiences in opposition to men's. This study is designed to incorporate this "advice" and to examine the intersections between various personal characteristics (gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, etc.) and migrants' experiences and processes of adaptation; to not only identify *how* different individuals' migration experiences differ, but *why* those differences occur. How are the choices they make and strategies they employ informed by their personal characteristics and the constraints they experience because of these?

For all that cultural and social belonging and acceptance are crucial for migrants' successful adaptation and wellbeing (Boekestijn 1988; Ethier & Deaux 1994; Berry 1997; Sanders 2002) attaining legal and political status is also very important (Ewing 1990; Phinney et al. 2001; Schwartz et al. 2006), which is why I see issues of citizenship and migration policy as being closely related to other aspects of belongingness. In many cases, migrants' ability and desire to adapt is partly shaped by their legal status—whether they are able to envision themselves having a stable and secure status in the new location for the long term (and thus whether they see the expenditure of time and effort needed to adapt as being worth it), and whether they feel that these efforts are or will be rewarded. The two (legal citizenship and social/cultural adaptation) are thus mutually reinforcing—attaining citizenship (or seeing it as a viable option) encourages adaptation, and the commitment to the new location that is necessary to be willing to put forth the efforts necessary for successful adaptation often fosters the pursuit of citizenship (or other semi-equivalent statuses such as permanent residency permits).

CITIZENSHIP

In the case of modern nation-states, the most basic questions in relation to migration are (1) who should be allowed to enter, (2) under what terms are they permitted to enter, and (3) what will their status be while they are in the country? These questions are answered by each nation's immigration policies and laws, which determine the criteria for entry and for citizenship and various categories of legal residence (Kivisto & Faist 2010).

Modern nation-states are politico-legal entities, with the power to require citizens and residents to obey laws, and are the sole arbiters of who can claim the legal status of

"citizen" (Faist 2007). Citizenship affords holders with both rights and duties (e.g., voting and paying taxes, respectively), and serves as one way to define who are "insiders" and "outsiders" in a given polity (Bloemraad 2006). In classical citizenship theory, ideals of citizenship were premised on the idea of individuals who belonged, or held citizenship in, only one nation-state. Migration was thus viewed as a process of transferring one's loyalty from one state to another, relinquishing the rights and duties of the old one and taking up those of the new (Torpey 2007; Castles & Miller 2009).

This view, however, is no longer the dominant one among scholars of migration—one effect of increasing globalization and transnational activity in the last few decades is a dramatic increase in the number of people who hold dual, multiple, or nested (e.g. national and EU) citizenships, and consequently changing understandings of whether and how these overlapping memberships pose challenges to the rights and duties of citizens, as well as to state sovereignty and individuals' loyalties (Ong 1999, 2003; Kivisto & Faist 2010). This has also coincided with an expansion of our understandings of citizenship, to include a broader range of social and cultural components in considerations of the links between the people(s) and the polity of a nation (Kivisto 2007).

MIGRATION & IDENTITY

DEFINING IDENTITY: PERSONAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL, ETHNIC

What is usually called a person's "identity" is, in fact, a synthesis of personal, social, and cultural self-conceptions, which intersect and overlap in complex and highly individual ways. As defined by Schwartz et al. (2006), identity is "the organization of self-understandings that define one's 'place in the world'". An individual defines their

identity both from their own internal viewpoint—that which they attribute to themselves—and through how others perceive them and act toward them—that which is ascribed to them by external sources (Vertovec 2001). A person's identity also incorporates their past experiences as the foundation for their future actions and self-determinations (Ethier & Deaux 1994). Accordingly, it can be said that while the process of identity formation is never completed, a fundamental characteristic of identity is its *continuity* for a given individual. Although individuals present themselves in varying ways depending on the situation, and are perceived by others differently at various times as well, they retain a central, consistent concept of self and identity (Ethier and Deaux 1994). This continuity of identity means that each new experience is incorporated into the individual's overall sense of self, maintaining connections between that person's past and their stable core identity as they move toward and react to each new situation (Weinreich 2003).

Identity serves as a bridge between an individual and the society they live in. The culture of the society a person lives in, and the community(ies) they belong to within that culture, determine what practices are acceptable; individuals in turn adapt and reorganize those accepted practices according to their own past experiences to form their identities (Ewing 1990; Hand 2006). The identity that an individual claims for themselves, and how strongly that individual identifies with a given group or society, therefore depend on the context in which that individual is located. Individuals are continually buffeted by cues from the various situations that they pass through; these cues serve to emphasize or de-emphasize certain facets of their self-conception, making certain individual or community identities more or less salient than others at any given time (Ethier and Deaux 1994).

An individual's identity has numerous functions. It serves as a mechanism for that individual to understand who they are and how they fit into the larger social and cultural world, providing meaning and structure through associated values and beliefs, and giving consistency and coherence to their interpretation of their everyday experiences (Schwartz et al. 2006). Any given individual's overall identity also encompasses multiple facets. Those aspects of identity most relevant to discussions of migration include personal, social, cultural, and ethnic identities.

People often perceive their own personal identity as being distinct from the collective identity of the group(s) they are a part of. In fact, though, the two are closely interrelated; developing a fully formed personal identity depends vitally on sharing a collective identity with others (Boekestijn 1988). An individual's personal identity is comprised of the goals, values, and beliefs that that individual holds, which reflect the cultural and social groups to which that individual belongs (Schwartz et al. 2006).

Social identity, in turn, refers, not to an individual's personal characteristics, but to the ways in which they identify with the groups they consider themselves to belong to. Thus, social identities encompass the ideals, mores, labels, beliefs, and conventions that a given group asserts as its own, and are shaped and supported by the networks of social relationships among group members (Ethier & Deaux 1994). The strength of these identities therefore reflect both the extent of that individual's desire to be seen as a member of a particular group, and their desire to distance themselves from other groups (Schwartz et al. 2006). Social identities include cultural and ethnic identities, as well as identities derived from specific workplaces, hobbies, and so forth. Cultural identity specifically references an individual's sense of solidarity with the ideals, attitudes, and behaviors manifested by a particular *cultural* group. (Boekestijn 1988).

Ethnic identity is derived from an individual's identification with a particular ethnic group or groups. Barth (1969) notes that ethnicity is an ascribed label, conferred by both oneself and others, that is a composite of various characteristics of an individual and the social group(s) to which they belong. An individual's ethnic identity is thus constructed based on that individual's sense of self in specifically ethnic terms—in terms of membership in a subgroup within the larger society that claims a common ancestry and shares one or more elements such as customs, values and beliefs, race, religion, language, kinship, or place of origin (Eriksen 2010[1994]). Often, ethnic groups also share non-cultural features, such as commonalities in physical characteristics of appearance, and emotional ties based on shared history or life experiences (Min 1999). Due to this, ethnic identity is particularly malleable and situational, and shifts according to those characteristics that are most salient in a particular set of circumstances (Barth 1969; Eriksen 2010[1994]). Ethnic identity, then, can be defined as "the subjective meaning of one's ethnicity and the feelings that one maintains toward one's ethnic group" (Schwartz et al. 2006).

Migration places a great deal of strain on the identities that an individual has constructed for themselves prior to migrating, and makes ethnic and cultural differences salient in ways that are not possible in the more homogeneous location of origin (Duderija 2007). Mortland (1994) argued, in her study of Cambodian Khmer refugees in the United States, that the experience of migration itself served to create ethnicity because it "forces a group to see 'difference', to see 'others'". This is echoed by Hall (1991), who states that "though I suppose 98 per cent of the Jamaican population is either Black or colored in one way or another, [before coming to the U.S.] I had never ever heard anybody either call themselves, or refer to anybody else, as 'Black'". These

changes in the way that a person views themselves, and the social and cultural groups to which they belong, call into question the beliefs and practices that were taken for granted in the prior location (Ammermann 2003). As a result of these changes in their external context(s), migrants experience a great deal of pressure to adapt the way they conceptualize their place in the world, and their relationships within that world—their identity (Schwartz et al. 2006).

THE PROCESS OF ACCULTURATION

Upon migration to a new location, migrants experience a process known as acculturation (Berry 1997). The classic definition of acculturation was put forth by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits in 1936: acculturation "comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous firsthand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (as cited in Gordon 1964). Gibson (2001) similarly, but more straightforwardly, defines acculturation as "the process of cultural change and adaptation that occurs when individuals from different cultures come into contact" (Gibson 2001). When applied to migrant groups, as opposed to non-immigrant ethnic groups, acculturation refers to adaptation along two dimensions: adoption of ideals and behaviors of the newly encountered culture, and retention of values, beliefs, and traditions from the culture of origin (Phinney et al. 2001).

It can be argued that there are similarities in the process of acculturation for all migrants, although there are significant variations in the ways that different groups approach adapting to the new location. These differences are rooted in the group's original cultural background and experiences, and the degree to which their original

culture differs from that of the new location (Bhatia and Ram 2001). There are four ways in which migrants can approach the process of acculturation: marginalization, separation, assimilation, and integration (Berry 1997; Phinney et al. 2001). Which of these a particular group adopts depends on two factors—how strongly they value preservation of their distinct cultural identity and characteristics, and how much they wish to become involved with the dominant cultural group in the new location or avoid such involvement (Berry 1997). The choices they make during this process have dramatic, and often lifelong, consequences on their identities, and thus on their wellbeing and quality of life.

The first approach, marginalization, reflects both a low desire to maintain one's original culture and to become involved with the newly introduced culture. Strict marginalization is not common, and migrants generally do not voluntarily pursue marginalization. It is often the result of enforced culture loss combined with exclusion or discrimination. Separation occurs when a group values maintenance of their original culture highly, and avoids interactions with other groups. This approach is also uncommon. If this option is forced on a group, rather than voluntarily chosen, it is referred to as segregation rather than separation (Berry 1997; Phinney et al. 2001).

The assimilation model of acculturation, discussed in detail earlier in this chapter, conceptualizes the process as a linear progression, with migrants gradually improving their language and occupational skills, absorbing the new society's cultural values and shedding those of their original culture (Edmonston and Passel 1994). As Mortland (1994) notes, adapting to the new cultural context requires lengthy, ongoing negotiations, exploring the new situation and crafting acceptable responses to it, all the

while tacking back and forth between old and new attitudes and behaviors. I will not be discussing assimilation further here, since it was covered thoroughly above.

Currently, integration is viewed as the most adaptive mode of acculturation, and the most conducive to migrants' maintenance of psychological and social wellbeing (Phinney et al. 2001). Berry defines integration as retention of one's original cultural or ethnic identity, while at the same time identifying and frequently interacting with other cultural group(s) in the new location (Berry 1997). Bernard (1967) notes that integration also implies that all cultural groups involved in the integration process are affected by contact with the others; with the resulting whole being greater than the sum of the original parts (Bernard 1967). This is only possible, however, in a society that places value on cultural diversity and displays relatively low levels of prejudice and discrimination against minority groups, and where all groups have a sense of attachment to, or identification with, the society as a whole (Berry 1997).

In her study of Iranian migrants living in southern California, Hoffman (1989) demonstrates precisely this non-linear, dualistic form of integration. Hoffman argues that English-language proficiency is not correlated at all with acquisition of American cultural identity. The Iranian migrants clearly distinguished between achieving linguistic proficiency in pursuit of education and employment, and a deeper level of commitment to American values and cultural identity (Hoffman 1989). A similar pattern was observed by Leichtman (2005) among Lebanese living in Senegal. While individuals did incorporate the idea of being Senegalese, or African, into their overall personal and cultural identities (Leichtman 2005), they emphasized that integration meant that the Lebanese retained the right "to be an ethnic group like the other ethnic

groups in Senegal" (Leichtman 2005), rather than requiring that they completely assimilate into Senegalese society.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE ACCULTURATION PROCESS

Many factors influence the ways in which migrants adapt to the culture of their new place of residence. Personal characteristics, such as gender, age, and level of education, cause individuals from the same cultural background to react to new circumstances in different ways (Berry 1997). However, many researchers have argued that the original culture of an individual, or group, strongly influences how they react in the new situation (Barth 1969, Hoffman 1989, Magat 1999, Sanders 2002, and many others). In particular, Sanders (2002) states that each group reacts to the environment around them according to their cultural traditions, and that different groups will react in very different ways when confronted with the same circumstances.

Three personal factors in particular are known to influence the ease with which acculturation progresses: an individual's gender, age, and level of education. Women are often at high risk for developing problems after migrating. This appears to result from the dramatic shift in social roles that many women experience, in comparison with the less drastic change that affects men (Berry 1997). Very young children often transition smoothly to a new environment, perhaps because their original culture is not yet completely wedded to their identity. Adolescents and the elderly often encounter more problems with this transition; the former, because their identity is already undergoing extensive development and change during that period of their lives, and the latter because they have such a long experience within the original cultural context to reconcile with that of the new location (Berry 1997).

For adults between adolescence and old age, problems with acculturation occur most often when they have extremely negative or positive feelings toward the migration. A negative attitude often results from forced migration; individuals who feel negatively toward their migration or toward life in the new location often have low expectations regarding the new situation, and a low desire to adapt to the changes brought about by the relocation. A positive attitude, although generally beneficial, can also be detrimental to smooth acculturation if it produces extremely intense or unrealistic expectations for life in the new location (Berry 1997).

Education, either completed before emigration or begun after arrival, is consistently linked with ease of transition, and higher levels of educational achievement are predictive of lower levels of stress and fewer problems with adaptation to the new environment. Education is itself a resource, with highly educated individuals displaying greater skills in analysis and problem solving. Education also correlates to protective factors such as higher income, occupational status, and support networks. Furthermore, education begun in the new location may also serve as an extra source of information about the features and norms of the new society, helping migrants to become attuned to the new culture more quickly (Berry 1997).

In addition to personal characteristics, the biggest factor in successful adaptation following migration to a new country is the development of close relationships, either friendships or romantic relationships, with individuals in the new location. These types of relationships form the basis of identification with the new country, and provide migrants with the feeling of being accepted in the place they are now living (Boekestijn 1988). The assimilation model specified that primary social ties, such as marriage, must be formed with members of the dominant cultural group for acculturation to be

completed (Gordon 1964). Acquiring the necessary sense of acceptance in the new place of residence, however, depends only on the closeness of the relationships that are developed, instead of who they are formed with. Thus, connections established with members of one's own ethnic group, members of other minority groups, or members of the dominant culture of the new country can all serve this function. Close relationships with those who share the same ethnic background, however, are necessary for the preservation of ethnic identity (Boekestijn 1988).

BELONGING & CONCEPTS OF "HOME"

Belonging is a feeling, one that people can experience in a multitude of different ways (Oliver 2011). Simply put, belonging is the result of a process whereby a person develops a feeling of association, identification, or solidarity with a group. It can be useful to think of "belongingness" as a sense of congruence between an individual's various identities and the collective identity, values, aims, beliefs, etc. of a group (Jones & Krzyżanowski 2008)—a sense of being-at-home-ness and comfort with who a person perceives themselves to be in a particular place or space (Cuba & Hummon 1993). Belongingness can be derived from formal membership, but it is also often derived from smaller, more casual, and more mundane sources, the simple day-to-day activities and situations in which attachments are formed and identities are reinforced (Gordon 2008; Jones & Krzyżanowski 2008). Belonging is also frequently a fluid process, in which immediate situational circumstances rather than any fixed individual or societal characteristics determine whether one "fits in" (Mandel 2008).

An individual's sense of belonging is often rooted in interactions and relationships between themselves other people. So "whilst geographies change… the

shared space of interrelations that inform our rootedness and connectedness move with us" (Oliver 2011). It follows, then, that belongingness is frequently related to the acts of recognizing and remembering. We feel that we belong in places we recognize as familiar, or comfortable, and which are connected to significant memories; we also feel a sense of belongingness in places where *we* are recognized and remembered by *others* (Oliver 2011). If someone is denied recognition by those who already belong to the group one wants to belong to (whether casually, such as being ignored during the meeting of a social group, or formally, as in being denied a visa or citizenship), it is difficult if not impossible to develop a true sense of belonging (Jones & Krzyżanowski 2008).

The concepts of "belonging" and "home" are closely related. "Home" is, at its most basic, a place where someone belongs (Gordon 2008), and is often a marker of both personal and collective identities (Oliver 2011); but all of the places an individual belongs are not necessarily "homes". So, when does belongingness translate into being-at-home-ness?

As previously mentioned, the concept of "home" is specifically linked to a place; this can be a single dwelling, a city, a nation, or even a metaphorical place such as a family group, company, or other organization (Gordon 2008). In some cases, as with belongingness in general, home is a place that is linked to daily routines, and relocating those routines can serve as a method of re-creating a sense of being-at-home for migrants (Jones & Krzyżanowski 2008). In others, home is marked by the people who are there (Cuba & Hummon 1993; Magat 1999), or the presence of meaningful objects (Gordon 2008), or even simply the development of familiarity over time (Ahmed et al. 2003).

It is important to note that "home" is not necessarily a fixed place, nor is it always a single place. Some people identify "home" as their homeland, their place of origin, or some other stable location that remains unchanged despite migration. In many circumstances, however, "home" is created, and recreated, many times throughout a person's life, a process referred to as "homing" (Ahmed et al. 2003). Many people who create new homes for themselves continue to identify with prior homes as well, either with equivalent meanings or by thinking of them with varying or hierarchical degrees of permanence (Gordon 2008). This viewpoint challenges the idea that migration automatically results in a feeling of homelessness for migrants: although moving frequently disrupts people's sense of home, it is common for that disruption to be followed by a period of reprocessing of meanings and regrounding of the sense of home in some aspect of the new situation or location (Cuba & Hummon 1993). This is demonstrated by the fact that scholars studying a wide variety of migrants found that, although their methods and patterns vary, the vast majority do find a sense of both belonging and being-at-home in their new location (e.g., Cuba & Hummon 1993; Magat 1999; Ahmed et al. 2003).

IMPACTS OF ACCULTURATION ON IDENTITY

The process of acculturation is begun by contact with another cultural group. This contact often makes one's identity more salient, or conspicuous, that in the previous context (Ethier and Deaux 1994; Phinney et al. 2001). Other shifts in circumstances, such as entering an interethnic marriage or moving from one phase of one's life cycle to another, can also serve to increase the salience of one's identity (Ethier and Deaux 1994; Refsing 1998). This increased salience, combined with the change in

external context, often causes and individual to feel that their previous identity no longer "fits". This is due to the discrepancy between the collective identity on which the identity was originally based, and the identity of the group in the new context that one must now fit into (Refsing 1998).

Boekestijn (1988) refers to the problems encountered by migrants during the acculturation process as the "immigrants' dilemma…the inherent tension between sociocultural adaptation and the preservation of identity, [in which] [t]he wish to be accepted is counteracted by the wish not to deny cherished beliefs and values" (Boekestijn 1988). The degree of tension experienced will be proportional to the amount of difference between the old and new cultures (Boekestijn 1988). In the United States, migrants from East Asian countries such as Japan and Korea experience a high degree of this tension between the culture of their former and current country of residence, and the extremely homogeneous nature of the culture of origin (Min 1999).

With this change in context, the ways that a person previously sustained their identity are no longer available. In this situation, individuals must find ways to reinterpret their identity in the context of the new place of residence, and alter the methods used to maintain that identity in the new location (Schwartz et al. 2006). This requires a process of disconnecting or deterritorializing one's identity from the former location, as well as de-linking one's self-conception from the group that one belonged to in that location. The individual then forms new connections between their identity and the new environment, developing new bases of social support to maintain the necessary stable sense of personal identity. Ethier and Deaux (1994) dub this process of forming new connections to support one's identity "remooring". In so doing, migrants often increase the strength of their connection to their group's ethnic and social identity, as

that group's values and attitudes become more tightly entwined with the individual's personal identity (Ethier and Deaux 1994). This "remooring" process is especially characteristic of identities based on characteristics such as ethnicity that are not directly tied to specific role relationships (Ethier and Deaux 1994).

MIGRATION STUDIES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Despite recognizing that migration has been a constant in human history and experience, anthropologists gave little attention to the study of migration until the middle of the 20th century, due to the cultural theories and style of fieldwork common in the discipline at that time. This changed as anthropologists began doing more studies in urban areas, particularly as they more fully investigated experiences of rural-to-urban migrants and interactions between urban ethnic populations (Brettell 2000). This contributed to a change in the field of migration studies more broadly, as anthropologists (along with other social scientists, particularly sociologists) embraced more network-centric models of migration, in contrast to the individualistic push-pull models popular previously (Brettell 2000; Kivisto & Faist 2010).

Anthropological studies of migration have a number of distinctive features. Anthropological investigations of migration tend to be less focused on quantitative questions, such as the numbers of migrants moving between particular locations, instead emphasizing the effects of migration on sending and receiving communities (Mintz 1998). Anthropologists also generally focus on more micro- and meso-level approaches to the study of migration; combined with the discipline's emphasis on long-term, emplaced, extensive, in-depth fieldwork and interests in questions of culture, this

leads many anthropologists to focus on migrants' lived experiences and questions of identity and belonging (Foner 2005; Prato 2009).

Within the field of migration studies, anthropologists have contributed to several areas in particular. First, anthropologists such as Nina Glick Schiller and her colleagues were heavily involved in the development of theories of transnationalism (Glick Schiller et al. 1995; Brettell 2000). Anthropologists have also been active in studying the changes in concepts of citizenship, especially ideas of cosmopolitanism and (transnational, flexible, cultural, etc.) citizenship (Kearney 1995, Ong 2003). Additionally, anthropologists have been deeply engaged in examinations of multiculturalism in various contexts, and in exploring other related consequences of late-20th-and-early-21st-century trends in globalization (Vertovec 2007; Prato 2009). And finally, anthropologists have been involved in theorizing about relationships between migration and gender (Mahler & Pessar 2006).

WESTERNERS IN JAPAN: LACK OF INDIVIDUALITY & IDENTITY INSTABILITY

Much like people in Western countries who claim that all Asians, Black people, etc. look alike, many Japanese pay attention to only the most basic features of Western immigrants' appearances when in public—if they are male or female, Black or white, unusually tall/short or over/underweight, or have some other highly noticeable characteristic, such as having full-arm sleeve tattoos. This, participants claimed, affords them a kind of "invisibility cloak" (Tommy) as they go about their daily lives: they are noticed, because foreigners still stick out in Japan, even in Tokyo, but they are not noticed *as individuals*. They are "just another *gaijin*" (Steve, Orla), or perhaps "just another Black *gaijin*" (Josh) or "just another fat *gaijin* woman" (Laurel) if the observer

is paying particular attention—still not individuals, just *gaijin* with some feature different enough from the average to be momentarily noticeable. As Alice heartbreakingly put it, "I'm not Japanese, just another indistinguishable *baka gaijin*[36]... sometimes I'm not sure I'm even seen as a human being at all". Outside of their own neighborhood (and sometimes even in their own neighborhood), Westerners can fade into the background even while standing out in the crowd.

And while this has positive effects for immigrants, it also has its downsides. The biggest problem is the strain that not being seen as an individual puts on someone's psyche. As Orla put it,

> *Some days, I don't feel completely human here. Having people make the batsu sign*[37] *as I approach, say 'No Ingurisshu!' before I have the chance to open my mouth and show that I can speak Japanese—or worse, if I'm speaking Japanese and they literally can't hear it because the words are coming out of my distinctly-non-Japanese face—these kinds of things really wear you down at times. I often feel like I'm being treated by shop clerks, JR staff, etc., as an amalgamation of all of the foreigners they've previously encountered, and it doesn't even matter how I act or what I do, they won't treat me as an individual person.*

This is also an issue that many Westerners encountered as English teachers in Japan. In both the public JET Programme and private English-teaching companies (e.g., AEON, ECC, Gaba, GEOS, Interac, Berlitz, NOVA), turnover is high. Each JET participant stays in their job three years at most; private companies' employees are

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[36] バカ外人 (*baka gaijin*), meaning "stupid foreigner", is a relatively mild phrase used in a dismissive and derogatory manner when complaining about foreigners in Japan. Foreigners also use it to discuss other foreigners, when describing how someone else is behaving badly, giving foreigners a bad name, being oblivious or insensitive to Japanese norms, etc.

[37] In Japan, making an X with your forearms held up in front of you is called *batsu*, which carries a negative meaning. It can be used to show that something is not allowed, that something has not worked out, or that something is incorrect. The opposite is *maru*, a circle made with either your hands or your arms, but this is not used as frequently as *batsu* since a) there are not as many times when you need to communicate an affirmative for someone's behavior or result, and b) there are other gestures that have been adopted from outside Japan, such as the thumbs-up and the "ok" sign made with the thumb and index finger in a circle and the other three fingers extended.

transferred by the company or at their own request even more frequently, often after only a few months or a year.

Because of the rapid, constant turnover in these jobs, many of the Japanese permanent employees do not treat the teachers as individuals, just as the current version of the Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) or Assistant English Teacher assigned to their school. This leads to experiences like Edmund's, where he was introduced in the assembly to open his first trimester at a school as "our school's new Matt"—his predecessor's name— and was addressed as "Matt" by many of his students and colleagues for nearly all of his first year in his JET posting, despite Matt being a shortish, stocky, Latino American man, and Edward being a tall, lanky, blond Englishman. In a slight variation, Jeremy/025 was referred to as just "*ALT-san*" (Mr. ALT) by most of the teachers he worked with for his 2 years with Interac. And Gemma received a goodbye card from her coworkers after 1.5 years with Gaba in which her name was misspelled in two different ways. I was also often referred to by my predecessor's name, Claire, during my time as a JET ALT, frequently at first, but still occasionally even after 2 years there; my successor Katy later told me that she was similarly addressed as "Jessica" during much of the time she was at that school.

Another significant consequence of non-Japanese–looking immigrants being treated as a monolithic entity is that when someone does distinguish themselves in some way, often by remaining in Japan a long time, gaining a high level of fluency in Japanese, and/or becoming highly knowledgeable about or skilled in some aspect of Japanese history or culture, they can find themselves being treated worse than when they knew very little Japanese and almost nothing about Japan. Some, like Millie, have had it "made very clear to [her] that [she] was tolerated, but not fully accepted" as a

member of Japanese society, being asked at least a handful of times each year by her neighbors when she is "going home" despite having lived in the same house for decades, being married to a Japanese man, and raising their Japanese children. Others, like Diana, said that the longer they live in Japan, the more pressure there is to behave "properly," since she "should know by now that things are done *like this* here in Japan" (emphasis Diana's).

Diana illustrated this pattern with two experiences from work. When she was a new hire with only a low-intermediate level of Japanese language skill, she made a gaffe when speaking at a staff meeting (confusing *suwaru*, "to sit", with *sawaru*, "to touch"); afterwards, her supervisor told her not to worry about it at all, he was just glad she was trying to speak Japanese. Years later, when she had become fully fluent in Japanese, Diana made a similar gaffe out of exhaustion after her infant daughter had kept her up all night (confusing *okosu*, "to wake someone up", with *okasu*, "to violate someone"). As before, it was obvious what word she meant, and it did not cause any confusion or delay her coworkers' discussion. This time, though, her supervisor criticized her harshly for making such a "stupid" mistake, and embarrassing their team in front of the rest of the department, saying that since she had studied Japanese so much, she "should know the difference in those two words by now." When she filed an HR complaint, it was dismissed, because "he was only trying to help [her] learn how Japanese company culture functions, and help [her] improve her Japanese skills." She said that incident made her realize just how often she was expected to meet the standards of "insiders"—native Japanese people—while at the same time being kept outside, "always a *gaijin*, always not quite good enough, not quite Japanese enough, even though I'm simultaneously not allowed to become Japanese."

Sometimes, though, immigrants experience more hurtful treatment than being called by the wrong name or being pointedly tolerated instead of accepted. Nearly all interviewees of color shared a story of being treated, in one way or another, "as a curiosity, just something there for the entertainment or amusement of Japanese people" (Christopher). For Aisha, this most often takes the form of people pulling on her hijab, or trying to lift it to look at her hair. She said that while this type of "unaware and dehumanizing curiosity" is preferable to the anti-Arab/anti-Muslim discrimination and xenophobia she has experienced at home, it is still upsetting when it happens. To her, these actions make even less sense than those of people who pull off women's hijabs as a protest against Muslim immigrants—"after all, it isn't acceptable in Japan for strangers to touch others' clothes, and a lot of people have gotten in trouble for things like up-skirt photos." She just could not fathom how famously polite Japanese people could see lifting a woman's hijab as different than lifting her skirt.

> *I mean, both are obviously covering things people don't want to show in public. And most Japanese people at least have a little bit of idea that my hijab has something to do with my religion. I only can guess that they don't think I'm a person with the same rights as them, or that they think their curiosity is more important than my comfort…. But even so, who removes a stranger's clothing in public?! Even if it is "just" a scarf, and not a blouse or skirt, how can they justify that in their own minds?*

For all of the Black people who participated in my study, the experience of being treated as an object of curiosity is most frequently connected to their hair (or at least, this is the aspect they notice most often). They reported people often touch their hair, "almost petting me like I was a dog or cat or something" (Josh), or tug on locs/braids "like they don't believe they're actually attached to my scalp!" (Christopher). This is, unfortunately, not an "only-in-Japan" experience, but they did report that it is much more frequent in Japan. They also said that people rarely begin a conversation before

they go for their hair in Japan, where in the U.S., non-Black people usually make a comment about how their hair is "interesting," "cool," "looks soft," etc., or ask about how their style was done, before touching their hair without permission.

Another, very Japan-specific experience shared by nearly all participants was having parts of their bodies grabbed, poked, or judgmentally commented on[38] when visiting an *onsen* or *sentō*.[39] It is common to visit *onsen* with family, friends, and even work colleagues. Many workplaces hold end of year/beginning of year parties and other celebrations at *onsen* hotels or complexes, and hotels or inns with *onsen* are popular vacation spots. Many female participants specifically mentioned having their breasts grabbed or squeezed by other women, both colleagues and strangers, while using an *onsen*—especially those who are larger than average. Some women also shared tales of (usually elderly) women or young children commenting bluntly and negatively/critically about their weight, tanned skin, freckles, or other physical characteristics, often assuming that foreign *onsen*-goers do not understand Japanese.

> *My friends took me to Atami for a weekend trip, and while we were there I had an old woman walkup to me in the onsen and poke me in the breast and stomach and then go back to where her friends were sitting and tell them how "squishy" I was! I couldn't believe it, so I just stood there in shock and didn't respond. A few months later, I went to a sentō spa with a colleague to destress after a long week at work, and two older women spent at least five minutes discussing how ugly my freckles were, and how they couldn't understand why gaijin allowed themselves to get so much sun exposure. (And I don't even get that much sun—I wear sunscreen every day, carry a parasol, etc.—it's just genetic!) That second time, I had time to figure out how to react, and so I began a conversation*

[38] It is not uncommon in Japan to comment on such things as weight gain/loss, bad haircuts, sloppy dressing, etc., but it is generally done to people you know—family members, coworkers, friends, and so on, not strangers (at least not in their hearing/spoken directly to them).

[39] An *onsen* is a hot spring public bath, usually with separate sections for male and female patrons, although young children can go into either section with their parents. They are located throughout Japan, operated by both public and private entities, and are quite popular with all ages. *Sentō* are similar, albeit more utilitarian, bathhouses, primarily located in more urban areas. *Onsen* are fed by natural hot springs, while *sentō* use water heated by a boiler.

> *[in Japanese] with my colleague about where to eat after we left the spa in slightly-louder-than-usual voices… those two women couldn't grab their towels and get out of there fast enough! (Thérèse)*

Correspondingly, many men reported having their chests/stomachs poked and genitals grabbed by strangers, and hearing the same types of negative comments about their appearance (weight, freckles, tattoos, etc.) as women. Andy said that "from what I've seen, Asian guys aren't really physically different than white guys—you know the rumors?—but some of them really seem to believe it, which has led to several awkward *onsen* encounters over the years." Josh also described some unpleasant experiences in *onsen*, which he enjoys and visits regularly despite the awkward and annoying situations he has encountered. He said that

> *…it's a stereotype, that has some truth in it to be fair, that gaijin are bigger—taller, heavier, higher nose, whatever—than Japanese people, and I'm on the heavy side even for gaijin guys, being a gym guy who's 180 cm and around 100 kilos. So I'm not surprised that I catch people's attention sometimes. But I've been surprised how blunt, and frankly cruel, some people have been, talking about how "disgusting" my body is because I'm so much bigger than the Japanese average, and saying that my chest looks weird because they think my pecs looked like female breasts.*

Gavin shared the most extreme example of this type of dehumanizing experience of all my participants:

> *I used to hate the bōnenkai and shin'nenkai[40] at my former company. They always had overnight dos at an onsen resort hotel, which included a group bathe on arrival, another sometime after dinner, and usually one before leaving the next morning too. Japanese people are pretty quick to comment on other people's bodies, and they're usually pretty blunt about it too. So I got my fair share of ribbing when I put on a few kilos, and when my hair started going…. But this was different. There was this old git who'd been in our department forever, one of those madogiwazoku,[41]*

[40] End-of-the-year and beginning-of-the-year parties, respectively.

[41] *Madogiwazoku*, literally "the tribe by the window", is the term used for employees who are no longer needed or useful, but who cannot be fired. It indicates that they have been given a seat by a window, out of the way, and are given little or no work to do until they either quit or reach retirement age.

who kept trying to grab me dangly bits every time I went in the onsen—and because he watched to see when I was going to go in, that happened a lot. I didn't feel right avoiding the onsen at these parties, as it was a big part of departmental bonding for the year, and I definitely couldn't skip the parties entirely, and I didn't want to, either. So I just had to fend the bastard off as best I could without disturbing the wa….[42]

ANONYMITY & THE FISHBOWL LIFE

One of the most common irritations was what many interviewees referred to as the "fishbowl feeling"—as though you were living in a giant fishbowl, with people peering in from all directions all the time. This experience is generally more prevalent in rural areas, although it is encountered in cities as well. As described by Payam, a current Tokyo resident who had previously lived in a small town in southern Kyūshū, the "fishbowl feeling" is the feeling you get when, "by what is said, or unsaid, it becomes clear that your life's a source of great interest and close observation by neighbors or coworkers." Others described it as "never getting to share my own news—everyone always already knows what I've been doing" (female survey respondent, Osaka city), and "the sense that everyone in your neighborhood always pays just a little bit more attention to your comings and goings, who you have over, when they leave, etc." (male survey respondent, Ojiya City, Niigata Prefecture).

This "fishbowl feeling" is a phenomenon that I am personally quite familiar with, having lived in a small town in rural Niigata Prefecture in 2003–2004. I was one of only

[42] *Wa* means "harmony", "peace", or "contentment". The phrase "disturb the *wa*" is often used by English-speaking foreigners to describe actions that disrupt, or could disrupt, the atmosphere of a given social space/situation. For example, in an office setting, doing something disruptive or distracting (e.g. eating smelly food at your desk, shouting at a coworker, putting your feet up on your desk and clipping your toenails) would be felt to disturb the wa—the busy, professional atmosphere of the office—and thus to be a transgression of your colleagues' work environment. Similarly, getting angry with or harassing a coworker during a work party would disturb the wa, or relaxed and convivial ambiance, of the party.

two foreigners living in that town—the other was a Filipina woman who had married a Japanese man—so it was not surprising to me that I stood out when I was out in public. From the time I arrived, it seemed like everyone knew who I was, and many people in both Horinouchi, the town where I lived, and the surrounding towns where I taught (e.g., a grocery store cashier in Yunotani Village, a bicycle store mechanic in Koide Town, an elderly woman tending to the flowers at the local shrine in Irihirose Village) greeted me by name the first time we met.

The most surprising and unsettling "fishbowl" moment, though, occurred as a result of a video rental. After work on a late-winter Friday, during my first year of living there, I borrowed a movie from a video store near Irihirose Junior High, located about 22 km north of Horinouchi (approximately 45 minutes' drive on the narrow, winding mountain roads in that area). On Monday morning, when I got to work at Yunotani Junior High (around 6 km south, or a 20 minutes' drive, from Horinouchi), a small group of students asked me if I had enjoyed *The Pirates of the Caribbean*. Until that point, although I had known that my neighbors and coworkers paid attention to my life and activities, I had not realized that that went for the entire larger community—I had assumed that I was more of an anonymous "just another *gaijin*" outside of the town I lived in and my workplaces. This experience, in particular, made me much more circumspect when engaging in certain activities anywhere in the entire area around where I was living, and probably saved me from a not-insignificant amount of nosiness and judgment that I might otherwise have experienced!

To a certain degree this phenomenon occurs in rural areas and small towns the world over, of course. In Japan, though, it seems to be unusually common in large cities too. And as multiple interviewees who had lived in places other than their home

countries and Japan made clear, there is also a specifically Japanese aspect to the "fishbowl" phenomenon. Ruth, a German woman who spent several years in New York and Hong Kong before coming to Japan, described it most clearly when she said that:

> *It's more the length of time it goes on, and maintains that intensity, rather than just that the neighbors are curious about or paying extra attention to the new kid on the block. In New York, the first time I ran into other people living in my building at the mailboxes or so, they recognized that I was new there and most said hello or asked me a couple questions. But after I'd encountered someone a couple of times, they didn't seem to notice me more than anyone else—maybe even less than some others, since I'm a white European. In Hong Kong, my neighbors and coworkers were very curious about me at first, but after I'd been there a couple months and they'd gotten to know me, know the basics about me, and I'd shown that I wasn't a crazy person, or someone who does lots of interesting or unusual things, I was mostly ignored, or treated (as far as I could tell) pretty much like just another neighbor/coworker. In Japan, though, I've been here almost two years, and my neighbors seem just as curious as the day I arrived! And many of them don't seem to remember anything about me—they ask me where I'm from, how long I'm staying, if I have a boyfriend, and so on every time they talk to me. I feel pretty much fully accepted in the neighborhood, but they'll never let me be just another neighbor….*

I heard well over a dozen stories of people's actions being monitored by neighbors, even in large cities—neighbors asking about recent guests, expressing concern over having worked too late for many days in a row, or lecturing about garbage disposal regulations and procedures.

In fact, garbage-related incidents were the most commonly mentioned issue when the topic of overly curious or interfering neighbors was discussed. Nearly a quarter of interviewees and survey respondents complained about having rules they already knew explained to them while putting out their garbage or recycling, or being told their garbage or recycling was sorted or bagged wrong when in fact it was correct, sometimes even after living in the same neighborhood for years. Several had also been

assumed to be the cause of bad behavior perpetrated by others, because "of course the neighbors assumed that it was the *gaijin* who screwed up when sorting their garbage, it's not possible that it was anyone else" (Jenny/017). In nine cases, participants had had "helpful" neighbors "return" a bag of someone else's garbage to them. Eight of these people had not, in fact, put out the mis-sorted trash; the ninth had put out incorrectly sorted trash once when they first moved to the neighborhood, and thereafter regularly had other people's incorrectly sorted garbage returned to them.[43]

COMING TO TERMS WITH BOTH THE PROS AND THE CONS

Between the fishbowl life and lack of individual identity they regularly experience, often simultaneously, many participants reported either a period of despondency, bitterness, exasperation, and/or trepidation regarding their lives in Japan well beyond what would be considered the "culture shock" period; a period of trying very hard to be recognized as an individual, putting great effort and creativity into this goal with uniformly mixed results; or both. While the anonymity of being just another Western foreigner can make life easier at times, the lack of recognition of their

[43] To be fair, regulations for sorting and disposal of garbage and recyclables are a very big deal in Japan, especially in cities, and can truly be quite confusing for newcomers. Due to its geography, Japan has limited space for waste management methods such as landfills that are common elsewhere; incineration and recycling are the main methods used there. Every city or town, or ward in big cities, has its own rules and classifications, and these can differ from one another considerably. In general, the categories for garbage are burnable (e.g. paper, food scraps, fabric, some plastics), non-burnable (e.g. aerosol cans, dishes), oversized (e.g. appliances, furniture, bicycles), and recyclables (e.g. metal cans, glass bottles, plastic (PET) bottles). However, each location defines these categories differently—for instance, some places burn paper, and others recycle some types of paper, and in some places, a hair dryer or iron would be oversized garbage that would require special disposal arrangements, but in others appliances smaller than a microwave would just be regular non-burnable garbage—and some can use more, highly granular, categories (e.g. separating glass by color instead of grouping it all in a single category). In addition, the locations and schedules for disposal and pickup vary widely, from being able to put trash into a dumpster at any time, to having to put each type of trash in a separate location during a specific window of time (e.g. glass bottles in location A on the second Tuesday of the month, burnable garbage in location B every Thursday between 10 PM – 8 AM, and so on). This means that careful attention must be paid when learning a new system. See [Figure #] for an example of the garbage sorting & disposal rules for [location(s)].

individuality can also cause a great deal of distress. Choosing to live in Japan long-term means accepting both sides of the coin, and finding a way to take advantage of the opportunities these provide while avoiding, mitigating, and/or managing the worst negative effects of *gaijin* life.

CHAPTER 5: CONCEPTUALIZATION OF JAPANESENESS & IMMIGRATION IN JAPAN

The concept of "Japaneseness", like the conceptualization of any modern nation-state's identity, is a complex construction that includes wide array of factors; each identity is also shaped by the specific culture and history of the people(s) that comprise the nation-state. In the case of Japan, the identity of Japaneseness is an ethnoracial concept that fuses cultural, biological, political, and historical characteristics to distinguish the differences between "us" (Japanese) and "them" (not-Japanese) (McVeigh 2004). Through this fusion, "Japanese" becomes an essentialized identity in which "racial, ethnic, and national categories rather vaguely overlap" in Japanese perceptions of themselves (Yoshino 1998).

To comprehend the growing tension between the definition of Japan's national identity, based on racial and ethnic homogeneity, and the growing pressure to implement more genuine policies and practices of multiculturalism, one has only to examine the history of immigration into Japan from the end of the Second World War to the present. The portrayals of Japan since WWII as an ethnically, culturally, and racially homogeneous nation were reinforced by the small size of the foreign population (which only reached 1% of the total population of Japan in the early 1990s) and the fact that the majority of this population was of pre-war Chinese/Taiwanese and Korean origin. Most of these pre-war immigrants used Japanese names in public life, spoke only Japanese in public (or at all), and were not visibly distinguishable from the native Japanese population. Indigenous minority ethnic groups are similarly invisible from casual or superficial observation. This is due to their Northeast Asian origins, shared with the majority Japanese population, and their long history of intermixing with the

majority Japanese and subsequent loss or dwindling of their own languages and distinct cultural traditions. The fiction of racially and ethnically homogeneous Japan was thus not significantly challenged until the late 1970s, when visibly foreign immigrants began arriving in larger numbers (Kashiwazaki 2000).

JAPANESENESS: CONCEPT, IDENTITY, DISCOURSE

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE JAPANESE?

Often described as an ideology of cultural nationalism, as mentioned above Japaneseness is a compound ethnoracial ideology that includes cultural, biological, political, and historical characteristics to define who does, and does not, qualify to be labelled Japanese (McVeigh 2004; Creighton 2009). In other words, to be recognized to possess Japaneseness, to claim the label Japanese, an individual must look, sound, and act like "we Japanese" are supposed to.

Of particular interest is the racial or biological component of this concept, in which kinship, religion, culture/language, and biology are combined into the idiom of "Japanese blood". The origins of this phrase stem from the Meiji-era[44] notion of Japan as a family-nation, imagined to be an isolated, interrelated extended kin group, with the emperor as the "father" or head of the "family" (Yoshino 1998). This idiom, often described as an ideology of cultural nationalism, emphasizes the dichotomy of Japanese and not-Japanese, promoting the idea that Japaneseness is conferred by sharing in this unique lineage (Creighton 2009). The possession of Japanese blood is used to identify who is and is not allowed to belong to the group of "we Japanese"—who has the ability to fully comprehend Japanese culture, speak Japanese, and behave according to

[44] The Meiji era lasted from 1868 to 1912.

Japanese norms. Without being acknowledged to possess Japanese blood, it is difficult for an individual to claim the identity of Japanese or membership in "us" (Doak 2007).

Saying that to claim the label "Japanese", an individual must look, sound, and act like "we Japanese", though, highlights the circular logic inherent in much *Nihonjinron*[45] discourse: being "Japanese", or being accepted as belonging in Japan, means having the ability to conduct oneself appropriately according to Japanese cultural norms; but an individual is only thought to be capable of learning to behave properly if they already possess the other characteristics of Japaneseness. This is supported by the idea, derived from the system of organization for traditional family groups, that while a person can belong to many different groups, they have the right to membership in only one of any set of competing groups (Dore 1999[1958]; Brown 1966). Therefore, if one is Japanese, one cannot be not-Japanese, and vice versa; these are mutually exclusive groups, and it is seen as impossible to move between them or belong to both.

There are numerous cases that could be used to challenge this statement. For example, someone might question whether the descendants of pre-WWII Korean and Chinese immigrants, whose families have now been in Japan for generations, and who (being born and raised in Japan) are fully culturally and linguistically indistinguishable from Japanese people, might contradict this point. And being of East Asian origin, most are also visually indistinguishable from native Japanese people. Thus, on an everyday basis, they are not treated as *gaijin*, and people may assume they are "just" Japanese.

Nevertheless, I argue that they are still in the not-Japanese category for three reasons. First, in many cases these individuals' names, especially family

[45] *Nihon*=Japan, *jin*=people, *ron*=discourse, treatise, essay, doctrine, theory

names/surnames, still hint at their Korean or Chinese origins.[46] Next, these people are still legally registered as "special permanent residents", counted as foreign residents in things like the census, and must go through the naturalization process to obtain Japanese citizenship just like someone who was born abroad and moved to Japan only a few years earlier. And finally, because their legal status (special permanent resident or naturalized Japanese citizen whose family immigrated from elsewhere) is still included in their own, and therefore their family's, government records—registration of residence with the local government office, their official family register, and so on—while future generations may eventually be seen as just Japanese if the family intermarries with native Japanese partners, they themselves are never able to fully lose their (family's) connection to foreignness and be accepted as just Japanese.

Another example that could be argued to disprove the mutual exclusivity of the Japanese/not-Japanese categories is the South American *Nikkeijin* discussed in Chapter 2. These are people of Japanese descent whose families emigrated from Japan many decades ago. But, being second-, third-, fourth-generation Brazilian-Japanese (or Peruvian-Japanese or Bolivian-Japanese, etc.), they often have much stronger ties to the

[46] For example, Kim (金) is the most common surname in Korea, and often becomes Kaneko (金子) when people with this name naturalize in Japan. Similarly, other common Korean and Chinese names like Yi/Li (李, 伊) or An (安, 案) are combined with a commonly used component of Japanese names, such as the word for wisteria (*fuji*, 藤) to make names like Itou (伊藤, 委藤) and Andou (安藤, 案藤). Other common examples are Pak/Park (朴), the character for which is often separated into its component parts and becomes Kinoshita (木下), and Im/Lim (林) and Yu (柳), which are simply used as-is with their Japanese pronunciations, Hayashi and Yanagi. In all of these examples, the Japanese versions are common surnames in Japan, so many of the people with those names are not of foreign origin; still, this practice is known, and people with such names are sometimes subject to a bit of extra scrutiny for possible Korean or Chinese ancestry.

culture of the country they were born in than to Japanese culture, and many (especially in later generations) speak Portuguese or Spanish as their first (or only) language.

When policymakers decided to recruit these *Nikkeijin* to "return" to Japan as a way to solve labor shortages, they assumed that because they were of Japanese descent, they would be Japanese, meaning that that the officials believed that they would have the linguistic and cultural competence of a native-born Japanese person. When larger numbers of *Nikkeijin* began arriving in Japan, however, it quickly became apparent that this was not the case. In fact, many of these immigrants experienced high levels of discrimination and harassment because they had Japanese names and faces but did not speak Japanese as a native-born person would (if they even spoke Japanese at all) and did not know or (care to) adhere to Japanese cultural and behavioral norms. This caused a great deal of tension and conflict between the Japanese public, government officials, and the immigrants themselves. Although things have improved in recent years, and very few people now expect that these South American-born immigrants will be fully Japanese, this was quite a significant issue for decades precisely because these immigrants were not Japanese.

Underpinning this conceptualization of Japaneseness is the belief in, or myth of, Japanese racial, cultural, and ethnic homogeneity (Befu 2001). This homogeneity, though, is considered to be an illusion or myth by many scholars (e.g., Moeran 1993; Yoshino 1998; Befu 2001; Iida 2002; Kowner 2002; & Wilson 2002). Japan has never been truly homogeneous by any definition—for example, there are two significant indigenous minority groups in Japan, the Ainu in Hokkaidō and the Ryūkyūans in Okinawa, both of whose arrival in the territory of the modern Japanese nation-state predates that of the current majority, called the Yamato, who are considered as THE

Japanese people in these homogeneity arguments (Björklund 2008). The myth of Japanese homogeneity and uniqueness also ignores the long history of immigration into Japan, as well as intra-Japanese differences in class, language, religion, etc. (Kowner 2002).

Nevertheless, both popular and academic discourse have perpetuated (and continue to perpetuate) the idea of Japan as an ethnically and racially homogeneous society (McVeigh 2004). And any significant shift in the composition or culture of the population of Japan would, in the eyes of many Japanese, mean that an identifiable "Japan" no longer existed. Recently, though, the presence of increasing numbers of foreign- or not-Japanese-looking migrants who speak and read Japanese fluently and naturally, as well as returnees of Japanese descent who behave and speak in ways that are considered not-Japanese, have begun challenging this concept of Japaneseness in which culture, politics, and biology are linked (Kowner 2002).

NATION, RACE, CULTURE, & IDENTITY

Because of the way that various components are woven together to create the identity of any group or individual member of a group, the national and individual conceptions of identity are very much intertwined (Murphy-Shigematsu 2000). The process of creating a "self" is thus "completely interdependent with the beliefs, values, and meaning systems embodied in particular sociocultural environments" (Cross 2000).

The Japanese sense of self is often described as relational, situational, socially defined, and context-dependent (Bachnik 1991). This is frequently contrasted with the self-concept of individuals in Western societies, which is viewed as independently derived, stable, and transcending social contexts (Cross 2000). While the actual

identities of both Japanese and Westerners are more nuanced than this black-and-white dichotomy of "relational" vs. "independent" implies, the differences are instructive when considering the meanings of Japaneseness and their significance for non-Japanese individuals residing in Japan.

Inherent in the Japanese concept of socially defined selves is the idea of *movement*, or the ability to shift between varying modes of behavior and self-presentation in different social contexts. Performing these shifts fluidly, and selecting the appropriate communication and interaction styles for any given situation, "is a crucial social skill for Japanese, and a paramount requirement to function as an adult" (Bachnik 1991). Hence, for foreign migrants to Japan, or even Japanese who have lived outside Japan for a significant period of time, the lack of knowledge of these behavior norms, or lack of skill in performing required shifts, can cause them to be seen as less than capable adults, and signifies that they are not seen as being, or having the capability to become, fully functional people (Bachnik 1991).

The connection between the modern politico-legal nation-state of Japan and the Japanese people, however, takes a different shape than in many other nations. For example, (speaking in terms of ideals not specific cases) the American national ethos includes an explicit acceptance of the possibility that non-Americans can become Americans, and that becoming American does not require any specific racial or ethnic background, linguistic competence, or cultural knowledge—one's "Americanness" is not determined by physical appearance, or diminished by one's parents having been born elsewhere. Similarly, demographic shifts in the population of the United States may bring changes to American values or culture, but the subsequent population would be no less American for all the changes, because the national conception of American identity

encompasses all people who identify as Americans, rather than setting cultural or ethnic prerequisites for claiming Americanness. Citizenship and identification with the country, rather than language, culture, or biology, determine who is American.

In contrast, without possessing the linguistic, cultural, and biological markers that comprise Japaneseness, factors such as citizenship, self-identification, or residence in Japan have little impact on the perceived authenticity of individuals' claims of Japaneseness. While it is possible, legally speaking, for non-Japanese to become Japanese, meaning that they can obtain Japanese citizenship, there is no corresponding belief that they have the ability to acquire the cultural and social knowledge necessary to claim Japaneseness—much less the biological or descent-based component of Japanese blood. Despite this, the requirements regarding language skill and cultural understanding for foreigners wishing to acquire Japanese citizenship are extremely stringent. Furthermore, dual citizenship is prohibited for all adults; those wishing to naturalize to Japanese citizenship must give up their original nationality altogether. These factors do not allow for any substantial form of multiple ethnic or cultural identities, either for foreign immigrants or children whose parent is of non-Japanese origin (Kajita 1998).

NIHONJINRON: THE DISCOURSE OF JAPANESENESS

The conflation of ethnic, racial, cultural, and other factors into this concept of Japaneseness has led to the production of a body of work referred to as *Nihonjinron* (or *Nihonbunkaron*[47]). Most commonly translated as "theories of Japanese people/culture/society", *Nihonjinron* is a large, and varied, body of both academic and

[47] *bunka*=culture, civilization

popular work that attempts to identify and explain the uniqueness of particular characteristics of Japan's culture, society, and national character (Revell 1997; Yoshino 1998; Kowner 2002). It is at times both critical of, and laudatory toward, Japanese culture and society (McVeigh 2004), but always relies heavily on the notion of a presumed Japanese "ethnic essence" preserved in the purity and homogeneity of Japanese blood (Befu 2001).

The discipline of anthropology unfortunately played a significant role in shaping the development of *Nihonjinron* writings in the post-WWII era. This influence can be traced directly to Ruth Benedict's (1969[1946]) framing in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (Moeran 1993; Hendry 1996; Robertson 1998; Ryang 2002), which presented Japanese society as a monolithic, knowable entity and played a significant role in establishing and perpetuating an influential, if erroneous, conception of Japanese society as ethnically and racially homogeneous (Linhart 1994). As discussed above, in the first decades after the end of WWII, anthropological studies of Japan were largely concerned with exploring the structure of Japanese society via "village studies", classic-style ethnographic studies in which a single rural community was studied as a microcosm or representation of the society as a whole (van Bremen 1986; Sofue 1992). Many of these studies, or at least their findings, were incorporated into the thinking and writings of *Nihonjinron* theorists, forming the basis of the social scientific branch of the discourse (Ölschleger 1996).

In subsequent decades, as both Japanese and non-Japanese anthropologists worked to break down this monolithic, homogeneous view of Japanese society, seeking to differentiate and expand our knowledge of different groups and experiences in Japanese society, and break down the myth that Japan is an ethnically, racially,

linguistically, and culturally homogenous nation (Moeran 1993; Befu 2001). These developments led to a larger number of studies located in urban communities, greater attention being given to individual actors and their experiences, and investigations of a much broader range of topics, including questions of gender, class, marginalization, agency, and conflicts within society, as well as subject areas such as the anthropology of work, education, medicine, and tourism (Kelly 1991; Moeran 1993; Eades 2000). Other current topics of particular interest in Japanese studies include Japan's position in the economically and culturally globalized 21st century world, especially negotiation of the tension between tradition and social changes that have resulted from this increasing internationalization and globalization (Robertson 1998; Steinhoff 2007). These developments, in turn, generated a significant level of criticism of *Nihonjinron* theories and works, as scholars in social sciences disciplines moved further and further from the homogeneous, ahistorical, and "uniquely unique" view of Japan advocated by many *Nihonjinron* writers (Iida 2002; Goodman 2008[2005]).

While *Nihonjinron* is by no means only a postwar phenomenon, it experienced dramatic (and sustained) growth in the years following WWII, and coalesced into stronger and more identifiable patterns. Aoki (1999) classified *Nihonjinron* discourse into four stages:

> (I) 1945 to ~1954: primarily concerned with reflecting on Japanese militarism and WWII-era aggressions, *Nihonjinron* writers in this period ascribed a "negative uniqueness" to Japanese society
>
> (II) ~1955 to ~1964: focus shifted to historical relativism and ostensibly objective comparisons between Japanese and Western culture

(III) ~1965 to ~1984: characterized by a reversal from negativity to positivity due to Japanese economic prosperity and political stability, affirming the uniqueness and superiority of Japanese culture and society

(IV) ~1985 to ~1999: defined by focus on internationalization (*kokusaika*, covered in the section headed "The Past: *Kokusaika*" below) and a balance between the negative and positive branches of *Nihonjinron* discourse[48]

GLOBALIZATION & JAPANESENESS

Although it is difficult to separate the movement and effects of *ideas* around the globe from the movement of *people* and the effects of their movements, I will attempt to do so here because both the introduction of foreign ideas and of foreign people have had significant effects on Japanese society and its understandings of Japaneseness.

Japanese culture has long been discussed in opposition to other cultures, most notably "the West" and "Asia" (often implying *East* Asia or even specifically China) (McVeigh 2004). While *Nihonjinron* writings seek to identify unique characteristics of Japanese culture as discussed above, they are frequently doing so through a contrast with one of these other cultural groups. In many cases a dichotomy of Japan and the other culture(s) is created, which then serves to emphasize Japanese uniqueness and difference (Yoshino 1998, Kowner 2002). Some of these works advocate shifting toward the identified norm, and others argue for preserving the unique characteristics.

It is noteworthy that while *Nihonjinron* writings do work to demonstrate Japanese uniqueness, that characterization of uniqueness takes an unexpected and

[48] It can be argued that it is now possible to identify a fifth stage, beginning with the global economic situation in the mid-late 2000s, which has taken a more negative tone than in the previous decades due to economic problems, rapid political turnover, and the 3/11 earthquake/tsunami/nuclear triple disaster. However, a complete evaluation of this most recent period has not yet been published.

thought-provoking form. While articulating the difference between "we Japanese" and the rest of the not-Japanese world (usually "the West"), this difference is often characterized as "*our*" difference, not "theirs" (Yoshino 1998). That is, many *Nihonjinron* authors are positioning Japanese culture/society as the Other, on the periphery of the standard "them", and Japaneseness is situated as a collection of particularistic exceptions to "their" universal norm.

Beginning in the 1970s, however, there was a marked increase in the volume and variety of publications that could be classified as *Nihonjinron*. *Nihonjinron* writings were increasingly produced by elites (academics, businessmen, politicians) for popular consumption as well as for other elites (Kowner 2002). The Japanese government itself participated in the production and dissemination of *Nihonjinron* materials, financing the creation of English translations of *Nihonjinron* classics for distribution abroad (McVeigh 2004).

In this period, a core of *Nihonjinron* literature coalesced into a "hegemonic ideology" (Kowner 2002), increasingly produced by elites (academics, businessmen, politicians) for popular consumption. Indeed, Japanese businesses played a significant role in the production, and dissemination, of *Nihonjinron* writings, especially during and after the "bubble years" when Japanese businesses and businesspeople experienced widespread global expansion and integration. Via publications produced for their own employees and others (both foreign and Japanese) in the business arena, Japanese businesses played a significant role in the growth of familiarity with *Nihonjinron* claims and ideas outside of academic circles both within and outside Japan. In particular, these publications included "cross-cultural manuals", such as English-language learning materials and handbooks on Japanese and foreign management practices, and were

often intended to help Japanese businesspeople apply these theories of Japanese uniqueness and difference to practical issues related to rapidly globalizing industries and intercultural communication (Yoshino 1998). Other similar publications were created to help foreign business partners understand Japanese culture and Japanese business practices, and especially (until the economic bubble burst in 1991) as a resource for foreign businesspeople eager to implement Japanese management styles in their companies (Yoshino 1998). The Japanese government has also participated in the production and dissemination of *Nihonjinron* materials, financing the creation of English translations of *Nihonjinron* classics for distribution abroad (McVeigh 2004).

One thing about *Nihonjinron* that is fascinating to me is how it represents both inward and outward globalization, in that it is both aiming to discuss how Japan is changing due to the influences of and encounters with foreign ideas and aimed at informing non-Japanese people about Japan. Many types of *Nihonjinron*, such as the cross-cultural manuals mentioned above, are written both for a domestic audience, to help with understanding foreign cultures and foreign influences in Japan, and for foreign audiences, both popular and academic, with the goal of explaining various aspects of Japanese culture—business, popular culture, language, history, etc.

CRITIQUES OF NIHONJINRON

Analyses of *Nihonjinron* have identified an immense number and variety of works that can be considered to fall into this category. Topics covered in *Nihonjinron* works include linguistics, biology, history, economics, sociology, psychology, anthropology, neurophysiology, religion, geography, and ecology, among others. *Nihonjinron* writings have been presented in both academic and popular media,

including academic press books and journals, newspapers, television and radio programs, advertising, and even tabloids (Revell 1997; McVeigh 2004; Goodman 2008[2005]). Taken as a whole, these writings show little consistency in terms of methodologies, theoretical approaches, or topical concerns; rather, it is a catch-all discourse driven by moral and emotional motivations to explain Japan and Japanese identity (Iida 2002). Revell (1997) argues that this diversity in topics and media indicates that *Nihonjinron* is not, in fact, a single, identifiable body of work. This, however, is a minority viewpoint; most scholars, me included, agree that *Nihonjinron* is a distinct phenomenon, even if they disagree on whether a specific work belongs in the category.

While many *Nihonjinron* writings are popular and widely known, and there are some useful and well-supported insights into Japanese society and culture that can be drawn from the more academic *Nihonjinron* publications, this body of work has also drawn numerous criticisms. These can generally be divided into two groups: the way that *Nihonjinron* literature identifies and characterizes Japanese/not-Japanese differences, and the things that are overlooked by or left out of *Nihonjinron* works (Wilson 2002). The former critique largely stems from the way that much *Nihonjinron* literature models generalized "Japanese society" in contrast to a monolithic, homogeneous "West"[49], and the conflation of ideals and norms with actual practices and

[49] Goodman (2008[2005]) identifies the following "West" / Japan values dyads commonly discussed in *Nihōnjinron* literature:

WEST	**JAPAN**
racial heterogeneity (*jinshūnokonketsu*)	racial homogeneity (*tan'itsuminzoku*)
competitive conflict (*meiwaku*)	harmony (*wa*)
individualism (*kojinshugi*)	groupism (*shūdanshugi*)
egalitarian, horizontal ties (*yoko*)	vertical, hierarchical ties (*tate*)
universalistic ethics (*kochokutekigenri*)	particularlistic ethics (*jōkyōronri*)

behaviors. The latter draws on copious evidence from a wide variety of fields that contradicts the essentialized, stable, harmonious, homogenous, and mostly ahistorical picture of Japan and Japanese society contained in many *Nihonjinron* works. In particular, critics in this vein highlight the considerable ethnographic evidence of diversity and conflict in both historical and present-day Japan (Kowner 2002).

Nihonjinron as a genre is both critical of, and laudatory toward, Japanese culture and society (McVeigh 2004). Culture is viewed as the infrastructure underlying everything Japanese; social, political, economic, etc. phenomena are therefore treated as manifestations of the culture (Yoshino 1998). In much *Nihonjinron* literature, Japanese culture is simultaneously described as being immutable and pure, and as something that is fragile and easily contaminated. These characteristics both became a much greater focus in *Nihonjinron* works in the years immediately following WWII, as authors attempted to explain the causes and effects of the war (McVeigh 2004; Goodman 2005[2008]). (These persisted in the genre in subsequent years; indeed, they are still seen in quite recent works of *Nihonjinron*.)

Critiques of *Nihonjinron* identify four main, misguided premises that much of it is based on. The first is the claimed homogeneity of the Japanese people, the assumption that the Japanese invariably share a single language, culture, religion, and lifestyle, and belong to a single distinct, identifiable race. (Kowner 2002). Second, works of *Nihonjinron* amalgamate the land, people, and culture of Japan into the

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sense of rights (*kenri*)	sense of duty (*gimu*)
logical/rational (*gōriteki*)	ambivalent/emotional (*kanjōteki*)
independence (*dokuritsu*)	dependence (*amae*)
contractualism (*keiyaku*)	"kintractualism" (*en'yaku*)

ineffable idiom of Japanese blood, described above. Third, *Nihonjinron* authors uncritically accept that Japanese society is a single, vertically structured, hierarchical, and group-oriented entity, as opposed to the monolithic horizontally structured, egalitarian, and individualistic West. Finally, much of *Nihonjinron* literature is premised upon the supposed uniqueness of Japanese culture and society, especially the Japanese language and Japanese patterns of communication (Yoshino 1998; Kowner 2002; Goodman 2008[2005]).

In all four cases, either an implicit or explicit comparison is being drawn between Japanese and not-Japanese. When the not-Japanese role is not filled by the monolithic West, the specific group or groups discussed in these works shift based on global business and political trends. In the first couple decades following WWII, the U.S. was the most commonly referenced not-Japanese Other; in more recent years, the Other(s) have proliferated, with Western Europe, individual European countries, North America (as opposed to just the U.S.), Asia (or sub-regions within Asia), and Australia/New Zealand occasionally taking the place of the West (Iida 2002; Wilson 2002).

IMMIGRATION TO JAPAN: RECENT TRENDS, POLICY REFORM, ATTITUDES

JAPANESE IMMIGRATION POLICY AND POLICY REFORMS

The concept of Japan as an isolated nation, and myths of Japanese ethnoracial homogeneity, shaped postwar public and official attitudes toward immigration and immigrants (Tsuda & Cornelius 2004). The foundation of Japan's current, and comparatively restrictive, immigration policies was created during the post-WWII Allied occupation of Japan. These policies codified the ideology of Japan as a unique, self-contained, and ethnically pure nation, a conception which had not held as much

prominence in the pre-war public imagination (Morris-Suzuki 2010). Even now, Japanese immigration policy continues to be explicitly shaped by the idea that Japan is a culturally and racially homogeneous society. Allowing large-scale immigration into Japan, opponents claim, would thus undermine Japanese culture and nationhood (Goodman et al. 2003).

Government responses to immigration, and the development of policies relating to immigration, have been haphazard and ad hoc at best, and more competitive than cooperative, currently involving at least 17 separate ministries and agencies. Despite the changes that have been implemented in recent decades, and the growing recognition that more changes will inevitably be necessary in the near future, Japanese policymakers still remain wedded to the principle of allowing only short-term, unaccompanied migration, and prohibiting most labor migration. This summary has provided but a small sample of the many areas in which Japanese policies fail to provide support for the multicultural society that is purportedly desired for the future. The continued discrimination in housing and employment, the highly restrictive immigration laws, the lack of progress in combating both overt and covert forms of racism and xenophobia, and the backtracking that has occurred in some areas in recent years effectively undermine the ideal that a "multicultural Japan" is actually possible in the near future (Befu 2006). Some progress has been made at lower levels of government in services available to foreign residents (Tsuda 2003b). Areas with high numbers of immigrants, particularly those of Brazilian- and Peruvian-Japanese descent, often offer a number of resources for immigrant workers and their families. Progress at these local levels, however, can in reality only go so far without more genuine and wide-reaching support from the national government.

By the end of the 1980s, there was a recognition that the labor shortage was not improving (Morris-Suzuki 2010)—and indeed, due to the rapidly aging population and decrease in rural-to-urban internal migration, that it would continue for the foreseeable future (Weatherall 2006). The 1990s, therefore, saw major shifts in Japanese immigration policy, the most significant of which was the introduction of major reforms to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1990 and 1995 (Kajita 1998). These reforms of the Immigration Control Act, specifically the provision creating a legal category for the immigration and employment of South Americans of Japanese descent, were viewed as a compromise solution to the growing labor demands of the growing economy—a way to allow much-needed foreign workers to enter the workforce while at the same time continuing to emphasize Japanese racial and ethnic homogeneity and the importance of Japanese ancestry as a justification for strict immigration policies (Kajita 1998).

In addition to creating new categories of visas, residence, and work permissions, these reforms introduced stricter criteria for many existing types of visas and reshuffled or redefined many immigration status categories, thereby reducing the number of people entering Japan for longer-term stays (Ishii 2010). They also expanded programs for trainees and pre-college students—which are largely utilized by migrants from other Asian nations. These reforms also slightly relaxed requirements for naturalization, and for obtaining Japanese nationality for children with one foreign and one Japanese parent, although these requirements remain quite strict in comparison with other industrialized nations—even other nations where citizenship is based on the *jus*

sanguinis principle[50] (Kashiwazaki 2000). They did not, however, facilitate any great improvement in the practice of immigration control, as the new policies upheld the former systematic exclusion rather than incorporation of most foreign workers and continued to offer little in the way of support services for migrants.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRATION

In Japan, foreigners were historically kept distinct, separate, and not permitted to assimilate socially or politically. This practice of *sakoku*, or national isolation, dates from the Tokugawa Shogunate of the early 1600s, when Japan closed itself to the outside world except for a few highly restricted port cities. Although Japan became more open from the mid-1800s, the sakoku ideology has continued to play an important role in definitions of Japanese national identity, and was encouraged by nationalists and militarists in the WWII period (Richey 2010).

The arrival of increasing numbers of *visibly foreign* immigrants in recent decades did not go unnoticed by the Japanese public. Throughout the 1980s, there were frequent reports in the media on the "problem" of foreign workers (Friman 1996), and in 1990 the Immigration Bureau began regularly publishing estimates of the number of visa overstayers and illegal foreign workers in Japan (Morris-Suzuki 2010). Recently, however, there has been a slight change in the tone of discussions of immigration in Japan and the understanding of "Japaneseness" in the popular imagination.

[50] *Jus sanguinis* (meaning "right of blood") and *jus soli* ("right of soil") are the two principles by which nearly all nation-states determine the citizenship of individuals at birth. The former is based on the citizenship of a child's parent or parents; citizenship is acquired by children from parents in accordance with the specific requirements of a given state—whether it can be acquired from mothers and fathers equally, whether the child has to be born within the state, and so on. *Jus soli*, in contrast, is what is commonly referred to as "birthright citizenship": anyone born in the territory of a particular country has the right to citizenship in that nation-state.

The "return" migration of large numbers of *Nikkeijin* from Brazil and Peru has sparked some discussion of the role of blood vs. culture in identifying people as Japanese. Although of Japanese descent, the *Nikkeijin* migrants (mostly the children, grandchildren, and in some cases great-grandchildren of the original Japanese emigrants) often retained little in the way of Japanese culture or language in South America—a situation which has caused consternation among advocates of the blood- or descent-based "ethnic Japanese" argument (Tsuda 2003b). In contrast, foreign populations which have resided long-term in Japan, such as WWII-era Korean and Chinese (largely Taiwanese) populations, are usually fully fluent in Japanese language and cultural behaviors, despite the maintenance of strong ethnic communities.

One result of these shifts was that the Japanese public—although not the Japanese government—began questioning the ideology of homogeneity as a guiding tenet of immigration policy (Goodman et al. 2003). Although *Nihonjinron* theories have been long since disproven, some aspects of the discourse are still commonly familiar to, and accepted to some degree by, the general public, as well as a significant minority of politicians and academics (Richey 2010). This is a cause of significant tension with regard to questions of immigration: while encouragement of assimilation is usually viewed as anti-immigrant and racist in the U.S. and Europe, in the case of Japan, those expressing the strongest anti-immigration sentiments have been found to have a segregationist rather than assimilationist point of view. To put it another way, those who support assimilation are much more likely to be pro-immigration and back immigrant rights. Through advocating the ethnoracially based concept of Japanese identity and uniqueness, those who are anti-immigration argue that it is impossible for foreigners to ever fit into Japan in any way; the opposite view, that foreigners can and

should become integrated into Japanese society, therefore represents the pro-immigration viewpoint in Japan (Richey 2010).

FORCES OF SOCIAL CHANGE

THE PAST: KOKUSAIKA (INTERNATIONALIZATION)

As it has become less and less acceptable, both within Japan and in the international community, to base national identity on overt exclusion and racism, more subtle processes of exclusion have been developed—many of which, on the surface, appear to actually promote *inclusion*. The first of these new attempts to maintain an ethnoracially homogeneous Japanese identity has shifted to the concept of *kokusaika*. The term *kokusaika*, written with the characters for "international" and "change", is defined as "broadening out on an international scale". Often literally rendered in English simply as "internationalization", *kokusaika* carries dual connotations: of opening Japan and the Japanese people to international influences, and of sharing Japanese perspectives and knowledge with the rest of the world (Ivy 1995; Björklund 2008). In practice, though, sincere efforts toward the first type of *kokusaika*—introducing non-Japanese ideas into Japanese society—have been limited, frequently as a result of Japanese government policies (McConnell 2000).

The idea of *kokusaika* contains three seemingly contradictory notions: assimilation, suppression, and celebration of difference. Japan's official *kokusaika* policy was put in place by then-Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone in 1984. Due to Western fears regarding Japan's surging economy, the Japanese government felt increasing pressure to present a more positive, accommodating image to the international community. No fan of immigration or cultural diversity, Nakasone created

the policy of *kokusaika* in response to this international pressure regarding the openness (or lack thereof) of Japan's markets to foreign goods. By instituting this policy, Nakasone and his government hoped to gain a measure of control over how, and to what degree, Japan opened itself to foreign influences, without compromising its national identity (Itoh 1998).

One solution to both the need for low-skilled laborers during the bubble years and the increasing international pressure for Japan to open itself to the world more was to bring in *Nikkeijin*, the descendants of Japanese emigrants to South America. Because they were of Japanese descent, it was felt that the presence of these "return" migrants would not disrupt the nation in the same way that other, truly foreign immigrants would, but would give the appearance of greater openness. Those who opposed this view maintained that due to demographic and economic realities, increased levels of immigration would eventually become inevitable. It was therefore preferable to put in place programs and policies that would help new arrivals to learn to fit in and contribute to Japanese society before these immigrants arrived, so that the eventual internationalization of Japan could be as smooth and painless as possible. This group also contended that, rather than undermining Japanese society, multiculturalism would benefit and strengthen Japan. In the early 2000s, the focus of public debate also gradually shifted away from curbing the inflow of immigrants to social integration and the meaning and benefits of multiculturalism, although government policies still only provide means for foreigners to enter Japan on a temporary basis.

The second strand of *kokusaika* is the dissemination of Japanese ideas and perspectives to the rest of the world—spreading Japanese culture (pop and traditional), values, history, and perspectives—in order to preserve Japan's interests and promote the

desired image of Japan abroad (Hendry 1996). But as is the case inside Japan, this form of *kokusaika* is characterized less by an opening up than by a defensive turning in. The focus is on protecting cultural barriers instead of transcending them; teaching others about Japan as a way of emphasizing the Japanese/non-Japanese divide and maintaining Japan's monoethnic and monoracial ideology of national identity.

"Inward" Kokusaika and the Reification of Difference

The domestication of the foreign within Japan is sometimes referred to as "inward" (*uchinaru*) *kokusaika* and is typically used to describe local government foreigner-support programs and internationalization that takes place within a family or local community (Graburn et al. 2008). Inward kokusaika contains difference by reifying the divide between Japanese and foreigners, separating homogeneous Japan from the rest of the world (Pak 2000). The most visible manifestations of inward kokusaika are "international cultural exchange" events. At such community events, foreigners are invited to demonstrate aspects of their culture, such as songs, dance, customs, or food. The repeated staging of these events often make foreigners feel as if they are being "shown off" and used to promote the "exoticness" of their town or city while being excluded from the mainstream community. The "international" thereby becomes a product which is exotic and external to everyday life (Burgess 2008).

The domestication of the foreign within Japan is sometimes referred to as *uchinaru* (inward) *kokusaika*; this term is often used when describing local government programs targeted at foreign residents. Examples include offering free basic classes in Japanese language and culture and foreign-language translations of information about local services, and the hosting of events such for "international cultural exchange". In

many cases, however, these services are initially established to minimize the impact of foreigners settling in the neighborhood and make life more comfortable for local Japanese residents, rather than to make the newcomers feel welcome (Graburn & Ertl 2008)—to suppress the influence of foreign people where possible, and to mark their presence as something separate from everyday life. The "international" thereby becomes a product which is exotic and external to everyday life, maintaining the difference between Japanese and Other through inclusion rather than exclusion (Burgess 2008).

THE PRESENT: KYŌSEI (COEXISTENCE)

Since the late 1990s, the concept of *kyōsei* has increasingly been used instead of *kokusaika* to describe the relationship between Japanese and non-Japanese people within Japan (Befu 2006). This term is comprised of characters meaning "all" or "together" and "life", and is commonly defined as "coexistence" in English. Until recently, this word was mostly used as a technical term in biology to describe symbiotic relationships between two or more species, or to refer to the coexistence of humans and nature. In its biological usage, relationships that are mutually beneficial to both/all coexisting parties (symbiotic relationships, or *sōri kyōsei*) are differentiated from those that only benefit one partner (parasitic relationships, or *henri kyōsei*). Taken at face value, the use of the word *kyōsei* to describe the interaction between foreign and native Japanese residents implies that all are benefitting equally, and that neither is subordinate to the other; in fact, though, the meaning that is implied is often closer to the latter (Brody 2002). Although government officials, policymakers, and leaders of community organizations mean well by using the term *kyōsei*, they are in fact

reinforcing the dichotomy of Japanese vs. (undifferentiated) Others also found in the earlier *kokusaika* concept.

Using the *kyōsei* concept in this way reaffirms the uniqueness and separateness of the Japanese, placing themselves in a dominant position over non-Japanese. This use of *kyōsei* is thus a subtle way of conveying the idea that the dominant Japanese group must find a way to control the not-Japanese Others, whose presence—and difference—threatens the blood- and race-based construction of national identity (Goodman et al. 2003). The fact that *kyōsei* so quickly came to be linked with the more problematic aspects of the earlier idea of *kokusaika*, combined with the nuance of hierarchy contained within the word itself, has prevented this concept from attaining widespread use in Japan. Already, it is being discarded in favor of another term with great cachet in the traditional "countries of immigration" in the West: multiculturalism (Morris-Suzuki 2010).

THE FUTURE (?): TABUNKASHUGI (MULTICULTURALISM)

Tabunka, comprised of the characters for "many" and "culture", is generally translated as multicultural, and thus *tabunkashugi* (many cultures doctrine) can be rendered in English as multiculturalism. An alternate term for multiculturalism, *tagenbunkaron* (pluralistic culture discourse), also exists, but is not widely used in policy or academia at present. *Tabunkashugi* has until recently been used mainly to describe relations between people from Japan and other, mostly Asian, countries. In describing interactions between individuals from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds within Japan, however, it is a concept that is still in its infancy (Murphy-Shigematsu 2000).

While some writers use the term "multiculturalism" merely to highlight social and ethnic diversity within Japan, within the last decade or so it has come to be used to refer specifically to a new sociopolitical ideology that is developing in Japan as a result of the pressures of recent demographic changes, and the policies resulting from that shift. This use of "multiculturalism" is similar to the meaning of the term as it has been used in North American and Western European countries since the 1970s (Graburn & Ertl 2008). In this sense, "multiculturalism" carries the connotation of celebrating and respecting cultural diversity, in much the same way found in the earlier *kokusaika* ideology. This understanding of multiculturalism, however, also explicitly contains expectations of equality and mutual respect between those of different backgrounds, as well as a belief that diversity and cultural exchange benefit society. Furthermore, while supporting a doctrine of multiculturalism is not necessarily synonymous with supporting (increases in) immigration, a belief in the value of immigration is implied (Chung 2010).

As was the case with both *kokusaika* and *kyōsei*, the concept of multiculturalism represented by *tabunkashugi* is felt by some to enforce the marginality and isolation of minority communities, albeit in a slightly different way. *Tabunkashugi* forces individuals to locate themselves within one (and only one) ethnoracial category. This is because everyone must be identified with a particular culture before the existence of multiple cultures can be recognized in a given community or society (Graburn & Ertl 2008).

This pressure to identify with one and only one ethnic label is especially apparent when one considers the words used for children with one Japanese and one foreign parent. The most common term for such children is *haafu*, borrowed from the English

word “half”, as in “half-foreign”; the Japanese half of the child’s background is completely denied in favor of identifying their partial non-Japanese descent. Even newer “progressive” or politically correct terms for these children, such as *daburu* (“double”, also taken from English), are problematic. While acknowledging their part-Japaneseness, *daburu* also emphasizes their difference by also requiring that people of mixed ancestry express and be identified by both their Japanese and non-Japanese ethnicities (Murphy-Shigematsu 2000). *Tabunkashugi* is thus the latest in a string of ideologies to pressure Japanese to become “more Japanese” and foreign residents to become “more ethnic” (Chung 2010).

Multiculturalism in Policy and Practice

Thus far, we have considered Japan’s openness to foreign ideas – or lack thereof – largely in terms of the concepts that have shaped popular and official views on immigration and interacting with foreign people and entities. Mindset, however, is only part of the picture: policies must also be created (or altered) and implemented if change is to truly be affected, instead of merely paying lip service to the *idea* of change. With this in mind, I will now consider a few areas in which policy does not yet support the stated ideal of a fully multicultural Japan.

In concrete terms, the national government of Japan has only begun to create policies to support the development of a genuinely multicultural society. For example, to date Japan does not recognize dual citizenship for adults. Children with a parent of another nationality are allowed to obtain citizenship both in Japan and their parent’s country(ies) of origin, but this is a relatively recent development. Immigration law governing children’s citizenship was only changed to allow children to hold multiple

nationalities in 1985 – and it was only one year before that that the children of Japanese women and foreign-born men could obtain Japanese citizenship at all (Morikawa 2008). (Japanese men with foreign-born wives (but not Japanese women with foreign-born husbands) were allowed to choose either Japanese or foreign citizenship for their children prior to 1985.) Under current law, however, children with dual (or multiple) nationalities must give up their non-Japanese passport(s) if they wish to retain Japanese citizenship when they reach age 20 (the age of majority in Japan) (Chung 2010).

Another area which requires improvement is Japan's immigration laws. In November of 2007, the Japanese government reinstated a system for photographing and fingerprinting and photographing all foreigners entering Japan, and changed the system for registration of resident foreigners to include fingerprinting again (Rafferty 2007) – requirements that had been abolished only seven years previously after a decade-and-a-half struggle by foreigner's rights groups (Komai 2001). The reforms of the Immigration Control Act also introduced stricter criteria for many types of visas – several of which, such as those for students and trainees, are largely utilized by migrants from other Asian nations – thereby reducing the number of people entering Japan for longer-term stays (Ministry of Japan 2010).

One final area in which Japan has yet to establish satisfactory provisions and protections for foreign residents is in employment, especially public-sector employment. It is commonly known that Japan has a low, and falling, birth rate, and thus a rapidly aging population. Japan also has a universal health care system, in which local governments administer the national health insurance plan.

In the mid-1990s, amid growing concern that there were insufficient numbers of health professionals to care for the burgeoning elderly population, the Ministry of Home

Affairs amended public employment laws allowing local governments to hire foreign health care workers such as nurses and nursing aides (Kagawa 2001). This amendment, however, was accompanied by very small quotas – only 1,000 total health care workers were to be admitted each year, divided roughly between individuals from the Philippines and Indonesia – and health care workers who were granted entry were required to pass highly demanding nursing exams, administered completely in Japanese, within three years of their arrival or face revocation of their work permit. In the first three years since the laws were changed, only three of the hundreds of caregivers admitted under the new rules have succeeded in passing the exams (Tjandraningsih 2010).

This is but a small sample of the many areas in which Japanese government policies fail to provide support for the multicultural society that is purportedly desired for the future. The continued discrimination in housing and employment, the highly restrictive immigration laws, the lack of progress in combating overt and covert forms of racism and xenophobia, and the backtracking that has occurred in some areas in recent years effectively undermine the ideal that a "multicultural Japan" is actually possible in the near future (Befu 2006). There has been some progress at local—prefectural and municipal—levels, in terms of both services that are provided for foreign residents and efforts to assist newcomers with more fully integrating into their new communities (e.g., providing forms, informational pamphlets, and government websites translated into multiple languages, making translators available when needed) (Tsuda 2003b). Progress at these local levels, however, can in reality only go so far without more genuine and wide-reaching support from the national government.

ON THE GROUND: JAPANESENESS THROUGH THE EYES OF WESTERN IMMIGRANTS

It was fascinating to me, and very telling, that when asked "How would you define what it means to be Japanese?", nearly all participants gave variations of the same answer—and that their answers closely mirrored the ethnoracial concept of Japaneseness outlined above. Furthermore, when asked if they thought that their definition of Japaneseness differed from Japanese people's, I received only two basic answers: (1) no, or (2) that the Japanese idea was even more restricted and restrictive than their own. While it is not unusual that immigrants would, to some degree, incorporate the host country's definition of itself into their own understanding, it struck me as unusual that most did not really espouse anything different from or in addition to Japan's own definition of Japaneseness.

On the whole, interviewees and survey respondents were readily able to provide detailed explanations of the factors that comprise Japaneseness, and their answers shared many similarities. Nearly every participant highlighted Japanese language fluency, a deep understanding of the culture, and conformity with certain behavioral expectations as non-negotiable aspects of someone being considered Japanese. In addition, the vast majority (86% of interviewees and 81% of survey respondents) mentioned race or biology in some way. For example, Gemma put it quite bluntly: "Someone who is Japanese is someone with Japanese parents who was raised here, full stop". Andy had much the same answer, saying that "a Japanese person is someone that's born to Japanese parents who were born to Japanese grandparents". Alison expanded a bit with her answer, emphasizing that "a lot of people would just say oh, you just have to be Japanese. Your parents have to be Japanese. You have to be born here,

grow up here, go to school here, have the same experiences as other Japanese people. You have to develop this kind of collective consciousness. And that can't be learned as an adult". And Ebony/022 highlighted the issue that this causes, not for immigrants themselves, necessarily, but for their children born in Japan: "My son was born here, and is being raised here. But because he was born to two American parents, he will always be considered *just* American" (emphasis Ebony's).

THE GAIJIN CARD: GET OUT OF JAIL FREE?

The saying 出る釘は打たれる ("*derukugi ha utareru*", or "the nail that sticks out gets hammered down") is often referenced in discussions of conformity within Japanese culture. While it is a convenient way to explain things, and there is certainly some truth to it, it is also a reductive way to think about belonging and submission in Japan. While there are some contexts where "sticking out" is very much frowned upon, such as conservative companies or formal events, in day-to-day life it is very possible to live life quite differently from those around you without attracting much comment at all.

This goes double for Westerners who live in Japan—there are specific situations where the rules cannot be bent very far (if at all), but in general simply being foreign is a good enough excuse to take considerable latitude with norms and expectations without causing problems for others or experiencing negative consequences. For example, many Westerners work as English teachers when they first come to Japan. Those who work in the public school system cannot skip school assemblies—beginning of the year opening ceremonies, graduations, special presentations when a student club or sports team win a big competition—no matter how bored they are, how little they understand, or for basically any other reason other than severe illness.

Gaijin can, however, get away with bending some of the other requirements, such as dress codes. For many events, including school assemblies, there are pretty specific expectations for how attendees will dress—for women, this almost always includes a skirt, either in the form of a business suit with a skirt, or a dress, and for both men and women, dark attire (usually black, although a dark blue is also acceptable for less formal or traditional events) is *de rigueur*. Many *gaijin*, especially younger people just out of college, do not necessarily own a specific color or type of suit, but they can wear something else that's similar—a darker grey suit, for example, or pants instead of a skirt for women—without causing offense or suffering the judgment or negative consequences a Japanese person might.

I myself experienced this when I was teaching in a rural junior high school in Niigata, Japan. I was a year out of college when I moved to Japan, and my wardrobe was very heavy on jeans, sweaters, t-shirts, and "hippie" skirts, but light on formalwear or business suits. And it is nearly impossible for me to find clothes (especially tops) in my size in Japanese stores. So, for events like opening ceremonies and graduations, I made do with black business casual pants, a white shirt one step less casual than a t-shirt, and a black cardigan sweater, and my colleagues all assured me that my attire was fine, I was obviously doing my best to fit in and be respectful. Another teacher—also fresh out of college, in her first year of teaching—also did not have a black skirt suit, only a grey pants suit, which she wore for the opening ceremony in April. She was criticized by the principal, though, even though her attire was technically appropriately conservative. and had purchased a new black skirt suit by the time an assembly was held to celebrate the baseball team's winning their district championship in October.

The term "*gaijin* card" is used frequently, in both a literal and figurative way. The former refers to the identification card the Japanese government issues to residents of foreign nationality—formerly the 外国登録証明書 (*gaikokutōrokushōmeisho*, or foreign registration certificate), but recently replaced with the 在留カード (*zairyūkādo*, or residence card)—both of which are colloquially referred to as one's *gaijin* card.

Other uses of the term *gaijin* card, though, are not so literal. In a figurative sense, *gaijin* card indicates a kind of "get out of jail free" card, that can be applied in a range of situations. The ones described below, in which someone leans into their (sometimes false) lack of knowledge of the Japanese language, government regulations, bank processes, and so forth to manipulate a situation, could all be considered instances of those individuals using their metaphorical *gaijin* cards.

One of the most common uses of the *gaijin* card is non-Japanese–looking immigrants pretending not to speak Japanese when confronted with someone they do not want to speak with, such as a fee collector for NHK, the public broadcaster. This fee is supposed to be paid annually by anyone who owns a TV, regardless of whether they watch it, or even whether their TV can access NHK content or not. Westerners in Japan often share an urban legend with newer arrivals, telling of a *gaijin* who, many years ago, got out of paying the NHK fee by responding with a strategically butchered version of the phrase "*Terebi ga arimasen*" ("There's no TV here"), a simple sentence that even most beginners will know. Variations include "*Terebi ga tabemasen!*" ("I don't eat TVs!"), "*Terebi ga mazemasen!*" ("The TV isn't blended!"), "*Terebi ga ikimasen!*" ("TVs do not live!"), and so on. This anecdote is usually presented as either advice about how

to avoid paying the NHK fee, and/or as an explanation of what the *gaijin* card is or how to use it to your advantage.[51]

But it goes much farther than that. Japanese people are socialized to be obedient to authority, which include things like posted instructions and crosswalk signals. A common application of this type of *gaijin* card is Westerners' willingness to disobey these types of instructions, when they deem it safe or necessary to do so. I myself have ignored "do not enter" signs, for example when I needed an informational pamphlet/map from a rack in a train station that was behind rope with a sign saying the area was closed for the night. Similarly, over a dozen interviewees mentioned crossing streets against the lights, usually at night when there was little or no traffic, in several cases walking past Japanese people waiting patiently for the "walk" sign to light up despite the late hour and empty streets.

In addition to instructions, there are many norms and expectations that Westerners use their *gaijin* cards to evade or manipulate, so to speak. The norms most commonly mentioned by participants in this study were relating to clothing and season/weather. Seasonality is an important value in Japan, and clothing changes with the seasons in a much more prescribed way (and on a much more specific schedule) than most Westerners have experienced previously.

Further complicating this difficulty, the Japanese Environment Ministry initiated a campaign they dubbed "Cool Biz" in 2005 in the hope of reducing companies' energy consumption. Cool Biz guidelines instructed government offices' air conditioning be set

[51] Many participants either described having been told this story themselves when they first arrived ([Danny/039]), having heard a friend or acquaintance tell the story to a recent arrival ([Gemma/019]), or it being referenced in passing as one of those things that everybody just knows about ([Doris/003] & [Ian/031]).

no lower than 28°C (~82°F) and set out new, more casual standards for office attire while it is in effect. These guidelines include foregoing neckties and suit jackets, wearing short-sleeved shirts, and in many cases wearing chino trousers and sneakers instead of dress pants and shoes. During "Super Cool Biz", which was implemented in 2011 and 2012 due to nuclear plants being offline following the 3/11 earthquake-tsunami-nuclear disaster, even more casual clothing was recommended, such as polo or Kariyushi[52] shirts. Private companies were also encouraged to adopt Cool Biz guidelines, although whether, how much, and which parts of Cool Biz they have chosen to implement varies widely.

For women, the Cool Biz campaign does not usually bring many changes. They are instructed to leave off suit jackets if they normally wear them, and are encouraged to tie up long hair and use antiperspirant and cooling products such as face wipes and sprays. But beyond not wearing jackets, there are no clothing-related guidelines for women. Nevertheless, three women—Diana, Alison, and Jenny—all said that they have used the ambiguity of the Cool Biz guidelines for women to stop wearing pantyhose. Diana's and Jenny's companies both allow women to go bare-legged if they are not interacting with customers. Diana "forgot to wear hose one day when I was meeting with clients and no one noticed (or at least no one said anything and nothing happened), so I tried again the next week, and when no one noticed then either, I just stopped completely in hot weather".

In contrast, Jenny hates pantyhose and "would do *anything* to avoid wearing them", so when her company said they were allowed to dress more casually for Cool Biz,

[52] Kariyushi are an Okinawan style of short-sleeved, button-down, collared shirts, similar to aloha shirts.

she chose to interpret that as 'no more pantyhose' and stopped wearing them immediately. And by immediately, she meant that "I literally went to the bathroom and took mine off that afternoon! I figured, 'better to ask forgiveness than permission', if anyone cared enough to tell me to wear them again". The situation was quite different for Alison. Her company embraced Cool Biz enthusiastically, and "had an all-staff meeting where we all gave our input into what our Cool Biz dress code should be. The votes to drop the necktie, suit, and pantyhose requirements passed unanimously, and although we go back to somewhat more formal dress in the colder months, we're still more casual than we used to be".

Male participants had many clothing-related complaints, especially regarding being expected to switch to wearing long-sleeved shirts for work on a specific date regardless of the weather. As Danny grumbled,

> *my company requires us to switch on 15th September, even though Cool Biz doesn't end until October these days. If I followed that rule, I'd spend weeks either sweating through my shirt and looking ridiculous or changing my undershirt at least a couple times a day. So I just play the gaijin card and wear clothes that are both weather-appropriate and office-appropriate, and claim that I forgot or didn't see the memo if someone says something.*

In contrast, while George's company follows some Cool Biz standards during the entire period it is in effect,

> *they're really old-fashioned, so they don't let us dress down so much. So we don't have to wear ties on a daily basis, and don't have to wear jackets in the office, but we do have to wear long sleeves and dress pants still. And we have to wear jackets and ties when meeting with anyone outside our company—which is annoying because often they're doing Cool Biz all the way & both groups end up feeling awkward about what they're wearing. But we can wear black shoes that aren't dress shoes, as long as they're not too casual looking. The whole thing, the way they're doing it, is just kind of a farce, and I've gotten to the point that I bend the rules whenever I can, and since I'm a foreigner and I'm old they usually*

just look the other way as long as I dress right when I meet with people from other companies.

In the end, many found that, like Danny, George, Diana, Jenny, and Alison, being a *gaijin* allows them to break the rules without many (or often any) consequences. Christopher summed it up best, saying that he wore short-sleeved shirts once it got too hot in spring until it cooled off again in fall, "no matter whether the 'start wearing short sleeves' date or the 'switch to long sleeves' date was past". As far as he is aware, his career never suffered for his sartorial "rebellion"—he was never disciplined for it, and received promotions while working there. As he joked, "I guess times have changed. So much for hammering *deru kugi*s, huh?!"

These examples of using the *gaijin* card highlight the anonymity many feel as a *gaijin* in Japan, and how they perceive their *gaijinity* overshadowing any other aspect of their identity in many situations. Two of the interviewees who mentioned crosswalks specifically said that they feel like they can "play their *gaijin* card" in that situation because "I'm just some random *gaijin* to the other [Japanese] people who see me do it" (Lizzy), and "even if I see them again somewhere else they won't identify me as the *gaijin* who ignored the crosswalk that one time" (Gavin). In a similar vein, Gemma said that while she will not disobey crossing signals in her own neighborhood, where she knows some people well and many recognize her on sight, or when walking with coworkers, she will when she is on her own in other areas, since "those people don't know me as *me*, I'm just another *gaijin*". And many of those who have played their *gaijin* cards in relation to work attire observed that their coworkers and supervisors expected *gaijin* to be odd, so when they broke rules around clothing, as long as they did

not make the company look bad the only consequence was a snarky "what else can you expect from *gaijin*"-type comment.

This type of rule-breaking can be seen as a mild form of the *gaijin* card's more aggressive, disruptive, and obnoxious brother, the "*gaijin* smash"[53]. Much like the *gaijin* card, a *gaijin* smash utilizes an individual's foreignness to obtain a desired outcome; in smashes, though, *gaijinity* is used as a weapon instead of just a tool. Tommy explained it this way:

> *The difference between using my gaijin card and gaijin smashing my way through a situation is how extreme my behavior is, how much I'm trying to go against rules or norms, and, in my opinion, how selfish I'm being. For example, if a clearly foreign person with a clearly not-gang-related tattoo goes to an onsen and pretends not to understand the attendant saying that people with tattoos aren't allowed in that onsen until they give up and let them in but once inside they follow the rules, I'd say that person played their gaijin card. But if someone did that, but didn't follow the rules once they'd entered—not washing themselves before getting in the shared bath, taking their towel into the bath, using soap in the shared bath instead of the individual showers, deliberately breaking those kinds of taboos because they want to or can't be bothered—I'd call it a gaijin smash. It's more extreme, and it's not just about getting around a rule that's obviously not meant to be applied to you, it's about doing whatever the hell you want without considering others.*

Kevin and Jenny both gave similar explanations. Kevin defined *gaijin* smashing as "playing your *gaijin* card in an asshole-ish way", and Jenny explained the phenomenon as "just saying 'fuck Japan' and doing things the same way you would at home, or however you feel like, without considering how things are done here or others' feelings".

Others, though, did not necessarily or automatically equate this aggressive and selfish attitude with the *gaijin* smash, simply defining it as another, sometimes "bigger",

[53] See https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Gaijin Smash for further details.

form of the *gaijin* card (Justin), or pointing out that there was a lot of overlap between the two (Jeremy). Payam also said that

> *what a person defines as a gaijin smash, where they draw the line between the two or how selfish someone has to be to be considered to have gaijin smashed something, is different for everyone. It's like pornography vs. art: we all know which category we'd put a given story or painting or something in, but other people would put that story or artwork in a totally different category, and depending on interpretation either classification could be considered correct.*

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Given everything discussed in this chapter, it is unsurprising that those who migrate to Japan find it difficult to fit in and be considered full members of Japanese society. Many migrants find themselves in a permanent liminal space, due to social and personal isolation resulting from Japanese ideas regarding who can and cannot belong in Japanese society. Despite this somewhat inhospitable climate, immigration to Japan has increased in recent decades, and the origins of migrants settling in Japan have also become more diverse. As a result of the increases in the migrant population over the past few decades, as well as the changes in attitudes toward migration and cultural diversity stemming from globalization, both the popular and official viewpoints regarding the desirability of immigration, the value of diversity, and the very meaning of Japaneseness are experiencing slow, if not yet particularly substantive, shifts. As the need for immigration, and thus for finding ways to truly integrate migrants and help them adapt to Japanese society, increases in coming years due to the dual demographic crises of the continuing decrease in birth rates and aging of the population, it is my view that changes in the conceptualization of Japaneseness and who belongs in Japanese society are unavoidable. It remains to be seen, however, whether those changes take the form of an expansion of the actual concept of what Japaneseness means, or whether it

will be more along the lines of a decoupling of ethnoracial Japaneseness from political and social/cultural Japaneseness, to allow for new, more inclusive modes of belonging.

CHAPTER 6: THE EXPERIENCES OF 'CHARISMA MAN' VS. EVERYONE ELSE

Figure 9: Charisma Man Comic#1

The first comic strip in the run of *Charisma Man* by Larry Rodney, published in *The Alien* in 1998.

Charisma Man is the titular character in a comic strip published in *The Alien*[54] (a monthly magazine for English-speaking immigrants in Japan) from 1998-2006. The character is based on stereotypes of a certain type of Western immigrant in Japan. These men—straight, white men who come to Japan when they are young (usually early 20s) and find that their foreignness affords them a mystique or glamour that they would never experience back home. They find themselves the center of attention in many social situations, inordinately praised for any attempt to learn about Japan/ese culture or do things the Japanese way: eating with chopsticks, trying new-to-them Japanese foods, using a couple phrases in Japanese, going to a cherry blossom viewing party, and

[54] *The Alien* was later renamed *Japanzine*.

so forth. As with any excessive praise, this can go to their heads, convincing them that in Japan they are seen as extremely cool, smart, capable, and attractive to women, as opposed to their more average and ordinary perception in their home country.

The term charisma man was being used in some parts of the *gaijin* community before the comic first appeared, but the comic introduced it to a much wider audience and cemented it as a caricature of and shorthand for a certain kind of Westerner. By 2001, when I first went to Japan, the term was in common use: I learned about the stereotype of the charisma man and who it applied to within a couple months of my arrival, but I was unaware of the comic until years later.

In the comic strip, Charisma Man is portrayed as an unattractive nerd, short and skinny with a bad haircut, when in the presence of his nemesis, Western Woman. When interacting with Japanese people, however, he becomes a tall, square-jawed, brawny, cool dude with an exotic air that causes everyone around him to pale in comparison. Throughout the comic's run, the authors used the characters to explore many common immigrant experiences, poke fun at *gaijin* who became a little too convinced that they were cool or interesting simply because they were foreign, and explore some of the less-discussed aspects of the immigrant experience in Japan.

Unfortunately, if/when Western men start believing, and acting, as if they *are* cooler/smarter/more capable/etc. than others, they can become arrogant and oblivious to the effects of their behavior on others, and fail to continue to develop their social skills and maturity beyond the point at which they moved to Japan. The charisma man could, in fact, be called the (somewhat exaggerated portrayal of the) anti-hero of the Western expat community—in Japan, he sees himself as Don Draper, or Indiana Jones,

or Jim Stark (the character played by James Dean in *Rebel without a Cause*), but at home he was perceived more as a George Costanza or Homer Simpson type.

While the charisma man character is obviously quite exaggerated, it does reflect a kernel (or multiple kernels) of truth—that straight, white, Western men have a much different, and much easier, experience of living as foreigners in Japan than other immigrants. Their foibles and faux pas are seen as valiant attempts to adapt to life in Japan; for many other Westerners, such efforts are taken as evidence that the person is lazy and has not worked hard enough to learn Japanese language or culture. And where they are seen as high-prestige friends and desirable romantic partners by Japanese women, many Western women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people of color find it much more difficult to become friends with or date Japanese people.

In this chapter, I will be discussing areas in which a subgroup (or subgroups) of Western immigrants—specifically women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and/or people of color—recounted experiences that differed from those of the stereotypical charisma man in some interesting and/or informative way. But first, I will introduce a typical charisma man from my own research,[55] as an example to compare with the experiences of the non-male, non-straight, non-white interviewees I will be discussing in the rest of the chapter.

[55] I purposefully minimized the number of people who could be characterized as charisma men included in this study. I was determined to include a diverse group of people in this study, with a variety of backgrounds and life experiences, so I both put extra effort into recruiting women, LGBTQ+ folks, and people of color, and was deliberate when choosing straight, white men to include.

DON: REAL-LIFE CHARISMA MAN

By almost any definition, Don is a very privileged person (and immigrant in Japan): straight, white, male, American, relatively young, fitting the conventional standards of attractiveness, straight and partnered with a Japanese woman, financially stable, university educated. For him, life in Japan is easy and has, overall, been a smooth and stress-free experience. He had been in Japan for 8 years when I interviewed him in 2016, and had just turned 30 years old. From late 2009 (around the end of his second year in Japan) until approximately 10 months prior to our interview he was married to a Japanese woman; he had begun dating another Japanese woman around 6 months before the interview.

His time in Japan has been notably easy in many ways. For Don, who has "chosen an expat-type life" and plans to be in Japan indefinitely, problems "just seem to melt away" or be solved easily with help from those around him (meaning that they solve the problem for him). This is an illustration of his privilege in two ways: (1) many people are willing to expend their own time and energy to fix his problems, and (2) he does not recognize that this *is* a privileged experience, or that life does not work that way for many other people. He just expects that other people, especially women and Japanese people, will of course jump in whenever he needs help.

By his own admission, he "lets" his current girlfriend, and his ex-wife, "take care of all the paperwork stuff—taxes and registering the new address when I move and visa forms and stuff" because he "just can't understand all that stuff". In contrast, women and gay/bisexual men reported that their Japanese male partners do not help with those types of tasks, because "those are the kind of things that women take care of, not men… you know, house-related things" (Jenny) and "he's just too busy at work, whenever we

have time together he doesn't want to spend it filling out forms for me or worrying about boring stuff like that" (Justin).

My interview with Don, and with the other straight, white men in my study (Gavin, Bryan, Iacopo, Tommy, Danny, and Edmund), were strikingly different from those with the other 35 interviewees. On the whole, these seven straight, white men had experienced only a fraction of the race/ethnicity/gender/sexuality/nationality/etc.-based incidents that the rest of the interviewees had, and were far less likely to recall or recount such experiences without direct prompting from me (e.g., "Other people have told me they've experienced X—has anything like that ever happened to you?"[56]).

After speaking with Don for a short length of time,[57] it quickly became apparent he is nearly completely unaware of how his identities have smoothed his path as an immigrant in Japan, where interviewees of color, LGBTQ+ interviewees, and female interviewees were acutely conscious of and able the ways in which their identities had impacted their experiences since moving to Japan. When asked about any instances of discrimination he has experienced, Don first responded that he "hasn't been treated badly in Japan" and "can't think of anything I've experienced that could be considered discrimination", although when asked directly later did in fact recount a few such experiences.

This lack of notable incidents in his life in Japan is quite remarkable, because every person in my study who was not straight, not white, and/or not male readily

[56] I only asked these types of direct questions later in interviews, and asked several open-ended questions framed in different ways during the earlier portions to give them ample opportunity to remember such incidents and share them with me in their own way first.

[57] Don is a coworker of a friend of mine, and I had met him briefly in social settings a couple times when I went out for dinner or drinks with my friend after work. So the interview was not my only conversation with him.

described multiple incidents of discrimination, sexism, racism, and so on. During the course of the interview, though, it became clear that Don has indeed encountered some of the experiences most common to Westerners in Japan—being denied entry into an *onsen* because he has tattoos, being rejected by a landlord simply for being foreign, being ignored when speaking Japanese because someone assumed he would only be able to speak English—but until specifically asked, he had not even considered that those experiences could be related to his race/nationality/etc. This in itself is a mark of privilege—having so rarely experienced such discrimination before (if ever) himself, and not belonging to a group that experiences systemic discrimination, Don (and the other six straight, white interviewees) had neither the awareness necessary to recognize their experiences as discrimination nor the language to discuss them as such. Additionally, this subgroup of interviewees did not experience any significant life disruption as a result of these events, so they had no reason to think much about them or for them to be particularly memorable. For example, whereas other participants had to search for months and jump through all sorts of hoops to secure an apartment, getting rejected multiple times even by those with ostensibly "foreigner-friendly" landlords, Don was approved to rent the "second or third apartment I applied for. I think the first guy was just old and stuck in his ways".

In contrast, Ebony eventually had to have her (male) Japanese then-boss write a letter on her behalf, explaining to the landlord that she was American, not African; had lived in Japan for several years and had a good understanding of Japanese culture and thus would not damage the tatami flooring, bath, etc.; spoke Japanese well, and could communicate with the landlord via phone and in writing; and had secure long-term employment. Her boss also had to agree to be a second guarantor on her lease

(requiring one is common; two is fairly unusual) before she was approved to rent the apartment.

Alison also had to get her (male) boss' assistance in getting approval to rent her apartment; the landlord was concerned because she was a single woman, and might not give notice and pay the early-termination fee if she wanted to get married and move before her contract was up. In the end her boss also had to write a letter vouching for her reliability, length of stay in Japan, and years working for that company, as well as agreeing to take responsibility for explaining the terms of the rental contract to her and acting as a go-between if the landlord had any difficulties with her.

Like the women above, Ian, a Brit of mixed multiracial ancestry[58] who has lived in Japan for around 20 years and took his Japanese wife's surname when they married, has had several experiences with discrimination while apartment-hunting. More than once, when he showed up for an appointment to view an available rental, he said that

> *a look of sheer terror and panic crossed the agent's face when they realized that "Mr. Ōdai" was a mixed-race gaijin, and tried to work out how such an obviously non-Japanese person had a Japanese name. A couple times they've told me that someone else had just viewed the flat and already applied so they would get it first if they wanted it, but of course I could apply if I wanted. I've also gotten the whole "chotto muzukashii…"[59] runaround more than once. Weirdly, all the obstacles seem to melt away when my wife is with me, or I mention her (and that she's Japanese), or if she calls to follow up—they can't refuse me without refusing her too, after all, because that would be discriminating against a fellow Japanese person, and that would never do….*

[58] Ian is of English, Jamaican, Trinidadian, and French descent—while he identifies as Black and mixed, he says that "most people just perceive me as some kind of ambiguously brown person. They know I'm not 'just white', and that's enough for most people".

[59] *Chotto muzukashii* is a phrase that literally means "It's a bit difficult…", but is used to indicate that a request or proposed action is in fact very difficult, but that saying it outright would be awkward.

THE MAJORITY OF IMMIGRANTS ARE *NOT* STRAIGHT, WHITE MEN

Noting that each person's life experiences are shaped by their environment and their personal history and characteristics is hardly a novel statement. But careful consideration and comparison of the specific details of individuals' experiences can be quite instructive, both for learning about a particular environment and how it influences those who live in it, and for identifying patterns among individuals who share similar characteristics. This has certainly proven to be true with regard to my study of Westerners in Japan.

From the beginning of my dissertation research, I sought to recruit participants from a wide variety of backgrounds and identities. The sex ratio among Westerner immigrants is highly skewed in favor of men, and there are far more white Westerners in Japan than Westerners who are Black or people of color, which meant that I had to deliberately pursue opportunities to meet and interview immigrants who were not white men. As I detailed in the discussion of my research methods in Chapter 3, I attended and conducted participant observation in meetings and events offered by a large number of different groups; unsurprisingly, those that targeted specifically LGBTQ+ and female immigrants proved to be the most fruitful for this project.

There are a number of situations commonly encountered by nearly all Western immigrants in Japan: not being able to read the labels on packages of salt, sugar, and powdered MSG and thus purchasing the wrong item; having people refuse to sit next to them on crowded trains, instead standing in front of the open seat or even getting up

and moving elsewhere in the train car;[60] being rejected or prohibited—from entering a business, from using an *onsen*, from renting an apartment—due to their foreignness. But there are also many experiences that are very much mediated and moderated by each individual's particular background and identities.

In the course of my research, it became clear that there were three domains in particular where individuals' experiences differed significantly: discrimination and "isms", safety & violence, and their ability to avoid things at home. For each of these, despite the experience being shared in very general terms among a wide variety of participants, I identified a different pattern among a subset of individuals who shared a particular characteristic or identity. And analysis of the specifics of these patterns has highlighted some interesting things with regard to Japanese society and how the concept of Japaneseness facilitates and contributes to these patterns.

SAFETY & VIOLENCE: "A LOT OF MINOR WEIRD STUFF HAPPENS HERE, BUT IT'S PRETTY SAFE UNLESS YOU HOOK UP WITH AN OBARA[61] OR AN ICHIHASHI[62]"[63]

Violence was the most common thing that interviewees mentioned escaping by living in Japan; the specific type of violence varied according to individuals' race/ethnicity and place of origin. South Asian Britons pointed specifically at verbal abuse and threats (which are frequently carried out) from racist and xenophobic individuals while out in public in the U.K., often framed as "retaliation" for terrorist

[60] For a great look at "*gaijin* seat" phenomenon, check out Baye McNeil's 2018 article *The Empty Seat on a Japanese Train: 10 Years on, the 'Gaijin Seat' Still Grates*, available at https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2018/10/17/our-lives/empty-seat-crowded-japanese-train-10-years-gaijin-seat-still-grates/.

[61] Jōji Obara—murderer of Lucie Blackman & Carita Ridgeway

[62] Ichihashi Tatsuya—murderer of Lindsay Hawker

[63] [Gemma/019]

attacks. Nabil said that while he might get a few worried or fearful looks from Japanese people following an attack, "it's nothing like back home. There, people shout all sorts of nasty things at you, calling you things like 'dirty Paki bastard' and 'stupid fucking Paki cunt'; telling you to go home, that you're not wanted in England; spitting at or on you and giving 'friendly' advice to stay out of certain areas…".

In contrast, Black Americans cited violence from members of law enforcement more than individuals, in particular the escalation in police brutality and unpunished murders of many unarmed Black men and women by police that had occurred in the last few years. The murders of Trayvon Martin,[64] Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, Sandra Bland, and Philando Castile[65] were specifically mentioned as events that had contributed to their decisions to move to or remain in Japan long-term. For Ebony and Christopher in particular, the killing of Michael Brown caused them to reconsider their planned return to the U.S.; when Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old boy, was shot by police, they decided they would remain in Japan indefinitely. Christopher said that

> *looking at the photo of Tamir from his yearbook or whatever, the one that all the newspapers and everyone used, I saw my own son, and I just didn't feel right thinking about taking him back after that. Parents are supposed to protect their kids. How could I live with myself, consider myself a good parent, if I knowingly exposed him to deadly risks like that?!*

[64] Travyon Martin was not killed by police. The 17-year-old was shot on February 26, 2012, in Sanford, FL by civilian George Zimmerman, who was the coordinator of his gated community's Neighborhood Watch; that organization operated under the supervision of the local police. Zimmerman was acquitted under Florida's "Stand Your Ground law".

[65] Eric Garner, 44, died in Staten Island, NY, of asphyxiation in a police officer's chokehold, 7/17/2014; Michael Brown, 18, was fatally shot by police in Ferguson, MO, 8/19/2014; Tamir Rice, 12, was shot by police in Cleveland, OH, and died 11/22/2014; Freddie Gray, 25, died in Baltimore, MD, of a spinal cord injury sustained during transportation in a police vehicle, 4/12/2015; Sandra Bland, 28, died by hanging in police custody (ruled suicide), in Hempstead, TX, 7/13/2015; Philando Castile, 32, was fatally shot by police in St. Paul, MN, 7/6/2016. All were unarmed, all were killed while either complying to police instructions or after having already been restrained by police.

Safety was also an important benefit of living in Japan for almost all women, regardless of race/ethnicity or nationality. Japan has extremely low violent crime rates compared to other developed countries, and social norms generally prevent things like catcalling in the street to a large degree. This is not to say that there is no sexual or gender-based harassment in Japan—groping and general creepiness are especially prevalent on public transportation, to the point that there are women-only train and subway cars during morning commute hours, and I personally have had sexual comments about my body yelled at me while waiting at crosswalks—but it is markedly less than what these women had experienced in most other places they had lived. Most of the women interviewed had experienced some type of gender-based harassment or unwanted attention in Japan, and several had had their underwear stolen from their clotheslines when they had lived on the first or second floor, but none reported ever having been in a situation where they felt in danger of physical harm in public.

DISCRIMINATION, RACISM, & SEXISM: "JAPAN'S GOT PROBLEMS, BUT AT LEAST I KNOW THE POLICE WON'T SHOOT MY BLACK SON"[66]

Although racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, and other harmful ideas exist in Japan just as they do elsewhere, many immigrants feel that the Japanese iterations are expressed with less violence, and thus are less physically dangerous, although of course they are just as painful and disheartening as they are anywhere. Many participants of color discussed how they were still discriminated against in Japan, and still experienced racism, but that these experiences are more akin to "benign" "curiosity" there (Pascal & Ebony, respectively), and are in some ways less damaging

[66] Ebony/022

than the violent racism & entrenched systemic discrimination they faced at home. Ebony said that she felt she and her husband had "trad[ed] specific kind[s] of discrimination at home for general *gaijinity* in Japan". Instead of fearing for their lives and their futures at every turn, they could worry about "milder" (Nabil) instances of discrimination, such as being stared at on the train (Christopher & Ebony, Aisha) or being assumed not to know Japanese (Mathieu, Nabil) or basic things about Japanese culture such as the custom of removing outdoor shoes when entering many buildings (Cale) or what bowing means (Nora).

Most interviewees and survey respondents highlighted specific types of violence, harassment, and/or discrimination at home as something they were able to avoid, partly or entirely, through living in Japan. The one exception to this was straight, white men: they mostly talked about the negative experiences they themselves have encountered in Japan, and/or areas in which foreigners in general experience discrimination or harassment there, and spent very little (if any) time discussing things they had experienced or were avoiding in their home countries. LGBTQ+ immigrants, immigrants of color, and female immigrants, meanwhile, spoke at length about the kinds of discrimination they faced at home that they no longer experienced (or even had to worry about) in Japan. Several described employing a kind of cost-benefit analysis when deciding whether to remain in Japan or move home/to another country, and deciding that, while Japan is far from perfect, on the whole it is a pretty decent place to live.

It was particularly interesting that some non-white participants' treatment by Japanese people improved markedly after someone became aware of their Western nationality. There are stereotypes about many groups and nationalities in Japan—again,

this in and of itself is not at all a unique phenomenon. But the specific immigration history in Japan, and the highly visible waves of immigrants from particular groups, shaped some specific stereotypes in Japan that these participants of color encountered. For example, Africans (especially Nigerians) and Middle Easterners (in particular Iranians and Saudis) are often assumed to be (a) poor and/or (b) criminals, and South Americans (Brazilians, Peruvians, Bolivians…) loud, unserious, and unreliable, and these stereotypes and resulting (bad) treatment are often applied on the basis of appearance, regardless of a person's actual nationality or place of origin.

Some types of discriminatory attitudes and actions were experienced nearly universally by the participants in this study. One experience that was shared by all interviewees who had lived in Japan for around five[67] years or longer was having a rental application rejected solely for being foreign. Unfortunately, this is not prohibited by Japanese law, and if a landlord refuses to rent to someone due to their not being Japanese, there is little, if any, recourse available. Thankfully, there are also many landlords who are willing to rent to foreigners, and some who even target Western foreigners specifically.

Another experience shared by nearly all of the people I interviewed was the "*gaijin* seat"—seat(s) that are left open beside people of foreign appearance on public transit, often even when the train/subway/bus/etc. is extremely full and many riders are forced to stand. To be sure, this is common in other countries too, and it could

[67] This is because typical apartment rental contracts run for a 2-year term, and many people do not move frequently because the initial move-in costs are so high. Additionally, many foreigners have their first apartment arranged for them by their employer or a foreign-targeting real estate company. It is only after searching for an apartment on their own that they encounter this anti-foreigner bias, and by about 5 years living in Japan everyone I spoke with had moved to a new apartment at least once.

sometimes happen for other reasons, such as an individual just not wanting to sit beside anyone at all. But it is a regular, and specific, experience among immigrants in Japan. Those foreigners who are of East Asian heritage generally do not experience this, as they are not "read" by Japanese people as *gaijin* when in public unless they are talking. Those immigrants whose appearance indicates that they are not of Asian origin, though, particularly those who are not identifiably white, reported that this was a fairly common experience in both large cities and more rural areas.

In addition to the attitudes described above, many foreigners in Japan find the many, and varied, experiences of racism particularly difficult to handle in the long term. In this case I am speaking specifically of Western, English-speaking people's experiences of racism in Japan. While it is true that there are many examples of the kinds of discriminatory and ostracizing behavior that is typical of racism in the U.S., it is often the combination of these events with racism couched in positive terms (e.g., singling someone out because of their race/ethnicity to give them special treatment) that proves most difficult to cope with for foreigners in Japan.

Experiences of such "positive racism" (Millie) are particularly common for people living in more rural areas. Although the local people are attempting to be welcoming and to help the new person fit in to the community, the end result is frequently that the newcomer feels smothered and overwhelmed, unable to repay—or even keep track of—the hospitality being offered, and unnerved by constantly being treated as a celebrity for no reason other than their foreignness. The juxtaposition of being treated as a special guest at your place of employment (often for weeks, even months, after your arrival), and then being refused entry into a restaurant or shop on your way home from work, or having epithets yelled at you in the street, can be extremely draining and leave people

feeling constantly unsettled. For many of my friends and acquaintances, it was this factor, more than the language, cultural differences, or even the "come, teach, and leave" attitude that many people expressed, that influenced them to seek a job outside of Japan at the end of their teaching contract.

ABILITY TO AVOID THINGS AT HOME

RELIGION & FAMILY EXPECTATIONS: "I DON'T HAVE TO PRETEND TO CARE ABOUT JESUS ANYMORE!"[68]

Two other things that came up often as something interviewees could happily avoid by living in Japan were religion and family expectations regarding life choices. For some, this came in the form of avoiding religion in general, as Japan is not a particularly religious society, and religion is generally seen as a private matter, not something that is displayed or performed publicly. And many people who are not religious, or who are adherents of a religion other than Christianity, find it comforting that in Japan attitudes towards religion are generally accepting and/or disinterested.

Japanese people themselves most commonly identify as Buddhist, but many blend Buddhist, Shintō, and Christian-derived traditions throughout their lives. Most commonly, parents will celebrate Shintō rituals and festivals during pregnancy and while their children are young. Many couples have weddings at Shintō shrines; many also have a secular ceremony modeled on stereotypical Western Christian traditions—big white dress, tiered cake, and so on, sometimes even officiated by a Westerner playing the part of a "clergyman"—either in addition to, or in lieu of, the traditional shrine ceremony. The majority of funerals are conducted following Buddhist rites and

[68] [Andy/018]

ceremonies, with some Shintō rituals also being incorporated. And throughout the life course, most Japanese people will celebrate both Shintō and Buddhist holidays and observances, marking milestones in their lives and praying for themselves and their loved ones at both shrines and temples.

Multiple interviewees mentioned that their lack of religious belief, participation in a different religion or denomination than their family, and/or infrequent attendance at religious services had been a source of anywhere from mild to severe conflict between themselves and their families when they had been living in their home countries. Living in Japan, Josh said, "lets my family pretend that I'm still a devout Baptist, and is a convenient response when relatives or fellow church members ask why I haven't been at services for so long". Others said that they had become less- or areligious while living in Japan, and that they felt, or knew with certainty, that this would be a source of conflict with their family or community if they were to move back to their home country. As Edmund observed, "being in Japan gives me enough interesting stuff to talk about with my family… I can kind of avoid or redirect any mentions of religion. It's kind of a lie of omission, I guess, but it's better than telling my elderly mother that I'm not a believer anymore, and enduring the flood of guilt, tears, self-blame, and prayers that would follow. It's just better this way".

Avoiding conflict with family over pressure and expectations regarding relationships, jobs, and life path was a particularly common theme among LGBTQ interviewees. Some, like Andy, had been disowned by their families after coming out, or had had a fraught relationship since then. Jason said that for him, moving to Japan gave him something neutral to discuss with his parents, and had actually been a huge help in rebuilding their relationship, which had been strained for years after he came

out to his conservative, evangelical Christian parents. Others, like Josh and Nora, had not come out to their parents—their being in Japan was therefore "a good excuse" for not having "found a nice girl and settled down" (Josh), and was a "convenient reason" why they were not going to "start popping out grandbabies anytime soon" (Nora).

Several also said that that because of the distance, it was extremely unlikely that they would be introducing their same-sex partner to their families, and therefore felt that it was acceptable to let their families "make whatever assumptions they want to about the unspecified gender of my partner, who I only refer to by his Japanese given name[69] on the rare occasions I mention him at all" (Justin). Similarly, Jason, Indigo, and Kevin all said that living in Japan for so long made it easy to lie by omission and/or avoid talking about their personal/romantic life with their families at all.

Similarly, many felt that by working in Japan, they could "spin" (Ian/031) the information they shared with their family about their employer or position, since their relatives were not familiar with many Japanese companies. In this way, they could prevent their families from worrying about their financial circumstances, future stability, potential for professional advancement, and so on. When Kevin worked for a local company, "my parents were always after me to ask for promotions and raises, but since they don't know anything about how the work world functions in Japan, they generally just accept what I tell them and don't give me so much grief anymore". Similarly, Julia found that by working in Japan instead of her hometown, she was able

[69] [Justin/013] said that their family had no familiarity with Japanese culture or names, and no desire to learn, so the fact that his partner had a name that is almost always given to men in Japan was not a problem. In contrast, [Ruth/024] uses a unisex Japanese pseudonym—a name that is given roughly equally to men and women in Japan—to refer to any man or woman she dates when talking with her family, without specifically mentioning their gender. She's also used the same pseudonym for years now, to give her family the impression that she is in a stable, long-term relationship and thus help them worry less about her living so far away.

to escape the prying eyes of her neighbors, family friends, and distant relatives who either worked for the same company or knew someone who did.

> *Because it's a small town, and [company] employs a large percentage of the people who live there, everyone knows everything about everyone else's life. I'm a private person, and I didn't like knowing that people around me knew so much about me and were talking about me. Here, my private life is not connected to my work life, and everyone in my life except my husband only know a little about one part of my life. It's much more comfortable for me this way.*

This type of reduction in pressure to pursue a certain kind of job or a specific level of professional advancement was noted by many participants. Some, like Ian, said that "part of the reason I stay here is because I couldn't have the jobs I do, or live the life I do, back home. I get to do several things I enjoy, part-time on my own schedule, and no one is pushing me to expand my businesses, earn more money, and so on". Likewise, Mathieu noted that

> *it would not be possible to do the work I do in [my hometown], it's an only-in-Japan job. There isn't much demand for people with Japanese, English, and French ability there, and my skills are not enough to get the same kind of job without that extra demand. And I would have to work for a company full-time to earn a good salary at home. Here I can work part-time on my design work, and pursue my [artistic work] when I want, and life is good without having to answer questions about why I don't have a better job!*

POLITICS: "IT'S JUST KIND OF A NON-ISSUE FOR EVERYONE HERE"[70]

My research was conducted in two parts. The main period of research was from October 2015–October 2016, and the second, shorter period was April–July 2017. This research was thus carried out during, and shortly after, the U.S. presidential election campaign, election, and inauguration of Donald Trump.

[70] [Ruth/024]

This timing had three significant effects on my research and findings. First, Trump's candidacy caused many people to pay much more attention than usual to politics in the U.S., and inspired some (particularly Americans, unsurprisingly) to join political groups and/or participate more actively. This was valuable for my research because the national and regional Democrats Abroad Japan (DAJ) groups[71] held a number of events—debate-viewing parties, monthly "speakeasy" gatherings at a foreign-owned pub in Tokyo, demonstrations, and so forth—that provided great opportunities for participant observation and making connections with potential interviewees.

Second, due to the increased interest in politics back home, many Americans were also thinking more than usual about politics in Japan, and therefore had interesting insights to share about how their lives as immigrants in Japan intersected, and were affected by, Japanese politics. Jenny summed this up in the spring of 2017, saying "If you'd asked me about politics re: my life in Japan a couple years ago, I wouldn't have had anything to say. But because of the whole fiasco with Trump I've realized that I need to pay attention to [Japanese] politics, even though I can't vote in Japan".

Finally, most of the non-Americans I spoke with were following the Trump campaign with a kind of horrified fascination,[72] and pretty much everyone wanted to

[71] As mentioned in Chapter 2, though I attempted to make contact with the Republicans Abroad group as well, I was unsuccessful—in 2016, and still as of August 2020, the URL provided for the Japan chapter by the main Republicans Overseas/Abroad group links to the website of astrologer Shankar Bhattacharjee, and I could not find any other information or contacts for the organization. I was also unable to locate any nonpartisan political organizations for foreigners in Japan with meetings or events I could attend.

[72] A roommate from Germany, who was a short-term resident in Japan and thus not eligible to be interviewed for this study, told me that they'd "always wondered what it was like [in Germany] in the 1930s—did people know that something different and historic was developing? Did they have any idea of the potential negative consequences? I guess I've got my answer now…" (field notes, 9 October 2016).

discuss politics with me since I was American. This again served as a good entrée to discussing Japanese politics and their lives as immigrants.

Ironically, when not discussing the American political situation & upcoming election, most interviewees said that living in Japan allows them to *avoid* politics. As in most countries, non-citizens are not allowed to vote in Japan.[73] And since Japan does not allow dual nationality, the vast majority of foreign-born people living in Japan have no say in its governance. This, coupled with the overwhelming dominance of the Liberal Democratic Party since WWII, has caused non-citizens of Japan (as well as many Japanese citizens) to have low levels of political engagement and high levels of apathy. Aside from issues specifically relating to foreigners (e.g., changes to immigration and permanent residency policy, laws relating to *koseki* (family registry) and *jūminhyō* (residence registry), most foreigners do not engage much with Japanese politics. Ian put it like this:

> *I'm not Japanese, and I don't want to become Japanese (even if they'd let me, which I doubt, they make it incredibly difficult!), which means I can't vote here. I pay attention when they start talking about reforming immigration laws again, but other than that I just can't get interested—and being a gaijin gives me an excuse not to have to pay attention to politics here. People don't expect me to be interested, and I feel like they'd be uncomfortably surprised if I was. Besides, politics and politicians are so different and boring here, most Japanese don't pay much attention either, it's just kind of a non-issue for everyone.*

Even those who have some interest in getting involved with politics in some way often find their efforts thwarted. Alison noted that she "can't affect Japanese politics, not much anyway, so I save my energy for the issues that impact me". She observed that while it could be seen as selfish to only pay attention to or get involved in activism

[73] There are a small number of municipalities that allow foreign residents to vote in local referenda, which are not legally binding.

promoting one's own interests, "if I tried to get into non-*gaijin*-related activism, like protesting the PMs' visits to Yasukuni,[74] I'd probably be told to mind my own business, or people would spend so much time asking why I was there that the actual cause or event would get neglected!"

Other interviewees shared similar concerns and experiences. Diana, who had lived in the same house for over a decade, recounted her experiences with her neighborhood association.

> *I'm very active in my neighborhood association, but it's taken years for me to be accepted as a "real" member of the group and resident of the neighborhood, and be allowed to take on any real duties or responsibilities. And even now, I still kind of have to "prove" my "insider-ness" to every new person who moves to the neighborhood. I can't imagine how much worse it would be to join city or prefectural or national groups—just getting involved in my own neighborhood was, and sometimes still is, exhausting!*

In addition to feeling that their foreignness gives them an "out" when it comes to following, or engaging in, Japanese politics, many immigrants in Japan also said that their being in Japan means that they do not have to participate much, if at all, in politics in their home countries. Danny, a man from New Zealand, said that he "doesn't quite feel as if [he has] the right to vote on local [NZ] issues, since they don't affect [him]", but that he does vote on some things because "as someone from New Zealand, [he does] feel a responsibility to make sure the government of [his] home country is doing right by people, both fellow Kiwis and worldwide".

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[74] Yasukuni Jinja is a Shintō shrine in Tokyo that is dedicated to those who died in service to Japan during war, from the Boshin War (1868–1869) to the First Indochina War (1946–1954). Different buildings and areas commemorate different groups of people—Japanese soldiers, those of other nationalities who died on behalf of Japan, all people who died in WWII regardless of nationality, and so on. Because those whose souls are enshrined at Yasukuni include convicted war criminals from WWII, and because the war museum operated by Yasukuni Jinja is considered by some to be nationalistic in tone and present a revisionist interpretation of history portraying Japan as a victim of Western influence while making no mention of any of the atrocities committed by the Japanese Imperial Army (e.g. the Nanjing Massacre).

The one notable exception to this was Americans, unsurprising given the presidential election campaign that was occurring/had recently ended during my research periods. To put it mildly, Donald Trump is a polarizing political figure, and both his campaign and his time in office contributed to deep partisan divides in the American populace.

Generally speaking, the Americans who live in Japan are on the liberal side of the American political spectrum, and were therefore vehemently opposed to Trump. His campaign spurred a large increase in the amount of attention American emigrants in Japan paid to the politics of their home country, and how active they were in participating in a wide range of political activities and events. Several American interviewees told me that they had never bothered to vote from abroad before 2016, and that they had paid little attention to U.S. politics until Trump received the Republican presidential nomination.

Highlighting the larger point of living abroad allowing people to avoid politics in both their home country and Japan, three American interviewees said that they had not even started paying attention to the 2016 presidential campaign until non-American friends had started asking them about the "circus" developing around the Republican nominee race, or whether Trump was a serious candidate. And in interviews conducted after the election, several participants, both American and non-American, said that Trump's election had scared them so much that they were planning to get involved in home-country politics, and explore ways they could be involved at least somewhat in Japan's politics, too.

FREEDOM: "WITH BLONDE HAIR AND A 'GAIJIN CARD', I CAN PRETTY MUCH DO WHATEVER I WANT"[75]

As I discussed in Chapter 5, "Japaneseness" is defined by cultural, racial/ethnic, linguistic, and personal history factors, but not often by legal ones, at least in terms of an immigrant obtaining Japanese citizenship having any effect on who the average Tarō[76] considers to be Japanese. If you are not born in Japan, or born elsewhere to Japanese-born parents, raised in Japan, of Japanese descent, and culturally and linguistically fluent, it does not matter what you want or how you view yourself, you are not and cannot *become* Japanese, in the eyes of most Japanese people. And you have to have all of those factors—just being fluent in Japanese language and culture is not enough if you are a blue-eyed blonde, and being of Japanese descent is not enough if you do not speak native-level Japanese. The one occasional exception is when a person of Japanese descent becomes famous in some way, such as Kristi Yamaguchi and Mirai Nagasu (figure skaters), Pat Morita and George Takei (actors), Michio Kaku (scientist), or Mazie Hirono and Daniel Inouye (U.S. senators); often they will be "claimed" as a source of Japanese pride.

For many Western immigrants in Japan, knowing that they cannot become Japanese in the full social and cultural sense of the word, that no matter what they do or how hard they try they will not truly be accepted as Japanese, gives them permission not to try. If there is no way for them to be accepted by Japanese people as "one of us", they realize that if they remain in Japan they are accepting that they will always remain partially outside of Japanese society.

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[75] [Lizzy/028]

[76] The given name Tarō (most often written 太郎), while uncommon these days, was in previous decades a common name for boys. It functions in Japan in much the same way the "average Joe" does in the U.S.

A number of interviewees told me that this—having no way to be seen as "really" or "fully" Japanese by Japanese people, no matter what they do—is, in a strange way, freeing for them as immigrants in Japan. These sentiments are illustrated by two quotations from three interviews: both Ian and Pascal said that "because I can't become Japanese, I don't have to try", and Jenny added a different nuance when she said that "because I can't ever be Japanese, I can choose when I want to follow Japanese norms and when I want to play the *gaijin* card".

Many others expressed similar ideas, in particular the idea that not being able to be seen as completely Japanese means that they do not feel pressure from Japanese people to assimilate and fit in. This, in turn, affords them the choice of when to comply with Japanese cultural and societal expectations, and which norms and mores they are comfortable adhering to.

For nearly all of the people I interviewed, the realization of what it meant for them to continue living in Japan came fairly quickly. Some came to this understanding without consciously articulating it to themselves; most, though, could pinpoint a specific time—attending a specific event, reading a specific news story, having a specific conversation with a friend or coworker, etc.—when they realized the implications of choosing to remain in Japan in a very concrete, and conscious, way.

In Alison's case, this occurred when her then-boyfriend broke up with her and told her that he had only wanted a fun, short-term relationship, and he assumed she wanted the same thing because of course she was going to go home soon… despite her having just signed a new lease on her apartment and having a secure full-time job that she enjoyed very much. For Jason, the moment of realization was when his apartment rental application was rejected for being a *gaijin* the month after he received permanent

residency—having lived in Japan for over 10 years, working a secure full-time job with a Japanese company, and going through the process of applying and providing documentation for long-term permission to remain in the country were no match for his non-Japanese-ness. Dawn realized that she would always be perceived as at least a bit of an outsider when coworkers left her off an email chain with a client, assuming that she would not understand, despite the fact that she had in fact recruited that client and served as their primary contact within her organization to date. And Millie realized, "for the millionth time", that she was not accepted as belonging when her neighbor—a woman she had lived next door to for more than 40 years, since she came to Japan as a newlywed and moved into her Japanese husband's family's Tokyo apartment—asked her yet again when she was going home (meaning the U.S.), and expressed considerable surprise when Millie replied that she *was* home and had no plans to leave.

At the same time that they are partially outside Japanese society, though, they are also no longer fully a part of (or insiders in) the society of their home country; the degree to which they are no longer insiders grows in direct relationship with how long they have lived elsewhere. Several people said that after being in Japan for a period of years, or in some cases decades, that they felt much more comfortable in the "niche" they had created for themselves in Japan than they did when they visited their home country. This is not surprising, given that most people are most comfortable in familiar surroundings. And in many cases, they acknowledged that they would probably be able to adapt and be happy if they returned to their home country, but that held little appeal for most. Many also expressed concern that they had missed too many years of pop culture references, political events, or even family changes to ever feel completely comfortable in their home countries again. Nevertheless, a majority of interviewees said

that they could imagine few, if any, circumstances in which they would want to leave Japan; most of those who could more readily imagine leaving Japan said that they would prefer to go to another country where they would remain similarly somewhat outside of society, because they had come to value the freedom they had found in doing so.

In many ways, living in this kind of permanent limbo, a liminal space within, but never truly, entirely inside Japanese society has given these immigrants a previously unimagined degree of freedom to construct their lives according to their own desires, largely unconstrained by convention or others' expectations. They can carve out jobs and relationships that would not be possible in their home countries, and achieve a level of peace and contentment that for many members of minority or marginalized groups are simply impossible at home. The *gaijin* card provides a tool that they can use to get around, or reshape, many things in Japan that they dislike or disagree with, as well as a way (or an excuse) for them to adopt and adapt things that they do like. By choosing to live in Japan, welcoming the permanent limbo that results from that choice, and learning to use that limbo and their foreignness to their advantage, this group of immigrants has turned potentially difficult and damaging circumstances into a benefit. The exclusionary definition of Japaneseness that continues to shape Japanese attitudes and policies regarding immigrants and immigration has, in fact, produced conditions that are especially well suited for Western immigrants, allowing them to create better lives than they otherwise could, even if they lived in places more accepting of outsiders than Japan.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

There are, of course, commonalities to life in most large, globalized cities, regardless of their location; similarly, international migrants' experiences share some common features no matter which countries they are leaving and moving to. For Westerners in Japan, though, the specific combination of who they are and the ethnoracial definition of Japaneseness produces some very unusual experiences in comparison to those of other international migrants.

Japan is not thought of as a destination for large numbers of international migrants, and prior to WWII it truly was not. The last few decades, however, have seen growing numbers of people moving from other countries to Japan, and a growing diversity in immigrants' countries of origin. Some in Japan recognize that immigration benefits the country much more than it causes it problems, but government policy and some people's attitudes toward immigration remain anchored to the idea that immigration should not be encouraged, and the myth that Japan is, or was in the past, a homogeneous nation. These negative attitudes toward immigration result from, and are reinforced by, fears that increasing diversity through immigration will irrevocably damage Japanese society by changing what it means to be Japanese and redefining who can belong in Japan.

As it currently stands, Japaneseness is strongly tied to both an individual's personal linguistic and cultural competence and life history and their (biological) family's heritage and origin. Because nearly all Westerners are missing one or more of these characteristics, it is impossible for them to become fully Japanese in the eyes of Japanese people. As a result, those who choose to live as immigrants in Japan are also

choosing to accept living in a permanent state of limbo, neither completely inside nor outside Japanese society. Most participants in this study cited this limbo as a positive thing, though, due to the flexibility this vaguely defined partial belonging affords them, in terms of employment and social opportunities that are open to them because of their particular situation, the ability it gives them to choose when to fit in and when to stand out (or when to follow, or not follow, Japanese norms and expectations), and the safety and freedom they are able to enjoy by living in limbo in Japan.

Of course, the life of a Western immigrant in Japan is not without difficulties. Between the fishbowl life and lack of individual identity; the racism, sexism, and other discrimination they encounter; and the stress of dealing with communication issues, immigration regulations, and a whole host of other things that accompany migrating to any new country, there are numerous ways that their life in Japan is anything but straightforward and easy. For the participants in my study, however, the good aspects of their lives there far outweighed the bad.

Interestingly, those who were a minority or marginalized in some way in their home country—people of color, women, and LGBTQ+ people—indicated that they felt that they benefit from living in Japan more than straight, white men did, even though the stereotype of the charisma man is based on the idea that Japan is a paradise for them and a horrible place to live for everyone who is not straight, white, and male. Participants, however, made it very clear that in their experiences, the fact of their obvious non-Japanese-ness both overshadowed things like their sexuality, ethnicity, gender, and so on that had marked them as different in their home countries, and led to their being seen as "just another *gaijin*", granting them an anonymity and freedom they had not experienced prior to moving to Japan.

Among studies of international migration, Western emigrants are an uncommon group to study. Which is disappointing, because as a group they face an interesting combination of privilege and discrimination, acceptance and tolerance. This is especially the case with Westerners who migrate to Japan. Unlike many other groups that have comprised the main focus of migration scholarship until recently, who leave their home countries out of economic necessity or to escape political or ecological upheaval, Westerners generally move to Japan primarily just because they want to, rather than because of any specific economic or political pressure. They also usually have the means and ability to return home or move to another new country at any time. Thus, as described above, their decision to remain in Japan is truly, at some level, an active choice to live in a permanent liminal state, which also goes against the general trend of most migration studies until fairly recently.

In Chapter 4, I discussed the mutually reinforcing nature of legal/political citizenship and social/cultural adaptation for most migrants. In most cases, the possibility of attaining citizenship encourages such adaptation, and the commitment to the new country necessary for successfully adapting stimulates a desire for a permanent connection and legal status there. While it is possible for immigrants to Japan to obtain citizenship or permanent residency, and thus a legally recognized connection to the country, the inability to become Japanese disrupts the mutual reinforcement cycle.

Westerners in living in Japan can, and do, adapt in many ways—mastering the language, adhering to the expectations for culturally appropriate behavior, learning about customs, holidays, traditional art forms, and so on—and benefit from this adaptation, they are not doing this as part of their process of becoming Japanese in the way that an immigrant to the U.S. or Australia or another Western country is.

Conversely, many who obtain permanent residency have not adapted to Japanese society and culture in meaningful ways, and often seek permanent residency to maintain their lives in Japan without depending on an employer or spouse for continuing visa renewals, rather than out of a desire to be connected to or a part of Japan as a nation. And because legally acquiring citizenship requires substantial language abilities and cultural knowledge, revocation of any other citizenship(s), and still does not allow a person to be seen as having become Japanese by Japanese people, it is not an attractive option for most Westerners (Arudou 2015). Since neither adaptation nor legal status give one the ability to fully become Japanese, these two processes simply do not motivate the other the way they do in other countries.

Through this exploration of Westerners' adaptation experiences and strategies as immigrants in Japan—the decisions they make, the motivations behind those choices, the strategies they employ, and the constraints shaping both their decisions and the effectiveness of the chosen strategies—my study is contributing to recent efforts by migration scholars to consider a more diverse range of migrant groups and flows, and furthers the development of more nuanced understandings of migrant adaptation strategies in the 21st century by contributing an ethnographic case study of an unusual and under-studied group to the migration studies literature. In particular, this research investigated the contradictory experiences of migrants who are privileged yet excluded; this group that is welcomed yet unwanted provides a more well-rounded view of migrants' (lack of) integration and migration experiences than has usually been considered.

No study, unfortunately, is without its flaws. In particular, this project contained three important limitations. It was not designed to be statistically representative, but

future studies of this type would benefit from the inclusion of a more representative group of participants, especially for surveys and questionnaires. Likewise, this study was constructed with the understanding that it would be primarily centered on migrants living in Tokyo, although efforts were made to include the experiences of immigrants living in other areas of Japan. The conclusions would therefore be more convincing and robust if the study included a greater number of participants who live outside of Tokyo and the *Kantō* region, especially those living in smaller cities, towns, and rural areas. Finally, this research was conceptualized as a broad exploration of Westerners' experiences, to explore a population that has not previously been studied much. Future studies would benefit from a more focused approach—either targeting a particular subgroup of Westerners, or a specific domain or category of their experiences—now that a general understanding has been established.

Despite these flaws, by studying a group of visibly foreign migrants, who are considered by Japanese society to be categorically unable to fully assimilate and become Japanese, this dissertation has contributed a new perspective on the discourse of Japaneseness, and the ways in which migrants' experiences in Japan reflect, and are a product of, the current conceptualization of Japaneseness. Through my exploration of Westerners' adaptation processes, the strategies they employ, and the outcomes of their efforts, this dissertation adds to current scholarly conversations in both anthropology and migration studies around ideas of national identity, post-migration liminality and belongingness, and the structural and social factors influencing migrants' adaptation strategies and their outcomes.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: IN-PERSON INTERVIEW DOCUMENTS

CONSENT FORM

The following consent form was reviewed with each interviewee prior to the interview and signed by the participant indicating their informed consent. A copy of the form was offered to all participants.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
(Michigan State University IRB Study # x16-896e)

LIVING IN LIMBO: WESTERN IMMIGRANTS' EXPERIENCES IN JAPAN AS A PRODUCT OF JAPANESENESS

You are being asked to participate in a research study of migrants from Western countries living in Japan being conducted by Jessica McLeod, a PhD candidate at Michigan State University. The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of foreign-born residents of Japan, in order to identify patterns in these experiences and gain a deeper understanding of how these individuals adapt to life in Japanese society.

Participation in This Study

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You are not required to participate. You may choose not to answer certain questions, and you may change your mind and withdraw your participation at any time without consequences. Participation in this research involves no risks to you, and you will not be compensated for your participation in this study.

I will interview you concerning background information about yourself; your experiences migrating to, and living in, Japan; and your opinions on and perceptions of Japan and Japanese society. In general, interviews should take no more than two hours to complete.

Confidentiality of Research Data

I will make an audio recording of our conversation, and take handwritten notes. All research data collected in this study will be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible. Only the researcher, Jessica McLeod, and her faculty advisors at MSU will have access to this data. After this project is completed, the data collected in this study will be retained and may be used in future studies unless you specify otherwise.

Contact Information

If you have questions or concerns about this study, please contact the researcher, Jessica McLeod, at mcleodj4@msu.edu / JAMcLeod@gmail.com, or +81.80.9544.1418 (*Japan*) / +1.704.648.6508 (*U.S.A.*); or via the Department of Anthropology at MSU at anthropology@ssc.msu.edu; +1.517.353.2950 (phone), +1.517.432.2363 (fax); or Baker Hall, Rm. 355, 655 Auditorium Road, East Lansing, MI 48824, U.S.A.
This research study has been reviewed and approved by MSU's Human Research Protection Program. If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, or would like to register any concerns you might have, you may contact the HRPP, anonymously if you wish, at: irb@msu.edu; +1.517.355.2180 (phone); +1.517.432.4503 (fax); or Rm. 207, 408 West Circle Drive, East Lansing, MI 48824, U.S.A.

Signing below indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

_____ _____

Signature Date

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

Demographic information form, completed by each participant after obtaining informed consent and before we began discussing the interview questions below.

***Nationality*:** _____
(original nationality, if different from current: _____)

What other countries (if any) have you lived in besides Japan/your home country? _____

When did you come to Japan? _____

Do you have Japanese citizenship or permanent residency?
yes (citizenship), *year obtained:* _____ / yes (PR), *year obtained:*
no

If no, do you plan to apply for [Japanese citizenship / permanent residency] ***in the future?*** [yes / maybe / no / haven't considered it yet]

Are you currently employed? yes (full time) / yes (part time) / no / other
What job(s) do you do have? _____

***Age*:** _____ (or if you prefer, are you in your 20s / 30s / 40s / 50s / 60s / 70+)

***Race/ethnicity*:** _____

***Religion*:** _____

***Gender*:** _____

***Sexuality/Orientation*:** straight / gay / lesbian / bisexual / no response / prefer another term: _____ / other: _____

***Relationship Status*:** married / engaged / partnered / dating / single / other: _____

(if applicable: spouse/partner's nationality: _____)

***Do you have children*:** yes / no _____
age(s) & country(ies) of birth: _____

_____

How would you describe your Japanese language ability?

beginner / intermediate (low) / intermediate (high) / advanced / fluent

other: _____

What other languages do you know (if any) besides English and Japanese? _____

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

*****PRE-INTERVIEW DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION*****

(Questions in light text are included in the demographic information form participants completed prior to the interview; those bold text are follow-up questions or questions seeking more detail that I wanted to be sure I included once the interview began.)

What is your age?
What is your race/ethnicity?
What is your religion?
Are you currently employed? [*full time / part time?*]
What jobs have you had in Japan? Before you came to Japan?
What is your gender:
What is your sexuality/sexual orientation?
What is your current relationship status?
[*If applicable: What is your spouse/partner's nationality?*]
Do you have children? [age(s) / birthplace(s)]
How would you describe your Japanese language ability? [*beginner/intermediate (low)/ intermediate (high)/advanced/fluent/other*]
What other languages besides English and Japanese do you know (if any)?
How did you learn Japanese? **[probe for all options]**
What is your nationality? [*current / original*]
What other countries (if any) have you lived in besides Japan/your home country?
When did you come to Japan? **[Have you stayed continuously? Boomeranged?]**
What originally brought you to Japan?
At that time, did you intend to stay long-term/permanently?

Why what is (are) your reason(s) for settling in Japan/staying long-term?

What do other people (family/friends, Japanese) assume is (are) your reason(s) for staying?

Do you have Japanese citizenship or permanent residency?
[*If yes: Which? When obtained?*]
[*If no: Do you plan to apply for either in the future? Which?* **Why/not?**]
Are you planning to continue to live in Japan in the future?
[*If yes: How/why did you decide to stay?*]
[*If no: How/why did you decide to leave? Do you have a definite departure date?*]

*****PART 1: EXPERIENCES IN JAPAN—COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, SOCIAL ACTIVITIES*****

Please tell me a bit about your experiences of living in Japan.

What is your "regular" daily/weekly life like? [*daily activities, regular interactions, etc.*]

What do you do for fun/to relax/in your free time? What kinds of social activities or hobbies etc. do you take part in?

Who is (are) your closest friend(s)? [*Nationality(ies)? How did you meet? How frequently do you meet/communicate?*]

Who do you go to when you need advice? [*Specific problem(s)/type(s) of advice seeking? Why that person/those people? Nationality(ies)?*]

Who do you ask for help when you have a problem? [*Specific problem(s)/type(s) of help seeking? Why that person/those people? Nationality(ies)?*]

Do you participate in any kinds of groups or organizations?

> *If yes: What groups? How do you participate? When did you start? Why did you join? How did you find out about them?*
>
> *If no: Why not?*

How are your social life and social experiences different here from where you were living before?

*****PART 2: EXPERIENCES IN JAPAN—TRENDS & IMPRESSIONS*****

What are the easiest or best aspects of living in Japan for you?

Most difficult aspects?

Most surprising or confusing?

What is the most frustrating aspect of living here?

Most enjoyable or rewarding?

Changes over time?

Was there a particular point that life here was especially difficult or enjoyable for you?

What kinds of experiences, good &/or bad, have you had based on/due to your own personal characteristics?

Please tell me a bit about your experiences in relation to [*making friends, dating, working, learning the language (& attitude toward language), raising kids/etc.… as applicable.*]

*****PART 3: OPINIONS & INSIGHTS RE: JAPANESE SOCIETY & PEOPLE*****

What do you think Japan does better than your home country/other places you've lived?

And vice versa?

Do you see differences in values/behavioral expectations/"worldview" between Japan & your home country?

If yes: What are those differences?

Have your own values changed? How?

How do you balance or navigate those differences?

How do you choose which norms to follow when?

Do you feel different or Other here? If so, how?

Is this different from how you feel at home? If so, how?

What are your opinions on the treatment of foreigners here by individuals? Society? Government(s)?

Do you have any strong feelings or preferences re: terms used to discuss non-native-born people in Japan? (e.g. foreigner, 外人/外国人, etc.)

What things are good about being foreign here?

What needs improvement?

What things are difficult because you're foreign?

Easy/good?

Do you find you experience:

Sense of freedom?

Isolation?

Specifically gender/race/sexuality/nationality/age/etc.-based treatment?

How would you characterize the Japanese (individual/societal/governmental) attitude toward foreigners & immigration?

How would you define what it means to be Japanese?

Do you think this is different from how Japanese people define what is/isn't Japanese?

What has your experience living here as a non-native-born person taught you about the meaning of "Japaneseness"?

Is the meaning of “Japanese” or “Japaneseness” changing?

How so?

*****PART 4: WRAP-UP*****

[follow up on any topics that each interviewee brought up that]

What are other important topics or issues that we haven’t discussed yet?

What else is it important for me to know about you, your experiences, or the experience of being foreign in Japan generally (that we haven’t already touched on in this conversation)?

*****PART 5: THANK YOU!!!!*****

APPENDIX II: ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

LIFE IN JAPAN QUESTIONNAIRE[77]

You are being asked to participate in a research study of migrants living in Japan being conducted by Jessica McLeod, a PhD candidate at Michigan State University in the U.S. The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of foreign-born residents of Japan, in order to identify patterns in these experiences and gain a deeper understanding of how these individuals adapt to life in Japanese society. Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You are not required to answer any of the questions in this survey, and you may choose to skip questions you would prefer not to answer without penalty. Your responses are not recorded until you click "submit" at the end of the survey, so you may change your mind and withdraw your participation at any time prior to submission. If you have any questions or concerns, or you wish to withdraw your participation after submitting your responses, please contact Jessica McLeod at mcleodj4@msu.edu. Participation in this research involves no risks to you, and you will not be compensated for your participation in this study. This survey will cover background information about yourself, your experiences moving to, and living in, Japan, and your opinions on and perceptions of Japan and Japanese society. All research data collected in this study will be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible. Only the researcher, Jessica McLeod, and her faculty advisors at MSU will have access to this data. This research study has been reviewed and approved by MSU's Human Research Protection Program (Study # x16-896e). If you have questions or concerns about this study, please email the researcher, Jessica McLeod, at mcleodj4@msu.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, or would like to register any concerns you might have, you may contact the HRPP, anonymously if you wish, via email at irb@msu.edu; via phone at +1.517.355.2180; via fax at +1.517.432.4503; or via postal mail at Rm. 207, 408 West Circle Drive, East Lansing, MI 48824, U.S.A. By completing this survey and submitting your responses, you indicate that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

SECTION 1: Background Information

First, I'll ask you to share a bit of background information about yourself.

Where are you from?

What other countries (if any) have you lived in besides Japan and your home country?

When did you come to Japan?

[77] The online version of this questionnaire can be viewed at http://goo.gl/forms/egEwXLxQzT7KDqDn2.

Have you lived in Japan continuously since then? Yes / No

If you haven't lived in Japan continuously, please describe when and why you left and returned.

Do you have Japanese citizenship or permanent residency?

Yes, I have Japanese citizenship.
Yes, I have permanent residency (and DO plan to apply for citizenship in the future).
Yes, I have permanent residency (and DO NOT plan to apply for citizenship).
No, but I'm currently applying for PERMANENT RESIDENCY.
No, but I'm currently applying for CITIZENSHIP.
No, but I plan to apply for PERMANENT RESIDENCY.
No, but I plan to apply for CITIZENSHIP.
No, but I plan to apply for one or the other in the future (and I'm not sure which yet).
No, and I'm NOT SURE if I want to apply for either in the future.
No, and I DO NOT plan to apply for either in the future.

Which prefecture do you currently live in? [dropdown menu with all prefectures listed]

Have you lived anywhere else in Japan? (If so, please list the location(s) below.)

Are you currently employed? Yes (full time) / Yes (part time) / No

What is your…

Age?

Race and/or ethnicity?

Religion? (if applicable)

Gender?

Sexuality/orientation?

Relationship status?

If applicable…

What is your spouse/partner/significant other's nationality?

Do you have children?

SECTION 2: Language Skills

Next, I'd like to get a sense of your language abilities and knowledge.

What is your native language?

How would you rate your Japanese language ability? (Don't be too modest!)
beginner / intermediate (low) / intermediate (high) / advanced / fluent / other:

What other languages (if any) do you know besides English and Japanese? (Please list each language and rate your ability, e.g. "Chinese (low intermediate)".)

SECTION 3: Experiences in Japan—Activities

In this section, I'd like to get to know a bit about your regular day-to-day life. There are no wrong or right answers here—I just want to find out what kinds of activities and what aspects of social life are important to you.

What kinds of social activities, hobbies, etc. do you take part in?

Are you a member of any organizations, groups, clubs, etc.? (Or do you regularly participate with any groups etc., even if you're not formally a member?)
Yes / No / I was/did, but I'm not/don't anymore / other:

If you are a member of any organizations, groups, clubs, etc., please list them below (either by name or by type or organization).
Also, please describe your participation: When did you join? How did you find out about that organization? What kinds of activities, events, etc. do you take part in with that group? And so on.

SECTION 4: Experiences in Japan: Life in General

Now I'd like to ask about your experiences in Japan overall. Again, there are no right or wrong answers here! I only want to learn about the life experiences that are meaningful to you, and what aspects of life in Japan you feel are most important.

For you, what are the easiest or best aspects of living in Japan?

What are the hardest or most frustrating aspects of your life in Japan?

Was there any particular point where life in Japan was especially difficult or enjoyable for you?

What kinds of experiences, good and/or bad, have you had due to your own personal characteristics (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, nationality, etc.)?

People experience a wide range of feelings as a result of living in Japan. Some have described finding a sense of freedom in their life here. Others have said they experience isolation and/or some kind(s) of confinement or constraint. Sometimes these feelings have been attributed to the relationship between life experiences in Japan and individuals' personal characteristics, such as gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, or age; other times they were simply due to being a non-native resident of Japan. Do you experience (or have you experienced) any of these types of feelings? Please describe your experiences and any reasons for them that you can identify.

Please tell me about any notable experiences (bad or good) in relation to the following if applicable:

Making friends?
Employment?
Dating?
Marriage/family?
Raising children?

SECTION 5: Thoughts on Japan and Japaneseness

Finally, in this section I'll ask you some questions about your opinions on and insights into Japan, Japanese society, and the experience of living in Japan as a non-native.

How would you characterize the Japanese (individual/societal/governmental) attitude toward immigration and treatment of non-native residents of Japan?

How would you describe the position of foreigners/immigrants/non-native residents in Japanese society?

How do you yourself define what it means to be "Japanese"?

Do you think this is different from how Japanese people think about or define "Japaneseness"? If so, how is it different?

What has your experience living in Japan as a foreign-born resident shown you about the meaning of "Japaneseness"?

Is the meaning of “Japanese” or “Japaneseness” changing? If so, how and why?

SECTION 6: Final Thoughts

Final thoughts: Is there anything else about your life or experiences in Japan, immigration in Japan, Japanese society, or other related topics that you think is important for me to know (that hasn't been covered yet)? Is there anything mentioned above that you'd like to say more about? Please feel free to write as much as you like about anything you want in this space.

SECTION 7: Gratitude

Thank you so much for your participation!

I truly appreciate you taking the time to share your experiences, opinions, and insights with me. If you have any questions or concerns, wish to discuss any of these topics in more detail, or need to contact me for any reason, you can reach me at mcleodj4@msu.edu. Thank you again for your assistance with this research! - Jessica McLeod

APPENDIX III: PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHICS

INTERVIEWEES' DEMOGRAPHICS[78]

sex:	male: 22 female: 22
age:	23 (*1*); 24 (*2*); 25 (*2*); 28 (*1*); 29 (*2*); 32 (*3*); 33 (*2*); 34 (*2*); 35 (*4*); 36 (*2*); 37 (*2*); 38 (*3*); 39 (*1*); 40 (*2*); 42 (*2*); 43 (*1*); 44 (*2*); 46 (*1*); 47 (*2*); 49 (*1*); 51 (*1*); 54 (*1*); 56 (*1*); 59 (*1*); 65 (*1*); 68 (*1*)
race/ethnicity:	white: 30 Black: 4 Asian: 3 (*1 Korean-Canadian, 1 Japanese-Canadian, 1 Pakistani-British*) Arab: 2 (*1 Arab-American, 1 Arab-German*) Multiracial: 4 (*1 Black/white, 1 white/Japanese-American, 1 white/Pacific Islander, 1 "mixed"*) Native American: 1
home country:	U.S.: 16 U.K.: 8 Australia: 5 Canada: 4 Ireland: 3 France: 2 Germany: 2 Italy: 1 Netherlands: 1 Denmark: 1 New Zealand: 1
sexuality:	straight: 25 gay: 9 lesbian: 3 bisexual: 7 (*4 female, 3 male*)
relationship status:	married or partnered (Japanese spouse/partner): 24 married or partnered (partner/spouse from home country): 7 dating (Japanese girl/boyfriend): 8[79]

[78] I did 42 interviews, two of which were conducted with married couples, for a total of 44 interviewees.

[79] Two interviewees had multiple partners. One, who has a committed Japanese partner, admitted cheating on their partner with a Japanese woman. The other is polyamorous, and is casually dating a Japanese woman as well as having a long-term Japanese girlfriend as their primary relationship.

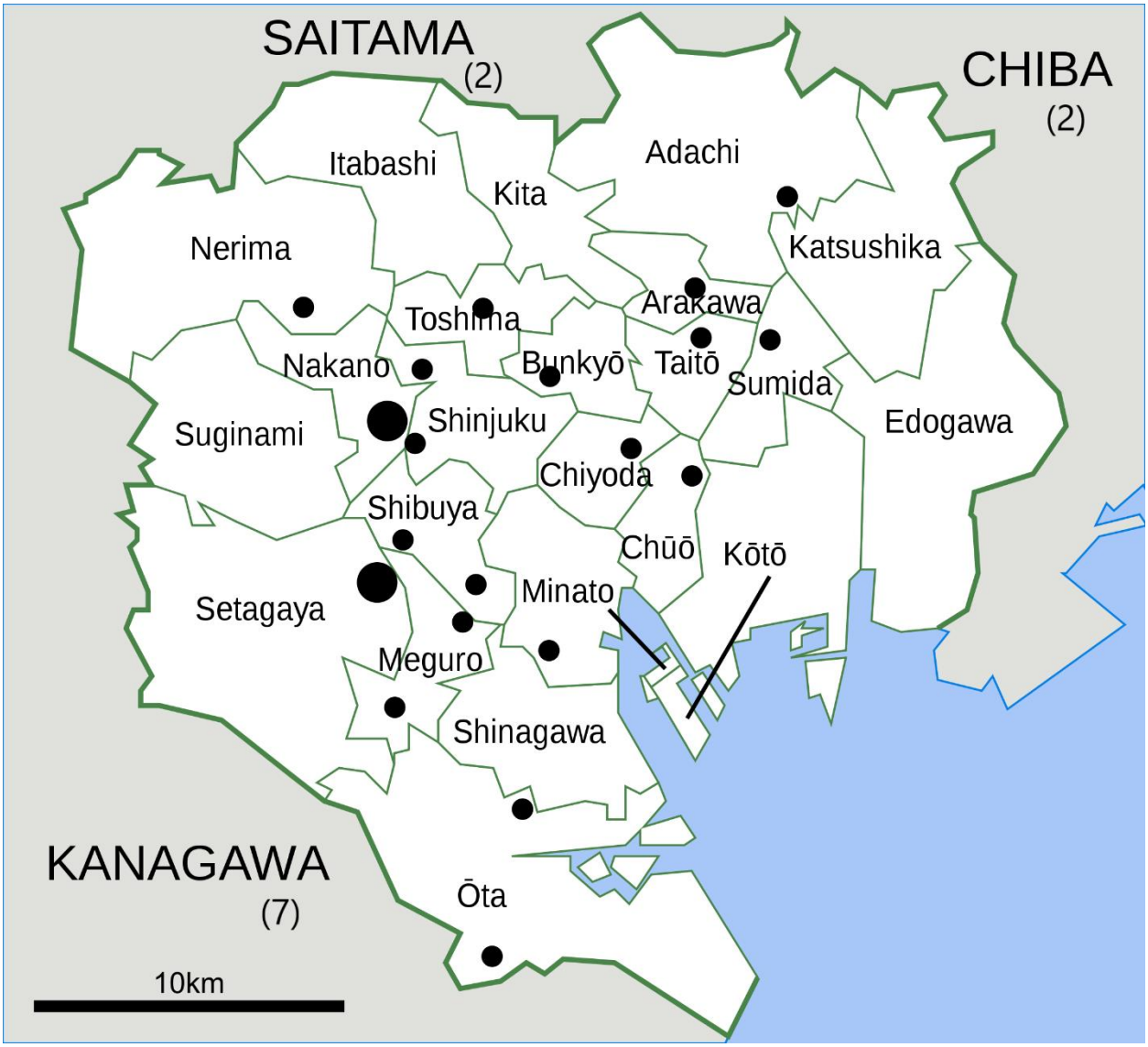

Figure A1. Locations of Tokyo Area Interviewees

Locations where the 22 interviewees in Tokyo proper were living at the time of our interview. Larger dots indicate the two married couples included in my study. Numbers in parentheses indicate how many interviewees were located in those prefectures around the greater Tokyo area but outside the city proper. Map by user Furfur, available via Wikimedia Commons under a Creative Commons license.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHICS

sex:	male: 58 female: 31
age:	youngest: 26 oldest: 62 20s (*19%*); 30s (*34%*), 40s (*26%*); 50s (*16%*); 60s (*3%*)
race/ethnicity:	white: 71% Black: 12% Asian: 9% Multiracial: 8%
home country:	U.S.: 62% U.K.: 9% Australia: 7% Canada: 4% Ireland: 3% New Zealand: 3% Austria, Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Italy, Jamaica, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Trinidad & Tobago, Ukraine: 1%
sexuality:	straight: 84% gay: 8% lesbian: 2% bisexual: 6% (*4 female, 1 male*)
relationship status:	married or partnered (Japanese spouse/partner): 79% married or partnered (partner/spouse from home country): 5% dating (Japanese girl/boyfriend): 16%

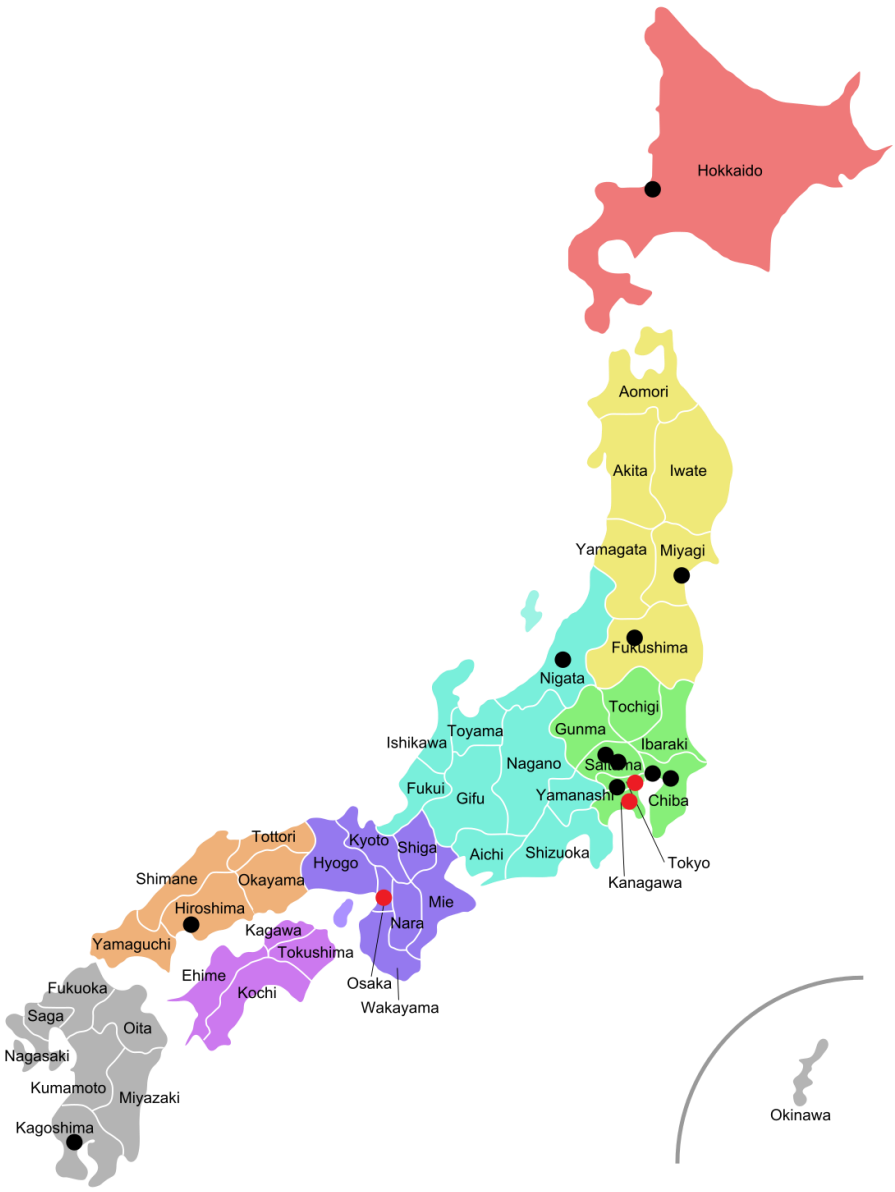

Figure A2. Locations of All Interviewees

A map of Japan, showing the locations of the individuals interviewed for this study: Black dots indicate a single interviewee; red dots indicate multiple interviewees. Specifically, from north to south, the red dots indicate: the city of Tokyo, 22 interviewees; Kanagawa Prefecture, 7 interviewees (3 in the city of Yokohama); the city of Osaka, 2 interviewees. Map by user Tokyoship, available via Wikimedia Commons under public domain.

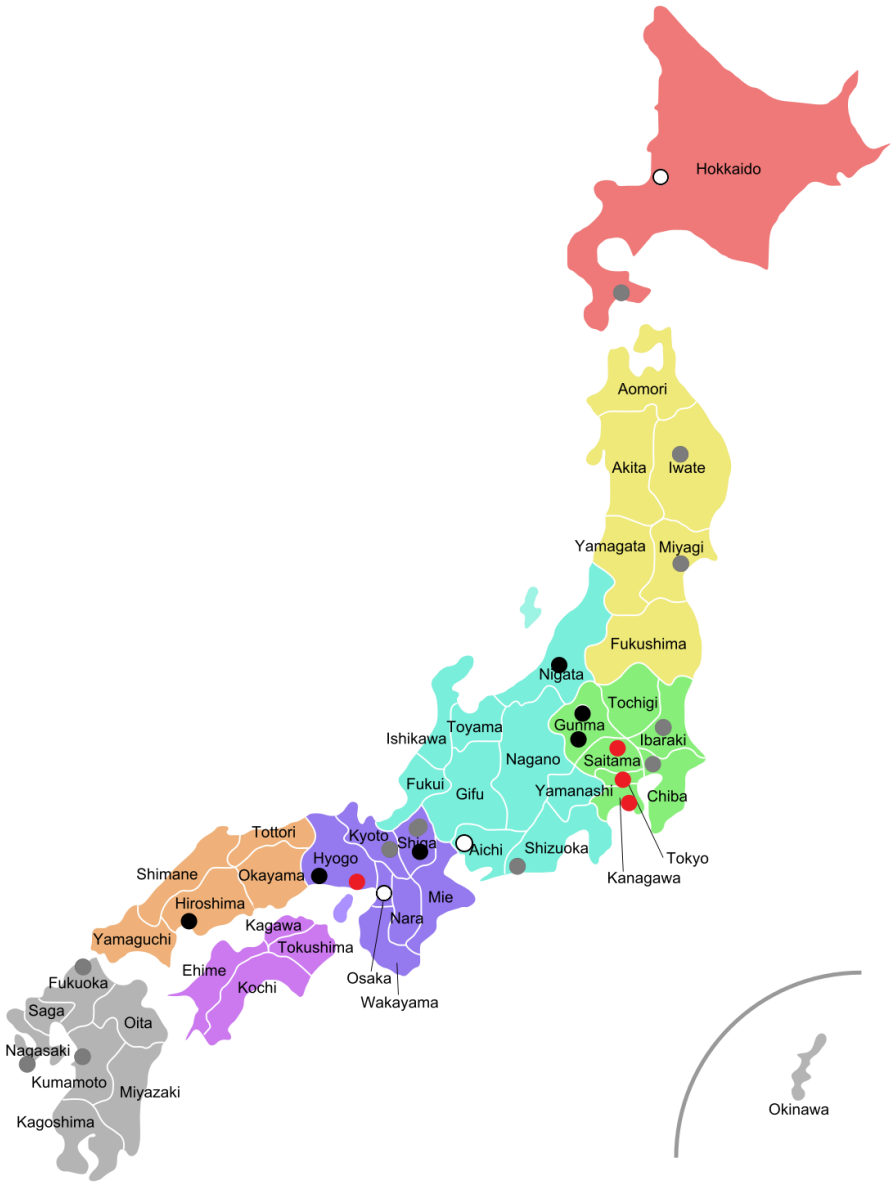

Figure A3. Locations of the 60 Urban Survey Respondents

A map of Japan, showing the locations of all survey respondents living in an urban location. Black dots indicate a single respondent (*Ojiya, Niigata; Takasaki & Maebashi, Gunma; Hikone, Shiga; Hiroshima; Hiroshima*); grey dots indicate 2 respondents (*Hakodate, Hokkaidō; Morioka, Iwate; Sendai, Miyagi; Utsunomiya, Ibaraki; Narashino, Chiba; Hamamatsu, Shizuoka; Kyōto, Kyōto; Kitakyūshū, Fukuoka; Kumamoto, Kumamoto; Nagasaki, Nagasaki*); white dots indicate 3 respondents (*Sapporo, Hokkaidō; Ōsaka, Ōsaka; Nagoya, Aichi*); red dots indicate 4 or more respondents (*4–Kobe, Hyōgo, and Saitama Prefecture; 7–Kanagawa Prefecture; 10–Tōkyo Prefecture*). Map by user Tokyoship, available via Wikimedia Commons under public domain.

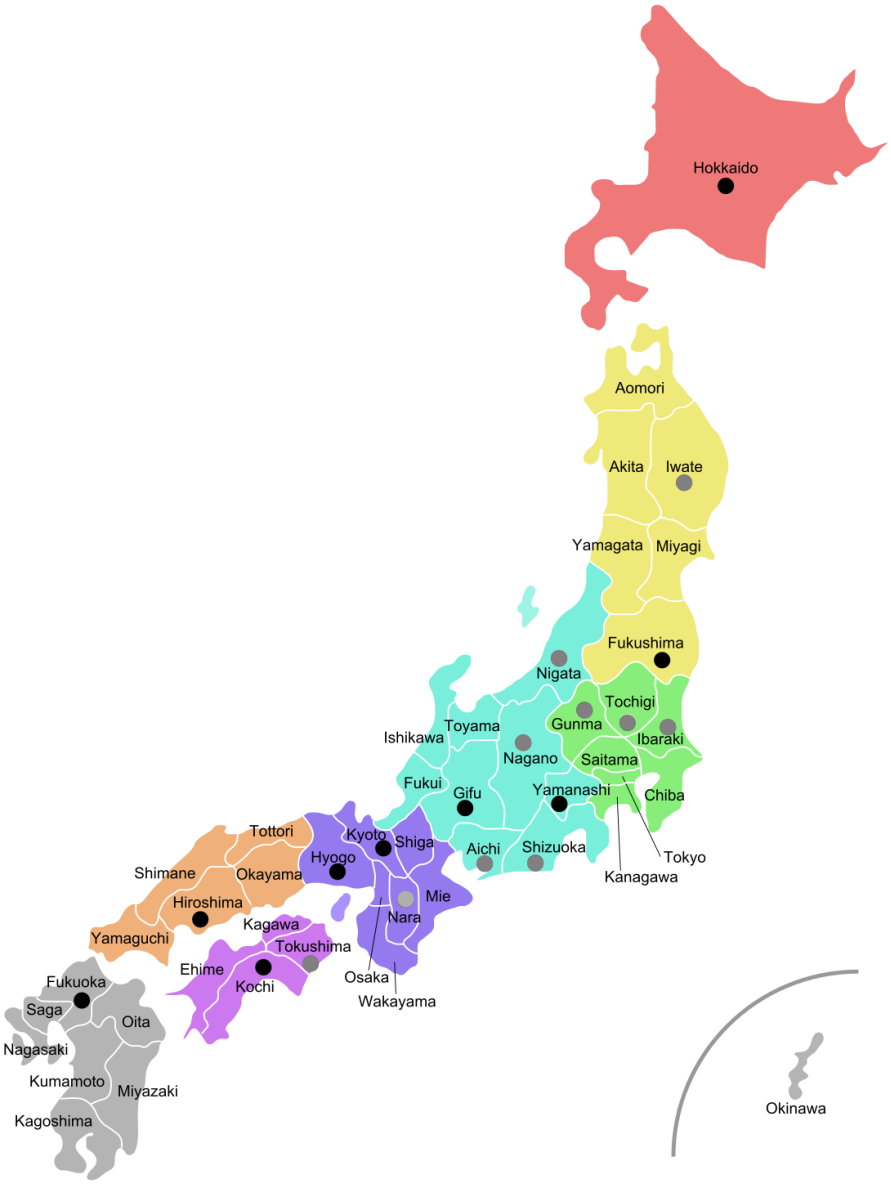

Figure A4. Locations of the 29 Rural Survey Respondents

A map of Japan, showing the locations of all survey respondents living in a rural area—a town, village, or other rural place. Dots indicate the prefecture the respondent(s) live in, not the specific location(s) they live in within each prefecture. Black dots indicate prefectures with a single respondent; grey dots indicate that 2 respondents live in that prefecture. Map by user Tokyoship, available via Wikimedia Commons under public domain.

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